

## Success Stories

***"Pandemic:Never Stopped:Learning Thurst"***



**Rajani KC, GESI Focal Teacher,  
Shanti Namuna SS, Rupandehi**

*"As a GESI focal teacher for 3 years, I have realized that the knowledge on gender responsive dynamics is very important to design and implement the actions effectively in school. Gender analysis is necessary to generate the smart actions and have profound changes. The skills on planning and understanding of intersectionality can transform the traditional gender norms which are deep rooted in our society. I equally realized that adjustment on internal policies, guidelines, procedures, plans and structures from gender lens and capacity building initiatives could make local governments, schools and stakeholders responsible and accountable for more gender responsive affirmative actions, i. e. gender balanced perspectives everywhere.*

*I observed that if the schools have more diverse team, the performance could be also better. The assigned tasks could be taken more positively; easy to mainstream the GEDSI into school education, and resulted equitable outcomes. Gender responsive budgeting and its effective implementation is still far behind to respond disasters in many spheres of our institutions and communities but partnership and advocacy could change the situation. For that, continuous effort is required to reflect gender responsiveness in to the vision, mission and goals of educational institutions. Infrastructures have not built, taking context specific gender consideration, however, it is noticed that it is happening because of no gender expert availability despite the positive intention. Some institutions have GESI responsive policies but again lacking effective implementation and monitoring or audit in place. In some places, monitoring had done by external party but that was found only in document to meet the legal requirements. The findings were hardly addressed in the next level planning. Most importantly, it is equally noticed that the commitment of management and leadership could play the crucial role to establish institutions as GEDSI transformative.*

*The space provided to women/girls helped to create the safe and stimulating environment. If institutions provided the space to present the views of girls and gender minorities to the fore, it could greatly support in quality learning outcomes, mitigating SGBV, strengthening resiliency in schools. Safe learning environment, toilet facilities, transportation arrangement, balancing working hours helped vulnerable groups greatly, and supported in continuing their education hugely. The competence on gender issues, integrity and support mechanism for women and girls still found lacking in many places as expected. It is found that gender mainstreaming in all programs and projects should be inbuilt necessarily. I realized that leadership can minimize the gender stereotyping and stigmatizing attitudes and behaviors in schools. Equal access to resources, training opportunities, meeting spaces and supported networks could scale up women/girls in leadership positions. Analytical framework for gender, formal rules and policies, accountability mechanisms for social reforms and deep structures, acceptance of women leadership, ownership and agendas of gender issues in schools could greatly contribute in learning continuity, maintaining stability, fulling learning thrust and promoting safe environment in school & community."*

***“Alignment & Dedication: Cornerstone for Change”***



**Bimala Rai, Mayor,  
Haleshi Tuwachung Municipality, Khotang**

*“From my perspective, as a mayor, I realized that system strengthening is very necessary to have changes in terms of ‘Gender and Social Inclusion’, quality learning outcomes and environment in the remote contexts. In Haleshi Tuwachung municipality, all schools were closed because of COVID-19 and EiE efforts supported to continue the schools’ education of our children. Here is very limited access of mobile and TV technology to run the regular classes. Our area has very huge gap in term of digital divide. In our area, many ethnic minorities and socially excluded groups are residing. Poverty and low-income families are another challenge for coping with disasters and pandemic.*

*In this context, EiE efforts became cornerstone for change. It helped for learning continuity. It helped in dropout mitigation from our schools. The awareness campaigns helped to mitigate the sexual violences. The orientation on SRH rights helped to minimize the taboos associated with menstrual health and psychological distress. Additionally, the training on Palika level plans and policies made us aware on system strengthening. It equally aware us on ensuring the inclusion and protection addressing the specific needs of girls and women for gender-based violence’s response mechanism. We also believe that the initiatives enhanced the capacity for management and coordination for Education in Emergencies and ensuring the safeguarding mechanisms for future outbreaks. The efforts were customized the gender transformative approaches as per the local government’s needs, local context and contributed hugely for stability and recovery. Remedial supports to minimize the learning gaps equally helped to revitalize the educational loss. However, putting the efforts from sustainability perspectives having more strategic partnerships for institutional and social reforms could have more tangible impact.”*



