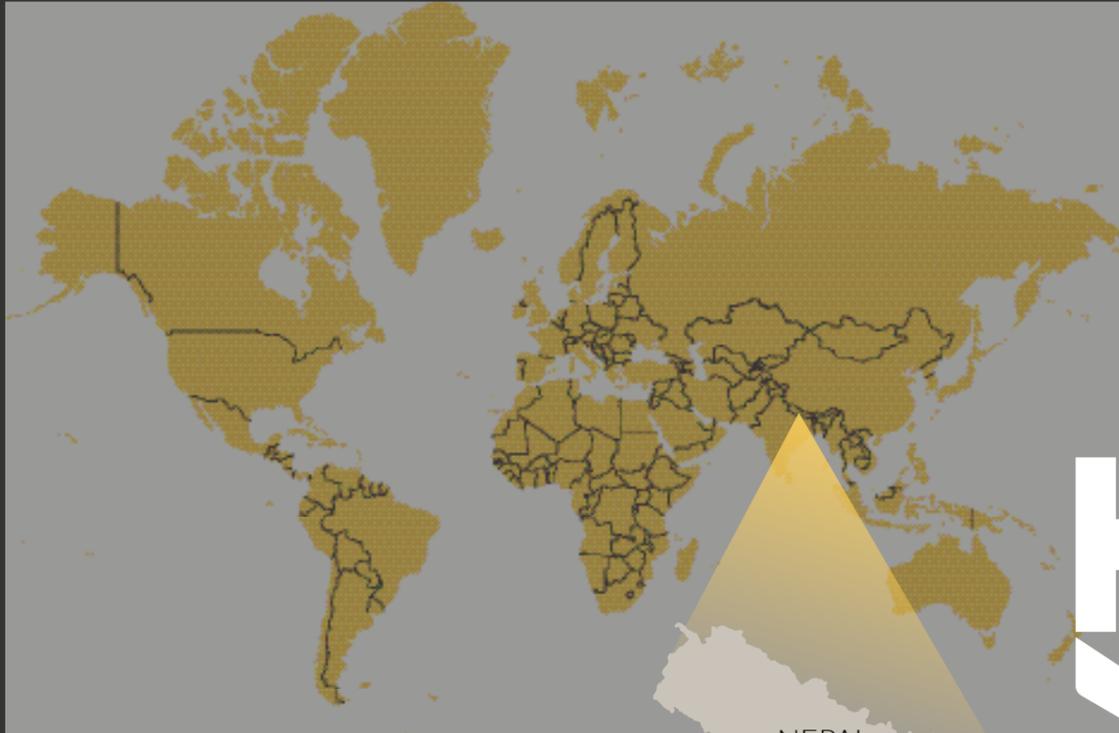




Sikai

Strengthening Inclusive Education Project in Nepal

MID-TERM REVIEW BRIEF, FEBRUARY 2022



NEPAL has an adult literacy rate of 68%. While the literacy rate for the male population of 15 years and above is 79%, it is only 60% for the female population, indicating a huge disparity (World Bank, 2018). Gender-related barriers such as cultural or religious beliefs, the heavy workload of household chores, e.g. fetching water, washing dishes and clothes, cooking and looking after younger siblings, male bias in the family and menstruation-related issues, impede girls' participation in education and their achievements. Moreover, Nepal has one of the highest rates of child marriage in Asia and one in four girls get married before the age of 18 (UNFPA & UNICEF, 2017). Nepal's gender gap in education is highest among excluded castes/ethnic and lower socioeconomic groups. The most vulnerable children (MVC), especially girls from excluded caste/ethnic groups and children with disabilities or learning difficulties, still remain the most marginalised groups (USAID, 2017).

