

**SPONSORSHIP PROJECT
10 YEARS ON**



Save the Children

Save the Children believes every child deserves a future. In Nepal and around the world, we give children a healthy start in life, the opportunity to learn and protection from harm. We do whatever it takes for children – every day and in times of crisis – transforming their lives and the future we share.

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प्रदेश सरकार
प्रदेश नं. ५
सामाजिक विकास मन्त्रालय

बुटवल, रुपन्देही



निजी सचिवालय
सुदर्शन बराल
मन्त्री

प.सं. :
च.नं. :

मिति:

MESSAGE



Save the Children started implementing Sponsorship Program in Kapilvastu and Pyuthan since 2009. Since then we have worked in close partnership with the organization - advancing our work on child rights. Notwithstanding the enormous challenges of working in a culturally, socially and economically intricate setting, the project has successfully managed to achieve the targeted outcome of improving health, education and livelihood opportunities of the most deprived and marginalized communities of Kapilvastu and Pyuthan.

The project's overarching goal of ensuring that children have the right to survive, be protected and learn has been met and in some regards gone beyond the target, clearly demonstrating the impact it has made in the targeted areas. Some rural municipalities and municipalities have even set themselves as role models at the local, provincial and national level in advocating for children's issues, formulating unprecedented policies and guidelines with Save the Children's support.

These examples should be brought into the spotlight so that other local government, duty bearers and stakeholders can follow suit and incorporate the best practices. From our side, we are strongly committed in embracing the learning and best practices derived from this 10-year journey to create a state 5 where child rights issues are prioritized and addressed effectively. We also remain equally committed in taking ownership of and giving continuity to the program activities so that the impact is sustained.


1st Dec 2019
Honourable Minister
Sudarshan Baral

"बुढोको जन्मस्थल सुम्बिनी जागी, शान्तिको सन्देश फैलाउगी"
सुम्बिनी भ्रमण वर्ष २०२०



Message

'Child Rights' lies at the heart of all work we do at Save the Children. Our commitment and action are to ensure that every child is protected, survive and learn remains stronger than ever and is accentuated on our projects that span across the country. Sponsorship Project is one of such initiatives of Save the Children that we delight in for the remarkable contribution it has made in the lives of the children of Kapilvastu and Pyuthan in the last one decade. As the project concludes in December 2019, the impact Sponsorship project has made in the areas of Education, Health, Adolescent Development and Livelihood is evident in our evaluation reports, feedbacks and appreciation received from our beneficiaries and stakeholders. Some notable accomplishments which includes but are not limited to, are significant reduction in child marriage rate, increased enrolment and learning achievement, decreased drop-out rate, increased access to availability of adolescent health services and rise in child participation. These are indicative of the effectiveness of our program interventions. Our time and experience in the field rolling out the program has also allowed us to witness some best practices and learning, which we believe could contribute towards child rights protection, promotion and fulfillment at a wider level. It is with this objective that we have put together this booklet documenting our best practices, learning and stories which we hope will serve as a useful resource to actors and stakeholders working for the rights of the children in Nepal.

Bandana Risal
Interim Country Director



A child from Sponsorship project surrounded by her text books and toys.

ABOUT SPONSORSHIP PROJECT

Save the Children achieves lasting impact for children through partnerships and provides tools that empower entire communities to better support their children's health, education, protection and growth – breaking the cycle of poverty for generations to come. Sponsorship program uses a proven approach known as “The Common Approach” for designing, implementation and measurement to ensure that children are educated and healthy, contributing to the organization's overall goal. In Nepal, the program is currently implemented in five districts: Saptari, Mahottari, Sarlahi in the East and Kapilvastu and Pyuthan in the West. The Sponsorship Program was implemented in the Western Impact from 2009 - 2019 with a focus

on Early Child Care Development, Basic Education, School Health and Nutrition and integrated Adolescent Development. The program was implemented in collaboration with six partner NGOs along with the district line agencies and local government such as the District Education Office, District Health Office, District Child Welfare Development Committee, District Small Cottage and Industries Board, municipality and rural municipality. The program is implemented through the funds donated by individual or corporate sponsors. The sponsor child becomes the representative of children around his community to raise the fund that is invested in the intervention that benefits the sponsor child along with other children in the community.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF SPONSORSHIP PROJECT- (2009-2019)

