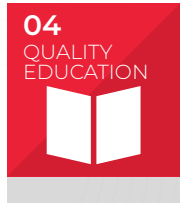
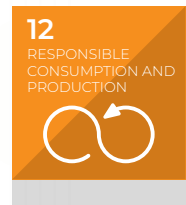
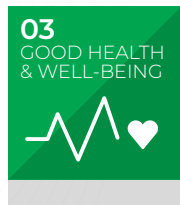


ADVANCING SDGs AND REALIZING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN NEPAL:

CHILD INFORMED SDGs REVIEW REPORT



JUNE 2024



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYM

AAAA	Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development
CEHRD	Center for Education and Human Resources Development
CSO(s)	Civil Society Organization(s)
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ERO	Education Review Office
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GPI	Global Peace Index
HDI	Human Development Index
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer/Questioning, and Intersex
MDG(s)	Millennium Development Goal(s)
MICS	Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MoHP	Ministry of Health and Population
MoWCSC	Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
NCRC	National Child Rights Council
NGO(s)	Non-governmental Organization(s)
NPC	National Planning Commission
NPHC	National Population and Housing Census
SDG(s)	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
SC	Save the Children
SDGGC	Sustainable Development and Good Governance Committee
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
VNR	Voluntary National Review

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In July 2024, Nepal will present its third Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Given the crucial importance of children's rights in achieving and sustaining the SDGs beyond 2030, we strongly assert that children's needs and perspectives must be integrated at every stage of SDG implementation, evaluation, consultation, and reporting.

Hence, this report has been prepared in consultation with children, civil society organizations, and experts. For which, a Child Scorecard (CSC) approach was utilized to understand children's opinion and perception on the gains made by Nepal to achieve SDG and provide critical inputs on the progression being made using child-friendly consultation and discourse tools, such as, an emoji board. During the consultation, the child participants ranked the level of implementation of each goal studied through the children's scorecard. Secondary sources were also utilized to triangulate the quantitative data.

An indication of Nepal's dedication to the SDGs is their incorporation into several national plans, policies, and initiatives, such as, the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Periodic Plan and its corresponding objectives. In 2016, National Planning Commission (NPC), as the SDGs focal agency of the government, formulated a SDGs 2030 roadmap with 494 total indicators. However, the indicators were updated in June 2023, reducing the total to 301.¹

Consultations with children and multiple stakeholders reveal several challenges in achieving the SDGs in Nepal. Consultations provide evidence that a majority of under-represented families do not prioritize their children's education, leading to forced drop out, and exclusion from school settings. Furthermore, the stereotypical notion that education is not required for girls, children with disabilities, and stigma associated to children from the LGBTQI+ community also compounds the lack of access to quality education. Similarly, anecdotal evidence suggests that families tend to prioritize income generation activities from children more than child's education.

The vicious cycle of poverty deprives children and their families from accessing essential services for example, health, nutrition, education, well-being, which is further aggravated by gender disparity. The mid-day meal programs introduced in schools have been considered as a novel approach to ensure retention of children in schools and addressing malnutrition. For school mid-day meals, the government allocates NPR 15 per primary school child. While this is regarded as a good initiative, it is considered insufficient. Additionally, the Government of Nepal provides child nutrition allowances of NPR 532 per child under 5 years old. In 2023, the Government of Nepal provided child nutrition allowances for 1,137,995 children.

¹National Planning Commission, (2023), SDGs revised indicators.

Most participants stated that cities and villages still lack access to safe drinking water, forcing them to wash their clothes, take baths, and drink water from streams and ponds. Lack of access to high-quality healthcare in rural areas was identified as a major barrier by the participants. Many participants expressed concern over the lack of qualified healthcare professionals in Karnali, as a majority of health practitioners do not prefer to be stationed in Karnali given its distant and hard-to-reach geographical and socio-economic structure. However, quality health facilities are centered in major city areas, and access to treatment and services is expensive. Hospitals operated by the government are overcrowded.

Consultations reveal that mental health and access to mental health services is still considered a taboo. According to the National Mental Health Survey of Nepal 2020, the prevalence of mental distress among adolescents is reported to be 5.2%.² A majority of children consulted in Madhesh and Karnali during the child score card process shared that, children of their age group have experienced anxiety, sadness, leading to suicidal tendency. Furthermore, there is a lack of child focused and targeted mental health practitioners, clinics, or hospital to provide holistic care and child-friendly mental health services. According to Kanti Children's Hospital data (2022/23), a total of 6589 children (Boys: 62.82%, Girls: 37.18%) received mental health and psychosocial counseling services. Similarly, Nepal Police recorded 795 children (Boys: 266, Girls: 529) committed suicide in 2022/23.³

A quick review of school enrollment data provides evidence of net enrollment rate of 70.6 percent among 4 years children at the early childhood development (ECD) and 95.6% at basic levels (Grade 1 – 5) in 2023/24.⁴ However, enrollment alone does not guarantee regular

attendance and retention. Children from Dalit and underrepresented communities, such as Teli, Koiri, Kushwaha, Chamar, Musahar, Kurmi, Dusadh, Mallaah, Raute, including those from low-income households, children with disabilities, and LGBTQI+ children, often lack access to quality education. Participants in the consultation shared their perceptions related to wealth and quality education. The qualitative data obtained from the FGDs with the children suggested that well-off families tend to enroll their children in private schools, which cater to providing quality education. Similarly, respondents believed that teachers in private schools are more accountable for students' learning and education and that they provide mentorship. This, in turn, supports the holistic development and well-being of children. The divide between private and public schools is also considered a social marker of inequality.

A majority of participants stated that despite campaigns and advocacy around child marriage, many families still believed in the notion that daughters should be married at an early stage. This is because of the entrenched harmful social norms, which condones early or child marriage, as an escape from poverty and livelihood crisis. Consultations also revealed the prevalence of violence against children by their parents, guardians, and caregivers, leading to psychological distress, fear of socialization, and isolation. Many children, particularly girls reported experiencing harassment in local transportation and public places, raising concerns about their safety and security.

Overall, children and participants expressed that despite some progress, Nepal is still falling behind on achieving several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 13, and 16.

²National Health Research Council, (2020), *National Mental Health Survey of Nepal, 2020*.