Schools and Madrasas (religious schools) are two sources for the provision of Primary education in the country. Both sources are faced with challenges of poor infrastructure,

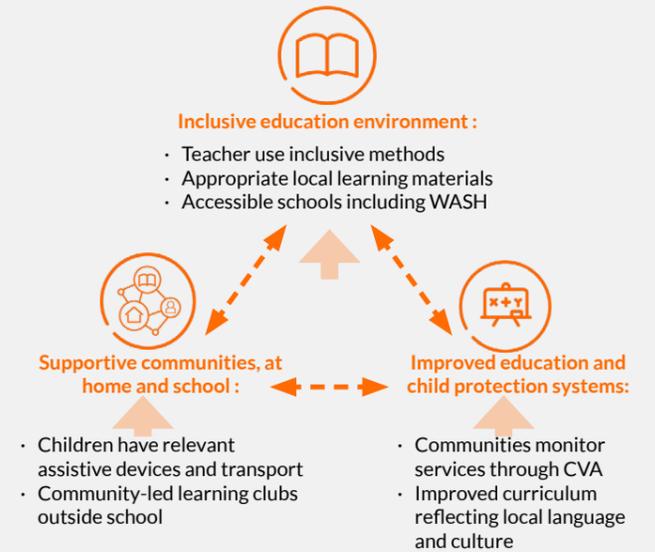
overcrowded classrooms, teacher absence, and generally low-quality teaching that results in poor learning outcomes. The situation is further complicated for Children with Disabilities as neither the curriculum is inclusive, nor the teachers are trained in inclusive education pedagogy and practice (USAID 2017).

THE CHALLENGE

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

In such a context, Sikai¹ -Strengthening Inclusive Education Project was designed with the following goal of: **'Most vulnerable children access and participate equally in education and achieve equitable learning outcomes in basic education in the target district'**. The project focuses on three main outcomes: improving school structures to encourage inclusive education (IE); changing the behaviours of parents and communities concerning children's education; and improving the policy framework and service delivery of rural municipalities to effect IE.

To achieve these outcomes, the project intervened at the school, community and municipality levels and employs various evidence-based approaches namely: Early Grade Learning, WASH in schools, Community Change (C-Change), and Citizen Voice and Action (CVA). At schools, the project interventions contribute to creating a safe and inclusive education environment for all children. Teachers' capacity building in IE and behaviour change mechanisms, IE pedagogy and provision of teaching-learning



materials, and construction of safe and accessible school structures conducive to girls and children with disability are some project interventions to achieve this. Parallel to the school interventions, the project is supporting families and communities to be more supportive of children's education through awareness raising. At the municipality level, the project supports the adoption and implementation of inclusive education and child protection policies and plans of the Government of Nepal (GoN).

Sikai is being implemented by a consortium of three partners: World Vision International Nepal (lead organisation); Handicap International; and World Education in 58 schools and 23 madrasas in four municipalities of Sarlahi district of Nepal. The project aims to reach 56,457 people (Men: 15,924; Women: 17,076; Boys: 11,298, Girls: 12,159) over a period of five years (July 2018-June 2024). The project is funded by the Australian Government through its Australian NGO Cooperation Program.

PURPOSE OF THE MID-TERM REVIEW (MTR)

The purpose of the MTR was to assess the status of the major project components, measure progress against the project plans, and assess the contextual changes resulting from COVID-19. The specific objectives of the assessment were:

Community Change	Community Change (C-Change) is a group-based methodology that uses sustained and facilitated group dialogue at the community level to address socio-cultural norms and practices. C-Change sessions are facilitated by C-Change facilitators. C-Change groups are made up of different stakeholders in the community (school-centered catchment area of the community) coming together to discuss issues facing children, find appropriate solutions, and work with the community to take action to mitigate harmful practices.
Early Grade Reading	Early grade reading aims to improve the foundational skills for literacy acquisition in the early grades (grade 1 to 3), recognising alphabet, reading simple words, understanding sentences and paragraphs, and listening and reading with comprehension.
Inclusive WASH in Schools	The project has supported gender-sensitive, disability inclusive, and child-friendly toilets and water access, and provided an incinerator for sanitary pad disposal for girls.
Citizen Voice and Action	Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) facilitates dialogue between community and government to enhance the quality of services. CVA participants become aware of relevant rights and better understand how to work with service providers and government to find ways to ensure rights and improve services.
Reading Awareness Workshops	These workshops show parents how to engage and encourage their children to learn.

