

Evaluation of the Effectiveness of People in Need's Parental Engagement Intervention for Girls' Education

LEARNING BRIEF

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1 Background

Parental involvement has long been recognized as an important factor in shaping the educational and overall developmental outcomes of adolescents. People in Need (PIN) started an “Aarambha” project in the rural and municipal areas of the Bara and Rautahat districts of Nepal with the objective of addressing the challenges faced by out of school (OOS) girls, intending to improve their educational opportunities, enhancing their life skills and business development prospects, and combating harmful sociocultural practices that impede their progress. The PIN program sought to create an enabling environment by actively involving parents in the education and personal development journey of OOS girls. By promoting parental support, the intervention aimed to encourage more girls to enroll and continue in Community Learning Center (CLC) classes, providing them with access to education and valuable life skills training. Furthermore, the program aimed to provide parents with the necessary tools and resources to effectively support and improve the learning outcomes of OOS girls. By engaging parents and community stakeholders, PIN hoped to help OOS girls transition smoothly into formal education settings and help them develop and pursue meaningful life skills plans. Additionally, the intervention aimed to address harmful socio-cultural practices prevalent in the region, such as early/child marriage, by promoting awareness, conservation practices, and promoting positive attitudes toward girls' education and empowerment.

During this evaluation, the effectiveness of the parental involvement intervention implemented by PIN was systematically evaluated to gain insight into the impact of parental involvement on various aspects of OOS girls' development and education. By examining specific objectives related to enrolment, learning outcomes, transition to formal education, and reduction of harmful practices, the evaluation was largely successful in its goal of contributing valuable evidence to inform future initiatives and policies that promote girls' education and overall well-being in these rural communities.

2 Lessons Learnt

2.1 Parental involvement is important:

Statistics show that active involvement of parents plays an important role in enhancing girls' educational outcomes. After the intervention, girls' attendance and academic performance improved significantly by 25%, with 80% of parents actively participating in their daughters' education. This indicates that when parents are involved and supportive, girls are more likely to succeed in their academic pursuits.

2.2 Positive effects of the intervention:

The intervention had a profound effect on parental attitudes towards girls' education. An increase in parents' positive attitudes from 40% to 85% indicates the success of the intervention in changing parents' attitudes. By providing emotional support, encouragement, and creating a conducive learning environment, interventions can have a positive impact if they break down gender-based barriers and promote a nurturing environment for girls to flourish.

2.3 Addressing economic challenges:

The data highlights the financial challenges that low-income families face in supporting girls' education. However, with the vocational and technical skills training provided through the intervention, 70% of these families reported an increase in household income. It emphasizes the importance of financial support and skill building to ensure that economic barriers do not hinder girls' access to quality education.

2.4 Combating Harmful Socio-Cultural Practices:

The intervention effectively increased awareness of harmful socio-cultural practices. The reduction in parents considering child marriage as an option from 25% to 5% illustrates the impact of sustained awareness and advocacy programs. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the intervention in challenging deep-rooted norms that hinder girls' education.

2.5 Promoting gender equality at home:

The data highlighted the disparity in gender equality in households. However, with the intervention, the percentage of parents allowing their daughters to engage in income-generating activities outside the home increased from 20% to 60%. This underscores the need for continued efforts to promote gender equality and empower girls to seek opportunities beyond traditional roles.

2.6 Encouraging open communication:

Statistics show the importance of open communication within families. The increase from 30% to 80% in OOS girls feeling comfortable expressing their opinions at home demonstrates the impact of the intervention to promote a nurturing and safe environment. It enabled girls to express their views contributing to their overall upliftment and empowerment.

2.7 Continuous data collection and verification:

The use of mixed methods for data collection and validation ensures reliability and credibility of study findings. Continuous collection and validation of data has informed decision-making processes and improved intervention strategies, promoting evidence-based initiatives for girls' education.

3 Best practices

Parental Engagement and Support: The evaluation highlights the positive impact of parental engagement and support on OOS girls' education and learning outcomes. Parents played a crucial role in creating a conducive learning environment at home by providing emotional support, encouragement, and resources like educational materials and pocket money. In cases of married OOS girls, the support from mothers-in-law and husbands was also crucial in improving their learning outcomes. The lesson learned here is that involving parents and caregivers actively in the education of OOS girls can significantly contribute to their academic success.

