Assessing Girls’ Life Skills and Children’s Reading Habits in Marginalized Districts in Nepal

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nestled between Asian giants China and India, Nepal is one of the poorest nations in the world and home to 27 million ethnically diverse people. In 2006, Nepal ended its ten-year civil war with the signing of a peace agreement. Since then, Nepal has experienced a period of political transition that has contributed to its slow development. Despite slow progress, Nepal has made great advancements with primary net enrollment reaching ninety-five percent in 2013. Nepal has also succeeded in gender equality in education as it has almost achieved gender parity. However, challenges remain as disparities continue to exist between regions and ethnicities and between boys and girls. Despite achievements made in gender parity, girls still have a harder time completing and succeeding in school. Moreover, the quality of government-funded education remains low, with many questioning whether children are actually learning.

Room to Read (RtR) understands these challenges and aims to ameliorate them by working with marginalized communities and local governments to promote and enable educational opportunities through literacy and gender equality in education programs. RtR’s main tools are its Literacy Program (LP) and Girls’ Education Program (GEP). RtR’s LP is a comprehensive program that aims to support children to become independent readers. The program seeks to work not only with children but also with their immediate environment including teachers, schools, families, communities, local governments, and civil society to achieve greater and more sustainable results. RtR’s GEP supports adolescent girls from economically disadvantaged areas to complete secondary school with the skills necessary to negotiate key life decisions, including self-awareness, self-efficacy, and social awareness.

In November 2014, RtR and four young development professionals from The George Washington University (GWU) entered into an agreement to conduct a rapid assessment of RtR’s literacy and girls’ education programs. The assessment also included an evaluation of RtR’s Research Monitoring and Evaluation (RM&E) programs for the main program components. The assessment’s main goal was to determine the impact of RtR’s programs on children’s reading habits and girls’ life skills in the districts of Nawalparasi and Bardiya, respectively. These districts are located in the Terai region, or the plains, which is the most densely populated area in Nepal and has the largest number of people living under the poverty line.

Equipped with surveys, interviews, focus groups, participatory activities, and participant observation exercises, GWU’s consulting team interviewed eighty-nine key informants and surveyed 189 students. The team’s fieldwork revealed that RtR’s work has in fact influenced and encouraged children’s reading habits. The team found that fourth graders are most benefitting from RtR’s LP with seventy percent of them reading five or more books in a month. The team also discovered boys and girls read about the same amount of books in a month, and that the majority of students rely on the library to obtain their books. Most students self-select their books and less than half are asking a friend or a teacher for help. Students reported they enjoy reading on their free time and believe it is an easy and enjoyable activity. Additionally, they believe reading will make them more educated, which will provide them with better opportunities in the future. The team’s fieldwork also revealed a difference in the reading ability and habits of students who did not get a chance to participate in RtR’s reading and writing instruction (RWI) program.

Concerning GEP, girls, parents, teachers, and Social Mobilizers (SMs) agree that GEP has had a positive impact in girl’s lives. There has been a positive impact on girls’ enrollment, retention, and completion rates due to different components of the program. Moreover, girls are able to perform better and to complete their secondary education. The role of SMs is instrumental as they have taught the community the relevance of girls’ education, and the girls themselves feel empowered to talk to their parents, siblings, and other members of the community about the importance of their education and its contributions to the country’s development. With the support of SMs and their acquired knowledge in negotiation skills, some girls have been successful in preventing, or at least prolonging, early marriage.
It is not surprising that some girls aspire to be SMs, as they are extremely pleased with the impact SMs have on their lives.

RtR’s literacy and girls’ education programs have had an overall positive impact; however, there are some limitations. The programs’ main limitations are the lack of stakeholder involvement, short project time, and sustainability. Key limitations that prevent program sustainability are limited training, cessation of support to school staff and students, and book procurement. Based on this information and in-depth analysis of the data collected, the team suggests a list of recommendations that may help RtR strengthen the design, implementation, and impact of its programs. The team believes GEP can achieve greater impact by extending Life Skills training to the community, providing continuous academic support to girls, providing additional trainings for SMs, and creating innovative partnerships with existing programs in Nepal. For LP, the consulting team believes RtR can achieve greater impact with parental involvement in reading activities, additional training for teachers and librarians, and extension of training to school staff. To measure the impact of its program’s in childrens’ reading habits and girls’ life skills, the team recommends the use of reading logs, reading diaries, a reading habits survey, and the Life Skill Tracker (LiST) to track and monitor progress. Finally, with the involvement of main stakeholders in programs, including monitoring and evaluation design, RtR may have a greater impact in the communities it aims to help succeed.
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INTRODUCTION

Nepal

Nepal is a small ethnically diverse south Asian country, landlocked between Asian giants China and India. Classified as one of the poorest countries in the world, Nepal has almost one third of its population living under the poverty line.\(^1\) The decade-long Maoist insurgency and the political transition period that ensued after the 2006 armistice, have characterized Nepal with social inequality and political instability.\(^{ii}\)

Despite the slow progress, Nepal has made significant advancements in the education sector. The government is committed to ensure equal access to primary school students\(^{iii}\) and succeed in raising net enrollment rates (NER) to 95.3% in 2013. Nepal has also made great strides in gender parity with the girls to boy ratio in primary education enrollment standing at 0.99.\(^{iv}\) However, challenges to the Nepalese educational system are numerous and complex; four percent of the student population remains out of school, and disparities still exist between regions and ethnicity and between girls and boys. Moreover, the quality of government-funded education remains low, with many questioning whether children are actually learning.

The majority of marginalized populations consist of girls and lower castes such as the Dalits, Janatas, Tharus, and Madhesis, particularly in the Terai region of Nepal.\(^1\) Located in the southernmost region of Nepal on the border with India is the Terai, which has fertile plains and dense forest areas.\(^x\) Ethnically diverse people densely populate the districts in the Terai, which have the highest number of people living under the poverty line.\(^x\) The majority of people in these districts rely on traditional occupations like agriculture and animal husbandry to support their livelihoods.\(^{vi}\) Concerning education, school enrollment rate is high but unevenly low for marginalized communities. Furthermore, students travel long distances, which contributes to low attendance, classrooms are overcrowded, education quality is low, and literacy rates are the lowest in the country.\(^{viii,ix}\)

Girls in marginalized communities, particularly in the Terai region, continue to have limited access to schools. Statistics show that girls between the ages of six and ten attend school in greater numbers; however, it is very unlikely that these girls will complete their education. Contributing to the girls’ unlikelihood of completing school, are traditional practices of the high-caste Hindus. In rural areas especially, Hinduism continue to adhere to strict rules and traditions that restrict the movement of post-pubescent girls.\(^x\) Through the Kamrari system, parents contract their female children into indentured servitude, and although the Supreme Court of Nepal officially outlawed this practice in 2006, many people, particularly in the western region of Bardiya, still widely accept it.\(^2\) Additionally, families expect girls to contribute heavily to household chores and the Tharu culture perceives as shy, submissive, incompetent, lazy, and as less intelligent than boys. These practices and misperceptions inhibit a girl’s successful performance in the classroom and cause teachers to pay less attention girls, which unfortunately causes many girls drop out of school.\(^x\)

In addition to high drop out rates, Nepal’s education sector is of low quality, which counteracts the high number of students enrolling in school. In 2013, out of 548,000 students who sat for the School Leaving Certificate at the end of secondary school, only thirty-four percent obtained a passing grade.\(^{xii}\) Students from rural areas are less likely to pass as they typically receive low grades.\(^{xii}\) Thus, while Nepal has addressed access to education, children still have a difficult time acquiring the skills necessary for their full development. Additionally, even though ninety percent of the total population between the ages of

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\(^1\) Nepal is divided into three geographical regions: the mountainous region, the hills, and the Terai.

ten and twenty-four is literate, people in the rural areas have very low literacy skills. For example, the literacy rate of the central region\textsuperscript{3} barely reaches seventy-five percent of people between the ages of ten and twenty-four.\textsuperscript{xiv} Another challenge with literacy is reading habits. Reading habits remain low in Nepal because the majority of the population struggles with reading and writing, and those who are proficient, do not considering purchasing books a priority since their primary concern is obtaining food and shelter.\textsuperscript{xv} Overall, while Nepal has made some achievements in the education sector, the country needs to do more work to provide its citizens with equal educational opportunities.

**Room to Read**

Room to Read (RtR) is a global non-profit organization that originated in Nepal where, in 2000, it began bringing donated books to schools in rural communities. Today, RtR collaborates with communities and local governments in several countries in Asia and Africa, to promote and enable educational opportunities and attainment for all children through literacy and gender equality in education.\textsuperscript{xvi} In Nepal, RtR works in several districts including Nawalparasi and Bardiya – both in the Terai region.

**Literacy Program**

RtR’s Literacy Program (LP) is a comprehensive program that aims to support children to become independent and fluent readers with a sustained habit of reading.\textsuperscript{xvii} LP simultaneously implements several components that address teacher and school staff training, school infrastructure, family and community engagement, civil society and government collaboration, and monitoring and evaluation systems in its effort to support the development of children’s reading skills and habits\textsuperscript{xviii}. RtR supports schools through field facilitators and literacy coaches who supervise librarian and teacher performance, respectively, and provide continuous feedback on how to improve reading and writing instruct and library management.

LP’s main program activities include:

- **Reading Materials:** Publish original, high quality, developmentally appropriate, and culturally relevant children’s books in local languages.
- **School Infrastructure:** Work with schools and communities to build new classrooms and libraries, and repair existing classrooms.
- **Reading and Writing Instruction:** Provide professional development on reading and writing instruction to teachers in order to deliver a high quality literacy education to children.
- **School Libraries:** Establish school libraries that provide children access to engaging books and a safe place to read. Librarians, teachers, and school staff receive professional development training and mentorship to establish library management systems, including functional check out systems\textsuperscript{4} that enables students to identify books at their reading level. It also establishes at least one regular library period per week per each grade, composed of different reading activities\textsuperscript{5} that incite a love for and a habit of reading.\textsuperscript{xix}

**Girls’ Education Program**

Room to Read’s Girls’ Education Program (GEP) supports girls to complete secondary school with the skills necessary to negotiate key life decisions. RtR focuses on girls transitioning to secondary school.

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\textsuperscript{3} Nepal is divided into five development regions (Eastern, Central, Western, Mid-Western, Far Western), fourteen administrative zones, and seventy five districts.

\textsuperscript{4} Room to Read’s GROWBY system classifies books by colors according to reading level. (Green, Red, Orange, White, Blue, Yellow, and white and black) Green represents the easiest level with many pictures while black represents harder levels and reference books.