¹ Sikai in Nepali language means 'To Teach'

- to assess the progress made towards achieving projects planned objectives, with focus on intersectionality of caste/ ethnicity, gender and disability;
- to assess the effectiveness of Child Rights Committees (CRC) and C-Change groups, especially in supporting efforts to prevent, protect and respond to child protection issues and supporting MVC;
- to assess the impact of COVID-19 on project components;
- to examine some of the key indicators to measure the changes since baseline study; and
- to document the lessons learnt, challenges, barriers, good practices and way forward.

In line with the above objectives, the MTR focused on answering six key evaluation questions related to: progress on key indicators; contribution to child well-being; component review; effectiveness of the technical and material support provided by the project, impact of COVID 19, and sustainability.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a mixed method approach. Quantitative and qualitative data was collected from primary and secondary sources. Methods used to collect data from primary sources were:

- Surveys (parents and teachers' surveys)
- Focus Groups Discussions (FGDs)
- Key informant interviews (KIIs)
- School observations using checklists
- Case studies

Secondary data from the following sources was obtained and used:

- Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Maths Assessment (EGMA),
- Education Management Information System (EMIS) data
- School profile data (on enrolment and annual learning achievement scores, etc.)

The evaluation team surveyed 422 randomly selected parents (60 % mothers) in 29 randomly selected schools and 23 madrasa catchment areas and 157 teachers from all schools and madrasas. Qualitative information was collected from various respondent categories including C-Change and CVA groups, Child Rights Committees, School and Madrasa Management Committees (SMC/MMC) children with disabilities, children aged 10-15 years, parents of children with disabilities and other stakeholders such as Inclusive Education Working Group and Organisations of Persons with Disabilities, and government officials at the municipalities.

Quantitative data was analysed using SPSS Software version-26 and descriptive statistics and bivariate analysis (Chi-square test) were carried out to test the statistical significance of changes in attitudes and its relationship with participation in various programme components, gender, education and caste/ ethnicity. The results were compared with the baseline. Qualitative data was analysed thematically. Data and sources were triangulated to draw conclusions.

KEY FINDINGS

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS- IN THE TARGET SCHOOLS AND MADRASAS

Enrolment increased from **16,680** to **24,646**

56% students are girls

Number of children with disabilities attending schools increased four folds **16** to **66**

Proportion of parents with supportive attitudes towards equal right to education for boys and girls increased from **5%** to **71%**

Proportion of parents with supportive attitudes towards education of girls and children with disabilities increased from **17%** to **45%**

Proportion of teachers with supportive attitudes towards education of MVC increased from **12%** to **98%**

All municipalities now have local level **IE** and **child protection** policies and plans.

1 PROGRESS ON KEY INDICATORS

GOAL LEVEL:

The project tracks progress at the goal level, using five indicators and the MTR found that the project has mixed results in terms of achievement on goal level indicators:

1 Improvement in reading proficiency:

The proportion of the students who have completed Grade 3 and could meet the national benchmark for reading i.e. were able to read 45 correct words per minute with 80% comprehension, had declined by three percentage points as compared to the baseline (baseline= 4%; MTR= 1%). While reflecting upon the reasons for this finding, multiple factors were identified:

• Prolonged school closure due to the pandemic:

The schools remained closed for almost a year (March-September 2020 & April-August 2021) and this may have especially impacted these younger students who did not have a strong foundation before the schools were closed, and with most of the parents being illiterate (58%), were unable to help children, improve their reading skills.

• Language:

Nepali is not the mother tongue of children in the project target sites and they do not speak Nepali at home, yet the assessment measures reading and comprehension skills in Nepali. While the schools were closed, retention is likely to have decreased due to lack of practice of a non-native language.

• Student-teacher ratio:

Half of the sampled schools still do not meet the national standard for student-teacher ratio (1 to 50) and that might have contributed to the poor performance of these students who were already impacted by the prolonged school closures.

• Absence of a book corner:

Only one third of the schools have a book-corner indicating limited opportunities for children to improve their reading skills.

