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Acknowledgement

This year, 2020, we expanded our working area to Chautara Sangachowkgadi Municipality within Sindhupalchowk district and Panchkhal Municipality in Kavre Palanchowk district. In 2020 we planned to do various activities, however, as the global pandemic hit, we faced difficulties and uncertainty to execute planned activities. With the impact of COVID-19 and nation-wide lockdown, we shifted our target toward the vulnerable groups. There are also transitions in some of the activities as schools remained closed till November, and we shifted some of our activities onto a digital platform. We would like to thank Equality Fund, ONGD-FNEL, EMpower, and Novo Foundation funds for Tides Foundation for their continued support even during such hard times. We hope to continue these partnerships in the future. Special thanks to Girls Advisory Committee, Girls Support Committees, and School Support Committees, Rural Municipalities, Schools, Trainers, Mentors, Health post and Female Community Health Volunteers, Women Circle Network, and Local Community who were directly involved with Hamro Palo and supported the execution of our activities. We are also thankful to our trainers, speakers, and participants who joined us on the digital platform. Coping up with the pandemic would not be possible without any one of you.

LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Reflecting on what was the most challenging year for all of us, I am indebted to each member of Hamro Palo and the community of partners - adolescent girls and boys, young people, schools, funding organizations, collaborators, and well-wishers for the support that was shared and multiplied.

Although we had to shelve most of the activities, especially school-based activities such as - Her Turn and His Chance <u>Education</u> and <u>Empowerment</u> programs, we were prepared

to respond to the challenges by June 2020. From early July, we began our COVID-19 response activities on the ground, starting with immediate food and medicine relief programs. By August, our programs for married and out of school girls were set in motion maintaining safety protocols for both our staff and the program participants. While we kept our in schools programs intact for next year, we improvised some of the programs and took them to the online platforms. The shift was stimulating but we knew we had to stay connected with the girls and the communities, so we explored various interventions involving individuals and organizations who we have never worked before, such as - Webinars highlighting issues women and girls can directly relate to, workshops on mental health where adolescents, especially girls can learn ideas to stay safe and healthy.

We also introduced several new programs this year, creating various avenues for women and girls to get involved for the cause, some of them include - Her Turn Leadership Award, Radio programming, Digital advocacy fellowship. And we are gratified by our partnership with Health Institutions and FCHV (Female Community Health Volunteers) who are making sure that pregnant women and new mothers in rural villages are safe and have access to health services. While all of this was trying at times, we kept on moving forward. Everything that we achieved in 2020 was through the power of resilience and compassion and we will continue to do so in the coming year.

Stay safe and take care of yourself.

Anita Thapa

Executive Director

A. HER TURN EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

The Her Turn Education and Empowerment Program is a workshop for girls aged 12-16 from rural communities of Nepal. In previous years, the program was implemented in various community schools of Sindhupalchok, Gorkha, Rautahat, and Jumla districts. This year, we conducted the Her Turn Education and Empowerment Workshop in two schools. Sindhupalchowk and Kavre Palanchowk district. This year 197 adolescent girls completed the workshop where they learned about issues like menstrual taboo, puberty, domestic violence, human trafficking, confidence building, and self-esteem out of many. In the last week, the participants came up with a community project to build a child-friendly toilet and bought a speaker for their school to help them conduct mass programs. At the closing ceremony, the girls ended the workshop with songs, poems, dances, gazals, and speeches about empowerment, justice, and gratitude towards Hamro Palo.



HER TURN EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

In Her Turn workshop, I learned about violence against women and how it is impacting women in our communities. Now I can identify the type of violence and know how to respond to it. I also feel confident and have learned to speak up for our rights and stop violence against women.

Ritu Rokka, 16 Panchkhal-12, Kavrepalanchowk District



B. HIS CHANCE EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

Alongside Her Turn Workshop, we conducted His Chance workshop in Shree Setidevi Secondary School in Sindhupalchowk with 66 participants. The boys learned about health issues (puberty, hygiene, menstruation) and safety issues (bullying, harassment, human trafficking, and early marriage). His Chance workshop uses a gender transformative approach that encourages in-depth discussions on power dynamics in their communities, how they affect girls, boys, women, and men, and how they can become allies in the social change process.