\textsuperscript{5} Reading activities include reading aloud (teacher reads to the class), shared reading (students read along with teacher), independent reading, and paired reading (reading with a classmate).
because that is where the biggest—and most permanent—gaps in gender equality in education take place. GEP achieves this by creating girl-friendly school environments, financially supporting girls to attend and remain in school through graduation, and providing female mentorship and life skills training to girls.

RtR employs Social Mobilizers (SM), who may be previous benefactors of GEP, and are instrumental to GEP’s success. SMs work closely with girls and their families to ensure that girls stay in school. They are also mentors and community facilitators whose role is to follow-up with girls to maintain life skills practices, co-facilitate workshops with teachers, and speak with community members about the importance of girls’ education.

RtR defines Life skills as a girl’s ability to meet day-to-day challenges and make informed decisions about their lives. RtR’s designed its life skills education activities for school-going, adolescent girls from economically disadvantaged areas, with the goal of keeping them in school and preparing them to deal with key life decisions. RtR believes that the most critical skills girls need to develop their personalities during adolescence include self-awareness (self-confidence; expressing and managing emotions; and empathy), self-efficacy (self-control; critical thinking; decision-making; and perseverance), and social awareness (communication; creative problem solving; and relationship building).

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

RtR Nepal seeks to understand the impact of their literacy and girls’ education programs as well as to establish a causality relation between the organization’s interventions and observed results. In an attempt to contribute to this goal, the consulting team designed and developed a rapid assessment of RtR’s Literacy and Girls’ Education Programs.

The overarching research question of this study is:

- How have RtR’s Literacy and Girls’ Education Programs influenced children’s reading habits and girls’ life skills in Nepal?

Additionally, the team sought to fulfill two key objectives in the programs pertaining to Research Monitoring and Evaluation (RM&E) and program design:

1. Provide RtR Nepal with two tools to support the RM&E team in collecting baseline and periodic data on children’s reading habits and girls’ life skills.

2. Provide RtR Nepal with an analysis and recommendations for LP and GEP that may assist the organization improve program design, implantation, and impact.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**Research Design**

The research methodology consists of both a primary/fieldwork research component and a secondary research (desk-based) component. The primary research required the team of four to split into two teams in order to conduct research in the districts of Nawalparasi for LP and Bardiya for GEP and in the capitol city of Kathmandu. The research consisted of what The World Bank categorizes as a post-intervention project group without baseline data or a comparison group. As a whole, the team fulfilled the secondary research in Washington, D.C. that included an analysis of project papers and reports from RtR, maps of Nepal, and government planning documents related to education in Nepal. The research also consisted of a literature review of reading habits, reading motivation, the role of libraries in societies, girls’ education, and life skills. Additionally, the team conducted interviews with subject
matter experts in Washington, D.C. that guided project research, tool design, and insight into issues pertinent to girls’ education and children’s reading habits in developing countries. Please see ANNEX I for a complete review of the literature.

**Literacy Program (LP)**
The team assigned to LP designed a short survey to measure reading habits, reading attitudes, and use of the library. With the assistance of RtR, the team randomly selected ten third graders, ten fourth graders, and ten fifth graders (n=30) from each school participating in the study (Bindesworil Lower Secondary, Goshainbaba Lower Secondary, and Janachetana Primary School). The team administered the survey to a total of ninety (n=90; 44 girls and 46 boys) students.

The team also conducted semi-structured interviews with individual/key informants. The team interviewed one student per school (n=3), and conducted semi-structured and unstructured interviews individually with teachers, librarians, and field facilitators from different schools (the team interviewed one field facilitator, two head teachers, two teachers, and two librarians, n=7). In Kathmandu, the team conducted two (n=2) semi-structured interviews individually with key members of the RM&E team.

Finally, the team conducted a small participatory mapping activity with two students (one boy and one girl) from grades three, four, and five (n=10), to better understand student’s use of the library. Additionally, the team carried out a participant observation of classroom and library activities.

**Girls Education Program (GEP)**
The team assigned to GEP developed a survey to assess the Life Skills of scholars. The team implemented the survey to eight sixth graders, twenty seventh graders, thirty-three eighth graders, twenty-nine ninth graders, and nine tenth graders, or ninety-nine (n=99) scholars, in four different schools (30 in Gurash High School, 35 in Nepal Rastriya Secondary, 24 in Nepal Rastriya Secondary, and 10 in Jayakalika Secondary).

The team also conducted focus groups with Social Mobilizers, parents, guardians, teachers, headmasters, and scholars. Thirteen (n=13) SMs participated in four different focus groups (4 in Gurash High School, 2 in Nepal Rastriya Secondary, 3 in Nepal Rastriya Secondary, and 4 in Jayakalika Secondary). Additionally, twelve (n=12) parents or guardians of scholars from Gurash H High School participated in a focus group. Eleven teachers and three headmasters, all male, (n=14) participated in focus groups in Gurash High School, Nepal Rastriya Secondary and Jayakalika Secondary. Finally, eighteen (n=18) scholars participated in focus groups in two schools (8 in Nepal Rastriya Secondary, and 10 in Jayakalika Secondary).

To complement the information gathered through the survey and focus groups, the team observed a life skills session in Gurash High School that included thirty girls from different grades. In the session, the team observed many students perform songs and poems that described why they value education as well as to show their appreciation for RtR and for GWU’s consulting team.

**Methodology Limitations**

**Design**
The lack of resources and time in the field limited the design of the methodology and scope of the study. The team was unable to create and assess a comparison group to compare results against participants in schools participating in RtR’s programs, and the team was unable to reach a greater number of participants. These barriers, along with long commutes, contributed to a small sample size, limiting the team’s ability to make statically valid conclusions.
Surveys
The surveys presented a unique challenge as the team designed them for young children and adolescent girls. The team had to pilot the surveys in both English and Nepali before administering them to Nepal youth in order to ensure proper cultural interpretation and clarity. However, the team was unable to pilot the surveys once translated into Nepali due to time constraints in the field, which presented several issues during the assessment. First, many phrases and concepts used in English did not translate well into Nepali. Second, students were not familiar with surveys, or perhaps, were too young to complete them correctly. Thirdly, students were not familiar with checkboxes or tables, and either selected only one answer in questions that requested they check all that apply or skipped those questions entirely.

Selection Bias
The team did not randomly select schools to participate in the study as RfR had pre-selected schools prior to the team’s arrival in Nepal. There is the possibility that these schools are at an advanced stage in the program, and therefore were likely to show better results. They may also be schools that are easier to access and not representative of how other children are doing in more remote areas. Furthermore, while the team, in consultation with RfR, randomly selected students to participate in the survey, teachers selected students for the team to interview. For the GEP survey, SMs pre-selected students. In both cases, selected students may represent those that teachers or SMs know perform better; for LP it could be students who like to read or that read more often, and for GEP it could be girls who have demonstrated an advanced understanding of the concepts taught during LS sessions.

Language Barriers
Due to the distance and time difference, the team did not interact with the tool translator, which prevented the team from addressing the misunderstandings encountered during the research. Along with the surveys, translators interpreted the interviews into Nepali, and because not one of the team members is fluent in Nepali, there was no way to ensure that the interpreter fully conveyed the content and meaning of the responses. In Nawalparasi, the team found that the interpreter sometimes omitted responses that he did not consider useful or relevant to the research. The interpreter also used terms such as read and study interchangeably, which made it confusing to understand whether students were reading or just studying for school.

Social Desirability
Teachers, librarians, head teachers, field facilitators, SMs, parents, and students might have said what they thought the researchers wanted to hear in order to avoid jeopardizing the receipt of future support from RfR in their schools.

KEY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Key Findings: Literacy Program

Children’s Reading Habits and Attitudes
The survey revealed that fourth graders are the most avid readers with seventy percent of them reading five or more books in a month. Survey results also revealed that boys and girls read about the same amount of books with fifty-nine percent of girls and fifty-four percent of boys reporting they read five or more books in a month.

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6 While it the survey administrator explained to the children multiple times that answers were individual and that there were no right or wrong answers, many participants copied answers from fellow classmates when they were unsure of the answer.
Although there is not much difference for reading achieved on a monthly basis, girls do spend more time reading, with eighty-one percent of girls reading two to four hours or more per week compared to sixty-seven percent of boys that read the same amount. When compared across grade level, forty-eight percent of fourth graders read four or more hours a week. Most third graders read between two to three hours a week and about a third of fifth graders read four hours or more a week. Interviews with children in the third, fourth, and fifth grade corroborate this information as students stated they read between thirty minutes to one hour each day. Students also revealed they enjoy reading, including during their free time and most feel reading is easy for them.

Students like books that are relatable, exciting/mysterious, or books that teach a moral lesson. For example, a female student revealed she enjoys reading stories that take place in villages (she lives in a village), or stories that have characters similar to her (she recounted a story about two little girls who, like her, eat maize). Students also enjoy reading books about ghosts, the supernatural, or kings and queens. A type of book that students often mentioned they enjoy reading is a book with moral lessons.
For example, a male student in the fourth grade described a character in his favorite book that, at first, had a very bad personality, but that throughout the story, the character became a good person. For this student, the lesson was that by improving one’s behavior, one could become a good person. Students also specified they enjoy reading poems. Interviews also informed that teachers and librarians consider student preference while selecting books to read to them. For the most part, teachers and librarians like to read storybooks and course related books to students. The books range in topics from adventure, animals – especially about rhinos since they are nearby Chitwan National Park – poems, fairy tales, kings, and health and nutrition. For older students, teachers and librarians may even suggest reference books.

In terms of reading activities, students most enjoy silent reading and paired reading. There was not a significant difference between boys and girls and their preference for silent reading, but fifth graders seem to like silent reading the least. The students did not say they dislike aloud reading, but they did say they do not like when everyone is reading aloud because there are “noisy characters” and “it is disturbing”. The fact that students prefer a quiet reading environment explains why most of them favor reading in the classroom or at home. Students did not disclose their attitudes toward shared reading.

Teachers and librarians base their selection of activities on how much students like a particular activity, the reading level of students, and age of students. Teachers like aloud reading for younger students and paired reading or independent reading for older students. While teachers believe all reading activities influence children’s reading habits, teachers believe paired reading has the most influence in children’s reading habits, because “there is the chance that students ask friends about what they don’t understand.”

An interesting finding was that many students said their parents motivated them to read. At first, the team interpreted this to mean that parents read; however, teachers and librarians informed the team that, in fact, parents do not read. Though further questioning, the team determined that parents motivate children to complete their homework, which the students also interpreted as motivating them to read. Interviews with students also revealed that siblings, friends, and teachers influence reading habits. When asked about their motivation to read, students believe reading will help them become a better student and help them succeed in school. They also equate reading with increased knowledge and education, which they associate with money and prestige. To them, an education will make them more qualified.