2 Improvement in Math scores:

The student scores in Early Grade Math have increased from 2.5% of the baseline to 10.8%. However, 62% still remained unable to recognise numbers greater than 20 and could not perform simple addition or subtraction.

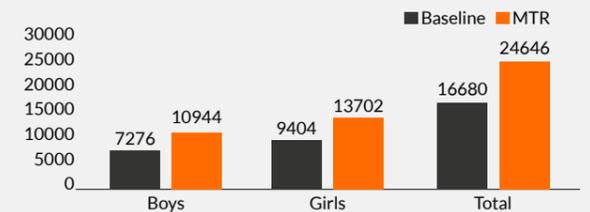
3 Improvement in overall grade scores:

The average scores of all the four key subjects from grades 1 to 8 had also dropped slightly by the MTR, compared to the baseline (Baseline=54.6 and Midline=51.8). This too was attributed mainly to the prolonged school closures due to the pandemic.

4 Increased enrolment of boys and girls:

Student enrolment has increased substantially (Baseline= 16,680; MTR=24,646). Gender disaggregation showed that a higher proportion of female students (56%) compared to male students are now enrolled.

FIGURE 1: School Enrolment: Baseline vs MTR



5 Participation of the most disadvantaged children in education:

The project made significant progress on this indicator and almost one-fourth (24%, n=5,835) were from Muslim ethnicity followed by Dalit (18%, n=4,535) families. The number of children with disabilities has increased four-fold i.e. from 16 at baseline to 66 by the MTR.

OUTCOME 1

Improved inclusive education environment in schools

The project tracks progress on this outcome using two indicators and the description of the findings below illustrates that the project has mixed results in terms of achieving this outcome.

- **Schools meeting minimum inclusive teaching and learning environment:**

A total of 9.6% of schools and madrasas met the minimum inclusive teaching and learning environment criteria (measured using Prioritized Minimum Enabling Conditions - P MEC - of the GoN) which was 9.2% at the baseline. Among them, none of the Madrasa met all five P MEC criteria, while 17% schools (5 of the 29 schools surveyed) met the minimum P MEC requirements. The project could not achieve its target of 29 schools meeting these criteria by the MTR.

While looking into each P MEC criterion disaggregated by type, availability of the books has been met by most of the schools and madrasas (81%) followed by the availability of safe classrooms (52%), student-teacher ratio (44%), book corners (35%) and separate disability friendly toilets for boy and girls (10%). Availability of separate, disability friendly toilets for boy and girls is the criterion not met by any madrasa. This indicates the need was greater than the project's capacity and further intervention is needed to help the schools meet this and the other (e.g. book corner and student-teacher ratio) criteria.

- **Children receiving specialised educational support:** The project could achieve its targets on this outcome indicator. By the time of the MTR, a total of 100 children with disabilities (both in-school and out of school) received specialised support from the project. Also, the findings of the teachers' survey revealed that a large majority of the children had received educational support from the Sikai project.

OUTCOME 2

Communities are more supportive of the education of their MVC, at home and school

The project uses three indicators to assess progress on this outcome and based on the findings presented below, the MTR could conclude with confidence that the project progress on this outcome has been significant.

- **Caregiver supporting equal learning opportunity to girls and boys at home and community:** The majority of parents (71%) now have supportive attitudes towards equal learning opportunities for girls and boys at home and the community as compared to those of 5% at the baseline ($p < 0.001$). A significantly higher percentage of parents who had participated in or were reached by C-Change (80% vs 66%), CVA (80% vs. 68%), child right (79% vs. 68%), PTA/SMC (84% vs. 65%) and parental orientation for children with disability (90% vs. 67%) had supportive attitudes indicating an association between the project interventions and the change.
- **Supporting the education of girls and children with disability:** Further, at the baseline, only 17% of parents were supportive of education for girls and children with disabilities. This percentage has increased significantly ($p < 0.001$) to 45% by the midline survey. Some differences were found among municipalities and caste/ethnic groups in terms of the level of change, indicating the need for more efforts to raise awareness in those communities.

Sikai project has brought a lot of improvements at the community level through different trainings, awareness programmes, and creating a conducive and supportive environment for children to receive school education (Participant 3, FGD, CRC-Brahmapuri).

