



Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	2
Executive Summary	2
Introduction	3
Letter from our Executive Director	2
Year 2018 in Nepal	3
Core Programs	4
Her Turn	4
His Chance	5
Mentorship Program	6
New Developments	7
Scholarships	7
Girls who have undergone early marriage	7
Expanding our work to Province 2	8
Working with new local governments to improve the lives of girls and boys	9
Advocacy	10
National Conference	10
Create, Connect and Share Respect – Online Safety	10
Media and Social Media	10
Organizational Development	12
Girls' Advisory Committee	12

New Board Members

12

Finances

13

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank all our friends, donors, and supporters who made our work possible in 2018. Big thank you to People in Need, The Umbrella Foundation, Cooperation Circle, Match Fund, With and For Girls Award Collective for their ongoing support. We also want to acknowledge the amazing girls, boys, young women and men who have worked with us this year to better their schools and communities. We are lucky to know and work with so many inspiring young advocates for change and we hope we will expand this work further in 2019.

Executive summary

The year 2018 was significantly smaller in terms of continuing our core programming (Her Turn and His Chance) but was important in that we expanded our work with local governments. We have connected the girls and boys we have worked with in the past years to the newly elected local government officials, to increase accountability and create long lasting links between them that result in girls' and boys' advocacy on local level.

We have started working with girls who are perhaps the most marginalized – those who've already undergone an early marriage. In the earthquake affected district of Sindhupalchok we are beginning to work with adolescent mothers with the aim of increasing their knowledge and skills that pertain to their health, safety, communication skills, and mental health. While we know this might be one of the most hard to reach groups – they sometimes face mobility restrictions and their needs are often not prioritized – we think in our context, with more than 1/3 of Nepali girls married by the time they turn 18, it is an important and overlooked group. We are ready to learn what they need and want, and what we can do to meet those needs.

We also saw some changes in governing structures – we have established an eight-member Girls Advisory Board, who will advise us on programming and strategy development. We are excited to welcome these young active advocates and looking forward to having a strong representations of girls we work with in our governance structure. We hope this will ensure our accountability first and foremost to the heart of our organization – to the girls' themselves.

We have also welcomed several new Board members.

Because of the lower turnover this year, the organization was able to invest in the growth and development of our system to improve the inclusion of girls within the organizations' programming and overall strategy and the protection of the girls and boys we work with. Over the course of the year, we have made significant improvements to our safeguarding systems in order to ensure our organization is compliant with the highest child protection and safeguarding standards.

Her Turn workshop is very inspiring, it encouraged me to help and support others. I am confident and able to say 'no' where necessary. Girls in my school are also very active after attending this workshop.
Her Turn participant

Introduction

Letter from our Executive Director Anita Thapa

Like last year, 2018 remained an engaging year for us. While we continued our work with the girls with Her Turn programming and mentorship, we went back to the schools from early February, where we did Her Turn programs with the girls in between 2015 and 2017. Based on the feedback from the girls and interest shown by the boys, we conducted His Chance programs - similar to Her Turn – in schools, trying to balance the program intervention.

Also, we travelled to Jumla, a remote district in Mid-West Nepal, where we delivered our Her Turn program to 48 girls back in 2016. Although there were hundreds of girls in school who wanted to be a



part of Her Turn, we were not able to accommodate all of them due to limited resources. From next year, we will be working in Provinces 2, 3 and 6 and want to deepen our work in Jumla in province 3. Meeting with the girls and their good work in fight against menstrual restrictions and social taboos has inspired us and we look forward to working with these local girl champions.

One of our goals is to hone the leadership capabilities of the girls who would lead Hamro Palo in various capacities such as local trainers, mentors, advisory board president, and eventually Hamro Palo's executive board in the central office. Hence, we intensively worked with the Girls Support Committees and formed 7 members Girls Advisory Board this year, which we plan to expand to 15 members in 2019.

