

Hamro Palo 2019 Annual Report



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Letter from our Executive Director

Gratitude!!

Another incredible year is coming to an end and at Hamro Palo we are thankful to everyone who supported our work, chose to be a part of our movement - girl led leadership, and partnered with us in our various endeavors.

This year is special in so many ways and we are so inspired by the intelligence, courage, and commitment of the girls to make this world a better place for their generation and generations to come. We introduced new program designed to cater to the needs of Married and Out of School girls. Similar to our flagship program, Her Turn, we developed four weeks long workshop for young mothers focusing on their mental health and maternal health. The workshops were first of its kind for the participants as they hadn't received programs designed just for them before.

We are incredibly proud of our Girls Support Committee members who continue to showcase their leadership in dealing with social and gender norms. Around 70 members from various school met this year at the 4th Annual Girl Led Leadership Symposium to learn and share from each other and strengthen their leadership. Some of the members are now contributing their knowledge and expertise through our Girls Advisory Board.

By the end of this year, 6,625 adolescent girls and 1,671 adolescent boys have graduated from Her Turn and His Chance programming that began in 2012 and 2017 respectively. And we hope to reach out to many more adolescents in the coming year.

We are extremely delighted that we introduced sports for girls in schools this year and for the first time they played volleyball in school in their fight against gender based discrimination. You can read more about it in this report. We so look forward to introducing sports for girls in other schools too.

We look forward to taking our girls-centered, women led leadership forward in coming year.

Thank you!

Anita Thapa

Executive Director



Core Programs

Her Turn

Her Turn is our oldest program that has been running continuously since 2012 – initially under auspices of other organizations, and since 2016 by Hamro Palo. It is an education and empowerment program that uses gender transformative approach, for rural adolescent girls aged 12-16. It consists of 4 weeks long workshops, community project led by the participating girls, and a community ceremony also hosted by the participants. The workshops cover health issues, safety issues, and leadership skills development. During the program, the girls elect a Girl Support Committee – and we continue to work with these groups after the workshops end.

Her Turn workshops are delivered by young local women, after they receive training from our Master Trainers. That way we can ensure that the trainers speak the same mother tongues as the participants and are familiar with customs and practices of their communities. It also makes the trainers more relatable role models for the girls.

In 2019, we have worked with 421 girls and 32 trainers. Some of the results of our evaluation below:

- After the workshop, 81% girls said menstruation is a natural process which was an increase by 35%. Before participating, 39% said they don't know whether menstruation is a natural process or not, which decreased to 9% after the workshop.
- The percentage of participants who knew the legal age to get married is minimum 20 has increased from 72% to 89%.
- The percentage of girls who know that domestic violence is illegal has increased to 71%, a 30% growth.

I learned about the workshop last year from teachers in another school and was waiting for Hamro Palo to partner with our school. Over the weeks, I could see changes in the behavior of students as they learned about social skills and leadership. I am glad to see this change and hope they will continue demonstrating such behavior in all spaces.

Sushma Bhandari, Teacher, Yanglakot

His Chance

Her Turn participants we have worked with have since the beginning repeatedly and accurately pointed out that working towards gender equity requires engaging boys and men. Following recommendations from them and good practices in gender transformative programming, in 2017 we started working with adolescent boys.

His Chance workshop has a similar structure to Her Turn. The boys learn and discuss health issues (including menstrual hygiene management), safety issues, leadership skills development, and allyship with girls against violence. At the end they implement a community project and lead a community ceremony, where they highlight the issues they learned and that they find relevant in their community. The workshops are delivered by young men from the same communities as the boys, who complete our training of trainers.

In 2019 we have worked with 352 boys and 36 trainers. Some of the results of our evaluation below:

- Before participating, 33% boys knew that domestic violence is illegal. After the workshop this figure grew to 67%.
- Before the workshops, 44% of boys disagreed that when a girl is harassed it is often her fault; this figure grew to 72% after.

- Before the workshops, 27% of boys knew that menstruation is a natural process. After participating, 68% knew this fact.

Workshops with Girl Support Committees

In September and October, we organized two skills based workshops with 61 Girls Support Committees' members. The topics discussed included: effective communication, advocacy, creative writing, decision making in everyday life and during crisis, community activism, career planning, and interactions with the local government officers.

After the workshops completion, the participants said that they would be implementing the learnings in their homes, schools, and communities. They are also looking forward to leading some of the session in the next Girls Support Committee symposium.

I really enjoyed the workshop and the lessons I learned were useful in my everyday life. I am now more confident to speak against discrimination and also about the laws and punishment.