Parents attitudes towards equal right to education for boys and girls

5% BASELINE | 71% MIDLINE

- **Teachers' attitude towards education of the MVC:** Proportion of teachers who have supportive attitudes towards the education of MVC had also increased considerably by the MTR. At the baseline, only 12.5% of teachers had supportive attitudes towards the education of the MVC and this proportion had increased to 98% by the MTR.

OUTCOME 3

Improved function and governance of inclusive education and child protection systems

The project tracks progress on this outcome using two indicators and the MTR concluded that the project is on track in terms of achievement of this outcome.

- Number of local level IE policies and plans formulated: The local level IE policies and plans have been formulated and endorsed in all the four study municipalities of Sarlahi district. The municipalities have already started to allocate budgets for implementation of these plans.
- Protection policies and plans implemented by local government aligning with provincial and federal levels: With the project support, the local protection plans in line with national policy, have been formulated and at the time of the MTR, were in the process of endorsement at the municipality level.

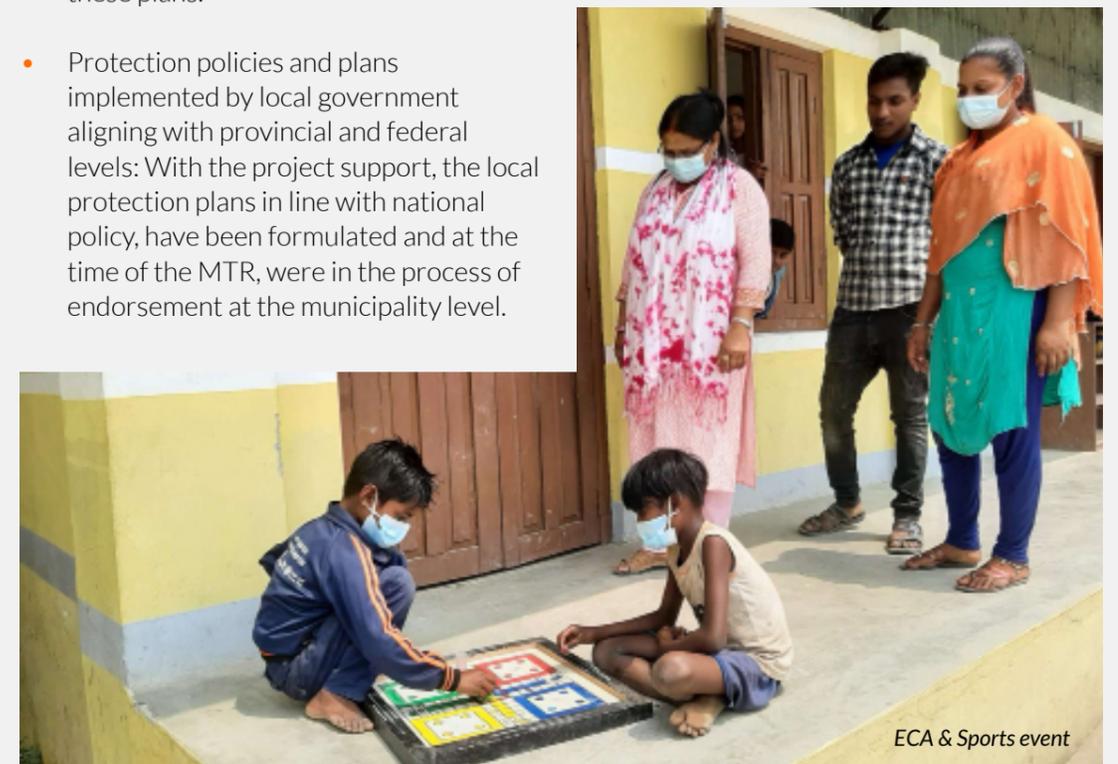
2 MATERIALS/ TECHNICAL SUPPORT

The project provided technical and material support to schools, communities, implementation partners and government staff at the municipalities.

