



FACT SHEET

Empowering a New Generation of Adolescent Girls' with Education in Nepal (ENGAGE)

Dates

August 2018 – August 2022

Locations

Parsa, Banke, and Sarlahi districts in Province No. 2

Implementing partners

- VSO (Consortium Lead)
- Humanity & Inclusion (Co-Lead)
- Prerana
- DEC-Nepal
- Divya Yuva Club

Government Partner

- Ministry of Education, Science & Technology

Funded by

- Dept. for International Development, Girls' Education Challenge



More information

Shyam Krishna Mandal
Consortium Manager, ENGAGE
+977-1-5541469 ext. 155
ShyamKrishna.Mandal@vsoint.org

Background

Girls in Nepal's Terai, especially those with disability, face unique barriers to accessing quality education. Terai girls are not only far more likely to be out of school than their national peers, they are 25% more likely to be out of school than Terai boys. Meanwhile, girls from ethnic and religious minority groups face cultural biases and discrimination that shape expectations about their acceptable roles and behaviours. Disability is also a major predictor of poor educational achievement; in the Terai thousands of girls with functional limitation have never been to school in part because their condition has not been evaluated.

Empowering a New Generation of Adolescent Girls with Education in Nepal (ENGAGE)

aims to help improve learning opportunities and outcomes for thousands of highly marginalised out of school marginalised girls (OOSM) and girls with disability in the Banke, Sarlahi and Parsa districts of Province No. 2. Through the project, 2,656 girls will be bolstered by a newly supportive community, equipped with new skills for learning and employability, experience new-found confidence and self-esteem, and become able to influence and control their own sexual and reproductive health.

How ENGAGE works

Many of the barriers to girls' education in Nepal stem from low levels of engagement from stakeholders in the system. Given the country's strong and progressive education policies, change is only possible if parents, teachers, school managers, and policy makers know their roles and are inspired to act. ENGAGE addresses critical factors of marginalisation identified during participatory stakeholder consultations, including:

- socio-cultural norms that place a low priority on girls' education;
- lack of awareness and support services for girls with disabilities or functional impairments;
- poorly equipped teachers/educators and educational institutions to support the needs of OOSM girls and girls with disabilities; and
- poor implementation of inclusive policies by local service providers and duty-bearers

ENGAGE focuses on strengthening stakeholder engagement in inclusive education at household, school and system levels. Each girl benefits directly from ENGAGE's innovations in:

- personalised social support for girls and families
- Identification and assessment of disabilities of girls
- peer-based mentoring of younger girls by older girls to encourage participation and help girls address barriers.
- 9-month "bridge classes" to help acclimate girls to education and accelerate their re-entry into formal

systems

- community awareness about the value of girls' education
- coordination with local government authorities and support services
- training, coaching and mentoring hands-on practical experience in inclusive, student-centred pedagogy and practice for 100 educators and 90 BE/d and ME/d student teachers.
- Optional livelihood training for girls.

Identifying key barriers to inclusion

ENGAGE will use the Washington Group (WG) questions as a disability screening tool, and subsequently provide referrals for girls with disabilities to access services for the first time. Consortium co-lead Humanity & Inclusion (HI) piloted use of WG questionnaires in Nepal, supporting the localisation/contextualisation of these questionnaires including translation into Nepali in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. To date, WG questions have been piloted in 40 schools in four remote and rural districts of Nepal. A recent survey using the questions found that as many as one in four students have a functional limitation that requires further check-up, treatment, and provision of assistive devices, therapy or teaching-learning adaptations. WG questionnaires have proven ability to identify "hidden" disabilities that would otherwise go undetected.

Creating a safe space for education

Gender-based violence is a widespread and deep-rooted fact for many girls in Nepal. The vast majority of incidents go unreported. The direct result of this is the undermining of girls' enrolment and empowerment in education, especially as girls reach puberty. Regardless of age, violence and harassment prevent girls from attending school. The psychological impacts can result in absentee-ism and weak performance. Among the types of violence that girls often face are:

- physical abuse in domestic settings
- denial of rest, nutritious food, and chaupadi (isolation during menstruation)
- psychological violence that leads to feeling not capable in taking decisions.
- never-ending household chores and unpaid work
- child, early and forced marriage and dowry systems
- economic violence and denial of access to money
- discrimination/bullying by teachers and students

Girls with disabilities are far more likely to experience sexual abuse and neglect as non-disabled peers and face greater obstacles reporting abuse and accessing support services. Further, in Nepal access to adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health (AYSRH) services is very limited and girls with disabilities receive less support from their families, experience



An ENGAGE physical mobility assessment in Banke

more discrimination from health workers, and lack access to information, skills and technology adapted to their impairment. ENGAGE holistically addresses vulnerability and strengthens survivor-centered response within the education system at four levels by:

- ensuring there is sufficient resourcing and expertise to support GBV response and reduction,
- ensuring that preventative measures to protect rights are recognized and nurtured
- ensuring that systems and strategies are in place to monitor and respond to incidents
- ensuring girls have access to multi-sector services to support their recovery from violence and abuse.

Beneficiaries

The project's beneficiaries are moderate to severely marginalised out-of-school girls aged 10-19 years including girls with disability:

	With disability	Never in school / drop out	Total
Sarlahi	150	799	949
Parsa	318	480	798
Banke	368	541	909
Total:	8,36	1,820	2,656

Expected Results

Impact

- Girls and families become empowered, support girls' education, and hold duty-bearers and service providers to account
- Teachers/educators become inclusive education practitioners
- Schools/institutions, service providers and duty bearers uphold inclusive education policy provisions.

Outcomes

1. Increased empowerment of out of school and marginalized girls
2. Increased parental support for girls' education
3. Improved attendance in formal and informal education
4. improved teaching quality
5. Improved inclusive education practice in learning facilities

Volunteering for development

A key innovation in ENGAGE is its blended volunteering model which links together layers of volunteers to provide expertise, local knowledge, and passion for girls' education that is necessary to catalyse change.



Technical verification of learning disability in Banke

Peer mentoring

ENGAGE adapts VSO's pioneering "Sisters for Sisters" peer mentoring approach, pairing experienced older girls ("Big Sisters") with vulnerable younger girls ("Little Sisters") to strengthen their participation and support them to overcome the many barriers they face.

Service learning

ENGAGE partners with local colleges to give BEd/ MEd student teachers pre-service inclusive education training opportunities.

International volunteer expertise

IVEs bring to inclusive teaching methodologies that are tested and proven in other contexts.

National volunteer expertise

Nepal development professionals support ENGAGE staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders by providing technical training and coaching in core development approaches like inclusion, social accountability, and resilience contextualized for Nepal's federal context.

Community volunteers

Volunteer mobilizers support inclusive, people-first development and Personalised Social Support services. Other adults serve as "Adult Champions" for girls' education, and give extra support to Big Sisters.