His Chance participant, grade 6



Girls Affected by Early Marriage

In 2018 we have started working with a group that is hard to reach and experiences a number of risks: married adolescent girls. According to 2016 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), 59% of women aged 20-24 were married by the time they were 20 years old (the legal marriage age in Nepal), and 40% were married by the age 18.

Girls who are married often face pressure to become pregnant shortly after the marriage. This exposes them to health risks related to early pregnancy and childbirth, especially in areas with limited access to health care services. Married girls are also at higher risk of various forms of violence, and in rural Nepal they typically drop out of school, which means they lose access to peer support networks. Married girls are also at risk of mental health problems, which our program intended to address.

In the Hello Saathi (Hello Friend) program, we have worked with 105 adolescent mothers, 40 Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs), and 6 Community Mobilizers. The FCHVs and Community Mobilizers became trainers after completing our five days long Training of Trainers (ToT) and three days long Basic Psychological Care and Support Training conducted in February. The ToT included teaching methodologies and communication skills, such as nonverbal communication and active listening; gender discrimination; early marriage; stereotypes; sex and gender; role models; menstruation and family planning. The FCHVs who were illiterate were paired with community members so that they could deliver the workshops jointly following the written curriculum.

Following the ToT, the trainers delivered the workshops to the adolescent mothers. In addition to topics covered in our Her Turn curriculum, this program included family planning, and mental health.

To strengthen sustainability and access to services for adolescent mothers, we organized five workshops at two Rural Municipalities. During these events adolescent mothers, FCHVs, and representatives from local governments discussed roles of various government bodies and the services that health posts provide.

My husband was not supportive during the initial days of the workshop and refused to take care of the baby. I had to take the baby with me to attend the workshop. One day he asked me to share the workshop learnings, and after sharing, he was happy to know that the workshop benefits not just me but my entire family. Now he takes care of my baby while I attend the workshop and I share my learnings with him every day.

Adolescent Mother, 19, Botenamlang

New Developments

Computer Classes

In one of the remote Rural Municipalities of Sindhupalchok district where we worked in 2019, we discovered that computer classes only use text books, and the school did not have a single computer for the students to learn. This school had 391 students, out of which 207 are the girls.

We partnered with the school and offered computers, computer classroom equipment, and library books. In return, we asked the school management to improve water and sanitation facilities for the students. The school then collaborated with the local government and received additional 10 computers from them. Now, the school has a computer learning center with 20 computers, a library, 24 hour water supply and adequate sanitation. We are also funding a computer teacher's salary for a year.

We were happy at this collaboration, which resulted in students being able to learn computer skills in practice, and having adequate toilets and water supply.



Girls' Sports for 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence

In October, our Girls Advisory Board members traveled all the way from their villages to Kathmandu to join 3 days strategic planning workshop. One of the members is a 15-year-old girl from Golche – a remote village, close to China border in Sindhupalchowk district. She participated in our Her Turn workshops seven months earlier. During the program, the girl was elected to the Girls Support Committee that is formed in each school during the workshop to provide long-term support to the girls we work with. After serving in the Committee for six months, she was selected to join Girls Advisory Board.

In Golche, most of the community members come from Tamang, Dalit, and Bhujel minority groups, and many don't speak fluent Nepali. There is approximately 170 households, and many people have migrated out of the village. Some own property in the capital city, while others are working abroad. The major occupation is farming, and most of the senior citizens are illiterate.

During the workshop, we were discussing various strategies and interventions for girls leadership. This participant's interest in sport games as a path to leadership was evident. She said,

"I would like to see girls participating in sports, especially volleyball. My friends and I have witnessed how the boys have been playing volleyball in school and how confident and vigorous they look. Girls have never been asked if they would like to play volleyball and

hence they were always the audience. School drop outs, elopement, early pregnancy, domestic violence, polygamy and polyandry are the most prevailing issues in our village and girls in sports could make huge difference in tackling these issues.”

We committed ourselves that we will support her leadership with a condition that she will have to convince other girls and school administration. On November 25th, the first day of #16DaysOfActivism, with the backdrop of Jugal mountain range, the girls got ready in their jerseys and white shoes. For many girls this was the first time they have worn anything like this. The girls playing volleyball for the first time in school was significant and historic – it was a big day for everyone.

For a week prior the girls were coached and trained by the school teachers (all men) and boys, and received support from their families. They were divided into four teams and the jerseys were all orange, because we were celebrating #16DaysOfActivism against Gender Based Violence, with a theme: “Orange the World: Generation Equality Stands against Rape”. The girls smashed the game, and the entire school audience, including mothers and grandmothers, were cheering for them. The girls not only played the game, they also made the history. They girls said, “We feel powerful and confident and want to continue playing volleyball and encourage more girls to participate.”