Another interesting discovery is the effect of RTR’s RWI program on students’ reading ability. Teachers, head teachers, and field facilitators observe that students who have participated in RWI have better

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7 The team believes the interviewees interpreted independent reading as silent reading, as interviews rarely mentioned “independent reading”.

8 Teachers believe aloud reading improves children’s listening skills. Teachers also believe that independent reading conducted in the library, motives students to read at home and in the classroom. Librarians provide students with 20-40 minutes to read in the library.

9 Although some teachers expressed that their motivation to read has also increased because of LP, they explained that they do not have enough free time to read. The team considers the reading habits of teachers and librarians important in order to improve the reading habits of children.

10 The field facilitator believes children’s reading habits have also improved. However, the field facilitator sometimes compares the students who did not get the chance to participate in RWI or LP, and notices a difference between those who have participated in the program and those who have not. The field facilitator believes that the students who participated in the program can read and can read clearly, while students who have not benefitted from the program cannot read well.
reading skills, better reading habits, and they make better use of library materials. According to Netra Dahal, LP program manager, the students (first, second, and third graders) that have participated in RWI have better reading skills than students do in the fifth grade (RtR’s RWI was not active during the time that fifth graders were in the first or second grade in the schools assessed by this study). The team also observed that students in the fifth grade that did not participate in the RWI component had more difficulty reading. Yet, while first, second, and third graders are more skilled, librarians believe this group of students has the most room for improvement, in terms of reading habits, as they feel older students already possess stronger behaviors.

Interviews with teachers and librarians revealed that they sometimes use incentives – such as exercise paper, erasers, pencils, and colored pencils – to encourage students to participate in a reading activity. While teachers and librarians have confidence in the ability of reading activities to improve students reading habits, they believe parental involvement could also improve students’ reading habits. Teachers and librarians think it a good idea to encourage parents to read and to have them learn about the different reading activities. They believe that if parents read, then the children will read, as the children will mimic what they see. Additional methods teachers and librarians believe could improve reading habits include spelling competitions (to help students remember the spelling and sounds of words) and activities that relate to the books students have read, such as drawings, role-play, or research. Overall, teachers and librarians believe students’ reading habits have improved so much so that some students are reading a book a day.

Libraries

The school libraries each have over two thousand books in Nepali and between 175-200 books in English. The majority of students do not have books at home and they rely on the library to obtain books. Most students enjoy going to the library and seventy-eight percent indicated they checkout out books. On average, students check out 600 books in a month (min of 400 and max of 800). Fifty-three percent of students indicated they visit the library once or twice a week, while twenty-seven percent said they visit the library more than twice a week. In addition to checking out books, students visit the library to look at pictures in the books, play games, and eighty-two percent of students said they read during their library visits.

A little over half of students, or fifty-one percent, select books on their own, and forty percent ask a teacher or friends for help. Of those who ask for help, third graders and boys were more likely to ask a teacher for help. To help students choose books, librarians and teachers utilize the “GROWBY” method, which librarians believe helps students find books easily. While librarians are happy to assist students with book selection, they encourage students to choose on their own as the school year progresses.

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11 The team wondered whether students distinguished between teachers and librarians. Throughout the interviews, students referred to librarians as “teacher librarian”. Also, interviews with librarians revealed that their primary role in the school was a teacher. This may explain why only 9% of students ask librarians for help selecting a book.

12 RtR book leveling system.
Overall Impact
School staff and the communities believe RTR’s support has been a milestone in the community. Students are positive and excited about school, they are disciplined and eager to learn, and the number of enrolled girls has increased. Prior to RTR’s support, children were absent often or they would not complete the school day. Students did not care about reading and had no concept of books nor did they have access to books. Now, students stay the entire school day, even if the library hour is the last class of the day. Students are also excited and curious about books and they visit the library to try to improve their reading. What librarians appreciate most is that students take care of their books and bring them back in time without tearing them apart or writing in them. The community also believes that teacher’s habits have changed and that the school environment is more conducive to learning. Teachers are more involved and more conscious of their work because of their relationship with field facilitators.

Another huge contribution communities attribute to RTR is the buildings. Prior to RTR’s support, buildings were small and in bad condition. RTR renovated buildings, built libraries, and improved the design and the decor of the library, making it a positive environment that fosters learning. School staffs believe these improvements have made libraries attractive to students and both students and teachers believe the library “is excellent”. Most school staffs revealed that they never would have imagined a library like this were it not for RTR’s support.

The Nepali Government’s introduction of the early grade reading program into the school curriculum has been, in the team’s opinion, a huge accomplishment for RTR in these communities. RTR has been able to integrate its literacy program with the school very well, data shows that children are checking out more books. RTR’s training program is producing skilled teachers who understand the importance of reading. Netra Dahal, LP program manager, is pleasantly surprised with the RTR’s positive impact, as he did not think RTR could have such an impact in such a short time – especially in some of the districts they work with.

Analysis: Literacy Program
Strengths
Over all, the team found that RTR’s literacy program has had an impact on children’s reading habits. While the team was not able to quantify the magnitude of this impact through this study, the team found that students are indeed reading and that they enjoy reading. A major strength of the program is the libraries themselves. Libraries have made a wide range of reading material available to children and more importantly, have exposed children to books. The management of the library has also facilitated the students’ use of the library; students know what their reading level is and know exactly where to find the books they can or want to read. The team also observed that the library period complemented the program in a positive way as it provided a time and space for students to read, explore around the library, and encourage students to check out books. Students actually complain if they do not get their library period.

Courses

“Before, people were not educated.”
- Female teacher

“Students read more today.”
- Male head teacher

“80%-90% of students can read well without interruption.”
- Male head teacher

13 Teachers associate this with improved attitudes toward reading, since they believe this new excitement toward reading and the library equates improved reading habits.

14 During interviews, Prashanta Thapa informed the consulting team about a study that indicated book checkout per child was at 17.5%, which had increased from 8.5% before program implementation.

15 The team conducted their work in the library, which prevented students from attending their daily library hour.
The team also found that the combination of RWI component and the library program further strengthens the program impact on reading habits. While, RWI mainly enhances reading skills, it helps students become more confident in their reading, which could lead to improved reading habits.

Another major strength is that the targeting of not only students, but also their entire surrounding environment. RtR’s direct engagement with the community ensures that they meet the needs of the community through the design and implementation of the program. This has contributed to the creation of a supportive and enabling environment that further encourages the development of children’s reading habits. Lastly, RtR’s support has created environments that are conducive to learning, which in the opinion of teachers, has contributed to students’ desire to stay in school, learn, and more importantly, read.

Limitations
A main limitation of the program is that it targets students’ reading habits without simultaneously targeting the reading habits of teachers and parents. Research has found that children’s habits are first developed at home and later at school and that children establish their habits via imitation. The study found that parents and teachers generally do not read. If children do not see their parents and/or teachers reading, they might imitate this behavior, which is counterproductive to RtR’s goals.

Another limitation is the lack of training sustainability. While some teachers receive training and continued support from literacy coaches and field facilitators, the training and support ends once RtR phases out. New teachers do not receive the same training and the team did not determine whether there was a system in place to train another teacher or librarian in the even that a trained teacher left. This means that there will be no replacement with the necessary knowledge and skills on RWI, library management, and reading activities, which threatens the sustainability of the program.

An additional minor limitation is that the librarian has other roles at school, which sometimes distracts the librarian from his/her duties in the library. The team also found that when the librarians are not in the library, the library remains closed. This limits the program because students who would have wanted to visit the library in that time might not be able to do so and it restricts students’ access to the library because of librarian availability.

Finally, the time allocated for the full completion of the literacy program is too short. Teachers, librarians, school staff, and field facilitators all agree that three to four years of support is not enough to achieve a complete impact on the school and the library. The team found that following RtR phase out, librarians and teachers have struggled to keep the library functioning, particularly in acquiring new books. Acquisition of new books is important because students have read all the books at their level. If students cannot access new books, then they may lose interest in returning to the library.

Key Findings: Girls’ Education Program

Life Skills (LS)
The LS survey revealed scholars enjoy their LS sessions because they gain valuable knowledge that they can apply in their daily lives. Scholars have gained skills in problem solving, saving habits, defense against abuse, time management, and public speaking, among others. They also mentioned they enjoy the sessions because they learn new things. All SMs who participated in focus groups expressed they saw a change in girls’ attitudes due to LS sessions and the knowledge they have gained related to confidence, health consciousness, communication, problem solving, ability to interact, and confidence to express themselves. Furthermore, parents affirmed LS sessions are the most important and effective component of all GEP to empower girls, as the sessions build healthy habits and consciousness, orient girls to study regularly, improve their reading habits, build confidence, create awareness on early marriage, and encourage delaying marriage until after completing their education. Moreover, girls believe these LS make them feel empowered, as they are more knowledgeable and aware. The team’s
observation of a LS session allowed them to conclude that girls can express themselves freely in a safe space, and are capable of understanding the topics covered by SMs.

The survey revealed that ninety-seven percent of scholars believe LS sessions have inspired them to find new ways of looking at problems and come up with new solutions. Scholars who participated in focus groups expressed problem solving as one of their favorite LS topics.

An important objective of LS sessions is to empower scholars to think about their options before making a decision. To do this, LS encourage scholars to discuss their options with someone they trust and believe can be a good guide. The survey showed fifty-seven percent of the girls turn to a SM when they need to make a decision. Additionally, not one scholar responded that they prefer to avoid making a decision when they feel confused about their options. This demonstrates that SMs are influencing how girls make decisions.

During a focus group, a scholar shared how LS sessions gave her the courage and the skills to make the decision to talk to her parents after they arranged a marriage for her. Equipped with knowledge gained from the LS, she was able to communicate to her parents the relevance of completing her education and was able to stop the arrangement. Parents of scholars agree that LS sessions have been significantly effective in delaying and, in some cases, stopping early marriage.

The parents or guardians of scholars mentioned they saw an increased self-confidence in their daughters and saw them become more aware of who they are and how their body works. Parents agreed that prior to LS sessions, girls were hysteric and anxious when they menstruated. Now girls feel comfortable talking about menstruation and are no longer scared. A father to two girls in the program shared that when his older daughter menstruated, she felt scared and embarrassed, but because the younger daughter learned about menstruation in LS sessions, she was able to help her older sister understand, accept, and stop feeling ashamed.