Available at: [https://publichealthupdate.com/national-mental-health-survey-nepal-2020-fact-sheet/#:-:tet=The%20prevalence%20of%20current%20mental,and%20among%20females%20\(5.1%25\)](https://publichealthupdate.com/national-mental-health-survey-nepal-2020-fact-sheet/#:-:tet=The%20prevalence%20of%20current%20mental,and%20among%20females%20(5.1%25) last accessed on 05 June 2024) last accessed on 05 June 2024

³Nepal Police, *Annual factsheet on cybercrime and suicide 2022/23 fiscal year, Women, Children and Senior Citizen Service Directorate of Nepal Police*

⁴Center for Education and Human Resources Development / MoEST, *Flash Report of 2023/24*.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	
Abbreviations and Acronyms	
Executive Summary	
1. Introduction and Context	1
1.1 Methodology	1
1.2 Policy Environment	4
2. Children Specific Sustainable Development Goals and Its Progress in Nepal	7
Goal 1: End Poverty in All Its Form Everywhere	7
Goal 2: End Hunger, Achieve Food Security & Improved Nutrition and Promote Sustainable Agriculture	9
Goal 3: Ensure Healthy Lives and Promote Well-being for All at All Ages	12
Goal 4: Quality Education	15
Goal 5: Gender Equality	19
Goal 13: Climate Action	23
Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	26
3. Conclusions and Recommendations from Children	30
3.1 Conclusion	30
3.2 Key Recommendations from Children	30
 Annex 1: Child Scorecard	 34



1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Nepal has outlined its roadmap to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, with two voluntary progress reports submitted in 2017 and 2020 as part of the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process. In July 2024, Nepal will present its third Voluntary National Review at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Recognizing the pivotal role of children in consultation, dialogue, and progress checks related to the advancement and realization of the SDGs by 2030, we firmly assert that children’s perspectives must be incorporated into every stage of SDG implementation, monitoring, and reporting. This report highlights the progress and status of the SDGs relating to child rights. Although all 17 goals are related to children; **this study is focused on SDGs 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 3 (Health and well-being), 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), 13 (Climate Action), and 16 (Peace and Justice)** covering the period from January 1, 2016, to December 31, 2023.

1.1 METHODOLOGY

The report preparation process employed the methodology mentioned below, ensuring ethical and meaningful standards for child participation and engagement.

Desk review

Existing research studies relevant to the SDGs and their impact on children in Nepal have been reviewed as part of the initial process of preparing the report. Laws, policies, or programs that have influenced children’s well-being in Nepal have also been assessed. This in-depth analysis helps to assess the extent of progress Nepal has made in implementing child-focused SDGs. Both quantitative and qualitative data have been examined to garner a holistic insight, and understanding of the implementation status of children-related SDGs.

The study utilizes a child-informed intersectional lens to further uncover and identify the challenges faced by Nepal to achieve the relevant SDG targets. This includes assessing barriers to education, healthcare, nutrition, child protection, and more. Understanding these challenges is vital for evidence-based decision-making and policy recommendations.

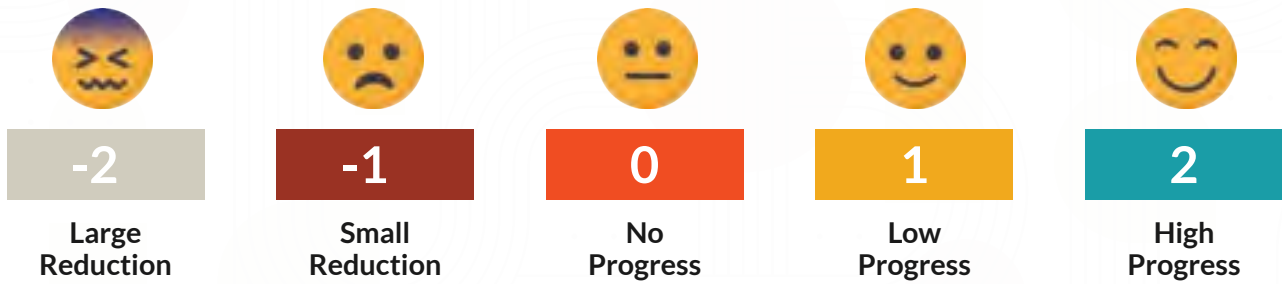
A comparison of Nepal’s progress with international benchmarks and evaluation in alignment with national laws, policies, and plans with SDG goals for children has also been conducted.

Preparation meeting with experts

On 13 December 2023, the study team conducted a preparatory meeting with SDGs experts and child rights campaigners in Nepal. This further supported with designing the study methodology.

Preparation of the Children's Scorecard

A child scorecard to grade the level of progress on the implementation of child-related SDGs was developed by Save the Children. This Scorecard was translated and pre-tested with children to contextualize and ensure child-friendly language, and signage. The scorecard offered grading, such as "0" for no progress, +1 for low progress, +2 for high progress, -1 for very small reduction, and -2 for large reduction. Each grading scale was assigned a relevant emoji to make it interesting and friendly to children.



Emoji Grading Explainer:

- 1 emoji represents one-third of the total participants who scored.
- 2 emojis represent two-thirds of the participants.
- 3 emojis represent nearly all child participants scoring the same.

Below is an example:



Almost all child participants scored the SDG as 'low progress'.



Two-thirds of child participants scored the SDG as 'low progress'.



One-third of child participants scored the SDG as 'low progress'.

Consultation with province-level child club representatives and orientation on children's scorecard

Representatives of province-level child clubs from all seven provinces of Nepal, including Madhesh and Karnali provinces were invited for an orientation on the SDGs, accountability mechanism, VNR process and the Child Scorecard methodology. After the orientation, children engaged in a consultation to review the progress of SDGs directly related to children. In addition, a pilot or field-test of the Child Scorecard was carried out by the child participants themselves. The pilot test helped to revise and contextualize questions set in the scorecard.

Province-level consultations with children

In April 2024, child consultation workshops were conducted in the Madhesh and Karnali provinces. These workshops included focus group discussions and scorecard ratings facilitated by and with children. The workshops took place in Janakpur, Madhesh Province, and Surkhet, Karnali Province. To ensure a comprehensive representation of children's voices, children from all districts of Madhesh and Karnali provinces participated in the consultation workshops. Special attention was given to ensuring representation and participation from diverse socioeconomic demographics, including caste, ethnicity, gender identity, religion, and geographical region. The consultation process also included children with disabilities, LGBTQI+ children and young people, and children from various underrepresented groups, such as Dalits.



To facilitate children's participation and ensure a broad representation, support from national and provincial-level child rights-based networks was sought. A total of 56 children participated in the Scorecard process where 40 (Girls: 25, Boys:14, LGBTQI+:1) children directly participated in the consultation workshop for focus group discussion and scorecard, and additionally 16 children contributed for Children's Scorecard.

Filling out the Child Scorecards

Child participants in Madhesh and Karnali provinces filled out the Child Scorecards. Each participant also consulted with other children who were not part of the workshops to ensure each scorecard was completed by at least two additional children. All completed scorecards were collected and analyzed to provide qualitative information about children's knowledge, experiences, and perceptions regarding the implementation of SDGs directly related to children. A total of 56 children provided ratings for each goal, guided by five principles: Universality, Leave No One Behind, Interconnectedness, Transformation, and Multi-stakeholder Partnership.

Province-level consultations with civil society representatives

Civil society representatives were consulted on the policy environment and implementation status of children-related SDGs in Madhesh and Karnali provinces. Representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working on child rights and SDGs participated in consultation workshops.

Diversity of adult participation and CSOs was considered, including participation of people with disabilities, Dalits, and people from ethnic, religious, linguistic, sexual and gender minorities.

Analysis and validation:

Quantitative data is extracted from secondary sources and analyzed alongside qualitative findings. Primarily, qualitative analysis was conducted on data generated from focus group discussions, presented in narrative statements, and supplemented by children's quotes and perspectives written on the Scorecard checklist. Regarding the Scorecard process, initially, child participants individually scored the guiding principles of respective goals. Subsequently, children discussed in groups and reached a consensus score. All scores were aggregated, and an average score was calculated for each goal. The draft report findings were shared and validated with children, civil society organizations (CSOs), and the National Planning Commission (NPC).