This event sent many messages to the school and village community: that girls like to play sports just like the boys and they play as well as the boys. The opportunity to play sports in school should be equal and we need to make more investment in sports. Given the right opportunity and space, girls can do anything. One of the mothers said, “I had never thought my daughter could play anything like volleyball and I am so proud of her.” At Hamro Palo we too are so proud of girls for breaking the system of discrimination and taking leadership for themselves.



My favorite class in the workshop was on the topic of adolescence, as I got the opportunity to learn about emotional, physical and biological changes that we go through this phase. As an adolescent, I used to be scared of the changes in my body and used to have many questions. Now, I know everyone goes through what I am going through and it is completely normal to experience these changes in me.

His Chance participant, grade 9

Advocacy

Girl Led Leadership Symposium

In August, we held our three days long 4th Annual Girls Support Committee Symposium in Dhulikhel, Kavre district. The participants were 70 girls members of the Girl Support Committees and Girl Advisory Board who have graduated our Her Turn workshops in 2015-2018. The event was led and facilitated by the girls themselves as an opportunity for leadership skills development and practice. It also reflects our vision that girls are not the recipients of the program or the beneficiaries, but they can lead in their own ways and as an organization, we benefit having girls involved in decision making processes and in our governance structures.

The event served as a platform for the girls to meet, exchange ideas, knowledge and skills, and celebrate their individual and collective leadership stories in their schools and communities. The participants discussed various aspects of leadership such as goal setting, coordination, risk-taking, or communication. We also had a reflection of Hamro Palo's work and its impact in the communities. The girls were excited that Hamro Palo is coming up with new comic book on menstrual hygiene. We conducted Focus Group Discussions to receive feedback about the comic book content as well as suggestions from the girls. Based on the girls' feedback on the content, the comic book is at the final stage and will be launched next year. At the end of the conference, we announced our scholarships for two of the Girls Advisory Board members who are pursuing grade 11. The scholarship will cover tuition fee and other support for the awardees.

A video documenting the event is [available here](#).

I am glad to participate in Her Turn workshop as this is more effective than my regular school classes. I liked all the classes, out of which I loved the class on health and hygiene, and particularly on menstruation. I also talked about menstruation with my mother and I am looking forward to learn more about internet and its impact on adolescents.

Her Turn participant, grade 9

Collaboration with Local Governments

In 2019, the Girls Support Committees' and the Girls Advisory Board's members have met twice with the local government representatives. The girls advocated to address some of burning issues in their schools. In both the meetings, the girls have asked for sanitation and safe space in schools to manage menstruation. They have also urged for inclusion of extra-curricular activities such as sports in schools.



Menstrual Hygiene Comic Book

During our workshops, we used to distribute a Nepali version of Menstruopedia comic book. In 2019 we ran out of our stock and decided to develop our own comic book specific to the context of Nepal. It will also feature some inspiring stories of the girls who have tackled and challenged menstrual restrictions and taboos. We started developing the content, which was consulted with the girls during our annual symposium and we expect it to be ready in 2020. The comic book will then be distributed during our Her Turn programming and shared with other schools and organizations.

I feel proud to be a part of Her Turn workshop. Students were curious to learn new information and knowledge on the subjects like menstruation, domestic violence, human trafficking and reporting mechanisms and legal action. Through this facilitation opportunity, I myself feel empowered and these learning will be for lifetime.

Rita Shrestha, Her Turn workshop Trainer, Hapra

Women Deliver Conference

Women Deliver Conference is the largest global conference on gender equality and health, rights, and well-being of girls and women. In 2019, it was organized in Vancouver on June 3-6th. Three

representatives from our organization attended this event in June 2019. The event hosted thousands of change makers, activists, advocates, researchers, decision makers, and implementers discussing the challenges, solutions, and ideas.

We participated in sessions on mental health, education, girl's empowerment, early marriage, sexual and reproductive health rights, menstrual hygiene, good governance, and girls and women's agency and equality, and many more.

Our Executive Director Anita Thapa was invited to participate in two sessions with other leaders. One was a Feminist Human Library organized by the Canadian Council for International Cooperation. In this event, Anita was selected as one of the human books to share her reflections on her work, feminism, and gender equality. At the pre-conference event on 2nd June, she shared her thoughts along with 16 other chosen feminists.