**“Life Skills help me talk to people about what is good and bad. I am now able to identify who is a bad influence in my life.”**

-Female scholar, 8th grade

LS sessions also help girls identify hidden talents and better understand their strengths and potential. Scholars mentioned LS sessions dedicated to self-awareness help them identify shortcomings in their personalities and gives them the confidence to seek help and improve them. Parents also mentioned their daughters have developed leadership skills after enrolling in LS sessions.

Scholars, parents, and SMs agreed the girls are more confident speaking in public because of their participation in LS sessions. SMs noted that this is not only the case in LS sessions; girls are also comfortable speaking up during their regular classes and teachers have noticed scholars participate and engage more in class. In the focus groups, scholars mentioned LS sessions help them gain confidence and express their feelings. During the team’s observation of a LS session, it became clear
that the environment makes girls' feel confident and comfortable to express their creativity and ideas. The team also observed that girls enjoy having a space where they can explore their personalities and talents safely.

LS sessions have also taught scholars time management. During the interview, scholars frequently mentioned time management as a very important skill especially because some girls do not have parents and need to fulfill household chores and schoolwork. The skills gained in time management allow them to do homework and complete their home responsibilities.

In terms of parental and community involvement in LS sessions, eighty-four percent of scholars revealed that their family and community are aware of and are involved in what they are learning during LS sessions. Another eighty-seven percent revealed that their families agree with what the girls are learning in LS sessions. Furthermore, ninety percent of respondents strongly agreed that their families encourage them to be active in LS sessions and learn new things, and eighty-nine percent said they feel encouraged by their community to continue their education and prepare themselves to make key life decisions. Interviews with parents and guardians determined they have very positive attitudes toward LS sessions, and they are happy SMs are covering topics they as should cover with the girls but have not done so or do not know how to do so. Parents and guardians can see improvements in their daughters and they expressed their gratitude to SMs.

Lastly, eighty-nine percent of scholars believe LS sessions motivate them to continue learning, and eighty-five percent affirmed LS sessions motivate them to share knowledge with other members of their community.

**Overall Impact**

Overall, the opinions about GEP contributing to girls’ school retention and completion were strong among all the interviewees. Early marriage was more common before the launching of GEP and parents, teachers, and SMs acknowledge GEP has been instrumental in informing communities and changing society’s perception about the relevance of girls’ education. The team also learned that GEP has positively affected the quality of girls’ education and of girls’ lives. In some schools, the team observed more girls than they did boys, and according to teachers and head masters, the girls are performing better because of GEP. The team learned that the main components causing change in the communities are the work of SMs, especially the home visits, and the LS sessions. Girls agreed LS sessions, home visits, and scholarships (material support) are the GEP components that have the greatest impact in their lives and in their education.

During focus groups with parents, SMs, and scholars, the team learned about the relevance of home visits and how they contribute to girls’ retention in school. When a SM identifies a girl that is missing school, the SM visits her house and talks with her parents or guardians about the relevance of continuous attendance. When SMs meet with parents that do not send their daughters to school because of safety concerns, they were able to convince them to accompany the girls on their way to school so they could assess themselves the degree of risk. This exercise made parents realize the girls were safe and encouraged them to send their daughters to school. Teachers also acknowledge home visits have increased girls’ attendance, and girls mentioned home visits are of outmost relevance for them to continue their education.

Parents and guardians feel positively about the work of SMs and believe SMs empower and motivate girls to succeed, as well as encourage them to think creatively and express their ideas in a safe space. The role SMs play in the girls’ lives is not limited to the school. According to some SMs, they sometimes receive calls from girls from home when they need their support to deal with a problem.
During the observation of LS session, the team witnessed the strong relationships girls have developed with SMs, so it is not surprising that some girls want to become SMs.

SMs also provide academic support, which not only contributes to increasing the academic standards of the girls but also allows students to interact with the teacher in a more personal way, as class size is big and interaction is often challenging. When surveyed, eighty-eight percent of girls agree that mock tests improve their performance on real tests and ninety-eight percent believe the academic support they receive has helped them improve their academic performance. Overwhelmingly, the girls enjoy receive academic support and they believe it is a worthwhile endeavor. Parents and guardians also believe academic support helps their daughters perform better in school, which, at the same time, contributes to their confidence, and they attest to their daughters’ improved literacy skills and reading habits, as some of them now read at home.

The material support component of GEP provides scholarships to a selected number of girls to attend school and obtain the necessary materials such as textbooks or uniforms. During focus groups, the team learned about a girl who dropped out because she did not have parents/guardians and had to provide for her siblings. However, GEP’s material support allowed her to re-enroll and stay in school. Another scholar informed the team that her father had remarried and abandoned her; she had no resources to attend school and as a result, dropped out. It is only because of GEP’s material support she is able to continue her education. Furthermore, a SM mentioned that material support creates a stronger relationship between the girls and their family. The further survey corroborated that material support impacts the girls’ lives. Of the scholars who receive material support, eighty-eight percent agreed they are more likely to complete secondary education, eighty-nine percent believe they can spend more time in school activities than in household chores, and ninety percent agreed they can spend more time in school activities than in work.

Furthermore, because of GEP’s efforts, parents and guardians are more involved and engaged in their daughters’ education and school activities, in particular mothers. In a focus group with scholars, a girl mentioned GEP has changed her family’s support for her education. She got married in sixth grade when she was only 12 years old and did not have much time to study. With the help of GEP and their efforts to engage families and the community, her family and husband realized the relevance of her education, and they now help her with house chores so that she has time to complete schoolwork.

Finally, parents, guardians, and scholars expressed appreciation for RtR’s support for the education of girls who live below the poverty line. They acknowledged RtR is linking the family and community to schools, as families now know about the value of education and specifically of girls’ education. In a Madhesi community, scholars said that because of RtR, girls are now educated in this community. Teachers also believe GEP is empowering girls through LS and they appreciate RtR’s work at the grassroots level. In the teachers’ opinion, this creates real change. However, parents informed the team they would have appreciated to be involved in program design prior to implementation and teachers hope the government will provide their support once RtR phases out.

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16 Ninety-nine percent enjoy receiving academic support and eighty-three percent do not think it is a waste of time.
17 This quantification only includes valid responses.
Analysis: Girls’ Education Program

The results obtained from the fieldwork allowed the team to identify strengths and limitations. The team also developed an analysis of obstacles that may potentially hinder GEP’s impact. Please see ANNEX II for a complete analysis of the obstacles.

Strengths

The first major strength is the GEP’s emphasis on working with the community, which creates ownership and sustainability. Parents are happy to be included, because they feel they are contributing to their daughters’ empowerment and learning about the relevance of girls’ education. Parents believe SMs are effective at providing support to network and collaborate with schools.

A second strength is GEPs comprehensiveness. Participants, teachers, and parents all agree that the LS component by itself would not contribute to girls’ empowerment. They believe it does a better job when complemented with the rest of the program components. As specified before, scholars, parents, and teachers identify material support, academic support, home visits, and LS as the most significant components contributing to girls’ education. Girls feel empowered when they can attend school, complete their education, and negotiate key life decisions.

A third strength are the SMs. SMs share the same background as the girls, which makes them relatable. Additionally, LS sessions cover issues that are real life situations, which accelerate the learning processes and internalization of knowledge. This is possible when the instructor has experienced similar situations or can deeply understand them.

A fourth strength is the collection of feedback from scholars, parents, guardians, and teachers. RtR uses suggestion boxes at the schools, which encourages all actors to provide anonymous feedback or comments. Finally, SMs’ meetings with all stakeholders definitely contribute to the program’s success and the communities’ satisfaction with the program’s design and implementation.

Limitations

RtR shares project management responsibilities with each partner community through the Challenge Grant, which expects community members to co-invest in the project by providing cash, materials, or labor. The aim of this model is to set the stage for long-term sustainability and involve the community more; however, many communities cannot meet the challenge grant. During the research, the team discovered many teachers and headmasters had made multiple fruitless efforts to meet the minimum funding needed for the grant. In one particular school, teachers agreed to a cut of their paycheck to help obtain the grant. Since the grant does not have a system that carefully considers the context and resources of each community, it risks excluding communities and schools in dire need of support.

Similar to LP, GEP provides support to schools for four years then phases out. This is problematic because RtR is increasing the expectation for education but not ensuring its sustainability. SMs lose their job upon completion of the program and there is no system between GEP and the school to facilitate this transition for all key stakeholders involved.

Another main limitation for RtR involves safe-spaces. Many of the schools where SMs work have limited space to facilitate sessions and other activities, particularly during winter. Some of the schools the team visited also lacked girl friendly toilets. During menstruation, the girls’ have to go back to their homes and they do not always return to class. The program also lacks practicality; it does not provide girls the opportunity to put into practice the skills they have gained. After secondary school, GEP participants search for professional opportunities or financial resources to pursue a higher education, however, economic disadvantage and few or no networking opportunities hinders this pursuit.
Furthermore, although LS sessions help build girls’ self-esteem and confidence, the lack of continuous support could force girls into the same decisions and paths they had prior to GEP support.

An additional limitation is the program’s specific emphasis on examination periods. Extra tutorial classes before examinations are not enough to impact academic performance significantly. RtR’s specific targeting of girls in grades 8 and 10 also is not sufficient. The fact that RtR does not support girls if they fail examinations or if they drop out of school is another limitation as it causes girls to feel unable choose a different life path and believe that marriage is their only viable option. The lack of support after twelfth grade could also lead to a feeling of hopelessness as they may feel they cannot do anything with their gained education.

RtR also lacks a cultural, talent, or athletic component in their programs. Many girls have unexplored talents and limited opportunities to display and strengthen these skills. By incorporating athletic, girls could learn perseverance, discipline, and health-awareness. Cultural experiences could also reinforce existing trust and friendships amongst girls, helping expand the existing emotional support system for girls within the classroom.

Another big limitation is the exclusion of boys, parents, and teachers. By not integrating boys in the program, RtR is missing a powerful opportunity to educate males in the community to become agents of change and help empower girls. Educating the community on the importance of girls’ education and gender inequality creates a more sustainable environment for girls to succeed and participate in. Many teachers and parents also fear boys may retaliate or harbor negative feelings toward girls because there is no display of concern for the well-being of boys in the communities where GEP works.\(^{18}\) One head master in particular shared his concerns of boys’ reduced enrollment because of RtR’s support. Prior to RtR’s support, there were more boys enrolled and they were performing better academically. Now, there are more girls than boys attending school, which has caused some to fear the school will become a girls’ only school.

