Project Evaluation Report

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Notes:

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Sisters for Sisters' Education II

Baseline Study Report

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Executive Summary

Context. With support from Girls Education Challenge (GEC) funded by DFID, VSO Nepal is implementing second phase of Sisters for Sisters' Education project in Nepal. The project is planned for four years from April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2021, and implemented in four districts: Dhading, Lamjung, Parsa and Surkhet. The project targets to reach 17,213 students, directly benefiting 8158 girls, and indirectly benefiting 8,099 boys. The SFS's Theory of Change (ToC) has been developed with the hypothesis that the inequity in education and learning achievement gaps for Nepal's most marginalised girls can be addressed by ensuring equitable access to quality learning and skills development across the education continuum. The project envisions that the marginalized adolescent girls from four districts in rural Nepal will transition from basic to secondary school education with the power of choice to either find employment or continue their education. The baseline study used quasi-experimental design. A mix of quantitative and qualitative methods for gathering data consisted of the household survey, learning assessment, classroom observation, focus group discussion and key informant interviews.

Findings

Learning Outcome. In terms of scores, the average learning scores were higher for literacy and slightly lower for numeracy. The average scores were significantly higher for control areas for both SEGRA and SEGMA. The scores were higher for higher grades, and lower for lower grades. The average scores increased slightly with increase in grades. For both SEGRA and SEGMA scores, the variances were on higher sides.

	SeCGRA Mean Score			**SecGMA** Mean Score		
Grade	**Int.**	**Cont.**	**SD**	**Int.**	**Cont.**	**SD**
Grade 6	24.2	25.9	14.9	10.9	15.0**	11.5
Grade 7	29.8	31.9	17.6	15.2	17.0	13.1
Grade 8	39.2	39.2	17.7	25.3	28.6	18.9
Grade 9	44.2	47.2	18.4	31.0	37.1*	19.8
Grade 10	52.2	57.7	18.3	37.9	49.6**	23.6
Aggregate average	34.1	36.9*	21.2	20.3	25.6**	18.6

While categorized based on proficiency, most of the girls were categorized as emergent learner with very few being a proficient learner (less than 1 per cent). The learning outcomes were positively linked with higher attendance, participation of girls in decision-making, and parental engagement in schools. The girls faced multiple challenges to attendance and learning. The barriers girls were facing such as lack of adequate parental support and motivation, limited leisure time at home to study coupled with intensive workload, lack of materials to read and limited practice among girls to read materials other than school textbook, and lack of light and electricity to study during evening were closely and significantly associated with lower learning scores. The girls from poor households, mother tongue other than Nepali and with illiterate household heads were scoring significantly lower in both literacy and numeracy.

Transition Outcome. During baseline, the rate of successful transition among the girls enrolled in school was 94 per cent and 83 per cent for out-of-school girls with the benchmark successful transition of 82 per cent for the age group 10-20 years. Among the girls, the lowest transition (88.9%) was for age group 17-20 years. The transition rate was already high and had ceiling effect. The qualitative discussions indicated that the higher attendance, self-confidence, and parental support positively affects transition outcomes.

Age	Sample	Transition pathway										Successful transition rate per age (%)
		Successful Transition							Unsuccessful transition			
		In school progression	In school progression being married	Re-enrolled in school	Dropped but involved in NFE	Dropped out but involved in TEVT	Dropped out but employed with minimum wage	Dropped out but have started business on own	Repeats grade	Dropped out of school	Drops out of school but unemployed	
10 -12	350	330 (94.3%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	20 (5.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	94.30%
13-14	419	393 (93.8%)	0 (0%)	4 (0.9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	26 (6.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	93.80%
15-16	227	215 (94.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	12 (5.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	94.70%
17-20	54	48 (88.9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (11.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	88.90%
Total	1050	986 (93.9%)	0 (0%)	5 (0.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	64 (6.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	93.90%

Sustainability outcome. The baseline study ranks overall sustainability status as Emerging (1). The sustainability status differs for community, school and system. At the community level, there are changes in the perceptions of people with regards to girl's education. At the school level, there are some changes taking place like no physical punishment for children, scholarships for girls, establishment of complaint response mechanism in some schools. The sustainability at the system level is influenced by the country is currently under the restructuring process that observes transition of the education governance mechanism from district and central structure to local government.

Marginalisation and gender analysis. Girls were at disadvantage when it comes to education. The parental and community expectations related to education were different for boys and girls. Girls also did not receive suitable study environment and adequate time to study at home. Other bases for marginalization to education outcomes were caste/ethnicity – being of dalit community, speaking different mother tongue than the language of instruction (Nepali), and having some form of disability.

Intermediate Outcomes findings

Intermediate outcomes	Indicators	Intervention	Control
IO1: School attendance	School attendance rate (annual)	86.7	87.9
	School attendance (based on spot check)	73.6	76.3
IO2: Improved self-esteem for girls	% of girls who feel confident	83.1	87.9**
	% of girls who feel they are involved in decisions in home	74.4	74.9
	% of girls who feel they are involved in decisions in school	60.2	62.3
	% of girls who feel they are involved in decisions in community	35.3	32.7
	% of girls who are listened to at home	86.4	87.2
IO3: Increased parental engagement in girl's education	% of parents who actively support girls to complete secondary education	75.6	73.6
	% of parents who volunteer their services to school or joint SMC/PTA and engaged in their activities	14.6	16.0
IO4: Improved teaching quality	% of teachers using learner centred classroom practices	9.1	18.8**
IO5: Improved school Management and Governance	Number of schools with complaint response mechanism	28 (62%)**	6 (35%)
	Number of schools with SMC and PTA members aware and informed about their roles, and able to develop SIP	83% (15)**	68% (31)

	% of teachers trained on correct way to recognise and respond to cases of child abuse	10.5%	10.0%

1. Background to project

1.1 Project context

Nepal is undergoing a socio-political transition following the culmination of a constitution drafting process that passed through the constituent assembly in 2015. The state re-structuring process, involving a transfer from unitary to federal structure, has gained momentum after the completion of local, provincial and central level elections. Although the transition process has faltered for more than a decade, the country now has governments at all levels (local, provincial and federal) that are likely to be in power for next five years. After a long period of internal conflict and uncertainty there is a degree of cautious optimism as the country moves towards the fully-fledged implementation of the constitutional commitments and provisions that underlie state restructuring. The country has been restructured in 753 local governments and 7 provincial governments. As of March 2018, the newly elected governments have assumed office in all three layers of governments despite being at an embryonic stage in terms of their actual operational capacity. The constitution assumes primary responsibility on part of local government with regards to local development efforts including the large portion of responsibility related to school education.

Although the data may not be entirely reliable, socio-economic development indicators - especially the Human Development Index (HDI) – suggest that the country is on the verge of graduating from Least Developed Country (LDC) to Developing Country. However, given the on-going transition and instability in the aftermath of the earthquake that has demanded sizable financial resources; the Government of Nepal has decided to entreat the United Nations to delay the graduation of Nepal to the list of developing country[1]. Impressively, school education in Nepal is one of the most progressive development sectors.

The Constitution of Nepal, 2015 guarantees universal and free school education for all children in Nepal with provision for specific support and priorities for girls, and children from disadvantaged groups. In its fundamental principles, the constitution has declared basic education as free and compulsory for all children in Nepal while maintaining that the state will assume the prime responsibility of financing basic school education. The constitution, vividly, states:

(1) Every citizen shall have the right to access to basic education.

[1] https://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/government-wants-nepal-remain-least-develooped-countries/

(2) Every citizen shall have the right to compulsory and free basic education, and free education up to the secondary level.

(3) The physically impaired and citizens who are financially poor shall have the right to free higher education as provided for in law.

School education in Nepal consists of primary level, from grade one to five, followed by three years of lower secondary, two years of secondary, and two years of higher secondary education (MOE, 2008). The School Sector Reform Programme (SSRP) (2009–2015) which transitioned to School Sector Development Plan (SSDP, 2016-22), has categorized school education into two levels: basic education (grades 1–8) and secondary education (grades 9–12) (MOE, 2008 & MOE, 2016).

The education sector in Nepal has substantially grown in recent years. The number of schools and student enrolment rates has jumped up impressively over the years. The school age population (5-14 years for grades 1-10) is expected to be around 8 million (which is more than 25 per cent of the total population in Nepal) of which around 6.9 million are present in school (up to grade 12) and more than one million kids are out of school (CBS, 2011 & DOE, 2016). In 2015, the Net Enrolment Rate (NER) for the primary level (grades 1-5) was 97 per cent[2]. The rates declined in higher levels at 78 per cent for lower secondary and 58 per cent for secondary levels (DOE, 2015). From primary to secondary level, more than 25 per cent miss out the enrollment, and around 63 per cent do not manage to progress in succession. In another data compiled by CBS during National Living Standard Survey (NLSS), around 7 per cent children have never attended schools, and remain out of school.

Table A: Educational outcomes at the lower secondary level by sex (2015).

Indicators	Primary		Lower Secondary		Secondary Education	
	Total	**Girls**	**Total**	**Girls**	**Total**	**Girls**
Enrollment	4,264,942	-	1,862,873	-	938,897	-
GER	135.4	140.8	120.1	124.1	75.1	74.7
NER	96.6	96.3	89.4	89.6	57.9	57.3
Promotion Rate	88.4	88.7	90.9	91.0	92.2	92.2
Repetition Rate	7.6	7.5	4.0	3.9	2.9	2.9
Drop Out Rate	3.9	3.8	4.4	4.3	4.9	4.9
Survival Rate (5, 8 & 10)	87.5	87.9	76.6	77.4	37.9	38.9

Source: DOE, 2015

[2]The figure is believed to have been inflated due to wrong reporting by schools because the household surveys present completely different picture. The National Living Standards Survey (NLSS-III) published in 2011 reported that the actual NER observed in the household survey was only 68.8 percent which was a decrease of nearly 3 percent from the NLSS-II figures of 72 (CBS, 2007 & CBS, 2011b).

Despite these, the education system suffers in terms of poor transition to higher grades (with only 1 in 2 children enrolled in Grade survive till the early secondary grades), and poor learning outcomes. Based on National Assessment of Student's Achievement (NASA) learning achievement studies conducted during 2011-2013 commissioned by Education Review Office, Ministry of Education, the learning achievement rates are lower (in between 50-60 per cent) for primary grades and around 40 per cent for secondary grades in the most recent studies (DOE, 2014). The learning achievement rate has mostly staggered in the range of 30-40 per cent for last three decades.

Although the Gender Parity Index (GPI) does not show big difference between boys and girls in school, there are many girls outside school education system. There is also tendency of families to enroll their daughters in community school, and sons in private schools. Similarly, the school drop-out and repetition are slightly worse off for girls compared to boys. It is worthy to note that the drop out among girls is largely due to gender and family related reasons such as early marriage, not enough time to study at home, and inability of parents to finance their studies etc (ActionAid Nepal, 2017). For boys, the top reasons for drop out include migration for work and poor academic performance. There are also limited facilities for girls available at school such as separate toilet for girls, sufficient number of female teachers etc. In addition to various challenges related to not adequately gender sensitive environment in schools and families, gender-based violence is one of the core reasons that affect lives of girls and women. While the provisions are strong, the implementation remains weak. At least 2 in 10 woman/girl have once felt gender based violence in their recent past, in public or private sphere (ActionAid Nepal, 2013). As per Informal Sector Service Center - INSEC (2013) report on situation of violence against women and girls, 1 in 4 violence that occurs with women occur with girls less than 18 years of age (INSEC, 2013).

On top of the gender related barriers, there are multiple other frames that lead to exclusion and marginalization. Although there is not much information available on the children with disability, the available evidences suggest their poor engagement in school education. According to CERID (2004), the physically and mentally disabled and socially disadvantaged people are educationally disadvantaged. The National Census 2011 conducted by GoN reported that 1.94% of the total population of Nepal is living with some kind of disabilities, whereas the National living standard survey report (NLSS) 2011 has claimed it to be 3.6 per cent. However, both figures are quite low as compared to the 15 per cent disability prevalence rate claimed by WHO and World Bank in the World Report on Disability (2011)[3]. In the school education, only 1.4 percent of the total children enrolled are enrolled with disability, and most of them are the children with physical disability (44%)[4]. The poor families especially dalits facing socio-economic discrimination may not be in a position to manage minimum out-of-pocket expenses

[3] http://atlas-alliansen.no/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/SINTEF-A27656-Nepal-PrintVersion.pdf
[4] https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/TTP/article/view/11553/9339

for their children's education where the amount provided by government in the form of scholarship is very low (around 4 USD per year).

The Government of Nepal in their document on sustainable development goals (2016-2030) for Nepal has included the fourth goal on quality education (UNDP, 2016). Government has also set ambitious targets that related to improving quality of education, particularly for girls: nearly 100 per cent enrolment and completion of primary education, 95 per cent of children transit successfully from grade 1 to grade 8, attendance rate of 90 per cent for all children, and elimination of gender disparity in schools and in tertiary education.

In this wider education context, with support from Girls Education Challenge (GEC) funded by DFID, VSO Nepal is implementing Sisters for Sisters' Education in Nepal II project. The project envisions that the marginalized adolescent girls from four districts in rural Nepal will transition from basic to secondary school education with the power of choice to either find employment or continue their education. The project is planned for four years starting from 1 April 2017 and lasting until 31 March 2021, and will be implemented in four districts from four different provinces: Dhading (Province 3), Lamjung (Province 4), Parsa (Province 2) and Surkhet (Province 6).

The districts cover four out of seven provinces in Nepal, and were selected based on socio-economic and education indicators. For example, the districts host 10 of the 22 ethnic groups identified as extremely marginalized, among which 10 per cent of girls reach grade 6 and less than one per cent reach secondary education.[5] The ground realities and barriers to learning and transition differ among the districts. Chhaupadi practice is widespread in Surkhet, whereby girls are sent to the cowshed during menstruation and withdraw from school. Child marriage and the subsequent leaving of school is particularly common among the Tamang and Gurung communities of Lamjung, Dhading and the Madhesi of Parsa. With its location in the Madeshi Terai region, the OOS rate for children and unemployment rates for youth are generally higher in Parsa than the other project districts and are linked with increased marginalization for girls, greater risk of GBV and sex trafficking[6]. Despite a national ban on dowries, the practice persists in all four districts and most extremely in Parsa, driving poor families to allocate their scarce resources into their daughters' dowry rather than her education. International migration is prevalent among the Gurung and Tamang people of Lamjung, increasing the burden of household duties on girls and women. Girls on the border to the Indian district of Parsa are also highly vulnerable to sex trafficking. The terrain in Dhading and Lamjung is spread out, making it difficult to access secondary education. Children often have to walk for a minimum of 3 to 4

[5] Dept. of Education Nepal, FLASH report 2068 (2011-12), e.g. Dalit's face higher poverty at 46% than Newars at 14%; 83% of Terai Dalit women are illiterate; 80% of Muslim women have no education and 11 year shorter lifespan than Brahmin women.

[6] arsa is one of 9 districts of Nepal with more than 20% of OOS children in the same age groups. (National Population Census 2011, Flash Report 2015, MoE)

hours to reach the school, thus raising safety concerns.

While child marriage is common among the districts, in Parsa, the incidences of forced child marriage is high while the voluntary child marriages are on the rise in other hill districts. The discrimination during menstruation, lack of adequate support from parents to continue their study due to discriminatory gender expectations for girls – expected to raise family an look after the family than build a career and make living, gender based violence on the way and inside school, and many other issues related to social construct make it difficult for girls to meet their learning standards, and attain successful transition. The project assumes to overcome these barriers, and succeed in ensuring that girls meet basic learning outcome related standards, and also progress through successful transition.

1.2 Project's Theory of Change and Assumptions

The SFS's Theory of Change (ToC) has been developed with the hypothesis that the inequity in education and learning achievement gaps for Nepal's most marginalised girls can be addressed by ensuring equitable access to quality learning and skills development across the education continuum. The project envisions that marginalised adolescent girls from the project districts will transition from basic to secondary school education with the power of choice to either find employment or continue their education. They will be equipped with skills, bolstered by strong learning outcomes that improve employability, enhanced confidence and self-esteem to act as leaders, and enable them to influence and control their own sexual and reproductive health rights. To achieve this, the project aims to create secure, conducive learning environments for marginalised adolescent girls and their classmates, with schools, teachers, parents and communities more actively engaged in helping girls to excel and transition through key education milestones and beyond.

The project activities focus on improving attendance, knowledge, skills, develop confidence, and provide economic empowerment to marginalised girls through mentoring, bridge and learning support classes, extracurricular activities, life skills, digital competency and English proficiency classes, and providing micro-grants. The project coordinates and works with the community, school and government to create safe learning environment for girls at school and home as well as influence government to recognize work of schools and community.

Though the project focuses on girls, boys in the target schools will also benefit indirectly from other interventions i. e. improved teacher knowledge and skills, and development of inclusive School Improvement Plans (SIPs) including establishment of child protection and safeguarding mechanisms in school. School events conducted by big sisters will encourage boys' participation. Since the boys are of the same age as the target girls, they will also be undergoing physiological changes as the girls. Sexual reproductive health (SRH) trainings will target both girls and boys as its participants.

Chart 1. Theory of Change

Learning | **Transition** | **Sustainability**

Results

Increased attendance of girls	Increased self-esteem and empowerment of girls	Increased community engagement in girls' education	Improved teaching quality	Gender - responsive school management and governance
Leads to	Leads to	Leads to	Leads to	Leads to	Leads to
Marginalized girls are attending school regularly and benefitting from peer support and mentoring networks	*Marginalised girls in target catchment areas have basic knowledge of appropriate life skills (both in school and OOS)*	*Parents and caregivers are aware of the importance of actively supporting children's learning at home and enable attendance at school*	*Teachers are trained on child centered delivery of subjects and ASRH*	*Schools have protective school policies in place (with description of policies)*	*Marginalised out of school girls access low-interest start-up financing to establish an enterprise*
Leads to	Leads to	Leads to	Leads to	Leads to	Leads to
• *Big Sister Little Sister mentoring - capacity and skills on civic education, and life skills* • *Bridge classes and learning support classes & peer mentoring* • *Girls Education Network*	• *Non-formal girls clubs: EDGE, peer educators (life skills, ASRH, career counselling)*	• *Community awareness activities and campaigns*	• *Build capacity of teachers including training in subject specific areas (English, Math, Nepali and ASRH); to promote inclusive education practices*	• *Capacity building for HT, teachers and SMC to develop and implement inclusive School Improvement Plans* • *Supporting VDCs to strengthen child-friendly local governance practices*	• *Economic empowerment, including business skills and financial literacy training.* • *Girls Transition Fund to enable low interest loans for girls to transition into sustainable livelihoods.*

1.2.1 Specific barriers that the project aims to address

Demand for girls' education in Nepal begins to drop by age 14 as child marriage prospects increase and the perceived benefit of keeping girls in school decrease. Parents are dis-incentivized to support their daughter's advancement if they lack awareness about the value of education or the ability of girls to expand beyond traditional work roles. There are real short-term economic benefits for families when girls leave school to marry, tend to chores, care for siblings, participate in family business or take on menial work. Ensuring girls enter into lower secondary school is the most promising approach for curtailing child marriage through the education cycle[7]. By working with communities and parents to **raise awareness of these issues, challenge gender norms and provide SRH education** for girls, teachers, parents and community, SfS aims to increase community engagement and perception and improve girls' self-esteem so they see they have choices for their mind, body and future.

For older and OOS girls, lack of access to vocational training (i.e. digital literacy, English, leadership, etc.), business/financial literacy, and affordable start-up funding greatly influence the decision to let others determine their future, as does a lack of support to get back into school. Projects in similar contexts in Nepal have found that when this supportive environment is present, girls are more willing to **pursue sustainable livelihoods and make better life choices.** Since the proportion of children out-of-school at primary level is high in Parsa district, the bridge class support will be provided to enable children to prepare themselves to enroll back to school education.

On the supply side, Nepal's public education is characterized by strong policies and weak implementation. Teachers lack competence and skill in specific subjects and often fail to see girls as learners. Poor management and school leadership creates unsafe environments that hinder girls' learning. Leveraging SfS proven approaches and VSO's global systems strengthening expertise, the project engages stakeholders at school, district, and central levels to address these deficiencies. Further, acknowledging that change pathways are not linear, the project plans **multiple feedback and learning assessment loops** to check engagement and make adjustments to interventions in order to deepen impact while generating evidence and education data for reflection, adaptive programming and sharing.

The barriers could be further categorized for learning, transition and sustainability as follows:

[7] Out of wedlock, into school. The office of Gordon and Sarah Brown, 2012

Learning barriers	Transition barriers	Sustainability barriers
Traditional practices regarding menstruation, girls required to help at home, lack of trained female teachers, lack of gender responsive inclusive teaching, poor learning environment, lack of quality ASRH education, lack of WASH facilities, lack of child protection mechanisms in school	Socio-cultural pressures – increasing pressures as girls move into adolescence, early marriage, parents unwilling to send girls to school, parental feeling of protection and shame, cost of schooling, gender based violence, lack of aspiration and feelings of self value in girls, lack of awareness of options and alternative, gender stereotypes and work appropriate to girls, lack of financial and business literacy among out-of-school girls, distance to secondary school, lack of training in life skills and skills for work, and lack of access to low interest start up financing	Lack of equity related policy implementation at the school level, frequent shifts in government, ambiguity in roles, responsibilities and resource distribution due to state restructuring process, deep rooted socio-cultural practices at family and community level

The gender analysis explored and elaborated the gender related barriers that are making it difficult for girls to achieve learning outcomes of certain level, and also to ensure successful transition.

There were two layers of challenges that affect girl's education. First, the girls currently enrolled in school face challenges to give sufficient time for their study due to household workload. Second, the girls find it difficult to stay motivated to continue their school in dearth of the parental support to do so.

Women and girls are excessively involved in household chores keeping them occupied right from early morning to late night. The girls enrolled in school get little time for their studies at home. Girls spent most of their time (4 to 5 hours) in care work at home compared to boys who spent far less time in household work (maximum of an hour). Whether in the school, house or in the community girls experience more violence compared to boys. The perception on their safety had effect on their independence in decision-making, especially about their free mobility.

There was some different in terms of the expected return from education for boys and girls. While community expected boys to make some income out of education, they had other expectations for girls. When girls were asked about their parents' expectations from them, girls noted that parents expected boys to have good education and provide for their families. On the other hand, parents expected girls to have a good husband or be good wives. Very few stated that they were expected to have careers. Although some parents expected the girls to have careers, sons are still given priority when it comes to education since they will take care of the families in the future. The practice that girls need to live with the in-laws after the marriage diminishes the possibilities for girls to continue school. When girls get older, they will be subjected to get married and take care of the house and in-laws while the boys will need to be independent and take care of their families. These norms have perpetuated the dependency of girls/women on boys/men for income and other entitlements. When some parents find it difficult to send their girls to school due to financial reasons, others are enrolling their sons in private schools that require them to pay fees.

Source: Gender Analysis Report, 2017

Table 1: Project design and intervention

Intervention types	What is the intervention?	What Intermediate Outcome will the intervention will contribute to and how?	How will the intervention contribute to achieving the learning, transition and sustainability outcomes?
Marginalized girls are attending school regularly and benefitting from peer support and mentoring networks	Big Sister–Little Sister mentoring scheme; build girls' capacity and skills through training on civic education, and life skills Establish Girls Education Network in all the target schools, train members on	Increased attendance for girls. A combination of peer mentoring at community level, community dialogue with community mobilisers, ASRH education for girls, parents and communities, working with parents to address reasons for absenteeism from school for e.g. specific time of year or times of day and strategies to	The mentoring support mechanism embedded in schools and communities by big sisters and adult champions supports little sisters with their confidence and aspiration. The improved confidence and aspiration is capitalized through the after school learning support classes among the peer groups in which strong students provide academic support to the other

Intervention types	What is the intervention?	What Intermediate Outcome will the intervention will contribute to and how?	How will the intervention contribute to achieving the learning, transition and sustainability outcomes?
	mentoring and develop action plans	address these, together with extra learning support through schools to enable girls to progress.	students which is extended to the higher grades supporting the lower grades. The areas of remedial support identified by the students attending these support sessions are brought back to the regular classes where teacher support is required.
Marginalised girls in target catchment areas have basic knowledge of appropriate life skills (both in school and OOS)	Conduct bridge classes and learning support classes and support girls from bridge classes to enrol in school Establish non-formal girls clubs to include: English and Digital for Girls Education (EDGE) implementation, training of peer educators, incorporation of life skills training, ASRH, career counselling for Grade 10 -12, and visits from female role models Life skill ToT for selected big sister Develop ASRH and MHM package and train Community Mobilisers, Big Sisters Brothers and Adult Champions	Increased self-esteem and empowerment of girls. Big sisters feel empowered through taking on the role of mentors which is successively taken up by little sisters who in turn mentor others. Increased confidence in learning at school leads to increased sense of achievement and self-esteem; parents, teachers, peers and the wider community value girls, and actively demonstrate this through enabling the girls to prioritise their education. ASRH education will also increase self-esteem for girls - they will stop seeing themselves as only wives or mothers, recognise that they have a choice when it comes to deciding when and if to have children. This combined with gender sensitive practices in the classroom and in the school, child protection polies effectively implemented and increased opportunities to acquire new skills and knowledge for work and employment.	The project focus and will continue to support "bridge courses" and learning support classes for girls who have never been to school or dropped out, in addition to mentoring schemes and community/parental engagement to help increase raise awareness and socio-cultural barriers to girls' education. Big sisters will specifically liaise with grooms' families to help married girls return to school and increase SRH education within the community to prevent early pregnancy. These will contribute to increased community engagement in girls' education.
Parents and caregivers are	Develop and broadcast public	Increased community engagement in girls'	A combination of community engagement interventions to

Intervention types	What is the intervention?	What Intermediate Outcome will the intervention will contribute to and how?	How will the intervention contribute to achieving the learning, transition and sustainability outcomes?
aware of the importance of actively supporting children's learning at home and enable attendance at school	service announcement (PSA) & Develop and publish press release, Community dialogues- on different issues ASRH, Child protection, civic education, etc., Street Drama performed by LS, BS, AC, Orientation on Child Friendly Local Governance (CFLG) for teachers, head teachers, SMC & PTA, child club and GEN - 48 Schools , Train VCPC to establish mechanisms for reporting abuse and harassment Interaction meeting of SMC and VDC/VEC on education plans	education .The project addresses community awareness on child protection policy through well-designed community outreach activities that include community dialogues, street dramas, IEC material developed in local language and public service announcements (PSA). Awareness sessions will be held to increase the knowledge of child rights, child protection and life skills to develop girls' (and families') self-esteem and confidence levels to voice any form of abuse or violence they might face. The awareness sessions will be targeted at parents and girls Communities and parents will also witness positive changes in their daughters, as their confidence, skills, self-esteem and ability to support family decision-making at home increase, which will feed back into communities valuing educated girls.	raise awareness and initiate dialogue through village structures VDCs as well as school-community mechanisms such as SMCs, PTAs, monitoring of education policy implementation at school level including child protection policies, and building capacity of Gender Focal points within the DEO. Adult Champions, big sisters and community mobilisers working with parents to support their daughters' learning in and outside school, setting up 'learning corners' at home and liaising with families at times when girls are at risk of dropping out (to get married for example) or non-attendance (during menstruation) to come up with strategies to support girls to remain/return to school.
Teachers are trained on child centred delivery of subjects and ASRH	Train and mentor subject teachers to improve quality of teaching (i.e. Math, Nepali, Science, ASRH) Ongoing Me ntoring and Coaching for teachers by National and Intl volunteers Influence government system to recognize work of schools and	Improved teaching quality. After the training, coaching and capacity building, Teachers will have the skills, attitude and content knowledge to effectively teach Nepali, Maths, and ASRH as well as strategies of assessment for learning and assessment of learning, use gender-responsive teaching methodologies and	Enhancing the capacity of teachers through IVEs train and coach teachers on child-friendly, inclusive and gender sensitive methodologies to improve the participation of girls in learning, combined with direct school support to teacher professional development and subject specific capacity building in literacy and numeracy. Teachers are supported to act as peer mentors and set up

Intervention types	What is the intervention?	What Intermediate Outcome will the intervention will contribute to and how?	How will the intervention contribute to achieving the learning, transition and sustainability outcomes?
	community of project Identify subject specific teachers and take assessment bi-annually on the quality of teaching	have improved perception of girls as learners	communities of practice within their schools.
Schools have protective school policies in place (with description of policies)	Train HT, DEO, SMC, PTA on child protection and safe guarding, implementing mechanism for reporting abuse,	Through building the capacity on-the-job of individual education officials within the DEO including Resource Persons, gender Focal Point and head teachers as well as developing child-friendly inclusive school improvement plans that are responsive of the needs of girls, and include clear mechanisms for child protection issues to be reported and dealt with effectively. Additionally, support to schools and DEOs (including HTs) provide ongoing professional development to teachers and mechanisms for addressing teacher absenteeism and teacher performance issues.	Child protection mechanisms will be established in schools and within the community through the PTA and Village Child Protection Committee. Creation of Children's clubs/Girls' Education Network will provide girls and boys exercise their leadership skills through involvement in developing the SIPs and "mentoring" younger students. The Girls' Education Network will provide a safe space for girls to discuss their issues and identify solutions. It will also develop strategies to create a reading (and learning) culture for other children with the use of materials from the reading corners, Gender-sensitive SIPs will be developed by the SMC and PTA so that girls feel safe in school and confident to participate in activities, Learning support classes will be provided to poor performing girls so that they are able to improve their performance and transition to the next level.
Marginalised out of school girls access low-interest start-up financing to	Accompanied support visit to Surkhet to support initial set up of Girls Transition Fund – including	Gaining skills and means to set up their own business will give girls the option of continuing their own education and/or provide economic support to their	Economic empowerment through financial literacy and business literacy to enable them to be economically independent whether they choose to

Intervention types	What is the intervention?	What Intermediate Outcome will the intervention will contribute to and how?	How will the intervention contribute to achieving the learning, transition and sustainability outcomes?
establish an enterprise	negotiations with SACCOs, Training of trainers in district in financial literacy and business skills-linked to economic empowerment , Conduct economic empowerment training for OOS BS (1 districts),Train SAACO for micro-grant for economic empowerment , Set up GTF - Low-interest Loan	families, giving them increased status and decision making power within the family unit.	continue their education to grade 12 or seek employment

1.2.2 TOC assumptions

There were some key assumptions made with regards to TOC. At the national level, the project anticipated that the federalization process does not affect the project's chances to deliver it outcomes. While the theory of change assumes that the federalization process may not affect project, however, the transfer for roles from the central government to local government, given their existing level of staffing, capacity and availability of local level policies, may affect the project. The theory of change does not provide adequate stress to collaborate with the local government, and does not have any space to work with the provincial government. In the changed context where the roles related to school education are largely devolved to local government, the project should look forward to support local government and work with them closely to improve the school governance and management. The coordination with district authorities may no longer be relevant. The project also assumes that the girls towards end of their school education can have access to sufficient life choices including employment opportunities, life skill training and others. The project is making assumptions that such facilities are available locally for the girls to access and benefit from. For the ground level, the project assumes that the communities and parents will support girls, and there will be substantial improvements in behaviours over the life of the project. The project also anticipated improved performance of teachers in terms of assessment of learning, and utilizing the assessment for tailored inputs to students. In the changed context, the assumption related to sustainability related outcomes that the education officials at the district would be retained in the local area to continue supporting the process appears to be highly optimistic. The government is

currently reshuffling the staff distribution throughout the country, and it might take another 2 years to arrive at more stable distribution.

1.3 Target beneficiary groups and beneficiary number

The primary target group of the project are girls who will directly benefit from the project with boys studying in the project schools anticipated to benefit indirectly from the project. The target groups include: The project aims to reach a total of 16,257 students (8158 girls, 8,099 boys) from 48 schools (i.e. 12 schools per district) over the life cycle of the project. Based on the project document, the breakdown of the target group is anticipated as follows:

- The same cohort of girls from GEC1 composed of 1283 in-school marginalised and extremely marginalised girls with the addition of 320 marginalised girls (Big Sisters) who will be tracked throughout the lifetime of the project.
- In school girls between grades 6 to 10 who are marginalized and extremely marginalized who will transition from basic to secondary education
- In school girls between grades 9 to 10 who are marginalized and extremely marginalized from secondary to upper secondary or other pathways
- 8158 girls who are direct transition beneficiaries throughout the project period.
- 7382 girls to be counted as direct learning beneficiaries who will benefit from the direct intervention of the project.
- 8,099 GEC-1 marginalized boys in the same class as the little sisters who will transition along with the girls in primary school
- 720 marginalised out-of-school (OOS) girls will be enrolled in schools after finishing bridge classes 720 (240/yr X 3 years). Age range is 6 to 9.
- 56 big sisters who are out-of-school, dropped out, or finished grade 12 and are not working to provide them alternative choices through the EDGE intervention, building their entrepreneurial and financial skills for them to move into safe sustainable livelihoods. Age range is 18 to 25.
- GEC-T will work with 64 (48 GEC-1 schools with the addition of 16 new secondary schools)
- 48 schools from four districts (three from hill areas and one from terrain areas) coverages four provinces out of seven provinces
- Grades 6-10
- Out of school girls aged 18 – 25 who are and not employed or earning income (Big Sister) who will receive financial and business literacy training.

The estimated beneficiaries' number in the original project proposal and MEL framework found differences however the above mention target numbers has been amended to align with the logframe initial targets. The distribution of sampled girls varied slightly by the districts. Unlike the anticipation in the MEL framework that all districts will be represented equally at the proportion of 25 per cent, Dhading and Lamjung are under-represented. While the number of girls covered

in Dhading and Lamjung districts were lower in both treatment and control sites, the girls covered was higher in Surkhet and Dhading district. The coverage, however, reflected the target beneficiaries in the districts. In Lamjung and Dhading districts, the number of girl's beneficiaries of grade 6-10 was fewer while it was larger particularly for Parsa followed by Surkhet. In Lamjung and Dhading, baseline ended up covering close to the entire population of the girls available.

Reliability of the target number of beneficiaries

In the observation of the baseline study, the project may need to lower down its target groups for in-school girls. First, the number of schools that are willing to take part of the project, as of baseline study figures, is 47 (unlike the earlier target of 48 schools). Second, the project assumes that all of their GEC-I beneficiaries will transit and remain enrolled in secondary level. The number of girls currently available in school cannot be simply multiplied by the years of project considering that many of them (around 5%) are likely to drop out of school each year. There is a need to recalculate the exact number of beneficiaries based on the updated monitoring data with some anticipated attrition. While the boys are presented as indirect beneficiaries, there are very few activities that target boys, and the project documents does not clearly specify the outcomes applicable for them. The project made estimation in the number of the girls based on their figures on the pervious cohort during GEC-I. Although they have made detailed tabulation of the girls with their names by grades and schools, the head count exercise was not done. The numbers do not entirely match with the number of girls available in school, and thus, VSO needs to head count the beneficiaries and confirm the number. The baseline could not exactly verify that there is exact number of the beneficiaries available in schools.

The target groups for out-of-school girls are divided into two sub-groups. There is a fundamental difference in these two out-of-school girls in terms of their age, and their transition. While the out-of-school girls of age 6-9 years are solely anticipated to enroll to school, the out-of-school girls of age 18-25 are either anticipated to join higher education, enrol in skill training, join employment with gainful income, or start up their own business. It is justifiable to treat them differently for the interventions, and research/evaluation purpose.

- The target related to out-of-school girls of age 6-9 years seems achievable from the observation at the baseline. The baseline study reached the population of more than 240 girls for the survey while there were more than 260 girls enrolled in the bridge class. However, not all girls enrolled in bridge class were of the age group 6-9 years. Since the project covered majority of out-of-school girls during the first year, it could be a challenge to find and enrol same number of girls for the second and third year.
- The target of reaching 86 out-of-school girls (age 18-25 years) may require reconsideration. At the start of the baseline, VSO was able to supplement only the list of 49 out-of-school girls among whom only 25 could be reached for direct or phone interview during the baseline.

In the project document of the VSO, there is a mention that the girls with disability will be covered and will benefit from the project. However, there are no figures provided on how many children or girls with disability will benefit from the project. If we consider the national figure (1.95% of the population is living with disability, and 37 per cent of the children with disability are enrolled in school), only around 65 girls among the target groups may be the children with disability. The baseline study, using Washington group of screening for disability, indicates that the proportion of children with some form of disability is more than 3.3 per cent. Based on this estimate, 300 girls and 267 boys could be the children with disability.

2. Baseline Evaluation Approach and Methodology

2.1 Key evaluation questions & role of the baseline

Evaluation Questions

There are four broader evaluation questions applicable for the program, and sixteen project specific evaluation questions. At the program level, the evaluation seeks to answer the following programme overarching questions: process, impact, and value for money, effectiveness, and sustainability. The evaluation questions at programme level were as follows:

1. Was the GEC successfully designed and implemented? Was the GEC good Value for Money?
2. What impact did the GEC Funding have on the transition of marginalised girls through education stages and their learning?
3. What works to facilitate transition of marginalised girls through education stages and increase their learning?
4. How sustainable were the activities funded by the GEC and was the program successful in leveraging additional interest and investment?

The project level evaluation questions were as follows:

Process

1. Has the project been able to address the community needs in the girl's education sector? How?
2. Is the approach of the project suitable for reaching the extremely marginalized girls where we are operating?
3. Has there been change in gender norms (girls and boys) that the project was able to influence? What influenced the change?
4. What are the factors that helped overcome attitudinal/ institutional barriers?

Impact

5. What was the size of the impact observed in learning, retention and attendance of marginalized girls across the interventions of the project?

6. What was the size of impact observed in the transition of marginalized girls across the interventions of the project?

Value for money

7. Whether the investment is enough to attain the project objectives?
8. Do the benefits of the project outweigh the costs of intervention?
9. Which components of the project are most effective in terms of value for money and what are the factors that help realize good value for money?
10. Whether the Big Sisters approach represented good value for money, compared to other interventions in the project?

Effectiveness

11. Which aspects of the Big Sisters approach were effective in delivering the final outcomes? How were they effective?
12. Which aspects of the other components of the project were effective in delivering the final outcomes? How were they effective?

Sustainability

13. Whether the community is willing to own the project and continue it after the project fund ends?
14. Whether three years are enough to ensure sustainability of the project and how?
15. Whether the provision of the micro-grant ensures sustainability?
16. Whether the project will ensure additional external funding during its project implementation period?

Feedback on the project level evaluation questions

Based on the observations and experiences during the baseline study, most of project level evaluation questions are relevant and answerable, and enable evaluation of the effectiveness of the interventions or the change in status of impact indicators. The questions also provide space to inquire about which factors and/or project's strategies were contributing to improvements in all or some of the impact and outcome indicators. However, some of the questions need to be more clear and specific in terms of what they are looking to explore:

1. The first question on the process sets to assess whether project was able to meet community needs for girl's education. Since the project focuses largely on overcoming the parental level barriers for girl's education rather than addressing community needs, the question could be revised to assess about to what extent project was able to tackle the parental and community level barriers for girl's education.
2. The questions related to sustainability might be difficult to measure along the line in other evaluation points considering that the country is going through structural transition, and there is uncertainty about the relationship between local government and school

management committee, and roles of different layers of governments in school education. The education financing mechanisms are also under considerations.

Role of the baseline study

The role of the baseline study will be to estimate the baseline value especially to enable assessment of the impact related indicators, set up base to answer the evaluation questions related to value for money, effectiveness, and sustainability, and infer reflections and revisions in the processes. Most of the evaluation questions will depend on the baseline status while measuring the change, and attributing the changes to certain variables.

2.2 Outcomes and Intermediate Outcomes

The project has three long-term outcomes and five short-term outcomes. The outcomes are briefly described as follows:

The long-term outcomes are:

(1) Learning: The number of marginalised girls supported by GEC with improved learning outcomes measured as percentage-point increases in scores for literacy and numeracy vis-à-vis the baseline sample.

(2) Transition: The number of marginalised girls who have transitioned through key stages of education, training, or employment, measured as the percentage-point increase in the proportion of girls who transition successfully vis-à-vis the benchmark sample established at the baseline.

(3) Sustainability: The changes brought about through the project which increase learning and transition through education cycles are sustainable at the community, school, and system levels, primarily measured qualitatively through levels of CEC support given to schools and communities, as well as the level of support that CECs have from communities.

The intermediate outcomes are:

Intermediate outcome 1

Increased attendance for girls: measured as a percentage increase in average attendance rate from multiple data sources: spot checks conducted in school on a particular day, review of school's attendance record, and caregiver's reporting. The project anticipates to achieve it through big sister – little sister mentoring support, orientation to parents, menstrual hygiene management, and establishing protective mechanisms in schools.

Intermediate outcome 2

Increased self esteem and empowerment of girls: measured in terms of increase in number and percentage of girls reporting (a) self-confidence, b) being listened to, and c) influencing decision-making in a) the home, b) school, c) the wider community. The project aims to achieve it through girls education network, child club and non-formal girls club, life skill TOT, and English and Digital Literacy Education (EDGE).

Intermediate outcome 3
Increased parental engagement in girl's education: measured in terms of increase in number and percentage of parents who volunteer their services to the school or join the SMC or PTA and/or provide emotional support to girls due to increased awareness on girls education, and % of girls who report that their parents actively support them to complete secondary school. It will be achieved through public service announcements, awareness sessions and awareness events, and production and dissemination of Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials.

Intermediate outcome 4
Improved quality of teaching: measured in terms of increase in number of trained teachers displaying learner centred classroom practices, achieved through training, coaching and mentoring of teachers by VSO volunteers.

Intermediate outcome 5
Improved school management and governance measured in terms of number of schools with SMC and PTA members who are aware of their roles and responsibilities are able to develop inclusive SIPs and setup Complaint Response Mechanism in school, and # and % of staff who can identify the correct way to recognise and respond to cases of child abuse. It will be achieved through training of SMC, PTA, Head Teacher and teachers on school improvement plan, social audit, and setting up mechanism for child protection and safeguarding.