1.2 POLICY ENVIRONMENT

The Sustainable Development Goals ("SDGs") were enunciated in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution, "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"⁵ ("Agenda 2030"), adopted by 193 UN member states as "a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity".⁶ The 17 SDGs officially entered into force on 1 January 2016.⁷ The non-binding resolution urges all states to undertake various actions to achieve the goals over the next 15 years.

Agenda 2030 recognizes the eradication of poverty as being "indispensable"⁸ to realize sustainable development. The SDGs, also known as Global Goals, are partially built on the earlier⁵ Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). SDGs go further and seek to rectify the shortcomings of MDGs by, among other things, realizing the human rights of all and achieving "gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls."⁹

The SDGs must be considered in conjunction with two other international documents. First is the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development (AAAA) 2015, "which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development."¹⁰ The second is the Paris Agreement on Climate Change 2015 which recognized the "intrinsic relationship"¹¹ between climate change, sustainable development, and poverty eradication.

⁵ *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UNGA resolution no. A/Res/70/1, adopted on 25 September 2015. ["Agenda 2030"]*

⁶ *Agenda 2030, preamble.*

⁷ *United Nations, the Sustainable Development Agenda, available at <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda-retired/#:~:text=On%201%20January%202016%2C%20the,Summit%20-%20officially%20came%20into%20force.> ["UN SDA"]*

⁸ *Agenda 2030, preamble.*

⁹ *Agenda 2030, preamble.*

¹⁰ *Agenda 2030, para 40.*

¹¹ *The Paris Agreement on Climate Change, 2015, preamble.*

Each SDG has associated targets. In total, there are 169 targets for 17 SDGs “which are integrated and indivisible”¹². The implementation status of these goals and targets is assessed against “a set of global indicators”¹³. Currently, there are 231 individual indicators to measure SDGs.¹⁴ Further; a country may devise indicators at regional and national levels based on its own domestic scenario.¹⁵ Initially Nepal developed 494 total indicators but revised and reduced to 301 indicators in June 2023.¹⁶

The principle of ‘Leave No One Behind’ (LNOB) is crucial to the implementation of the SDGs. LNOB seeks to eliminate discrimination and reduce inequality, including overlapping¹⁷ inequalities. All governments have promised to reach the furthest behind first and most marginalized and addressing their specific needs.¹⁸ The 2030 Agenda puts a strong emphasis on the, “most vulnerable and marginalized”¹⁹, which include, among others, all children. Children are at risk like they have not been in over a generation, according to UNICEF.²⁰ That is why the successful realization of SDGs necessitates careful attention to the specific needs of children and the identification of child-specific indicators under the SDGs.

Major child rights-related development indicators included by global indicators consists of child poverty, stunting, wasting/overweight, maternal mortality, skilled attendant at birth, under-five mortality, neonatal mortality, universal health coverage, full vaccination coverage, early learning, early childhood development, physical and sexual violence against women and girls, intimate partner violence, child/early marriage, safely managed drinking waters, safely managed sanitation and hygiene, child labour, physical and humiliating punishment, sexual violence against children, and birth registration. Nepal upholds the fundamental principles of the SDGs, which are aligned with its constitution, practices, and aspirations. These principles include inclusiveness, equity, social development, economic growth, environmental protection, and the sustainable use of natural resources. Nepal’s commitment to the SDGs is evident through their integration into various national plans, policies, and programs, including the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Plans and their associated goals. **According to the National Planning Commission, Nepal requires NPR 30,384 billion to achieve the SDGs, with the public sector contributing NPR. 16,670 billion (55%) and the anticipated private sector contribution being NPR. 13,714 billion (45%). However, only NPR 21,609 billion (71%) is currently available, leaving a gap of NPR 8,775 billion (29%).**

This translates to an annual finance gap of NPR 6 billion, which accounts for 12.8% of the GDP.²¹

¹² *Agenda 2030, para 18.*

¹³ *Agenda 2030, para 75.*

¹⁴ *Measuring and Monitoring Progress Towards the Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 2020, p. 1.*

¹⁵ *Agenda 2030, para 75.*

¹⁶ *NPC 2023, SDGs revised targets.*

¹⁷ *Leaving No One Behind: Equality and Non-Discrimination at the Heart of Sustainable Development, The United Nations System Shared Framework for Action, United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, New York, 2017, p. 17. [“LNOB”]*

¹⁸ *“Leave no one behind”, UN Sustainable Development Group, available at <https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/universal-values/leave-no-one-behind>.*

¹⁹ *LNOB, p. viii.*

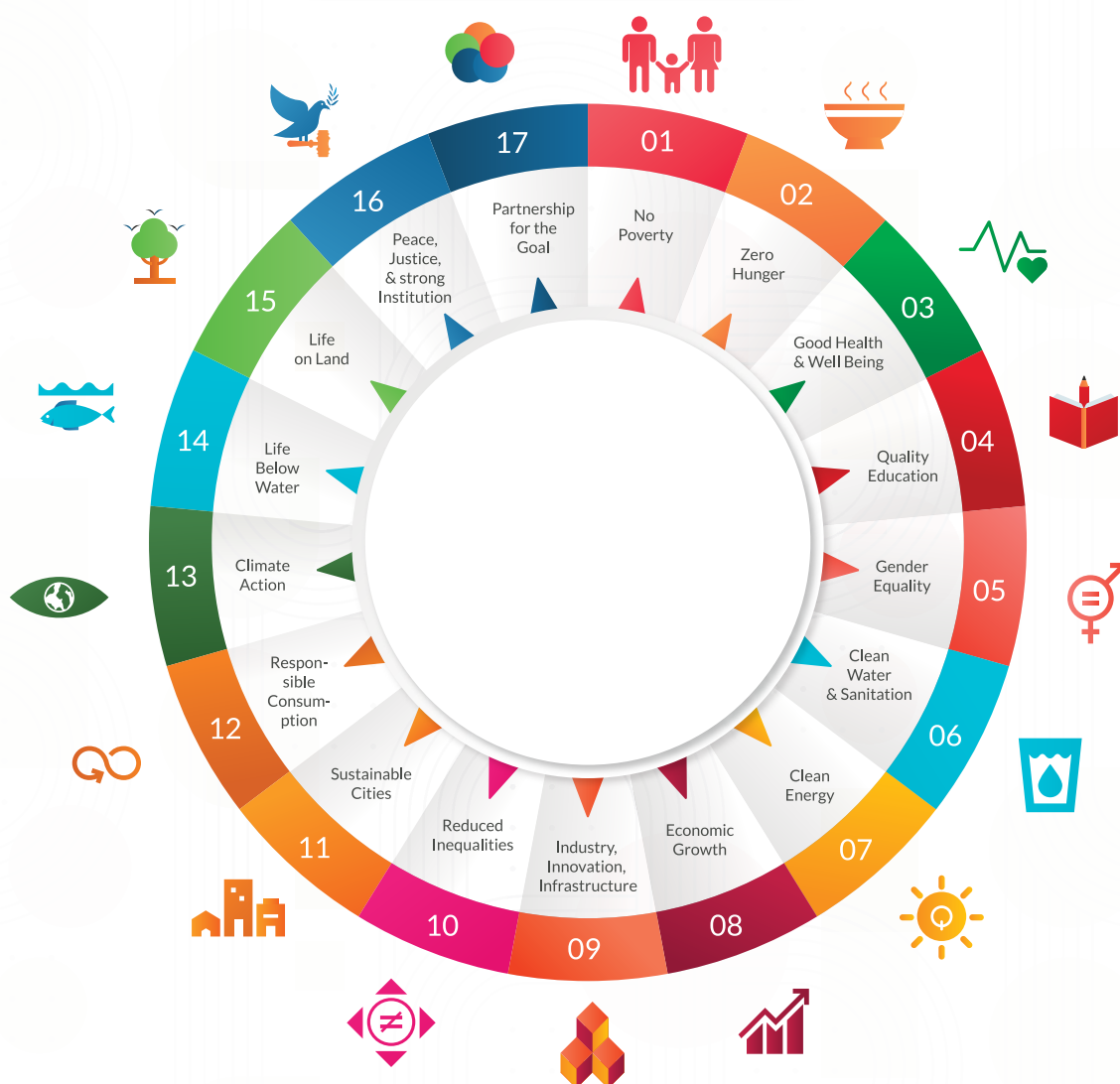
²⁰ *UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022-2025, UNICEF, available at <https://www.unicef.org/reports/unicef-strategic-plan-2022-2025>.*