HIS CHANCE EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

The most interesting topic for me was substance abuse. I was the victim of substance while I was living with my brothers in Kathmandu. When my family found out about it, they brought me back to Syaule, and by their guidance, I left using substances. I was very happy to learn about this topic in the His Chance workshop.

Anil (name changed), 17 Syaule, Sindhupalchowk

CORE PROGRAMS

HIS CHANCE EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

Some of the outcome of the workshop based on our evaluation:



During the Baseline study, **28.8%** of the boys said that domestic violence in Nepal is illegal. After completing His Chance workshop, the number grew to **91.3%**

Before the workshop, **24.2%** of the boys knew that menstruation is natural which changed to **97.8%** after completing the workshop.





Similarly, **88.4%** of boys said that after the workshop, they changed their behavior in school.

82.6% of boys said that after the workshop, they changed their behavior at home.



C. SNEH PROGRAM - FOR MARRIED AND OUT OF SCHOOLGIRLS AND YOUNG MOTHERS

Sneh program trains married and out-of-school girls and pregnant and young mothers aged 14-24 on hygiene, maternal and infant health, family planning, mental wellbeing, communication and negotiation skills, and financial literacy. The tailor-made program was introduced in 2019, and this year we conducted eight workshops in four communities of Panchkhal Rural Municipality. Due to COVID-19, the workshop was conducted limiting the number of participants and following the COVID-19 guidelines. 100 married and out-of-school girls and young mothers completed the 15-day workshop this year.



SNEH PROGRAM - FOR MARRIED AND OUT OF SCHOOLGIRLS AND YOUNG MOTHERS

interesting. In our community young mothers have so many household chores to do, they don't have enough time to take care of themselves or their children. After the session about needs and desires, I have planned to save money for the future because I learned that need are important to fulfill than desires in the Sneh workshop"

Srijana Rasaili, 21, mother of 8 months child Panchkhal Municipality, Kayrepalanchowk

I liked the topic of women's empowerment very much. In my community, women who do not bear children after some years of marriage have more difficulty because the people in the community put pressure on them to have children. The workshop has changed me because now I can share my problem and fight back if face misbehavior. I liked the topic "Don't forget Yourself" the most.

Rupa Danuwar, 20 years old married woman Panchkhal Municipality, Kavrepalanchowk

MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS

A. WOMEN CIRCLE

From January to August 2020, we met 50 women in small groups inviting women entrepreneurs, non-profit leaders, corporate executives, independent artists, and others. Through a women circle meeting, we wanted to connect with women from diverse fields, learn each other's work and prospect the idea of coaching our mentors, Girls Advisory Board, Girls Support Committee members through various sets of skills. The sense of bonding and interest in collaboration expressed by the women leaders led us to commission our work to women, hiring women consultants, and choosing businesses led by women.



B. SCHOOL MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

In January 2020, we launched the School Mentorship Program, a weeklong mentoring program in schools of Kathmandu valley, both private and government, for children aged 12-16. The idea of the School Mentorship Program emerged after numerous media reports on sexual harassment and abuses at the schools of Kathmandu valley. We believe that adolescents need to stand up and speak out for themselves. Our pilot program aimed to equip them with skills and voice by educating, encouraging, and engaging the young through an activity-based curriculum led by mentors. In coordination with schools, mentors are assigned to guide the students in topics that can be confronted at home or schools like bullying, domestic violence, sexual abuse, social media, and skills that are vital to them like life skills, and future-planning. Along with the curriculum, the students were also provided with a guidebook on issues such as sexual harassment, which are not discussed openly.







(333 boys 355 girls) completed a week-long workshop.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS

SCHOOL MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

The topics we shared are less prioritized in the school curriculum and children have only vague knowledge. With our sessions being more engaging through group work and fun activities, they enjoyed and learned. I am glad that I said yes to this opportunity. Being a part of this program has made me feel more confident to communicate well.

Puja Panta, 26 Mentor, School Mentorshin Progra



MENSTRUAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE

A. WORKSHOP ON MENSTRUAL CYCLE IN HELAMBU

A one-day workshop on the menstrual cycle was conducted for 91 Her Turn graduates of grade 6-10 in collaboration with Social Change Maker and Innovator (SOCHAI) at Bhumeshowori Secondary School, Helambu. The Red Cycle bracelet was also distributed to the participants which helped young girls to be aware of the different phases of menstruation and prepare them for their upcoming cycle.



MENSTRUAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE

B. MENSTRUAL COMIC BOOK

Hamro Palo published a Menstrual Comic Book based on the stories of Her Turn Participants. The book was published to create awareness on menstrual hygiene among the participants of the Her Turn Education and Empowerment Program. The book has various cartoon characters the girls can identify with who talk about different topics like what is menstruation and how to maintain hygiene during this time. The comic book also includes the topic to end discrimination against girls during menstruation. The comic book was distributed to 18 schools this year.



A. FOOD RELIEF IN KAVRE AND SINDHUPALCHOWK

When the pandemic hit Nepal, it affected the most vulnerable groups. Realizing this, Hamro Palo distributed nutritional food and sanitary materials to 128 pregnant and new mothers from Danuwar and Dalit minorities from Panchkhal-12, Kavre on 15 July 2020. Similarly, food relief was also distributed to 100 households of the Dalit community residing near Kalika Devi Secondary School, Sindhupalchowk.



FOOD RELIEF IN KAVRE AND SINDHUPALCHOWK

I live in a joint family where there are 20 members in their family. Before lockdown, most of the family members used to live in Kathmandu and earn, but with the lockdown and unavailability of work, all the family members came back to the village and nobody is earning. With lack of income, it is difficult for us to manage our daily expenses."

Chautara Sangachowkgadi Municipality, Sindhupalchowk

I live in a joint family with seven members. My husband is a blacksmith and the only person earning in my family. Due to the nationwide lockdown, he does not have any work and we are facing financial problems.

Maya Gajamer, 28 Chautara Sangachowkgadi Municip

B. FEED THE HUNGRY

Feed the Hungry Nepal is a non-profit organization working to eradicate hunger. We wanted to help them in their endeavors during the lockdown to support meals for families who are in a difficult situation and donated NRS 15,000 in August. With the help of Feed the Hungry Nepal, we could reach 8 locations in Kathmandu Valley and distribute 33 ration kits.



C. PARTNERSHIP WITH HEALTH INSTITUTION

One of our COVID-19 response initiatives is to equip health institutions in rural villages and capacitate FCHVs (Female Community Health Volunteers) so that they can support pregnant and new mothers to have easy access to health services. In the first week of October, we provided equipment and medicines to five health posts in Chautara Sangachokgadi Municipality of Sindhupalchowk district and held meetings with the health post-in-charge and ward offices. For the next few months, FCHVs will reach women in their communities to collect data of pregnant and new mothers so that Hamro Palo can provide the support as per their need.



D. WORKSHOP WITH FCHV (FEMALE COMMUNITY HEALTH VOLUNTEERS)

On 27 December, we conducted a maternal health and safety awareness workshop with FCHV of Pipaldanda, Chautara, Sangachowkgadi. The FCHV plays a vital role to inform, educate and collect data from local women for the health post. We also provided materials and equipment as requested by the health post to enhance the services in general but more importantly for pregnant and new mothers.



A. WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

Every year, 10 September is marked as suicide prevention day and the month of September is dedicated to suicide prevention. This year, Hamro Palo celebrated the survivors by organizing a photo campaign where the participants held a paper and filled in the statement: "I want to live because". We got responses from different parts of Nepal sharing their reasons for life. We wanted to create awareness on suicide by letting people know that life is beautiful and to be celebrated instead of ending it.



B. TEENAGE MENTAL HEALTH WORKSHOP

To address the growing mental health issues among teenagers, on 11 October 2020, we introduced a teenage mental health workshop for teenage girls. 19 teenager girls joined the workshop that focused on understanding common teenage mental health issues, psychosocial factors that may contribute to mental illness, such as abuse and neglect, sexual problems, media (social media, other media), peer pressure, bullying, identity development, family relationships, and techniques to identify if someone has mental health issues and how to talk and manage someone with mental illness and when to seek help. Participants asked different questions about how to manage the mental illness and some of them want more counseling. Some of the participants shared their experience of family pressure as psychosocial factors that may have affected their mental health.