No. of children and adolescent who benefitted from the program annually

30941



Sponsor children benefitted annually

239,244

Other children and adolescent benefitted annually



>10,197

children below the age of **5** benefitted from the program



Physical Infrastructure

Intervention

Quantity

| | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| ECCD Building | 163 |
| ECCD renovation | 110 |
| School Building Construction | 38 |
| School renovation | 293 |
| AFS Health Services | 47 |

ECCD



- **100% ECCD** centres have trained facilitators and separate class
- **36 ECCD** building constructed in collaboration with DDC/municipalities
- **127** through sponsorship project (**35** through other collaborations)
- Improvement in the quality of the centre based learning environment increased to **83%** from **8% (2012)**
- Attendance rate of **ECCD** children increased to **85%** from **57%**

Basic Education



- **99%** schools in Pyuthan and **88%** schools in Kapilvastu declared **100%** enrolment
- **2** municipalities in Pyuthan and **4** municipalities and **2** rural municipalities in Kapilvastu have developed education strategic plan
- Drop out rate of students decreased to **2.9%** from **15% (2010)**
- Promotion rate in Primary school increased to **92%** from **69% (2011)**
- Learning achievements of Grade **5** reached **55.86%** and Grade **3** reached **57.21%**

School Health and Nutrition



- Health Policy and Strategy developed by **6** municipalities (**2** in Pyuthan and **4** in Kapilbastu)
- Children reached by annual deworming increased to **96%** from **56% (2010)**
- Children who reported healthy behavior increased to **97%** from **71% (2011)**
- Children who bring home made tiffin reached **79%** from **10% (2011)**
- Schools conducting health screening has reached **97%** from **0 % (2009)**

Adolescent Development



- **11** Health facilities certified as adolescent friendly services **15** health facilities are ready to be certified
- **10** municipalities in Kapilvastu have developed Child Rights Strategy
- **7** municipalities have developed and implemented Child Protection Policy
- **9** municipalities have developed and implemented child club formation and mobilization guideline
- Child Marriage rate decreased from **46% (2012)** to **10%**
- Adolescent with access to adolescent friendly services increased to **80%** from **30%**



Children participate in the child assembly

CHILDREN PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE CHILD ASSEMBLY

Nepal as a state party to the Convention on the Rights of the Children (CRC) has a mandatory obligation to strengthen institutions, mechanism and system that are responsible to deliver services for children; provide legislative and legal improvement; programming and budgeting for quality services, promoting child participation in governance process.

Underpinned by the fundamental principle determined by the Convention on the Rights of Child (CRC) 1989 'Children to be heard',

the Sponsorship Project has been advocating and providing technical support to the government to ensure meaningful participation of children in the planning process.

Child Assembly is one of the important mechanisms through which meaningful child participation can be ensured. 9 child assemblies in Pyuthan and 13 child assemblies in Kapilvastu have been organized in the year 2019. During the assembly, children – divided into different groups based on their age – engaged in drawing sessions where they sketched out visions that they would

like to see around them and developed action points to achieve those visions – a group of facilitators supported the children in coming up with creative ideas.

Children then voted for the most important issues that were raised from the previous session which was noted down in the meeting minutes further developed into action plan submitted to the rural municipality and municipalities by the Child Club Network. Through this

process, the Child Club Network could secure commitment from the government for the inclusion and budget allocation of the plans – such as the training for child clubs on child rights, participation and leadership, budget for sports materials and child led activities such as anti-child marriage campaign – developed by the children into the government plan. The child assembly has been proven as a successful mechanism to internalize issues important to children in the planning process and promoting child friendly local governance. While initially, only a few VDCs would organize Child Assembly, over the past year almost all municipalities including those not included in our working area have started to organize Child Assembly which shows that the community and the duty bearers have recognized the importance of this concept.