A table below lists the outcomes, and describes the details about measurement of outcomes:

Table 2: Outcomes for measurement

Outcome	Level at which measurement will take place,	Tool and mode of data collection	Rationale	Frequency of data collection
Literacy	School study groups/ clubs	Quantitative: SeGRA test Qualitative: Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with girls and parents, Key Informant Interviews (KII) with teachers, head teachers, SMC/PTA	Quantitative: EGRA and SeGRA test Qualitative: FGDs with parents and KIIs with teachers and head teachers to identify which interventions best helped in improving learning outcomes	Per evaluation point
Numeracy	School study groups/ clubs	Quantitative: SeGMA test;	Quantitative: SeGMA test	Per evaluation point

Outcome	Level at which measurement will take place,	Tool and mode of data collection	Rationale	Frequency of data collection
		Qualitative: Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with girls and parents, Key Informant Interviews (KII) with teachers, head teachers, SMC/PTA	Qualitative: FGDs with parents and KIIs with teachers and head teachers to identify which interventions best helped in improving learning outcomes	
Transition	Household	Quantitative: Caregivers survey, School survival Rate of boys and girls collected from school Qualitative: FGDs with girls FGDs with parents Key informant interviews (KII) with teachers, head teachers	Quantitative: Caregivers survey School survival rate obtained from school records Qualitative: FGDs with girls and their peers to identify what activities affect the girls' abilities to stay on an educational pathway or transition to employment, reasons for inability to make informed decision about their life choices and to what extent it affects girls to have healthy transition. FGDs with parents to identify how supportive/permissive they are to children	Per evaluation point
Intermediate outcome 1: Increased attendance for girls	School	Quantitative: Registration data, teachers attendance data, Spot check data gathered at least 3 times per school year, Attendance audit data; Qualitative: FGDs girls and parents, KIIs with teachers, head teachers, and SMC/PTA	Quantitative: Registration data, teachers attendance data, Spot check data gathered at least 3 times per school year, Attendance audit data; Qualitative: FGDs and KIIs with parents, teachers, head teachers, facilitators using ranking method will be conducted to find out the strong barriers on regular attendance of	Start of every SY Per evaluation point 2 times per SY

Outcome	Level at which measurement will take place,	Tool and mode of data collection	Rationale	Frequency of data collection
			girls in school; calendars (with girls) to determine activities of students that affect attendance	
Intermediate outcome 2: Increased self-esteem and empowerment of girls	School	Quantitative: Girl's survey and caregiver's survey Qualitative: FGDs with girls and parents, Interview with teachers and head teachers Observation of girls in classrooms and activities	Quantitative: Girls survey were conducted to test the self-esteem and empowerment of girls according to the criteria and areas mentioned in intermediate outcome indicator Qualitative: FGDs and KIIs with girls, parents, teachers, head teachers, SMC/PTA members, and local government officials to explore the level of participation and confidence of girls including knowledge and ability to make decisions Observation of girls in classrooms and activities	Per evaluation point
Intermediate outcome 3: Increased parent engagement in girls' education	Household & Community	Quantitative: Caregiver survey and girls survey Qualitative: FGDs with girls; FGDs with parents KII with HTs and teachers	Quantitative: Caregiver survey to explore the practical actions taken to support girls' education with caregivers and girls. Qualitative: FGDs with girls on experiences and support received from parents including decisions relating to permissiveness in going to school during menstruation and discussions on reproductive health. FGDs with parents to identify their	Per evaluation point

Outcome	Level at which measurement will take place,	Tool and mode of data collection	Rationale	Frequency of data collection
			involvement in education activities; with teachers to explore the engagement of parents to support girls' education; KII with HTs on school activities that encourages parents' participation/ involvement in their children's education.	
Intermediate outcome 4: Improved teaching quality	School	Quantitative: Barefoot Assessment Caregiver's Survey Girls survey Qualitative: Classroom observation. FGDs and KIIs with girls, parents, teachers, HT, and SMC/PTA members	Quantitative: Barefoot Assessment used to measure improvement of skills (7 point scale); HHs Survey triangulates data of Barefoot assessment Qualitative: Classroom observation. FGDs with students and interview with head teacher and teachers to identify factors that facilitate or hinder learning based on their teachers' teaching skills.	Every 6 months Per evaluation point
Intermediate outcome 5: Improved school management and governance	School	Quantitative: Caregiver's survey School information form Qualitative: FGDs and KIIs with girls, parents, HT, teachers and SMC/PTA	Quantitative: HHs, pre/post test of SMC/PTA member's awareness on their role and responsibilities Qualitative: FGDs and KIIs with girls, parents, teachers, HT and SMC/PTA about SMC and PTA involvement in school activities and management. FGDs with parents to determine if they know about the role of SMC and PTA and their activities	Per evaluation point

Measuring sustainability

A Sustainability Scorecard[8] was used to measure progress of sustainability mechanisms at three levels – school, community, and system. The same score card was used to assess the existing level of sustainability during the baseline. The ratings were provided in the scorecard based on qualitative data obtained through various project sources. The sustainability scorecard is anticipated to help measure changes in behaviour, capacity and delivery of services, and adoption of a measure or approach that would need sustaining.

Intermediate outcomes are linked with sustainability and may contribute at different levels, whether at community, school or system level, within the overall theory of change. However, intermediate outcomes may not be able to capture the degree to which change has happened. More precise sustainability indicators for each level (community, school, and system), which build on the intermediate outcomes, was used to assess progress against the sustainability scorecard.

The sustainability indicators take into consideration:

- **At school and community level**, a measure capturing the achievement of a critical mass of behaviour change (i.e. among parents, both male and female, siblings, teachers, community members and/or leaders and others who see the benefits of change). For progress against the scorecard, it is expected that the process of achieving a critical mass of behaviour change will take place in a significant majority of project communities and schools.

- If a **new practice or delivery model** (e.g. clubs, classes, technology) is key to change, then sustainability was and will be determined by evidence of locally led or owned systems to incorporate this (e.g. in to school operations, community action) and provide local resources (including funds, staff or volunteer time). Evidence of action independent of project support were documented, particularly from school and community leaders.

- At **system level**, the project did and will identify which specific authorities and actors, including gender and women's' issues authorities are expected to adopt a measure or approach and what they would need to do this (e.g. capacity, staff resources/time, funding, specific regulation, etc.). For other points of evaluation, the project will endeavour to capture credible evidence of how the commitment is being or will be put into practice.

Each sustainability indicator draws on the mixed method approach used for the evaluation. Qualitative research will be undertaken by the external evaluator to understanding sustainability better, while indicators in the log frame provide proxy quantitative measures of change.

8 developed by the Fund Manager

Table 3: Sustainability outcome for measurement

Sustainability Level	Where will measurement take place?	What source of measurement/ verification will you use?	Rationale – clarify how you will use your qualitative analysis to support your chosen indicators.	Frequency of data collection
School	School	CPCS policy and Code of Conduct (local policies and plans including budget allocation and staffing); Local development office plans identifying development priorities; Inclusive SIPs;	FGD of parents on the type of support and involvement in school / community in support of girls' education; document review (local policies and plans including budget allocation); KII with local authorities on development priorities; FGDs with Complaint Response; Committee to identify challenges in implementing CPCS;	Per evaluation point
Community	Community	Document review (local policies and plans including budget allocation on child protection and safeguarding); survey of parents on the type of support and involvement in school / community in support of girls' education; community know the role of SMC and PTA	Document review of local policies and plans including budget allocation on child protection and safeguarding; KII with local authorities on development priorities; FGD with parents on support provided to children and involvement in education activities; FGD with parents on involvement of SMC and PTA in children's education	Per evaluation point
System	Institution	Document review of Municipal plan priorities and budget allocation; school completion rates; local education plans including budget allocation and staffing; events/forum/ workshop reports; project reports	FGDs and KIIs with staff of the education system at municipal and national levels, ranging from policy to delivery and key priorities Document review - local education plans including budget allocation and staffing; KII with local authorities on development priorities; KII with ministry on impact of VSO programmes to education sector	Per evaluation point

2.3 Evaluation methodology

2.3.1 Overall evaluation design

The baseline study used quasi-experimental design combined with cohort tracking for the estimation of counterfactuals for monitoring and evaluation purpose. In quasi-experimental design, there are two different comparison groups:

- **Intervention group,** popularly known as 'treatment group', refers to an area or population who will be directly intervened by a project. The sample size of intervention as well as control groups should be identified using power calculations -differ slightly with the sample size calculation for simple random sampling.

- **Control group,** popularly known as 'comparison group', refers to an area or population who will not receive direct as well as indirect benefit from the project intervention. Such groups were selected only for comparison and assessment purpose. **For this study, schools were considered zone of influence.**

The **cohort tracking** aims at understanding the changes and its contributors in detail over a long period of time. The baseline design created a cohort of girls (and their parents) to evaluations at different points.

2.3.2 Target groups

Definition of Marginalised and Extremely Marginalised

All girls attending the target underperforming schools in the socio-economically disadvantaged catchment areas are considered marginalised. In particular, the project will target **marginalised** girls between 6 – 25 years old at project start, and:

- is enrolled in any of the 47 schools; or
- has never been to school or has dropped out of school; and
- is an ethnic minority.

"**Extremely marginalised**" refers to girls facing the greatest vulnerability to factors putting them at risk of dropping out or not attending school, and who will be the project's Little Sisters or the Bridge Class Students (specifically those who never enrolled or who dropped out between Grade 1 to 3). More specifically for purposes of the project, an extremely marginalised girl is one who is either in-school or out-of-school and falls under any of the following priority:

In-school: is a girl who is between grades 6 to 10 (enrolled in one of the 47 schools) at project start.

Out-of-school (6-9 _: is a girl between 6-9 years old at project start, who has never been to school or dropped out of school at project start

Out of school (18-25): is a girl between the age of 18-25 years old at the project start who have dropped out or never been to school but are supported to enrol back to school, attend skill training, join gainful employment or start up business

Priority:

1st priority : has a disability.
2nd priority : A Dalit girl whose mother tongue is not Nepali, and whose family income is able to feed the family for less than 6 months
: A Dalit girl whose mother tongue is Nepali, and whose family income is able to feed the family for less than 6 months
: A Janjati girl whose mother tongue is not Nepali, and whose family income is able to feed the family for less than 6 months
: A Janjati girl whose mother tongue is Nepali, and whose family income is able to feed the family for less than 6 months

The target groups for learning are:

Target 1: In school girls between grades 6 to 10 who are marginalised and extremely marginalised receiving all interventions (i.e. Big Sister mentoring, teacher training, peer mentoring, learning support classes, SIP improvement, EDGE classes)

The target groups for transition will be:

Target 1: Girls aged 6 to 9 who have never been to school or has dropped out of school (receiving Bridge Classes) who will be enrolled in regular school
Target 2: In-school girls between grades 6 to 8 who are marginalized and extremely marginalized who will transition from basic to secondary education
Target 3: In school girls between grades 9 to 10 who are marginalized and extremely marginalized from secondary to upper secondary or other pathways
Target 4: out of school girls aged 18 – 25 who are and not employed or earning income (Big Sister) who will receive financial and business literacy training

The applicability of various project outcomes for various direct and indirect beneficiaries from the project are illustrated in the table below:

Table B: Outcomes and direct/indirect beneficiaries

Outcomes	Direct beneficiaries			Indirect beneficiaries				
	In-school girls (6-10 grade)	OSG (6-9 years)	OSG (18-25)	In-school boys	HT/Teachers	Parents	SMC/PTA	Local government
Learning	✔			✔	✔	✔		

Outcomes	Direct beneficiaries			Indirect beneficiaries				
	In-school girls (6-10 grade)	OSG (6-9 years)	OSG (18-25)	In-school boys	HT/Teachers	Parents	SMC/PTA	Local government
Transition	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔		
Sustainability	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	
IO 1: Attendance					✔	✔		
IO 2: Self-esteem and empowerment	✔	✔	✔					
IO3: Parental engagement	✔	✔	✔			✔		
IO4: Quality of teaching	✔				✔	✔	✔	✔
IO5: School management and governance	✔				✔	✔	✔	✔

In terms of information sources for various outcomes, some of the outcomes such as quality of teaching had multiple sources to triangulate the data and was not based entirely on self-reporting of teachers, the questions on parental engagement were largely based on caregiver's survey with limited triangulation with girls. The attendance was also either based on reporting by parents or based on school records but was not directly collected for individual girls included in the cohort. Similarly, the data on self-esteem was self reported by girls without triangulation from parents or other sources.

The data collection took place in all 4 districts (Dhading, Lamjung, Parsa and Surkhet) and 56 schools. Target schools have been mapped out using Google Maps[9]. While in-school girls were spread across all four districts, the out-of-school girls of age 6-9 years were only available in Parsa, and the out-of-school girls of age 18-25 years were present in Dhading, Lamjung, and Surkeht districts.

[9] ***Dhading***:
https://www.google.com.np/maps/place/Dhading/@27.983309,84.6287554,89271m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x3994d470a35a9651:0xb38623837cba0242!8m2!3d27.9711357!4d84.8984775?hl=en

Lamjung:
https://www.google.com.np/maps/place/Lamjung/@28.2735844,84.1116685,89029m/data=!3m2!1e3!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x3995a6aeaed110df:0xee0fb6ab24592a26!8m2!3d28.2765491!4d84.3542049?hl=en

Parsa:
https://www.google.com.np/maps/place/Parsa/@27.2086206,84.4665352,89904m/data=!3m2!1e3!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x3994a5a47254b8c3:0xe80739cdf608c9a4!8m2!3d27.173588!4d84.8567932?hl=en

Surkhet:
https://www.google.com.np/maps/place/Surkhet/@28.6522516,81.2242814,88711m/data=!3m2!1e3!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x399877deb6525269:0x8b2be37f3048da53!8m2!3d28.517456!4d81.7787021?hl=en

Selection Criteria for target and comparison schools

The project anticipated working with 48 target schools within the identified school catchment areas during GEC1. A school catchment area is defined as the geographical area (defined by the School Management Committee) where children living within are ranked as priority to attend that school. By identifying the school, the catchment area surrounding it becomes the community where the target beneficiaries will come from.

To identify the school catchment area, all schools within the district were mapped out. From the list of schools, poorly performing schools in each of the 4 districts were identified using the following criteria:

- Minimum of 300 students with at least 150 girls; and
- School average learning performance is less than (≤40%); and
- Enrollment, drop out, and retention rate (if data is available); and
- With at least 1 female teacher in school; and
- School does not receive support; and
- With large groups of Dalits, Janajatis [10]and ethnic minorities living in the catchment area; and
- At least 2-3 kilo metres geographical apart from other schools

From a list of poorly performing schools, 48 schools (12 schools for each of the four (4) districts) were identified as target schools.

For the GEC Phase II, new comparison schools were identified using the same process and criteria stated above. From the list that will fit the criteria, target schools and comparison schools in GEC 1 were eliminated. To identify the comparison catchment area, the list of potential comparison schools were matched to target schools based on:

- **Performance of school.** The comparison schools should be comparable to the target school in terms of learning performance.
- **Profile** (e.g. agri-social characteristics and context of marginalisation.) For each comparison school catchment area, a description was prepared that compares the area's profile with the typical profile of the treatment schools. This was also used to match comparison schools.

The sample girls for both target and comparison schools were selected using **stratified random sampling** method. With consent of the parents and following our child protection policy, the girls were randomly selected by choosing every n^{th} girl on the list until the total number of comparison girls is satisfied.

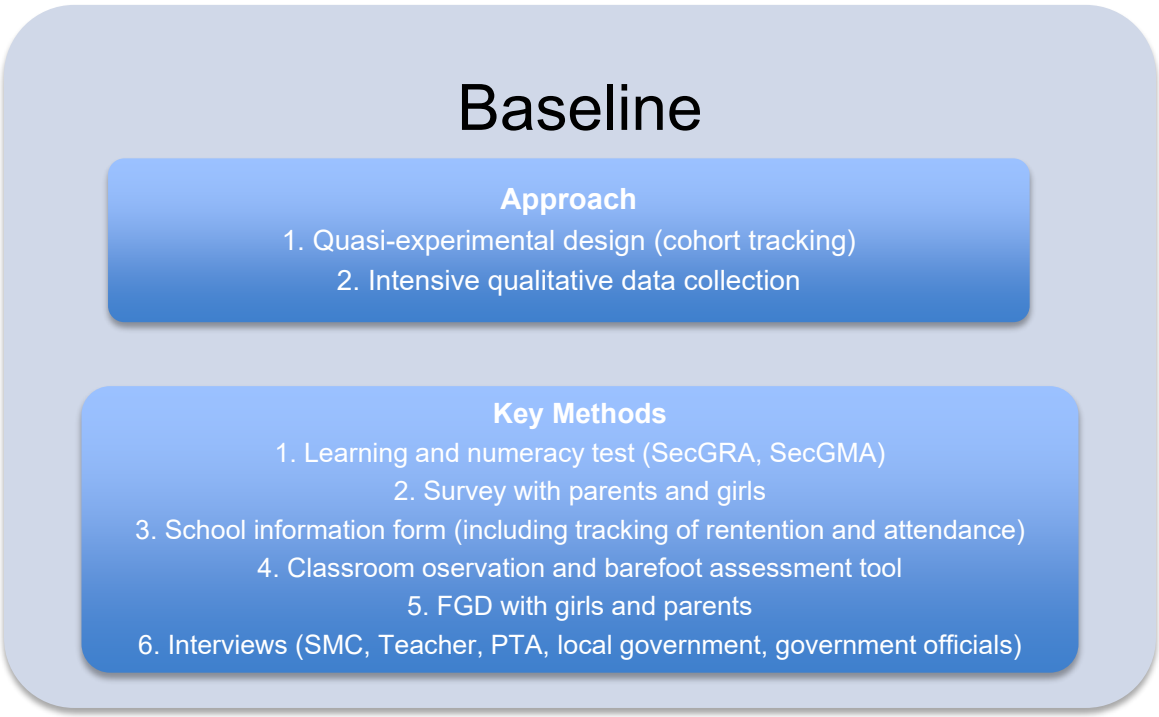
[10] The daits are caste based minority groups who face caste-based discrimination including un-touchability. The janajatis are ethnic groups who are considered indigenous to the country.

2.3.3 Evaluation of cohort girls and representativeness of the sample

A same cohort of girl has been identified during baseline, and will be tracked for learning and transition outcomes along with their caregivers. The direct target beneficiaries were substantially represented in the baseline study though quantitative surveys and other forms of data collection while the indirect beneficiaries, except boys, were covered through qualitative form of data collection. For in-school girls, a representative sample was drawn following standard power calculations for quasi-experimental design. For out-of-school girls of age 6-9 years and 18-25 years, the entire population that could be reached during the study was covered.

2.3.4 Integration of quantitative and qualitative data

The baseline study collected quantitative and qualitative data for all long-term and intermediate outcomes. The quantitative data were extensively collected for learning and transition related outcomes while qualitative data formed basis for status of sustainability related indicators. The quantitative data were collected to measure magnitude while the qualitative data were collected to back up and explain the figures. The key sources for quantitative data were: SEGRA and SEGMA test, survey with girls, caregiver's survey, and school information form. The key sources for qualitative data were: focus group discussions with girls and parents, interviews with teachers, SMC/PTA, and local government, and classroom observation.



2.3.5 Assumptions concerning relationship between intermediate and long-term outcomes

The project assumes that the improvements in student attendance and teaching quality together with improved school management and governance could improve the learning outcomes for beneficiary girls. Similarly, the improved self-esteem and self-confidence together with improved parental support is expected to contribute to successful transition while partially contributing the learning outcomes. The improvement in school management and governance together with improved teaching skills and abilities of teachers, and improved parental attitude and behaviours is anticipated to contribute to the sustainability of the outcomes at the school and community level. From the baseline study, the assumptions related to parental support and school attendance leading contributing to long term outcomes could be verified since the better transition and higher learning outcomes associated with higher school attendance and better parental support. Although substantial bases are not present, the qualitative discussions indicate that the improvement in teaching quality and improved school management and governance will also lead to improved learning, and the self-esteem for girls together with the life skills can contribute to successful transition, especially after they graduate from school.

2.3.6 GESI minimum standards

The baseline study adopted minimum standards for GESI. All data especially school information form, ad wherever possible, were disaggregated for sex. In addition, the social inclusion consideration was ensured by disaggregating the data by caste/ethnicity, with especial focus on comparison between dalits (most marginalized community) and other communities. Since the main direct beneficiaries of the project were girls, the baseline report presented the findings entirely for the girls, and did not have flexibility to report comparison based on gender dimension. However, in terms of data collection instruments, GESI was given specific attention. There were multiple questions included in the caregiver's survey, girl's survey, and the qualitative discussion checklists with girls and parents that explored about the gender differences and differences based on social status and caste/ethnicity. The baseline study also ensured that the discussions are adequately GESI sensitive. For example, the qualitative discussions explored in details about the differences between girls and boys through some participatory tool such as mobility map, and stories and picture-based checklists were utilized to explore about the differences based on social status and gender dimensions.

Since some of the project areas had local inhabitants including girls who were anticipated to not speak the main language of the country but use their own local language, the external evaluator team recruited the local researchers from the district who could speak the local language and dialects. They were asked to translate and back translate the tools in a way that it is asking the same question in the same way. For all other tools, the tools were first prepared in Nepali and then translated back to English to share for the approval of Fund Manager, and the edits were then translated back in the Nepali version. Since the enumerators could fluently speak local language and many parents and girls enrolled in school could speak Nepali language fluently, there was no issue in administering the tools properly, and there was also no issues observed

with Washington group screening questions. Before beginning the interviews in Parsa, the team leaders verified and ensured that the enumerators are using proper translations.

In addition, VSO Nepal also conducted the gender analysis in the four districts of the project explore about the gender linked barriers and enablers for girls to continue their education. The gender analysis findings were utilized to revise and refine the qualitative checklists (key findings from gender analysis is presented in section 1.2).

2.3.7 Benchmarking

In addition to data collection to determine outcomes for intervention and control groups, some data were also collected for benchmarking purpose for learning outcomes and transitions. For learning outcomes, 149 girls (75 in grade 11, and 74 in grade 12) were tested using the SEGRA and SEGMA tools. For transition benchmarking, 180 households were interviewed to collect data about existing transition of 235 girls. The benchmarking data for learning outcomes were collected from the intervention as well as control schools while for benchmarking for transition, a separate village or municipality was taken, and household were sampled randomly.

Box 1. Benchmarking for learning and transition

Learning outcomes

Baseline	Midline (1year later)	Endline (3 years later)
Project grades		
Grade 6	**Grade 8**	**Grade 9**
Grade 7	**Grade 9**	**Grade10**
Grade 8	**Grade10**	
Grade 9		
Grade 10		
Benchmark grades		
Grade 11	n/a	n/a
Grade 12	n/a	n/a

Transition

Benchmarking for transition was carried out with 235 girls of four different age groups. It was planned to conduct with at least 40 girls of each age group. The groups consisted of 10 – 12 years, 13 – 14 years, 15 – 16 years and 17 – 20 years. The distribution of the coverage is as follows:

Age group	10-12 years	13-14 years	15-16 years	17-20 years
Sample	**79**	**52**	**51**	**49**

2.4 Baseline data collection process

The baseline study activities formally started with the signing of the contract.

2.4.1 Pre data collection

The beginning of the pre-data collection process involved inception meeting between external evaluator and VSO Nepal. Followed by the meeting, the external evaluation team also reviewed all available project documents including the project proposal, M&E framework, and theory of change. The review also included some GEC specific guidelines and instructions. The team also obtained draft or model tools from the GEC. The external evaluation team developed inception report based on the MEL framework with finalized sample size based on the sampling framework made available by VSO Nepal. A detailed list of girls enrolled in grade 6-10 from intervention as well as control schools were compiled together to draw a sampling framework. Following the MEL framework and further discussions between VSO and external evaluator, the following sample sizes and sampling procedures were agreed.

Table C: Anticipated sample size, sampling techniques, and actual sample size

Tool	Beneficiary group	Anticipated sample size	Actual sample size	Sampling techniques	Remarks
Secondary Grade Reading Assessment (SEGRA)	In-school girls	Total: 1736 Treatment: 1105 Control: 631	Total: 1578 Treatment: 1009 Control: 569	Girls were selected randomly from 48 schools from four districts (12 schools in each district) to match the proportion of girls required for particular grade in intervention or control schools. The girls were selected using simple random sampling from the list of girls available for each school in the sampling framework. The data obtained from school registers with list of enrolled students were considered basis for sample frame. The list of sample girls to be included in the study was drawn up before the commencement of fieldwork.	While the total anticipated sample size was met for transition cohort, some of the girls were not present during the examination day or did not give consent to sit in examination. Few of them also left examination in middle.
Secondary Grade Mathematical Assessment (SEGMA)		Total: 1736 Treatment: 1105 Control: 631	Total: 1574 Treatment: 1008 Control: 566		
Survey with girls	In-school	Total sample size: 1718 Treatment: 1145 Control: 573	Total: 1736 Treatment: 1105 Control: 631 Including 40 little sisters	The girls included in the learning tests were interviewed.	While the total anticipated sample size was met, the number of girls anticipated to be covered in treatment was 40 less than anticipated.
	Out-of-school girls, 6-9 years	160	242	All girls enrolled in the bridge class, and present on the day for the visit by the team of enumerators were interviewed.	The population of girls available for interview was larger than the anticipated sample size.

Tool	Beneficiary group	Anticipated sample size	Actual sample size	Sampling techniques	Remarks
	Out-of-school girls, 18-25 years	49	25	All girls those could be contacted through phone or met during the fieldwork were included in the baseline survey.	The sample size requirement was not met due to inability to reach girls during the survey.
Survey with caregivers	In-school	Total sample size: 1718 Treatment: 1145 Control: 573	Total: 1736 Treatment: 1105 Control: 631	In addition, the caregivers of the girls sampled for learning outcomes were included in the caregiver's survey.	
	Out-of-school girls, 6-9 years	160	175	All available caregivers whose daughters were interviewed were included in the survey depending on their availability on the day of the survey.	Although the caregivers of all girls interviewed could not be reached, the study could reach to the number above the anticipated size.
	Out-of-school girls, 18-25 years	49	10	All available caregivers whose daughters were interviewed were included in the survey depending on their availability on the day of the survey.	The sample size covered was far less than anticipated, and thus, it was not possible to do detailed analysis of data.
School information form	School	All schools covered by quasi-experimental design (48+17 = 65)	62 schools (45 treatment and 17 control schools)	All available schools were to be reached to fill up the school information form.	There were only 47 intervention and 17 control schools available for the study unlike earlier anticipation. Two schools could not provide school data.

Tool	Beneficiary group	Anticipated sample size	Actual sample size	Sampling techniques	Remarks
Classroom observation	Teachers	2 classrooms per school (72 schools, 144 classrooms)	124 classrooms from 62 schools reached	The classrooms to be included for the classroom observation will be selected randomly from among the classes in operation for grades 6-10	The mismatch with anticipated sample corroborates with the number of school covered.
Focus Group Discussions parents and participatory tool with girls	Parents, Girls	24 group discussions involving around 240 individuals (12 with girls and 12 with parents, with each discussion participated by 8-10 participants)	24	In selected 12 schools from 4 districts, the discussions were to be conducted with the groups of individuals purposively selected at site. The individuals to be included in the discussions were recruited to ensure that all groups and diversity are represented.	The numbers were met as anticipated.
Key informant interviews at the school level	Teacher, Head Teacher, SMC, PTA	24	24	Same sites for focus group discussions, at least 2 interviews per school including teachers and	The numbers were met as anticipated.
Key informant interviews at the local level	Local government, community leaders	12	12	Interviews will be conducted with local government authorities, and local education officials purposively identified at the local level	The numbers were met as anticipated.

Although the baseline study was able to meet the sampling requirements for almost all tools except the survey with parents and girls of out of school girls (age 18-25 years), there was a limitation of not covering boys, and also not conducting any qualitative discussions with out of school girls and boys. For the next round of evaluations, it is recommended to cover these groups adequately in qualitative data collection process.

Research instruments

The research instruments were developed based on the MEL framework and inception report ensuring that the research instruments include checklists and questions to estimate the figures and explore further about the long-term and intermediate outcomes. The guidelines and model set of questions provided by GEC were taken as reference while developing the checklists. The instruments for SEGRA and SEGMA tests were developed by Education Review Office (ERO), a specialized agency within Ministry of Education, Government of Nepal to develop learning assessment tools and guidelines. All tools were developed first in Nepali, and then translated to English to submit to Fund Managers. All tools were submitted to Fund Manager for feedback and approval. The revisions suggested were then integrated in the Nepali version through back translation.

Piloting

The external evaluator piloted research instruments, other than the learning tests, in a school and its catchments in Kavre district. The piloting was done for both quantitative and qualitative tools, and involved surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions with more than 70 individuals. Some revisions, especially related to the language and possible options, were made in the tools immediately after the piloting. The learning tests were piloted by ERO, and the learning scores were calibrated to ensure that the test does not result to any ceiling or floor effect. The external evaluator then conducted thorough review of the quantitative and qualitative tools and checklists and revised in line with the project outcomes and objectives. Revised tools were shared with PWC for their approval and finalized upon receiving feedback.

Enumerator recruitment, training and field exercise

The external evaluator mobilized its in-house research team with minimum qualification of bachelor's degree, and some level of experience conducting researches with children and schools. In total, there were 28 enumerators supervised by four team leaders. The team included 10 female and 18 male enumerators. Among the enumerators and team leaders, 9 had previous experience of collecting data for GEC funded projects. The team leaders and 8 researchers among the total pool of enumerators were identified to conduct the qualitative studies. The eight included four female and four male researchers fully trained on qualitative research and with previous experience of work especially with children in conducting qualitative research with NEAT. A training targeted for enumerators to orient them on the data collection process and use of tools was

organized during November 26 – 29, 2018. The external evaluator and VSO Nepal team jointly facilitated the training. The training involved theoretical deliberations, and plenty of mock up exercises to familiarize the enumerators with the tools and also with the electronic data collection mechanism. As part of the training, a field exercise was conducted on November 29, 2018 to allow the enumerators to test their skills with girls, parents, and schools. The review of field exercise was done on November 30, 2017 to discuss on the issues and challenges faced and further clarify the confusions on tool use. Besides, training on EDGE component containing of the digital and speaking tests were conducted separately by British Council and Course/NEAT team on 1st and 4th of December 2017. Since the field could not be started due to the time taken for finalizing the learning test tools a re-orientation workshop was organized on January 1, 2018. The workshop intended to refresh the enumerators on various data collection tools involved mock up exercises, discussions, and field data collection plan.

2.4.2 During data collection

Field data collection

The data collection was done in two rounds. The first round of data collection started from January 2, 2018. During the first round, three different teams were mobilized to three districts: Parsa, Dhading and Surkhet. The first round data collection concluded during the first week of February, 2018.The data collection in Lamjung district was done in second round during February 10 – March 5, 2018 after completing the three districts. The qualitative discussions were conducted in two rounds. Field Team Leaders led the data collection in the field. The team leaders were specialized to conduct and supervise field level data collection both quantitative and qualitative, and had experience of more than 5 years doing so in researches related to education and other development sectors. The qualitative discussions were followed after completion of the quantitative data collection. In Parsa and Surkhet, the qualitative data collection was conducted during the first round after completion of qualitative data collection. For Dhading and Lamjung, the qualitative data collection was done during the second round. All data collection activities were completed by first week of March, 2018.

All quantitative data were collected utilizing the kobo forms using tablets. The data were uploaded every week for the central team to verify and suggest, if any. The interview with girls was of around 30 minutes while that with parents was of around 45 minutes. At the field level, the team leaders led daily review of the field activities including the questioning techniques, and quality of data. The qualitative data collection took place towards end of the data collection process. Each qualitative interview or discussion was facilitated by two researchers (1 facilitator, 1 note taker), and in most of the cases, the facilitator was of the same sex that of the respondent. All interviews and discussions were recorded for transcription purpose while the note takers made instant notes of the

key points that were discussed. The focus group discussions involved 8-10 respondents and took around an hour while the interviews were one to one for around 30-45 minutes. At the end of each qualitative discussion, the facilitators and note takers reviewed the discussions and presented their impression note along with the field note. The team leaders then reviewed the discussions to check whether all checklists were brought under adequate discussions and explorations.

The data collection activities took much longer than anticipated and started late due to delay in approval of learning tools. The time and resource estimation made for the baseline study was inadequate. To attain a cohort of 1736 girls and caregivers, the enumerator's team had to interview more than 2200 girls and caregivers. For many girls interviewed and tested in schools, their parents and caregivers were not available for interview. Similarly, wherever parents were interviewed, some girls were not present in school. Since a team could get a maximum of 2 days to work in a school, the mismatch required them to survey more girls and caregivers than actually intended to. The school holidays due to the decision of local and central government also affected the data collection. The team could only work 75 per cent of the days they were mobilized to field. In Parsa, the data collection process had to stop for more than a week since the schools were closed due to cold waves and bad weather conditions.

Ethical protocol

Throughout implementation of the activities within research framework, human subject research ethics was kept in high priority ensuring that the primary concept of justice, benefits and informed consent are well followed.

Informed consent. FGDs, interviews or surveys were begun only after taking consent from individuals. Consent forms were provided to each individual who shows interest on being a participant in the research. Facilitators and interviewers read out the contents of the consent form in case some have difficulty in reading the form. The tools were used only after making the participants understand about the research issues and taking their consent. The researchers and enumerators mobilized were trained on human subject research ethics.

Ensure anonymity and confidentiality. The research activities ensured that research participants and their views are used only for research work and not to be disseminated haphazardly within the larger population. The data remained anonymous and confidential. All the data acquired will be destroyed after their use has been deemed complete. The photographs and videos were not taken.

Special considerations related to child protection. For children, the external evaluator strictly followed child protection policy of VSO Nepal. When the data was

collected with girls below 18 years, it was ensured that parental consent or consent from Head Teacher of the school is obtained together with the assent from the girl being interviewed. This was done to ensure that child participation is voluntary, meaningful and safe. The external evaluator adhered to safe recruitment practices for all members of the research team. There was a comprehensive code of conduct that outlines how to protect children from inappropriate behaviour perpetrated by staff/contractors is in place for all in the research team to follow. All members of the research team were trained on Child Protection (CP) to understand how CP features in different evaluation aspects including developing tools and research methods, informed consent, code of conduct, incident reporting mechanisms, data protection etc. A reporting and response mechanism was in place to respond to children in distress or to a researcher's breach of the code of conduct. During the field level data collection, there were no such incidences happened that required reporting and response mechanism.

The primary concern of the researchers was the safety of the research participants. This is accomplished by carefully considering the risk/benefit ratio, using all available information to make an appropriate assessment and continually monitoring the research as it proceeds. The team also considered on how the adverse events will be handled; who will provide care for a participant injured in a study and who will pay for that care.

There were no major ethical issues that occurred during the data collection. However, one school denied to give access to interview the girls enrolled in the school while the parents had consented to go through. The school was later dropped form the study. Some schools denied conducting spot check of attendance requesting the team to depend on their official school registers. The team decided not to conduct spot check against the willingness of the school. There were no cases of denials from the caregivers and girls.

Sampling

The sample of girls to be interviewed and included in learning test as well as to reach to their caregivers for interview was identified randomly using randomizer function in MS Excel applied on the sampling framework made available by VSO Nepal. The random number obtained through randomizer function was sorted in ascending order to identify the list of girls included in sample for school. The total sample size per grade was divided by number of districts and number of schools for intervention and control districts. The samples were determined to ensure that each district is able to meet certain sample size for certain grade. Since the number of girls present in schools (especially in control schools) were lower for Dhading and Lamjung, there was an option open to sample slightly more number of girls in Surkhet and Parsa district to meet the total sampling requirements. The list of girls identified as sample were included in the

kobo form to be filled by the enumerators whereby they could only select and interview the girls who were included in the list available in the form. It ensured that the enumerators maintain the original randomization, and the girls who were included in initial sampling were covered.

For out-of-school girls of age 6-9 years, all available girls present in the bridge course were interviewed together with their parents. While the baseline could cover around 243 girls enrolled in bridge course, the team could only reach to 173 caregivers. The caregivers were often away from home to make their living. Similarly, it was also intended to cover the entire population of out-of-school girls of age 18-25 years. The study could only reach to 25 out of 49 girls included in the sampling frame, and only 10 caregivers. During the fieldwork it was difficult to navigate the girls and their parents despite availability of their phone numbers. Some of the phone numbers were not working or calls not received.

For qualitative studies, three schools in each district were selected in consultation with local government officials to ensure that the schools are diverse in terms of their operating grades, geographical locations, and socio-economic status of the catchments. The girls and parents were recruited for the interview purposively ensuring that they represent diverse grades, diverse socio-economic background, and diverse academic performance. The basis for selection of the study participants was decided in discussion with Head Teacher and SMC/PTA members. The other interviews were also arranged purposively at the school level based on availability of the individuals to speak with the study team.

Data Quality Assurance

Apart from intensive training to ensure data quality team of experienced and highly trained supervisors were mobilized in the field. The supervisors were also involved in data collection while supervising and checking the performance of the enumerators on regular basis. Supervisors carried out reviews of the data collection at the end of each day to discuss on the progress of the day and issues and challenges if any. Besides, use of digital data collection system Kobo enabled to have the data uploaded each day, which was reviewed at the centre and provided feedback as applicable.

Final sample size

Course/NEAT prepared a list of sample girls out of their population list available by VSO. The girls were randomly selected from the population using randomizer. The lists were prepared prior to the field visit and data collection was done according to the list. Parents of the child included for the survey and test at school were taken for the HH survey. In total, the project surveyed more than 2100 parents, 2200 girls, and take tests with more than 2000 girls to arrive to a consolidated number with proper match between three.

The sample sizes did not deviate much from the anticipated sample size included in the MEL framework except for out-of-school girls where only 25 out of 49 girls and 10 of their caregivers could be reached. The qualitative tools were implemented in the exact frequency proposed. During the fieldwork it was difficult to navigate the girls and their parents despite availability of their phone numbers. Some of the phone numbers were not working or calls not received. In the next evaluation point, specific considerations should be given to identify and track all 49 big sisters. VSO Nepal and its partners can monitor and track the big sisters (out of school girls of age 18-25 years) with their locations and other identifiers.

2.4.3 Post data collection

Data review, cleaning and refining

After the completion of data collection from the field and data uploads Course/NEAT moved ahead with data review and cleaning. The first and foremost task was to extract the data from Kobo and merge them since different instruments were used for collecting different information of the same child like girls' survey, test and household data. Besides, entry of the data collected in paper forms was carried out simultaneously. School information, classroom observation data etc were compiled and entered. Similarly, transcripts of the qualitative discussions (FGDs and IDIs) were prepared from the records and translated into English.

Data analysis

Analysis of the data was done after its data checks and cleaning were complete. For quantitative analysis, the data from excel were exported to STATA for further analysis where tabulations were made, and the values were tested for significance in difference, and causal analysis.

Qualitative data analysis was done following the preparation of qualitative transcripts. A list of themes was identified to reflect the long-term and intermediate outcomes of the project, and then the data were coded based on the themes manually using MS Word. The coded data were then analysed for their similarity and differences to make some narration out of the quotes. The data saturation was ensured through triangulation of the quotes from the same source, and then the different source while mapping the majority of similar points, and some key notable differences. Considering that the opinions from the respondents were towards the same direction, the sample sizes for qualitative discussions were considered adequate. The detailed quantitative and qualitative analysis procedures are provided below:

Table F: Procedures followed for quantitative and qualitative data analysis

Qualitative analysis	Quantitative Analysis
• Summarizing major questions to be answered by the data • Organizing and cataloguing data • Identifying themes in line with study objectives • Setting out the list of themes in a clear format by linking them with notes, quotes or references from the data • Coding the data and arranging them in respective themes along with quotes and citations • Clustering subthemes within each theme • Making a table to synthesize findings • Identification of important quotes needed to establish linkages • Drawing a diagram illustrating where data can be placed and gaps identified • Triangulating data and interpreting tables into paragraphs	• Designing a template for data entry • Data coding and cleaning • Training of data entry personnel • Data entry • Quality checks and refining of populated database • Acquire cleaned data set properly coded and arranged • Utilizing STATA for statistical analysis: ▪ Generate tables, charts, and other illustrations ▪ Conduct statistical tests, and econometric analysis, where ever necessary

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

On the broader outset, the baseline study has some limitations of adopting quasi-experimental design instead of randomized control trials, and also the limitations are more pertinent due to the fact that neither the intervention or control schools were identified randomly. The zone of influence (i.e. school) was very narrow. Since the interventions schools were selected to include the weakest schools with poor learning levels and challenges for girls, the selection of control school from among the remaining schools from the same Palika. The control schools were better than treatment schools in terms of physical facilities and the number of students enrolled. This may affect interpretation of results during baseline and other evaluation points where double differences of means (magnitude of change in intervention against the change in control) may hold more importance than face value at the evaluation point, and change compared to the baseline. Moreover, there is also a chance of contamination since the children from control may transfer to intervention school and vice versa, and since they are located in the same local government unit, the interventions implemented through local government supplemented by the project are likely to have equal impact on both schools. The project should take note of such possible contaminations by tracking inter-school transfers of girls, and also ensure that the interventions through local governments remain minimal. On the good note, unlike anticipated in the MEL framework, there was not problem in getting support from the control schools to collect data.