On 4th June, Anita spoke on the panel called "Let's Talk about it. Period" in a "pechakucha" format. It is a story telling format in which a presenter shows 20 slides and offers commentary for 20 seconds on each of them. Anita's presentation was on best practices by Nepali adolescent girls to manage menstrual hygiene and deal with the harmful menstrual restrictions and social taboos. She also highlighted why we should invest in girls' education.

The conference was an opportunity for us to connect with other organizations and other With and For Girls award winners. We met, exchanged ideas and explored funding opportunities.



My daughters from grade 10 and 8, and son from grade 6 were the participants of Her Turn and His Chance workshops. My younger daughter wanted to talk to me about equality and I listened to her. I am amazed how she spoke with confidence and convinced me. I am proud of my daughters' enhanced capabilities and new knowledge.

Parent of Her Turn/His Chance participants

Governance

Girls Advisory Board

In 2018, we have established Girls Advisory Board (GAB) to include girls in our governance and strategic processes. In August 2019, we expanded the Board and invited seven new members from the Girls Support Committees to join. Currently, we have 15 members representing different schools, communities, and ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

The advisory board is our effort to facilitate the next generation leadership and involve girls in the decision making processes. In October 2019, we held a three days workshop with the GAB members to reflect, prioritize, and strategize our interventions and programs for the next year. It was an important process for us to learn the issues and situation in the villages and collectively work on the effective solutions. Additionally, the girls had a tour of Kathmandu and met with other stakeholders, such as National Human Rights Commission and Department of Women and Children. These connections help them understand the mechanisms within government bodies. By 2020, we hope to have at least 5 girls leading in our central governance and more girls in the GAB.

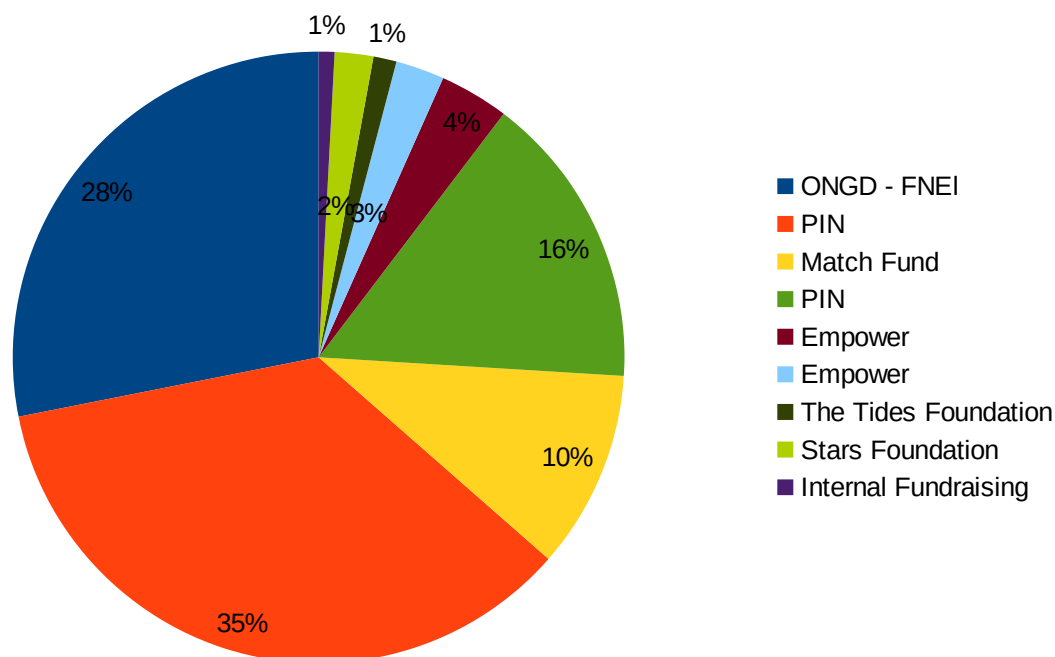
His Chance participants were very interested to learn about menstruation. Having not known about menstruation cycle before meant that boys feel uninformed. If they had known before menstruation cycle and what should be done, they would have supported their friends, sisters, and mothers. This workshop should be run for at least a month and should repeat in future as well.

Tej Bahadur Shrestha, Trainer, His Chance workshop

Finances

In 2019, our annual turnover was NPR 20,163,964 (USD 181,657). This funding was received from the following donors: ONGD – FNEL, People in Need, MATCH International Women's 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.



This project has given a lot of value and respect to FCHV. I am in this profession for almost a decade but never have I gained so much respect. Being a trainer in this project has given me respect and I feel I am being a part of change in my community. I would like to be part of such opportunities in the future as well.

Panchamaya Tamang, FCHV Lekharka, Panchpokhari Rural Municipality