A child club member lists down children related issues during the child assembly.



Children participate in a group work session during the child assembly



Children participate in a campaign against child marriage

PUTTING AN END TO CHILD MARRIAGE

Despite national laws and international agreements, child marriage remains a real and present threat to the human rights, lives and health of children, especially girls, in more than a hundred countries. 37% of girls in Nepal are married before they turn 18 and 10 percent are married by 15 even though the minimum age of marriage under Nepali law is 20. Boys also often marry young in Nepal, though in lower numbers than girls. UNICEF data indicates that Nepal has the third highest rate of child marriage in Asia, after Bangladesh and India. Kapilvastu district is known as one of the six districts with highest child

marriage rate in the county. The district had a 65% child marriage rate as per survey report “Girls are not Brides National Network,” 2014.

Under the Sponsorship program, Save the Children has been working on Child Protection issues especially focusing on child marriage in Kapilvastu with various actors at the local and district level such as the District Education Office, Women and Children Office, District Health Office, Ward Child Protection Committee, former Village Development Committee, Schools, Parents, Child Club, Child Club Network, Youth Club, Health Post,

School Management Committee, Parents Teacher Association and local level CBOs among others. The project primarily focused on advocacy with the local government for law enforcement and strengthening reporting mechanism; community mobilization was taken as a major approach to achieve the objective. 360 child clubs and 41 child club networks in the community level along with 48 WCPCs were formed and mobilized as per the government guideline.

Other activities including rally, street drama, mobilization of religious leaders, door to door campaign were conducted throughout the project period to raise awareness on the consequences of child marriage,

By the end of the project period, 51% of working area (21 former VDCs out of 41) in Kapilvastu have been declared as child marriage free zone. Child marriage practice in the working area has decreased to 11.16% from 47% and Buddhabhumi municipality of Kapilvastu has been declared as the first child marriage free municipality of Nepal setting an example for the other municipalities. Furthermore, post declaration strategy for child marriage free zones has also been developed for sustainability.



Child Marriage Free Declaration event of Buddhabhumi municipality, Kapilvastu



Children perform at the 'Child Marriage Free' declaration event in Buddhabhumi municipality Kapilvastu



Learning materials for children for EGR program

READING SKILLS OF CHILDREN INCREASE BY A WHOPPING 43% AFTER THE EARLY GRADE READING PROGRAM

In 2009, Effectiveness Survey for piloting Literacy Boost assessment conducted by Save the Children found that 73 percent of students from grade 2 and 43 percent of students from grade 3 could not read a single word of Nepali. And those children who could not read and write in primary level did not perform academically well in higher grades.

Taking the need to focus on improving children's reading skills in early grades, Literacy boost program was implemented in the catchment areas of Pyuthan and Kapilvastu from

2011 which later changed to Early Grade Reading (EGR) Program from 2015.

While the program was initially implemented in collaboration with the District Education Office, Save the Children later collaborated with Education unit of Municipality and Rural municipality along with the schools and Parents Teachers Association post political restructuring. The program followed a carefully planned procedure beginning from orientations to head teachers on EGR package, Training



Teacher facilitating EGR program in one of the schools of Sponsorship Project

of Trainers and Resource Centre level training to Nepali teachers who also led the class implementation plan and learning materials management in the school.

A reading corner was also established in the classrooms; Save the Children provided reference books for those reading corners while the teachers developed learning materials using locally available materials to create a classroom environment conducive to children's improvement in academic performance mostly including reading and comprehension skills. Other support included provision of workbooks, refresher training to

EGR trained teachers, mentoring and coaching, student assessment to identify and support children who need special care, formation of reading clubs and regular monitoring to ensure quality and effectiveness. EGR program has led to a remarkable increase in the reading skills of targeted children. The end line survey conducted in the year 2018 exhibit a significant improvement in reading skills from 25 percent in the baseline to 68 percent in the end line among students.