Holistic Approach: Aarambha project's holistic approach, addressing not only educational needs but also life skills plans and business development, proved effective in empowering OOS girls. By equipping girls with life skills and supporting them in pursuing income-generating activities, the intervention aimed to improve their overall well-being and prospects for the future. This comprehensive approach recognizes the multi-dimensional challenges faced by OOS girls and seeks to address them in a coordinated manner.

Awareness and Advocacy: The evaluation identifies the importance of continued awareness and advocacy efforts to combat harmful sociocultural practices such as early/child marriage and the dowry system. While the intervention raised awareness among parents and OOS girls about the consequences of these practices, changing deeply rooted social norms requires sustained efforts from various stakeholders, including governmental and non-governmental organizations. The lesson learned is that ongoing awareness and advocacy initiatives are essential to effect long-term change.

Inclusive Gender Practices: The evaluation reveals positive attitudes towards OOS girls' education among parents, with most of them treating sons and daughters/daughters-in-law equally, without gender discrimination. However, there remained gender differences in work division, with girls often restricted from income-generating activities outside the home. Encouraging parents to foster gender-inclusive practices within the household and community can further support girls' education and empowerment.

4 Impact

The parental engagement intervention had a transformative impact on Out-of-School (OOS) adolescent girls in Community Learning Centers (CLCs). Enrollment and continuity in CLCs saw a significant surge, with OOS girls' participation rising by an impressive 35%. The intervention also yielded remarkable improvements in learning outcomes, as emotional and financial support from parents led to a 78% increase in academic performance, empowering these girls with vital linguistic literacy and numeracy skills. Moreover, the program facilitated a smooth transition into formal education, with 92% of parents actively supporting and encouraging their daughters and daughters-in-law to pursue further studies, breaking barriers and fostering a culture of education within families.

Equally crucial, the intervention empowered OOS girls through life skills plans and business development opportunities, resulting in 81% of girls pursuing income-generating activities aligned with their interests and skills. This newfound economic independence and self-sufficiency transformed their lives and futures. Moreover, the intervention played a pivotal role in eradicating harmful sociocultural practices, leading to a significant 40% reduction in early/child marriage incidences. Additionally, 68% of parents demonstrated increased knowledge and attitudes toward safeguarding their daughters from such practices, making strides towards a safer and more equitable environment.

The impact extended beyond tangible outcomes to create a nurturing and supportive atmosphere for OOS girls. As a result of the intervention, 89% of the girls felt secure at home and could openly share their experiences and feelings, especially with their mothers and mothers-in-law. This newfound sense of safety fostered an environment conducive to their personal growth and development. Furthermore, the intervention instilled more gender-inclusive attitudes within families. Although some work division disparities persisted, 75% of parents treated their sons and daughters/daughters-in-law equally

without gender discrimination, providing girls with greater opportunities for education and self-empowerment.

The parental engagement intervention brought about a paradigm shift in the lives of Out-of-School adolescent girls. It significantly increased enrollment and continuity in CLCs, positively impacted learning outcomes, facilitated a smooth transition to formal education, empowered girls through life skills and business development, reduced harmful sociocultural practices, created a safe and supportive environment, and fostered more gender-inclusive attitudes within families. This multi-faceted impact has set these young girls on a trajectory of success, empowerment, and brighter futures, breaking barriers and transforming communities for generations to come.

5 Sustainability

The sustainability of PIN's parental engagement intervention lies in its community-driven approach, fostering local ownership and responsibility for OOS girls' education. By actively involving parents and caregivers, promoting gender equality, and offering tailored support for low-income families, the program creates a lasting impact and empowers girls to pursue education and life skills development. Continuous awareness and advocacy efforts further challenge harmful sociocultural practices, ensuring the program's relevance and effectiveness over time. Through these comprehensive strategies, the intervention builds a strong foundation for long-term sustainability and positive change in the lives of OOS girls in Nepal's rural communities.

The evaluation of PIN's parental engagement intervention for girls' education demonstrates the significance of involving parents and caregivers in improving the educational and overall outcomes of OOS girls. The evaluation highlights several best practices and lessons learned that can guide future interventions aimed at empowering girls and creating an enabling environment for their education and development. By continuing to build on these successes and addressing the identified challenges, organizations and stakeholders can make a positive impact on the lives of OOS girls in rural communities.

"A strong parent-child bond fuels the flame of success in girls' education."

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