²¹ *National Planning Commission, (2021), SDGs Needs assessment, Cost estimates and Financing Strategy also cited in Voluntary Mid-Term Review of the SDGs in Nepal_CS0 Spotlight Report, National Campaign for Sustainable Development, Jan 2024*

Nepal has created the following institutional set-up for the implementation of the SDGs and monitoring of the progress:

- A High-level Steering Committee on the SDGs, chaired by the Prime Minister
- Implementation and Monitoring Committee led by the Vice-Chair of the National Planning Commission (NPC)
- Sustainable Development and Good Governance Committee (SDGGC) of the National Assembly in the Federal Parliament, with representation of all the major political parties to provide oversight and national budget scrutiny on the SDGs
- Office of the Auditor General, which conducts audits on the SDG implementation

Nepal has made notable to significant progress in several SDGs, particularly in relation to SDG 1 (poverty), SDG 3 (health), SDG 4 (education), and SDG 5 (gender equality), and appears to be on track to achieve at least some of the targets under these goals. However, the biggest challenge for Nepal seems to be meeting the targets for zero hunger (SDG 2). According to the National Planning Commission (NPC), only 41.4% of the total targets have been achieved until 2023, with an anticipated increase to 60% by 2030.²²



²² Ministry of Finance, (2024), Economic Survey 2080/81, page 265

2. CHILDREN SPECIFIC SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

(GOALS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 13, 16)

AND ITS PROGRESS IN NEPAL

All 17 goals are related to children, however, this review focused on Goal 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 13, and 16.

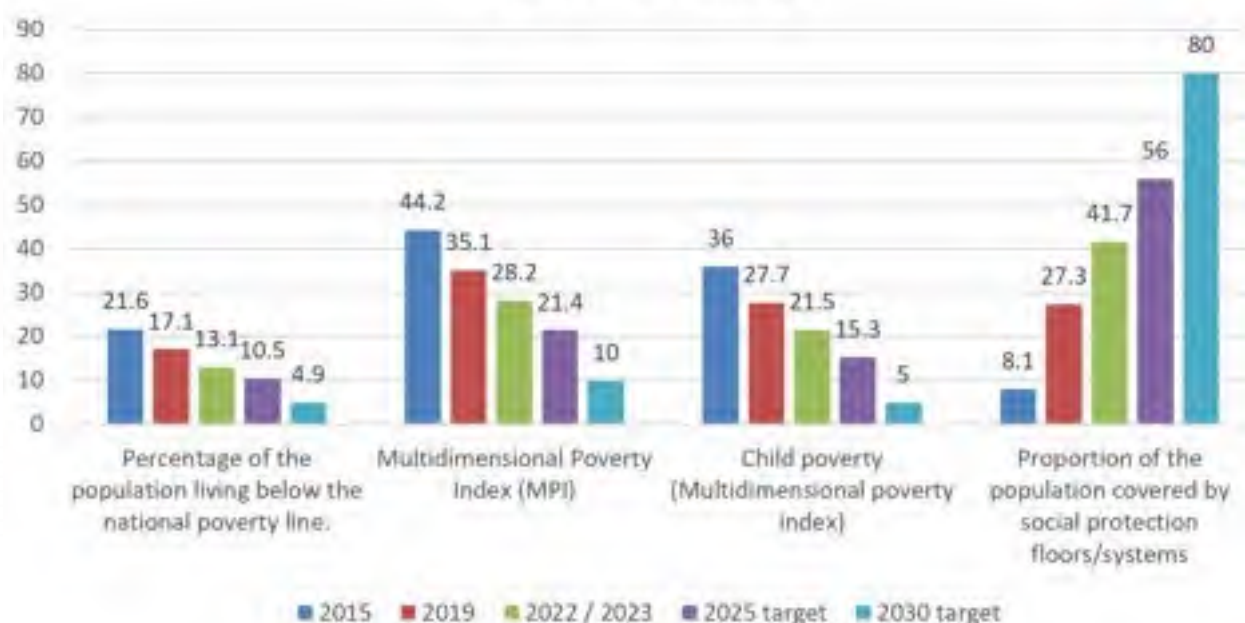
GOAL 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Among the three dimensions of human development, the standard of living makes the highest contribution to multidimensional poverty in Nepal at 45 percent, followed by health at 28.3 percent, and education at 27.3 per cent. Among the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) indicators, the largest contributors to national poverty are deprivations in years of schooling (17.7 percent) followed by nutrition (15.9 percent).²³



According to MDPI, the population below US\$ 1.25 was 23.7% in 2015 and 13.7% in 2022. However, there is lack of data on proportion of the population below the international poverty line by sex and age. MPI ratio was 28.6% in 2015 and 18.26% in 2022. There were 36% of children below the national poverty line in 2015 and 21.5% in 2022.

Goal 1 - No Poverty



(Source: NPC, 2023)

²³ Nepal Human Development Index- 2020.

Madhesh Province ranks the lowest in Nepal in the HDI, with a value of 0.519.²⁴ During the consultation, participants noted that children belonging to Teli, Koiri, Kushwaha, Chamar, Musahar, Kurmi, Dusadh, Mallaah, and other marginalized communities do not have enough food to eat, or a safe place to sleep. Most of them do not have clean water, toilet, or electricity at home. Though these families receive certain social protection benefits, such supports are inadequate, and have little impact in changing their lives.

Even among children living below the poverty line, those with disabilities, LGBTQI+ children, and girls bear the heaviest burden. This impact extends to their education, health, well-being, nutrition, and protection. Anecdotal evidence suggests that families often do not prioritize the education of children from LGBTQI+ and disability groups, and they hold discriminatory attitudes towards girls' education. This leads to forced dropouts, a lack of supportive environments at home to continue education, and pressure for these children to enter the labor market to support their families.