Finally, the program does not provide enough training and does not ensure training sustainability. SMs require more training in counseling, children’s rights, legal provision, and motivation skills to provide adequate support to girls. SMs expressed feeling their training only allows them to have a limited impact, and if SMs do not feel they have the skills necessary to perform their jobs, they could become frustrated, which could adversely affect how girls perceive the program. The lack of a train the trainer practice in LS, could also negatively affect program sustainability as RtR phases out.

**Key Findings and Analysis: RM&E**

**RM&E: Findings and Analysis**

RtR has comprehensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems in place. M&E consists of three types of indicators: reach indicators that measure the number of schools, students, girls, and teachers reached by RtR; implementation indicators that track program progress, including number of teachers, librarians, and SMs trained; and outcome indicators that measure program impact. The global office develops the M&E systems and indictors and the country office assesses and adapts them to ensure they fit the Nepali context. However, main stakeholders in the field are not involved in the design or assessment of indicators, which limits the indicators’ relevance in particular communities. Finally, RtR

\(^{18}\) Parents also highlighted a need to focus on drug prevention during LS sessions to help reduce the possibility of drug use and addiction. Many communities are experiencing a major problem in young boys using drugs and there is a fear that if this problem is not addressed it might become a problem for girls too. Some communities even blame SMs for the negative behavior of boys. Particularly boys’ rebellion increased due to jealousy and frustration of RtR focused-support towards girls.
supports the system with baselines, midterm, and final evaluations to assess the impact its programs. However, RtR has not collected baseline data for reading habits or for girls’ life skills, which limits RtR’s ability to measure the impact of their programs in these areas.

RtR tasks field facilitators and SMs with the data collection. Facilitators and SMs collect data on a monthly basis and record the information in the Global Solution Database. On a quarterly basis, field facilitators and SMs provide their findings to the Country Office. Field facilitators and SMs receive training on M&E through local offices and partner organizations, however, there is no direct communication between the RM&E department at the Country Office and data collectors in the field. This absence of communication could limit the effectiveness of M&E, as the RM&E team may be unaware of how it is collected and what is missing. Furthermore, the RM&E office and data collectors may have different interpretations of the data, which may lead to different conclusions about the progress, implementation, and impact of the program.

RM&E Literacy Program: Findings and Analysis

Field facilitators visit schools once or twice a month to collect information in reading skills, library management, classroom activities, and teacher performance. In addition to collecting information, field facilitators conduct three reading skills assessments per year that tests student’s skills in letter recognition, fluency, sound recognition, vocabulary, and comprehension. To monitor the library’s progress, field facilitators utilize the Library Rating System (LRS) to assess improvement on the nineteen indicators concerning the environment of the library, time to read, professional development of library staff, and family and community engagement. These indicators also collect information on book check out, reading activities, and library management. Finally, field facilitators observe the library period and assess the librarian’s performance in conducting these activities.

In the team’s opinion, the biggest strength of the M&E system in LP is the feedback and support component. Field facilitators provide immediate feedback to teachers, librarians, and headmasters and they discuss potential methods for improvement with the library management committee. A definite plus are the good working relationships between the field facilitators and school staff, which enhances the system as teachers and librarians are more willing to listen and to adapt the recommendations of field facilitators. Through this process, RtR reinforces the school’s and the community’s ownership of the program, while at the same time, supporting the schools to improve program implementation.

However, the M&E system in LP also has several limitations. One of the biggest shortcomings is the lack of indicators to track reading habits. In place of an objective indicator, RtR equates the number of books checked out per month with changes in reading habits without correcting for the fact that this does not to portray whether students are actually reading. Another method field facilitators use to discern a change in reading habits is the GROWBY system. Field facilitators associate causality to a student’s change in reading level with improved reading habits. Yet again this does not quantify how much students read or how often.

The team also found an absence of sustainability indicators. While LRS tracks the development of a sustainability plan, it does not have predetermined indicators to track the implementation of the plan. According to the field facilitator, this is problematic because students sometimes lose or damage books and there is no system to track these issues or to acquire new books. Finally, RtR does not follow up

19 For a full list of indicators, please refer to ANNEX III.
20 The family and community engagement indicators track family and community involvement and library activities as well as the development of sustainability plans for the library once RtR phases out of the program.
21 The management library committee includes the librarian, teachers, students and parents. The committee is responsible for the functioning and sustainability of the library and decides what next steps are to be taken to ensure its sustainability.
22 RtR conducted an impact evaluation in 2009 to assess the impact of reading habits, however, no there is no regular method to track actual progress.
with libraries and schools after it ceases its support. This is problematic because without this information, RtR cannot be sure about the sustainability of their programs, and if their programs are not sustainable, RtR needs to know what changes it needs to make to improve.

**RM&E Girls Education Program: Findings and Analysis**

RtR has an outcome indicator for LS, which it defines as the number of girls who demonstrate core competencies in life skills. However, RtR Nepal has not determined which competencies to assess, nor has the country office developed a functioning process to measure core competencies. The team also learned that RtR does not involve SMs in the development of M&E systems for GEP, and the long distances between schools makes the monitoring process time-consuming. The long distances also hinder the efforts of SMs from working closely with each school to implement and establish a functioning M&E system.

A few strengths of the program include monthly meetings and feedback. The team identified the meetings some SMs hold with scholars as a positive component of the program since SMs cooperate with scholars to find solutions as well as collect feedback and concerns about LS sessions. SMs also meet with parents and guardians on a monthly basis to discuss outcomes, progress, and weaknesses of the program. SMs keep parents informed about what the topics covered in LS sessions and encourage them to participate more in school activities. However, it is not clear what SMs do with the feedback they receive from the girls, or if they provide RtR with this information to inspire changes in the program. Furthermore, some teachers are concerned that parents/guardians only participate in meetings when SMs ask them to attend, but not when someone from the school asks. There is the additional cultural problem in which parents/guardians expect to receive something (i.e. a snack or allowances) in return for their attendance, and refuse to attend if there is nothing offered.

Lastly, while RtR provides feedback to SMs quite regularly, SMs would like to get information that is more frequent from RtR on how they can improve their performance. SMs also have a hard time providing RtR with information through ICTs, as there is limited internet connectivity and hardware availability. To mitigate this problem, SMs use their cellphones to communicate with RtR when there is an urgent matter.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the analysis of the research conducted, the team developed a list of recommendations for RtR Nepal to strengthen the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and impact of their Literacy and Girls’ Education programs.

**Literacy Program**

**Reading Habits**

To encourage children’s reading habits, RtR should engage parents in teachers in reading activities as well as encourage the reading habits of teachers and parents. RtR could also help school libraries obtain reading materials for adults to make books available for parents and teachers. The team believes that if children see their parents and teachers reading, they will become more motivated to read, which could lead to improved reading habits.

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23 According to the RM&E coordinator, RtR conducted one post program evaluation and found that only 78% of the libraries in the evaluated schools were still functioning. However, this still fails to provide information on how the libraries are or are not operating.
**Library Management**
In order to provide students with more opportunities to access the library, RtR should ensure that there are at least two librarians in every school. RtR should also ensure that librarians coordinate their schedules and responsibilities in order to make library available to students throughout the day. A potential benefit of this strategy is that it could help ensure the sustainability of the program, as there will always be someone in the school with the knowledge and skills to ensure the library operates effectively.

**Training Sustainability**
The team also recommends establishing a train the trainer program within the schools to ensure the sustainability of RWI, reading activities, library management. RtR could create a permanent position similar to the literacy coach in each school that will be responsible for training and coaching other teachers as well as new recruits. More importantly, this trainer should always have an assigned assistant trainer that is able to assume this role in the event that the primary trainer leaves. By doing so, RtR could ensure that all school staff and new recruits receive training, which could create a sustainable program.

**Girls’ Education Program**

**Life Skills**
The team recommends providing girls with more LS sessions, as well as repetition of topics to ensure they feel comfortable discussing these topics and remember the material. RtR should also providing LS sessions to teachers, which could increase their involvement in ensuring a safe and gender-friendly learning environment. Also, RtR should provide parents with orientation on important issues that directly impact the well-being and development of their daughters, such as menstrual hygiene management (MHM), early marriage, among others. By including parents, RtR could help them understand the support girls need to succeed in school.

**Holistic Approach, Extend Life Skills Trainings**
Extending LS training to teachers, boys, and parents could help RtR develop a more inclusive approach that may reduce demand for early marriage and other practices that negatively impact girls’ education. By increasing the community’s awareness of the value of girls’ education, RtR could improve the program’s sustainability and long-term impact. RtR should also invite police officers and government officials to talk with the community and parents about the illegality of early marriage and other relevant topics that affect the wellbeing of girls.

**Further Training for SMs**
SMs often act as local female champions and role models to promote girls’ right to education. Given the importance of their job, it is imperative that they feel confident and prepared to engage in these discussions. To develop the skills of SMs and keep them empowered, RtR should provide extensive training and follow up sessions. Future training should include sessions on how to keep girls motivated, children’s rights, legal provision and country laws, and counseling techniques. SMs may also benefit from RtR’s support to expand their professional network and have informational interviews or visits with staff in RtR’s headquarters, ministries of Nepal, or organizing meet-and greets with strong female leaders in the capital. This exposure and hands-on learning may help SMs learn new creative ways to help communities understand how cultural gender norms limit both girls’ and boys’ life options, and encourages them to give equal opportunities to both.

**Continuous Academic Support for Scholars**
Girls need to receive continuous academic support to show sustainable improvements in their academic performance. It is important that girls receive support from the sixth to tenth grades and not
only prior to examinations. The team believes additional academic support could positively influence girls’ motivation, self-esteem, and retention rates. Additionally, RtR should support girls who do not pass the examination with extra tutorial support to encourage them to re-take the exam and prevent them from being at risk of dropping out of school and/or seeking early marriage as an alternative option. The team also recommends that RtR integrate a support system to aid girls in identifying potential scholarships for tertiary education and undergraduate studies. Finally, RtR should provide vocational training to girls at risk of dropping out of school, as formal education does not work for every girl.

**Teachers’ Preparation**

Teachers should also receive training on gender issues to improve their role in providing both girls and boys with equal opportunities to succeed according to their own abilities. Teachers may also benefit from attending LS sessions and it could avoid potential disconnects between the messages that girls learn in LS sessions and what they see and learn in school. There is also a need for better coordination with the Ministry of Education for teacher professional development. To improve the integration of GEP in school systems, RtR should implement a train the trainer strategy with schoolteachers for the program to be sustainable after RtR phases out.