There were few challenges during the baseline data collection process. The study process got delayed, and field level data collection took much longer than anticipated. A list of challenges and mitigation measures taken or suggested for future are presented below:

Table F: Challenges and Mitigation Measures

Challenges	Mitigation Measures
There are multiple possibilities that the control gets contaminated. First, the interventions schools could be feeder of the control. There may be already many students from GEC1 cohorts currently studying in the control schools since they were the lucrative and large schools for children to enrol. Second, the interventions collaboratively implemented with local governments are likely to benefit both intervention and control school since they fall within the same palika or local government unit.	The project should take note of such possible contaminations by tracking inter-school transfers of girls, and also ensure that the interventions through local governments remain minimal. For other projects and interventions, it could be better to select a bit wider zone of influence, and random selection of intervention and control schools.
Although sample size covered was higher than anticipated in total, the estimated size could not be met in Lamjung and Dhading districts due to insufficient number of the girls' population.	In both Dhading and Lamjung, the data was collected from the large number of girls close to their population. Hence, there won't be any issue with the representation. The numbers were supplemented from other districts (Surkhet and Parsa) to meet the basic sample size requirements. During next evaluation points, the approach of covering close to population from the two districts, and fulfilling remaining children/girls from other districts may be continued.
There was a withdrawal issue encountered in one of the treatment schools in Dhading where the field team was not allowed to conduct any data collection activity resulting in 47 treatment schools covered in total out of 48.	The withdrawal did not affect the minimum sample size to be covered during the baseline. Hence, the project may go ahead with the data collection in same number of schools during other evaluation points. However, the project needs to build some strategy to ensure that no more schools drop out of the support to the level to influence measurement of outcomes.
The baseline study was unable to cover all out-of-school girls of age 18-25 years. It was difficult to trace them for interviews despite availability of their phone numbers. The study ended up covering only 25 girls and 10 caregivers. Given the sample size, it was not possible to conduct detailed analysis of the data for this group.	The baseline study also used the basic data collected by VSO of 49 girls for their monitoring purpose to make some estimation about the existing transition of out-of-school girls. VSO is recommended to update their current transition status through their on-going monitoring system. For the next evaluation point, the figures from monitoring system could be considered as baseline. The project also

Challenges	Mitigation Measures
	needs to set up other identifiers to locate the out-of-school girls of age 18-25 years.
The out-of-school girls (6-9 years) enrolled in bridge course also involve girls above 9 years.	For the baseline, all girls enrolled in the bridge course were considered for analysis while making age-wise disaggregation during data analysis. However, VSO needs to make strategic decision on whether they will allow or not allow the out-of-school girls from other ages to attend bridge course against their pre-set targets.
Although boys were considered as indirect beneficiaries, the baseline study missed out opportunity to collect any substantial data from the boys.	The school information form contains some secondary data that may allow comparison of the status between boys and girls. For the next evaluation points, it is suggested that boys are included in the data collection process, especially the qualitative data collection.
There was a limitation of not conducting any qualitative discussions with out-of-school girls (both groups), their parents, and in-school boys.	For the next round of evaluations, it is recommended to cover these groups adequately in qualitative data collection process. If the sub-group is very small for focus group discussions, they could also be covered through in-depth interviews.
There were more girls and caregivers interviewed (than necessary) to get to the anticipated sample size. There was also mismatch between the girls interviewed and tested for schools where the tests and interviews were conducted on different dates.	The data from caregivers and girls unmatched have been maintained separately. The mismatch could be considered as an advantage for possible replacement and substitution in future. If necessary due to attrition, the caregivers or girls interviewed during the baseline could be considered for the followed up with full set of evaluation during another evaluation point.
A challenge was faced in conducting household surveys due to unavailability of the parents in the communities causing the delay the survey process than earlier plan. Due to frequent public holidays during the survey period, it took longer time to complete the data collection within the planned timeline.	For other evaluation points, there is a need to allocate sufficient time for the study to enable reaching both caregivers and girls. Considering the heavy fieldwork to be conducted during evaluation points, VSO need to reconsider the resource allocations and job descriptions for evaluators for next evaluation points.
There was difference in language of the research instrument and mother tongue of the person being interviewed. The challenge due to difference in mother tongue and research instrument was prominent while interviewing out-of-school children of age 6-9 years.	Although the mother tongue was language other than Nepali, many of the in-school girls and literate parents could speak Nepali. In Parsa district, considering that the difference in language will be an issue, the local enumerators who could speak the local language and dialect were trained and mobilized for interviews. They were responsible to interview the girls or caregivers who could not speak Nepali language. The qualitative interviews and discussions were mostly conducted with

Challenges	Mitigation Measures
	individuals who could speak Nepali language. In 1-2 discussions in Parsa, the local enumerators translated the questions raised in the local language while the facilitators could understand the response. The researchers with sufficient knowledge on local language translated the qualitative transcripts directly to English.
There were also some research biases. For some of the questions, there was chance of possible bias in self-reported data. For example, the survey conducted with caregivers took opinion of parents on their attitude and contribution towards girls. The parents might have been inclined to respond positively to the questions to leave positive impression on the enumerators. Similarly, the focus group discussions also had space for respondent bias especially in reporting their personal information, attitude and other challenges in front of other members from the community. In addition to the respondent bias, the moderator bias might have also influenced the response and discussions.	The enumerators were reminded about this challenge of receiving biased answers during the training and were provided with some skills to tackle it. The enumerators were asked to remind the participants that their information will remain confidential and anonymous, and they will not be judged based on their answers. For qualitative, considering that some of the respondents might not report honestly considering that there are other hearing their conversation, all participants were asked to realize and reiterate the ethical code that all opinions will remain confidential among the participants. Moreover, the discussions involved questions based on stories that allowed the parents to share their opinion and experiences without putting them under risk or pressure to deviate from their actual response. The enumerators and qualitative facilitators were trained on possible biases, and ways to counter it with priority given to the biases relating to the facilitator. For the next rounds of evaluations, some arrangements should be kept in a place to triangulate the figures with other respondent.
There was a challenge of double counting the girls with disability if they have more than one form of disability.	All questions were given same importance. The variables were recoded at the analysis stage to generate new variable that looks after the single and multiple disabilities. The standard guidance provided by the Washington group was considered while estimating the disability to avoid double count. The figures of girls with one or multiple disabilities are available for analysis.
Given the baseline findings, there are chances for sizable attrition among the cohort girls while the project gets to next evaluation points and to the end. Since same cohort of girls are to be considered for other evaluation points, it is a challenge to meet	The sample size at baseline is already bloated to maintain the sample size that will take into account attrition rates during the project period. The cohort of girls will be tracked throughout the project period and will be re-contacted at the different evaluation points (midline and endline). In cases where the participant cannot be re-contacted, one-on-one replacement strategy will be used. This means replacing the cohort girl from baseline with a 'substitute' girl with similar demographics, marginalisation status, and preferably from the same grade level from the

Challenges	Mitigation Measures
	same school to mirror her level of exposure to project interventions. The first priority will be given to the girls or caregivers with mismatch during baseline. The same selection (random selection) criteria at baseline will be used for substitutes. Substitution will be done in both target and comparison schools. The data on transition and other details for the substituted girls will be collected at the relevant evaluation point. For the learning cohort, the sample size will be bloated for the two lower grades to take into account the 'lose' of respondents who will transition from primary level to secondary level. For the transition cohorts, the sample size will also be bloated to take into account any attrition during the project period.

3. Key Characteristics of Baseline samples

3.1 Project beneficiaries

The direct project beneficiaries include girls studying in the 47 community schools of four districts – Lamjung, Dhading, Parsa, and Surkhet district enrolled in secondary level (grade 6-10). Some of the girls to benefit during the GEC-2 will include the girls who also benefited from GEC-1. Among the girls, the project anticipates to provide intensive support to a cohort of little sisters who will receive counselling and mentoring support from big sisters. The project, however, also intends to benefit indirectly to boys studying in all project schools through school level support. Most of the girls in the rural communities of Nepal face discrimination and marginalization based on their gender, and face multiple challenges to continue and complete school education, especially secondary education. The project will also benefit two categories of out-of-school girls: (1) out-of-school girls of age group (6-9 years) from Parsa district who are currently attending the bridge class and will be supported to enroll back to school, and (2) out-of-school girls of age group (18-25 years) who might be previously enrolled in school, and will be supported to either enroll back to school, receive skill trainings, join gainful employment or start self-employment initiative.

The project considers all girls enrolled in 47 project schools in grades 6-10, and the girls never enrolled to school or dropped out of school between the age 6-25 as marginalized. Nepal is a patriarchal society with social values and norms regressive towards the girls and women. As reported in the gender analysis findings presented earlier, girls, regardless of their other marginalization criteria, are discriminated in terms of parental support and aspirations related to education especially financing their education, have to engage intensively in the household work, and are discriminated during menstruation. Hence, they were considered marginalized for all districts. The project defines extremely marginalized girls as marginalized girls facing the greatest vulnerability to factors putting them at risk of dropping out or not attending school, and specifically falling under the priorities: (1) girl with disability, (2) girl from a dalit family whose mother tongue is not Nepali, (3) girl from a dalit family whose mother tongue is Nepali, (4) girl from janajati family whose mother tongue is not Nepali, and (5) girl from janajati family whose mother tongue is Nepali.

3.2 Representativeness of the learning and transition samples across regions, age groups, grades, disability status and sex of the beneficiaries

The total sample size for the baseline evaluation of in-school girls was 1,736 with complete match of sample of caregivers and girls. The sample included 631 girls and their caregivers from control school, and 1,105 girls and their caregivers from intervention schools. In addition, 243 out-of-school girls of age 6-9 years and 25 out-of-school girls of age 18-25 were also covered during the baseline. The distribution of sampled girls varied slightly by the districts.

Unlike the anticipation in the MEL framework that all districts will be represented equally at the proportion of 25 per cent, Dhading and Lamjung are under-represented. While the number of girls covered in Dhading and Lamjung districts were lower in both treatment and control sites, the girls covered was higher in Surkhet and Dhading district. The coverage, however, reflected the target beneficiaries in the districts. In Lamjung and Dhading districts, the number of girls beneficiaries of grade 6-10 was fewer while it was larger particularly for Parsa followed by Surkhet. In Lamjung and Dhading, baseline ended up covering close to the entire population of the girls available.

Table 4: Evaluation sample breakdown (by region)

1a. In-school girls

		Intervention (Baseline)	Control (Baseline)
	Sample breakdown (Girls)		
In-school girls	Dhading	222 (20.1%)	126 (19.9%)
	Lamjung	243 (22.1%)	140 (22.2%)
	Parsa	335 (30.3%)	188 (29.8%)
	Surkhet	304 (27.5%)	178 (28.2%)
	Total	1105 (100%)	631 (100%)

1b. Out-of-school girls

Category	District	Intervention (Baseline)
		Sample breakdown (girls)
Out of school girls (6-9)	Parsa	243 (100%)
Out of school girls (18-25)	Dhading,	12 (48%)
	Lamjung	4 (16%)
	Surkhet	9 (36%)
	Total	25 (100%)

Source: Caregivers survey

For out-of-school targets, the whole population was covered. While large proportion (more than 80%) younger out-of-school girls enrolled in bridge course could be tracked and included in the study, it was difficult to track the older out-of-school girls, possibly due to their migration, and transition to other status. As a result, 243 out-of-school girls (younger), and 25 out of school girls (older) were covered during the baseline study.

The distribution as well as population size follows the pattern presented in the M&E framework. Out of the total baseline sample, 31.0 per cent were from grade 6 (against anticipated 30%), 24.6 per cent were from grade 7 (against anticipated 25%), 19.8 per cent for grade 8 (against anticipated 20%), 14.6 per cent for grade 9 (against anticipated 15%), and 9.7 per cent for grade 10 (against anticipated 10%).

Table 5: Evaluation sample breakdown (by grade)

	Intervention (Baseline)	Control (Baseline)
Sample breakdown (Girls)		
Grade 6 (% in grade 6)	342 (31.0%)	174 (27.6%)
Grade 7 (% in grade 7)	271 (24.6%)	159 (25.2%)
Grade 8 (% in grade 8)	219 (19.9%)	128 (20.3%)
Grade 9 (% in grade 9)	169 (15.4%)	97 (15.4%)
Grade 10 (% in grade 10)	100 (9.1%)	73 (11.6%)
Total	1101 (100%)	631 (100%)

*Source: Caregivers survey and girl's survey. The chi-square or t-test for differences are indicated as ~p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01.*

In terms of age distribution for in-school girls, majority of the girls were of category 13-14 years (39.5%) followed by 10-12 (33.4%). The age distribution indicates that more than 72% of the total girls currently enrolled in target grades 6-10 are of the appropriate age group 10-14. There were also around 22 per cent girls of age group 15-16 (i.e. age group for grades 11-12). While the sampling framework anticipated covering the girls of age 10-14, 28.2 per cent girls surveyed were above the anticipated age group (considering grade appropriate age as a guideline). However, in the national context, the distribution of in-school girls by age group obtained in the sample is obvious considering that the gross enrollment rate is much higher than net enrollment rate for higher grades. The distribution of sample for control followed the pattern very similar to that of intervention.

For younger out-of-school girls enrolled in bridge course, there was some form of mismatch observed between age group estimated to cover, and actually enrolled. Since the baseline covered total available population, out of total young out-of-school girls covered by project, majority (61%) were of the age group 6-9, i.e. anticipated age group. There were additional 30 per cent of age group 10-12, and remaining around 9 per cent were of the age group 13-16 years. Among the out-of-school girls of age 18-25 years, all sampled girls were of the anticipated age group. For out-of-school girls, there was no data collected for the control group, following the approved M&E framework.

Table 6: Evaluation sample breakdown (by age)

3a. In-school girls

		Intervention (Baseline)	Control (Baseline)
	Sample breakdown (Girls)		
In school girls	Aged 10-12 (% aged 10-12)	368 (33.4%)	201 (31.9%)
	Aged 13-14 (% aged 13-14)	436 (39.5%)	236 (37.4%)
	Aged 15-16 (% aged 15-16)	241 (21.9%)	147 (23.3%)
	Aged 17-20 (% aged 17-20)	58 (5.3%)	47 (7.5%)
		1103 (100%)	631 (100%)

		Intervention (Baseline)
	Sample breakdown (Girls)	
Out-of-school (6-9)	Aged 6-9 (% aged 5-9)	148 (61.0%)
	Aged 10-12 (% aged 10-12)	73 (30.0%)
	Age 13-16 (% aged 13-16)	21 (9.0%)
	Total	243 (100%)
Out-of-school (18-25)	Age18-25	25 (100%)
	Total	25 100%)

*Source: Caregivers survey and girl's survey. The chi-square or t-test for differences are indicated as ~p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01.*

Among the girls included in sample 3.4 percent were the girls with disability in intervention schools compared to 4.9 per cent in control schools. Among those considered disabled, majority had mobility impairment followed by vision impairment, and cognitive impairment. Although there was no anticipated proportion for girls with disability included in MEL framework, the proportion is above the national estimate of 1.9 per cent, and can be considered representative. Among out-of-school girls enrolled in bridge course, there was only one girl reported having disability (i.e. communication impairment that she can not do at all).

Table 7: Evaluation sample breakdown (by disability)

4a. In-school girls

Sample breakdown (Girls)	Intervention (Baseline)	Control (Baseline)
Girls with disability (% overall)[11]	3.4%	4.9%
Vision impairment	10 (1.2%)	11 (2.4%)
Hearing impairment	3 (0.4%)	4 (0.8%)
Mobility impairment	12 (1.3%)	7 (1.3%)
Cognitive impairment	8 (0.9%)	7 (1.3%)
Self-care impairment	3 (0.3%)	0 (0%)
Communication impairment	1 (0.1%)	2 (0.4%)
Total	1105	631

*Source: Caregivers survey and girl's survey. The chi-square or t-test for differences are indicated as ~p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01.*

During qualitative discussions, disability was discussed as one of the characteristics barrier to school education. However, the understanding on disability was very narrow. The school stakeholders mostly considered physical or mental disability of severe nature as a disability, and believe that there is negligible number of children enrolled in school with disability. The schools did not have any practices or procedures to accommodate and support children with disability to attend school. The categorization presented based on Washington group disability screening

[11]The population identified as having a disability includes all those with difficulty *in at least one domain* recorded at *a lot of difficulty* or *cannot do at all*.

could be useful for schools to identify and support girls and children with disability who are already enrolled in school.

Overall representativeness of the sample
The sample can be considered fully representative of the population of the girls considering that the sample size was large enough, and accommodated more than 60 per cent of the total girls available in the selected treatment and control school, and was close to sampling of population particularly for Dhading and Lamjung districts since the number of girls available was low. In terms of age group, the sample was largely representative for primary age categories (10-12, 13-14, 15-16) but was not adequately representative for 17-20 years since the baseline only covered around 58 children in intervention for that age category. Since the study covered population of the out-of-school girls of age 6-9 years, the data was fairly representative since it covered entire population while understanding that in terms of age group, the actual age group that matched with anticipated age group was only 61 per cent. It may not be possible to have disaggregated data analysis for age 13-16 years from among girls in bridge class. Similarly, although the baseline attempted to cover whole population, the out-of-school girls of age 18-25 years may not be included in the detailed analysis since the sample of girls covered is only 25 while only 10 caregivers were covered by the caregiver's survey.

3.3 Educational Marginalisation

Household and Girl Specific Characteristics

The girls included in intervention and treatment cohort come from different socio-economic background with different family and personal characteristics that makes one marginalized compared to others in terms of education related performance. The baseline study takes into consideration the various characteristics and barriers that contributes to education marginalization, and also takes them into account during analysis. In terms of the characteristics identified by the project for marginalization, all girls were marginalized with 45 per cent extremely marginalized in the intervention schools and 50 per cent extremely marginalized in the control schools. The following table provides distribution of marginalized and extremely marginalized girls.

Table 8: Evaluation sample breakdown (by marginalization) for in-school girls

	Intervention (Baseline)	Control (Baseline)
Sample breakdown (Girls)		
Marginalized	1105 (100%)	631 (100%)
Extremely Marginalized	497 (45.0%)	316 (50.1%)
Priority 1 (Dalit)	18.9%	21.4%
Priority 2 (Janajati)	36.1%	28.7%

	Intervention (Baseline)	Control (Baseline)
Sample breakdown (Girls)		
Priority 3 (Dalit with different language of instruction)	15.6%	17.6%
Priority 4 (Janjati with different language of instruction)	18.1%	24.6%

*Source: Caregivers survey and girl's survey. The chi-square or t-test for differences are indicated as ~p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01.*

Table 8 a: Evaluation sample breakdown by marginalization for out-of-school girls of age 6-9 years

Sample breakdown (Out-of-school girls)	
Marginalized	242 (100%)
Extremely Marginalized	146 (60.6%)
Priority 1 (Dalit)	33.3%
Priority 2 (Janajati)	30.3%
Priority 3 (Dalit with different language of instruction)	29.7%
Priority 4 (Janjati with different language of instruction)	28.1%

Among the total girls, around 4.5 per cent had lost one of their parents while 0.5 per cent had lost both of their parents. The proportion of girls who are currently not living with either of their parents was 8 per cent while 19 per cent girls were living only with one parent. Around 34 per cent girls in interventions schools lived in female-headed household. Caregivers of around 66 per cent girls reported that it is difficult to afford to send their girls to school. Among them 16 per cent reported that the family is unable to meet the basic needs of the family with around 7 per cent missing their dinner due to the poverty. In a quarter of the families, the household heads were illiterate. The project considered caste and language as a basis to prioritize marginalization. There were 19 per cent dalits, and 36 per cent janajati among the in-school girls. Table 8 presents the education marginalization in terms of characteristics while table 9 presents marginalization in terms of actual barriers faced by girls.

Table 9: Girls' characteristics (in-school girls)

	Intervention (Baseline)	Control (Baseline)
Sample breakdown (Girls)		
Orphans (%) - Single orphans - Double orphans	 4.5% 0.5%	 3.7% 0.3%
Living without both parents (%)	7.8%	8.3%
Living with without at least one parents	18.8	20.9
Living in female headed household (%)	33.9%	36.6%
Married (%)	0.8%	0.9%
Mothers (%) - Under 18	0%	0%

	Intervention (Baseline)	Control (Baseline)
Sample breakdown (Girls)		
- Under 16		
Poor households (%)		
Difficult to afford for girl to go to school	65.9%	68.9%
Household doesn't own land for themselves	6.9%	4.7%
Households with poor material of the roof (such as mud, thatch, wood, cardboard, and plastics)	88.7%**	92.0%
Household unable to meet basic needs	16.1%	14.9%
Gone to sleep hungry for many days in past year	6.2%	4.4%
Language difficulties: % of girls with language of instruction different from mother tongue (%)	60.3%	57.9%
% of girls who can not speak language of instruction (%)	3.4% (To some extent: 22.1%)	3.8% (To some extent: 24.2%)
Parental education - HoH has no education (%)	24.1%	20.0%
Caste/Ethnicity		
Dalit	18.9	21.4
Janajati	36.1	28.7
Dalit with different mother tongue than Nepali	15.6	17.6
Janajati with different mother tongue than Nepali	18.1	24.6

*Source: Caregivers survey and girl's survey. The chi-square or t-test for differences are indicated as ~p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01.*

The characteristics from out-of-school girls were very similar to that of in-school girls. There were more families without land, and from the marginalized community (such as dalits and janajatis) among the out-of-school girls.

Table 5b: Girls' characteristics (Out-of-school girls)

	Intervention (Baseline)
Sample breakdown (Girls)	
Orphans (%) - Single orphans - Double orphans	 1.7% 0.0%
Living without both parents (%)	2.9%
Living with without at least one parents	1.7%
Living in female headed household (%)	8.7%
Married (%)	0.0%
Mothers (%)	0.0%

	Intervention (Baseline)
Sample breakdown (Girls)	
- Under 18 - Under 16	
Poor households (%)	
Household doesn't own land for themselves	11.7%
Households with poor material of the roof (such as mud, thatch, wood, cardboard, and plastics)	89.5**
Household unable to meet basic needs	9.4%
Gone to sleep hungry for many days in past year	15.2%
Language difficulties: % of girls with language of instruction different from mother tongue (%)	92.5%
Parental education HoH has no education (%)	50.1%
Caste/Ethnicity	
Dalit	33.3%
Janajati (Muslim)	30.3%
Dalit with different mother tongue than Nepali	29.7%
Janajati with different mother tongue than Nepali	28.1%

Source: Caregivers survey and girl's survey

Almost all factors (relating to household characteristics) that affect learning and transition are covered in the table above. The qualitative findings match with quantitative criteria used to assess family characteristics. The qualitative study confirmed that the children with disability, children coming from dalit households, children from Muslim or from other janajati families[12], and the poor families who are not able to meet daily needs have difficulty meeting learning standards and also progressing well in school.

> *The main reason for not sending daughters to school is poverty, not enough money for tution, for buying notebook, textbooks etc. (FGD with girls, Parsa)*

> *Mostly children of the Dalit community fall under this category of children (remain absent). There is a reason as well as to why this happen more in their community. They are mostly involved in daily wage based jobs. In lack of awareness, most of the parents of such children take children along with them to earn money for example in sand mining in the river parents. (KII with head teacher, Surkhet)*

The parental education was also one of the factors related to the learning and transition of children. The parental education also determines indirectly the family income and household decisions related to investment for education.

[12] In Nepal, Muslims are also considered religious minority, and their population is mostly spread in the terai region. Janajati mostly refers to hill based ethnic minorities.

In some households, boys and girls are treated equally. Those parents who are educated treat their children well, and their school performance is also good. (FGD with girls, Surkhet)

In general, children of the upper class personnel in the social strata with good level of education are sent to the good private schools. The remaining who are downtrodden poor, dalit, people of poor income and lower class in the ground of educational status they send their children in our school. This is the reason why children lack proper parental guidance. The parents are not in a position to provide support to their children. (Interview with Head Teacher, Surkhet)

The marital status of girl was also reported as one of the primary factor that affects transition of the girls. The qualitative discussions highlighted high prevalence of early marriage among girls starting at the age of 14 with maximum number of girls getting married at the age of 16-18 years. The married girls as well as boys tend to drop out of schools since they feel shy, and do not get the support from family to continue their education amidst the load for household work. Boys normally drop out of school after marriage to fulfill the family income requirements.

Some girls marry and quit school. There was a girl who intended to marry and we tried to convince her not do that. I even sent people to convince her but she was committed and said, 'I won't study any more'. And she got married and lef school. (KII with SMC chair, Dhading)

Some girls drop because they elope (laughing) while some do get married while studying 8, 9 classes. Some marry on their own will while others get married by the parents will. They miss out school. There is taboo in the society that girls are not allowed to go outside while they are in the menstruation period. Some girls miss out schools during their menstruation. (FGD with girls, Lamjung)

Match in the characteristics against anticipation in theory of change

Most of the assumptions made on the characteristics of the beneficiaries, that the VSO identified in its theory of change to define marginalization, were valid and true. As anticipated, the proportion of extremely marginalized girls was nearly half of the total marginalized girls. Being enrolled in the community school (i.e. coming from a lower medium or poor families), the marginalized girls were also facing number of barriers to school education, verified in the qualitative as well as quantitative data, to be considered as marginalized. However, some of the assumptions need to be reviewed. First, the criteria used to categorize girls as marginalized and extremely marginalized may need reconsideration. While girls from dalit households were reported to have some additional barriers due to caste based discrimination during qualitative discussion, considering janajati as marginalized may need to be reconsidered. While language of instruction different from home was one of the barriers to education, it was applicable to both marginalized and extremely marginalized girls. Second, the project may have missed some specific critieria for marginalization such as married girls, and girls from extremely poor families. In case of married girls, there was also difference in estimation of the number. The project anticipates the in-school girls and out-of-school girls to be married at the proportion close to 10 per cent. However, the baseline survey indicated that the proportion among in-school girls is far less (only 1%). For out-of-school girls, since they come from one particular district, the

proportion of girls speaking language other than the language of instruction was not something anticipated and recognized in the project document.

Other characteristics that may be linked to education marginalization

There were also some family related factors that were considered to influence the girl's education that came out during qualitative discussions but were not covered in the quantitative survey as possible characteristics related to marginalization. During qualitative discussions, the family that makes income from daily wage and does to possess a regular income source, and the family with the parents migrated outside the country were also reported to be vulnerable to drop out of school or be irregular to school. For next evaluation, it may worth collecting data to classify family based on whether or not they are engaged in daily wage income, and if any of the family members has migrated outside the country for work and income.

Barriers

There were various barriers for girl's education. For around 10 per cent girls, the school environment was unsafe followed by around nine per cent who considered the route to school as unsafe. There were negligible proportions of girls getting sufficient time to study at home with only around four per cent girls reported that they get sufficient time to study at home. There were also around 3-7 per cent girls reporting various forms of barriers linked with school facilities followed by around 20 per cent reporting that they disagree in considering that their teachers were present regularly to school, and were treating boys and girls equally.

Table 10: Potential barriers to learning and transition

	Intervention (Baseline)	Control (Baseline)
Sample breakdown (Girls)		
Safety:		
Fairly or very unsafe travel to schools in the area (%)	9.3**	15.5
Doesn't feel safe travelling to/from school (%)	8.5	5.8
Parental/caregiver support:		
Sufficient time to study: High chore burden (% of children who do not need to do households chores more than 2 hours a day)	3.5	4.7
Doesn't get support to stay in school and do well (%)	3.1	4.2
% of households who report that girls need to work intensively at home (more than a quarter of hours)	62.4	62.3
% of households who report work as a barrier to education	22.8	22.3
% of households who report it does not worth to spend on education of girls	5.2	4.0
Attendance:		
Attends school at least half the time (%)	93.2	92.1
Attends school less than half time (%)	6.8	7.9
Doesn't feel safe at school (%)	3.4	2.4
School facilities:		
No seats for all students (%)	3.6	2.4
Difficult to move around school (%)	1.8	2.3

	Intervention (Baseline)	Control (Baseline)
Sample breakdown (Girls)		
Doesn't use drinking water facilities (%)	5.8	7.0
Doesn't use toilet at school (%)	3.7	3.8
Doesn't use areas where children play/ socialize (%)	1.5	1.6
% of families who reported paying fees to school		
Teachers:		
Disagrees teachers make them feel welcome (%)	5.9	5.0
Agrees teachers treat boys and girls differently in the classroom (%)	22.0	18.7
Agrees teachers often absent from class (%)	33.9	31.0

*Source: Caregivers survey and girl's survey. The chi-square or t-test for differences are indicated as ~p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01.*

The table above covered most of the learning and transition related barriers beyond the household characteristics. However, during qualitative discussions, the girls, parents, teachers and other stakeholders came out with number of other school and government related barriers such as physical facilities, teacher training, availability of teaching learning materials inside classroom and utilization of these materials by teachers, financial pressure upon school to finance teacher salaries and other school related barriers which were not adequate covered in the barriers presented above. Some of the barriers related to household work and fees were added based on qualitative inferences suggesting that these variables worth inclusion and analysis. The qualitative discussions highlighted that the actual parental support can be verified based on the space and hours they provide their children to study at home.

> *It is difficult to find all the required materials in the village but 50 per cent of the guardians' want their children study well and don't ask them to help in HH chores. Such is not the case in all families but proportion of such families is less than 50 per cent. (KII with SMC, Dhading)*

Although parents disagree that they discriminate between boys and girls, the girls reported that the difference in investment and also aspirations linked with girl's education that serves as barriers for them. In their opinion, in society, there are parents who send their sons to private schools (better schools with investment) while they do not provide required materials and sufficient time for the girls to study at home.

> *We are ready to have our children study as much higher level as they like to attend. We can afford up to 12 class and in our society we do not discriminate between son and daughter. We do as much as we can do for them. (FGD with parents, Dhading)*

> *Due to the social discrimination there is high number of male going to the private school and lower number in boarding school. It is conventional in our society that it is considered that women as the person of the other's home. Parents believe boys as the caretaker of the family in the future. That is the reason of the discrimination. (FGD with girls, Lamjung)*

Neither pronounced in quantitative nor visible in qualitative is the safety of girls on the way to school and inside school. The school environment was mostly considered safe, and was not reported to be a challenge during the qualitative discussions. However, the qualitative discussions clearly presented the difference in perception of parents when it comes to safety fo girls and boys. The girls feel less motivated and more bound than boys, which affects their self confidence, and also portrays gender based discrimination.

> *'See the perception of the parents. If they saw their daughters ready for school, they would sardonically expresses " your majesty are you dressing up for the school?" if you go to the school who will carry out the daily functions of the home. They say that daughters are not like the son that they have to know all the work as they in future they have to manage all the stuffs of the home after the marriage. If boys stay outside two three days without letting know the parents, there is no problem but if we do as the boys do staying outside they think negatively. Sometime it so happens that it becomes little late while returning to home from the friend's home even in that case they worried about and scold for that. (FGD with girls, Lamjung)*

Many girls reported the difference in teacher's behaviours for boys and girls during the quantitative survey but was not much discussed during qualitative except some girls reported that teachers focus on good performing students. However, the barriers that teachers are often absent and do not stay and utilize full hours for teaching learning process were reported as barriers. One of the school also reported disallowing teachers to take mobile phones inside classroom as part of the measures to ensure that teachers utilize full hours for teaching learning process.

> *The teachers come to school regularly but they don't take class regularly. They do not spend full hours inside classroom. They also prioritized students scoring well. The teacher ask many questions to both boys and girls but the hard question is asked to 1st, 2nd and 3rd students.*
>
> *In the meeting, we made a rule that teachers mustn't take mobile in classrooms instead keep in the office after we saw them receiving phone calls in their classrooms. This rule is a rule for those who follow but nothing who don't. (KII with SMC, Dhading)*

Household work was reported as a primary barrier especially for girls in quantitative as well as qualitative discussions hence was used in the table above. There is gender-based difference in availability of adequate time for study at home and household workload for boys and girls. As reported during the qualitative discussions while boys have plenty of time to spare for sports and other activities back at home, girls cannot also find leisure time to study and do their home work. The time availability roots to the gender based differences. Girls feel they are bound inside a territory while boys are free to move around. In Parsa, parents reported that engaging girls to household work or sending their boys to work in field to make some income or stand in for their parents is part of their coping mechanisms to poor financial condition of the family.

> *We have financial problem in sending our children to school. We cannot buy books and other materials when asked. If we have household works, we ask our daughter to stay at home whereas if we have work in the field or outside, we ask our sons. Boys are also sent to make some income. (FGD with parents, Parsa)*
>
> *Besides going to school, girls carry on HH chores such as fetching water, preparing meal, grazing animals etc. whereas boys help their parents in field work which girls physically cannot do. (FGD with girls, Parsa)*

Girls do the works at home but boys do not. Girls do some dishwashing but boys do not have to. Boys roam around the village but they do not do anything at home. Boys are like the wind wherever they want to move they move. Girls study as much as they have leisure time. It so happens that soon they sit down for the study, there may be some call for the errands o it's disturbing. It's good to study at home before teacher teach in the class but if I tried to manage time for this apart from managing home stuffs, there is no time sometime not even time for the snack (day meal). If there are no parents at home because they have to go in the farm for the work so we ourselves have to prepare food for the family (FGD with girls, Lamjung)

In addition to the barriers discussed above, the menstruation among women was one of the barriers that affected their attendance in school with some possible implications on learning outcomes. Not only the girls are likely to miss school during menstruation due to unavailability of sanitary pads in school, unavailability of clean toilet with arrangements to dispose sanitary pads, and place to take rest. Back at home, the learning environment is disturbed by the discriminatory practices that do not allow them to sleep in same bed or same room, enter inside kitchen, and other restrictions. In schools with sanitary pads and good toilets, girls reported that they find it comfortable to attend school also during menstruation.

We are allowed to go to school during our menstruation and there is not restriction from the family. However, there is no room to take rest in the school during menstrual cramps. Although there is separate toilet for boys and girls, they are not clean enough. Some girls, thus, hesitate to show up in school during those days. (FGD with girls, Parsa)

Girls mostly attend school during the menstruation period. Some girls who feel weak during the period do not attend school. There is facility of sanitary pad in the school. We also have girls friendly toilet though there is not enough water available. There are challenges during menstruation back at home. We have to stay outside home, and there is a chance of catching cold and get sick. We won't be able to study. (FGD with girls, Surkhet)

For out of school girls, many questions about school related factors raised to in-school girls were not applicable. However, the data indicate that most of the girls need to work at home: there were 61 per cent girls who reported the need to work at home for at least a quarter of the day. The caregivers of 27 per cent girls reported that involvement in care work was a barrier to their education. It will be important to note that this is the proportion based on reporting by caregivers who are likely to undermine the hours spent by girls in household work. While parents mostly considered education to be worth spending, one in ten caregivers believed that there is no point making equal investment in educating girls compared to the boys. In their opinion, the investment on girls' education is not equally productive.

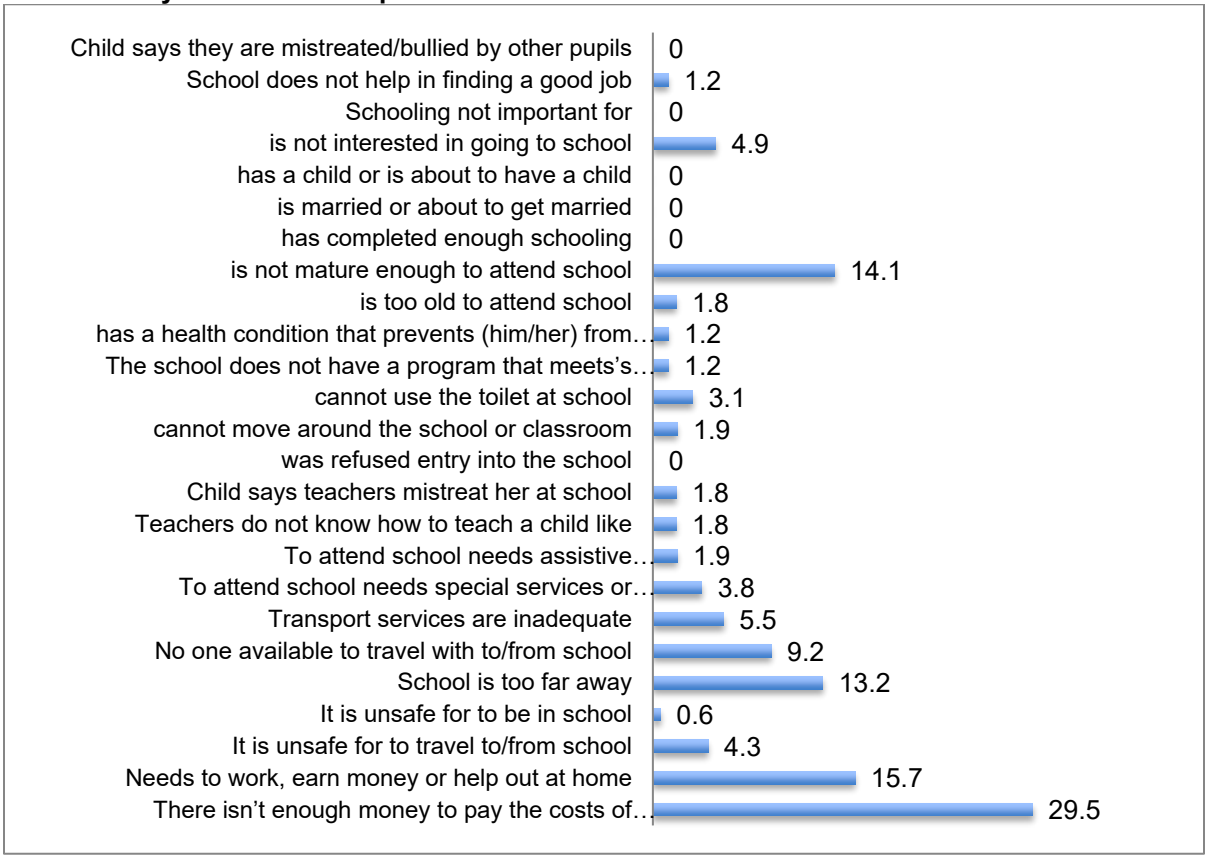
Table 6a. Potential barriers (out of school girls 6-9 years)

	Intervention (Baseline)
Sample breakdown (Girls)	
Safety:	
Fairly or very unsafe travel to schools in the area (%)	8.2%
Doesn't feel safe travelling to/from school (%)	9.4%
Parental/caregiver support:	
% of households who report that girls need to work intensively at home (more than a quarter of hours)	61.0%

	Intervention (Baseline)
Sample breakdown (Girls)	
% of households who report work as a barrier to education	27.3%
% of households who report it does not worth to spend on education of girls	10.4%

For out-of-school girls, the very reasons that led to their drop out could be considered as key barriers. The top reasons for them to drop out of school were: lack of money to finance education (30%), need to work at home or engage in paid work to meet livelihood (15%), and school is far (13%). For around 14 per cent girls, they did not enrol directly to school but did enrol them in bridge course considering that they are not mature enough to attend school.

Chart 6b. Key reasons for drop out



The qualitative discussions on why some of the girls dropped out and it may be difficult for them to enrol back at school indicate that reasons very similar to those identified in the quantitative data. The grade repetition, and early marriage was not covered as a barrier. The lack of

financial resources to fund children's education, and the need for the children to support family with household based care work and income generating works were the barriers equally discussed and reported in qualitative data.

> *Girls in this locality mostly get married at 16-20 years of their age. And they don't continue their study after marriage. And school has not taken any step to bring them back to school even after their marriage to this date. Boys drop to work and make some income. School has made some effort to bring drop out students back to school maintaining their records with the help of their parents. But they hesitate to continue their study in the same class where they dropped out from because their colleagues have already been in the senior classes and due to their age factor also. (KII with Head Teacher, Parsa)*

Correspondence between the barriers included in the theory of change and barriers identified by the baseline study

Most of the barriers identified in the theory of change were observed and reported during the baseline study as barriers. However, during qualitative discussions, the girls, parents, teachers and other stakeholders came out with number of other school and government related barriers such as physical facilities, teacher training, availability of teaching learning materials inside classroom and utilization of these materials by teachers, financial pressure upon school to finance teacher salaries and other school related barriers which were not raised with priority. Similarly, the theory of change includes the barriers that are linked with transition of out-of-school girls of age 18-25 years to employment and business to some extent, but does not include the possible barriers in readmitting the girls to school from the bridge course. During the baseline survey, getting girls back to school and keeping them retained in school was found to have multiple barriers related to the ability of family to finance education for their children.

3.4 Intersection between key characteristics and barriers

There is some relation between the key characteristics of family and the barriers for children along with some interrelationship and correlation between the household level characteristics. The education level of household head, poverty status of the family, and the caste group – being a dalit household had some relation with the barriers. The children from poor households were not getting sufficient time to study. It was largely because they needed to either support their parents in the household work so that the parents can engage themselves in wage works or they needed to be engaged directly in work to contribute to the family income[13].

> *Parents think that girls might take wrong path if they study more. Also, we need do household work and be involved in earning if other family members are not able to earn. Girls face challenges to continue school due to stomach pain during menstruation. (FGD with girls, Parsa)*

> *Girls get up early and the go to fetch water, prepare meal, cut grass and then go to school. After school, they should go home safe, and have snacks, then prepare dinner and only after thatopen the books if there is some time but she already feels sleepy and goes to bed. Girls might work for 4-5 hours in school days, 12 hours in holidays. (FGD with girls, Lamjung)*

[13] Reported during the qualitative discussions with Head Teacher in Surkhet, and FGD with girls in Parsa district.

Similarly, there were significantly large proportions of students reporting inadequate support from their parents for study if their parents are uneducated. Discussed in earlier sections taking reference from qualitative discussions, the educated parents were reported to be conscious about the support it takes for their children to perform well in school, and were also able to provide any additional support. During discussions with parents in Dhading, the parents reported that despite the fact that they are investing in their children's education and wish best for their future, they can not really help their children with studies nor inquire about the performance of their children in school, and are also negligent in allowing enough time for their children to study back at home.

To no surprise, the children from poor households and dalit households were more irregular to school than other groups. Compared to non-dalits (5%), 10 percent children from the dalit households were irregular to school. Similarly compared to non-poor households (3.7%), 7.3 per cent children from among poor households were absent in school. The reasons were similar to those discussed above. The parents are not able to arrange basic learning materials, proper food, and moral encouragement for their children[14]. The children from households with low parental education and from among dalit households also needed to give more hours for household work to an extent that there were significantly larger proportion of girls considering household work as a key barrier to school education from among households with low education level of parents and struggling with income poverty.

The language of instruction in school had effect on the feeling welcome at school. Significant larger proportion of girls who speak language different than the language of instruction did not feel welcome in school. In Parsa, the qualitative discussions indicated that the girls prefer teachers who can speak local language and enjoy those classes more than the classes that are entirely conducted in Nepali language[15]. In fact, Nepali language is low scoring subject for the girls in the district.

Table 11:Barriers to education by characteristic (In-school girls)

Barriers:	**Head of the household has low level of education**		**Household is poor**		**Household is dalit**	
	Yes	**No**	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**
Parent/caregiver support						
***Sufficient time to study:* High chore burden (more than 2 hours a day)**	*2.8%*	4.3%	3.6%	*6.3%**	4.1%	3.9%
Doesn't get support to stay in school and do well (%)	4.3%**	2.7%	3.6%	2.9%	3.7%	2.4%
Highest grade to attend	10	12	9	12	10	12

[14] KII with Head Teacher, Surkhet district.
[15] Reported by girls in Parsa during focus group discussions.