Safeguarding and Child Protection is the core value and practice of Hamro Palo and we spent a lot of time in developing safeguarding policies and updated our existing child protection policy so that we put the protection and safety of the children in the center of our work. Further, I was awarded Global Change Leaders fellowship by Saint Francis Xavier University's Coady International Institute in Nova Scotia, Canada as one of the 25 young women from the globe. It was an incredible platform to share HP's work in the global forum and also reflect, learn and plan Hamro Palo's upcoming strategy and programs.

This year, we did a lot of preparatory work for our five years long programs and advocacy work and we will be working in the hills, mountains and now in Terai (southern plain) and will focus our work with married and out of school girls along with our other programs.

On behalf of entire HP family, I would like to thank all the girls and the boys, schools, families and the communities that we collaborated and learned from and also many thanks to all the funding organizations (People in Need, The Umbrella Foundation, Cooperation Circle, Match Fund, With and For Girls Award Collective), allies and government and non-government organizations for their continued support.

Anita Thapa
Executive Director
Hamro Palo

Year 2018 in Nepal

In 2018, Nepal witnessed the first time in two decades its new federal and local governments were fully elected and in operation. While no doubt these new bodies are facing a lot of challenges, we also saw this new development as an opportunity to link adolescent girls and boys with newly elected officials. This work aimed at enhancing accountability, engaging the newly elected officials to interact with adolescent girls and boys, and providing platform for the adolescents to advocate for various issues affecting them, such as health care, education, and others.

Another important development in Nepal in 2018 was the introduction of a new legislation that penalizes people who force women to practice chhaupadi – one of the most severe form of menstrual restrictions. Chhaupadi is prevalent in the Mid-Western and Far-Western regions of Nepal. Women and girls who practice it spend days and nights during their periods in separate sheds. Over the last several years there were several highly publicized cases of women who have



died in these sheds from suffocation, snake bites, or other reasons. The practiced was outlawed by the Supreme Court back in 2005, but only recently the penalties were introduced, and the new law went into effect in August 2018. While we know that it will take more than changes in legislation to abandon this harmful and sometimes deadly practice, we welcome this development as a first step in creating safe environments for women and girls in these regions.

Core Programs

Her Turn

In 2018, we focused more on His Chance programming in order to cover boys who had not been reached under the previous year of funding. Regardless, 211 girls participated in Her Turn programming this year, with another 800 already confirmed to be targeted under our upcoming program in Central Terai in 2019. During the 24-day workshops, the girls, most between the ages 12 and 16, learned about health issues (nutrition, safe water handling, puberty, menstrual hygiene management), safety issues (bullying, domestic violence, human trafficking, early marriage, sexual harassment) and leadership skills development (public speaking, confidence building, problem solving). Each group of the participants of Her Turn workshops also met a local female leader – a member of a women's network, a social worker or an activist. The workshops were delivered by trained young local women from the same communities, who speak the participants' mother tongues. Each workshop was concluded with a Community Ceremony prepared and conducted by the participants. They invited their parents, community leaders and members, and teachers. They used the events as advocacy platforms to engage the guests in discussions about the subjects of the workshop. At the Community Ceremonies, the girls performed self composed poems, songs, dances, dramas, and speeches. Each ceremony was

Learning about legal punishment for social issues like early marriage, human trafficking, domestic violence and having [service providers'] contact information was the most helpful part of the workshop. Because of this information, now I feel more aware on who to contact and how.

Her Turn Participant

different as each was designed and planned by the girls and reflected their own priorities in their community.

Some achievements from our pre and post evaluation of the program from this year included:

- 73% more of the girls think that women should be leaders in their community
- 34% fewer girls believe that husbands should be the one to make important family decisions
- 10% fewer girls think that when a girl is harassed it is her fault
- 31% more girls think that menstruation is a natural phenomenon.



Additionally, because of Her Turn program's expansion since its inception, we decided that the program methodology, including the curriculum, will be released as an independent toolkit for other practitioners working on social norms and girl empowerment programs. The toolkit is planned to be released in 2019 and will be disseminated through a launch event and available online.