*“As I noticed so far, our children developed their confidence and leadership highly. They initiated to speak up and bring the issues to the front without hesitation. School maintained complaint handling mechanism and mainstreamed gender & safeguarding related activities into its regular annual plan after EiE efforts. Project initiatives capacitated & engaged community members, i. e. SMC/PTA, parents, local government representatives, GESI focal teachers, subject teachers and child club members. Learning loss caused by COVID scaffolded by remedial practices and support. Every EiE efforts selected the participants inclusively representing intersectionality. The orientation on SRH rights helped the children to minimize the mensural taboos and to speak up their issues openly. EiE gender responsive approaches are appreciated highly. Partnership for Recovery approaches paid attention to the unique needs of girls and gender minorities. EiE efforts valued their perspectives; respected their experiences; conducted empowerment initiatives in inclusive contents; provided supplementary resources to address the issues associated with them for learning continuity, mitigating harmful practices and strengthening resiliency for future outbreaks. Despite emergency, EiE efforts capacitated to all school stakeholders adopting wholistic approaches to minimize the gender inequalities/traditional norms/unequal roles-relations/powers; provided the learning resources and follow up services side by side. These gender transformative approaches contributed on*

*building lasting and positive changes in terms of quality learning outcomes, reducing drop outs from schools, mitigating violences and enhancing life skills on the part of students. Gender transformative approaches in education helped to utilize all parts of an education system – from policies to pedagogies to community engagement – to transform stereotypes, attitudes, norms and practices by challenging power relations, rethinking gender norms and binaries, and raising critical consciousness about the root causes of inequality and systems of oppression. It moved beyond simply improving access to education for girls and women towards equipping and empowering stakeholders – students, teachers, communities and policy makers – to examine, challenge, and change harmful gender norms and imbalances of power. So, with a gender transformative approach, education systems are equitable, inclusive and do no harm. In these systems, everyone is safe and on a same level.”*

***Kul Prasad Lamichhane, Head Teacher, Shanti Namuna SS, Rupandehi***

*“Global pandemic had been putting millions of ‘school going children including children with disabilities’ at risk. Normal services were disrupted hugely. Learning continuity initiatives via radio lessons and volunteers’ home visit gave a sense of stability & ignited hopes physically and psychologically, and protected us from risks: dropout from school, protected from harmful practices, and provided sense of normality. We learnt the life skills and academic skills and got hopes for future. We got WASH resources to continue our education during pandemic. We were involved in the child club training and school level talent hunt programs. We, children with disabilities, also felt respected.”*

***Pramila Ratala, Sunipipal SS, Child with Disability, Bajhang***

**“SRH Orientation: Blessing for Self-Dignity”**



**Uma Gautam, Student**

*“I am a student from Janajyoti Secondary School, Sindhuli. I believe ‘Periods’ should not stop schooling even in emergencies. Pandemics could make girls and women more vulnerable from many perspectives and making lives more difficult. I live in remote area of Sindhuli and belong to poor family. I often find difficult to get dignity kits because of my financial situation. This might be the case to many girls like me. Schools provide the pads but no other things that we, growing age girls, need to have for healthy behaviors. Because of that, girls normally face taboos, violences, exclusion, embarrassment and shame as a result of ‘Period’. That’s why we often keep this matter secret. Additionally, some of us have to walk for a long to get the school. Our school do not have sufficient water and safe practices to manage it nicely. This is not only my unique problem but also problem facing many girls of schools who could not tell it properly. Many girls might have been exploited sexually by their seniors & friends, victim of bullying and unsafe touch due to lack of proper SRH education at schools and communities.*