Barriers:	Head of the household has low level of education		Household is poor		Household is dalit	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
% of girls who need to spend at least a quarter of day for household work	65.6**	58.9	63.0	62.1	65.4*	61.5
% of households who consider household work as a barrier to school education	24.8**	20.6	28.3 **	21.8	20.2	23.4
School Level:			Girl does not speak language of instruction			
Disagrees teachers make them feel welcome			6.5%**	4.0%		
Attends school irregularly (%)	*8.1%*	5.7%	*7.3%**	3.8%	10.5%**	5.9%

*Source: Caregivers survey and girl's survey. The chi-square or t-test for differences are indicated as ~p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01.*

The household level variables were correlated. Significantly larger proportion of household head with low level of education lived in poor household. Similarly, the poor households and low level of education was highly correlated with dalit households indicating that significantly large number of poor households with low level education were dalit families. Education of household head was linked with the poverty situation of the family. The qualitative discussions also highlighted the fact that the families with low level of education among household heads are mostly poor households with weak education related practices. Similarly, the discussions also pointed that dalit households are mostly poor, and have tendency to engage their children more in paid or unpaid work, and the tendency of drop out is also high among the dalit, poor, and households headed by a person with low level of education.

During the analysis, it was attempted to check the correlation and relationship between all family characteristics and barriers to learning and transition. Only the indicators with some correlation were presented in the table. Other characteristics and barriers were examined for their relationship but excluded in the table.

3.5 Appropriateness of project activities to the characteristics and barriers identified

The findings indicate that there is a need to focus on dalit and poor households especially in allowing sufficient time for girls to study at home, and supporting and backing them up to complete their education.

Population and sample

Based on the discussions made earlier, the sample for in-school girls as well as out-of-school girls of age 6-9 years is highly representative of its population. They were well represented by

districts in proportion to their population. There were very few beneficiaries identified among out-of-school girls of age 18-25 years, and moreover, it was difficult to reach them. The target beneficiaries, however, were also beyond the anticipated age group. Among in-school girls, there were 5 per cent girls of age much higher than the target age, and among out-of-school girls, there were 39 per cent girls who were of age group more than 9 years. The project is on-course to meet its target to meet marginalized and extremely marginalized girls. However, earlier estimation of the marginalized groups who are married (10%) was much higher than the actual proportion of girls married (around 1%) for in-school girls.

Linkage to the theory of change

The barriers reported during the baseline largely matched with the barriers to be addressed by the theory of change. The common barriers were early marriage, discrimination during menstruation, school facilities to support girls during menstruation, household work load, discrimination in terms of parental attitude towards boys and girls education, lack of trained teachers etc. For in-school girls, the barriers related to household workload, limited time available to study at home, and gender based discrimination in terms of freedom (mobility and free time available to girls) were more pronounced barriers than parental attitude. During quantitative as well as qualitative interviews, parents were, theoretically, positive about educating the girls. Although the cost of schooling was discussed as a barrier to transition in the theory change, fees and ability of parents to pay were key barriers to transition for in-school girls. The theory of change does not discuss about the fees being charged by schools (directly and indirectly), and also in the name of tuition and donations. The practice of charging fees is against the constitutional provision and legal provision that the education till secondary level (grade 10) remains free[16]. The qualitative discussions highlighted that the barriers related to cost of education is also somehow related to poor financial situation of families[17], and lack of adequate support from government to encourage them to remain in schools (such as scholarship). In the opinion of parents, the scholarship provided, though is helpful, is very negligible amount to have any effect on the decision of girls to continue their education. The head teachers and SMC members reported that the schools are underfunded and do not have resources to arrange basic necessities such as mid-day meal[18]. Besides, school infrastructure and facilities, identified as barriers in the theory of change, were confirmed as additional barrier to girls' education. Unavailability of proper sanitation facilities including girls' friendly toilets and sanitary pads were cited to be reasons for irregularity. Not explicitly included in the list of barriers within theory of change, the qualitative discussions indicated that students in higher grades drop out also because they are not very hopeful that education will bring meaningful changes in their lives.

> *The drop out is high in 9th and 10th class few students are from 8th class. But higher number of students from 9th and 10th class quit school. This happens owing to the marital or poor economic status. I must say*

[16] The constitution of Nepal, 2015 & Education Act (Ninth Amendment), 2017
[17] FGD with girls in Surkhet and parents in Parsa district.
[18] KII with Head Teacher in Surkhet, and SMC in Dhading.

they have not understood the importance of the education. They have seen many of their seniors who completed school education remaining idle, and looking for opportunities of foreign migration. (Interview with Head Teacher, Surkhet)

While the theory of change discusses about the barriers related to out-of-school girls of age 18-25 years who are supposed to get engaged in skill training, job or self-business, the barriers for girls currently attending bridge course to attend back to school were not specifically mentioned. The quantitative figures from the baseline indicate that barriers similar to in-school girls are likely to affect them: the cost of education, household workload, and need to be engaged in paid work. However, these barriers are likely to be more influential to the bridge course girls compared to in-school girls. In addition, they are likely face challenges to adjust in school environment, be confident that the age gap between them and in-school students does not matter, and they are able to perform well academically in the school environment much different than the bridge course. In qualitative discussions, some of the schools reported to have made successful as well unsuccessful attempts to enroll children back to school. The common learning was that the children to be enrolled back require good counselling, moral back up and constant support in schools. The schools, often, do not have such arrangements in place[19].

The barriers identified for girls of age 18-25 years were similar to those identified and brought under discussions during baseline. The lack of opportunities to receive skill training and lack of business start up support were the common barriers. The provision of the project to provide TVET support for out-of-school girls can be considered relevant. During qualitative discussions, TVET was considered a most suitable option for girls who drop out of school so that they, mostly not in a position to continue their education, can make their living through skill based jobs. However, the theory of change overlooks the barriers related to access to finance and support required to link girls with the employment opportunities and employers.

Yes, they (dropped out) may wish to study more but the situation is not conducive to fulfill their wish. Some girls seek to get the vocational trainings to engage in income generating activities, and thereby making bread and butter for their family. (FGD with girls, Lamjung)

The target group identified and the criteria for marginalization were relevant. The project already anticipates benefiting some little sisters performing low in school. In addition to their learning score, the baseline suggests that it is necessary to target girls coming from certain households/families, i.e. poor and marginalized families, and dalit families. In terms of relevance of activities, the project needs to rethink about sufficiency and relevance of the activities to address the following barriers: fees and high cost of education coupled with poor economic condition and limited financial resources in schools, difference in household workload for girls and boys, psychological and adjustment barriers for out-of-school girls to enroll back to school, and requirement of capital and credit to start up business or link up the girls to possible

[19] KII with Head Techer in Surkhet, FGD with teachers in Parsa, and KII with SMC in Dhading.

employers. The project document also does not clearly mention how it plans provide girls with skill training, and does not discuss the barriers related to market to set up and expand the business.

Box 2: Project's contribution

Why the evaluators sample characteristics may differ from any mapping the project has done for its wider beneficiary population.

At the onset of GEC-1, the project targeted marginalised and extremely marginalised girls prioritising girls coming from Dalit communities. The project continues to work with the same cohort of girls. There are extreme cases where some girls (little sisters) need more support (provision of school materials) than others particularly those who are orphaned and left to the care of relatives.

The project is using different characteristics for certain groups for example age and gender was very important, some new beneficiaries required different characteristics.

The issues of child marriage may not be the issues for all the beneficiaries however, one of the project intervention districts for example Parsa have a higher percentage of child marriage

Why the projects theory of change may not correspond with some of the key barriers identified.

The project's Theory of Change is aligned with addressing the barriers identified above.

Traditional norms and practices are difficult to break particularly for extremely poor families where girls are expected to do household chores. For example, where girls are expected to support in household work, adult champion mentoring of parents is conducted to convince them to send their girls to school so that the whole family and succeeding generations will eventually benefit from their education.

The project will not provide infrastructure but instead work with the school management committee to develop plans that are gender sensitive that includes having separate functional toilets for girls and boys. The project will also build the capacity of the SMC and PTA lobby for funding of their SIPs and conduct social audits so that schools are made accountable to the students, staff and the whole community.

An additional component of the project is increasing awareness on adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASRH) and menstrual hygiene management (MHM) targeted for both girls and boys. Under MHM, the project will teach girls, where necessary, how to make sanitary pads so that they can continue going to class even during their menstrual period.

The relationship between the original little sisters and big sisters has change as the little sisters got older so the projects should look and adopt the new way of mentoring.

The unsafe route to school, particularly during rainy season, was also one of the key barriers identified during baseline study. The risk of landslide, flood or threat of accident due to slippery roads often affected the attendance which was not mention in the ToC. Project should coordinate with the SMC and community to address this barriers.

Whether the project plans to review their Theory of change in light of these findings.

To date, the Theory of Change still holds true but will be reviewed regularly to determine whether it addresses the pathways to change. Possible changes would be in the transition pathways of girls given that in the Education Act, children can choose to go for vocational training after finishing grade 8. In some cases, the project's little sisters are over aged for their grades and opt to go for employment after finishing basic education.

The gender analysis explored and elaborated the gender related barriers that are making it difficult for girls to achieve learning outcomes of certain level, and also to ensure successful transition. This barriers was not much emphasize in the ToC so the projects will focus more on awareness raising on gender and its importance on inclusive education.

4. Key Outcome Findings

4.1 Learning Outcome

The learning outcome was the main long-term outcome anticipated to increase by the project especially for in-school girls (as well as in-school boys indirectly). The baseline study estimated three different scores for learning outcome:

- SeGRA (age specific literacy skills)
- SeGMA (age specific numeracy skills)
- EDGE score (proficiency in English language, and digital literacy)

All of the tests were developed following standard procedures. For SeGRA and SeGMA, the standardized tests were development by Education Review Office within the Ministery of Education (MOE) – an agency specialized and authorized to develop measurement tools for learning outcomes. ERO piloted and calibrated the test tools for their reliability. The tests were developed closely in line with the guidelines set forward by GEC for its learning tool. The EDGE score was estimated using globally standardized tools used by British Council. For the note, the learning tests were only administered with the in-school girls for whom the primary long-term outcome was learning. The out-of-school girls were not included in the learning tests since the project aims to achieve transition related outcomes for them.

4.1.1 Secondary Grades Reading Assessment (SeGRA)

SeGRA is a literacy test for secondary grades students. It primarily tests reading and comprehension skills among the students. The SeGRA test, administered for an hour, involved 12 tasks compiled into three sub-task categories. The maximum score a student could obtain was 20 points.

<table>
<tr>
<td>Sub-task 1 (7 points)
• Task 1a Basic Understanding
• Task 1b Basic Understanding
• Task 1c Simple Comprehension
• Task 1d Complex Comprehension
• Task 1e Complex Comprehension</td>
<td>Sub-task 2 (8 points)
• Task 2a Basic Understanding
• Task 2b Simple Comprehension
• Task 2c Added Comprehension
• Task 2d Complex Comprehension
• Task 2e Comprehension (+ analytical questions)
• Task 2f Comprehension (+inferential)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2">Sub-task 3 (5 points)
Task 3 (Short Essay)</td>
</tr>
</table>

The average score for SEGRA was 34.1 per cent for girls in intervention schools compared to 36.9 per cent for control schools. The score varied widely with the high standard deviation of 21.2 per cent. The scores were higher for higher grades, and lower for lower grades. For girls

studying in Grade 6 in intervention schools, the average SEGRA score was 24 per cent which gradually increased to 52 per cent for the girls studying in Grade 10. With increase in score by grades, the score differences between the weak scorers and high scorers also got wider. The SEGRA scores, however, were not significantly different between intervention and control areas for different grades. However, in aggregate, the control schools had significantly higher SEGRA score than intervention school.

Table 11: Literacy (SeGRA)

Grade	**Intervention Group Mean**	**Control Group Mean**	**Standard Deviation in the intervention group**
Grade 6	**24.2**	**25.9**	**14.9**
Grade 7	**29.8**	**31.9**	**17.6**
Grade 8	**39.2**	**39.2**	**17.7**
Grade 9	**44.2**	**47.2**	**18.4**
Grade 10	**52.2**	**57.7**	**18.3**
Aggregate average	**34.1**	**36.9***	**21.2**

*Source: SEGRA and SEGMA test. The significance of differences in t-test are indicated as ~p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01.*

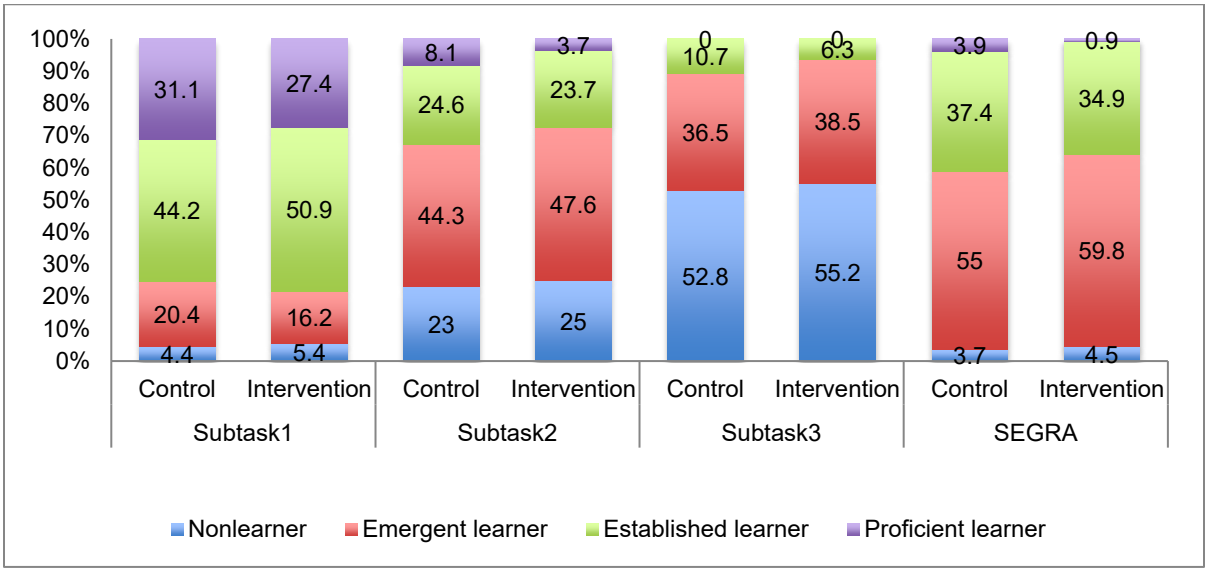
While analysed for the sub-tasks, the study attempted to categorize the girls in four categories based on their scores: (i) Non-learner (scoring 0%), (ii) emergent learner (scoring between 1%-40%), (iii) established learner (41%-80%), and (iv) proficient learner (81%-100%). In project schools, there were four per cent non-learners, 60 per cent emergent learners, 35 per cent established learner, and one per cent proficient learner. The proportion was distributed in similar fashion for control school with slightly higher proportion of girls (4%) in control schools considered proficient learner.

Table 11a. Distribution of categories of learners (by sub-tasks)

	Subtask1		**Subtask2**		**Subtask3**		**SEGRA**	
	Control	**Intervention**	**Control**	**Intervention**	**Control**	**Intervention**	**Control**	**Intervention**
Non-learner	4.4	5.4	23.0	25	52.8	55.2	3.7	4.5
Emergent learner	20.4	16.2	44.3	47.6	36.5	38.5	55.0	59.8
Established learner	44.2	50.9	24.6	23.7	10.7	6.3	37.4	34.9
Proficient learner	31.1	27.4	8.1	3.7	0	0	3.9	0.9

The graphical presentation of scores indicate shift from higher to lower level of learners while moving from first to second, and then third sub-task (increased difficulty level). While there were five per cent non-learned in the first task in intervention school, the proportion of non-learner increased 25 per cent in the second task, and 55 per cent in the third task. In aggregate, the proportion of emergent learner is the highest followed by established learner while there were negligible proportions of proficient learners.

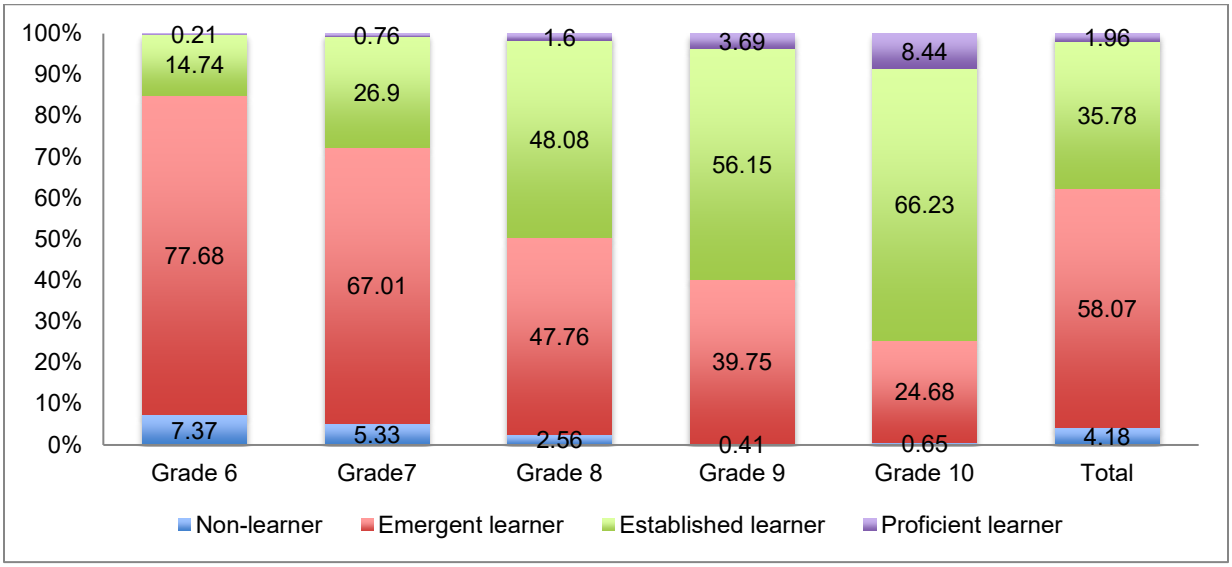
Chart 11b. SEGRA scores by sub-tasks and learner categories



SEGRA proficiency level by grade and age group

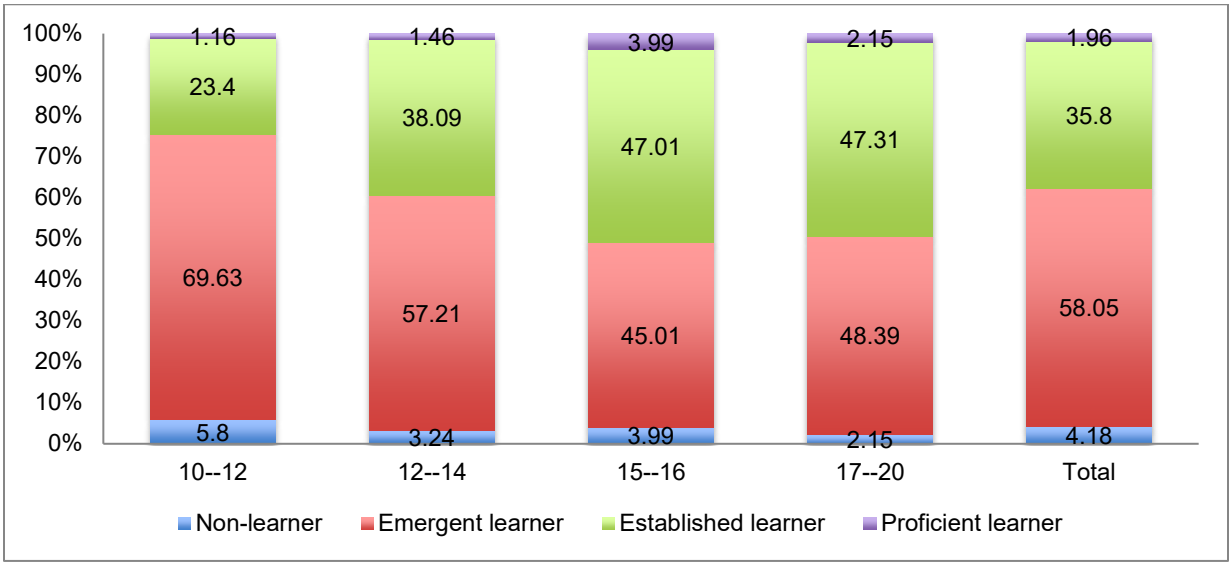
In aggregate, the proportion of established as well as proficient learner increased by grades: the proportion of proficient learner though remained low in proportion increased from 0.2 per cent in Grade 6 to 8.4 per cent in Grade 10. The proportion of emergent learner increased from 14.7 per cent in Grade 6 to 66 per cent in Grade 10. Similarly, there were only negligible (0.6%) numbers of non-learners in Grade 10. Interestingly, there were still 24.7 per cent girls enrolled in Grade 10 who were emergent learners, and were at the high risk of failing the examinations affecting their transition.

Chart 11c. SEGRA proficiency levels by Grades



By age group, the proficiency level of learners improved by age group from 10 to 14 years. However, there was no change in proficiency levels from 15 to 20 years. The age group of 17-20 years had very few girls either as proficient learner or non-learner but large proportion were emergent or established learner. The significant proportions of emergent learner in higher age group may face risk of dropping out of school if their performance deteriorates.

Chart 11d. SEGRA proficiency levels by age group



On the whole the leadership score was poor with the learners mostly scoring between 20-80 per cent, and with high standard deviation. The scores were poor, and disparities were high for the third sub-task that required girls to compile their ideas, comprehend the thoughts, and arrange as well as narrate their opinions. At sub-task level, there were no ceiling and floor effects observed. However, there were no children considered proficient learners in the third task with overall number of proficient learners being very low. This finding was observed and reported also during qualitative discussions. In the opinion of girls as well as teachers, there were fewer children scoring very high or very low. Most of the girls were emerging learner with poor scores in complex comprehension and analysis, and in organizing and presenting their ideas in the form of essay. In the opinion of teachers, the difference in scores was due to liberal promotion mechanism. Some students are upgraded to higher grades without meeting basic learning requirements to provide an opportunity to build later. Some of the students in the class do not attend school on regular basis. Based on classroom observation, the lack of abilities and practice of the teachers to focus on weak performing children and prioritize them might have aggravated the difference.

4.1.2 Numeracy Skills (SEGMA)

SEGMA is a mathematical test that involved a total of 19 tasks covering arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and basic calculation skills. The maximum score one could obtain was 24 points. The test was of around 90 minutes, and involved three sub-tasks. The first sub-task consisted of 10 tasks/questions followed by second sub-task consisting of six tasks, and third sub-task consisting of three tasks.

Subtask 1 • Task 1a Factorization 1 • Task 1b Factorization 2 • Task 1c Percentage • Task 1d Shape and Area 1 • Task 1e Shape and Area 2 • Task 1f Basic Geometry • Task 1g Simplification • Task 1h Word Problems • Task 1i Unitary Method • Task 1j Simple and Compound Interest	Subtask 2 • Task 2a Basic Algebra 1 • Task 2b Basic Algebra 2 • Task 2c Basic Algebra 3 • Task 2d Basic Algebra 4 • Task 2e Complex Algebra 1 • Task 2f Complex Algebra 2 Subtask 3 • Task 3a Complex Word Problems • Task 3b Geometry • Task 3c Basic Statistics

In aggregate, the SEGMA scores were lower compared to SEGRA. The girls from intervention schools scored 20 per cent in aggregate, significantly lower than 26 per cent for girls in control schools. While the scores increased gradually with grades from 11 per cent for intervention schools in Grade 6 to 38 per cent for Grade 10. For three grades (grade 6, 9 and 10), the scores were significantly higher for control schools. Here, it will be worthy to note that most of the control schools well large host schools while many intervention schools were feeder schools. The scores were significantly higher for the first level of the basic education, and both grades of the secondary level, which observe the sizable number of inter-school transition and transfers.

A chart below presents the difference in average scores by grades and for SEGRA and SEGMA for girls studying in interventions schools.

Table 12: Numeracy (SEGMA)

Grade	**Intervention Group Mean**	**Control Group Mean**	**Standard Deviation in the intervention group**
Grade 6	**10.9**	**15****	**11.5**
Grade 7	**15.2**	**17**	**13.1**
Grade 8	**25.3**	**28.6**	**18.9**
Grade 9	**31**	**37.1***	**19.8**
Grade 10	**37.9**	**49.6****	**23.6**
Aggregate average	**20.3**	**25.6****	**18.6**

*Source: SEGRA and SEGMA test. The significance of differences in t-test are indicated as ~p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01.*

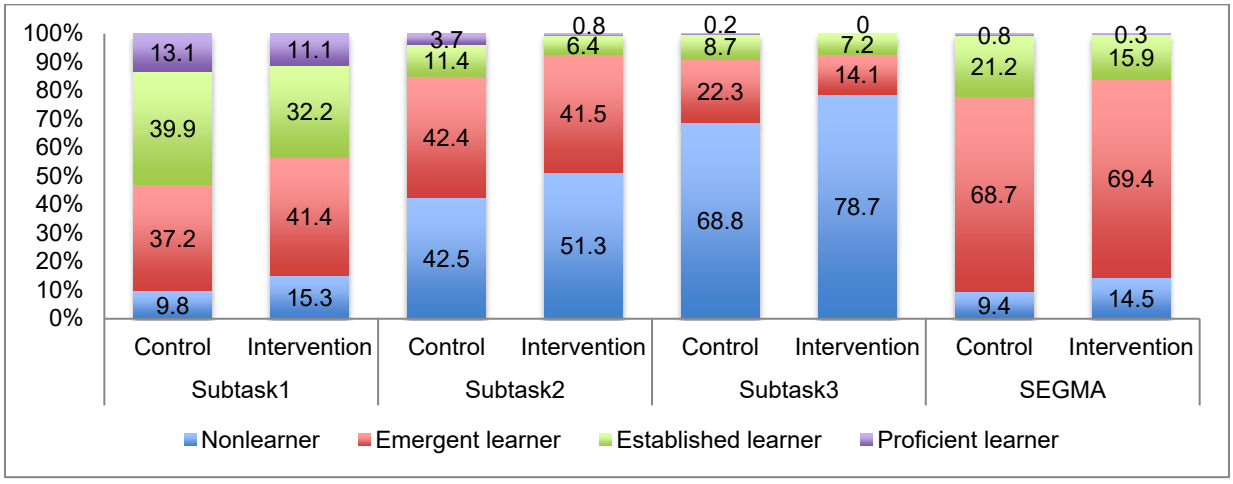
While analysed for the sub-tasks, the study attempted to categorize the girls in four categories based on their scores: (i) Non-learner (scoring 0%), (ii) emergent learner (scoring between 1%-40%), (iii) established learner (41%-80%), and (iv) proficient learner (81%-100%). In project schools, there were 14 per cent non-learners, 70 per cent emergent learners, and 16 per cent established learner. The proportion was distributed in similar fashion for control school with slightly lower proportion of girls (9%) in control schools were non-learner.

Table 12a: Numeracy (SEGMA) distribution by sub-tasks and learning categories

	Subtask1		Subtask2		Subtask3		SEGMA	
	Control	Intervention	Control	Intervention	Control	Intervention	Control	Intervention
Non-learner	9.8	15.3	42.5	51.3	68.8	78.7	9.4	14.5
Emergent learner	37.2	41.4	42.4	41.5	22.3	14.1	68.7	69.4
Established learner	39.9	32.2	11.4	6.4	8.7	7.2	21.2	15.9
Proficient learner	13.1	11.1	3.7	0.8	0.2	0	0.8	0.3

Similar to SEGRA, the proportion of non-learner increased with increasing difficultly level. For the sub-task category 3, nearly 8 in 10 girls in intervention schools were non-learners scoring zero. The proportion of non-learners was 15 per cent for first sub-task, 51 per cent for second sub-task, and 79 per cent for third sub-tsk. The number of proficient learners for second and third sub-task was close to none.

Chart 12b. SEGMA scores by sub-tasks and categories

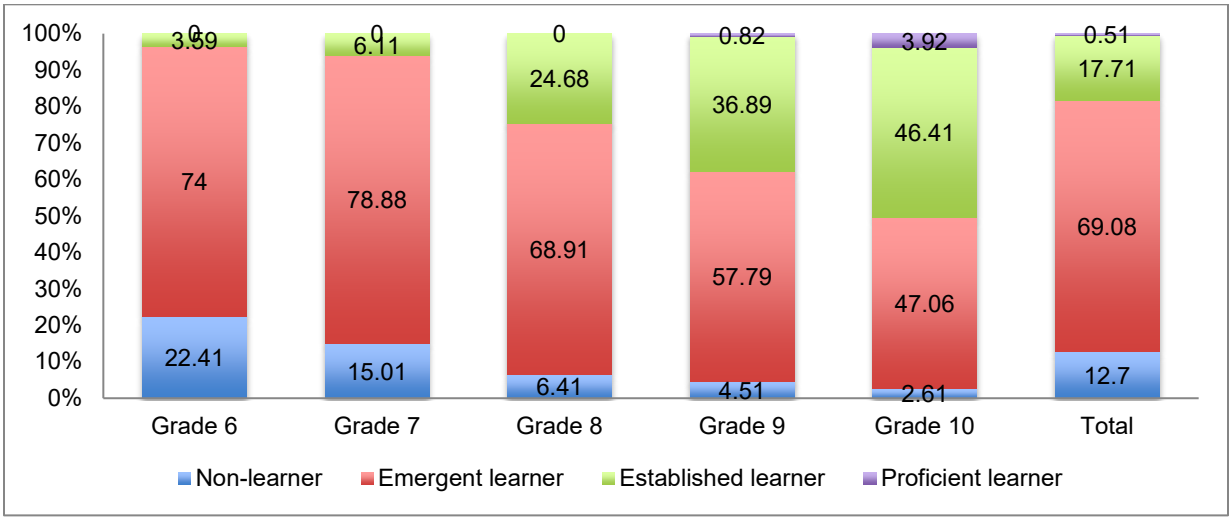


Grades and proficiency level in SEGMA

The proficiency levels for SEGMA improved with grades. While there were no girls categorized as proficient learner in grades 6, 7 and 8, there were 3.9 per cent girls in Grade 10 who could be considered proficient learner. The proportion of established learner also increased with grade:

3.6 per cent in Grade 6 to 46 per cent in Grade 10. A large proportion of girls (47%) were still considered emergent learner with 3 per cent non-learners in Grade 10. These groups scoring poorly in SEGMA while in Grade 10 could be a group to provide intensive support to improve their numeracy skills.

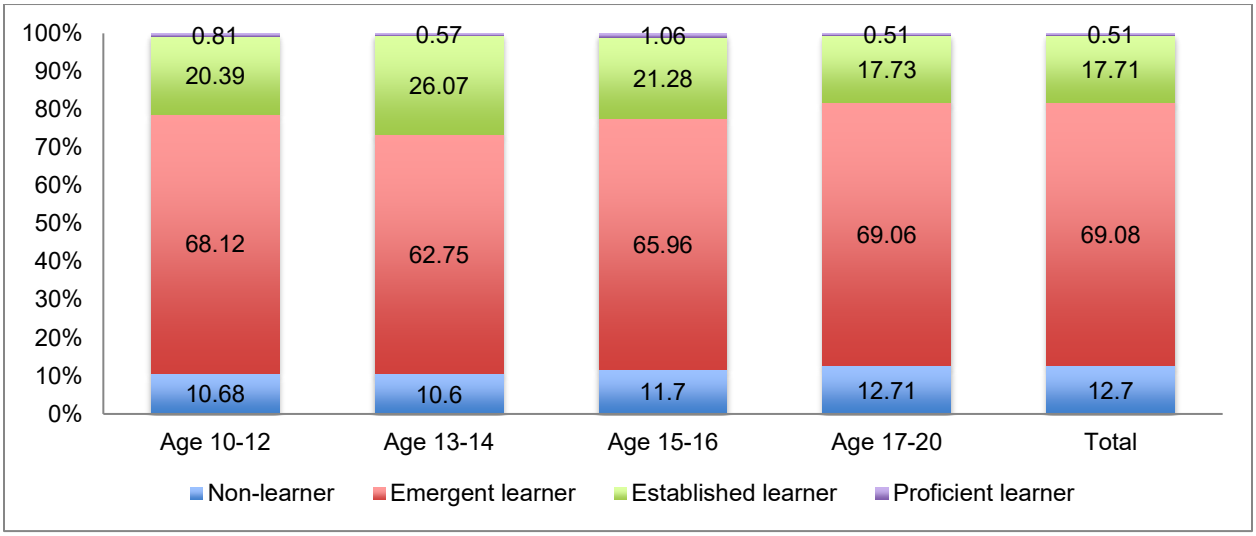
Chart 12c. SEGMA proficiency levels by Grades



Age group and proficiency level in SEGMA

For SEGMA, the proficiency levels were not different by the age group. In fact, there were larger number of emergent learners and non-learners among the girls of age higher than 15 years. A challenge for the project will be to ensure that the 13 per cent non-learners from age group 17-20 are safely transited from the school or their learning levels are improved.

Chart 12c. SEGMA proficiency levels by age group



At sub-task level, there were no clear ceiling or floor effects although the normal curve was leptokurtic, with some inclination towards the floor effect. There were trifling numbers of girls considered as proficient learners for second and third sub-task. The girls scored poorly in basic algebra as well as complex algebra, complex word problems, geometry, and basic statistics. During qualitative discussions, it was recognized that most of the students are poor in mathematics right from the beginning, and there was also practice of organizing additional make up class (paid additionally by students) for English, Mathematics and Science beyond school hours. The students often struggled in understanding and using algebra and geometry. Compared to the literacy, 7 in 10 students were emergent learners for numeracy. VSO requires prioritizing numeracy in its interventions targeting improvement of learning outcomes. There was a common understanding among the girls, parents and teachers that most of the girls were poor in mathematics, and this is the prime threat to their chance to promote to next grade. During qualitative discussions, it was reported that girls were enrolled in additional make up classes for mathematics, particularly for grades 8, 9 and 10. The teachers blamed on the poor foundation of mathematics during early school years as a reason for poor numeracy scores. The parents and girls, however, also believed that the school level teaching and learning process also has rooms for improvement.

Grade level

Although the official grade levels against the curriculum is not available, based on the information provided by ERO experts who development the tools, for each grade, the following grade levels were assigned especially starting with grade 8,9, and 10.

Table 12d. Proficiency level for SEGRA and SEGMA

	Proficiency level for SEGMA	Proficiency level in SeGRA
Grade 8	Foundational skills in first sub-task Foundational skills in second sub-task Foundational skills in third sub-task	Foundational skills in analytical answering Foundational skills in inferential answering Foundational skills in essay drafting
Grade 9	Established skills in first sub-task Established skills in second sub-task Established skills in third sub-task	Established skills in analytical answering Established skills in inferential answering Established skills in essay drafting
Grade 10	Proficient skills in first sub-task Proficient skills in second sub-task Proficient skills in third sub-task	Proficient skills in analytical answering Proficient skills in inferential answering Proficient skills in essay drafting

The grade 8 students are expected to have foundational skills in all sub-tasks while students from Grade 9 are expected to be at established skills, and Grade 10 as proficiency level.
In actual data presentation, there were very few students who could meet the proficiency levels as anticipated, particularly for Grade 10 and Grade 9. There were 53 per cent who could meet anticipated proficiency level for SEGRA in Grade 8 followed by 13 per cent in Grade 9, and no one in Grade 10. For SEGMA, there were 33 per cent in Grade 8 meeting anticipated

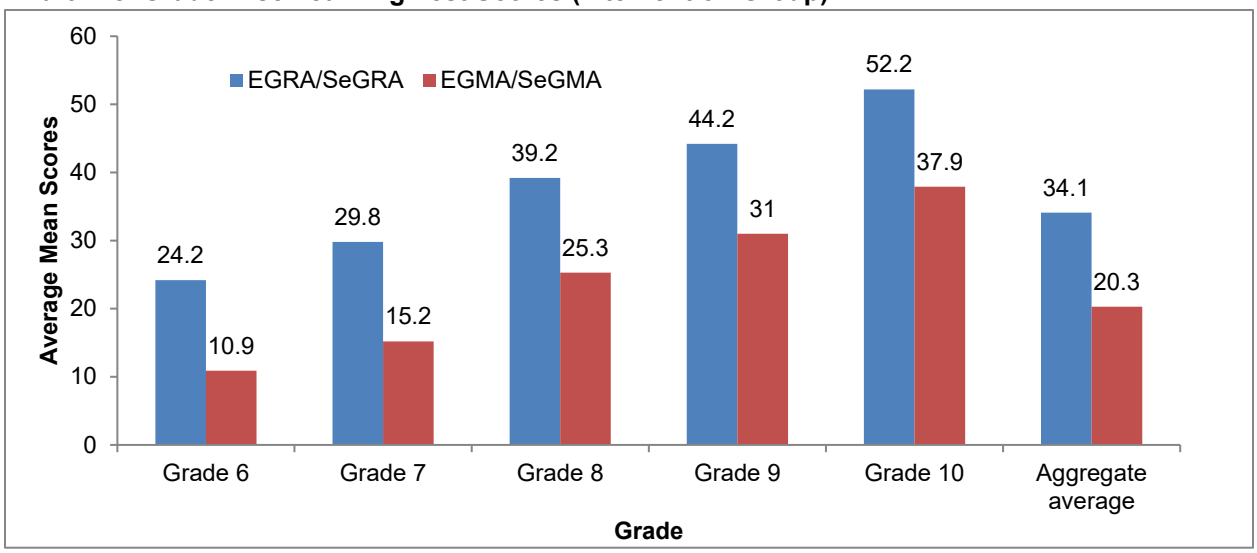
proficiency level followed by 18 per cent in Grade 9, and one per cent in Grade 10. The proportion indicates that the proficiency level of girls does not increase with the required extent with increase in the grade level.

Table 12e. Proficiency level for SEGRA and SEGMA

Test	Estimated proficiency level in SeGRA/SEGMA	% of girls in who meet proficiency level		
		Grade 8	**Grade 9**	**Grade 10**
SEGRA	Analytical answering (Foundational skill for grade 8, established skill for Grade 9, proficient for Grade 10)	96.8	58.0	51.9
	Inferential answering (Foundational skill for grade 8, established skill for Grade 9, proficient for Grade 10)	84.3	48.0	20.1
	Essay drafting Foundational skill for grade 8, established skill for Grade 9, proficient for Grade 10)	53.4	13.0	0.0
SEGMA	Sub-task 1 (Foundational skill for grade 8, established skill for Grade 9, proficient for Grade 10)	93.0	65.2	24.2
	Sub-task 2 (Foundational skill for grade 8, established skill for Grade 9, proficient for Grade 10)	59.7	18.9	11.8
	Sub-task 3 (Foundational skill for grade 8, established skill for Grade 9, proficient for Grade 10)	32.7	17.9	0.7

In terms of scores, the average learning scores were higher for literacy and slightly lower for numeracy. The lower SEGMA scores indicate towards weaker numeracy skills. The general scores are presented below:

Chart 12c. Grade-wise Learning Test Scores (Intervention Group)



Source: SEGRA and SEGMA test.

Although there is no national level data available on SEGRA and SEGMA score and they are newly introduced during this baseline study in line with the national curriculum, the scores also corroborate with the findings from national level learning achievement studies that report poor performance in mathematics and related subjects. In the national learning achievement study, the learning achievement rate for mathematics has remained close to 30 per cent[20]. The learning achievement rate of students in Nepal has always remained low at the international level, particularly for numeracy. The SEGMA scores were lower than SEGRA score but had higher standard deviation for higher grades. While scores increased for higher grades in terms of means, the scores also varied widely for different students. In terms of the data collection timing for the tests, they were conducted towards the end of the academic year when the girls were all set to attend their final examination of the year, and were conducted on a random day without any exam preparation opportunities for girls.

4.1.3 EDGE (English and Digital Learning for Girls Education)

In addition to the SEGRA and SEGMA, the baseline study further used EDGE to assess the digital literacy and English speaking ability among 220 in Surkhet district[21]. VSO plans to collaborate with British Council for English Speaking and Digital Education component. The English proficiency test involved rating of students in a six-scale category (A0, PreA1, PreA1+, A1, A1+ & A2). The digital literacy involved five sub-tasks:

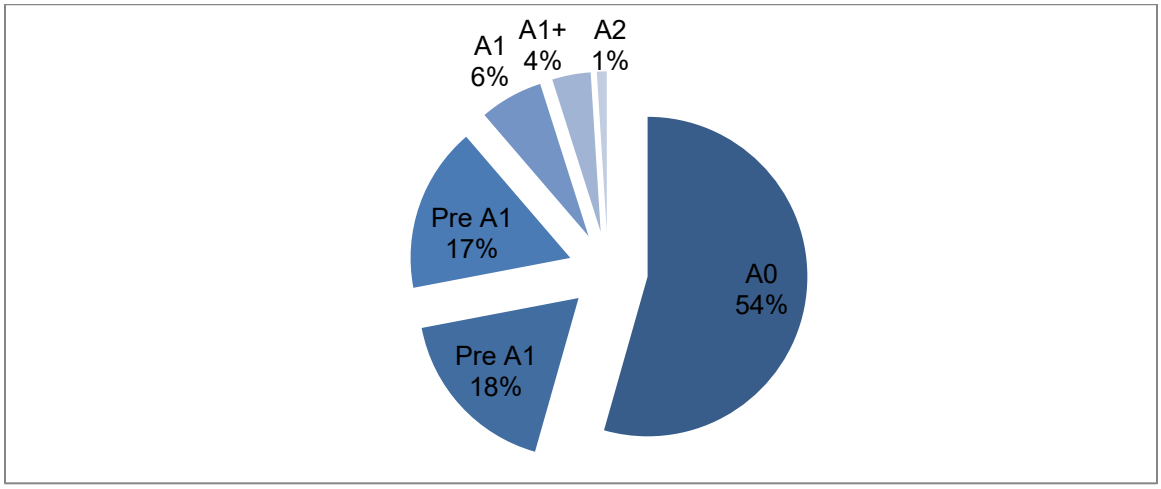
- Subtask 1 Word Task
- Subtask 2 Excel Task
- Subtask 3 PowerPoint Task 1
- Subtask 4 PowerPoint Task 2
- Subtask 5 Internet Task

English speaking

In the test administered entirely with selected little sisters from the intervention schools, more than 54 per cent children scored 0 during the English test. There were 35 per cent who managed to get to pre A1 level with only one per cent scoring A2 level. The average score was only 0.9 points (less than 20%) out of total of 5 points. The results are not surprising considering that the ability of students to speak English has been reported to poor in many of the previous studies. In fact, students get lowest average score in English, only second to mathematics, in the school level examinations[22]. At the community level, there is a tendency of parents from well-off families to send their children to private school for better reading, writing and speaking abilities in English. The findings indicate a big challenge for VSO to work with British Council to upscale the English proficiency of girls, which is currently at the very low level.