**Innovative Partnerships**

RtR should connect with existing programs in Nepal that have been successful at integrating arts, sports, and talent to girls’ education. RtR could increase its impact greatly by incorporating the proven power of artistic expression – drawing, painting, music, drama, dance and more – in LS sessions to help girls’ heal emotionally, learn critical skills, and achieve their highest potential. Potential partnerships could include FHI 360 for sports activities, Save the Children for arts, or the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation of Nepal for cultural events.

**Research Monitoring and Evaluation (RM&E)**

The team recommends that RtR involve more participants and other program stakeholders in the design and implementation of RM&E systems and the development of program indicators. This will ensure that indicators are relevant to each particular context where RtR operates and that the indicators track and meet the needs of RtR’s main stakeholders.

**Literacy Program**

To ensure sustainability of libraries, RtR should design indicators that assess the sustainability of libraries in schools that are no longer receiving support from RtR. Potential indicators include: amount of library management committee meetings per month; number of participants that regularly attend meetings; strategies developed to fundraise for library support; number of strategies implemented; and number of books collected. Establishing this library tracking system may inform RtR about how libraries operate after they cease receiving support and could help identify what strategies work and why. To ensure relevance of indicators, RtR should consult with schools, libraries, and communities.

The team also recommends RtR develop a more systematic structure to track reading habits so that RtR can assess the impact of its programs. To assist RtR in this endeavor, the team designed the following tools:

**Reading Logs**

The reading log may help RtR and teachers track the amount of time students read, the type of books they read, and whether students enjoy the books they read. While the log is an individual tool designed to track individual student’s reading habits, RtR could also use the tool to quantify how much time students are reading. The reading log has the potential to enable RtR to calculate a difference in the average time students spend reading at the beginning of the school year compared with the end of the year. For more information and instruction on the reading log, please refer to ANNEX IV.
**Reading Diaries**
Reading diaries may also help track reading habits for a precise period. Diaries may also help track specific information about reading attitudes. Students should keep the diary for one year and each entry should include the date, the name of the book, and a brief summary of what the book is about. The entry could also include how the reading made the student feel, whether it was relatable, and what the student liked or did not like about the book. The team believes the diaries are an opportunity for students to express their attitudes toward reading, to reflect on what they have learned, and to make connections between what they know and what they learn through reading. As such, the diaries may become a resourceful research tool for future impact evaluations.

**Reading Habits Survey**
The team designed the reading habits survey to provide RtR with a tool to collect baseline data on reading habits. As such, the survey aims to capture the way children practice reading, including time devoted to reading, likeness of reading, and what kind of reading. RtR should administer the survey three times throughout the program (prior to program implementation, at midterm, and at program completion) to assess the impact of LP on childrens’ reading habits. For more information on the tool and instructions in administering the survey, please refer to ANNEX V.

**Girls’ Education Program**
The team recommends RtR develop a more participatory approach for RM&E systems that includes stakeholder feedback and recommendations. It is also important to include SMs in the design of RM&E systems and indicators to ensure the program and indicators meet the needs of the community and the girls they support. The team also recommends RtR develop a more systematic structure to track and monitor girls’ LS to better enable RtR to assess the impact of its program. To this effect, the team recommends the implementation of the following tools:

**Tracking Girls’ Life Skills**
The team designed the Life Skills Tracker (LiST) to provide RtR with a tool to collect baseline and periodic data to help monitor progress in girls’ knowledge of LS topics. To help establish causality, the team strongly recommends the use of a control group during LiST administrations. Finally, it is imperative that SMs receive training on the proper use of LiST in order to ensure accurate data collection. Please refer to ANNEX VI for instructions on the implementation of LiST.

**Life Skills Journals**
The team recommends the uses of journals in which girls can write about and reflect on their thoughts and skills gained after for each LS session. This would help them remember important lessons as well as create a platform for girls to see their own improvement and comprehension of topics. In addition, LS journals could help RtR’s RM&E team gain a better understanding of the influence that LS topics have on girls’ lives.
ANNEXES

ANNEX I

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading Habits
According to a review of the literature, reading habit is the behavior that expresses the likeness of reading, the tastes of reading, and the way an individual organizes their reading. One could also identify reading habit by how much, how often, and what the reader reads. Reading is the foundation to obtaining, accumulating, using, and creating knowledge across content areas. Children who read for meaning are able to enrich their lives in a way that fosters the development of intellectual potential. To encourage children's reading in an effort to facilitate these outcomes, it is necessary to establish environments that promote healthy reading habits and attitudes. Studies conducted on children's reading habits determine that intrinsic reading motivation is essential to improving children's habits and attitudes toward reading. Studies also show that children with higher levels of reading interest experience excitement or joy when they read and they also learn more when they are interested in what they are reading. In addition, reading motivation is highly correlated with reading achievement. Researchers have also studied the effects of family cultural capital and found that there is a positive correlation between family cultural capital and reading motivation. They also found a significant correlation between reading motivation and reading behavior; however, they did not find a direct effect between family cultural capital and reading behavior, which underscores the importance of intrinsic motivation. In other words, where reading motivation is absent, family cultural capital has no positive impact on reading behavior.

As mentioned above, intrinsic reading motivation is a big determinant of reading habits. It is even more important than parental education and income. For example, students who are intrinsically motivated to read also perform better on reading comprehension tests. However, various studies reveal that although children are born with the intrinsic motivation to learn, this motivation decreases in elementary school and is most pronounced between Grade 1 and Grade 4. Because intrinsic motivation is essential for improved reading habit, it is important to engage and motivate children. To keep students engaged, books need to be relevant to their lives, meaning that students are able to make a connection between the story and their lives. By giving students access to a wide range of reading material, students are able to choose from a variety of books including stories, poems, and picture books. However, when children have a large quantity of options, it is important for teachers to pique their interests with "book selling" techniques. Students also need various opportunities to engage in reading activities, such as silent reading, reading with a friend, paired reading, or listening to the teacher read aloud to the classroom. Studies show that time spent reading in the classroom leads to reading proficiency and motivation, while reading at home leads to comprehension. Students also need opportunities to make choices about what they read and how they engage in and complete literacy tasks. By providing children with the ability to choose, they enhanced their sense of self-initiation, which increases their likelihood of learning more. Another way to engage students is by providing them with opportunities to talk with others about what they are reading. A final method to increase students’ motivation is to offer relevant incentives. Studies show prizes unrelated to reading reduce intrinsic motivation, however, relevant prizes such as a book, a bookmark, or even extra time for pleasure reading can have the opposite effect.

Just as the relevance of a gift impacts reading behavior, so does the reading environment. As mentioned earlier, it is necessary to establish environments that promote healthy reading habits and attitudes. Libraries play an essential role in society. They provide a wide range of attractive and relevant reading material to those who cannot constantly buy new books. Just as public libraries provide society with enriching reading materials, school libraries provide students access to
supplementary materials that complement and enhance the learning provided by prescribed textbooks. However, the existence of a school library is not sufficient. The arrangement of school libraries must be exciting and attractive to children to make it seem like a place worth visiting. In addition, school libraries must have some social space or social learning space since children acquire most of their learning through conversation. Libraries should provide engaging communal spaces where children could interact collaboratively for individual and group research, as well as quiet areas for reading or studying. By adding imaginative conversational spaces to the school library, the library could become a real learning facility.

Girls’ Life Skills
The world is experiencing the largest ever cohort of young people – more than 1.2 billion aged 15 to 24 years worldwide – progressing from childhood to adulthood and it is essential that attention and efforts be made to increase access and opportunities for an education of quality. Youth has been described as a time that “can offer most valuable opportunities to learn life skills and ground self-identity”, but young boys and girls face obstacles and challenges at various degree that hinder or block this time of growth and reflection. Life skills education can help bridge this gap by providing knowledge, skills, values and attitudes through the following four pillars of learning: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and with other, and learning to be. Garg and Gupta in their article “Enhancing life skill education through various activities” state the main objective of life skill education is to enable the learner to develop a concept of oneself as a person of worth and dignity. The article suggests the following dynamic activities to encourage the implementation of life skills and how to evaluate: Self-awareness; Skill to cope with emotions; Skill to cope with stress; Empathy; Decision-making skill; Problem-solving skill; Creative thinking; Critical thinking skill; Effective communication skills; Interpersonal relationship skills.

UNESCO Bangkok developed an advocacy piece in 2008 that describes Life skills-based education (LSBE) as an approach to education that can facilitate gender-responsiveness and can contribute to gender equity in teaching and learning. UNICEF defines LSBE as “an interactive process of teaching and learning which enables learners to acquire knowledge and to develop attitudes and skills which support the adoption of healthy behaviors.” Experts consulted for this advocacy brief discuss how LSBE is designed to enhance efforts to positively develop or change behaviors through a balance of knowledge, attitudes and skills to promote greater inclusiveness and empowerment, particularly for girls from disadvantaged backgrounds. It goes on to explain that gender responsive strategies often increase the multi-generational community-level impact, particularly in “patriarchal” families.

Literature on gender programs confirms that there is a misconception concerning gender about it being a topic mostly related to women and girls. For gender programs to be effective there needs to be an increase in stakeholder engagement, particularly men and boys, communities need to be actively engaged and beneficiaries need to be part of finding the solution from start to end. Evidence shows that there has been a shift in how girls are perceived but gender biases that are entrenched in societal norms constrain girls’ from tangible opportunities. It is widely recognized that an enabling policy and societal environment is necessary to pursue an effective girls’ education system that tackles girls’ obstacles to negotiate key life decisions. Penina Mlama, author of Gender Responsive Pedagogy: A teacher’s Handbook describes how gender inequities pervading society are carried into the school environment through school processes such as teaching, teacher–student interaction, school management, and the plan and design of the physical infrastructure. She defines gender responsive pedagogy as a call for teachers to take an all-encompassing gender approach in the processes of lesson planning, teaching, classroom management, and performance evaluation.

Educate A Child (EAC), a global program of the Education Above All Foundation (EAA) that aims to significantly reduce the number of children worldwide who are denied their right to education, published
a report in 2015 which focused in school classrooms as the most common place in which structured learning takes place with groups of children. Inadequacy of learning space and associated facilities often include over-crowded or dangerous classrooms, lacking in adequate sanitary facilities and lacking water for hygiene. These conditions often have a greater implication on girls’ due to health risks associated with inadequate toilets and sanitation, and an increase of school drop-outs due to safety concerns.