His Chance

We started our adolescent boys' program His Chance in 2017, with promising results. In 2018, we have worked with 461 boys aged 12-16. The boys are from communities where we delivered Her Turn workshops in the past, so it was a chance for them to "catch up" with the girls – a development very much welcome by the former Her Turn participants. In fact, it was very often the girls we've worked with in the past who advocated to include their male peers in our programming, arguing that they also have the right to know things, and need to learn about harmful effects of gender discrimination.

His Chance is similar to Her Turn, though gender differences are taken into account. The boys' workshop is also 24 days long and covers health and safety issues, including, for example, menstrual hygiene. It is rooted in gender transformative approach that encourages boys to critically reflect on the social norms and values of their community and how they affect themselves, girls, women and men differently. It is delivered by trained young local men and also concludes with Community Ceremonies, planned and organized jointly with the girls. While our main focus are adolescent girls, through participating in His Chance workshops, many boys become girls' allies and strong advocates for their rights.

Some achievements from our pre and post evaluation of the program from this year included:

- 49% fewer boys think a girl is "polluted when she has her period"
- 23% fewer boy participants think that when a girl is harassed it is her fault
- 15% fewer boys think that boys and girls from different castes

Before, it used to be a dilemma, where to report case or ask for help. But now that HP has connected us with Rural Municipality and Justice Center, it has been convenient to access justice. With the help of ward and the Rural Municipality office girls don't miss school anymore during their periods.

Social Mobilizer, Jugal

should not be friends

- 22% more boy disagree that husbands should be the ones to make important family decisions.

We also decided to make His Chance curriculum and method – developed jointly with People in Need – public to share learnings and approaches with other organizations working on engaging men and boys in the important work towards gender equity. The release date is not set and will likely follow other upcoming planned developments with programming, including the release of the Her Turn toolkit and a unified Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning framework.



Mentorship Program

Starting in 2014, we introduced our mentorship program. Our Social Mobilizers work as mentors who serve as a long lasting link and provide long-term support to the girls we work with, and are one of the most important elements of our programs. Mentors are selected from the most successful local trainers and receive additional training

where they learn about their roles, resources available to adolescents at risk, and how to access them. Each of them works with two to four Girl Support Committees (GSC) formed during the workshops. The mentors meet with the Committees once a month or more frequently if needed. Together they solve problems that arise in their schools and communities that typically relate to health, safety, and access to education. For example the GSCs and mentors speak with families of children who had dropped out of school and advocate for them to go back to school. In a number of cases, the mentors refer girls and boys to other service providers. It is important to note that the mentors face a number of difficulties in their work when they challenge harmful traditions; they, together with Girl Support Committees, are at the front lines of social transformation.

In 2018, we had three meetings and trainings with the Social Mobilizers. On 5-6th of February, we held an orientation with five Social Mobilizers at our office in Kathmandu. Same month, we had a consultation for Social Mobilizers in five rural Municipalities: Helambu, Indrawati, Panchpokhari, Bhotekoshi, and Jugal. On April 4th, we held a day long Response Mechanism meeting in Melamchi, Sindhupalchok district. Five of our Social Mobilizers also participated in our annual national conference in August, see below, page 10.

On top of that, the Social Mobilizers held 69 meetings with a total of 820 girls and 201 boys from 11 schools in five Rural Municipalities.

There are many outstanding examples of their work. One is that of a Social Mobilizer from Sindhupalchok who conducted a door to door survey to collect data

on students who have dropped out of school. She found 15 girls and boys, who dropped out mainly because of economic conditions of their families, and the need for the children to stay at home and help with

Working as a Social Mobilizer was both a challenge and an opportunity for me. My greatest learning was that every problem has a solution; we need to look for it and pick the best solution. I received support from local organizations, women's group, and police. When budget was allocated for women, we asked for a trainer to deliver a women's literacy course.
Srijana Tamang, Social Mobilizer, Jugal

household chores and in some cases, to bring income to the family. She then discussed the issue with their parents and encouraged them to send the children to school. She managed to bring five of those children back to school.