[20] Department of Education (DOE), (2016) Consolidated Flash Report 2015/16
[21] The sample size (drawn from same sampling frame) was different for digital test and literacy test since they were conducted on different dates.
[22] http://www.doe.gov.np/assets/uploads/files/0b0bd52ff7d1c80ac6ddab878d9c9b0d.pdf

Chart 3. English Proficiency scores (rating from A0 – A2)



Digital literacy

The scores were further lower for digital literacy with almost no girls having proficiency in using computers or digital media. Large proportions of girls (87%) were characterized as non-user followed by 10 per cent novice users. The distribution of scores is provided below:

Table 12: Digital learning scores

Total Score Range	No of girls	%	Rating
0	192	87.21	Non-user
(1-3)	21	9.59	Novice
(4-6)	4	1.83	Beginner
(7-9)	1	0.46	Competent
(10-12)	2	0.91	Proficient
13	0	0.00	Expert

The poor proficiency in digital literacy is also not surprising considering the qualitative discussions that indicated that most of the schools do not have computers, and barely any school use the computers to teach children about computers. Some of the schools reported the weakness in terms of not having teachers with computer skills to make students adept in some basic computer skills. It will be a challenge for VSO to work with the existing capacity of the schools to ensure that the target girls are made computer literate. Since the girls will not have computers at schools and back home, and they are also less likely to have adequate extra time to utilize for learning, there is a need to have detailed review and discussions on how the girls could be supported to enhance their digital proficiency.

The tables below present analysis of SEGRA and SEGMA results by sub-tasks, and categorize the learners in four sub-categories. For the analysis, only the scores from interventions schools were considered.

Table 15: Foundational literacy skills gaps

Categories	Task 1a Basic understanding	Task 1b Basic understanding	Task 1c Simple comprehension	Task 1d Complex comprehension	Task 1e Comprehension and analysis	Sub-task Category 1
Non-learner0%	14.3%	37.5%	31.8	29.1%	51.1%	5.0%
Emergent learner1%-40%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	17.7%
Established learner41%-80%	0%	0%	11.7%	0%	21.6%	48.6%
Proficient learner81%-100%	85.7%	62.5%	56.5%	70.9%	27.3%	28.7%
	100%	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Categories	Task 2a Basic understanding	Task 2b Simple comprehension	Task 2c Added comprehension	Task 2d Complex comprehension	Task 2e Comprehension (+ analytical qs)	Task 2f Comprehension (+inferential)	Sub-task category 2	Subtask 3 Short essay	Sub-task category 3
Non-learner0%	67.9%	59.2%	62.8%	79.5%	69.2%	59.5%	24.4%	54.4%	54.4%
Emergent learner1%-40%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	46.4%	37.7%	37.7%
Established learner41%-80%	0%	0%	13.3%	0%	17.3%	0%	24.0%	7.9%	7.9%
Proficient learner81%-100%	32.1%	40.8%	23.9%	20.5%	13.5%	40.5%	5.2%	0.0%	0.0%
	100%	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Table 16: Foundational numeracy skills gaps

Categories	Task 1a Factorization	Task 1b Factorization	Tsk 1c Percentage	Task 1d Shape and area	Task 1e Shape and area	Task 1f Basic geometry	Task 1g Simplication	Task 1h Word problems	Task 1i Unitary method	Task 1j Simple and compound interest	Sub-task category 1
Non-learner 0%	53.3%	45.3%	77.0%	41.9%	43.2%	71.9%	46.4%	54.8%	66.6%	65.2%	13.4%
Emergent learner 1%-40%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	39.9%
Established learner 41%-80%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	34.9%
Proficient learner 81%-100%	46.7%	54.7%	23.0%	58.1%	58.1%	28.1%	53.6%	45.2%	33.4%	34.8%	11.8%
	100%	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Categories	Task 2a Basic algebra	Task 2b Basic algebra	Task 2c Basic algebra	Task 2d Basic algebra	Task 2e Complex algebra	Task 2f Complex algebra	Sub task category 2	Task 3a Complex word problems	Task 3b Geometry	Task 3c Basic statistics	Sub task category 3
Non-learner 0%	58.9%	74.8%	92.9%	85.8%	90.1%	90.1%	48.2%	84.7%	95.6%	81.9%	75.1%
Emergent learner1%-40%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4.8%	5.1%	0%	0%	17.0%
Established learner41%-80%	0%	0%	0%	6.5%	2.6%	0%	8.2%	3.5%	0%	16.1%	7.8%
Proficient learner81%-100%	41.1%	25.2%	7.1%	7.7%	7.2%	9.9%	1.8%	6.7%	4.4%	2.0%	0.1%
	100%	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Table 13: English proficiency and digital literacy

Categories	Subtask 1 Speaking
Non-learner0%	54 % of students
Emergent learner1%-40%	35 % of students
Established learner41%-80%	10 % of students
Proficient learner81%-100%	1 % of students
	100%

Categories	Subtask 1 Word Task	Subtask 2 Excel Task	Subtask 3 Powerpoint Task 1	Subtask 4 Powerpoint Task 2	Subtask 5 Internet Task
Non-learner0%	86.8 % of students	95 % of students	97.7 % of students	98.6 % of students	98.2 % of students
Emergent learner1%-40%	10.5 % of students	2.3 % of students	0.0 % of students	0.5 % of students	0.0 % of students
Established learner41%-80%	2.7 % of students	2.7 % of students	1.8 % of students	0.9 % of students	0.5 % of students
Proficient learner81%-100%	0.0 % of students	0.0 % of students	0.5 % of students	0.0 % of students	0.9 % of students
	100%	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

The table above present a disparity in the proportion of girls characterized based on their proficiency by individual tests. The figures for literacy indicates that more than 70 per cent girls were characterized as proficient learners for task 1a and task 1d which requires simplest of skills to read through the paragraph and identify the answer from the paragraph without any need for analysis and comprehension. The students did poorly with the task related to some level of comprehension, and where they need to do some analysis to generate inferences. The scores were lowest in the third task on essays implying that the students have poor ability to write in organized and analytical fashion. The situation was further worse for numeracy tests. The highest proportions of proficient learners were in the first task that required very basic calculation skills. There were not more than 1 in 10 girls who were considered proficient learners for the tests after the second sub-task where the questions were raised indirectly requiring the girls to understand the question, make some analysis of it, and find out solutions in multiple steps. The scores indicate towards poor ability of the students to understand the question, and use their skills and knowledge to complete it.

Benchmarking

In addition to the tests with cohort of girls, the tests were also conducted with grades 11 and 12 for benchmarking purpose. The benchmarking test was conducted with 149 girls (75 grade 11 and 74 grade 12) in schools that offered higher secondary education. The figures indicate that the SEGRA and SEGMA scores for grade 11 and 12 were not significantly higher than that of Grade 10. It might be due to the fact that many of these schools offer courses in education faculty that enrols low performing students, and do not have rigorous reading and mathematics course compared to Grade 10.

Table 13: Benchmarking scores

Grade	SEGRA Mean Score	SEGMA Mean Score
Grade 11	**49.9**	**44.0**
Grade 12	**57.1**	**40.3**

Source: SEGRA and SEGMA test for benchmarking girls

4.1.4 Sub-group analysis of the Learning Outcome

District and Age Group

There was significant difference in scores for both control and intervention schools. The SEGRA as well as SEGMA scores were significantly lower for Parsa district. While Surkhet was slightly better off in SEGRA score than Parsa, the numeracy scores were at the similar level compared to Parsa. The girls in Lamjug scored significantly high scores in numeracy while girls from both Dhading and Lamjung were better than other districts in literacy skills. During qualitative discussions and observations, the school infrastructure and environment, student teacher ratio, and parental engagement in school affairs were better for Lamjung and Dhading compared to Parsa and Surkhet districts[23].

[23] Based on school and classroom observation forms collected from schools during baseline study.

Table 18: District and age wise breakdown of scores

	Average literacy score (aggregate)	Average numeracy score (aggregate)
District		
Dhading	45.7	26.4
Lamjung	42.3	36.7
Parsa	21.5	14.2
Surkhet	35.8	16.0
Age group		
Age group 1 (10-12 years)	29.2	16.4
Age group 2 (13-14 years)	36.3	23.7
Age group 3 (15-16 years)	40.5	26.7
Age group 4 (17-20 years)	40.1	26.5

*Source: Caregiver and Girls survey combined with SEGRA & SEGMA Test, Significant difference, **p<0.01, * p<0.05, ~p<0.10 estimated using two tailed T-test*

The scores were also higher for higher age particularly moving from 10 to16 years (normal school progression by grade) but got saturated and did not increase much for girls of age 17-20 years.

The SEGRA and SEGMA scores differed by the family situations. Girls living without both parents, living with female household head, living in poor family, and with illiterate household head had significantly lower scores. The difference in mother tongue and language of instruction mattered in terms of literacy scores. For students with language of instruction other than Nepali, their scores were significantly lower in both literacy and numeracy. This differenc in language of instruction helps to explain the lower scores for Parsa and Surkhet. While the language of instruction and mother tongue was mostly same for Dhading and Lamjung districts, it was different for Parsa and Surkhet. In Parsa, the students as well as parents spoke Bhojpuri while in Surkhet, there were some girls who spoke tharu language.

The various forms of disability among the girls did not really made difference in SEGRA and SEGMA scores. The result might have been due to the fact that proportion of children with disability was very less, and it mostly involved the children facing less severe disability were admitted to school. During qualitative discussions, it was noted that the zeal for study and the efforts made was higher for some children with disability who have already reached to secondary levels withstanding and surpassing various challenges. However, the facilities were not available in schools to match with the different ability of girls.

Compared to those living with parents, girls living with out their parents were significantly weaker in terms of numeracy skills. Interestingly, the girls from family headed by female scored significantly higher than girls living in male-headed households. Although qualitative data does not clearly discuss about the difference between male headed and female-headed households, the difference might due to better degree of freedom for girls, and possibly

more time available for them to study at home. There was not difference in the scores based on literacy level of household head.

Table 19: Learning scores of key subgroups

	Average literacy score (aggregate)	Average numeracy score (aggregate)
All girls	35.1	22.2
Living without both parents	34.7	18.1*
Living in female headed household	38.6*	24.4**
Mother tongue different to LOI	28.1**	18.5**
Vision impairment	42.7	24.2
Hearing impairment	36.1	17.6
Mobility impairment	30.0	25.9
Cognitive impairment	29.4	20.0
Serious illness	35.9	20.6
HOH is illiterate	34.9	21.0
Family is poor	32.5**	19.0*
Dalit	36.5	22.7
Married	40.0	27.5
Extremely marginalized girls	37.9**	24.0*

*Source: Caregiver and Girls survey combined with SEGRA & SEGMA Test, Significant difference, **p<0.01, * p<0.05, ~p<0.10 estimated using two tailed T-test*

The poverty status of the family was another factor that had direct effect on the scores. The children from poor families were scoring significantly lower in both literacy and numeracy scores. During qualitative discussions, the poor families were related with poor care practices at home, higher household workload, and limited study time and parental support for the girls. Coming from dalit family or being married did not make the scores different. The qualitative discussions also confirmed that the girls from poor family who need to engage heavily in household workload can manage to give very limited time for study, and it affects their score.

> *Most of the girls work. There is problem of water in our area so we go to fetch the water. Since we are busy with household works when were are at home we don't get time for study. (FGD with girls, Surkhet)*

> *Despite the household work burden girls give more time for study. They want to learn more. Though they have to do household work, they manage their time. Parents understand them. Boys, play mostly and do not give time to study. (FGD with male parents, Dhading)*

Among the learning barriers, limited time spent to read different materials other than textbook, limited use of learning materials other than school related materials, low level of support and encouragement from parents, and importantly not having sufficient time for study or any leisure time to spend on something productive for learning combined with low household work involvement were positively associated with the reading and numeracy scores. The SEGRA scores were affected by the lack of learning resources, and time

available for the girls to read materials other than the textbooks. The girls who did not use the learning materials available to them to read or discuss about were scoring significantly lower in literacy rates.

The behaviour of the teacher and their attendance in school (liked with quality of teaching) also made difference in score. The girls who perceived teacher's discriminatory behaviours, and reported lower level of attendance among teachers scored significantly lower than those who felt non-discriminatory behaviour and have teacher's presence on regular basis.

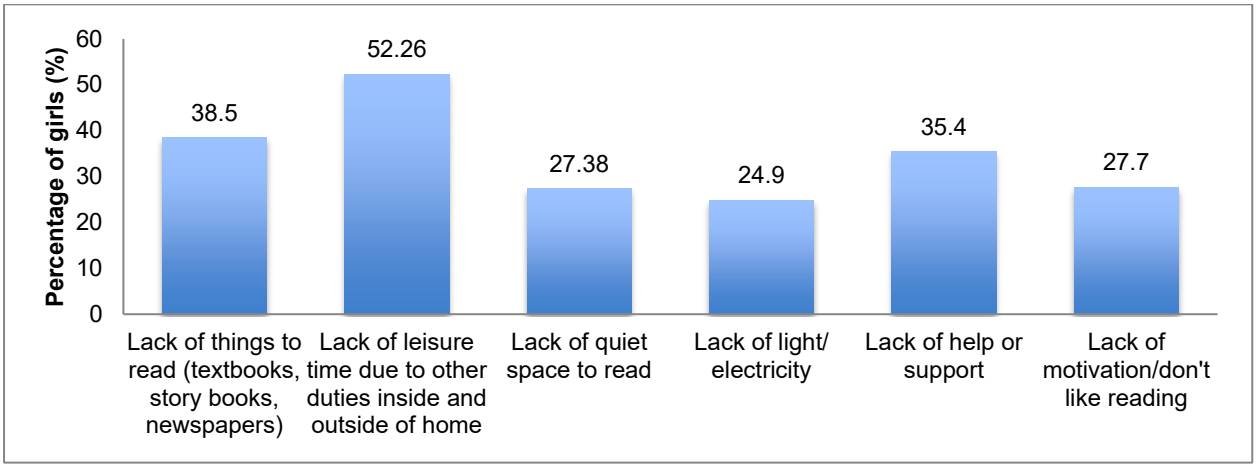
Table 20: Learning scores of key barriers

	Average literacy score (aggregate)	Average numeracy score (aggregate)
All girls	35.1	22.2
Do not use learning materials	32.3**	22.0
Difficult to move around school	36.8	24.6
Doesn't use areas where children play/ socialise	39.8	28.7
Disagrees teachers make them feel welcome	36.3	23.0
Agrees teachers treat boys and girls differently in the classroom	32.9	18.9**
Agrees teachers often remain absent	32.5**	17.7**
Do not receive adequate support from parents	34.7	20.2**
Lack of sufficient time to study	31.6*	17.6**
Immense household work involvement (more than a quarter)	34.2*	21.1**
Lack of materials to read	38.0	22.8
Lack of leisure time to study	35.0**	22.5
Lack of electricity or light to allow study during evening	33.2**	19.2**
Do not spend any time reading materials other than related to school	31.6**	18.9**

*Source: Caregiver and Girls survey combined with SEGRA & SEGMA Test, Significant difference compared to the opposite, **p<0.01, * p<0.05, ~p<0.10 estimated using two tailed T-test*

The girls getting support from parents (especially extensive support in terms of moral back up and encouragement not necessarily the support directly with studies) scored much higher compared to other students. The girls faced multiple challenges related to study. One in two girls reported lack of leisure time to study at home with 4 in 10 reporting lack of adequate materials, and 4 in 10 also reporting lack of adequate support from parents.

Chart 20a: What are the barriers for you to attend school education?



Source: Caregiver and Girls survey, 2018

In the multivariate logit regression run with scores and various barriers children are facing, the lack of leisure time at home to study, lack of things and materials to read, and lack of light and electricity to study during evening were closely and significantly associated with lower learning scores. The lack of time to study and its effects were also discussed during the qualitative discussions where girls highlighted that the environment at home does not support them to study. While girls reported not having adequate study materials, the parents reported that in their poor economic conditions, they are trying their best to arrange basic essential materials but they cannot afford to arrange all materials they wish for.

> *Girls get up early and the go to fetch water, prepare meal, cut grass and then go to school. After school, they should go home safe, and have snacks, then prepare dinner and only after that open the books if there is some time but she already feels sleepy and goes to bed. Girls might work for 4-5 hours in school days, 12 hours in holidays. It is conventional in our society that it is considered that women as the person of the other's home and parents believe boys as the caretaker of the family in the future. That is the reason of the discrimination (FGD with girls, Lamjung)*

> *Materials needed for study is related to financial burden for family .Our children tell us what they need for study. We provide them materials too. But we cannot afford materials that are expensive, and all materials they need. (FGD with parents, Dhading)*

The local government responsible to support parents and schools accepted that the scholarship provided by government (USD 4 per year) is not enough for parents to arrange necessary learning materials for children while emphasizing that parents are also not making use of the money they receive as scholarship to arrange such materials for children.

> *School does not provide any scholarship. Nepal government provides scholarship around Rs. 400-500 per year. Due to lack of education of parents, they do not properly utilize this money. There is lack of stationery items to children. (KII with representative of local government, Dhading)*

The discussions on the characteristics and barriers indicate that to have certain impact on the learning achievement the project will need to provide intensive support for some girls facing some degree of marginalization, and provide inputs to improve the household and family level study environment for the girls. **In summary, the scores were lower for Parsa district, girls living without their parents, girls with mother tongue other than Nepali,**

from poor family devoid of access to learning materials and proper learning environment (electricity and enough time to study) but required to heavy amount of household work. The project could benefit more by focusing its efforts with priority to Parsa district where there are many girls with language of instruction different than their mother tongue, and having challenging environment at home especially due to the immense engagement in household work. The children from poor families, coming from a family dependent on daily wage work of both parents, might be in higher risk of scoring low due to their absence in school, and inability to get adequate time to study back at home. To improve SEGRA scores, the project may focus on making the learning materials available to girls in school and at home, and also working with teachers to be regular and child friendly. The girls perceiving better parental support and non-discriminatory teacher behaviours also had better chance of scoring higher. On top of the barriers and priorities, the project needs to realize that the scores have high variance levels suggesting that there is a need to increase the scores, particularly for the girls with low level of numeracy and literacy scores at the moment.

4.1.5 Linkage between the learning outcome and other intermediate outcomes

The project's theory of change assumes that the intermediate outcomes such as improved school attendance, improve self-esteem among girls, improved teaching quality, and improve school management and governance leads to improved learning outcome. While some key variables could be taken for four intermediate outcomes, the outcome indicators for school management and governance could not be compared since the data for all indicators within this outcome was collected through school information which can not be linked with girls and caregivers survey. A multivariate regression was run to assess the possible linkage between the intermediate outcomes identified the following relationship:

- **IO1: Attendance**
  Attendance can predict learning outcomes. The parental reporting on attendance and absence was found to be associated with the learning scores. However, there is a need to explore better indicator of attendance rather than parental perception on attendance to allow comparison in future since the school attendance rates collected form schools have limitations to use for causal analysis.

- **IO2: Self-esteem among girls**
  The self-esteem among girl was also a good predictor of learning outcomes. The girls listened in making household decisions that determine their confidence and their ability to make all key decisions in home was positively associated with the learning outcome. The girls who felt being listened at family had higher numeracy and literacy skills. The qualitative discussions and gender analysis also indicated the role of self-esteem on learning outcomes.

  > *We are involved in decision making in our family and our parents listen to on our opinions and decisions like our studies and what to do after completing studies etc.*

Also, girls make decisions about marriage based on agreement with the parents. Girls who are active and confident score good. (FGD with girls, Lamjung)

- **IO 3: Increased parental engagement**
  The parental engagement was also good predictor of learning outcomes. The engagement of parents in school was positively associated with the SEGRA score. The parental support to children's education was linked with the learning outcome.

- **IO 4: Teaching quality**
  Although the log frame based indicator for teacher quality was derived from different source and could not be brought into the causal analysis, the rating on teacher absence was used to check if the teacher's ability and quality affects the learning. The perception of girls on whether teachers are absent in school was also found to be significantly associated with the learning outcome.

Table 20b. Results of multivariate regression (controlled for student grade)

Key variables	SEGRA	SEGMA
Weak attendance	~ (p=0.08, b=-3.29)	* (p=0.03, b=-3.88)
Girls listened in decision making at home	~ (p=0.00, b=5.99)	**(p=0.00, b=4.92)
Parents engaged with SMC/PTA in school affairs	* (p=0.03, b=2.84)	
Girls reporting that the teacher often remains absent	* (p=0.01, b=-2.46)	** (p=0.00, b=-5.19)
Grade	* ** (p=0.00, b=7.09)	** (p=0.00, b=7.4)

**Significance of the relationship, **p<0.01, * p<0.05, ~p<0.10 estimated multi-variate regression.*

4.1.6 Target setting for the learning outcome

The project will track same set of girls selected as cohort for learning outcome with possible addition of replacement samples, and will conduct learning tests at different evaluation points using same standard tool of SEGRA and SEGMA. The project will set targets for both SEGRA and SEGMA for the girls in project schools for all evaluation points following the GEC guidelines against the benchmarking scores. The study team has forecasted the target using the standard GEC guidelines to set it above 0.25 standard deviations from the mean for each interval. The minimum condition for the target is that the SEGRA and SEGMA scores will be significantly better than the control school in comparison the difference between the scores during baseline, and other evaluation points.

Table 21: Target setting for learning outcome

	Mid Term Evaluation (2019)		Endline Evaluation (2021)	
	SEGRA	SEGMA	SEGRA	SEGMA
Target for Grade 7	34.2	18.5	38.6	21.8
Target for Grade 8	43.6	30.0	48.0	34.8

Target for Grade 9	**48.8**	**35.9**	**53.4**	**40.9**
Target for Grade 10	**56.8**	**43.8**	**61.4**	**49.7**

4.2 Transition Outcome

This section presents the key findings on the transition outcomes. The project anticipates contributing to successful transition for in-school girls as well as out-of-school girls of age 6-9 years and 18-25 years. The following table presents the anticipated transition outcomes.

Table 22: Transition pathways

	Baseline point	Successful Transition	Unsuccessful Transition
Out of school girls (young)	Enrolled in bridge course	In school progression Re-enrolled in school (previously out of school) Dropped but involved in NFE	Repeats grade Dropped out of school or bridge course
Lower secondary (basic education)	Enrolled in Grade 6, 7, 8	In-school progression Re-enrolled in school (previously out of school) Dropped but involved in NFE	Repeats grade Dropped out of school
Secondary school	Enrolled in Grade 9-10	In-school progression Dropped out but involved in TEVT Dropped out but employed with minimum wage Dropped out but have started business on own	Repeats grade Dropped out of school Drops out of school but remains unemployed
Out of school (17-25)	Out of school or engaged in some other activities	In school progression In school progression being married involved in TEVT Dropped out but employed with minimum wage Dropped out but have started business on own	Repeats grade Drops out of school but remains unemployed

4.2.1 Transition benchmarking

At the baseline, an attempt was made to estimate the benchmarking figures for the transition outcomes. A random sample of 230 girls was mapped from some areas outside the project's coverage area for the benchmarking purpose. The girls of four different age groups were utilized for benchmarking. The benchmarking exercise indicates that the overall proportion of successful transition is 81.6 per cent resulted due to 78.1 per cent in-school progression ad 0.9 per cent engaged in the TEVT after dropping out of school. The benchmarking for transition outcomes indicates that the lowest successful transition exists for age group 17-20 while almost 90 per cent of the girls of age 10-12 were in successful transition stage. Nine per cent girls were repeating grades, and 12.5 per cent were dropped out of school.

Table 23: Benchmarking for the Transition Outcome

Benchmark group												
Age	Sample	Benchmark transition pathway										Transition rates
		Successful Transition							Unsuccessful transition			Successful transition rate per age (%)
		In school progression	In school progression being married	Re-enrolled in school (previously out of school)	Dropped but involved in NFE	Dropped out but involved in TEVT	Dropped out but employed with minimum wage	Dropped out but have started business on own	Repeats grade	Dropped out of school	Drops out of school but remains unemployed	
10 –12	79	90.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.5%	2.5%	2.5%	90.0%
13-14	52	76.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	9.6%	13.5%	11.5%	78.8%
15-16	51	76.9%	3.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	9.6%	11.5%	11.5%	80.8%
17-20	48	61.2%	8.2%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.2%	28.6%	28.6%	71.4%
Total	230	78.1%	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	9.0%	12.5%	12.5%	81.6%

Source: Caregiver and Girls survey, 2018

4.2.2 Transition status of cohort girls

Transition among in-school girls

The successful transition for intervention groups was 93.9 per cent since among the girls who were in the school, 93.9 per cent were promoted this grade from last year. There were 0.5 per cent girls who were out-of-school previous year, and enrolled back this year. The proportion of girls repeating grade was 6.1 per cent, highest for the age group 17-20 years. The age specific enrolment and transition was an issue. A table below presents successful and un-successful transition routes for the girls.

Table 24: In-school girls from intervention schools

Age	Sample	Transition pathway										Successful transition rate per age (%)
		Successful Transition							Unsuccessful transition			
		In school progression	In school progression being married	Re-enrolled in school (previously out of school)	Dropped but involved in NFE	Dropped out but involved in TEVT	Dropped out but employed with minimum wage	Dropped out but have started business on own	Repeats grade	Dropped out of school	Drops out of school but remains unemployed	
10 -12	350	330 (94.3%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	20 (5.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	94.30%
13-14	419	393 (93.8%)	0 (0%)	4 (0.9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	26 (6.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	93.80%
15-16	227	215 (94.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	12 (5.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	94.70%
17-20	54	48 (88.9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (11.1 %)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	88.90%
Total	1050	986 (93.9%)	0 (0%)	5 (0.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	64 (6.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	93.90%

The transition pathways for control were also similar with majority of girls in secondary levels of age higher than the appropriate age. For control, the rate of successful transition was 92.1 per cent with 7.9 per cent of girls to have repeated grades. In control, 0.5 per cent girls were the one previously dropped out but enrolled back to school this year.

Table 25: In-school girls from control schools

In-school (Control)												
Age	Sample size (#)	Transition pathway										Successful transition rate per age (%)
		Successful Transition							Unsuccessful transition			
		In school progression	In school progression being married	Re-enrolled in school (previously out of school)	Dropped but involved in NFE	Dropped out but involved in TEVT	Dropped out but employed with minimum wage	Dropped out but have started business on own	Repeats grade	Dropped out of school	Drops out of school but remains unemployed	
10 -12	190	175 (92.1%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	15 (7.9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	92.1%
13-14	224	207 (92.4%)	0 (0%)	2 (0.9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	17 (7.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	92.4%
15-16	137	128 (93.4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	9 (6.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	93.4%
17-20	46	40 (86.9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (13.0 %)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	86.9%
Total	597	550 (92.1%)	0 (0%)	3 (0.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	47 (7.9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	92.1%

For out of school girls, the in-school progress was out of question, hence, for girls currently engaged in the bridge course, the successful transition was 100 per cent since they fall under the category who dropped out of school but enrolled in NFE. For the out-of-school girls of age 18-25 years, the successful transition was nil since none of them were engaged in something that would quality as successful transition.

Table 26: Out-school girls

Out of school												
Age	Sample size (#)	Transition pathway										Successful transition rate per age (%)
		Successful Transition							Unsuccessful transition			
		In school progression	In school progression being married	Re-enrolled in school (previously out of school)	Dropped but involved in NFE	Dropped out but involved in TEVT	Dropped out but employed with minimum wage	Dropped out but have started business on own	Repeats grade	Dropped out of school or NFE	Drops out of school but remains unemployed	
6 – 9	148	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	148 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	100.0%
10-12	73	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	73 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	100.0%
13-16	21	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	21 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	100.0%
19-25	49	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	49 (100%)	0.0%
Total	291	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	242 (83.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	49 (16.8%)	83.2%

4.2.3 Sub-group analysis of the transition outcome

District. The successful transition rate was not significantly different by districts. The transition was slightly low for Lamjung (92%), and slightly higher for Parsa (95%). It will be worth to mention here that the in-school progression is linked with the examination system and quality control arrangement for school. The difference in transition rate and learning outcome indicates that they operate in slight trade-off based on the examination practices of the schools/district.

Table 27: District and age wise breakdown of scores

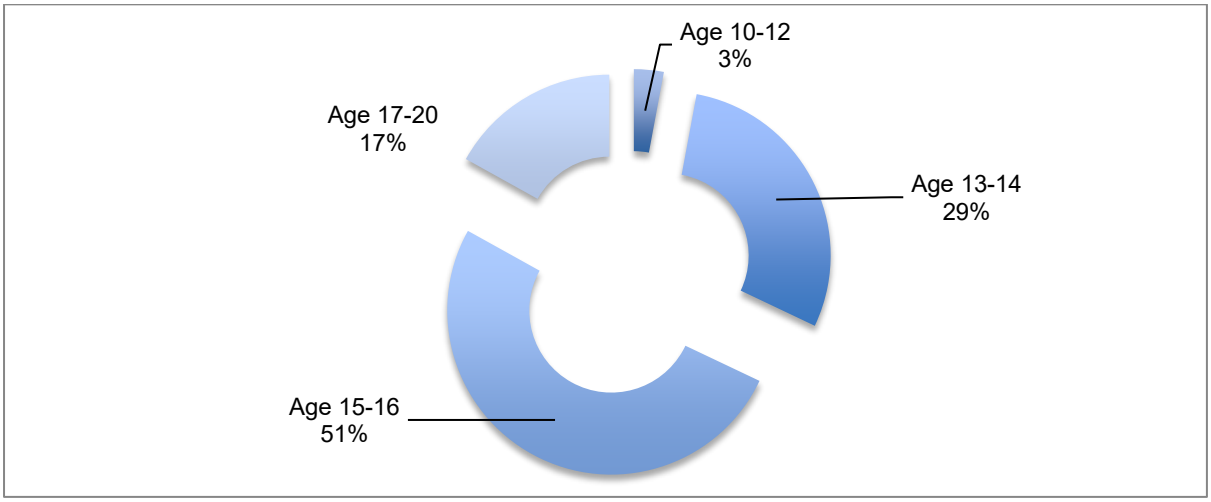
	Successful transition (%)
District	
Dhading	93.2
Lamjung	91.6
Parsa	95.3
Surkhet	92.5
Total	93.3
Grade	
Grade 6	92.5
Grade 7	94.4
Grade 8	91.3
Grade 9	94.3
Grade 10	95.2

Grade. The grade wise analysis indicate that though transition rates are in the same range between 91 to 95 per cent, the rates were particularly lower for Grade 6 an Grade 8. Both of these grades are the grades of transition from one level to another level (i.e. primary to lower secondary, and lower secondary to secondary) where the in-school transfers are maximum. The repetition possibilities also remain high for these levels. Although current transition rate for girls studying in Grade 10 is 95 per cent, the transition to next grade might be very challenging since they need to pass through the SEE (Secondary Education Examination) administered at the national level. The examination adopts letter-grading system with no provision for failures. However, the students who are asked to repeat the grade is above 40 per cent[24], and thus large number of girls might struggle to transition successfully after Grade 10.

Age. The biggest challenge to transition seems to be the age-specific enrolment, and higher drop out among the students of higher age. The presence of girls in school as well as in alternative education classes does not corroborate with their ideal age group. Among the girls in secondary level, only 29 per cent were of the appropriate age (13-14 years). The girls of age equal or higher than 15 years were 68 per cent. It will be a challenge for the project to ensure successful transition of girls currently studying in secondary grades but of age higher than 16 years.

[24] https://thehimalayantimes.com/kathmandu/slc-results-grading-published/

Chart 27a: Age group breakdown of secondary level students



Source: Caregiver and Girls survey, 2018

The qualitative discussions also confirmed that the increasing age and increasing grades result into higher drop out possibilities. In the opinion of girls, the students are under multiple pressures. On the one hand, they need to perform well and reach to next grade, they are also under pressure from parents to perform household chores while proving them to be good in scores. The teachers also put pressure on students to score high. While boys leave school to find some work, girls often leave school after marriage. The discussions also indicate towards absence of moral support and backstopping to encourage students to perform well. They are often blamed for their poor performance. The self-esteem including the ability to make decision was related with the resilience of girls to continue their schooling despite multiple challenges.

> *Yes, most leave in class 8 and 9. May be because they feel more pressure. Parents complain them while teachers scold them. Mostly boys leave school due to income pressure, and girls leave only if they get married. (FGD with girls, Lamjung)*

> *Most of the girls leave the study midway because they get married in early age. Their parents don't send them to school. Everything related to daughter like going to school regularly and continuing the study next year, about the marriage, about work after study, etc. is decided by the family members. (FGD with girls, Parsa)*

Other characteristics. There were some variables closely related with the transition rates. Among the family and individuals characteristics, few conditions were linked with lower transition rates. Unlike learning, two forms of disability was found to lead to lower rate of successful transition. The girls with vision impairment had successful transition rate of 78.9 per cent, and the girls with mobility impairment had successful transition rate of 83.3 per cent. The girls from households with illiterate household head and households from dalit community, unlike the non-influence to learning outcomes, had significantly lower transition rate of 90.8 per cent and 90.7 per cent respectively. The married in-school girls had lowest transition rate of 78.6 per cent.

Table 28: Successful transition rates by family/girl characteristics

	% of successful transition
All girls	93.9
Living without both parents	90.5
Living in female headed household	93.0
Mother tongue different to LOI	93.1
Vision impairment	78.9**
Hearing impairment	100.0
Mobility impairment	83.3**
Cognitive impairment	100.0
Serious illness	92.3
HOH is illiterate	90.8*
Family is poor	94.9
Dalit	90.7*
Married	78.6**
Extremely marginalized	92.6

**Significant difference compared to the opposite, **p<0.01, * p<0.05, ~p<0.10 estimated using two tailed T-test*

The linkage of being from dailt family with poor parental education and early marriage to drop out was also discussed during the qualitative discussions. Although the poor families (based on the criteria used by the baseline study) were not really having poor transition, the head teachers were of the opinion that the children from poor families drop out for income related reasons.

> *Mostly children of the Dalit community fall under this category of children to drop out. There is reason as well as why this happen more in their community, that is lack of awareness. The parents are not educated. (KII with Head Teacher, Surkhet)*
>
> *Some of the girls have household work. Their mothers call them to home for work. Some of the girls become absent for some days and later on they leave school. Most of the drop out is due to poverty. Due to the low income, parents also find it hard to manage expenses on study. The parents also lack knowledge on importance of education. (KII with Head Teacher, Parsa)*

The barriers for learning and transition were slightly different. Among various barriers to education, the difference in treatment was the only factor with significantly low rate of successful transition. Among the girls who felt being discriminated in classroom, the successful transition rate was only 88.1 per cent. Interestingly, the household level learning environment was not much related to the transition outcomes.

Table 29: Successful transition rates by key barriers

	% of successful transition
All girls	93.9
Do not use learning materials	95.8
Difficult to move around school	100.0
Doesn't use areas where children play/ socialise	100.0
Disagrees teachers make them feel welcome	95.6
Agrees teachers treat boys and girls differently in the classroom	88.1*

	% of successful transition
Agrees teachers often remain absent	93.8
Do not receive adequate support from parents	93.5
Lack of sufficient time to study	93.7
Immense household work involvement (more than a quarter)	93.6
Lack of materials to read	92.9
Lack of leisure time to study	92.6
Lack of electricity or light to allow study during evening	92.4
Do not spend any time reading materials other than related to school	92.6

**Significant difference compared to the opposite, **p<0.01, * p<0.05, ~p<0.10 estimated using two tailed T-test*

4.2.4 Linkage between the transition outcome and other intermediate outcomes

The project's theory of change assumes that the intermediate outcomes such as improved school attendance, improved self-esteem among girls, improved teaching quality, and improve school management and governance leads to better transition outcomes. While some key variables could be taken for four intermediate outcomes, the outcome indicators for school management and governance could not be compared since the data for all indicators within this outcome was collected through school information which can not be linked with girls and caregivers survey. The fact that transition outcome were already high and had ceiling effect might have also led to difficulty in assessment of the factors linked with the transition. They were also dependent on non-uniform school examination process, a logit multivariate regression was run to assess the possible linkage between the intermediate outcomes identified the following relationship:

- **IO1: Attendance**
  The rating of attendance parents could not predict the transition outcomes. There is a need to explore better indicator of attendance (possibly attendance rate of cohort girls) rather than parental perception on attendance to allow comparison in future since the school attendance rates collected form schools have limitations to use for causal analysis. During qualitative discussions, it was noted that fading attendance rates are linked with drop out since the students lose their interest, and also start scoring low in examinations leading to class repetition.

- **IO2: Self-esteem among girls**
  The self-esteem among girl was also not a predictor of transition outcomes. However, the qualitative discussions highlighted that the self-confidence could be a contributing factor to re-enrolment in school or the ability of girls to get employed or start up their own business.

- **IO 3: Increased parental engagement**

The parental engagement in SMC/PTA was also not a predictor of learning outcomes. The qualitative discussions, however, indicate that the parental attitude towards girl's education affects the chances for girls to continue her studies. The positive parental attitude, however, needs to be coupled with the high self-esteem from among the girls.

> *If our children want to learn then we will send but it depends upon our income also. We cannot provide enough budget to them to continue their education as much we have to. Our economic level is not sufficient to make them doctor and engineer. We behave boys and girls equally. We never discriminate them. Girls are more educated and they do even continue their study after grade 10 buy boys go outside and abroad to earn money. (FGD with parents, Dhading)*

> *I think we don't have to confine ourselves in the kitchen and home. I feel I will work in office in the future. It is good to live independently than living on others. I want to be independent. If we become independent no one can mistreat us and we don't need to ask for money we need for our expenses. If I get the full support of the family like now, surely my desire will be fulfilled. Women can work anywhere from government jobs to leading a nation, making a law for the country, become a famous doctor. (FGD with girls, Lamjung)*

- **IO 4: Teaching quality**
  Although the log frame based indicator for teacher quality was derived from different source and could not be brought into the causal analysis, the rating on teacher absence was used to check if the teacher's ability and quality affects the learning. The perception of girls on whether teachers are absent in school was found to have no association with transition outcomes. The perceived discrimination in behaviour of teacher in school, however, was a predictor of transition outcome.

The logit regression figures are presented below:

Table 29a. Results of multivariate regression (controlled for student grade)

Key variables	Successful transition (Yes 1 against No 0)
Weak attendance	(p=0.8, b=-0.05)
Girls listened in decision making at home	(p=0.25, b=1.13)
Parents engaged with SMC/PTA in school affairs	(p=0.14, b=-0.3)
Girls reporting that the teacher often remains absent	(p=0.67, b= 0.09)
Grade	(p=0.44, b=0.06)

**Significance of the relationship, **p<0.01, * p<0.05, ~p<0.10 estimated multi-variate regression.*

In summary, there is a need to review the intermediate outcomes its linkage to transition outcomes. The list of variables should be expanded in a way to capture the possibile association with the transition outcomes. For out-of-school girls, the transition rate was 100 per cent successful for girls of age 6-9 years, and 100 per cent unsuccessful for girls of age 18-25 years, hence, the causal analysis to assess the link with intermediate outcome was not performed.

4.2.5 Cohort tracking and target setting for the transition outcome

During baseline, the project has covered 1736 girls (with 1105 intervention, and 631 control) from 47 schools. The baseline study has set multiple identifiers to enable tracking of the girls which include: schools, specific traceable locations, name of parents, phone numbers, and the information about their geographical positioning wherever applicable. The VSO staff especially big sisters are anticipated to track the status of migration and movement of girls throughout the project. However, there will be many challenges for VSOs to ensure that the successful transition rate is maintained to higher level.

The tracking of six per cent girls (58 girls in intervention school and 48 girls in control school) may be challenging. It's largely because five per cent of the girls included in the baseline survey of age 17-20 are already married, and given the trend; the girls of younger age might marry and migrate as they reach to higher age category. VSO is recommended to give special attention to girls of age higher than 14 years so that their early marriage could be prevented along with the arrangement to prevent possibilities of their drop out.

The project will achieve the transition target of 90 per cent with successful transition by end of the project. It means the project will only allow possible 5 per cent reduction in the existing transition rate (100%) during two intervals – midline and endline points. The rate proposed as target is 3.7 per cent higher than the existing benchmark for the age group 10-20 available in the community. The achievement of target will require the project to counter the national average figure for repetition rate of 5 per cent and drop out rate of 4 per cent. The target for out-of-school girls 6-9 years was set considering the benchmark transition of age group 10-12 years, i.e. 90 per cent. For out-of-school girls (18-25 years), the goals were set ambitiously at 50 per cent considering that the number is few and it is manageable to achieve it.

Table 29b: Target setting for transition outcome

	Mid Term Evaluation (2019)	Endline Evaluation (2021)
Target generated by the outcome spreadsheet		
Alternative target proposed by project (if applicable)	**95**	**90**
Alternative target proposed for out-of-school girls (6-9 years)	**90**	**95**
Alternative target proposed for out-of-school girls (18-25 years)	**50**	**75**

4.3 Sustainability Outcome

The baseline study ranks overall sustainability status as **Emerging (1).** The table below provides details:

Table 30: Sustainability indicators

	Community	School	System
The project approaches and outcomes will be sustainable given the community, school, and system context.	At the community level, the perceptions are slowly changing. The parents are willing to support and educate their girls till secondary level while there are still various barriers and discrimination when it comes to household workload and financing.	Some schools had some basic structures and provisions in place for girls education. There is some degree of motivation at the school level to make classes and school environment child friendly.	The country is under transition with local government yet to take a strong and convincing shape. There is no education plans available at the local level with specific priority for girls.
Baseline Sustainability Score (0-4)	**Emerging (1)**	**Emerging (1)**	**Emerging (1)**
Overall Sustainability Score (0-4, average of the three level scores)	**Emerging** The state structure is under transition towards a bit more stable and long term position. At present, the capacities are limited, and the resource flow for education is unstable. However, at the school level, girls are being better prioritized that they used to be, and at the community level, there is change in perceptions on girls education. While many barriers and challenges till exist for girls, the priority for girl's education can be considered emerging.		