At the schools, the project has contributed towards the improvement of school infrastructure, provided learning materials to facilitate early grade and inclusive teaching and learning; organised teachers training and refresher training; conducted bridging classes for out of-school dropped-out children; supported girls from the most marginalised ethnic groups/castes with cash vouchers and arranged for the provision of sanitary pads to adolescent girls.

At the community level, the project has conducted the screening of children to identify disabilities, started providing assistive devices, raised awareness on child rights through C-Change, conducted

The project screened 26,300 in and out of school children (11,894 boys and 14,406 girls) to detect any disabilities. Provision of assistive devices has started.



ECA & Sports event

Reading Awareness Workshops to engage parents in the learning process, distributed learning materials, and organised learning clubs during the school closures due to COVID-19.

At the partner's level, the project helped them implement evidence-based approaches such as C-Change, CVA, Early Grade Learning and WASH in schools which were new to them.

At the policy level, the project provided technical support to municipalities in the development of local level IE policies and plans. These have been endorsed and the local government has started to allocate a budget to execute these plans. The project also helped the municipalities in the development of the child protection policies and plans which are currently in the process of endorsement.

As shown by the results in the previous sections, material and technical support provided by the project have contributed to the achievement of project outcomes. However, it seems, the need was greater in certain areas of intervention than the support provided by the project. The inability of most schools to meet the PMEC standard for inclusive teaching learning environment is an indication of this. Most of the schools still do not have separate toilets for boys and girls and the book corners and student-teacher ratio is still high, manifesting the need for further intervention by the project or other stakeholders.

3 CHILD WELL-BEING AND INCLUSION

The project has made significant progress in terms of contributing to education and rights of the MVC. Generally, interventions at the school, community and municipality have been effective. More children are coming to schools and the numbers of girls, children from marginalised groups and Children with Disabilities have increased. Many out-of-school children are now re-enrolled as a



Child supported with assistive device

975 out-of-school children (75% girls) attended bridging classes and 60% of them have been enrolled in schools

result of bridging classes. The project provided awareness on how to treat children with disability and incidents of bullying have decreased. In line

with this, participants in most of the FGDs with children aged 10-15 years reported that teachers do not treat children with disabilities badly. However, the bullying at school by other children has not stopped altogether.

Children have been enrolled in our school from the Muslim and Dalit community. Usually, 2-3 children with disabilities also study at school. Teachers have created an environment where children with disability can also come to school. This is our great achievement. Earlier, people were unaware of inclusive education but ...now children of all communities come to school. Our group is trying to move forward in the education sector by including all social classes of people. (P2 C-Change 5, Haripurwa).

Simultaneously, as a result of the project interventions, awareness on gender equality, early/child marriage and other issues has increased. Similarly, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of parents who support equal learning opportunities for their boys and girls and education of the MVC and children with disabilities. This can have a lasting impact on child well-being in these communities.

Further, to improve the learning environment at home and encouraging parents' active engagement with the child's education, the project organised Reading Awareness Workshops. Students aged 10-15 mentioned various family members now helping them with studies and mothers sparing girl children from household chores to attend school. Further, CRC, a GoN requirement for each school and the municipality to promote children's right and protect them from the violation of rights, did not exist prior to the project. The project, in collaboration with the school, community and the municipality, formed CRCs in all schools/madrasas, at the ward and the municipality levels to address child protection issues. Though the CRCs needs further mentoring to become independent, they can play a vital role in the protection of children's rights as they exist in a supportive context where child protection policies and plans have been developed.

Parental education provided to the parents of children with disability and other children has also improved parents, thinking towards children with disabilities. Parents now feel that children with disability are also capable like other children (Participant 3, FGD project team).



Medical camp for hearing

4 COMPONENT REVIEW

CVA: The project has established CVA groups at all 58 schools. Reportedly, as a result of CVA interface meetings, the relationships between municipality and schools have improved. Both are now proactively working together to meet the PMEC standards of the GoN. Raising awareness among communities to send out of-school children to school, monitoring of teaching learning environment at school, advocating with the local government for improvement of school infrastructure, and student-teacher ratios etc. were mentioned as the key interventions by the CVA groups.