Sukraraj with his mother

SUKRARAJ OVERCOMES VISION IMPAIRMENT WITH THE RIGHT SUPPORT

Sukraraj, 13, from Swargadwari, Pyuthan, lives with his mother and younger sibling. The men of the family have migrated to bigger cities to earn a living and support the family. Sukraraj had suffered an injury on his right eye while playing with his friends which affected his vision. The district hospital in Pyuthan suggested visiting better hospitals in Kathmandu citing he had internal problems.

Sukraraj's mother could not follow the doctor's advice due to the obvious

costs involved with traveling and medical services. Kalika, a School Health and Nutrition focal teacher at Sukraraj's school, Sisnerai Primary School, started noticing irregularities in Sukraraj's behaviour. Sukraraj who rarely missed classes previously started to have poor attendance rate. The focal teacher later identified Sukraraj's vision problem after a preliminary eye screening during the School Health and Nutrition celebration week. After coordinating with the school's head teacher,

Gangaram and Kalika Development Centre (Save the Children's implementing partner for Pyuthan), Sukraraj was taken to Bhairawa for treatment. Sukraraj acknowledges the improvement in his vision and thanked the referral support with a smile on his face.

This signifies the success of the Health Referral Support provided by School Health and Nutrition (SHN) Program implemented by Save The Children in Pyuthan area with many children benefiting from this program. Under SHN, a trained focal person is assigned in each school to monitor the health conditions of the children and on SHN celebration week, a basic preliminary health screening of the children from Grade 1 to Grade 5 is conducted. If any problem is identified, the children are referred to the medical assistance they require. If requested, financial support is also provided to marginal and poor families from these remote areas by reimbursing the submitted medical bills and vouchers.

The program is implemented in coordination with the DPHO, Schools, Health facilities and SCI's implementing partners of the program area. Due to lack of

awareness, financial resources and necessary health services, Sukraraj may have lost the vision of his right eye. SHN program's planned intervention has enabled Sukraraj to live a better and fulfilling life. With SHN program's regular health screening, health issues among children can be identified quicker and treated accordingly before the condition worsens.

Over the period of two years, 133 students like Sukraraj (62 Girls and 71 boys) of grade 1 to 5 have benefitted from the Health Screening Referral Support in Kapilvastu and Pyuthan. Schools and local bodies can continue this practice in coordination with the health facilities and by allocating resources for students requiring such support in an annual basis. Continuity of annual health screening benefits the children with minor health issues as well as those who need to be referred to higher centres and need financial support.



Girls from Madarasa stand with their textbooks in front of the Madarasa building

MAINSTREAMING MADRASA INTO THE NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

Madrasa, a religious education institution guided by the norms and cultures of Islamic religion, is a common form of education system among Muslim students who comprise of 20 percent of the total students in Kapillvastu district. Madrasa system emphasize on teaching religious studies and is exclusive of any national education curriculum. In the light of this scenario, Sponsorship Program took initiations to mainstream Madrasa into the national education system in coordination with the District

Education Office and partnership of local NGO through advocacy and awareness raising. Assessment of the catchment areas, workshop and conferences were further organized to develop process and strategies for the mainstreaming. Additionally, promotional messages targeted at parents on the consequences of sending children to Madrasa, capacity building of teachers (Maulana), communities and lobbying for the education rights of Madrasa was done in full swing to bring about the needed change.

As a result of continuous advocacy and lobbying, the government has now formulated policy to mainstream Madrasa into the national education system while the District Education Office (DEO) has been providing financial support required for such mainstreaming. Out of around 200 Madrasas that are currently present in Kapilvastu, more than 150 Madrasas have been successfully mainstreamed into the government system and are receiving government facilities.