The sustainability status differs for community, school and system.

At the community level, there are changes in the perceptions of people with regards to girls education. While the early marriage among children especially girls is decreasing with some decrease in forced marriages, the phenomenon is still present. Five per cent girls attending schools already married while there may be many girls who dropped out of school after marriage. In terms of school enrolment, girls and boys were at similar stage with parents willing to provide girls with education above school level. However, girls have to continue their study amidst heavy workload at home, and also report not getting adequate support and moral backstopping from parents. The community rules affect transition and there are still some rules and practices related to menstruation and early marriage that affects the transition rates. The case of forced early marriage is largely applicable in Parsa district while the cases of discriminations during menstruation are applicable in rest of other districts. All of these districts also face problems related to voluntary early marriage. The environment within the community and school was not entirely safe for girls. For some girls, the way to school as well as environment within school as not considered safe.

Most of the daughters study till class 7-8 in community. The daughters get married in between the age of 17-20 after which their studies come to an end. (FGD with mothers, Parsa)
The parents have to give 5-6 lakhs as a dowry for both educated and uneducated daughters. So, they don't want to educate their daughters. They think that the daughters have to handle kitchen after marriage, so it is waste of money to teach them. (FGD with Parents, Parsa)

At the school level, There are some changes taking place. Due to policy directions, the schools have prioritized child friendly schooling with no physical punishment for children. The school provides scholarship to girls. The household survey indicated that more than 80 per cent families have received scholarship, though the amount of scholarship is small. Some of the schools have also established complain response mechanism with complaint boxes to enable girls to submit complaints about any problems or harassments they face. There is a provision of gender focal person in many project schools. Despite improvements, schools are still facing various challenges. Not all teachers are qualified and committed – many girls still feel unwelcomed at school, and all schools have not received adequate number of teachers, and lack good physical environment.

The teachers come to school regularly but they don't take class regularly. Most of the girls are afraid of asking questions to the teachers and clarifying confusions on any subjects. (FGD with girls, Parsa)

The sustainability at the system level is influenced by the country is currently under the restructuring process that observes transition of the education governance mechanism from district and central structure to local government. While local governments, during qualitative discussions, were positive and willing to invest and create suitable environment for better education opportunities for girls, they lack capacity, and are affected by the staggering transition faced with staff shortage, policy related confusions, and also confusions on their roles and authorities related to education. However, it is likely that the local governments will set up local education policy with specific priority to girl's education, and education delivery might improve for girls in future. Transition will depend on the facilities and performance of the local government. The policies at central level are positive but the real implementation will depend on their delivery at the ground level. The table below presents the response from the implementing agency:

Table 30b: Changes needed for sustainability

	Community	School	System
Change: what change should happen by the end of the implementation period	• Parents reduce household chores and other work for girls to enable them to study. • Parents and community members advocate and join organizations (PTA and SMC) or activities that	• School management committee (SMC) and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) members are equipped with knowledge and skills to lobby for funding to implement their School Improvement Plans (SIPs). • PTA conducts school audit at least once a year.	• Central level education stakeholders utilize information generated by the project to inform decision-makers for policies and plans • Increased school completion rate of girls

	Community	School	System
	promote girls' education and address and issues that hinder girls from getting education.	• Students report protection issues • Complaint response mechanism functional addresses issues raised by students	• Increased opportunities for employability and/or vocational training
Activities: What activities are aimed at this change?	• Continuous community dialogues coupled with street dramas	• Training of SMC and PTA and other school staff on Child Protection and Child Safeguarding including setting up a complaint response mechanism (CRM) in school • Dissemination and orientation of staff and students about the CRM • Training of SMC and PTA members on how to develop learner-cantered SIP • Teacher training, mentoring and coaching by international volunteers on subject pedagogy	• Advocacy • Sharing learning events (municipal and central level) • Participatory monitoring
Stakeholders: Who are the relevant stakeholders?	Parents and key community members	Head teacher, SMC and PTA members, teachers, Gender Focal Person	MoE, DoE, DEO, Municipal mayors, ward chairperson
Factors: what factors are hindering or helping achieve changes? Think of people, systems, social norms etc.	• Parents' belief that girls will eventually get married and do not need education		• Federal structure is new and the project can influence plans and policies • Priority of new local officials is different from the project

Change at the end of implementation period

Changes for sustainability are seen at three levels: community, school and system level.

Community: At community level, parents are seen as the key drivers to get girls educated. Based on the baseline report and GESI analysis, girls spend around 4 – 5 hours helping in household work. Boys on the other hand spend around 2-3 hours doing household chores. Although parents are now aware of the importance of education and send their children, particularly girls, they are not aware of how they are performing, the quality of teaching, and the status of school facilities and management.

Although parents are willing to send their children to school, they do not necessarily provide the environment for children to concentrate on their studies. For sustainability to happen, it is expected that parents allow girls to prioritize their studies by reducing the workload of girls or

share the workload with the boys. Providing equal opportunity to have tuition and attend private schools is also seen as a change in parents' attitude and behaviour to improve education of girls.

Beyond willingness to send girls to school, another change is for parents to be actively involved in the school and education of children in their community by joining the SMC and/or the PTA or advocacy programs to promote the education of children. This would allow them to have a voice in how the school addresses issues that hinder girls from participating in class and school activities. By joining activities, school based organizations, and/or municipal agencies; they would be able to promote education not only for girls but all children.

To further enhance awareness and for the change to happen, the project will conduct community dialogues that will discuss challenges and how parents can help overcome these challenges. Discussions will also revolve around the roles and responsibilities of the SMC and PTA in terms of establishing conducive environments for learning in schools. Parents and other community members will be encouraged to promote children's education by becoming members of the SMC and PTA or join other advocacy programs.

The change in parents' behaviour is directly linked to IO 3 where there is increased parent engagement in girls' education.

School: At school level, change is expected at two levels: quality teaching and school management. Participation of girls is still limited in class where boys are given more attention and girls being side-lined. One visible evidence is the seating arrangement where boys are on one side and girls on the other and boys being called upon more often than girls.
There have been attempts in improving school improvement plans to be more child-friendly but plans are not necessarily implemented. The SMC and PTA also are still unclear about their roles and responsibilities. Complaint Response Mechanisms still need to be strengthened for child protection and child safeguarding.

During the project period, teachers are expected to practice subject pedagogy that would encourage equal participation of girls and boys. This will allow students to participate equally in class that would enhance learning.

Teacher training and mentoring will be provided by Teacher Trainer international volunteers for subject specific teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills. Teachers will be able to practice their skills in class and learning support classes.

Members of the SMC and PTA will be orientated on their roles and responsibilities, developing SIPs, child protection and safeguarding and establishing a Complaint Response Mechanism (CRM) in their schools. These inputs are expected to support the SMC develop child-friendly School Improvement Plans (SIPs) and lobby for funding; and for PTAs to

conduct school audit at least once a year. Child protection and safeguarding will have CRMs in place that responds to students issues.

These changes are linked directly with improved quality teaching (IO 4) andi Improved school management and governance (IO 5) that would enhance learning and transition.

System: At system level, it is expected that central and municipal level education stakeholders utilize information generated by the project to inform decision-makers' policies and plans that would increase school completion rates and increased opportunities for employability and/or vocational training.

Advocacy and sharing learning events (municipal and central level) including participatory monitoring activities will be conducted to increase awareness about the project and influence decision makers i.e. MoE, DoE, DEO (?), Municipal mayors, ward chairperson.
At the moment, the new federal system is still unclear about the different levels of decentralization of powers. The project follows established policies and plans by the Ministry of Education and will adjust it's strategy based on the government policies. The project takes this as an opportunity to influence their plans and policies.

5 Key Intermediate Outcome Findings

The project had five anticipated intermediary outcomes.

5.1 Attendance (IO1: Increased attendance for girls)

IO1: Increased attendance for girls: measured as a percentage increase in average attendance rate from multiple data sources: spot checks conducted in school on a particular day, review of school's attendance record, and caregiver's reporting

The intermediate outcome on attendance was chosen considering that attendance is the single most factor that determines the learning achievement, and also a true indicator for access to school education. Since the project is attempting to improve access to school and learning achievement, the attendance was chosen as key intermediate outcome. The barriers to attendance include household workload, involvement in paid work, sickness, lack of sanitary pad and good toilet facilities available in school during menstruation period, menstrual cramps, inability to complete homework, and unsafe road to walk during the rainy seasons.

The key indicator for outcome 1 was the attendance rate of student, however, collected from two different sources using two different methods: school register (counting the total number of days students were present in school), and spot check (counting the number of children present on that particular day against total number of children registered in school). Since the school records are not entirely reliable with possible chances for schools to manipulate it, the dual approach was adopted. However, the attendance data collected from these two sources were, however, not useful to assess the linkage between learning and attendance since the data were of the total girls enrolled in school but not specific to the girls included in the cohort.

Table 31: Key IO1 Indicators

Indicators	Intervention	Control	What data has been collected and how?	Sampling and measurement techniques
School attendance rate (annual)	86.7	87.9	The data from school on student attendance has been collected for the current academic year from the time of admission to this date for all students of higher grades.	The student attendance related data were obtained from the review of school registers for all schools (intervention as well as control). All schools were included in the data collection.
School attendance (based on spot check)	73.6	76.3	Since the school records may not be accurate and correct, the spot check was conducted during the period of data collection to check what percentage of students was present on that day.	On the first day of data collection in school, the field enumerators counted the number of students present in the school. The spot checks were also conducted in all schools.

In school, the attendance rates were lower compared to the household response. While many schools did not have practice of keeping attendance records in details, the gap in attendance based on school records was at least around 10-12 per cent. On an aggregate, the attendance rate was 87 per cent for girls and 85 per cent for boys in intervention schools. There was no significant difference in attendance rates for control and treatment, and also for boys and girls.

Table 31a: Student Attendance Rate (school records)

Grades	Intervention		Control	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Grade 6	88.9	86.3	89.9	87.0
Grade 7	88.3	84.0	88.8	87.3
Grade 8	86.4	86.2	84.7	84.2
Grade 9	87.4	88.7	85.9	86.9
Grade 10	82.4	81.7	90.3	90.1
Aggregate	86.7	85.4	87.9	87.1

The student attendance rates were further lower when it comes to spot check. During spot checks, the number of children present in school was only 75 per cent. It indicated that only 75 out of 100 girls were present in school during the spot check. The attendances reported in spot checks were particularly lower for grade 6-8 in intervention area. The proportion was not significantly different for girls and boys. However, the causes for absences were different for boys and girls. During qualitative study, it was reported that boys remain absent to school and miss some classes due to lack of interest to attend classes and their engagement in peer circle, including drug addiction. However, the causes for girls were more related to family. They remained absent due to household workload or care responsibilities, and barriers related to menstruation (menstrual pain, lack of facilities in schools, and shyness).

Table 31b: Student Attendance Rate (spot check)

Grades	**Intervention**		**Control**	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Grade 6	69.4	72.1	80.6	74.5
Grade 7	72.1	71.6	79.8	75.0
Grade 8	68.8	73.3	72.8	74.6
Grade 9	73.9	79.4	72.2	77.9
Grade 10	83.8	79.2	76.2	72.5
Aggregate	73.6	75.1	76.3	74.9

At the household level, the parents also reported that the girls are often present in school. Only 7 per cent girls were reported to be irregular to school with half of them only attending for less than half of the year. The proportion of 3.5 per cent girls who attend only half of classes conducted in a year are more prone to drop out with implications on transition. During qualitative discussions, teachers reported that parents might not be fully aware about the attendance of children. Some children leave from home early morning but do not show

up on school or do not stay for full hours[25]. The tendency of not attending full hours in school was particularly observed among boys compared to girls. In discussions, the teachers and also some girls reported that the tendency to leave after tiffin break is also due to lack of mid-day meal arrangements. In a separate study conducted by RIDA among adolescents, more than half of the girls reported that they find it difficult to concentrate in classroom in classes after the mid-day[26]. While attendance was identified as a barrier, there was no practice of monitoring student attendance in each grade and explore about the reasons for student absence. In only one out of four classes observed during the baseline, there was a practice of reporting attendance. There was rare practice of exploring the reasons for student attendance with only 2 schools doing it during the first period. In the perception of teachers, it is impractical to check attendance in every class particularly if the number of students is high, and it is not difficult to track student attendance if there are fewer students[27].

The qualitative analysis highlighted some barriers to attendance. The key barriers to attendance were: need to do household work, need to engage in paid work in some instance, sickness, and some functions at home. The girls will have to fetch water, prepare meal, and fetch fodder for the livestock that sometimes could lead them to miss school completely during the agricultural season.

> *Girls get up early and the go to fetch water, prepare meal, cut grass and then go to school. After school, they should go home safe, and have snacks, then prepare dinner and only after that open the books if there is some time but she already feels sleepy and goes to bed. Girls might work for 4-5 hours in school days, and 12 hours in holidays. In some cases, if there is no one to work at home, they miss school. (FGD with girls, Lamjung)*

The unsafe route to school, particularly during rainy season, was also one of the barriers. The risk of landslide, flood or threat of accident due to slippery roads often affected the attendance.

> *There are many reasons for girls to be absent at school. Sometimes if they fall in road, the dress becomes dirty so they leave the class. Girls don't go to school if there is work at home or due to sickness. Also, those who are weak in study they think that they cannot do anything so they don't come to school. (FGD with girls, Parsa)*

In addition, girls also reported difficulties to attend school during menstruation. In their opinion, they feel embarrassed to go to school during menstruation, and also find it uncomfortable since the toilets are not clean, and there is no place to take rest in case of menstrual cramp.

> *There is no any facility in school during menstruation. It will be an embarrassing situation if we have menstruation in school since other tease us. There is separate toilet for boys and girls but the toilet is very dirty. (FGD with girls, Parsa)*

[25] FGD with teachers in Surkhet and Dhading district.
[26] RIDA, (2018). A study on food and nutritional status among adolescent girls in Nepal, study conducted for UNESCO, Kathmandu.
[27] FGD with teachers in Parsa district.

If there had been provision of sanitary pad for the girls and separate room, they would have attended in the class,some girls have problems of over-bleeding, so they can't come. There is taboo in the society that girls are not allowed to go outside while they are in the menstruation period. (FGD with girls, Lamjung)

The poor attendance perpetuates the risk to drop out of school. In addition to poor school performance and continuous failure in class owing to poor school attendance, the common reasons for drop out were: need to engage in full time paid work or household work to support livelihood of the family, early marriage, and drug addiction, primarily for boys. For girls who are married, they do not get adequate support from the family to attend school, and also feel shy to attend school.

The dropout is higher in the grades 8, 9 and 10. Some quit school due to the drug addiction, some do so owing to the poor economic condition of the family and some get married and leave school. Because some elope (Laughingly) some do get married while studying at grade 8 or 9 and some marry voluntarily. Some do get married by the parents will. After getting married, they feel shy to continue attending school, and also, they do not get good favourable environment to continue education due to ever increasing workload. (FGD with girls, Lamjung)

Interconnected factors

The analysis of quantitative data exploring relationship between the parental perceptions on rate of attendance of girls with multiple variables indicated that few family characteristics and barriers influenced attendance. The attendance tendency based on parental perceptions did not differ much by grade and age group. However, there was some difference for children with disability. The children with disability were reported to have lower attendance: 89 per cent compared to 93 per cent for children without disability. Similarly, it was also lower for children from the dalit family, children living in female-headed household, and for children with language of instruction different than the mother tongue. The marital status of the girl also affected attendance. Only 80 per cent parents of the married girls reported that she is regular to school compared to 93 per cent of the non-married girls. During qualitative discussions, it was reported that the married girls will have to finish the household chores before they reach to school, and will also be responsible to complete the evening chores after she returns back from school[28]. Some caregivers also reported that the girls from their family miss school during menstruation: there were eight per cent girls who were reported to be absent during menstruation. The attendance rates were particularly lower for girls in Dhading and Lamjung district.

[28] Reported during FGD with girls Lamjung district.

Table 31c: % of parents reporting good attendance for the girls form their family

	% of parents reporting good school attendance
All girls	93.1
Living without both parents	92.7
Living in female headed household	86.9**
Mother tongue different to LOI	91.7**
Children with at least one form of disability	89.7
Serious illness	92.5
HOH is illiterate	94.3
Family is poor	95.8~
Dalit	89.7**
Married	80.0*
Extremely marginalized	92.4

**Significant difference compared to the opposite, **p<0.01, * p<0.05, ~p<0.10 estimated using two tailed T-test*

Linkage to long term outcomes and key take out for the project

As presented earlier in the sub-section related to learning outcome, attendance was direct determinant of the learning outcome. The qualitative discussions highlighted that it also determines successful transition. Hence, it is an outcome that the project needs to keep it at high priority. Since the spot check indicates low attendance rates compared to school records, the project could support schools in setting up mechanisms to constantly monitor student attendance. Moreover, since the attendance related factors for girls were related to household factors, discussion with parents on importance of attendance could be a start point. VSO Nepal should prioritize supporting the girls from female-headed households, dalit family, having some form of disability, speaking different mother tongue than the school's language of instructions, and married girls. Some of the students do not stay for the full hours of school possibly due to lack of mid-day meal facilities[29] and lack of mechanism to monitor attendance at the end of school hours, schools could be encouraged to arrange both.

Target related to attendance

The student attendance rate (based on spot check) was 74 per cent during baseline, and thus anticipated to improve by 10 per cent by first evaluation point, and 20 per cent by endline evaluation point.

Table 31d. Target setting for outcomes

	Mid Term Evaluation (2019)	Endline Evaluation (2021)
School attendance rate (based on spot check)	**81**	**89**

5.2 Girls' self-esteem (IO2: Increased self-esteem and empowerment of girls)

[29] Based on interview with Head Teacher in Surkhet, and SMC in Dhading.

Intermediate outcome 2: Increased self-esteem and empowerment of girls: measured in terms of increase in number and percentage of girls reporting (a) self-confidence, b) being listened to, and c) influencing decision-making in a) the home, b) school, c) the wider community.

As per the theory of change, the girl's self-esteem is particularly important to enable them to transition well in school. If the girls develop self-esteem that can lead to their enhanced influence particularly in the family, and also establish their confidence in the school which can contribute to better in-school progression (and reduced drop out), and improved chances to get employed or start up business for older out of school girls. For the girl in bridge course, the self-esteem is expected to lead them to enrol back to school and be persistent and resilience in overcoming the barriers.

The log frame has identified five different indicators to measure the status of the second intermediate outcome. The indicators include:

- % of girls who feel confident
- % of girls who are listened to or consider themselves to be highly influential at least at the family level
- % of girls who influence decisions at: (a) home, (b) school, and (c) community

Considering that these five indicators does not directly estimate the self-esteem of the girls, five additional indicators were chosen to estimate and further explain the status of self-esteem and empowerment among girls. Three different indexes were developed based on the girls survey – life skills score, gender equity index (GEI), and youth leadership index (YLI). The life skill score was calculated by combining various life skills related questions included in the girls survey. Similarly GEI and YLI were also calculated based on the girls survey. The Gender Equitable Index (GEI) is an index designed to measure aggregate gender equitable attitudes based on the survey. There are three versions of the GEI designed for three different age groups: youth aged 10-12 years old, adolescents aged 13-17 years old, and adults aged 18 or older[30]. YLI, was designed specially by CARE to longitudinally measure changes in self-perceptions of leadership among youth, especially those aged 10-17[31]. The questions in the YLI ask youth about their self-confidence, their decision-making, problem solving and organizational skills, their sense of voice, and their ability to motivate others. The YLI also measures cooperation, diligence, independent thinking, personal responsibility, and leadership interest[32].

The in-school girls were mostly self-confident. For example, there were 83 per cent girls in intervention schools who could ask questions confidently to teachers and also respond to them with confidence. The proportion of girls who could show such confidence was significantly higher in control schools. Interestingly, there were fewer girls among out-of-school girls enrolled in bridge course who reported to be self-confident. There were only 57

[30]http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/CARE-GEI-Toolkit-FINAL-WEB.pdf
[31]https://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/CARE-YLI-Toolkit-FINAL-WEB.pdf
[32]https://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/CARE-YLI-Toolkit-FINAL-WEB.pdf

per cent girls who felt confident. It is worth noting that these girls are school drop out of younger age, and will require them to feel confident to enroll back and be resilient to continue their school. Three in four girls reported that they take part in decision making at home level with lower proportion (60%) reporting to be involved in decision making at school level, and fewer (35%) reporting to be engaged in community level decision making. There was no significant difference in the proportions for intervention and control schools.

In terms of being influential to decisions, the proportion of girl was only a quarter. Among the girls in intervention schools, 25 per cent reported that they are listened and highly influence decisions at home, significantly higher proportion compared to control schools (16%). The status of other indicators is discussed in sub-sections after the table.

Table 32: Key IO2 Indicators

Indicators	Intervention	Control	Out of-school girls (if applicable)	Source
Log frame indicators				
% of girls who feel confident	83.1	87.9**	57.1	Girls survey
% of girls who feel they are involved in decisions in home	74.4	74.9		Girls survey
% of girls who feel they are involved in decisions in school	60.2	62.3		Girls survey
% of girls who feel they are involved in decisions in community	35.3	32.7		Girls survey
% of girls who are listened to at home (highly influence decision at home)	86.4	87.2		Girls survey
Other indicators				
% of girls who believe they can make decisions about their education	68.4	68.6		Girls survey
% of girls who can make all key decisions related to education and marriage on their own	5.5~	7.6		Girls survey
Life skill score[33]	60.1	62.0		
Gender Empowerment Index (out of 56)[34]	49.9	50.9		Girls survey
Youth Leadership Index (out of 52)[35]	43.8	43.1		Girls survey

*Source: Girls Survey, Significant difference, **p<0.01, * p<0.05, ~p<0.10*

Education rights for girls

[33] Information compiled through girls survey, and an index created combining indicators used to measure life skill
[34] GEI is a composite index that adds up the rating (1 - strongly disagree, 2, 3, 4 -strongly agree) for 14 items that were included in the test. The minimum score is 14 and maximums score is 56.
[35] YLI is also a composite index that adds up the rating (1 - strongly disagree, 2, 3, 4 -strongly agree) for 13 items that were included in the test. The minimum score is 13, and the maximum score is 52.

Most of the girls had good understanding about their education rights, especially their rights to go to school in comparison with the boys. However, the proportion of girls who believed they cannot choose whether to attend or stay in school, and will have to accept what happens was lower. There were 62 per cent girls (compared to significantly lower 55% girls in control) who reported that they can't take decisions related to their education while believing that they have rights to do that. The practice of girls to read learning materials other than school hours and for school assignment was also rare. There were only 17 per cent girls (significantly lower compared to 20% girls in control) in intervention schools who reported that they spend time reading various learning materials.

Table 33: Education related rights and decisions for girls

	Intervention	Control
% of girls who think that it is important for children to go to school	98.9	98.6
% of girls who think that they have a right to go to school	99.1	98.8
% of girls who think boys have a right to go to school	99.5	99.5
% of girls who think children with disabilities have a right to go to school	95.6	94.1
% girls who believe they cannot choose whether to attend or stay in school, and will just have to accept what happens.	61.7**	54.9
% of girls who spend time reading various learning materials (outside the school hours and dedicated hours to complete school assignments at home)	16.6~	19.9

** The significant difference in two tailed t-test are indicated as: **p<0.01, * p<0.05, ~p<0.10.*

The qualitative discussions also concurred with the quantitative data in terms of very limited time that girls can devote for study back at home. While there was a common understanding among parents and girls that education is important, and should be accessible for both boys and girls, in practical terms, girls were at more disadvantage than boys in having quality time to give for studies while at home. The project should look to prioritize discussion with families to allow girls to have quality time to study at home, and also to enable them to have access to adequate learning materials.

Role in decision-making

Similar to the discussions presented above, the proportion of girls who make decisions on various aspects differed widely based on the topic. While only a few girls (20%) could take decisions about when to marry on their own, one in two girls could decide about how to spend your free time, and how often to spend time with friends. There were only 5.5 per cent girls who could make all key decisions on their own (significantly lower compared to 7.6 per cent girls in control). There were significantly lower proportion of girls among the out-of-school children who reported that they make decisions on their own or jointly. It signifies towards poor self-confidence and engagement in decision-making among girls, possibly due to the fact that they are much younger than in-school girls.

Table 34: Engagement of girls in decision-making practices

Decision areas	% of girls who decide at least to some extent				% of out of school girls (on own and jointly)
	Intervention		Control		
	On their own	Jointly with family	On their own	Jointly with family	
Whether or not you will go to school	44.8	27.3	42.9	29.6	25.5
Whether or not you will continue in school past this year	40.7	31.0	42.2	30.3	4.7
When/ at what age you will get married	20.3	30.5	19.1	20.3	25.8
If you will work after you finish your studies	35.2	30.8	35.6	29.2	-
What type of work you will do after you finish your studies	35.0	31.9	35.3	31.3	-
How you spend your free time	51.5	21.9	53.2	21.9	40.5
How often you spend time with your friends	57.0	17.7	56.5	20.8	39.2
% of girls taking all key decisions on their own	5.5~		7.6		

*Significant difference, **p<0.01, * p<0.05, ~p<0.10*

The qualitative discussions confirmed the quantitative findings. In a focus group discussion in Lamjung, the girls compare boys with wind who can roam around and do not need permissions while girls are always bound within the territory of the house. The statement infers to poor access to decisions among girls. While the say for girls to decide about the marriage has improved and girls are sometimes allowed to also decide about their career, they are still not able decide about the mobility outside home. When triangulated with parents and teachers, they also agree that there are some limitations for girls particularly due to their safety concerns. The parents tend to be more protective when it comes to taking decisions about girls. In some ways, it has linkage with widely prevalent sexual violence on girls/women, and its effect on the reputation of the family, and future life of the girls.

> *Boys roam around the village but they do not do anything at home. Boys are like the wind wherever they want to move they move. Girls stay at home and follow others. (FGD with girls, Lamjung)*

> *Girls usually decide getting married. Decision is made based on girl's agreement. First boy and girl like each other then that is given approval after the family and the rest happens. We are also free to decide about our career. We have to ask our parents and get permission for going somewhere out for visits or games etc. (FGD with girls, Lamjung)*

Life skills

On the whole, the girls had fairly good life skills except for the facts that large proportion of girls felt nervous to speak, read, and do some exercise in front of others. They were positive about continuing their education and performing well in their studies, and also working closely with their friends. It indicates that the activities set for the project and assumptions included in its theory of change to boost life skills among girls for their improved transition

were relevant. The good life skill score indicates towards positive possibilities to connect the girls to skills training, and to the employment for their successful transition.

Table 35: Life skill related checklists

Life skill queries	% who strongly agree and agree to some extent		
	In-school (Intervention)	In-school (Control)	Out-of-school
I am able to do things as well as my friends	93.3	91.5	78.6
I want to do well in school	96	96.5	82.4
I get nervous when I have to read in front of others	46.6	42.2	62.6
I get nervous when I have to do maths in front of others	57.1	43.6	56.9
I feel confident answering questions in class	75.5	75.1	48.7
I can stay focused on a goal despite things getting in the way	81.2	83.1	73.7
I would like to continue studying/ attending school after this year	95	95.9	50.4
I can put a plan in place and stick with it	79.5	78.2	
I recognise when choices I make today about my studies can affect my life in the future.	68.2	69	
I can describe my thoughts to others when I speak	86.7	91.1	
If someone does not understand me I try to find a different way of saying what is on my mind	90.1	90.7	
When others talk I pay attention to their body language, gestures and facial expressions	73.3	75.5	71.5
I can work well in a group with other people	92.5	96.6	
When I have the opportunity, I can organize my peers or friends to do an activity.	88.5	90.9	
I often feel lonely at school	17.5	15.7	54.7
I ask the teacher if I don't understand something	90.7	91.8	68.6
When I succeed at school it is because I worked hard	91.3	83.9	78.9
If I do well in a test it is because I am lucky.	42.3	39.5	35.4
I get support I need from my family to stay in school and perform well	97	97.7	
Life skill score	60.5	62.0	

*Source: Survey with girls, Significant difference, **p<0.01, * p<0.05, ~p<0.10*

The life skill scores were lower for out-of-school girls of age 6-9 years. Particularly challenging for the project could be that 1 in 2 girls were not interested and assured about continuing their education in school after the bridge course. Most of the girls were also not very confident about asking questions to teachers and gaining their support in studies. They mostly felt left out and alone. The finding has clear inference for the project to work with younger out of school girls in building their self-confidence, and also in enriching their ability to communicate with the teachers.

YLI Components

In terms of youth leadership, the girls had some leadership skills but were reluctant to take the leadership positions, and were not comfortable to speak out and participate actively in

public space. While the leadership characteristics and perceptions were not significantly different for intervention and control schools, the proportions were significantly low for out-of school girls especially in terms of putting forward their ideas, and asking questions.

Table 36: Checklists on youth leadership

Decision areas	% of girls who agree					
	Intervention		Control		Out-of-school	
	Strongly	To some extent	Strongly	To some extent	Strongly agree	To some extent
I like to do new activities that I may not know how to do.	44.6	36.9	46.9	33.8	53.2	26.7
My friends ask me for advice.	55.8	33.8	55.2	36.9	34.2	37.4
I recognize when people have different skills to contribute to a task.	30.9	60.0	26.8	65.1	37.4	47.7
I am comfortable when my teacher calls on me to answer a question.	37.3	51.4	36.8	56.0	48.9	39.2
I contribute ideas to discussions at home even if they are different from other's ideas.	41.4	41.7	46.5	41.5	17.7	39.5
I ask questions at school when I don't understand something.	38.5	54.8	35.2	60.4	16.8	52.5
The things I do set a good example for my peers.	46.5	39.8	51.7	39.3	18.9	51.3
I can show what is important to me with my actions.	38.1	53.2	39.9	55.1	34.4	45.7
I encourage others to join together to help my community.	39.2	47.5	41.0	50.8	16.9	41.2
If someone treats me unfairly at school, I am comfortable telling an adult.	30.5	60.1	26.5	64.8	39.9	28.1
I am willing to work hard to achieve my dreams.	26.8	65.9	27.9	68.4	48.1	31.3
I am interested in being a leader at my school	30.4	39.0	26.5	44.0	40.9	36.2
I try to understand the cause of a problem before trying to solve it	41.9	47.0	38.3	52.1	45.5	24.0

*Source: Survey with girls, Significant difference, **p<0.01, * p<0.05, ~p<0.10*

GEI Score Components

Compared to YLI, the GEI scores were higher. The girls were mostly agreed to most of the gender equity related statement. The only statements were they were a bit doubtful were about girls allowed to play sports, commenting on boys allowed to share their problems with others, boys as well as girls asking for permission to go and play, and equal right of women to enrol in higher education. There was no significant difference in the GEI score between control and intervention areas. However, the GEI scores were particularly lower for out-of-school girls who were younger than in-school girls, and were in bridge course due to their inability to get enrolled and continue school education. The lower GEI score confirms a barrier identified the theory of change that the lack of self-esteem is one of the barriers for transition.

Table 37: Checklists on gender equity

Decision areas	%girl's who agree					
	Intervention		Control		Out-of-school	
	Strongly	To some extent	Strongly	To some extent	Strongly	To some extent
Women have the right to hold leadership positions in the community.	72.7	18.3	79.3	14.5	52.5	27.6
A female president can be as effective as a male president.	65.0	25.5	71.8	20.6	41.5	31.8
At home, both boys and girls should ask permission to go play with their friends.	64.7	19.4	66.9	16.5	55.7	29.3
Girls have the same right to go to school as boys.	82.9	11.4	85.0	10.3	52.9	34.2
It is good for boys to talk about their problems with their male friends.	57.9	27.1	58.2	27.6	41.2	39.2
Men and women both have the right to enroll in advanced schooling.	73.3	19.7	77.5	17.2	42.2	36.6
I respect a man who walks away from a fight.	83.3	11.1	86.3	10.8	59.0	26.0
A husband and wife should decide together if they want to have children.	73.9	18.9	77.0	16.7	29.8	38.3
Both men and women have the right to choose who they marry.	76.9	17.3	79.3	17.2	27.4	31.6
Girls should be allowed to play sports.	66.6	19.6	70.6	15.9	46.1	37.8
Boys should be allowed to play sports.	77.9	15.4	84.5	11.3	64.6	26.3
If I heard a man insulting a woman, I would tell the man to stop.	83.1	11.3	88.8	9.1	43.7	28.5

Decision areas	%girl's who agree					
	Intervention		Control		Out-of-school	
	Strongly	To some extent	Strongly	To some extent	Strongly	To some extent
If I heard a woman insulting a man, I would tell the woman to stop.	69.1	23.0	75.1	19.1	42.5	34.4
Women should know about family planning before marriage.	67.0	24.9	73.5	19.2	28.2	40.0
GEI Score (out of 56)	49.9		50.9		42.1	

*Source: Survey with girls, Significant difference, **p<0.01, * p<0.05, ~p<0.10*

Discrimination during menstruation

One of the key barriers to girl's education is the discrimination girls face during the menstruation. During girl's survey, the girls clearly highlighted changes in their routine during the menstruation. Nine per cent girls reported that they do not attend school during menstruation. More than half proportion of the girls were not allowed to go to kitchen during the periods, and more than a quarter could not sleep in their usual bed. The discrimination during menstruation varied by districts. It was highest in Surkhet and lowest in Dhading followed after Parsa and Lamjung districts. In Surkhet and Lamjung, the proportion of girls missing school during menstruation was 10 per cent. During qualitative discussions, the girls reported that they could not attend school during menstruation due to lack of arrangement of sanitary pads, lack of good toilet facility, and menstrual pain.

> *Girl students face the problem during menstruation time and feel awkward at that time because they do not have separate toilet at school. (KII with SMC Member, Man, Dhading)*

> *No, we cannot talk to our parents about it, we talk to mothers. To talk with fathers about this, it's awkward. There are restrictions for 3-4 days, should bathe on the fourth day. We come to school but its difficult to come, also we feel awkward to sit in front of boys in those days. We find it difficult to talk to male teachers about such problems and there is no female teacher assigned for us to share our problem. (FGD with girls, Parsa)*

> *Due to lack of proper gender friendly toilet andlack of sanitation pads in school they don't attend school. School does not have facility of providing pads for them. I guess that may be the case why they do absent during this period. (KII with HT, Man, Surkhet)*

Table 38: Behaviour shifts during menstruation

	Intervention	Control
% of girls who reported that they do not attend school during menstruation	8.5	6.9
% of girls who reported that they are not allowed inside kitchen during menstruation	51.3	51.7
% of girls who reported that they are not allowed to sleep in the same bed during menstruation	26.7	29.8

*Source: Survey with girls, Significant difference, **p<0.01, * p<0.05, ~p<0.10*

Interconnected factors

The self-esteem of girls measured in terms of girls being listened too was lowest for Parsa with only 70 per cent girls reported to be listened to while making decisions followed by Surkhet (90%), and Lamjung and Dhading (>95%). There was no significant difference in being listened by the age group of the girls and grades. However, there was slight tendency of parents to listen to girls of age 14-16 years. The factors associated with higher chances of girls to be listened to were: girls from dalit family (92.4%), speaking same language in school to that in home (91.3%), and female headed household (93.5%). Compared to children without disability, slightly less parents of children with disability were reported to listen to their children/girls. Similarly, the married girls also had poor access to decision-making than unmarried girls since they mostly lived with in-laws in an environment with their limited influence. Other factors such poverty of family and other characteristics of girls and family were not significantly associated with the chances for girls to be listened.

Table 38a: Family characteristics & decision making among girls

	% of girls reporting to have been listened to by the family in making decisions
All girls	86.7
Living without both parents	90.9
Living in female headed household	93.5**
Mother tongue different to LOI	79.8**
Children with at least one form of disability	81.6
Serious illness	89.7
HOH is illiterate	85.4
Family is poor	83.8
Dalit	92.4**
Married	73.3
Extremely marginalized	91.8**

**Significant difference compared to the opposite, **p<0.01, * p<0.05, ~p<0.10 estimated using two tailed T-test*

Linkage to long term outcomes and key take out for the project

The self-esteem especially the feeling among girls of being listened to and taking part in decision was a factor significantly linked with learning outcome, and also to some extent with the transition. The qualitative discussions clearly indicated that all girls do not feel being actively engaged in decision making at school and household level. During quantitative survey, there were many girls who reported facing differential treatment from teachers for boys and girls. The girls also felt being discriminated at home, and were sensing lack of adequate freedom and opportunity to study. In this context, the project should look for some interventions to boost their confidence at home and at school by reducing the existing level of discrimination. The improvement in self-confidence could lead to improve learning outcomes. For younger out-of-school girls, the lack of confidence was one of the main barriers to their existing failed transition, and they also sense lack of confidence to join back to school and interact with teachers. The project needs to work in building confidence among girls, and also making them familiar with the school environment to ensure swift transition to school. Since girls were feeling lonely and were not confident about interacting with teachers, the host schools (to be enrolled) may also need to be encourage to have special treatment for such out of school girls. For out-of-school girls of age 18-25 years, and also for

in-school girls of higher grades, the project's approach to build life skill to transition to employment or business can be considered relevant.

Target related to self-confidence

The targets for self-confidence among girls and being listened to were adjusted some points above the baseline level. The following were the targets.

Table 31d. Target setting for outcome - II

	Mid Term Evaluation (2019)	Endline Evaluation (2021)
% of girls who feel confident	90	95
% of girls who feel they are involved in decisions in home	80	85
% of girls who feel they are involved in decisions in school	70	80
% of girls who feel they are involved in decisions in community	40	50
% of girls who are listened to at home (highly influence decision at home)	90	95

5.3 Community-based attitudes and behaviour change (IO3 – Increased parental engagement in girl's education)

Intermediate outcome 3
Increased parental engagement in girl's education: measured in terms of increase in number and percentage of parents who volunteer their services to the school or join the SMC or PTA and/or provide emotional support to girls due to increased awareness on girls education, and % of girls who report that their parents actively support them to complete secondary school

The parental perception reflects the community based attitude and behaviour towards girl's education including the behaviour of parents in allowing girls to spend adequate time for their education. The theory of change identified poor parental attitude and discrimination against girls as one of the barriers, hence, assuming that the improved parental attitude will enable girls to get better learning environment and good parental support to lead to learning as well as transition outcomes. The two log frame indicators to measure the status of parental engagement were: % of parents who actively support girls to complete secondary education, and % of parents who volunteer their services to school or engage in activities jointly with SMC/PTA. The baseline study identified five more indicators to assess the parental attitude and engagement in real sense. The indicators were identified and measured to track the progress or triangulate it with log frame indicators.

Table 39: Baseline status IO3 indicators

Indicators	Intervention	Control
Log frame indicators		
% of parents who active support girls to complete secondary education	75.6	73.6
% of parents who volunteer their services to school or join SMC/PTA and engaged in their activities	14.6	16.0
Other indicators		

Indicators	Intervention	Control
% of parents who believe it is worth investing in girl's education	57	54
% of parents believing that girls can also utilize education equally compared to boys	65	61
% of girls who need to get engaged in intensive household work	82.4	85.2
% of girls who report doing household work at least a quarter of the day (3-5 hours)	62.3	62.4
% of parents who report that the household work engagement affects her education to some extent	22.8	22.3

*Source: Caregiver's survey, significant difference, **p<0.01, * p<0.05, ~p<0.10*

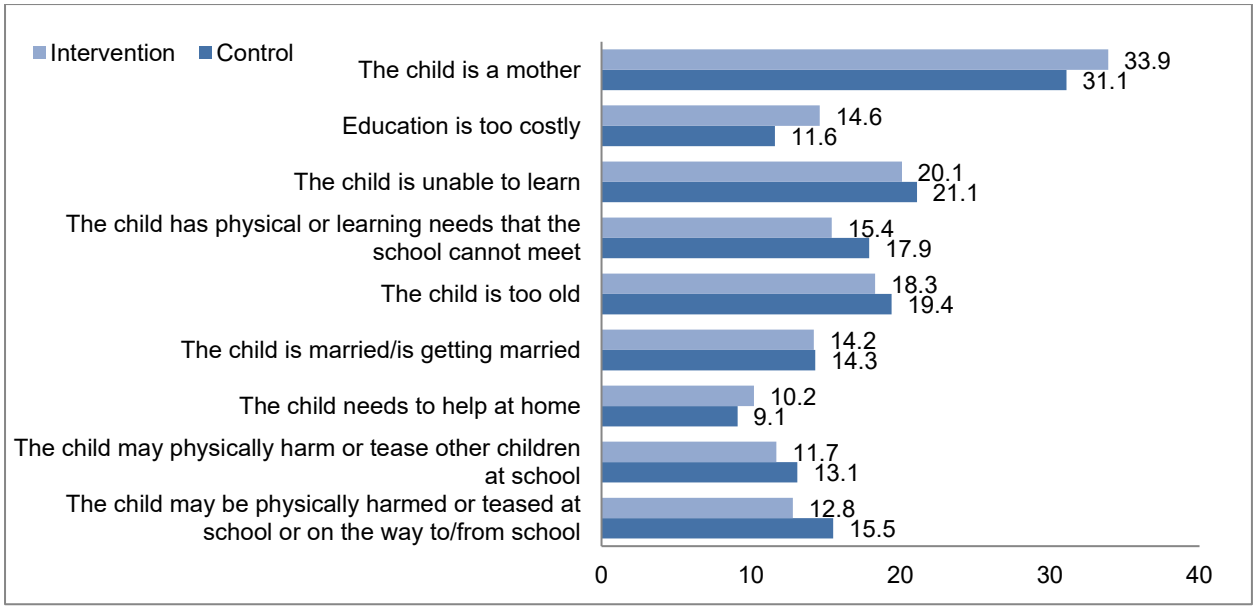
Parental perception towards girl's education

The parents were normally very positive towards educating girls. Among the total parents/caregivers interviews, 57.1 per cent in intervention area (compared to 53.9%) in control reported that they strongly believe it is worth investing in education followed by 37.6 per cent in intervention (42.0% in control) also believing it. Most of them were also positive that girls can also use education equally compared to boys with 95 per cent agreeing on it in both control and treatment. Among the parents/caregivers, 65 per cent in intervention area (compared to 61 per cent in control) strongly believed that girls are equally likely to utilize their education. While parents were positive in their attitude towards educating girls, the criteria majority of them identified as a situation good enough to drop out of school were mostly related to girls. The parents, depending on their financial situation, wanted to educate their girls to grade 12 or higher. In some cases, girls also concurred with parents in realizing that parents struggle to support them as necessary due to limited parental education, and poor financial conditions.