In another prominent example, the Social Mobilizer learned about a girl and boy who married early. Jointly with the ward President she visited the boy's parents and discussed the issue of the girl dropping out of school after the early marriage. Following the discussion, they decided that the girl will stay in her natal home and will continue her studies in grade 10. While immediate prevention of early marriages is often complicated and difficult, the social Mobilizers try to minimize their negative effects – this girl will now have some extra years of education, which in turn will lead to better opportunities in her future.

In His Chance empowerment workshop I not only got to learn about the adolescence of boys but of girls too. Now I understand that menstruation among girls is a natural thing, like wet dreams experienced by boys. I do not want my sisters to follow any menstrual restrictions.

His Chance Participant

New Developments

Scholarships

In 2018, we provided scholarships to 20 adolescents, (16 girls and 4 boys) who would have otherwise dropped out of school. The scholarship not only helped them stay in school but also take part in our other programs such as meetings with local government, theater workshops, and adolescents' conference.

Girls who have undergone early marriage

Married adolescents are a largely under-served group with unique needs. They are also hard to reach: they typically drop out of school, are limited in movement outside the home by families, and are often expected to bear children as soon as they get married. This pressure exposes them to the risk of health complications associated with early pregnancy and childbirth, and increased likelihood of mental health concerns such as postpartum depression. Adolescent pregnancy itself

is a risk factor for mental health disorders, as are unsupportive or polygamous relationships, poverty, experiencing violence, and holding low social status in families. Young wives in Nepal typically have low social status in their new in-laws' families, resulting in limited interactions with friends and access to peer support, higher probability of domestic and sexual violence, and lack of control over their reproductive choices and other important life decisions.

Because married adolescent girls are perceived to be vulnerable to sexual and gender based violence, some families and communities restrict their mobility outside the house out of concern for their safety and to prevent them from "dishonouring" their families. Not attending school nor having a job outside of home means adolescent girls are fully financially dependent on their husband's families and are disconnected from the support of peer networks.

Instead, married adolescents have a range of unpaid domestic responsibilities socially perceived as female tasks, such as cooking,



laundry, washing dishes, cleaning, fetching water, and care of the children and the elderly. The perception that this does not constitute work contributes to the low value families place on girls' education, as education is considered unnecessary for household work. Daughters-in-law are therefore perceived as free domestic labourers, whose role is to conduct all the menial domestic chores and support their mothers-in-law.

What is the Central Terai?

The Central Terai, which is now a part of Province 2 in Nepal, is a part of the Gangetic plain of South Asia – meaning unlike our other areas where we work, there are no hills or mountains! People in the Central Terai come from different ethnic groups and speak different mother tongues than the groups that we have worked with in the past. The Terai is the most densely populated part of Nepal and unfortunately, also where poverty is the most severe and most concentrated. This has a disproportionate impact on the life chances of many girls, and the region has a high prevalence of harmful practices, such as dowry and early marriage, which prevent girls from obtaining an education and a better life.

With the aim of improving emotional well being of adolescent mothers, at the end of 2018 we started working in the earthquake affected Sindhupalchok district in a project Hello Saathi (Hello Friend). Jointly with People in Need, we will deliver custom tailored workshops that will cover similar topics to Her Turn, but will additionally include unique needs of adolescent mothers, such as family planning and communication and negotiations techniques. Additionally, the participants will receive text and voice messages through Interactive Voice Response (IVR). This messaging will present simple stress reduction techniques, basics of maternal and infant health, and information about available government programs and resources. At the end of the project – in the fall of 2019 – we will evaluate whether the workshops and messages were effective in improving emotional well being and what were the differences between the two approaches.



Expanding our work to Province 2

Adolescent girls in Central Terai – lowland region in the south of Nepal – face a number of barriers in their access to education. In the Central Terai, the rate of adolescent marriages is the highest (23%) of any region (65.8% for women aged 20-49)¹. Enrollment rates of girl students are the lowest of any region in Nepal at primary and secondary levels, as are the net attendance rates of girls in primary education. Girls' high dropout rates result in limited access to information and peer support networks – a major barrier to psycho-socially healthy and safe lives.