This has helped the students going to Madrasa to continue their further education easily which previously was a big challenge as students could not catch up with another curriculum once they completed their studies in Madrasa. The advocacy initiative has yielded remarkable influence even in the national system as many issues identified from Kapilvastu have been addressed in the national policy such as holidays on Friday, increase of religious support fund and changes in the minimum numbers of students required to qualify for a religious school. A religious education unit desk has also been established in the District Education Office for the purpose of addressing issues concerning education in Madrasa and other religious education system.



A girl from Madarasa reads from her notebook



Students study in their classroom in Madarasa





Children in the ECCD with their teacher

MATCH FUNDING APPROACH FOR ECCD BUILDING CONSTRUCTION

Early Childhood Care and Development Program (ECCD) was one of Save the Children's key interventions that focused on building a platform for young children to aid in their learning and overall development. Each child deserves a safe and adequate learning and playing infrastructure. Due to lack of resources and time to build such infrastructures, the learning environment for children was not satisfactory in Kapilvastu. Save the Children and the DDC got on board by adopting a matching fund approach to construct ECCD in Kapilvastu.

A principle agreement was made with DDC defining the processes and roles of various parties. Save the Children, DDC, and Community Representatives (Construction Committee) were the three major parties involved in the agreement. While Save the Children provided financial support and took lead in the management and monitoring of the project, the then DDC provided financial and technical support and acted as the approval authority. The community helped in the implementation and local resource mobilization. The DDC identified and approved construction site and



the other parties agreed upon and extensively planned the construction criteria which acted as the basis for future assessments.

Community level orientation was also conducted to inform about the project and a construction committee was formed, after which both Save the Children and DDC duly undersigned the MOU for the concerned construction project. The technical and managerial team continuously evaluated and monitored the project. This approach has been adopted since the past four years and 36 ECCD buildings have been constructed till date.

Save the Children also provided further integrated support such as classroom management, book corners and more to create a better and enabling learning environment.

The matching fund approach has been a successful model to ensure community ownership and participation, effective costing, transparency and safe and quality construction to create a better and enabling learning environment. Municipalities have now started to adopt the match funding approach not only for the hardware components but also to support the software components of the program in other thematic areas.



Children in their school

PROMOTING HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT IN SCHOOLS FOR IMPROVED LEARNING ACHIEVEMENTS

Before the mid-day meal concept was introduced in the schools of the catchment areas in Pyuthan and Kapilvastu, students would usually go back home during lunch hour and wouldn't return. This led to low attendance rate and poor academic performance among students. Bearing this in mind, Mid-day intervention was implemented under the School Health and Nutrition program in targeted schools of Kapilvastu and Pyuthan with the objective of promoting health and nutrition and improving learning achievements among students.

This program primarily focused on promoting homemade tiffin made from locally available nutritious food amongst students.

Save the Children along with its partner NGO conducted various activities such as orientation to teachers and students on importance of homemade food, training to School Health & Nutrition (SHN) focal teachers, tiffin box distribution, banning junk food within school premises and awareness raising through Information Education

Communication materials including wall paintings in schools to encourage students to bring their own tiffin from home. SHN focal teachers assigned in each school conducted regular monitoring to ensure that every student complied with this new system.



A child enjoys his home-made tiffin

Over the years, school teachers, SMC members and other stakeholders have observed and acknowledged a significant improvement in students' nutritional status, attendance rate and learning achievements after the introduction of home-made tiffin system. Parents, teachers and student's knowledge on locally available nutritious food has also increased.



A group of students enjoy home made tiffin during the lunch break

Many schools, convinced by the effectiveness of this concept have gone an extra mile by banning consumption and selling of packed food such as noodles, biscuits altogether within and nearby school premises. Recently, the government has also formulated a policy to provide incentives to the mothers for promoting home-made tiffin.