> *The changes in our consciousness and understanding of the importance of education have led us to believe that we should send our children to school. (FGD with Parents, Dhading)*
>
> *We are ready to have our children study to higher level as they like to attend. We can afford upto 12 class and in our society we do not discriminate between son and daughter. We do as much as we can do for them. (FGD with Parents, Dhading)*
>
> *Well, our parents help us all the way they can. They are not literate. Had they been educated, they would have understood child as a student. They don't know many things but still they have done a lot.. (FGD with girls, Lamjung)*

The gender analysis also noted that educated parents were better in terms of their behaviours and ability to motivate girls to continue education. The educated parents were more inclined to create suitable education for higher education of girls. There were number of reasons that parents consider fine to drop their girls out of school. The top reasons were: having a child, getting married, and too old to attend school.

Chart 39b: Reasons valid enough to leave school



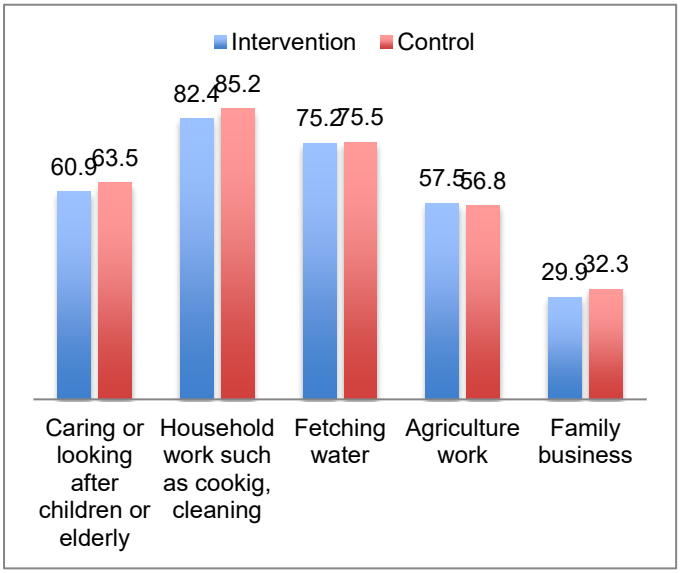
Source: Survey with Caregivers

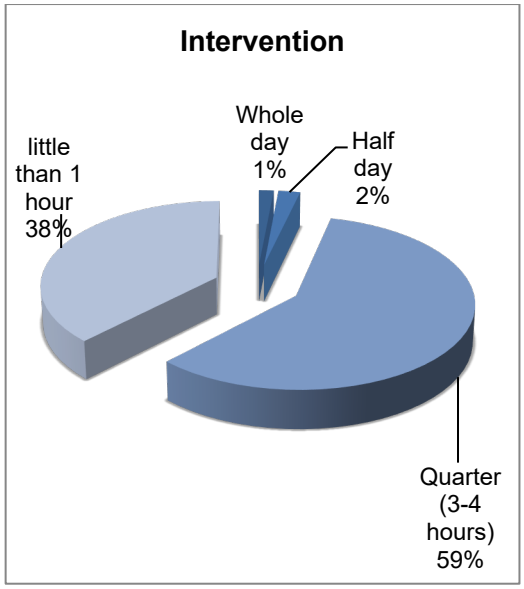
The situations considered good enough to drop out by more than 20 per cent parents include: lack of motivation for children to learn (closely related to the lack of motivation to continue study reported in girl's survey which was associated with their learning scores), and married with children. There were significantly larger proportions of parents/caregivers in intervention area (compared to control) who considered that it is viable to drop out of school if it is too costly.

> *Dropout is high in the 9th and 10th grades. Few students are from 8th class. But higher number of students from 9th and 10th class quit school. This happens owing to the marital or economic status…I must say they have not understood the importance of the education. (KII with HT, Surkhet)*

One of the aspects closely related to parents and girls in terms of positive behaviours among parents to send girls to school is household workload for girls. While parents were positive about girl's education, it was not really translated in practice since many of the girls were engaged heavily in household workload. The household workload for girls was evident also in the survey with caregivers/parents. Most of the children were engaged with household work such as cleaning and cooking (82%) followed by fetching water (75%), ad caring for other family members (60%). The hours and extent of involvement were also quite big with 59 per cent girls involved around a quarter of day (3-5 hours).

Chart 39c. Engagement in household workload **Extent of household workload**





Source: Survey with Caregivers

During the caregiver's survey, the caregivers reported that the household workload has affected the education of girls in their family including the girls included in the cohort.

Table 40: Coping and effects of household workload

Coping	Intervention	Control
Not enrolled	0.36	0.0
It often affects her education	1.18	0.5
It sometimes affect her badly	21.3	21.8
It does not stop her from study but affects somehow	76.5	77.1
Don't know	0.64	0.64

*Source: Caregiver's survey, significant difference, **p<0.01, * p<0.05, ~p<0.10*

Support for girl's education

Government of Nepal has a provision to provide scholarship to all girls enrolled in secondary school, and motivate and support parents to education their girls. The normal scholarship amount for girls at all levels of school is Rs. 400 per year. Among the total parents, majority (81%) reported that they have received such scholarship. The parents report that the scholarship has effect on the attendance and performance of girls. Out of parents receiving scholarship, 55 per cent reported that scholarship had effect on enrolling girls while 92 per cent reported support of scholarship to send girls to school on regular basis. In 92 per cent cases, the scholarship has helped parents to manage their finances for education. During the qualitative discussions, the parents reported receiving scholarship but also shared dis-satisfaction on its small amount. The Head Teachers and SMC members, in some schools, reported that parents only show up in school to collect scholarship amount, and they also misuse the amount for other family purpose rather than for children's education. However, they also agree that the amount provided is very low.

Interconnected factors

There was some difference in the proportion of parents who are engaged with SMC/PTA in school level activities by districts. The proportion of parents engaged was highest for Dhading and lowest for Parsa district: 20 per cent in Dhading, 15 per cent in Lamjung, 12 per cent in Parsa, and 16 per cent in Surkhet district. There were also more parents engaged in school (22.8%) if the girl is attending Grade 10 compared to Grade 6 (12.2%). The parental interest in Grade 10 is due to the fact that students from that grade will be attending secondary education examination, and might be visiting schools more to meet with teachers and school management. While checked for association with other factors, there was no significant relation observed between family and girl characteristics and barriers with parental engagement in school except for mother tongue separate than language of instruction. This finding corroborates with Parsa having lowest parental engagement since the language of instruction is different than the mother tongue for most of the children and parents in Parsa.

Table 40b: Family/Girl characteristics & tendency to engage in school

	% of parents engaged in schools
All girls	15.5
Living in female headed household	15.6
Mother tongue different to LOI	13.3*
Children with at least one form of disability	20.2
Serious illness	15.1
HOH is illiterate	17.6
Family is poor	14.0
Dalit	16.2
Married	15.6
Extremely marginalized	16.3

**Significant difference compared to the opposite, **p<0.01, * p<0.05, ~p<0.10 estimated using two tailed T-test*

Linkage to long term outcomes and key take out for the project

The parental engagement in school had positive association with the learning outcomes, especially literacy outcomes. The qualitative discussions indicated that the parental support to girls were crucial not only in keeping them to school but also in their transition to employment and business. The parental tendency to mobilize funds or finance some opportunities for girls was considered crucial in deciding career perspective for girls[36]. The parents, both men and women, were also positive about supporting their girls but were also constrained by resources, and their social practice such as early marriage. There was sharp difference in opinion between the school and parents in terms of invitation and parental participation in school affairs. There is an opportunity for the project to work with school to encourage parents to attend various events in school, and parents are invited on time, and are also motivated to do so. The project may also require specific efforts to make parents aware, informed and motivated to engage in school, and create suitable learning

[36] FGD with girls in Lamjung and Dhading.

environment and provide adequate opportunity and freedom for girls to utilize it for learning purpose.

In terms of the appropriateness of the log frame indicator, while the existing indicators on parental engagement and support to girls can be utilized further to monitor the progress in next evaluation points, it might be useful to add some indicators directly relating to parental perception, and their support in terms of improved study environment at home.

Target related to parental engagement

The percentage of parents who actively support girls to attend secondary education was 76 per cent during baseline. The proportion is expected to increase by 5 per cent point in each evaluation interval. Similarly, the proportion of parents engaged in school was 14.6 per cent, and anticipated to increase by 10 per cent in first evaluation point, and 30 per cent by endline.

Table 40c. Target setting for outcome - III

	Mid Term Evaluation (2019)	Endline Evaluation (2021)
% of parents who active support girls to complete secondary education	80	85
% of parents who volunteer their services to school or join SMC/PTA and engaged in their activities	17	21

5.4 Quality of teaching (IO4: Improved teaching quality)

Intermediate outcome 4: Improved quality of teaching: measured in terms of increase in number of trained teachers displaying learner centred classroom practices

The learning outcome is expected to depend on the quality of teaching in school determined by the teacher's training, qualification, classroom environment, and actual classroom performance. Hence, the outcome on quality of teaching was selected. The quality of teaching is a complex concept to breakdown. The baseline study collected information about quality of teaching based on teacher qualifications, students and parent's perception towards teacher's performance, and scores obtained during the classroom observation by the baseline team. The most crucial tool was classroom observation where random class of grades 6-8 for random subjects were observed and rated on key aspects of classroom teaching learning: preparation for class, availability of learning materials and basic facilities, teacher-student interaction, and evaluation of students. The checklists were taken based on standard criteria for classroom observation based on child friendly schooling framework issued by Ministry of Education, Nepal[37]. The baseline figures obtained for all criteria indicated no significant difference between intervention and control sites.

There was only one log frame indicator to assess the improved teaching quality: % of teachers demonstrating learner-centred approach in classroom teaching learning process. Based on MEL framework of the project, the data for this indicator should be collected through barefoot assessment to be conducted during the monitoring cycle of the project. During baseline, a separate classroom observation was conducted following principles of child friendly schooling, and the status of teachers using child-centred approach was estimated. In addition, six additional indicators were also framed to supplement and triangulate the status reported for log-frame indicator.

The baseline data indicated poor situation in terms of teaching quality. There were only nine per cent teachers following learner centred approach[38] in intervention schools compared to significantly higher 19 per cent for control schools. In terms of teaching quality and environment, the control schools were significantly better. For other additional indicators, however, there was no difference between intervention and control schools.

Table 41: Baseline status IO4 indicators

Indicators	Intervention	Control	Source
Log frame indicator			
% of teachers using learner centred classroom practices	9.1	18.8**	Classroom observation
Additional indicators			

[37] Government of Nepal, Department of Education (DOE), 2012. National Child Friendly Schooling Framework, 2012

[38] Scoring at least 75% in the rating scale used to measure the classroom teaching learning process including teacher-student interaction, and learning without fear.

Indicators	Intervention	Control	Source
% of girls who report that their teachers treat girls and boys equally	21.8	18.7	Girls survey
% of girls who report teachers are often absent	33.8	30.9	Girls survey
% of parents who report good teaching quality in school	41.3	35.5	Caregiver survey
% of unqualified teachers (with education less than higher secondary level)	12.8	12.0	School survey
Student teacher ratio	27	25	School survey
Classroom observation score[39]	50.0	49.7	

*Source: Significant difference, **p<0.01, * p<0.05, ~p<0.10*

Teacher availability and qualifications

First, despite the student teacher ratio of 27 students for 1 teacher (well below 40 students per teacher national standards), the distribution of teacher was not uniform. In some schools, government was not able to fulfil teacher requirements. As a result, the schools chose to recruit teachers from private source. In the interventions schools,15.5% teachers (compared to 20.9% teachers in control schools) were recruited through private source. In terms of teacher competence, not all teachers met basic academic qualification requirements. In terms of teacher qualification, there were 12.8 per cent unqualified teachers (with qualification less than higher secondary) working in intervention schools compared to 12 per cent in control schools. The availability of female teachers, however, was acceptable. There were nearly 1 female teacher among 3 teachers in both control and intervention schools (31.7% for intervention, and 28.8% for control). During qualitative discussions, most of the schools reported of teacher shortage. The teacher shortage was partially due to the inability of government to supply and manage teachers across the country based on Student Teacher Ratio (STR)[40], and largely because the schools were increasing the highest grade offered on their own without government approval which required schools to manage teachers on their own. This tendency has not only deepens teacher shortage but also has undermined the ability of schools to invest on processes and facilities that directly affects teaching learning process, and the schools are compelled to charge fees (affecting the access of poorest families) against the constitutional provision of compulsory and free education (refer to Section-1).

> *Only less than five teachers are permanent here 5 of them are temporary who all are paid by the VDC, altogether there are 9 teachers. We are facing difficulty in paying them. Our most concern and worry is how to pay them their salary and school is degrading, how to improve school's teaching quality, (KII with SMC Member, Dhading)*

> *Secondary school is run by the community resources. There is no sufficient fund with school to recruit well-qualified and specialized teachers. Yes, that is our difficulty - having no qualified teacher. (KII with head teacher, Surkhet)*

[39] Score was calculated based on the class observation remarks to indicate the quality of class.
[40] Pant, Yagya Raj, Teacher Performacne Development in Nepal, study conducted for Asian Development Bank, 2012

Parental perception on quality of teaching

Parents were not much aware about the teaching quality in school since they rarely visited schools to check about the teaching quality. The parent teacher interactions were very low with rate parent-teacher meetings. While 20 per cent were completely unaware about the status of teaching quality within school, there were only 41 per cent who believe the quality of teaching within the school is very good or good. During qualitative discussions, the teachers highlighted the fact that the arrangements to have regular interaction with parents of children studying at the secondary level are quite low while the parents remained mixed in observing whether the quality of education being delivered by the school is good. Some of the parents and local representatives, however, were very critical about the weak performance by teachers in the school, and considered their lack of motivation and weak performance as a main setback for quality education in school.

> *Teaching in this school is not satisfactory. Only 5/6 students pass secondary education examination each year. We don't believe that children educated in this school can do better in their lives later on. We don't think that they can get job. School is not managed satisfactorily. There are not enough materials for effective teaching. (FGD with parents, Parsa)*

> *Improvements can be seen in comparison to the past in schools. Nowadays we have good students performing better than the past. Also we have not seen any discrimination from the teacher's side. (FGD with parents, Dhading)*

> *I'm quite disappointed with school management. Children spend 18 hrs a day with their parents and 6 hrs with their teachers. If parents were educated, they would definitely teach their children themselves, they wouldn't seek help from the teachers. School is considered as second home for children. We are not satisfied with their teaching. Only sending children to school is not enough, teachers too have to teach well. You might have noticed that teachers aren't regular to school, and there are not enough number of teachers in schools as well which has directly affected quality of school. The assigned courses are also not completed in a year. In these circumstances, how can students get good marks? School management should take action in this regard. They are only focused in physical environment. (KII with local government, Dhading)*

Student's perception on quality of teaching

Most of the girls reported teachers to be supportive and welcoming while many identified that the teachers were not adequately gender sensitive. In their opinion, teachers did not give equal priority to girls compared to boys. In their opinion, teacher attendance was also an issue. Thirty four per cent girls in intervention schools reported that teachers are often absent. Interestingly, although teachers reported during qualitative discussions that they follow child friendly approach, more than 75 per cent girls reported that teachers punish children for not being able to complete lessons or assignments properly.

Table 42: Perception of girls towards quality of teaching learning

Key indicators	Intervention	Control
% of girls who believe they feel welcomed in school	93.5	92.8
% of girls who believe their teachers treat girls and boys equally	21.8	18.7
% of girls who feel teachers are often absent	33.8	30.9
% of girls who reported that teachers encourage them to participate	96.2	94.2
% of girls who reported that their teachers suggest them about ways to study at home	95.3	95.8

% of girls who reported that teachers punish for mistakes in lesson	74.8	77.7

*Source: Survey with girls, Significant difference, **p<0.01, * p<0.05, ~p<0.10*

During qualitative discussions, the girls had mixed opinion about the teaching quality. While they appreciated some aspects, they were not satisfied with others. In Lamjung, particularly, girls were satisfied with the teaching learning process. In Surkeht and Parsa, some strong dis-satisfactions were reported.

> *In comparison to the other schools around here our school is fairly good. Teachers are good and they repeat the lesson if not understood by the students in the class. Science lab is not good enough to experiment the assigned work. There are no games and extracurricular activities like dancing performance, oratory, are not focused on except giving some document to read on. (FGD with girls, Lamjung)*

> *Teachers are good and they teach well. They teach a lot of new things. We have group discussion in the classroom. Our teachers teach us additional things that are related to our studies and are useful for us in our daily lives like. It helps us to develop our general knowledge. (FGD with girls, Lamjung)*

> *All the students are satisfied. But there are some teachers who don't teach. They are busy in their own deeds. We complain to the head teacher .after that 1-2 month it is less but after that no. (FGD with girls, Surkhet)*

Classroom observation scores

The classroom observation indicated that the existing practices of teaching learning in school are not good enough. The classrooms were only operating at 50 per cent of their anticipated levels. During observation, in some of the schools, it was noted that the classroom is small to occupy and keep all children. The teachers were not always giving adequate priority to the weakest students while their approach was mostly universal targeting and benefiting all children. The interactions between teacher and students during the classroom were limited while the interactions and group works involving students were rarely observed.

Table 43: Classroom observation scores by various areas[41]

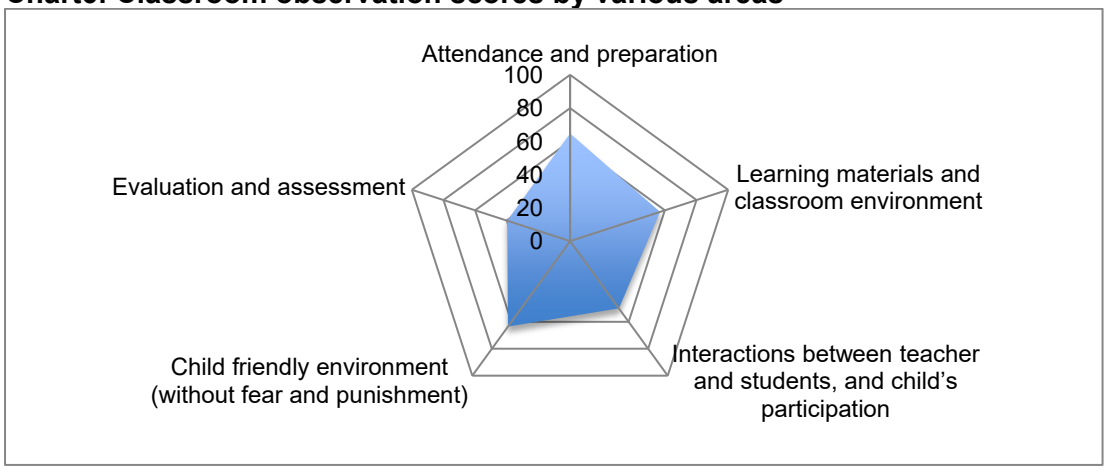
Key classroom observation areas	Observation score (100%)	
	Intervention	Control
Attendance and preparation	64.7	64.4
Learning materials and classroom environment	56.9	55.7
Interactions between teacher and students, and child's participation	50.0	50.9
Child friendly environment (without fear and punishment)	63.5	61.4
Evaluation and assessment	39.7	39.1
Total classroom observation	**49.7**	**50.0**

The spider-diagram below reflects that the performance of classroom against the standards was low in all areas. The weakest areas were review, evaluation and assessment, and

[41]The classroom observation was conducted using specific checklists of 37 items which asks for the observer to rate and rank the observed class against key standards related to classroom preparation, interactions, and evaluations.

interactions between teachers and students including active participation of children in the classroom activities.

Chart6: Classroom observation scores by various areas[42]



Source: Classroom observation form

The classroom observation conducted in all schools confirmed the findings in a way that the assessments are done poorly, and use of materials is low. Some of the observation notes indicated that there was no revision of the lessons covered in previous day nor there was any evaluation of the assignment provided to students. In some cases, teachers checked homework in sample, and solved the problems in classroom. The use of learning activities to deliver the lesson was very rare. The teachers often pinpointed certain students to respond to certain questions as part of their approach to engage children. The children were mostly passive while teacher was vibrant throughout the class. Except for books, there were no learning materials used inside classroom. The interaction was one way with teachers asking many questions, and students rarely asking any question. Most of the questions were about the lessons taught in the class and those had straight answers learnt form the book rather than giving the children opportunity to express their views or share their knowledge. The teacher was giving equal time to all the students as much as possible. However, any special preference to shy and less-confident student was not seen. The girls listened carefully to the teacher but they were not seen asking any questions. They were not actively participating in the classroom. However, when provided with opportunity, the students were not hesitant to share their opinions. The talented students were more engaged in the teaching learning process than others.

Interconnected factors

Since the log frame indicator for this IO is from classroom observation, it does not provide space to examine the causal relationship and associations with the family and girl specific variables. In fact, it is one of the outcome areas more connected to school management and

[42]The classroom observation was conducted using specific checklists of 37 items that ask for the observer to rate and rank the observed class against key standards related to classroom preparation, interactions, and evaluations.

environment than with family characteristics. In qualitative discussions, teaching quality was linked more with the physical facilities of schools, availability of teachers in school, availability of materials, and presence and actual performance by teachers in classroom.

Linkage to long term outcomes and key take out for the project

Although it was not possible to set direct linkage between the learning outcome and indicators used to measure teaching quality since they come from different source, the reporting from parents and girls that the teachers treat girls and boys differently in the classroom were associated with lower learning scores. The qualitative discussion clearly highlighted the linkage between teaching quality and scores. Some of the parents, SMC members, and local government representatives were very critical about the teacher performance, and considered it as a primary reason behind poor performance of students in examinations[43]. Unlike the anticipation of the theory of change, there were very limited opinions relating lack of skills among teachers as a barrier to poor teaching quality. The SMC and Head Teacher often believed that teachers have skill but they do not perform as anticipated. In the opinion of teachers, they do not get good environment, adequate teaching resources, and are heavily loaded to perform their best. The motivation among teachers to perform well, and the time that they receive to prepare for a class and use of teaching learning materials inside classroom may be a good starting point to intervene. Only one log frame indicator linked with the outcome relating to teaching quality may be insufficient. In line with the discussion, the baseline study team recommends the project to add some additional indicators such as classroom observation score, student teacher ratio, and % of girls who report non-discriminatory behaviour from the teachers for among boys and girls.

Target related to teaching quality

The baseline value for teaching quality was very low. There were only 9 per cent teachers who used learner centered classroom practices. The target is anticipated to increase in four fold with initiation taken by the project. The proportion is expected to reach 70 per cent by end of the project.

Table 43a. Target setting for outcome - IV

	Mid Term Evaluation (2019)	Endline Evaluation (2021)
% of teachers using learner centred classroom practices	50	70

[43] Based on interview with SMC representative (man) in Dhading, and FGD with parents (women) in Parsa district.

5.5 School governance and management (IO5: Improve school management and governance)

Intermediate outcome 5
Improved school management and governance measured in terms of number of schools with SMC and PTA members who are aware of their roles and responsibilities are able to develop inclusive SIPs and setup Complaint Response Mechanism in school, and # and % of staff who can identify the correct way to recognise and respond to cases of child abuse.

The measurement of status of school governance and management is a complex phenomenon. For the purpose of the baseline, the activeness of SMC was considered as one of the key indicators along with the composition of SMC, their role in fulfilling basic mandatory provisions for schools, and parental awareness and involvement in the activities organized by SMC. The school and SMC related information were collected using school information form from all schools (intervention and control schools) while some perception linked information were also collected with parents on performance of SMC.

While the government through DOE's guidelines on Complaint Response Mechnism issued in 2015 made it compulsory for all schools to establish complaint box and response mechanism to protect girls and other children from violence and other forms of injustice, the complaint response mechanism (established by SMC/PTA) were available in 62 per cent intervention schools significantly higher than 35 per cent control school. The higher value for intervention schools might be due to the GEC1 interventions. There were also 83 per cent schools who wer aware about SIP, and had SMC/PTA already developing SIP in intervention schools compared to 68 per cent control schools. Although schools have prepared SIP, the qualitative discussions indicated that they are done to meet the mandatory requirements and did not engage intensive exercise related to problem analysis and priority setting. The proportion of teachers training on correct way to recognize and respond to case of child abuse was low: 11 per cent for intervention schools, and 10 per cent for control schools. A table below summarizes the indicators, and the text following it explains all indicators in detail.

Table 44: IO5 Indicators

Indicators	Intervention (out of 45)	Control (out of 18)	Source
Log frame indicators			
Number of schools with complaint response mechanism	28 (62%)**	6 (35%)	School information form
Number of schools with SMC and PTA members aware and informed about their roles, and able to develop SIP	83% (38)**	68% (31)	School information form
% of teachers trained on correct way to recognise and respond to cases of child abuse	10.5%	10.0%	School information form
Key Additional Indicators			
%of schools with SMC	88% (40)	83% (15)	School information form

% of schools which have active SMC	68% (31)	83% (15)	School information form
% of dalit members in SMC	13.5	12.0	School information form
% of women members in SMC	32.7	27.8	
% of schools with SIP	84% (38)	83% (15)	School information form
% of schools who conduct social audit	75% (38)	56% (10)	School information form
% of parents who reported to have participated in activities organized by SMC	16.0%	14.6%	Caregiver survey

*Source: Survey with girls, Significant difference, **p<0.01, * p<0.05, ~p<0.10*

Availability and active SMC

The SMCs were mostly available: 54 out of 63 schools (86%) had SMC available. While the schools had SMC, only 50 per cent intervention schools and 45 per cent control schools had the committee re-elected during last four years. Most of the schools also had practice of selecting chair from among the parents of the children studying in school. Seventy one per cent interventions school and 77 per cent control schools had SMC chairperson from among the parents. Most of the available SMCs were active, 49 schools out of 54 schools organized at least one meeting during last 3 months. The proportion was 68 per cent among the intervention schools. The committees were inclusive, and followed the government rules in finalizing the composition. Thirteen per cent members were dalits and 33 per cent members were women. During qualitative discussions with local government, it was inferred that local government, mandated by the constitution to manage school education, is interested to play role in improving school management through local level education policy[44]. Since the policy will have specific effect on how the school management and governance including school planning will be organized in coming period, the project has an opportunity to support local government in preparing education policy or in implementing it with specific priority on girls education, and creating safe environment for them.

School Improvement Plan and Social Audit

Based on the Education Act and Regulation, all schools are required to prepare School Improvement Plan (SIP), and conduct social audit. The school improvement plan is anticipated to drive the distribution and utilization of budget received by schools. While all schools had some form of SIP available, there were 84 per cent intervention schools with the updated and fresh SIP (compared to 83 per cent control schools). Among the schools, 84 per cent (32 schools) had practice of preparing annual action plan on the basis of SIP. During qualitative discussions, Head Teachers and local government representative reported that the improvement plans are only prepare to meet customary requirements and are not focused on real issues. In a discussion, the local government representative from Dhading district clearly mentioned that the SMCs are more focused in physical construction and management and are clueless about how to improve the teaching quality. As a result, the plans do not include actions to improve the quality of teaching learning process. Compared to practice of preparing SIP, there were fewer schools conducting social audit. Among the schools, 71 per cent interventions schools (32 schools) and 56 per cent control

[44] Based on discussion with local government, Dhading district.

schools conducted the social audit last year. During social audit, the financial records of the school and other progresses were reported, and disseminated to parents. Most of the schools that conducted social audit disseminated it in an event inviting parents. During qualitative discussions, parents as well as SMC members reported that the engagement of parents in the entire process is very limited.

> *People those who are in committee discuss and prepare. If they call, we also join.Work is not done on the topic of SIP/SA of school. We asked the HT but he did not respond. (KII with SMC Member, Dhading)*

> *There has not been any public hearing and has not been disclosed from where money came from and how it was spent and they show some manipulated calculation. (FGD with Parents, Dhading)*

Parental awareness and perception on school management

Nepal was one of the pioneers of community based schools with provision of school management committee that supervises the school management to be formed out of parents to enable school to be accountable and transparent to parents - key stakeholders. However, not all parents were aware about school management, performance of head teacher, and availability and functioning of SMC and PTA. The baseline presents bleak picture of parental awareness and participation in school governance process. Twenty five per cent parents were not aware about presence of SMC/PTA with only 16 per cent reporting to have been engaged in activities organized by SMC. While only 10 per cent parents believed that the existing performance of school and the head teacher is good, 50 per cent were not much aware about the status of school to comment. During parental survey, 37 per cent of the parents agreed with the school that they receive regular communication, and it is weakness on part of parents that they do not show up interest to participate given that they have multiple responsibilities to perform. The figures were not significantly different for control and intervention schools.

Table 45: Parental awareness and participation linked with SMC/PTA

Indicators	Intervention	Control
% of parents who believe school well managed (% extremely well managed)	74.4 (7.83)	77.9 (6.85)
% of parents reporting that school management has improved compared to last year	55.8	52.5
% of parents who believed school management has remained more or less same compared to last year	17.9	20.3
% of parents who rate the performance of the head teacher to be good (with 50% unaware about it)	10.6	12.6
% of parents who were not aware about existence of SMC/PTA in school	24.8	24.0
% of parents who reported to have participated in activities organized by SMC	16.0	14.6
% of parents reporting they were informed by school about plans/ activities	37.6	36.4

*Source: Survey with girls, Significant difference, **p<0.01, * p<0.05, ~p<0.10*

There was sharp disagreement between SMC/PTA and Head Teacher with the parents regarding parental participation and performance of SMC/PTA. During qualitative discussions, the school stakeholders – SMC and Head Teacher reported that parents do not show up during events though school makes attempt to communicate with them. Even if they show up, they do not contribute much. For parents, while they agree that they do visit school rarely, they report being invited rarely with some reporting their dis-satisfaction with the SMC/PTA. For some parents, they cannot allocate time to visit school due to other engagements.

> *Sometimes (very rarely) HT sends us letter for discussion and we go to school. We discuss about school rules, SMC, and teaching learning activities. SMS is working monopolistically and we are not satisfied with its activities. We have no idea about PTA. (FGD with parents, Parsa)*
>
> *Only 50% of the parents visit the school during the meeting. They do come but feel shy and do not ask questions and communicate well. Educated parents do not remain in the village. (KII with Head Teacher, Dhading)*
>
> *It is hard to gather parents and conduct parents meeting. Last year we planned to distribute student's result file to their parents but only 2-3%came and later on we distributed result file to the students. Students also only 75% took their result file remaining file are still here. (KII with Head Teacher, Parsa)*
>
> *I find few parents concerned on these matters. Few parents counted in the fingers come school and ask about them and question us why their children have homework or he is not doing it or has he lied about it to the. Such issues are raised. Very few parents come. (KII with Head Teacher, Surkhet)*
>
> *Teachers and school management have not given much focus in the school sanitation. Children are forced to drink water from the river. Even the basic facilities are not available. We have separate toilets for boys and girls but they are not in good condition. It is to be taken care by the committee in the school. (FGD with Parents, Dhading)*

Complaint response mechanism

The government has made it mandatory for schools to appoint and mobilize a gender focal person, and set up a complaint box with complain response committee in school[45]. However, the provision was not yet taken into practice. Only 17 out of 45 schools (38%) had gender focal person identified and mobilized. In 35 out of 45 intervention schools (78%), some form of complaint response mechanism was in place in line with the directives of government to hear and deal with complaints from the children, especially girls. The mechanism was only functional in 28 schools (62%) – opened the complaint box time and again, and attempted to resolve the issues. In qualitative discussions, the girls and head teachers from the schools with the mechanism reported that mechanism could be useful but the mechanism is not in full-fledged operation. Moreover, the complaint response mechanisms were teacher driven without much involvement and inputs of the SMC and PTA[46].

> *There is a suggestion box in school. Some students have used the box. We drop complaints and suggestions if there is any curiosity that we cannot express verbally. Sometime when there is teacher is not doing his or her job properly we report such problem using the box. (FGD with girls, Lamjung)*

[45] Department of Education (DOE). (2015). Guidelines to set up Complaint Response Mechanisms in Community Schools of Nepal, Kathmandu

[46] Education Pages & Nepal Evaluation and Assessment Team (NEAT). (2017). Review of Complaint Response Mehcanism in Nepal, Kathmandu

We have assigned a teacher for the counselling part and for hearing their grievances, that is, to hear them and address their issues. We have complaint box installed but we have not got much complaints. But if that complain received we have developed a mechanism to hear them and address them. (KII with HT, Surkhet)

Interconnected factors

Since the values for all log frame indicators for IO5 were derived from school information form, there was no space to examine the causal associations with the family/girl specific characteristics and barriers.

Linkage to long term outcomes and key take out for the project

The linkage of the school management with the learning outcomes and transition outcomes could not be verified since the data sources were different. The qualitative discussions, however, confirm that the schools with strong management practices have been able to better mobilize teachers and create better learning environment for students contributing to good learning outcome. By creating safe and protection environment, the schools could also retain girls for longer. The barriers identified by theory of change and the activities can be considered relevant since they look to improve understanding of teachers on child protection and also set up child protection mechanism in school. However, the qualitative discussions indicated that in the changed federalized context, the local government would be the key players managing education and also the mechanism for child protection. The project may need to include activities to work closely with the local government. Since the actual implementation of complaint response mechanism was weak while the availability of complaint box was quite high, the project may need to focus on strengthening the mechanism with ownership and participation of SMC and PTA.

Target related to school management and governance

The baseline value for the schools with complaint response mechanism was around 60 per cent and the school with SMC and PTA role in SIP was around 70 per cent. Since both of these should be applicable in all schools, the target is 100% by end of the project period. In term sof teacher training, at least 1 in 3 teachers are expected to be trained on responding child abuse by end of the project period.

Table 45a. Target setting for outcome - IV

	Mid Term Evaluation (2019)	Endline Evaluation (2021)
% and number of schools with complaint response mechanism	80	100 (47)
% and number of schools with SMC and PTA members aware and informed about their roles, and able to develop SIP	90	100 (47)
% of teachers trained on correct way to recognise and respond to cases of child abuse	20	33

5. Conclusion & Recommendations

5.2 Conclusions

Educating girls, especially retaining them in secondary level and ensuring their successful transition to higher education, skill training, and employment is a challenge well known to the education sector in Nepal. The girls will not only have to come over the family and community level gender based discrimination and violence but would also have to have self-esteem and confidence to successfully move forward in their education and other career options. The baseline study confirms that the current status of learning and transition among girls is low, and there exists multiple challenges to educate and ensure successful transition for girls at the individual, family, community, and school levels.

The project is on-course to meet its target to meet marginalized and extremely marginalized girls. However, earlier estimation of the marginalized groups who are married (10%) was much higher than the actual proportion of girls married (around 1%) for in-school girls. The barriers reported during the baseline largely matched with the barriers to be addressed by the theory of change. The common barriers were early marriage, discrimination during menstruation, school facilities to support girls during menstruation, household work load, discrimination in terms of parental attitude towards boys and girls education, lack of trained teachers etc. For in-school girls, the barriers related to household workload, limited time available to study at home, and gender based discrimination in terms of freedom (mobility and free time available to girls) were more pronounced barriers than parental attitude. Although the cost of schooling was discussed as a barrier to transition in the theory change, fees and ability of parents to pay were key barriers to transition for in-school girls. The theory of change does not discuss about the fees being charged by schools (directly and indirectly), and also in the name of tuition and donations, and also does not present activities that can be helpful to resolve the challenges related to cost of education, particularly among poor and marginalized families. The theory of change also overlooks barriers related to teacher's motivation and commitments and their actual delivery of the skills inside classroom.

The baseline study process involved multiple challenges – both technical and in actual implementation. There was a challenge to ensure that the data is being collected from the same cohort of girls and parents. It was particularly difficult to identify and interview the out-of-school girls of age 18-25 years, and their parents. Since the control group of schools were identified from among the schools in the same area not included in the treatment, the randomization was compromised. There are multiple lessons from the baseline study that needs to be reviewed and considered during next phases of evaluations.

On the whole, the girls were only scoring only around 34 per cent in literacy and 20 per cent in numeracy. Among the girls, only around one per cent in SEGRA and close to none in SEGMA were the proficient learners. The lower SEGMA scores indicate towards weaker numeracy skills. Although there is no national level data available on SEGRA and SEGMA score and they are newly introduced during this baseline study in line with the national curriculum, the scores also corroborate with the findings from national level learning achievement studies that report poor performance in mathematics and related subjects. In the national learning achievement study, the learning achievement rate for mathematics has remained close to 30 per cent[47]. The learning achievement rate of students in Nepal has always remained low at the international level, particularly for numeracy. The SEGMA scores were lower than SEGRA score but had higher standard deviation for higher grades. While scores increased for higher grades in terms of means, the scores also varied widely for different students. Some of the girls scoring average values in grade 6 are likely to score lower than their current scores as they reach higher level. It will be a challenge for project to ensure that the scores does not deteriorate further for the girls score average during their lower grades. The determinants of learning outcomes were linked primarily with the time girls get at home to concentrate on their study, moral back up and support from parents, and their own access to learning materials, and tendency to use the available learning materials.

The pressing threat for the project could be to ensure successful transition. Although the current transition stands at 94 per cent for in-school girls and 83 per cent for out-of-school girls and the benchmarking figures indicate that the girls are likely to move towards unsuccessful transition as they reach higher age. Since most of the girls studying at the secondary level were of higher age than the desired age for the grade, they were already in the threat of drop out and unsuccessful transition. The tendency to drop out was linked with the performance of girls in school, parental support and their own motivation to continue their education, and early marriage. The project's sustainability struggles more with the systemic changes than with school and community. The project should plan to work closely with local government to avoid these systemic uncertainties, and continue working with community and schools to take it further.

There was a lot discrepancy in the attendance figures provided by school and obtained from the spot checks clearly indicating that both students and teachers do not attend as much as they should be. Since the attendance determines learning outcomes, and continued interest and motivation of girls to continue education, and chances for drop out, it is one of the crucial areas not only to intervene but also track and keep records of.

The parental attitude was already changing in favour of girl's education. The change in attitude, however, have not translated in terms of actual practice given that most of the

[47] Department of Education (DOE), (2016) Consolidated Flash Report 2015/16

girls are heavily engaged in care work for the family that limits their time to study beyond school hours. In some cases, the care work also leads to their absence in school for some days. During survey and qualitative discussions, girls reported that the moral back up and support from their parents is not yet adequate. While they have not pressed girls to drop out of school, they are also not entirely supportive and encouraging to take things forward. Most of the girls could not give enough time for study due to their household workload that affected their learning score.

While the girls had good understanding about gender equity and also their right to education as compared to boys, they lacked self-esteem. The leadership index indicated that most of them struggle to feel motivated and empowered. It is worthy to note that their motivation to continue their study was also one of the factors linked with their learning score. During qualitative discussions, it was noted that girls studying at the secondary level were not very hopeful about their future, especially about the chances to get employed or build a career.

The teaching learning practices in schools especially the behaviour and commitment of teachers was not adequate enough to influence the learning. The classroom observation indicated that the current classroom performances were only meeting half of the standards for ideal classroom teaching learning. The girls reported feeling discriminated by teachers, and were also not satisfied entirely with their performance. The parents were mostly unaware about the teaching quality due to limited interactions with teachers, and know-how on how to encourage and support girls for better education results.

The school management and governance status was mediocre. While most of the schools have managed to follow basic mandatory requirements such as forming SMC, having their regular meetings, preparing SIP, conducting social audit etc, the engagement of parents in all these processes was low, and the processes do not have any direct linkages that could trigger improvement in girls' education.

The overall findings clearly indicated that girls are in disadvantage than boys while the girls from dalit family, living without parents, female-headed households, speaking mother tongue other than Nepali language, and poor households were further marginalized in terms of long term and short-term outcomes. The girl specific characteristics such as having disability, and married further added to the family level marginalization. While the project already had good understanding of most of the ground realities linked with GESI and discriminations right from the design stage, the baseline has inferred project to target girls with specific characteristic. Given the nature of the interventions, the project is in the position to be gender accommodating rather than gender transformative since the activities are more focused on meeting objectives than transforming gender values/norms. However, there is a room for project to be gender transformative by playing specific roles in shifting care work related responsibilities, and economic empowerment of out-of-school girls.

While the baseline report presents challenges in ensuring good learning and successful transition for girls, it also points out areas to intervene to get good results, and clearly indicates that it is possible to improve form their current status.

5.3 Recommendations

NEAT believes that the findings will be useful for VSO Nepal and its partners to discuss and brainstorm further to find out solutions, and priority areas. Some key recommendations will be:

- *Monitoring, evaluation and learning of the project*
  - **Arrangement to track the cohort girls on regular basis**
    Based on the baseline study, it might be a challenge to track the girls who are currently in grade 9 and 10 till the end of the project due to their possibility to migrate (due to marriage, further study or other reasons). There is a need to create an arrangement to track the cohort girls on quarterly or semi-annual basis. One option is to highlight them in the school registers, and monitor the school registers for their attendance and their trimester examination results. Some arrangements need to be discussed to track them further. Along with monitoring of the cohorts on regular basis, there should be extra priority given to monitor and track some groups:
    - **In-school girls above 16 years**
      Since the in-school girls consist of around 5% girls of age more than 16 years who are more likely to get married and migrate, it is important to track. The tracking of these girls is also essential in order to provide them with some extensive support than other girls.
    - **Out of school girls (big sisters) for age 18-25 years**
      During baseline, it was difficult to track the big sisters or older out-of-school girls. They are also a group with higher migration possibilities in search of opportunities. The baseline study further recommends VSO to track all out-of-school girls and their transition status before beginning the study so that the baseline value for transition is ensured to be zero per cent.

  - **Keeping track of the school attendance and recording it on regular basis to avoid discrepancies in data**
    The school attendance reporting based on school records may not always be reliable. It also requires intensive work to calculate attendance rates by grades. VSO is recommended to conduct spot checks on regular basis, and calculate the attendance rates on their own. There could be some capacity

building supports to school to track student attendance, and provide them with necessary support.