*In this context, EiE initiatives provided a set of WASH materials and orientation on SRH rights. That’s become blessing for us however this was only one time event. Our team highly respect it because “something is better than nothing”. It helped us to scale up our self-esteem and to cope with challenges associated with mensural taboos. We talked SRH rights with our parents, teachers and friends openly. We equally requested with our ward chairperson to plan about mensural hygiene for providing the essential services to remove the false information, taboos, embarrassment and stigmas. Many adolescents are becoming the victim of suicide, early pregnancy, child marriage, school drop outs and victim of other harmful practices due to lack of SRH education on time. Our child club advocated with principal and SMC to have a door and clean water in girl’s toilet, safe disposal machine, vending machine and suggestion box in school. It was useful to remove the barriers for girls for mitigating embarrassment and stopping them from skipping from the school to some extent, and had profound impact on girls’ overall development. SRH education with essential kits increased the regularity of girls in school to some extent. “*

## "Functional Safeguarding: Boon for Resiliency Enhancement"



Shankar Raj Luitel,  
Education Chief, Kamalamaj Municipality,

"Education unit of Municipality was searching the collaborating partners during the COVID-19 pandemic period, Kamalamaj Municipality has wider coverage and very remote from many perspectives having large number of scattered geographies and schools. We have very limited capacity for technology access for inclusive education. In this background, the collaboration between Kamalamaj Municipality and REED Nepal for emergency response project found greatly supportive to each other. PSE project considered this inclusion aspects to a great extent however inclusion is the matter of subjectivity. The joint planning, implementation, monitoring and review helped a lot to be everyone on the same page for effective implementation of the project initiatives on time.

Talent hunt programs in each school were greatly acknowledged. They helped to establish the functional safeguarding mechanism and resiliency system. Awareness and orientation programs contributed on mitigating the learning loss on the part of students. Mobilization of volunteer teachers during movement restrictions time found meaningful to scaffold the learning loss and education continuity. WASH support to children with disabilities and extremely vulnerable children helped a lot to address the urgent needs and concerns of the vulnerable children. Children focused programs, i. e training, ECAs, helped the children and girls' leadership and life skills a lot. Regular school-based mentoring from Palika and REED staff helped a lot to support in the learning gaps. However, we would like to request with REED Nepal and donors to think from sustainability perspectives, alignment of project with Palika priorities, initiation of quality learning improvement initiatives and establishment of network of teachers. Lastly, we would like to offer thanks to REED and DFAT/Australian Aid for the support and eagerly waiting the future collaboration"

Thanks and Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shankar Raj Luitel". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Shankar Raj Luitel,  
Email: sluitel10@yahoo.com Phone: 9843423232  
Undersecretary (10<sup>th</sup> level) Kamalamaj Municipality, Sindhuli

***“Support and Mentoring: Inspired for Creative Exploration”***



***Safal Pun, Student***

*“My name is Safal Pun and from Durga SS, Rupandehi. I was hugely disturbed by the COVID pandemic and sitting in home doing nothing. The radio lessons during COVID time created hopes on me which were directly related with my needs. Training on safe and unsafe touch, symptoms of abuses and ways of coping with them, talent hunt programs, i. e. girls’ right, my voice matters, my body: my rights, mitigating measures for drug abuse, dramas on human trafficking, etc. largely encouraged me and my friends. We listened the radio jingles on safeguarding, referral mechanism, respectful language for disable persons, early marriage, child labor, etc. aware us very much. We also are regularly listening the radio lessons in our mobiles during the vacation time too. It also is helping us to continue our learning during the vacation time as well.*

*My mother is also helping me to set up the reading room and becoming regular in the school upon the request of school once attending the program of EiE in school. Our school has a complaint handling committee and box for the suggestions. Our GESI focal teacher is helping us to listen the grievances. Our school has a lot of IEC materials pasted on the wall: complaint handling mechanism, disability inclusion language, early marriage, child labor, etc. Sometimes, we present the key message related with GBV in the morning assembly as well as do project work as asked by the teacher. We have annual child club plan in our school. We regularly conduct the meeting and lead the ECAs on our own. We can speak in front of large mass after training.”*