Under our upcoming program, starting in 2019, we will be working in the Central Terai for the next five years, addressing the needs of adolescent girls, boys, and married girls across different local

¹ Nepal Living Standards Survey 2010/11. Statistical Report Volume One, 2011, Central Bureau Of Statistics, National Planning Commission Secretariat, Government of Nepal

governments through both our core Her Turn and His Chance programs and new life-skill development programming for the married out of school adolescent girls. Stay tuned for more in our 2019 annual report.



Working with new local governments to improve the lives of girls and boys

The new federal system in Nepal has a tremendous opportunity to positively improve the lives of girls and boys through better and more accountable services, such as healthcare and education. Local representatives will be directly administering local budgets and now have a responsibility for ensuring schools provide quality education in safe environments.

In order to explore the opportunities of working with the local representatives, we partnered with People in Need on a project to link Her Turn and His Chance participants with their newly elected local representatives and improve the government's response and

prevention of school related sexual and gender based violence. HP's Girls Support Committee and School Support Committees from different schools in Sindhupalchok district directly engaged in dialogues and presented their concerns, ideas, and recommendations to five Rural Municipalities: Helambu, Indrawati, Panchpokhari, Bhotekoshi and Jugal. These dialogues were facilitated by our Social Mobilizers and involved other relevant local stakeholders, such as Parent Teacher Associations, School Management Committees, Mothers' Groups, or Gender Based Violence Watch Groups. School related harassment and bullying is sadly prevalent in Nepal² and there are very few mechanisms that allow for the enforcement, prevention, and response to the violence that occurs in many schools. This project was an attempt to improve child protection systems in a particular municipality. Some of the outcomes of these discussions included:

Her Turn workshop gave us moral knowledge which was beyond our school curriculum. Because of the meeting with Rural Municipality, now that we have support of Vice-President of Jugal Rural Municipality, we expect to get her help whenever in need.
Student, Shree Rameshwor Sec School, Jugal

- Ban on the sale of alcohol and cigarettes within 100 m of school surroundings to help create a safe and healthy school environment – Jugal Rural Municipality
- Increased demand to consult with students and teachers when education budgets are allocated and planned – Helambu Rural Municipality
- Creation of school-based clubs to identify and collect data on early drop outs. Rural Municipality agreed to support children who have lost a parent or both parents through primary and secondary education – Indrawati Rural Municipality

² Are Schools Safe And Equal Places For Girls And Boys In Asia? Research Findings on School-Related Gender-Based Violence. Plan International, International Center for Research on Women. 2015

- Rural Municipality has prepared guidelines for schools, which will be circulated in every school of the Municipality. The guidelines ensure students' safety, quality education and teachers' responsibilities – Jugal Rural Municipality

Advocacy

We continued to advocate for the needs of girls and boys through several of our programs and as an organization. We believe that we have an obligation to share and promote the voices of the girls and boys that we work with in order to ensure they live healthy and safe lives. Some of the advocacy efforts were described in the section "Working with new local governments to improve the lives of girls and boys" above.

National Conference

On August 9-10th in Kavre, Banepa district, we organized our third national conference with the theme of "*Empowering Adolescents for Empowered Society*". The main objective of the event was to share experiences of Her Turn and His Chance participants and to think about way forward. Participants from seven Rural Municipalities and two Municipalities of Sindhupalchok district attended the event. The participants included 42 girls from Girl Support Committees, 24 boys from the different School Support Committees, 13 principals and teachers, three local government representatives, and five Social Mobilizers working on the mentorship program.

Besides discussing everyday challenges they experience as adolescents in their villages and efforts to tackle discriminatory social norms, our participants also learned about financial literacy, made environmentally friendly sanitary napkins, attended Knowledge Cafe with nine young achievers from diverse fields and helped us design our

We have received huge support from our Rural Municipality. During a meeting with the Rural Municipality, we shared about the necessity of bars at school compound. They asked to present a budget for having bars and we did so. Now, the Rural Municipality has promised to do the construction. Girl Support Committee and School Support Committee are also jointly raising awareness through rallies in the community.
School Support Committee member

new upcoming Girls Learning Centers.