Although the CVA groups contributed to a number of improvements at the school level, they were essentially performing the function of a School Management Committees (SMCs). The lack of functional SMCs in many schools may have been one of the reasons for the CVAs being involved in the implementation of school improvement plans. Even where both existed, their roles overlapped and the basic difference between the functioning of the two entities, i.e. the CVA (holding the service providers-in this case, the school and the municipality-accountable to improve service delivery) and the SMCs (part of that very service delivery system, mandated to monitor and improve the school performance or service delivery) did not exist. Simultaneously, the major challenges identified by the project team towards sustainability were a lack of initiative and motivation among the group members and their reliance on the project team to hold meetings. They might cease to function after the project ends.

C-Change: The project has formed 38 C-Change groups across all four municipalities which conducted several activities at the community and school levels, including: awareness raising and encouraging children and parents to increase school enrolment; door to door campaigns to raise awareness among communities regarding

child marriage and its consequences for girls; and personal hygiene and cleanliness in the village. Street dramas and rallies were conducted as a part of awareness raising for abolishing child marriage, child labour and waste management in the villages. The quantitative findings revealed an association between participation in the C-Change activities and positive changes in parents' attitudes towards equality in educational opportunities for boys and girls and educational opportunities for the MVC.

Despite all the above achievements, the MTR found that the C-Change groups are not functioning as expected. None of the groups interviewed had an action plan and relied on the project to be told what to do next. In addition to COVID related lock-downs, both the project staff and the C-Change groups identified lack of motivation and commitment among members to conduct regular meetings and expectations for some economic benefits as the reasons for this state of affairs.

Early Grade Learning (EGL): The project has trained Early Childhood Development teachers in improving their skills in Early Grade teaching and inclusive teaching learning pedagogy and provided them with teaching-learning materials. The project also facilitated experience and best practices sharing meetings to motivate teachers on the maximum use of EGL materials and techniques in the classroom. The schools were also supported with seating arrangements (such as child and disability friendly chairs) to make the classroom environment child friendly.

While the quantitative findings have shown a decline in: a) the proportion of children who could meet the national standards for EGRA, and b) annual learning achievement of all grades in basic level Math, English, Science, and Nepali, the MTR still cannot conclude that the approach has been in-effective in this context. The challenges posed by the pandemic, i.e. prolonged school closures and other constraints, e.g. student-teacher ratios etc. might have been the main reasons for such a decline.

Toilets have been constructed in our schools and these days; we can easily get the sanitary pads in schools whenever we need. And this has made us comfortable coming to the schools during our periods. Earlier, we (girls) used to leave classes if we had period in school (P7-FGD, Girl 10-15 years, Bhrmapuri).

WASH: As a result of the project support, 29% of schools (both mainstream and madrasas) had separate toilets for girls and around 10% have gender and disability friendly toilets; nearly, two-thirds of the schools had safe and sufficient drinking water facilities (61%); more than a half of the schools (52%) have handwashing facilities, and 13% of schools had sanitary bins in the girls' toilets.

Respondents highlighted WASH-related project interventions and their benefits, especially the girl children mentioned how the improvement in school WASH facilities had made the school environment more friendly for them, particularly during menstruation.

While the project has supported the construction of toilets, the level of intervention has been limited as compared to the need on the ground and more efforts are needed in this area.

CRCs: The project has supported the formation of CRCs at the school, ward and the municipality levels. Municipality level CRCs have been supported through training,



Gender and disability friendly toilet constructed by Sikai



Assessment camp for developmental disability

action plan development, joint monitoring visits and managing child feedback. Psychosocial counselling and case management training had also been provided by the project to deal with children's issues. For case recording, CRCs have been linked to district-level women and children cell (incident recording inspectors at the district). The CRCs mentioned running awareness campaigns on child rights, addressing complaints received through the complaints box and reporting of child rights violation incidents as their achievements.

While reflecting on the challenges, the project team shared that, despite their effort, many CRCs, especially the ones at the school level are not active in performing their roles. Although all the schools and ward-based CRCs have been provided with capacity building trainings and orientations on their roles and responsibilities, the activities of the CRC have not taken place as expected, indicating the need for further support from the project and relevant government authorities.