Karnali Province ranks the second-last in the HDI in Nepal with a value of 0.538.²⁵ Difficult terrain, lack of basic infrastructural development, high number of illiteracy, and harmful traditional practices like untouchability, child marriage, chhaupadi²⁶, etc. push children from Dalit communities like, Raute, Baadi, Damai, and Kaami to marginalization and deprivation. These children have been left behind in the pursuit of achieving the SDGs.

Majority of children perceived that poverty in Nepal, especially in Madhesh and Karnali, is gradually reducing, as many households now have food to eat and their living standards have improved compared to the past five years. However, two-thirds of the child participants felt that there has been limited progress in achieving the goal of ending poverty. One-third of the child participants believed that there has been no progress toward this goal, particularly for children and families from the Dalit caste group, who remain socio-economically disadvantaged. A child participant shared examples from Musahar communities in Madhesh Province, noting that there has been no progress at all for them.

“
A father has money to drink alcohol, but claims that he doesn't have money for their child's education, or any other necessity.

– Girl, 14, Madhesh

Two-thirds of the child participants expressed that there is low progress in achieving Goal 1, and one-third of them stated there is no progress, scoring accordingly as illustrated above. Children primarily scored “**No progress**” on the principles of “**Leaving no one behind**” and “**Multi-stakeholder partnerships**.”

²⁴ Human Development Index–Human Development Reports, GoN, UNDP, 2020. Retrieved on 24 May 2024.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Chhaupadi is one of the harmful traditional practice in Karnali and Sudurpaschim province of Nepal. During menstruation, women and girls are forced to stay overnight outside home (mostly in cow-sheds) for at least four days each month. Women and girls are not allowed to eat/drink milk and dairy products during this time.

-2	-1	0	1	2
Large Reduction	Small Reduction	No Progress	Low Progress	High Progress
		😐	😊😊	

GOAL 2:

End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

According to the 2023 Global Hunger Index, Nepal ranks 69th out of the 125 countries with available data to calculate 2023 GHI scores. With a score of 15.0, Nepal has a level of hunger that is moderate.²⁷ Nepal scored 20.8 in the Global Hunger Index 2020. Safe, nutritious, and sufficient food all year round is not available for the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants. Prevalence of undernourishment was 36.1% in 2015 and 20.6% in 2022. The prevalence of stunting among children less than 5 years of age was 36% in 2015 and 28.6% in 2022. Likewise, 30.1% of the children were underweight in 2015 and 19% in 2022.²⁸



The highest prevalence of food insecurity as measured by undernourishment is in Karnali, accounting for 4.7 percent of households, followed by Madhesh Province (3.8%).²⁹ The DHS 2022 suggests children who are stunted is highest in Karnali province (36%) and Madhesh province (29%).³⁰

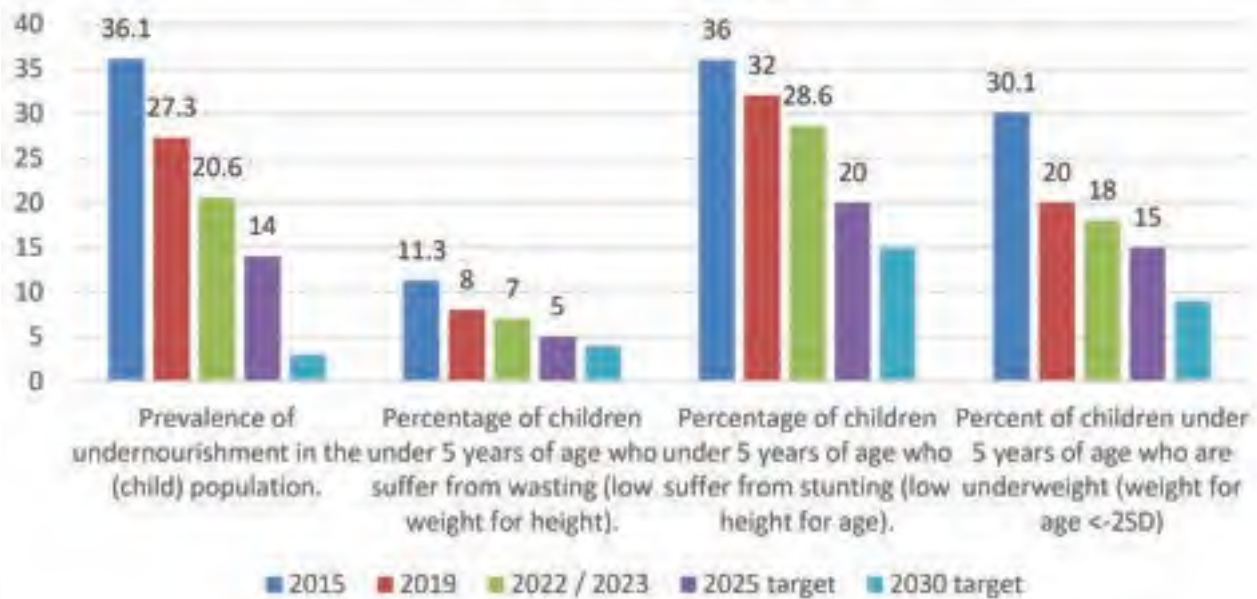
²⁷ Global Hunger Index 2023: Nepal available at: <https://www.globalhungerindex.org/pdf/en/2023/Nepal.pdf>

²⁸ National Child Rights Council, (2023), State of Children in Nepal 2023.

²⁹ Gokarna Prasad Gyawali & Prajwal Man Pradhan, Food Crisis in Nepal, Nepalese Journal of Development and Rural Studies, Volume 19, 2022, P. 3

³⁰ Ministry of Health and Population, (2023), Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2022

Goal 2 - Zero Hunger



(Source: NPC, 2023)

During the consultations, child participants shared that most people do not understand the nutritional value of home-grown food and food products available in the market. This attitude of indifference towards traditional and home-grown food sources undermines the nutritional value of easily accessible foods, creating a dependence on market food products with lackluster nutritional value.

Poor families do not have sufficient land for cultivation. The topography of Karnali does not support growing sufficient food crops for many families. Due to the unavailability and/or inadequacy of seeds, fertilizers, irrigation facilities, tools, and human resources, Nepal's agriculture is not sustainable. Raute community, the nomad people living in Karnali, solely rely on government support, and charities by other people.

Government of Nepal allocates NPR 15 for mid-day meals targeting to children at primary school. The children who participated in consultation workshops shared the practice of providing mid-day meals in schools can be considered a positive initiative that has ensured food for children at primary school level and aims to minimize



Mothers and families believe that the market-based products substituting milk and cereals for their infants have a bigger nutritional value and often choose market products over home-grown food. Families sell their products grown from the farm to the market and buy junk food for their children.

— Girl, 15, Karnali




Schools have mid-day meal programs, which is good. But why don't schools provide nutritious food? There are many instances where schools provide junk food.

— Boy, 13, Madhesh

malnutrition among children. However, children also expressed their reluctance on whether school mid-day meals are nutritious.

Majority of the child participants agreed and scored that Nepal made low progress in achieving goal 2 to end hunger.