Create, Connect and Share Respect – Online Safety

This year we also began promoting online safety and addressing the need to be more aware of digital hygiene and online security concerns. We have seen discussions in the communities on how more and more girls are entering early marriage partially due to increased access to communication technologies. This year we have begun to explore how technology can also be used to promote girls' and boys' health and safety.

On the occasion of the global [Safer Internet Day](#) celebrations on February 5th, 2018, we shared a toolkit for girls and programmers in Nepal to promote better online-safety practices. Online Safety Toolkit was our advocacy project aimed at raising awareness of digital hygiene among young girls and boys. It was conducted in partnership with PIN.

This hands-on toolkit helps to identify and prevent online violence. It is based on research conducted with adolescents interviewed in rural districts in November and December 2017. The toolkit tackles topics such as online resources for learning, social connections, mapping major risks, tools to stay safe and ways to report cases of abuse.

Download the [English version here](#). [The Nepali version is available here](#).

Media and Social Media

Our advocacy work continues on social media – at the end of 2018 we had 1,555 followers on Facebook, over 180 on Instagram and over 700 on Twitter. Follow us too if you haven't yet!

Her Turn empowerment workshop was very contextual especially on issues like early marriage. There are several early married girls in my community so I felt that this workshop came to educate girls about negative impacts of early marriage in terms of health, economy, education, and career.
Her Turn Participant



Mental Health in Nepal

Did you know that mental health is a serious issue in Nepal and depression is the leading cause of death for women of reproductive age? Many services are hard to access in Nepal, but psycho-social services even more so. With as few as 0.22 psychiatrists and 0.06 psychologists for 100,000 people, these services are extremely limited nation-wide. They are practically non-existent in the remote and poorer areas most impacted by the earthquakes. Disasters, through trauma, often have long term negative impacts on mental health, and while there is no concrete data examining the prevalence of mental health issues following the 2015 earthquake, suicide was already a large issue for young women in Nepal.

For the girls and boys we work with, in April and November we have issued 2 paper newsletters in 500 copies each. The newsletters contain news from Girl Support Committees, updates about our work, poems from adolescent girls and boys, and articles written by them. The newsletters were circulated among the girls we have worked with in

the past, Rural Municipalities, and schools.

We also issued 12 online newsletters in English, which provide our supporters with news and updates from the field.

We also had some media appearances. Our Girls Advisory Board's experience of working as grassroots advocates through Girls Support Committee was featured in an online news portal. One of the Board member's poem against sexual violence and rape was also featured (both in Nepali). Our work was also mentioned in English weekly Nepali times, where our Executive Director Anita Thapa talked about menstrual restrictions many girls in Nepal face.



Organizational Development

Girls' Advisory Committee

To increase active participation of adolescent girls in our programs and strategy development, we have established a new Girls Advisory Board. The members are eight girls aged 14-17 with whom we have worked in the past. Through serving on the Board, the girls will develop further their leadership and advocacy skills, and will help us ensure that our current and future work reflects rural girls' true priorities and concerns. We are excited to welcome these young active advocates and looking forward to having a strong representations of girls we work with in our governance structure. We hope this will ensure our accountability first and foremost to the heart of our organization – to the girls' themselves.

After attending His Chance workshop I have experienced change in myself. Before I used to have low confidence in myself and now I respect myself and my capabilities and strengths. Slowly but surely I am growing every day and every moment. I have started to accept changes and new opportunities that help my growth.

His Chance Participant

New Board Members

Our new Board was elected at the 3rd Annual General Assembly held on 6th October 2018. The new board's tenure is for two years and they are all professionals working in the education sector, women and legal issues, adventure sports, and women empowerment. Our current board is comprised of five women and two men.



Finances

Our annual turnover for 2018 was 11,551,099 NPR (105,080 USD). This funding was received from four donors, with all four of those programs concluding in 2018. That year, the volume of programming was considerably less than the previous year. We are planning another large year of upcoming programming in 2019, as several new programs and funds have already been confirmed.

As per Nepali law, we underwent statutory audit in September 2018, with no problems identified.

For an overview, please see the chart below.

Breakdown by Donor