Bipana, one of the participants of 'My First Baby Program' reads a textbook

MY FIRST BABY MAKING INFORMED SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CHOICES

Harmful social practices such as child marriage remains highly prevalent in Ward no 5 of Kapilvastu municipality. Many young girls are forced into getting married early by their parents resulting in early pregnancy and sexual and reproductive health problems. After identifying such issues in the community through a careful need assessment, the local government in technical support of Save the Children along with its partner Sunshine Development Social Organization (SSDO) initiated the “My First Baby” Program. Similar approach has been adopted in Pyuthan by Mandawai and Mallarani Municipality. The program aimed at

creating awareness on the possible consequences of early marriage and early pregnancy among married and unmarried adolescents.

A five-day long training was provided to a batch of volunteers in the community who expressed interest in facilitating the “My First Baby” program”. The facilitators then ran the sessions with adolescents in the community twice a month. The program has been successful in raising awareness among young girls and boys about making informed choices regarding their Sexual and Reproductive Health, getting married and conceiving at an appropriate age.

Kori (name changed) one of the participants of the program shares, “I got married at 15, I had no idea about the problems of getting married so early. I dropped out of school after getting married and had to look after my husband’s family.

Now I am pregnant. However, I am happy that I learnt so many important things about sexual and reproductive health after attending ‘My First Baby’ sessions. I feel confident about taking care of myself so that I can have safe and healthy delivery. I

also visited the health facility for ante natal care and sought advice from health workers. I have decided to give birth to my child in the health facility. ‘My First Baby’ program has helped so many other adolescents like me in my community and I feel very happy that I could be a part of it .”

Since 2015, My First Baby program has expanded to most of the working areas in Pyuthan and Kapilvastu with the initiative of the local government as well as Save the Children and its PNGOs. More than 250 MFB groups with participation of around 4000 married and unmarried adolescents, 300 FCHVs and 120 health workers were formed during the project period. This has been regarded as a proven social mobilization approach for addressing the issues of ASRH, minimizing the wrong traditional practices particularly early marriage, early pregnancy and promoting planned and healthy motherhood by encouraging delayed and safe pregnancy practices. There has been a significant increase in ANC, Institutional deliveries and PNC in the intervention areas. The MFB training curriculum has been on whole or on parts adopted by other projects within Save the Children and local governments.



Participants of the ‘My First Baby’ program after the completion of a training



One of the young girl participants from My First Baby Program



Children at the transitional ECD centre

TRANSITIONAL EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

Over the last ten years, Sponsorship program has worked with District Education Office, Village Development Committee, municipalities, parents, caregivers and well recognized resource organization on Early Childhood Care and Development to increase availability of and access to programs and services that directly support children's wellbeing and development. More specifically, Save the Children collaborated with District Education and District Health Offices to ensure improved quality of early learning environment that protect and promote children's cognitive, socio-emotional and physical

development. While the ECD program was a good initiative of the government that focused on accelerating the learning of children aged 3-4 so that they can eventually join school, the scope of their program remained limited in reaching out to the children belonging from the most marginalized and deprived communities. Bearing this in mind, Save the Children developed its transitional ECD program supplementing the existing program of the government with the objective of reaching out to these children. As such, pocket areas were identified and three months long ECD package was developed targeted at

the children marginalized based on ethnicity, gender, economic status among others who were not covered under the government's ECD program. The program also included formation of Management Committee, training to facilitators, provision of learning materials and technical support on record keeping.

Introduction of the transitional ECD centers has been proven as a successful response intervention to reach out to the marginalized children in low cost.

It was also observed that the children who enrolled in transitional ECD performed better when they graduated to grade one in comparison to those who didn't enroll in the ECD. Rural municipalities and municipalities have now taken up ownership of 13 transitional ECD programs initiated by Save the Children and have included them in their long-term plan along with their ongoing ECD – ensuring continued benefit to the marginalized and disadvantaged children.