-2	-1	0	1	2
Large Reduction	Small Reduction	No Progress	Low Progress	High Progress
				



GOAL 3:

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births) was 258 in 2015³¹ and 116 in 2022.³² The proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel was 55.6% in 2015,³³ 77% in 2019, and 80% in 2022.³⁴ The under-5 mortality rate was 38 in 2015 and 33 per 1000 in 2022. The neonatal mortality rate was 23 (per 1000) in 2015 and 21 (per 1000) in 2022.³⁵



According to DHS 2022, 79% of children are born alive in health institutions and 19% are born at home. Out of total child births in health institutions, 62% are born in government health services. Despite Nepal's progress in the health institutions, the participants were not satisfactory in government health services. Quality health services are expensive, and children from poor families are left behind by these services. The participants expressed that quality health services are not available in villages. Most health workers do not want to stay and work in Karnali, so there are few competent health workers compared to the need. Good hospitals are only available in urban cities and expensive. There is overcrowding in government operated hospitals.

In addition, participants shared that health care centers do not provide quality services for all children. For example, existing health care services do not offer LGBTQI+ affirming care, which further perpetuates discrimination and stigma against children from the LGBTQI+ community. This highlights the heteronormative structure of health care services and the lack of orientation on LGBTQI+ issues among health and medical practitioners.



There is birthing centers in the community, but not with essential equipment. Pregnant women and their families do not want to go to hospitals, thinking that if they did, doctors would refer them to a caesarian for child delivery. Women believe operation brings lifelong complications.

— Participants, Madhesh

³¹ Retrieved from NPC's SDG portal, <http://sdg.npc.gov.np/data/>

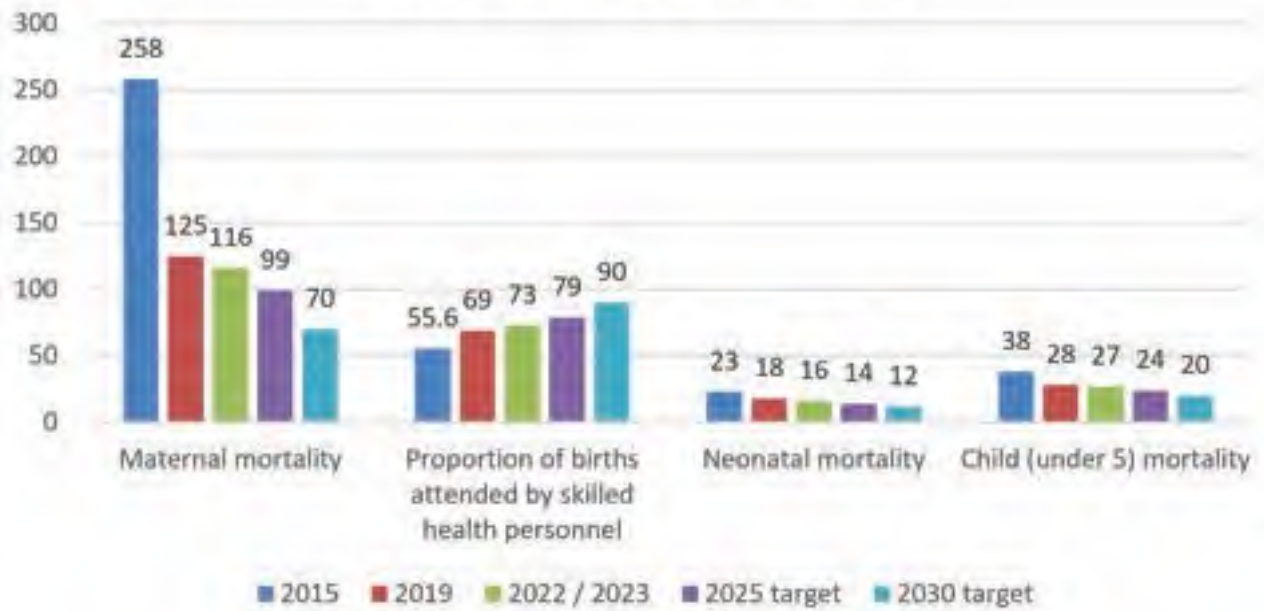
³² *Ibid*

³³ NPC SDGs revised indicators, 2023

³⁴ MoHP, (2023), *Nepal Demographic and Health Survey, 2022.*

³⁵ *Ibid*

Goal 3 - Health and well-being



(Source: DHS, 2022 / NPC, 2023)

The participants also shared that clean drinking water is scarce in most cities and villages where people use water from streams and ponds for washing dishes, clothing, bathing, and drinking. Most schools do not provide drinking water. They do not prioritize sanitation as toilets are not usable; there is no water or soap for washing hands. Education on adolescent health and menstrual hygiene is often ignored. Teachers do not teach these contents properly. Substance abuse among adolescents is a growing concern.

Children noted a rising issue with mental health, but a lack of child-friendly counselors and psycho-social support makes them hesitant to seek help. Children from the LGBTQI+ community and those with disabilities face additional marginalization due to practitioners' limited understanding of their experiences. The community's lack of awareness about available services and prevalent stereotypes among parents, guardians, and teachers further

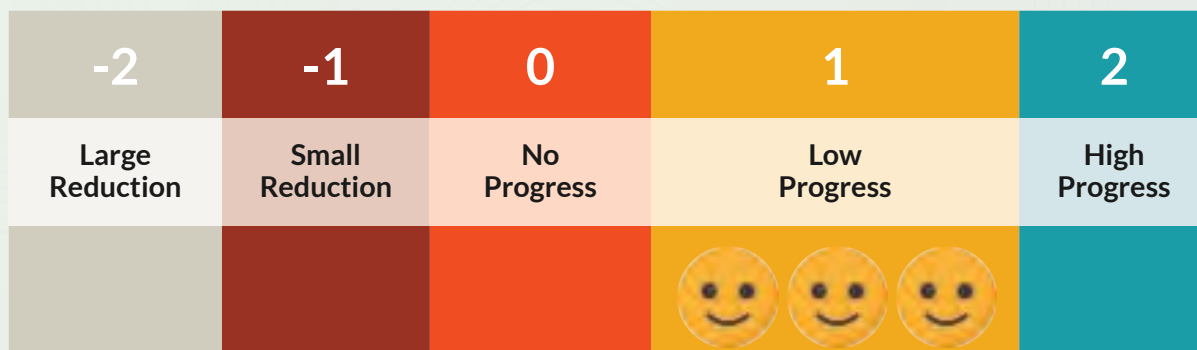


exacerbate the issue. Children struggling with mental health are often stigmatized and labeled as 'lazy,' reflecting a significant misunderstanding of mental health severity.

According to the data of Kanti Children's Hospital of 2022/23, total 6589 children (Boys: 62.82%, Girls: 37.18%) received mental health and psychosocial counseling services in Kathmandu. Similarly, the data of Nepal Police recorded 795 children (Boys: 266, Girls: 529) committed suicide in 2022/23.³⁶

“
Hospitals and health care centers are not gender sensitive. LGBTQI+ children and youth do not go to hospitals when they are sick for fear of being exposed.
 – Boy, 17, Madhesh

Most of the participants ranked that Nepal has made little progress in achieving the goal of ensuring healthy lives and the well-being of people. Almost all child participants expressed and scored that there is a low progress in Goal 3 as illustrated.