C. WOMEN CIRCLE MENTAL WELLBEING

In September, we conducted a mental wellbeing event for our Women Circle members. We realized the importance of wellbeing, especially during the pandemic, and wanted to create a safe space to share our personal/professional aspirations/experiences and a closed circle to support each other The session was led by our Women Circle member Ms. Punjita Pradhan, a psychological counselor, and wellness enthusiast.

The fortnightly session was divided into four parts. The sessions dealt with topics of breathing technique, rational and irrational beliefs, resilience measurement, strength identification, and on the last day, the participants set a goal for the next five years to take action for the habits they wanted to adopt.



GIRLS IN SPORTS: CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP

We have had a first-hand experience that sports can empower girls when we supported girls from Sindhupalchowk in 2019 to play volleyball and they won the match. Therefore, we wanted to organize a capacity-building program for girls in sports. In the first part, "Girls in Sport", we chose 12 girls through application acing at their respective sports to prepare them for the future with skills like public speaking, mindfulness and well-being, social media branding, and outdoor menstrual health. The workshop was conducted from 4-9 October 2020.

Radhika Shakya, a participant of the program shared,

A few months back, I was approached for an interview. I was given the questions before the interview and I surfed YouTube to watch how others gave an interview. Unfortunately, I forgot everything on the day of the interview. After this session, I feel you should be yourself while giving an interview or during public speaking.

FUTSAL EVENT

Since the workshop was successful and effective, we wanted to engage the participants and organized a 3-day futsal event for girls and young women who wanted to learn and gain skills to participate in sports. Most of the girls were first-time players and they have been encouraged to continue playing futsal.

Pally Chaudhary, 23 years old, shared,

of sports or outdoor activities. I was always keen about sports and wanted to be part of an athletic team but for futsal, we need a team and platform so I was happy to see how Hamro Palo opened this platform for all females. This is my first time and the coach really helped us. I was able to build friendly relationships with the participants and we plan to continue playing futsal in the future also.

GIRLS IN SPORTS: CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP

FUTSAL EVENT







CLIMB WITH PANCHA

On 28 December, Pancha Maya Tamang, a 20-year national sports climber, and Hamro Palo's executive board member led a one-day climbing workshop with six young girls. Pancha is an inspiring young climber and wants to see more female climbers. We also wanted to provide this opportunity to young girls to learn from Pancha and get inspiration from her story. For all the participants it was the first experience of wall climbing. After completing the training, they are motivated to practice climbing and Pancha Maya is willing to train them further.

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



A. PANEL DISCUSSION ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

On 25 November, the first day of 16 days of activism, Hamro Palo organized a panel discussion on gender-based violence. The discussion aimed to bring our attention to the different acts of violence that have been increasing during the pandemic. Speakers from diverse fields shared different challenges and scenarios in their areas of work. The discussion highlighted current needs and how can we contribute and support the people around us to eradicate gender-based violence.

B. HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL | ADDRESS INEQUALITIES TO RECOVER FROM THE CRISIS"

On the occasion of Human Rights Day 2020, 10 December, Hamro Palo organized a panel discussion, "Human Rights for All | Address inequalities to recover from the crisis". We were joined by 3 speakers from the field of health, education, and child rights. The panel discussion was held on ZOOM and linked to Hamro Palo's official page with a live broadcast.



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL

"My voice, our equal future"

On 11 October, the International Day of the Girl, Hamro Palo celebrated adolescent girls and their - power, courage, and leadership. Hamro Palo has been championing girls' education and empowerment since 2012 through our flagship program - HER TURN. While we celebrate girls' leadership every day, we wanted to make the international girls' day more special. This year, under the theme, "My voice, our equal future", we wanted to amplify girls' voices and leadership through various initiatives.

We celebrated the International Day of the Girl through Her Turn Leadership Award, Art Submission, and Day of the Girl Message. We organized an art competition for girls aged 12-18 years on the theme "COVID-19 and its effect on Nepali girls' lives". The three best art were selected by a panel of judges and given a cash prize of NPR 2000 each, a creative workshop with experts, and gifts from Nepali brands.

Similarly, we made a collective video dedicated to girls featuring individuals from different professional fields. Hon. Minister shared,

On the occasion of International Day of the Girl, I would like to offer my best wishes to all the young and adolescent girls. The Nepal Government is committed to ending gender inequality, abuse, and violence inflicted upon girls. It is the responsibility of the government to ensure education, health, nutrition.