Children with their teacher at the transitional ECD centre



Muskan, a child from ECD with her father



Urban health centre

MAKING HEALTH SERVICES ACCESSIBLE TO ALL (URBAN HEALTH CENTRE)

Only a few years ago, residents of Ward number 2 of Swargadwari municipality (the then former Swargadwari VDC) used to face enormous struggle to access proper health facility as the only health post available in the area was located far away from the residential area. Many pregnant women and other patients visiting the facility had to travel more than two hours and climb long and steep flight of stairs before reaching the health service. Initially, Save the Children supported the existing facility with necessary equipment, furniture and logistics to improve

Adolescent Friendly Services as making alternative arrangements did not seem feasible given the limited autonomy at the local level and district line agencies. However, utilization of the services remained bleak because of the location of the facility.

Gradually, after the federal government system came into effect, demands for alternative health services from the residents started to increase and with local government in power, an opportunity to resolve this problem came to life.

Save the Children and its partner Kalika Development Centre (KDC) successfully lobbied with the local government to build an Urban Health Centre in the municipality. While the government took the lead role in building the Urban Health Centre, Save the Children and KDC provided essential equipment for the birthing centre filling in the budget gap.

A complete set of birthing center equipment was donated to the facility for promotion of Institutional Deliveries, Adolescents Friendly Services (AFS) and Ante Natal Care. Likewise, two staff were hired on contract by Municipality and two others were deputed from Swargadwari Health Post. The formal inauguration of Urban Health Centre took place on 26th November 2018.

At present, the birthing center is fully functional with four nursing staff, two story rented building with adequate equipment and furniture located at the central of Ward number 2 of Swargadwari Municipality. Pregnant women now have easy access to services such as Ante Natal Care and Institutional deliveries which was

previously tiring and costly. Besides maternity care services, Family planning, Adolescent Friendly ASRH services are also being provided.

A total of 50 deliveries and 125 new Ante Natal Care visits have been recorded till date. Reduction in home deliveries and increase in institutional delivery is further expected because of the Urban Health Centre. Also, the Adolescent Friendly Services available in the facility is expected to reduce cases of child marriage and early pregnancy in the community. Inspired by this initiative, two other clinics have been established at Timile (Ward #6) and Dadagaun (Ward #4) by the Municipality adopting the same modality.

VOICES FROM THE STAKEHOLDERS

“ I feel surprised when I look back at the times when I used to get nervous even to introduce myself in front of the crowd but now, I can raise my voice on issues that matter, on issues of child rights. I participated in the child assembly, presented about things we like and dislike, safe and unsafe places for children and was successful in having these issues prioritized and included in the proposal submitted to the rural municipality. ”

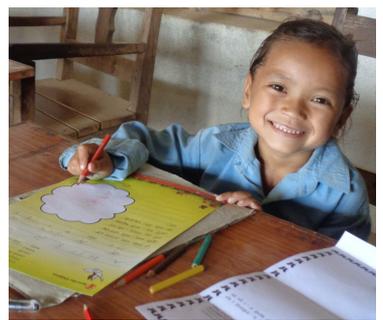
Rita, 17, Child Club Network, Bijaynagar

“ Education is one of the most important aspects of human life and is a must. The rural municipality is looking for ways to bring about the much-needed change in the education sector. For this, we have developed a five-year strategic plan with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders keeping in mind the problems, challenges and opportunities. We are sure that this plan will serve as a strong guide for the coming 5 years to improve the education sector. Save the Children and Kaalika Self Reliance Development Centre have provided continuous support and their absence will be felt for sure, however, this strategic plan will work as a foundation and the organizations' presence will be felt even after the project period. ”

Gopal Bahadur Thapa, President, Bijaynagar Rural Municipality

“ The fact that Kapilvastu was once considered as the district with high rate of child marriage can be considered a thing of the past now. We have seen significant changes in the perspective of the parents, who used to easily get their children married off. Continuous effort from the government and non-government sector on raising awareness, advocating and lobbying for changes in policies in regard to child rights, consequences of child marriage and legal provisions has finally panned out and the local government has started to declare their wards free of child marriage, one after another. ”

**Arjun Thapa Magar, Kaalika Self Reliance Development Centre,
Senior Program Officer**









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