Moreover, World Vision’s 2008 Report “Before She’s Ready: 15 Places Girls Marry by 15” discusses how societies endorse discriminating values against girls and women which creates a cultural conditioning for norms behind traditional practices that harm girls, such as early and child marriage. These practices often force women to assume a low status in their communities where confidence and participation are discouraged. The report explains, “Entrenched gender roles make it difficult for a girl to imagine life beyond what her community imposes on her”. The lack of encouragement present in girls’ lives prevents them from developing their self-worth, which makes them more willing to accept harmful practices and norms that prevent them from further self-development. Training in life skills, particularly for most vulnerable children, can help lay the groundwork for healthy choices, develop confidence and courage needed to complete an education and delay marriages. These steps help increase girls’ chances of a full, healthy life for themselves, their children and the broader community.
ANNEX II

GEP’S IMPACT OBSTACLES

Economic Stability: The parents of GEP scholars are often illiterate and unable to provide economic or academic support to girls. The dire conditions many families find themselves in lead to girls being the first to be removed from schools to support family needs (such as taking care of younger siblings or elderly, feeding animals or working to help financially) or married off at an early age to alleviate the family from any financial responsibility. Additionally, GEP works in remote economically disadvantaged areas that often lack basic resources such as hospitals or police enforcement.

Many parents consider children should go to school only in free time and do not consider their education to be a priority. During harvest season, both girls and boys do not attend school to help their families work the fields. Moreover, there is a problem of employment opportunities in poor communities. Technical careers tend to be the most financially lucrative, but also the most expensive degrees to pursue and least likely for girls to enroll in. When communities and girls’ see even educated people often find themselves unemployed or struggling financially the motivation to study reduces and people struggle to find the value in investing in education.

Traditional practices: The deeply engrained customs and ritualistic nature of these societies make it difficult to affect significant changes in behavior.

Early marriage
Dropout rates in schools are very high due to early marriage. Marriages are often arranged 3 to 4 years in advance for young girls, so by the time that SMs reach out and support girls in trying to negotiate a delay in the ceremony it is too late. Teachers and SMs try to encourage girls to not get married until they are financially sustainable, but many are not given the choice to complete their studies.

Some societies (Madhesi communities) believe the earlier a girl gets married (preferably, before menstruation period begins), the more likely their families are to enter heaven. Girls’ carry the burden of ensuring a family’s space in heaven per this belief, which reinforces the tradition of marrying girls off at a young age and not allowing them to complete their education. Some girls approach SMs for help concerning early marriage but most of the time they feel they cannot challenge parents’ decisions and they accept it as a reality.

Family dynamics
Pre-existing gender roles in the community and within the household often limit girls’ opportunities for self-development. At home, many girls are frequently required to prioritize household chores over schoolwork, making it difficult for them to manage their time to complete homework or find study time. SMs sometimes engage with discussions with parents to help delegate household chores, but it rarely makes a difference in girls’ lives because often there is no one else available to help families. Education is often viewed as a more valuable investment for boys who are more likely to be sent to private schools.

Kamlari (domestic labor)
Kamlari is a form of indentured servitude. Poor families in certain regions of Nepal remove their daughters from school and sell them to spend years of their lives performing Kamlari to help pay out family loans or because they cannot afford the financial burden of caring for them. The practice of Kamlari has been illegal in Nepal since 2002, but support is needed to completely eradicate this tradition through family trainings to help recognize and stop Kamlari, as well as to educate communities on the legal consequences of this practice.
Commuting: Distance, safety concerns, cold weather and floods affect the ability of girls to attend school. During winter, it is particularly hard to commute to school, as students are at risk of harm due to limited visibility because of fog, frostbite, and illnesses. Families often cannot afford to protect themselves or their children from extreme weather conditions. Rivers get flooded in rainy season and because students cannot cross these areas, they miss school.

Although many of these obstacles have been taken into account in the design of GEP, further adjustments may be required to the design of activities and implementation plans and priorities.
## ANNEX III

### Library Rating System

#### Library Rating System Indicators by Literacy Strategy Theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Priority No.</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Phase 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literate Environment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>A book-leveling system is in place (GI-related)</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome: Improved school environments that are conducive to learning</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Books appropriate for children’s ages and abilities are displayed at children’s eye level and children can reach the books</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>The library furniture is in good condition and allows for easy movement and activities to take place</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Print-rich materials are displayed on the walls</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to Read</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>The library is open for student use during non-designated time on a weekly basis (GI-related)</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome: Ensure sufficient and effective reading time</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>A functional checkout system is in place (GI-related)</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Students/classes from all target grades have a designated library period on a weekly basis</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>At least 5 students from each class per target grade have checked out books in the previous quarter (GI-related)</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Teachers/librarians conduct reading activities with students during the library period on a weekly basis</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Librarian or teacher has participated in at least one library training per phase (GI-related)</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome: Increased effectiveness of educators to encourage the habit of reading</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>The principal/director/leader from the school has participated in at least one library training</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>The school has hosted at least one school-based training per phase for primary school teachers who did not attend the RnR training</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and Community Engagement</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>A school committee (new or existing) has been given responsibility for making decisions concerning the library</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome: Increased family and community support for reading and involvement in library activities</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>The school committee met at least once in the previous quarter to discuss the library and literacy activities at the school</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>NEW! The school has created a literacy plan that details literacy activities aimed at involving families and communities that is updated annually</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>There is at least one community mobilizer identified by the school acting as a school-community liaison</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>NEW! The school has held at least one parent meeting to discuss support for children’s literacy and the library in the previous six months.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>The school has hosted at least one school-based literacy event per phase for families and communities</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>The school has created a library sustainability plan</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total number of indicators 15 18 19
ANNEX IV

Reading Log

Introduction:
The reading log tool is designed to track individual student’s reading habits during the school year. The tool requires students to track on a daily basis the book they have read, the number of minutes read and their feeling about each particular book. The log is designed to be managed by the principal teacher and it will enable teachers to learn how much each student is reading and what each student is reading. Furthermore, it will enable teachers to identify students that are not reading and work in order focus on encouraging their reading habits. Finally, the tool will enable teachers and RtR to track whether students reading habits are improving or whether they have remained stagnant. RtR may use the reading log to calculate the average reading times of students in a class and compare these average at the beginning and end of the year, as well as to compare reading habits prior to RtR’s support and after the schools has received RtR support.

Instructions:
The reading log is principally managed by the teacher. The teacher should introduce students to the reading log at the beginning of the school year as the tool is to be used daily by students throughout the year. Once the teachers hand out the log to the students, teachers should ask students to fill out their name, school, grade, and month. Each reading log is designed for a period of one month.

Students should take the log home every night and fill out the date, the title of the book they have read, amount time spent reading, and how they felt about the book. Teachers should emphasize the importance of filling out the log every night, and ensure that he/she will not grade the log, as the objective is to obtain accurate information on how much students read. Teachers need to explain that if the student does not read that day they should write zero (0), under minutes read and leave the other fields blank. To ensure that students fill out the log, teachers should inform parents of the activity and recommend that they help their children fill out the log; parents should verify and sign the log at the end of every month. Finally, teachers should quickly look over logs in the morning to ensure that students are filling them out.

At the end of every month, the teacher collects the reading log and distributes the new log for the upcoming month. Teachers should carefully look over the log and identify which students need encouragement to improve their reading habits. At the end of the month, field facilitators will collect reading logs and calculate average reading time per month, per student, per class, and per school. Then, field facilitators will provide this information to the Country Office on a quarterly basis.

Below is an example of a reading long, which the team developed; however, the team recommends RtR consult with program stakeholders, particularly teachers and field facilitators, to adapt the tool to better suit their needs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Book Title</th>
<th>Minutes Read</th>
<th>This book made me feel..</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I like it a lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>आइतबार</td>
<td>नाम 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>😊</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>सोमबार</td>
<td>नाम 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>😊</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>मंगलबार</td>
<td>नाम 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>😊</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>बुधबार</td>
<td>नाम 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>😊</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>बिहिबार</td>
<td>नाम 5</td>
<td></td>
<td>😊</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>शुक्रबार</td>
<td>नाम 6</td>
<td></td>
<td>😊</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>शनिबार</td>
<td>नाम 7</td>
<td></td>
<td>😊</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Book Title</td>
<td>Minutes Read</td>
<td>This book made me feel..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I like it a lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>आइतबार</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>😊</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>सोमबार</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>😊</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>मंगलबार</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>😊</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>बुधबार</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>😊</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>बिहिबार</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>😊</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>शुक्रबार</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>😊</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>शनिबार</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>😊</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parent Signature: ______________________________________
Date: ____________________________________________
ANNEX V

Reading Habits Survey

Introduction:
The Reading Habits Survey provides a quick indication of third, fourth, and fifth, grade students’ reading habits. For the purpose of this survey, in accordance to RtR’s reading habits definition, the habit of reading is defined as frequent and voluntary reading. As such the survey sets to capture the way children practice reading, including time devoted to reading, likeness of reading and what kind of reading.

The survey consists of 15 questions and can be administered to the entire classroom or a random selection of students in 20 minutes

Administration Instructions:
A teacher, school supervisor, or filed facilitator, may administer the survey:

- Tell the students that you wish to find out how much they read and what kind of reading they like to do on their free time. Emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers and encourage students to be honest in their answers.
- Distribute the survey to your students. Once all the students have the survey, explain that together you will read the questions and the possible answers for each question. Explain to students that they have to draw a circle around the option that best represents their own answer to each question. Show them the image in the survey to ensure that they understand.
- Emphasize again that there are no wrong or right answers. Read each item slowly and clearly.

Example:

1. Are you a boy or a girl?
   - boy
   - girl

Allow students a few second to answer. Read the question for the second time. Ask students if they have answered the question and once all have provided an answer continue to the next question. Make sure that you read the number of each question to ensure that students are following.
- Once completed the survey, please collect the surveys. This survey is anonymous so there is no need for students to include their name on the survey.
Reading Habits Survey

1. How old are you?
   - 8 or less
   - 9
   - 10
   - 11
   - 12 or more

2. Are you a boy or a girl?
   - boy
   - girl

3. What grade are you in?
   - Three
   - Four
   - Five
   - other

4. Do your parents/guardian read at home?
   - yes
   - no

5. Do your parents/guardian read to you at home?
   - yes
   - no

6. How many books do you have at home?
   - I don't have books at home
   - 1 to 3 books
   - 4 to 6 books
   - 6 to 9 books
   - 10 or more

7. Do you like to read?
   - yes
   - no
8. How much do you read outside of school per week?
   • I don't read when I am not in school
   • less than an 1 hour
   • 1 to 2 hours
   • 2 to 3 hours
   • 4 hours or more

9. How many books, magazines, or comic books have you read in the last month?
   • 0
   • 1-2
   • 3-4
   • 5 or more

10. What is the title of the last book/comic book/magazine you read? (Please fill in below or leave blank if you do not remember)

   _______________________________________________________

11. What do you like to read about? (Circle all that apply)
   • Adventure
   • Animals
   • Children like me
   • Fairy tales
   • Family
   • Health and Nutrition
   • Poems
   • Other

12. When you do not read at night, what prevents you from reading? (Circle all that apply)
   • not enough time
   • no one to share with or talk about reading with
   • nothing to read that interests me
   • I prefer to do other activities
   • I do not have books or magazines in my house
13. Who helps you choose the book you read? (Circle all that apply)
   - Librarians
   - Teachers
   - Friends
   - Family
   - I chose them
   - I don’t read

14. I read because… (Circle all that apply)
   - It is fun to read
   - I learn when I am reading
   - I have to read for school
   - My parents tell me to read
   - I don’t read
15. For this question, please circle the face that describes how much you like the activity.