HER TURN LEADERSHIP AWARD

We introduced the Her Turn Leadership award to celebrate girls who have demonstrated exceptional leadership and are making remarkable contributions in their communities. Girls aged 12-18 could either apply themselves or someone could nominate them. In the inaugural year, we awarded five young girls whose work not only inspired us but also made us hopeful for a better future for the girls.



66 Susmita Bhandari, a 17-year-old from Nawalpur is a Her Turn Award Winner. She has been working for child rights for the past five years. She says, "We as young girls do not know the potential we have. So to discover and understand that talent, know how to solve the existing problems among girls in society, the first thing I have learned is that we have to organize a Children's Club."

HER TURN LEADERSHIP AWARD

MEET THE WINNERS

KRIPA KARUNA POKHAREL (16), SUNSARI DISTRICT:



She is trying to change gender stereotypes through sports and is involved with different social organizations.

I have been actively involved in various leadership roles in my community and give various leadership training to girls in self-defense, socialization, moral training, and gender issues.

AMRITA KUSWAR (17), SARLAHI DISTRICT:

She is taking the initiative to run literacy classes for women in her community.



I come from a marginalized community where girls are deprived of education. Hence, I am contributing to my community through education. I am an Adult Literacy Teacher of Saahasi Project where I teach a group of 27 women to help them read and write.





SANSKRITI PHUYAL(16), KATHMANDU DISTRICT:

She is empowering girls through sports and has plans to work with young girls in the future.



After executing my project "Sports for Equality" in 2017, I have noticed my own leadership growth. I want to run a project in the Sports field for young girls and help them lead.

SHITAL B.K(14), ACHHAM DISTRICT:

She initiated the movement against child marriage and Chhupadi (an extreme version of menstrual restrictions in the form of isolating menstruating women and girls in a separate hut) in her community.



In my 2 years of activism, I've welcomed girls to take initiative in my school and led awareness campaigns for reusable cotton sanitary pad and led Chhaupadi free movement where almost 95% of Chhaupadi goths (hut) was dismantled with the help of district police and local government of Achham.





SUSHMITA BHANDARI (17), NAWALPUR DISTRICT:

She has been working in the sector of child development for 5 years through local child clubs.

66 After executing my project "Sports for Equality" in 2017, I have noticed my own leadership growth. I want to run a project in the Sports field for young girls and help them lead.

RADIO AND DIGITAL PLATFORM

A. RADIO PROGRAM: PARIWARTAN KA SWORHARU

This year, Hamro Palo partnered with a local radio station Radio Sindhu 105 Mhz and Sindhu Fm 102.8 Mhz and produce programs for adolescents in rural villages. Through the radio program, we wanted to emphasize the issues affecting adolescents such as early marriage, sexual harassment, domestic violence, and migration. It would also encourage girl-led leadership in the community, promote good work of community schools, highlight adolescents' leadership in their schools and communities, and give a platform to adolescents to share their experiences and future plans. Apart from that, it is an opportunity for students from different schools to interact with each other and focus on solutions to local problems highlighting youth leadership.

The radio program had 10 episodes with 10 different topics for each week, where our Her Turn graduates from Sindhupalchowk and other young girls and boys had an opportunity to voice their opinion on the live local radio.

B. HAMRO PALO WEBINAR FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS

Since 2016, we have been inviting our workshop participants and local stakeholders to Annual Conferences. These events are designed to celebrate their local leadership and bring the attention of various stakeholders to pertaining issues in their schools and communities, such as sexual and gender-based violence, menstrual health, and hygiene, financial literacy, early and child marriage. Then we also discussed possible solutions to the issues identified by girls/adolescents.

This year, however, due to the pandemic, we organized a webinar from 4-6 November for girls aged 16-18 years to learn, understand, share, and address issues and challenges experienced by the girls during this global pandemic. The webinar was designed based on the inputs given by adolescents to address the issues that they are going through. The workshop was divided into three days.



RADIO AND DIGITAL PLATFORM

The first day of the webinar was focused on Mental well-being during this pandemic: Problems faced and how to solve them, followed by Safe Digital Space and Women in Technology on the second day, and Gender Equality: How girls/women are breaking the stereotype on the final day.

The speakers were experts from various fields and presented insightful ideas. Through online medium, we were able to reach more than 1000 people from all over Nepal.