- **Consider covering boys and out-of-school girls and their caregivers in next evaluation points**
  The project needs to be a bit clearer on the outcomes for boys since they are mentioned as indirect beneficiaries, and plan to cover them through qualitative if not quantitative methods. It is also recommended to cover out-of-school girls and their caregivers in qualitative discussions using group discussions or interviews.

- **Make clear distinction between two groups of out-of-school girls in program monitoring, and upcoming evaluations**
  Since the two groups of out-of-school girls represent entirely different groups of girls with different expected outcomes, it is essential to name them separately and treat them separately not only for monitoring and evaluation purpose but also for program design and sustainability. These groups face completely different types of barriers and challenges as descried in the sections above. One option is to call the girls of age 6-9 years as bridge course girls, and girls of age 18-25 as out-of-school big sisters. The project will also need to decide whether to consider the girls of age higher than 9 years enrolled in the bridge course as project's direct beneficiaries.

- **Reconsider the benchmarking options**
  There may also need to reconsider the benchmarking option for learning achievement since the results indicate that the learning outcomes of grades 11 and 12 were either equal or lower than that of grade 10. In the context, it might be possible to take the 60^{th} or 80^{th} percentile of grade 10 or respective grade as possible benchmarks.

- **Add log frame indicators**
  Considering that the existing indicators in the log frame may not be enough to evaluate the performance against the intermediate outcome especially for outcome 1,3 &4, it is recommended to add some indicators, and track them through next evaluation points. The indicators proposed to add are included with their baseline figures in the list of key indicators along with logframe indicator in the section on intermediate outcomes. For the outcome related to attendance, it is suggested that the exact attendance rate of the cohort girls is tracked from the school registers to append with their learning tests. A table below summarizes the original and proposed new indicators:

	Original Log frame indicator	**Proposed new indicator:**	**Rationale for change/addition**

Intermediate outcome 1	Student attendance rate (based on school record and spot check)	Student attendance rate of particular cohort girls	To understand the determinants of student's attendance, and its effect on other outcomes, it is essential to track the attendance rate of particular girl.
Intermediate outcome 3	% of parents who active support girls to complete secondary education % of parents who volunteer their services to school or joint SMC/PTA and engaged in their activities	% of parents who believe it is worth investing in girl's education % of girls who report doing household work at least a quarter of the day (3-5 hours) % of parents who report that the household work engagement affects her education to some extent	The proposed log frame indicators were not enough to observe change in parental behavior, and their perception towards girl's education, especially the engagement in household workload.
Intermediate outcome 4	% of teachers using learner centred classroom practices	% of girls who report that their teachers treat girls and boys equally % of girls who report teachers are often absent % of unqualified teachers (with education less than higher secondary level)	The log frame indicator only indicates practice inside classroom during classroom observation but does not reflect on some important behaviors such as non-discrimination, and their qualification

- On top of everything presented above, during next evaluation points, there needs to be a review of the learning from the baseline study including the challenges faced and mitigation measures used or suggested to avoid those limitations in next rounds of evaluation.

- *Design, including the calculation of beneficiary numbers*

  - **Reconsider criteria to select – 'extremely marginalized'**
    The baseline findings indicate that the criteria used by the project to define extreme marginalization especially janajati was not highly applicable since they were not worse off in learning, transition, and other outcomes. In addition, project overlooked criteria that were closely associated with poor outcomes

such as girls coming from poor family and married girls. In this context, the baseline recommends VSO Nepal to reconsider the marginalization criteria. One option could be to combine various marginaliztion criteria to term extremely marginalized - dalits with mother tongue other than Nepali and unable to feed their family for more than six months.

- **Reassess the beneficiary number**
  The baseline study recommends project to use head count method to ensure their final number of beneficiaries based on various categories such as in-school and out of school, age group, and criteria such as disability, married and extremely marginalized. While the in-school girls can be counted and some estimations could be made based on the baseline, the following groups require special consideration while calculating the number of beneficiaries.

  - The target related to out-of-school girls of age 6-9 years seems achievable from the observation at the baseline. The baseline study reached the population of more than 240 girls for the survey while there were more than 260 girls enrolled in the bridge class. However, not all girls enrolled in bridge class were of the age group 6-9 years (only 70% were of 6-9 years age group). Since the project covered majority of out-of-school girls during the first year, it could be a challenge to find and enrol same number of girls for the second and third year. The project is suggested not to make assumption that same number of girls will be reached and enrolled in bridge course in coming years.
  - The target of reaching 86 out-of-school girls (age 18-25 years) may require reconsideration. At the start of the baseline, VSO was able to supplement only the list of 49 out-of-school girls among whom only 25 could be reached for direct or phone interview during the baseline.
  - Reconsider the targets for girls with disability, and married girls
    The project needs to make elaborated and comprehensive understanding of disability understanding that there are many children with partial disability that also affects their learning outcomes and transition possibilities. Similarly, there were far less married girls enrolled in school than the estimation made by the project document. The project needs to recalculate its target to reach based on the proportion suggested by the baseline sample.

- Ceiling effect for transition outcome, and floor effects for the third sub-task of SEGRA and SEGMA
  The baseline observed ceiling effect for transition outcomes of in-school girls that needs to be dealt carefully. The project may wish to focus only on the extremely marginalized girls and their barriers to ensure their successful transition than focusing on the population. Considering the floor effects on complex sub-tasks within both SEGRA and SEGMA, the project needs to work with teachers to focus on improving the skills related to comprehension and

analysis in literacy, and understanding and application of theories and techniques in numeracy. While sub-task 3 specific support could be applicable for all girls, the marginalized and poorly scoring girls may also require intensive support in initial sub-tasks.

- **Shift in learning outcomes will require inputs at the household and school level**
  The discussions on determinants of leaning outcomes clearly reflect that the shift in figures for learning outcomes will require efforts at school, family, and also at the individual level. The girls will require boost in self-esteem and self-confidence to continue further while family should provide them with adequate time to study and schools should arrange girls friendly classroom teaching learning environment.

- **Reconsider transition targets**
  Considering that many girls attending grade 9 and 10 of higher age (above 16) will be in immediate threat to drop out of school and go for unsuccessful transition, the study recommends VSO to adjust target for transition. It is better to set separate target for grades 6-8, and grades 9-10.

- **Immediate plan and arrangement for transition**
  In two months after this baseline report, the girls currently in Grade 10 will be out of school looking for multiple options including enrolment in higher secondary level. In this context, the project should look to link girls with the skills training or employment opportunity after encouraging them to enrol for higher education. This component should be in place urgently.

- **Make revisions in the theory of change especially in understanding barriers, and also align the activities with the barriers**
  The project needs to ensure that the following barriers are considered in addition to the existing barriers, and there are activities to counter the following barriers facing the girls for improved learning and successful transition:
    - Cost of education and weak financial situation of the families
    - Intensive household work load among girls and lack of sufficient time for them to study at home
    - Lack of adequate learning materials available for girls
    - Poor motivation level among teachers to perform
    - Weak delivery of teachers inside classroom despite receiving trainings
    - Underfunded schools without basic infrastructure and arrangements
    - Poor self confidence among out of school girls and poor parental support to enrol back to school

- **Focus on personal motivation of girls (with priority in breaking gender based expectations related to education)**
  For successful learning and transition outcomes, it is important that girls feel valued, motivated and hopeful. The project will need to work intensively in arranging such support for girls especially with focus on arranging parental support and moral backstopping.

- *Scalability and sustainability*

  - **Work with local government in education policy with special focus on girls education**
    In the changed context without District Education Office, there is a need for VSO to have some form of memorandum of understanding with the local government. This provides VSO with an opportunity to support village or municipality education committee to develop education related plans, policies, provisions, and entitlements that are in favour of girl's education.

  - **Need to work with schools and with central government in ensuring that some of the core provisions related to girls are implemented**
    The study clearly shows that some of the provisions and entitlements set forward by the constitution and education act such as free education, scholarship for girls are not fully implemented in ground. There is also a need for advocacy at the central, local, and school level to ensure that such provisions are fulfilled.

Annexes (Added separately)

Annex 3: Key findings on Output Indicators

This annex should be completed by the project.

The evaluator should hand over any output-related data to the project to enable the project to populate the following tables.

Fill in the table below with every Output Indicator, means of verification/sources, and the frequency of data collection. Please include output indicators for which data collection has not yet taken place and state when data collection for these will take place.

Table 1: Output indicators

Logframe Output Indicator	Means of verification/sources	Collection frequency
Number and Indicator wording		E.g. monthly, quarterly, annually. NB: For indicators without data collection to date, please indicate when data collection will take place.
Output 1: % of marginalised adolescent girls in school (MAGIS) who receive regular quality peer support to build their self-esteem		
Output 1.1: # of target a) BS and b) LS who rate peer support including ASRH as good quality	Quantitative: Peer support survey tool will be developed to assess the benefit of providing peer support and peer to peer support on issues relating to ASRH. Qualitative: FGD with ACs, BS, LS, parents, teachers to determine what kind of support is provided by mentors to mentees and which has created the most impact. Ranking of peer support mechanisms with LS and BS Data disaggregation: group type (ACs, BS, LS, parents, teachers); age, sex, grade level, ethnicity	annually
Output 1.2: # of target schools with active Girls Education Network (GEN)	Quantitative: Peer support survey (TBD) Qualitative: KIIs with teachers on the support provided by school to GEN; documentary review of minutes of GEN, workplan, activity report; FGD with GEN members on benefits derived from being a member 'Active' means that the GEN has a structure, that the group is able to implement their plan, and recruit members"	annually
Output 2: % of target MAGIS who have increased knowledge of appropriate life skills (both in school and OOS)		
Output 2.1: % of target MAGs who achieve level 5	Quantitative: Digital competency test Qualitative: observation; FGDs with EDGE members to identify how they will use their acquired skills; Data disaggregation: grade level, age (sex - all	after 120 hours for each module there are 4 modules

competence in digital skills	members are girls) Note: Scores from 7 - 9 are defined as competent (of a maximum possible total score of 13-expert)	
Output 2.2: % of target MAGs who achieve A2 level of proficiency in English	Quantitative: English proficiency test Qualitative: observation; FGDs with EDGE members to identify how they will use their acquired skills; Data disaggregation: grade level, age (sex - all members are girls) Note: A2 level is defined in British Council's monitoring tool as 'Completes parts 1 and 2 (of test) successfully and accurately. Can describe the pictures in part 3 with some structuring of discourse. No support needed. Reasonable range of language produced accurately in the present including some attempts at expanding (e.g. She is happy because) but cannot refer to the past or future'	after 120 hours for each module there are 4 modules
Output 2.3: % of target MAGs who can describe things that can realistically be changed in oneself	Quantitative: GSS survey, Self-esteem test, self-efficacy test Qualitative: observation, FGDs with teachers and parents to identify changes in girls life skills; Role plays with LS to demonstrate life skills Data disaggregation: only for little sisters (all female); grade level, age, disability, ethnicity	self esteem and self efficacy tool- annual; discussion - logs quarterly
Output 2.4: % of target adolescents (girls and boys) who have correct knowledge about ASRH.	Quantitative: survey to assess knowledge, attitudes and behaviour relating to sexual and reproductive health (disaggregated by age, sex, grade level) Pre/Post Test Questionnaire which would be specific to the training provided to LS and BS. Qualitative: Individual FGDs with girls and boys to explore more on issues relating to sexual and reproductive health and how does that relates to learning and transition Data disaggregation: sex, grade level, age, disability, ethnicity	every training
Output 3: % of target MAGs' parents who actively support their child's completion of secondary education.		
Output 3.1: # of parents/carers who attend meetings of CBOs, community networks, and advocacy activities	Quantitative: HHs Qualitative: FGDs and KIIs with BS, teachers, parents, HTs, CBOs to identify contribution/involvement of parents in planning for education activities Data disaggregation: sex, age, disability, ethnicity; single parent	bi-annual (update as necessary)
Output 3.2: # of parents/carers	Quantitative: HHs	annual

who increase time for girls to study	Qualitative: FGDs and KIIs with BS, teachers, parents, to identify changes in time allocation of household chores; timeline Data disaggregation: sex, age, disability, ethnicity; single parent; disability (type and severity)	
Output 4: % of teachers in target schools with increased capacity to teach their subject in a learner-centred way		
Output 4.1: % of trained teachers in target schools who show improvement in learner-centered teaching	Quantitative: Barefoot Assessment tool measures use of child-friendly and gender sensitive teaching methods in 5 dimensions. Qualitative: FGDs with teachers, and students on changes of how subjects are taught (pedagogy) and punctuality. KII with HT on punctuality and plans of echoing training received by target teachers. Data disaggregation: teachers, HTs, students (grade, sex, age, ethnicity, disability (type and severity)	bi-annual
Output 4.2: % of teachers trained to enhance their skills and knowledge on specific subjects	Quantitative: Barefoot Assessment tool Qualitative: FGDs with teachers and students on changes of how subjects are taught (mastery). KII with HT on plans of echoing training received by target teachers. Separate FGDs for boys and girls will be conducted to determine level of comfort in the classroom environment when discussing SRH which is a part of school curriculum. Data disaggregation: teachers, HTs, students (grade, sex, age, ethnicity, disability(type and severity))	bi-annual
Output 5: % of target schools with improved child protection policies and practice		
Output 5.1: % of target schools who implement CP policies/ measures	Quantitative: pre-post test Qualitative: FGDs with SMC and PTA members to know how they will setup CPCS; KII with HTs to identify plans of setting up Complaint Response Committee document review of training; participant list; ranking to determine types of abuse or violence and risk mapping to determine where these occur; Venn diagram showing the relationship between individuals, groups and institutions in a community Data disaggregation: sex, age, designation, ethnicity, disability	annual
Output 5.2: #, % of target schools who communicate with students on where to go to report abuse and seek help and advice	Quantitative: survey, checklist to determine CPCS mechanisms established in schools Qualitative: KII with HTs to determine complaints and how they are responded to; document review of CP policies/mechanism including minutes of meetings and reported cases, observation; Data disaggregation: designation (teacher, student) sex, age, designation, ethnicity, disability (type and severity)	annual (or when necessary)

Output 5.3: # of target schools where all staff have been trained on child protection	Quantitative: pre/post test of teachers/staff Qualitative: FGDs with SMC and PTA members to know how they will setup CPCS; KII with HTs to identify plans of setting up Complaint Response Committee document review of training; participant list; ranking to determine types of abuse or violence and risk mapping to determine where these occur Data disaggregation: sex, age, designation, ethnicity, disability	annual (or when necessary)
Output 6: % of trained marginalised out of school girls with increased capacity to establish an enterprise		
Output 6.1: % of marginalised out-of-school girls trained in financial literacy and business skills	Quantitative: pre/post test Qualitative: FGDs and KIIs with trainer, girls Data disaggregation: sex, age, designation, ethnicity, disability (type and severity); educational attainment; civil status	per training
Output 6.2: # of SACCO trained to provide low-interest start-up financing to establish an enterprise	Quantitative: pre/post test Qualitative: FGDs and KIIs with trainer, girls, SACCO members Data disaggregation: sex, age, designation, ethnicity, disability (type and severity); educational attainment; civil status	per training
Output 6.3: % of target marginalised out-of-school girls who access low-interest start-up financing to establish an enterprise	Quantitative: document review of SACCO recipients Qualitative: FGDs with girls on their motivation and future aspirations; KII with SACCO members on readiness of girls to establish an enterprise Data disaggregation: sex, age, designation, ethnicity, disability (type and severity); educational attainment; civil status	quarterly
Output 6.4: % of marginalised adolescent out-of-school girls' families who provide support for their girl establishing an enterprise	Quantitative: document review of SACCO recipients Qualitative: FGDs and KIIs with parents on the kind of support they will provide the girls and their aspirations for the girls future FGD with girls	quarterly

Report on the Baseline values/Baseline status of each Output Indicator in the table below. Reflect on the relevancy of the Output Indicator for your Intermediate Outcomes and Outcomes and the wider Theory of Change based on the data collected so far. Are the indicators measuring the right things? What do the Baseline values/Baseline status mean for the implementation of your activities?

Table 2: Baseline status of output indicators

Logframe Output Indicator	Baseline status/Baseline values Relevance of the indicator for the project ToC	Baseline status/Baseline values
Number and Indicator wording	What is the contribution of this indicator for the project ToC, IOs, and Outcomes? What does the Baseline value/status mean for your activities? Is the indicator measuring the right things? Should a revision be considered? Provide short narrative.	What is the Baseline value/status of this indicator? Provide short narrative.
Output 1: % of marginalised adolescent girls in school (MAGIS) who receive regular quality peer support to build their self-esteem		
Output 1.1: # of target a) BS and b) LS who rate peer support including ASRH as good quality	One of the challenges of girls as they transition to secondary education is being equipped with life skills (e.g. self-esteem, leadership, communication) and ASRH and MHM knowledge. This indicator contributes to increasing attendance (IO 1) and increased self-esteem and empowerment of girls (IO 2) which affects learning and transition. This indicator will be measured at midline 2018.	Training of Big Sisters was conducted in December 2017. The Big Sister manual is in the process of being finalized. The manual provides guidance on building life skills and assessing the mentoring scheme and has yet to be finalized. Hence, this indicator will be measured by midline 2018.
Output 1.2: # of target schools with active Girls Education Network (GEN)	To expand and institutionalize the mentoring scheme, the project will help schools to establish GENs that provide safe spaces for little sisters to mentor other girls in school and safe spaces to discuss ASRH and MHM . This will contribute to IO 1 and IO 2. Establishment of GENs starts in Y2 and will be measured by midline 2018.	Activities related to this indicator will only start in Y2.
Output 2: % of target MAGIS who have increased knowledge of appropriate life skills (both in school and OOS)		
Output 2.1: % of target MAGs who achieve level 5 competence in digital skills	English and Digital for Girl's Education (EDGE) focuses on enhancing participants' English proficiency, digital skills and awareness of social issues and leadership skills to be able to make more informed and independent life choices, in order to contribute more fully to the family, the economy and society. This indicator is directly related to IO 2 to boost self-confidence and help in improving learning and transition. The results were measured using standard EDGE tools. The results are expected to be low prior to any intervention.	Results from the baseline assessment showed around 87 percent of 220 girls were characterized as non-users followed by around 10 percent novice users. The distribution of scores is presented in Table 14 of the baseline report. While the baseline for this component has been measured, implementation will only begin by Y2.

Output 2.2: % of target MAGs who achieve A2 level of proficiency in English	The results were measured using standard EDGE tools. The results are expected to be low prior to any intervention.	Out of 220 girls tested for English proficiency, 54 percent children scored 0 during the English test. There were around 35 percent who managed to get to pre A1 level with only one percent scoring A2 level. The average score was only 0.9 points (less than 20%) out of total of 5 points. While the baseline for this component has been measured, implementation will only begin by Y2.
Output 2.3: % of target MAGs who can describe things that can realistically be changed in oneself	Alongside Output Indicators 1.1 and 1.2, this indicator will be measured at midline 2018	Alongside Output Indicators 1.1 and 1.2, this indicator will be measured at midline 2018
Output 2.4: % of target adolescents (girls and boys) who have correct knowledge about ASRH.	As girls and boys move into adolescents, there are many challenges that they will face physically and emotionally. ASRH provides knowledge on these changes and how they can respond to them. This indicator is directly related to IO 2 where girls and boys can make informed decisions about their sexual reproductive rights.	This component will be implemented in Y2, and will be measured by midline 2018.
Output 3: % of target MAGs' parents who actively support their child's completion of secondary education.		
Output 3.1: # of parents/carers who attend meetings of CBOs, community networks, and advocacy activities	Key driver to children's education are parents' attitude and involvement in their education. This indicator is directly related to IO 3 which will increase parents' engagement in girls' education. This indicator will be measured at midline 2018.	During qualitative discussions at baseline, the school stakeholders – SMC and Head Teacher reported that parents do not show up during events though school makes attempt to communicate with them. During parental survey, around 37 per cent of the parents agreed with the school that they receive regular communication, and it is weakness on part of parents that they do not show up interest to participate given that they have multiple responsibilities to perform.
Output 3.2: # of parents/carers who increase time for girls to study	Baseline findings and GESI assessment showed that girls spend approximately 4-5 hours doing household while boys spent only 2-3 hours doing chores. This leaves very little time for the girls to prepare for school and their class. Allowing girls to have more time to study is directly linked with IO 1 and 5.	Baseline findings show that 82.4% of girls were engaged in intensive household work and 62.3 % of the girls reported doing school at least a quarter of the day (3-5 hours)
Output 4: % of teachers in target schools with increased capacity to teach their subject in a learner-centred way		
Output 4.1: % of trained teachers in	Activities for this component will start in Y2.	This will be measured by Q5 in Y2.

target schools who show improvement in learner-centered teaching		
Output 4.2: % of teachers trained to enhance their skills and knowledge on specific subjects	Activities for this component will start in Y2.	This will be measured by Q5 in Y2.
Output 5: % of target schools with improved child protection policies and practice		
Output 5.1: % of target schools who implement CP policies/ measures	The government has made it mandatory for schools to appoint and mobilize a gender focal person. However, the provision was not yet taken into practice. Training has been conducted for HTs and GFPs on the establishment of CRM. This has yet to be fully implemented by Y2. This indicator is directly related to IO 5 improving school management and governance to make children feel safe in school.	Only 17 out of 45 schools (38%) had gender focal person identified and mobilized. In 35 out of 45 intervention schools (78%), some form of complaint response mechanism was in place in line with the directives of government to hear and deal with complaints from the children, especially girls. The mechanism was only functional in 28 schools (62%) – opened the complaint box time and again, and attempted to resolve the issues.
Output 5.2: #, % of target schools who communicate with students on where to go to report abuse and seek help and advice	See above. This indicator will be measured by midline 2018.	This will be measured in Y2.
Output 5.3: # of target schools where all staff have been trained on child protection	See above. This indicator will be measured by midline 2018.	This will be measured in Y2.
Output 6: % of trained marginalised out of school girls with increased capacity to establish an enterprise		
Output 6.1: % of marginalised out-of-school girls trained in financial literacy and business skills	Activities for this indicator will only be implemented in Y2.	This will be measured by midline 2018.
Output 6.2: # of SACCO trained to provide low-interest start-	Activities for this indicator will only be implemented in Y2.	This will be measured by midline 2018.

up financing to establish an enterprise		
Output 6.3: % of target marginalised out-of-school girls who access low-interest start-up financing to establish an enterprise	Activities for this indicator will only be implemented in Y2.	This will be measured by midline 2018.
Output 6.4: % of marginalised adolescent out-of-school girls' families who provide support for their girl establishing an enterprise	Activities for this indicator will only be implemented in Y2.	This will be measured by midline 2018.

List all issues with the means of verification/sources or the frequency of data collection which require changes or additions.

Table 3: Output indicator issues

Logframe Output Indicator	Issues with the means of verification/sources and the collection frequency, or the indicator in general?	Changes/additions
Number and Indicator wording	E.g. inappropriate wording, irrelevant sources, or wrong assumptions etc. Was data collection too frequent or too far between? Or no issues?	E.g. change wording, add or remove sources, increase/decrease frequency of data collection; or leave as is.
Output 1: % of marginalised adolescent girls in school (MAGIS) who receive regular quality peer support to build their self-esteem		
Output 1.1: # of target a) BS and b) LS who rate peer support including ASRH as good quality	Delay in finalizing the BS mentoring guide including assessment tools has delayed collection of baseline data.	N/A
Output 1.2: # of target schools with active Girls Education Network (GEN)	N/A	N/A

Output 2: % of target MAGIS who have increased knowledge of appropriate life skills (both in school and OOS)		
Output 2.1: % of target MAGs who achieve level 5 competence in digital skills	N/A	N/A
Output 2.2: % of target MAGs who achieve A2 level of proficiency in English	N/A	N/A
Output 2.3: % of target MAGs who can describe things that can realistically be changed in oneself	N/A	N/A
Output 2.4: % of target adolescents (girls and boys) who have correct knowledge about ASRH.	N/A	N/A
Output 3: % of target MAGs' parents who actively support their child's completion of secondary education.		
Output 3.1: # of parents/carers who attend meetings of CBOs, community networks, and advocacy activities	N/A	N/A
Output 3.2: # of parents/carers who increase time for girls to study	N/A	N/A
Output 4: % of teachers in target schools with increased capacity to teach their subject in a learner-centred way		
Output 4.1: % of trained teachers in target schools	N/A	N/A

who show improvement in learner-centered teaching		
Output 4.2: % of teachers trained to enhance their skills and knowledge on specific subjects	N/A	N/A
Output 5: % of target schools with improved child protection policies and practice		
Output 5.1: % of target schools who implement CP policies/ measures	N/A	N/A
Output 5.2: #, % of target schools who communicate with students on where to go to report abuse and seek help and advice	N/A	N/A
Output 5.3: # of target schools where all staff have been trained on child protection	N/A	N/A
Output 6: % of trained marginalised out of school girls with increased capacity to establish an enterprise		
Output 6.1: % of marginalised out-of-school girls trained in financial literacy and business skills	N/A	N/A
Output 6.2: # of SACCO trained to provide low-interest start-up financing to establish an enterprise	N/A	N/A

Output 6.3: % of target marginalised out-of-school girls who access low-interest start-up financing to establish an enterprise	N/A	N/A
Output 6.4: % of marginalised adolescent out-of-school girls' families who provide support for their girl establishing an enterprise	N/A	N/A

Annex 4: Beneficiary tables

This annex should be completed by the project.

Please fill in the tables below. Individuals included in the project's target group should be direct beneficiaries of the project.

Table 1: Direct beneficiaries

Beneficiary type	Total project number	Total number of girls targeted for learning outcomes that the project has reached by Endline	Comments
Direct learning beneficiaries (girls) – girls in the intervention group who are specifically expected to achieve learning outcomes in line with targets. If relevant, please disaggregate girls with disabilities in this overall number.	8,158 [This should align with the total beneficiary numbers reported in the outcomes spreadsheet] Girls in grades 6 - 10	7,382 (only little sisters) [This may equal the total project number in the outcomes spreadsheet and in the column to the left, or may be less if you have a staggered approach]	Total project number includes total number of girls both in-school and out-of-school and will only be tracked for transition Total number of girls targeted for learning outcomes are girls in-school in grades 6 – 10 and will be the only ones tracked for learning outcomes Previous numbers were calculated from the school registration for SY 2016 – 2017. The new numbers are based on registration of SY 2017-2018 [Projects should provide additional information on who they are and the methodology used. If the numbers have changed since Baseline, an explanation should be provided]

Table 2: Other beneficiaries

Beneficiary type	Number	Comments
Learning beneficiaries (boys) – as above, but specifically counting boys who will get the same exposure and therefore be expected to also achieve learning gains, if applicable.	7,485	The boys are in the same class as the cohort girls (Grades 6 – 10)
Broader student beneficiaries (boys) – boys who will benefit from the interventions in a less direct way, and therefore may	3,582	The boys are in the same school as the cohort girls and will benefit from improved SIPs

benefit from aspects such as attitudinal change, etc. but not necessarily achieve improvements in learning outcomes.		
Broader student beneficiaries (girls) – 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.	4,170	The girls are in the same school as the cohort girls and will benefit from improved SIPs
Teacher beneficiaries – 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.	196	There will be 4 subject teachers (Math, Science, English and Population and Health) in each of the 49 schools who will be the main target beneficiaries of teacher training
Broader community beneficiaries (adults) – adults who benefit from broader interventions, such as community messaging /dialogues, community advocacy, economic empowerment interventions, etc.		Due to the current change in the federal system, a new population census is still pending.

- Tables 3-6 provide different ways of defining and identifying the project's target groups. They each refer to the same total number of girls, but use different definitions and categories. These are girls who can be counted and have regular involvement with project activities.
- The total number of sampled girls in the last row of Tables 3-6 should be the same – these are just different ways of identifying and describing the girls included in the sample.

Table 3: Target groups - by school

School Age	Project definition of target group (Tick where appropriate)	Number targeted through project interventions	Sample size of target group at Baseline
Lower primary			
Upper primary	✓	4,419	
Lower secondary	✓	2,963	
Upper secondary			
Total:			[This number should be the same across Tables 3, 4, 5 & 6]

Table 4: Target groups - by age

Age Groups	Project definition of target group (Tick where appropriate)	Number targeted through project interventions	Sample size of target group at Baseline
Aged 6-8 (% aged 6-8)			
Aged 9-11 (% aged 9-11)			

Aged 12-13 (% aged 12-13)			
Aged 14-15 (% aged 14-15)			
Aged 16-17 (%aged 16-17)			
Aged 18-19 (%aged 18-19)			
Aged 20+ (% aged 20 and over)			
Total:			[This number should be the same across Tables 3, 4, 5 & 6]

Table 5: Target groups - by sub group

Social Groups	**Project definition of target group** (Tick where appropriate)	**Number targeted through project interventions**	**Sample size of target group at Baseline**
Disabled girls (please disaggregate by disability type)	✓	**###**	
Orphaned girls			
Pastoralist girls			
Child labourers			
Poor girls	✓	7,382	
Other (please describe)			
Total:			[This number should be the same across Tables 3, 4, 5 & 6]

Table 6: Target groups - by school status

Educational sub-groups	**Project definition of target group** (Tick where appropriate)	**Number targeted through project interventions**	**Sample size of target group at Baseline**
Out-of-school girls: have never attended school	✓	720	
Out-of-school girls: have attended school, but dropped out	✓	56	
Girls in-school	✓	7,382	
Total:			[This number should be the same across Tables 3, 4, 5 & 6]

Annex 11: Control group approach validation

The project targets the same cohort of girls from GEC 1 who were identified as marginalised and extremely marginalised.

Definition of Marginalised and Extremely Marginalised

All girls attending the underperforming schools in the socio-economically disadvantaged catchment areas are considered marginalised. In particular, the project targets **marginalised** girls between 6 – 25 years old at project start, and:

- is enrolled in any of the 56 schools; or
- has never been to school or has dropped out of school; and
- is an ethnic minority.

"**Extremely marginalised**" refers to girls facing the greatest vulnerability to factors putting them at risk of dropping out or not attending school, and who will be the project's Little Sisters or the Bridge Class Students (specifically those who never enrolled or who dropped out between Grade 1 to 3).

More specifically for purposes of the project, an extremely marginalised girl is one who is either in-school or out-of-school and falls under any of the following priority:

In-school : is a girl who is between grades 6 to 10 (enrolled in one of the 56 schools) at project start.

Out-of-school: is a girl between 6-9 years old at project start, who has never been to school or dropped out of school at project start.

For this project, new comparison schools were identified using the same process and criteria stated above. From the list that fit the criteria, target schools and comparison schools in GEC 1 will be eliminated. To identify the comparison catchment area, the list of potential comparison schools were matched to target schools based on:

- **Performance of school.** The comparison schools should be comparable to the target school in terms of learning performance.
- **Profile** (e.g. agri-social characteristics and context of marginalisation.) For each comparison school catchment area, a description will be prepared that compares the area's profile with the typical profile of the target schools. This will also be used to match comparison schools.

Potential challenges

- In identifying the comparison school, data on the distribution of girls and boys over the various grades may not be consistently robust. If they are not, selection will be based on learning performance and school profile
- Comparison schools are likely to be uninterested in the tests, as it might mean work-without-benefits. In such cases, permission from the education authorities will be sought. This will be also be discussed with the Fund Manager for the possibility of providing non-educational materials for the schools.
- There is an ethical issue with testing girls who do not enjoy any benefits from the project.

For the target groups, the project will work with the same cohort of girls from GEC1 composed of composed of 1283 in-school marginalised and extremely marginalised girls with the addition of 320 marginalised girls (Big Sisters) who will be tracked throughout the lifetime of the project.

- Identify any risk to comparability of the intervention and control group at midline and endline, e.g. different processes to select samples, exposure to different government policies, contamination or spillover effects.

Risk of contamination: The project's comparison schools and communities might be "contaminated" by other donor-funded projects. Where it becomes difficult to identify communities with no educational interventions as comparison groups, evaluators will select communities with interventions that may be significantly different from the proposed project activities.

To avoid contamination from target schools, school catchment areas that are not adjacent to target areas will be selected as comparison catchment areas.

- Show and comment on tables displaying intervention and control samples composition by region, age, grade and the subgroups identified in Section 3.

- Analyse any difference between the two groups and summarise any issue in comparing them according to the Difference-in-Differences approach.

- Provide any mitigation strategy for the issues identified.

Annex 12: External Evaluator declaration

Name of Project: Sisters for Sisters (SfS) Education, Phase II

Name of External Evaluator: Course International in association with Nepal Evaluation and Assessment Team (NEAT)

Contact Information for External Evaluator: Phone: +977-01-4002292, Kathmandu, Nepal, Email: neatnepal2015@gamil.com

Names of all members of the evaluation team:

1. **Jeevan Raj Lohani, Team Leader**
2. **Diwakar Basnet, Data & Study Manager**
3. **Kamana Uprety, Associate Researcher**
4. **Vikas Aharya, Associate Researcher**
5. **Rabindra Neupane, Associate Researcher**
6. **Sunil Poudel, Associate Researcher**

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

J. R. Lohani

Jeevan Raj Lohani

Study Team Leader, Course International & NEAT

March 29, 2018

Annex 13: Project Management Response

This annex should be completed by the project.

This annex gives the project the chance to prepare a short and concise management response to the evaluation report before the report is published.

What is the project's response to the key findings in the report? Make sure to refer to main conclusions (Section 6)

- 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. Have findings shed new light on relationships between outputs, intermediate outcomes, and outcomes and the significance of barriers for certain groups of children – 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.

The baseline report confirms the challenges that girls face in education at all levels, starting from individual level, community and school level, including central level. The findings also shed light on how and where interventions and activities should have more focus. The relationship of outputs, intermediate outcomes, and outcomes are clearer and activities will be more focused on addressing the challenges stressed in the findings. Some examples are mentoring should focus more on building life skills on leadership and self-esteem by providing opportunities for girls to take leadership roles, either within the school or the community. Community dialogues will focus more on enhancing parental engagement in the SMC and PTA or advocacy events to support girls' education.

The theory of change focuses on four pathways, mainly individual level, parent and community level, school level, and central level. At individual level, strengthening self-esteem and life skills will give the girls empower to make informed decision for their future including their education and reproductive rights. By increasing awareness of parents, they will take a more active role in encouraging their girls to be educated and promote education by joining the SMC, PTA or other advocacy campaigns. With improvements in teaching quality, children will have improved learning outcomes. The SMC will be able to develop more gender sensitive School Improvement Plans that would provide a more conducive school environment for children to learn and feel safe.

The new federal system poses both a challenge and an opportunity for the project. With the new federal system, it is still unclear how the education system will be decentralized making it difficult for the project to identify key people who will lead in the education sector. There is also the great opportunity for the project to influence the planning of the education system in the new system through the evidences generated by the project.

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 organisation (see Section 6). 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.

- *Monitoring, evaluation and learning of the project*

  - **Arrangement to track the cohort girls on regular basis**

  While the project is currently tracking only the little sisters, there is a need to expand to the tracking system to include all girls included in the sample size. However, tracking will be limited to tracking the girls' transition points. This will also allow the project to track the girls at the different evaluation points (midline and endline).

  Tracking of attendance will be conducted at least 3 times per school year, the same spot checks are collected so as not to over burden staff. Tracking will be limited to in-school girls.

  - **<u>In-school girls above 16 years</u>**

  Whilst tracking of girls in the sample size will be included, the interventions will remain the same since the main target group of the project are the little sisters. Other girls (and boys) will benefit from other activities e.g. community dialogues, career guidance, ASRH and MHM training, improvements in teaching quality and school management, aimed in motivating them to remain in the school system or choose other positive transition pathways.

  - **<u>Out of school girls (big sisters) for age 18-25 years</u>**

  This point is well noted by the project. However, since the intervention for this group is limited to big sisters, it might be better to plot out the different transition points of the big sisters.

  - **Keeping track of the school attendance and recording it on regular basis to avoid discrepancies in data**

  This is currently being conducted by the project. School attendance data is gathered on annual basis and spot checks including teacher's attendance are conducted at least thrice a year with the third conducted by the external evaluator. These data are analysed and compared to show discrepancies. Data is also shared with the stakeholders during project reviews or regular monitoring visits.

- **Consider covering boys and out-of-school girls and their caregivers in next evaluation points**

  Given the results of the baseline assessment, this will be taken into consideration by VSO and will recommend to the Fund Manager. Further guidance will be sought from the FM how we can cover them through qualitative if not quantitative methods to analyse the impact of the project.

- **Make clear distinction between two groups of out-of-school girls in program monitoring, and upcoming evaluations**

  Given the findings from the baseline assessment this will also be taken into consideration by VSO and will recommend to the Fund Manager. These two groups has completely facing different types of barriers and challenges so the project has already planned different intervention such as bridge course for 6-9 years girls and other livelihood related intervention for 18-25 years girls

- **Reconsider the benchmarking options**

Given the results of the baseline assessment, this will be taken into consideration by VSO and will recommend to the Fund Manager. Further guidance will be sought from the FM on benchmarking.

- **Add log frame indicators**

The project has been agreed that the existing indicators in the log frame may not be enough to evaluate the performance against the intermediate outcome especially for outcome 1, 3 & 4. Considering the recommended indicators to track them through next evaluation points will discuss with Fund Manager in RAM and will include in the logframe.

- *Design, including the calculation of beneficiary numbers*

- **Reconsider criteria to select – 'extremely marginalized'**

  Given the condition that the primary target beneficiaries has been already defined and selected as all girls attending the target underperforming schools considered marginalised. In particular project has target marginalised girls between 6-25 years old at project start and enrolled in any target schools or has been dropped or never been school and is an ethnic minority.

"Extremely marginalised" refers to girls facing the greatest vulnerability to factors putting them at risk of dropping out or not attending school, and who will be the project's Little Sisters or the Bridge Class Students (specifically those who never enrolled or who dropped out between Grade 1 to 3). More specifically for purposes of the project, an extremely marginalised girl is one who is either in-school or out-of-school and falls any of the following priority: In school or out of school under 1st priority should be Dalit and 2nd priority defined in the MEL framework. And also project decided to work with the same cohort of girls from GEC1 composed of composed of 1283 in-school marginalised and extremely marginalised girls with the addition of 320 marginalised girls (Big Sisters) who will be tracked throughout the lifetime of the project. So the recommendation of the evaluators doesn't justifiable.

- **Reassess the beneficiary number**
  Given the recommendation from the baseline assessment that the project could face challenge to find and enrol same number of girls in the bridge courses for the second and third year, it will be discussed within the team and come up with the realistic number. Another target of reaching 86 out of girls age (18-25) will also take into consideration and revised the number in consultation with Fund Manager. In regard to disability that also affects the learning outcomes and transition possibilities the project will take into consideration and try to intervene some especial activities focusing the children with disabilities.

- **Ceiling effect for transition outcome, and floor effects for the third sub-task of SEGRA and SEGMA**

  Given the results of the baseline assessment about the ceiling effect for transition outcome of in school girls that the project will focus only the extremely marginalized girls and their barriers to ensure their successful transition. While sub-task 3 specific support will focus for all girls, the marginalized and poorly scoring girls with intensive support from the project intervention.

- **Shift in learning outcomes will require inputs at the household and school level**

One of the main interventions of the project is the mentoring scheme provided by the big sisters to little sisters that is aimed at building self-esteem and leadership skills. This mentoring scheme will be further expand through child clubs or girls' education network that will provide other marginalised girls to have the same opportunity, and knowledge to build their life skills and self-esteem.

Aside from mentoring big sisters, adult champions will focus more on increasing parents' awareness on the benefits of education and mentoring them to take a more active role in their children's education. They will encourage parents to have discussions between parent and child about their aspirations for their future so that girls will be encouraged to continue their education.

- **Reconsider transition targets**

Based on the project's own monitoring and evaluation, VSO agrees to reconsider the transition targets for the grades identified by the external evaluator. The Education Act of Nepal also states that students who finish basic education may opt to enter Alternative Learning System (ALS) whether formal or non-formal. The project proposes the following transition points for grades 8 to 10:

Transition Points *=successful transition		
	Baseline point	**Possible transition pathways at Midline and Endline**
In-School	Enrolled in Grade 6, 7	• Successive class* • Successive class with conditions (married, working, moved to different school, etc)* • Dropout and moved to non-formal education (NFE) (vocational, training, employment)** • Dropout due to different conditions (marriage, household migration) • Remains in same year
	Enrolled in Grade 8, 9, 10	• Successive class* • Successive class with conditions (married, working, moved to different school, etc)* • Moved to non-formal education (NFE) (vocational, training, employment)* • Training/further training* • Dropout due to different conditions (marriage, household migration) • Remains in same year

- **Immediate plan and arrangement for transition**

This recommendation is well noted and will be discussed during the annual planning scheduled in the following month. The fund manager will be notified when a decision has been made.

- **Make revisions in the theory of change especially in understanding barriers, and also align the activities with the barriers**

Given the results of the baseline assessment in terms of the barriers, the project will ensure there are activities to overcome the existing barriers and the additional

barriers facing the girls for improved learning and successful transition. This recommendation will be raised with the Fund Manager and incorporate in RAM to add some relevant activities to address the weak financial situation of the families

- **Focus on personal motivation of girls (with priority in breaking gender based expectations related to education)**

As part of the mentoring scheme, both for little sisters and big sisters, the project focuses in changing parental expectations and attitude (see above) and is one of the main strategies of the project.

- *Scalability and sustainability*

  - **Work with local government in education policy with special focus on girls education**

  VSO has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Education which covers the DEOs. VSO continues to monitor changes and plans in the new federal system. Once there is clarity in the new federal system particularly in the education system, VSO will develop an memorandum of understanding with the local government will provide VSO with an opportunity to support village or municipality education committee to develop education related plans, policies, provisions, and entitlements that are in favour of girl's education.

  - **Need to work with schools and with central government in ensuring that some of the core provisions related to girls are implemented**

  The project will continue working and strengthening school management to ensure that provisions and entitlements set in the constitution including policies are set in place in the target schools. It will work closely with school management and newly elected officials so that the schools are able to provide students with such provisions in law.

Does the external evaluator's conclusion of the projects' approach to gender correspond to the projects' gender ambitions and objectives?

VSO conducted its own Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) assessment and the conclusions provided by the external evaluator confirms its findings. The interventions identified by the project addresses these inequalities to make education more inclusive.

What changes to the logframe 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 (following completion of Annex 3 on the output indicators).

The project has realised to revisit the indicators particularly intermediate outcomes and output levels as recommended by the evaluators.