



Empowering Adolescent Girls and Young Women through the Provision of Comprehensive Sexuality Education and a Safe Learning Environment in Nepal

Under the framework of the UNESCO, UNFPA and UN Women Joint Programme for the Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women through Education



Published in 2016 by the UNESCO Office in Kathmandu
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KAT/2016/PI/H2

Printed in Nepal



Why this project?

Nepal has nearly achieved universal enrolment in primary education and has also made significant improvements in gender parity in primary and secondary education. However, many challenges persist for young women and adolescent girls in terms of access, participation and completion of good quality education. Female students tend to drop out of school as they reach higher grades. In many instances, education systems and plans are not gender-responsive and do not take into consideration girls' and women's particular needs. But even if there are provisions within the education sector to ensure universal access to all, social/cultural values tend to override such provisions. Among the many socio-cultural, economic and other factors preventing adolescent girls and young women from accessing education are, for example, child marriage and early pregnancy, gender-based violence, lack of knowledge or provision of proper hygiene facilities such as WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene).

There is a need for a holistic and comprehensive approach to girls' and women's education and for creating an enabling environment, including ensuring access to water and sanitation as well as health services, raising awareness and conducting advocacy among stakeholders, enhancing socio-economic policies, and challenging persistent social norms. Such an environment should complement efforts to improve the quality of education through mainstreaming gender in education policies, plans, pedagogies, curricula, and the school environment, making them relevant and empowering, encouraging adolescent girls to stay in and complete school.

The UNESCO-UNFPA-UN Women Joint Programme for the Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women through Education

The UNESCO-UNFPA-UN Women Joint Programme was announced on the occasion of the 59th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2015, jointly by the heads of the three UN agencies – UNESCO, UN Women and UNFPA – and the World Bank, who expressed their commitment to promote the empowerment of adolescent girls and young women, through an integrated approach to their education. The Joint Programme was the translation of the conviction that an integrated approach to education, gender equality and good health was not only necessary to empower them, but can also break the cycle of poverty and foster greater social justice, economic development and sustainable peace.

The Joint Programme is an initiative under the framework of the Global Partnership for Girls' and Women's Education – Better Life, Better Future, launched by UNESCO's Director-General, Ms Irina Bokova in 2011, which seeks to increase learning opportunities for adolescent girls and women and to find innovative solutions for some of the biggest challenges and obstacles to their education.

Nepal is one of the six first phase countries of the global Joint Programme (together with Mali, Niger, Pakistan, South Sudan, and Tanzania). The national component for Nepal has been conceived as a part of the global Joint Programme and is guided by its goals and objectives, contributing to its broader outcomes.



A partnership to empower adolescent girls and young women through education.

From left to right: UN Women Deputy Executive Director, Yannick Glemarec, UNESCO Director-General, Irina Bokova, and UNFPA Executive Director, Dr. Babatunde Osotomehin. (Photo: © UN Women/Ryan Brown)

What do we want to achieve?

The component on Nepal has four main objectives:

- Mainstream comprehensive sexuality education, including school-related gender-based violence in formal and non-formal education;
- Enhance access to, participation, transition and achievement in education and functional literacy, especially for adolescent girls and young women;
- Increase access for out-of-school, vulnerable adolescent girls and young women to sexuality and reproductive health information, services, life skills and other relevant programmes; and
- Create an overall safe and healthy environment with improved provisions of healthy food, clean water and sanitation, service delivery mechanisms and favourable societal attitudes.

The project will be an important contribution towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: “*Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning*”, by addressing gender equality and the promotion of lifelong learning through non-formal education. The project will also contribute to SDG 3: “*Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all*”, SDG 5: “*Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*”, and SDG 6: “*Ensure access to water and sanitation for all*”.

The project will also significantly support various national efforts outlined in several important national policies and plans, such as the School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP), the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP), the National Plan of Action for the Holistic Development of Adolescents, the National School Health and Nutrition Strategy, the National Adolescent Health and Development Strategy, the National Reproductive Health Strategy, among others.

How will we reach our goal?

The project will be implemented through two complementary channels:

Formal Education targeting school-going adolescent girls and their teachers;

Non-Formal Education through Community Learning Centres (CLCs) and existing community-based programmes, targeting out-of-school adolescent girls (aged 10-19), young women (aged 20-24) as well as community members.

The project in Nepal brings together the three UN partner agencies of the Joint Programme– UNESCO, UN Women and UNFPA – seeking to benefit from and build upon their comparative advantages and complementarity. The project will leverage the substantive resources and programmatic experiences of each agency.

A strong capacity-building component of government entities and key stakeholders will underpin the project's sustainability.

Who are our partners?

In order to ensure country ownership and sustainability, the project will be implemented in close collaboration with various departments of the Ministry of Education (MoE), such as the Department of Education (DoE), the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), the National Centre for Educational Development (NCED), and the Non-Formal Education Centre (NFEC). Other relevant government entities, such as the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (MoWCSW), civil society organisations, non-governmental actors and stakeholders across sectors will be mobilised as (extended) partners for the effective implementation of the programme.

Where will the project be implemented?

The project will be targeting those districts of Nepal where girls and women are socio-economically marginalised and do not have easy access to safe water, sanitation, health services and other basic needs, due to which their opportunities to quality education have been denied or compromised.



Who will benefit?

The project will benefit adolescent girls and young women who are either in-school or out-of-school, and are especially marginalised due to socio-economic reasons.

Government officials, head teachers, teachers, CLC facilitators, peer educators of various on-going girls' programmes, adolescent boys and young men, parents and community members will also benefit through various awareness-raising, orientation and training programmes.



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