The project introduced alternative methods to continue learning outside school, such as distribution of self-learning books and initiation of community based learning clubs (tole shiksha). While the student learning scores have decreased for almost all grades and early grade reading scores too have also declined as compared to the baseline, the MTR cannot conclude if the above-mentioned interventions have been in-effective because: a) the scale of these interventions has been limited; and b) no counterfactual is available to compare what would have happened without these interventions.

Our main challenge was school closures due to COVID-19 lockdowns. We had provided trainings to the teachers as well as teaching-learning materials to the schools aiming to improve the quality of education. But due to the lockdowns they were not utilised as expected. We were not able to know how effective those trainings and materials were. Some materials were already damaged by the time of re-opening of the schools. So COVID-19 was the main challenge for us (P4-FGD-Project team).

5 IMPACT OF COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected various project activities that have directly or indirectly affected the achievement of intended results of the project. Given the nature of the project, i.e. most of the activities requiring human interaction, implementation of various activities remained on hold during the lockdowns. The impact of certain activities, e.g. teacher training was also impeded by the repeated and prolonged lock-down resulting in poor learning outcomes.

Self-learning books were provided to 10,556 students by the project to facilitate learning when schools were closed in 2020 and 2021.

694 children attended 16 community-based learning clubs in the madrasas catchment areas to continue learning during school closure.



Handwashing station constructed by Sikai

6 SUSTAINABILITY

The Sikai project has been implementing almost all its interventions in close collaboration with municipalities. Therefore, the likelihood of a number of project achievements such as the development and implementation of inclusive education and child protection policies and plans is quite high.

Further, the attitudinal change brought about by the project among parents and teachers are expected to be sustained, especially if some reinforcement is possible. However, application of the teaching skills, imparted by the project will depend on the commitment at municipality, availability of teaching materials, and student-teacher ratios.

The MTR also concluded that the project approach of working at various levels (family, community, school and policy) to promote gender equality and ensure IE, has been appropriate. However, its implementation modality, where multiple components are being implemented almost parallel to each others has not been effective. Engaging community members in various activities, e.g. CRC, CVA, C-Change, where each group is expected to have their own plan and execute it, has a high opportunity cost for them and without immediate tangible benefits, the motivation remains low. These interventions are unlikely to continue after the project ends and the project will need to look for mechanisms to improve the sustainability of these initiatives.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

- Intensify the awareness - raising interventions to promote supportive attitudes towards the education of girls and children with disabilities, as there is still a substantial need for such an attitudinal change.
- Focus more on the low performing municipalities and sub-groups in terms of attitudinal changes and design targeted strategies to improve results.
- Encourage the enrolment of children with disabilities at schools, out of those who were supported by the project with assistive devices.
- Adopt strategies to improve learning outcomes such as: organising remedial sessions; encouraging establishment and use of book-corners for grades 1-3; and advocating with the municipalities to prioritise improving student-teacher ratios.
- Mobilise additional resources to help schools meet the PMEC standards especially in the areas lagging behind e.g. WASH, establishment of book-corners and student-teacher ratios. The project may try identifying the potential partners and link them with the municipalities to make sure the gaps are filled even if the project ends.
- Strategise to cope with future school closures within the project life and beyond. The project may consider
 - a. Continuing and expanding community based learning clubs in order to cover a greater number of children. This can be combined with age appropriate self-learning materials.
 - b. Collaborating with other partners and stakeholders in Nepal to find a solution to cope with such situations in future.
- Merge the project's established the entities with government structures where possible, e.g. a) CRC and C-Change groups and b) CVA groups and SMCs. This may help in improving their performance, and reduce the participation fatigue for communities. These entities should then be mentored in the last year of the project to become sustainable.
- Put in place strategies to boost community motivation by reflecting with the communities and the relevant government offices on the reasons for the lack of motivation to participate in various activities.
- Develop and implement an exit plan jointly with the municipalities and other stakeholders for the gradual withdrawal of the project teams from various interventions, and the alternative government or community mechanisms taking over to ensure a smooth transition.