³⁶ Nepal Police, Annual factsheet on cybercrime and suicide 2022/23 fiscal year, Women, Children and Senior Citizen Service Directorate of Nepal Police

GOAL 4: Quality Education

The net enrolment rate in basic-level education reached 95.6 percent in 2023-2024.³⁷ The 2030 target is set at 99.5%. Likewise, 70.6 percent of children aged 4 years are enrolled in Early Childhood Education Programs in 2023-2024.³⁸ Gender parity has been achieved at the basic level and has almost been achieved at the secondary level, which is 0.99 percent.³⁹

04
QUALITY
EDUCATION



During the consultation, children also shared that many of their peers have secured (or in a process) to get passports to seek foreign employment by manipulating their age. A 16-year-old boy from Madhesh said, “Way before completing school (Grade 12), half of my classmates have already prepared their passports and are actively looking for foreign employment.” Additionally, it was noted that many families often increase the age of their children to send them to the labor market early, a trend that is prevalent in low- and middle-income families. This practice further exposes these children to risky and hazardous labor conditions.

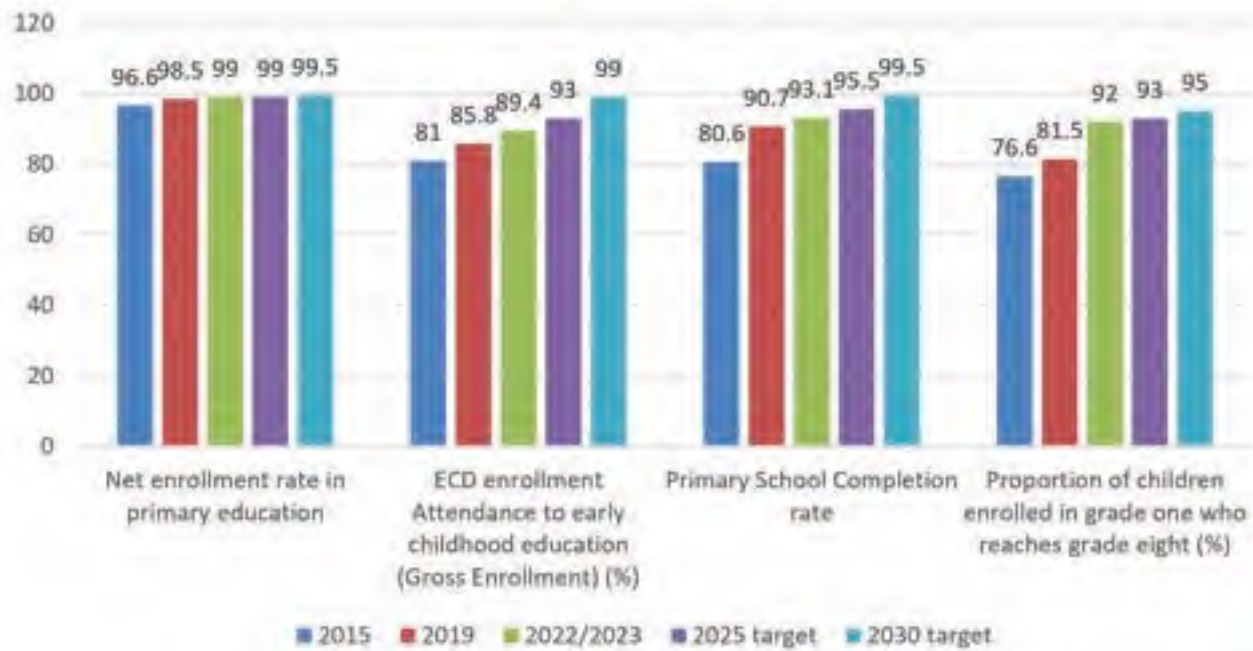


³⁷ CEHRD / MoEST (2023-24), *Flash I Report 2080 (2023/24)*.

³⁸ CEHRD / MoEST (2023-24), *Flash I Report 2080 (2023/24)*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

Goal 4 - enrollment



(Source: NPC, 2023)

According to the ‘Report on Classroom-Based Early Grade Reading Assessment 2017’ the overall achievement of grade two and three students was 65%.⁴⁰ In comparison to the pilot study in 2016, the proportion seems lower, as the achievement for both grades was 74%. According to the endline study titled ‘Endline Report: Program Impact on Student Reading Performance in Early Grades 2022’ of the Early Grade Reading Program II (EGRP II) in Nepal implemented by the Government of Nepal with the technical support of USAID, the overall achievement of grades two and three is 31% and 42%, respectively. Similarly, the National Assessment of Reading and Numeracy among Grade 3 students conducted in 2020 found that only 43.5% and 37.2% children solved reading and numeracy related problems respectively.⁴¹



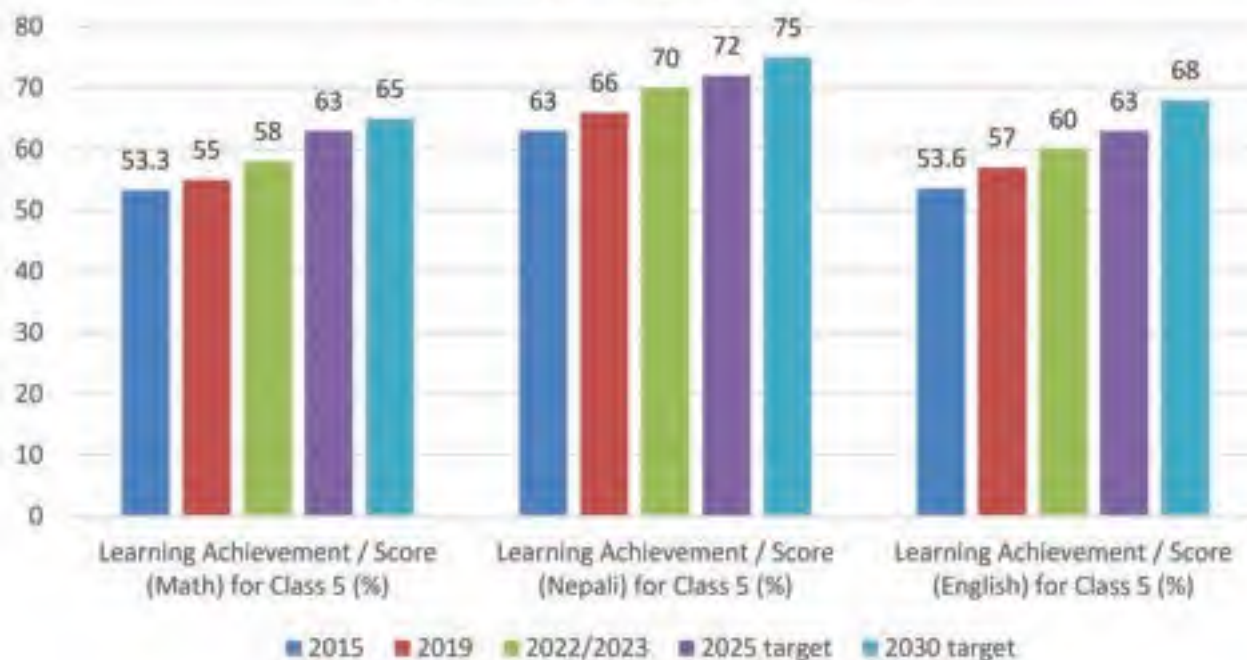
Members of school management committee and school teachers of community schools do not have trust in their own teaching and their school management. Hence, a majority of them send their own children to private schools.