(Instructions: Ask the students to look at the faces. Point at the first face and state that this face means that you like the activity very much. Point at the second face, this means that you like the activity. Point at the third face and so on... Then read each of the activities listed below and for each activity read the four possible options.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>I like it a lot</th>
<th>I like it</th>
<th>It’s all right</th>
<th>I don’t like it</th>
<th>I really don’t like it</th>
<th>Don’t practice this activity</th>
<th>I don’t read at home</th>
<th>I don’t read in the classroom</th>
<th>I don’t read in the library</th>
<th>My teacher does not read to the class</th>
<th>I don’t read with friends</th>
<th>I don’t talk about books</th>
<th>My parents don’t read to me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading at home</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading in the classroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading in the library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher who reads aloud to the class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading with friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talking to others about books</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Parents read to me at home</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNEX VI

Life Skills Tracker (LiST)

Room to Read seeks to understand GEP’s impact on girls’ life skills. To support RtR in this objective, the team developed a tool to track girls Life Skills (LiST) throughout the years the sessions are taught. Please refer to ANNEX VII to view the LiST.

The team developed LiST based on two main sources of information:

1) Based on what Room to Read defines as Life Skills, the team developed a set of questions that takes into consideration the Nepalese context and appropriate ways of asking about girls’ Life Skills. The team implemented the survey and the analysis of the survey’s results allowed the team to understand how to tailor and modify the questions for a better collection of information.

2) The fieldwork activities also provided insight on the collection of context-appropriate information to assess Life Skills. The focus groups with parents/guardians, teachers, SMs, and girls, as well as an observation of a Life Skills session, allowed the team to understand how Life Skills are applied on a daily basis. This information helped the team prioritize what information to collect with the LiST and how, therefore, the final tool consists of eleven questions.

The LiST is to be implemented ideally three times: when a girl starts attending Life Skills sessions (6th grade), in the middle of the full completion of Life Skills sessions (8th grade), and after the full completion of Life Skills sessions (10th grade). Alternatively, if a girl joins the program after the 6th grade, the tool must be implemented at that moment, and two more times if possible. The objective of the triple implementation is to measure and observe the gradual change of girls Life Skills learning and comprehension level. The maximum score is 34, and it is achieved when the girl provides the best response for each question.

Every response for each LiST question has a different score, as specified in the “LiST Score Guide” in ANNEX VIII. Each response with its corresponding score will be captured in the Social Mobilizer’s LiST A (SM LiST A), which will collect information per student. The objective is to get a final Life Skills score for each girl, which can be obtained by adding up her scores for each question. For the instructions on how to use SM LiST A, please refer to the tool on ANNEX IX.

Social Mobilizer’s LiST B (SM LiST B) tool will collect the information of each girl’s score for every time LiST is implemented. A girl’s total Life Skills score for each implementation will be reflected on this table, as well as the date of implementation. This tool will allow RtR to easily observe changes in the score through the years. The last column of this tool suggests subtracting the total Life Skills score for LiST 3 minus the total Life Skills score for LiST 1 for each girl. The result is the change in Life Skills score from the implementation of LiST 1 to the implementation of LiST 3. For instructions on how to use SM LiST B, please refer to the tool on ANNEX X.

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24 Room to Read Life Skills Competency Framework.
25 The response that is consider “best” and has the higher score is the one that reveals girls have effectively gained a certain Life Skill.
ANNEX VII

Life Skills Tracker (LiST)

Life Skills (LS) Sessions
School_____________________________________ Date____________________

Student’s Name__________________________________________________________
Age ____________________________________________________________
Grade________

Is this your first Life Skills (LS) session?: Please check your answer ______Yes ______ No
If you checked “no”, approximately on what grade did you start LS sessions? _______

For each question below, please circle the option the represents you best. Please be honest with your response, there is no right or wrong answer. Thank you!

1. How confident do you feel speaking in front of your class?
   0= I never feel confident speaking in front of my class; 1= I rarely feel confident speaking in front of my class; 2= I don’t care if I have to speak in front of my class; 3= I sometimes feel confident speaking in front of my class; 4= I always feel confident speaking in front of my class.

2. Imagine you are walking down a road and you find a big obstacle that blocks your way. You remember your friend told you it was possible to climb it and pass it so you try but you are not able to do so. You…
   a) Turn around and return the way you came.
   b) Try to climb it like your friend said but if you are not able to quickly succeed, you return the way you came.
   c) Are able to continue thinking of new solutions and keep trying until you succeed.

3. When you identify people you get along with, are you able to build and nourish strong relationships with them?
   a) It’s hard for me to build relationships with new people.
   b) Usually it is not hard for me to build relationships with new people.
   c) It is always easy for me to build relationships with new people.

4. Imagine you are at school and your menstruation begins, you…
   a) Do not know what menstruation is.
   b) Feel scared or embarrassed and do not feel comfortable talking about menstruation to anyone.
   c) Feel confused but comfortable to seek help.
   d) Feel prepared and confident to manage your menstruation on your own.

5. When you have a strong emotion such as sadness or anger you…
   a) Actively seek ways to make yourself feel better.
   b) Don’t know what to do to change how you feel.
6. If you learn that a professor abused a student at your school, you…
   a) Don’t think about it because it did not affect you directly.
   b) Are capable of understanding how that student must feel.
   c) Try to understand how the student feels but you can’t.

7. Imagine Lalita is a girl in your community. Her friends invite her to the cinema during school hours. What do you think she should do?
   a) Lalita should go have fun with her friends whenever she wants.
   b) Lalita should not prioritize other activities over attending school.
   c) It is ok for Lalita to miss school sometimes, as long as you don’t do it all the time.

8. Pick the line that represents you best:
   a) I can manage my time to complete household chores and homework.
   b) I don’t know how to manage my time to complete household chores and homework.
   c) I know how to manage my time and I try, but there are too many things I have to do so it is difficult.

9. If your parents/guardians are making a decision about your life that you do not agree with, you…
   a) Usually accept their decision and don’t try to change it, they know what is best for you.
   b) Decide to express how you feel to them and/or ask support from a SM or teachers to talk to your parents/guardian.

10. Imagine one day you discover you love football and you want to join a team. You quickly realize you are not as good as the other players, and people in the community are telling you football is not for girls. Please select the scenario that best represents how you would react.
    a) I believe I can become a better football player if I practice frequently and that everyone should be able to play.
    b) I realize it might take a lot of work and that my community knows best what is right for me so I try to find a different activity.

11. Write a check mark ✓ in the boxes of all the scenarios that in your opinion are abusive.

   a) A teacher touching a student inappropriately.
   b) A student takes another student’s book supplies without the younger student’s consent.
   c) A man hitting his wife.
   d) A girl calling her younger sister stupid in public.
   e) Two sisters arguing about who should help their mother in the kitchen.
ANNEX VIII

LiST Score Guide

Every LiST question’s answer has a different score. Find the girl’s selected response in the score guide and identify the score for that response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Number</th>
<th>Survey response and corresponding score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>0 = 0  1 = 1  2 = 2  3 = 3  4 = 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>a = 0  b = 1  c = 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>a = 0  b = 1  c = 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>a = 0  b = 0  c = 1  d = 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>a = 2  b = 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>a = 0  b = 3  c = 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>a = 0  b = 3  c = 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>a = 3  b = 0  c = 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>a = 0  b = 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>a = 3  b = 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Each ✓ equals 1 point, except for option “e” (e = 0); add each point for question’s total score (maximum score = 4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNEX IX

SM LIST A
Grade __________________
Date __________________
Social Mobilizer’s Name ______________________
School: __________________

Instructions:
For each row: write her name on the first column. Write her selected response for each question on the upper row; write the equivalent score for the selected response on the lower row. Example: If the scholar’s response for question 2 (Q2) is c), write “c” on the upper row of Q2 column, and write the response’s equivalent score of 3 (as shown in Score Guide) on the lower row of Q2 column. For reference, please see the first row as an example.

In the final column “TOTAL”, add up the scholar’s scores in the lower row.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholar's name</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q3</th>
<th>Q4</th>
<th>Q5</th>
<th>Q6</th>
<th>Q7</th>
<th>Q8</th>
<th>Q9</th>
<th>Q10</th>
<th>Q11</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sarita Thapa</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>2xs</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNEX X

SM LiST B
School ___________________
Social Mobilizer____________
Grade __________

Social Mobilizer's LiST Database

Instructions:
For each row: Write the scholar’s name on the first column. Write her total score for each LiST implemented and the date when the LiST was implemented. After the LiST 3 (L3) is implemented, subtract the LiST 3 score to the LiST 1 (L1) score; write the result on the last column. For reference, please see the first row as an example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholar’s Name</th>
<th>LiST 1 score</th>
<th>L1 Date</th>
<th>LiST 2 score</th>
<th>L2 Date</th>
<th>LiST 3 score</th>
<th>L3 Date</th>
<th>Improvement range (L3 score – L1 score)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sarita Thapa</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>April 15, 2015</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>October 20, 2017</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>January 6, 2019</td>
<td>30-19= 11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Notes


v Ibid.


ix Ibid.


xii Ibid.

xiii Mathema, *Crisis in Education*.


xviii Ibid.


xx Fourth grade student, interview by Claudia Cadena and Consepsion Rodriguez, March 12, 2015.

xxi Fifth grade student, interview by Claudia Cadena and Consepsion Rodriguez, March 10, 2015.

xxii Librarian, interview by Claudia Cadena and Consepsion Rodriguez, March 12, 2015.

xxiii Male head teacher, interview by Claudia Cadena and Consepsion Rodriguez, March 10, 2015.


Gambrell, "Seven Rules of Engagement".

Crow, "Information Literacy".

Gambrell, "Seven Rules of Engagement".

Chiu, Hong, and Hu, "The effects of family cultural capital".