C. DIGITAL ADVOCACY

We have dedicated our work to adolescent girls and know the pandemic has brought uncertainty and a difficult time for them. Therefore, in August, we initiated a digital fellowship for Nepali women up to 35 years old-bloggers, vloggers, journalists, writers, filmmakers, and artists. This was our digital initiative to highlight the lives of adolescent girls in various parts of Nepal who want to advocate at the comfort and safety of their homes.

We selected five projects under the fellowship and provided them grants. The select projects highlighted sexual violence through art, problems of the adolescents through the podcast, sex education to adolescents through various sessions, mental health issues through webinars and blogs, and self-expression for young girls through mentorship. Over the course of three months, all projects advocated their issues using digital platforms and engaging both young men and women. We believe in girl-led leadership and wanted to provide this opportunity to highlight adolescent girls' issues.



RADIO AND DIGITAL PLATFORM

D. STAND UP FOR HUMAN RIGHTS SYMPOSIUM

On December 10th, to mark Human Rights Day, Under UN Human Rights' generic call to action "Stand Up for Human Rights", we invited Nepali young women aged 20-28 to join us in our 3-day online symposium. The symposium reflected Nepal's human rights in general but focused on women's and girls' rights, especially during the COVID-19 situation. We were joined by experts from the economic sector, women's rights, and youth activists. Participants were encouraged to think about some pertinent issues they wanted to address through community projects. They were guided to put their ideas into action making it their passion project. We committed to providing a seed funding grant to support 2 projects.

CHALLENGES AND LESSON LEARNED:

NATIONWIDE LOCKDOWN:

With the nationwide lockdown from 24 March 2020 due to the COVID-19 crisis, all our activities were affected. For the month of April and May, we completely closed our office. Since June, we began to work from home and started reaching out to the adolescents, schools, and communities to learn the ground reality and prepare for COVID-19 response initiatives. This year we were not able to fully operate our office until toward the end of 2020.



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION:

All Hamro Palo staff worked from home on alternate days due to partial lockdown and shut down of public vehicles for the commute. We continued the project activities other than her Turn and His Chance programming on digital platforms.



PROGRAM IMPROVISATION:

We had to improvise many of our activities in order to continue working with the girls maintaining safety protocols of our own staff and the community that we work with. For instance: we did our Girls in sports and Annual Girls conference on a digital platform. We had to revise our program participants' intake as well as curriculum.



DIGITAL DIVIDE IN RURAL COMMUNITY:

We also looked into the possibility of distance learning and conducting our workshops but the team concluded that it will not be effective because many students also told us they do not have the financial capability to use the internet via data as there is no wifi available in the village. Further, many students have only one smartphone in their households, and in most cases, girls did not have access.



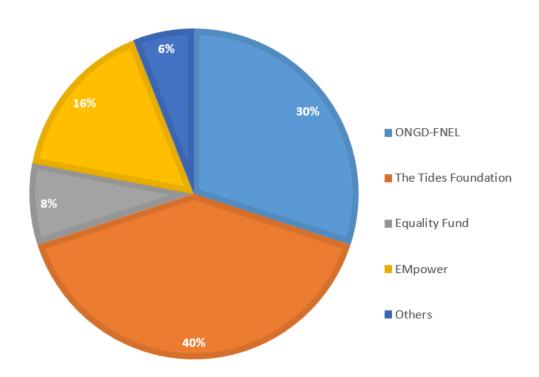
SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAM REMAINED INTACT:

We understand the significance and value of our school-based programs - Her Turn and His Chance education and empowerment programs and hence kept it as it is for the adolescents and when the situation was better we began our collaboration with schools.



FINANCE

In 2020, our annual turnover was NPR 14,303,493 (USD 122,503). This funding was received from the following donors: ONGD – FNEL, Equality Fund, EMpower, The Tides Foundation, and Stars Foundation. We are grateful to our donors and supporters, without whom our work would be impossible. Please see the breakdown below:



667 Adolescent Girls



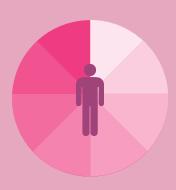
Adolescent Boys



Married, out of school girls and new mothers



Direct Beneficiaries



Indirect Beneficiaries



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