— Participants in Madhesh & Karnali Province

⁴⁰ The Education Review Office, Report on Classroom-Based Early Grade Reading Assessment 2017, p.

⁴¹ Education review Office, (2020), National Assessment for Reading and Numeracy (Grade 3)

Goal 4 - Learning achievement



(Source: ERO/MoEST, NPC 2023)

Children reported that the severity of corporal punishment has reduced, but it remains common in schools, with management and teachers lacking awareness of violence-free education and its impact on children’s well-being. Conversations around Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), LGBTQI+ issues, and SOGIESC are still taboo, leading to increased stigma and discrimination. School management committees and parent-teacher associations are often non-functional, and school-based child clubs are typically limited to cultural events. The absence of intersectional and cross-sectional dialogues in schools deprives children of a comprehensive education. For example, the lack of WASH supplies, sanitary pads, or water in toilets contributes to school dropouts, particularly among adolescent girls. Furthermore, inadequate counseling facilities and forced mediation to address bullying negatively impact performance and self-esteem, leading to higher dropout rates.

According to the participants, rich families send their children to private schools where the quality of education is better compared to most of the public schools. In private schools, teachers are made more accountable towards students, their guardians, and school administration. Students are better mentored in most of the private schools. Thus, children from rich families are able to get better supervision and mentoring, whereas children from poor families are not getting quality supervision and mentoring at schools. This trend of inequality is on the rise and is contributing to the production of two types of school graduates, one who attend private school and those who attend public or government schools. Majority of participants during the consultation stated that people from Dalit and underrepresented



Children from Musahar caste group hardly complete basic school.

**– Girl, 14,
Participant, Madhesh**

or marginalized communities are often compelled to send their children to public schools. Furthermore, there is a lackluster attitude towards the quality of education provided, leading to a sense of hopelessness that undermines the perceived importance of education in driving social, political, and economic stability in the lives of children. The net enrollment rate in basic education reached 95.6 percent in 2023–24, however, retaining children in school and preventing dropouts remains a significant challenge. Many young boys, after the age of fourteen, leave school to work as laborers, or porters in India. Similarly, many girls leave, or are forced to leave school due to their families’ poor economic conditions, and get married as early as age 14 or 15. Participants reported that many of their classmates struggle with solving simple mathematics problems and reading their textbooks in Nepali and English. Poverty in families is directly linked to the quality of education, school dropout rates, and child marriage.

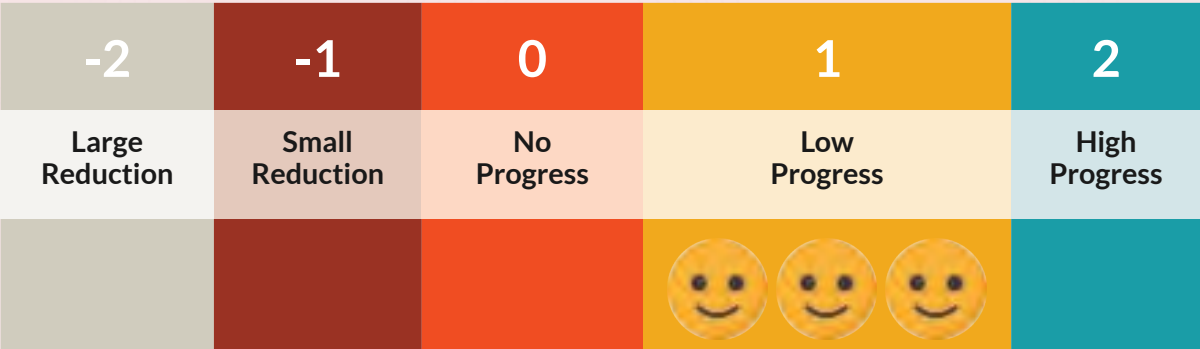
**School at Home
for children with disabilities**

In Madhesh and Karnali province, ‘School at Home’ initiative has been implemented for children with multiple disabilities who face barriers attending schools. This initiative offers learning opportunities in the comfort of their home with the support of a well-trained facilitator to eventually enroll them in formal schools. Through this approach, parents are also engaged in their children’s education, developing pedagogical skills that bring together children and their parents. ‘School at Home’ has been acknowledged as a promising approach for children with disabilities by the Government of Nepal.

Home Schooling

‘Home Schooling’ initiatives have been introduced to ensure learning and education continuity in the most marginalized communities. This helps to create the conducive learning environment at home. This innovative model engages parents in their children’s education, developing pedagogical skills that bring together children and their parents. The innovation has been scaled up and acknowledged as a promising approach by the Government of Nepal. This is one of the key approaches and interventions identified for Recovery and Accelerated Learning Plan of the government.

Despite certain shortcomings in the sector of education, majority of child participants believed that Nepal has made progress in achieving the goal of providing quality education, though the progress is low. Almost all child participants expressed and scored that there is a low progress in Goal 4 as illustrated.



GOAL 5: Gender Equality

The gender Inequality Index depicts a score of 0.49 in 2015 and was expected to decrease to 0.29 in 2022. Regarding the proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual, or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by a form of violence and by age (indicator 5.2.1), the 2020 VNR Report states that 24.3 percent of women experienced physical and/or sexual violence during their lifetime.



The DHS 2022 findings suggests that among women and girls aged 15 – 49, 23% have experienced physical violence since age 15. The percentage of women who experienced physical violence in last 12 months of the survey increased from 9% in 2016 to 11% in 2022. Likewise, the percentage of sexual violence among women aged 15 – 49 years was 7% in 2016 that increased to 8% in 2022.⁴² Intimate partner violence against women and girls aged 15 – 49 has increased from 14% in 2016 to 17% in 2022. Among those women aged 15-49 who experienced violence, only 28% sought help or reported the case.

Though the total number of reported cases against women increased from 18843 in FY 2020-2021 (B.S. 077/078) to 21311 in FY 2021-2022 (B.S. 2078/079), incidents of crimes such as rape decreased from 2532 to 2380, attempts to rape decreased from 735 to 655, polygamy decreased from 852 to 809, Domestic violence accounted for 80 percent of the reported cases.⁴³

According to Nepal Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey 2019, “37% of girls in Nepal marry before age 18 and 10% are married by age 15, in spite of the fact that the minimum age of marriage under Nepali law is 20 years of age.” The highest rates of child marriage for women and girls between the ages of 20–24 who were first married before age 18 are found in Madhesh Province (53%), Karnali Province (48%), Sudurpashchim Province (45%), Gandaki Province (41%) and Lumbini Province (40%).⁴⁴ Save the Children conducted a gender and power analysis of child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) in Madhesh province in 2023 and revealed that gender inequality is the root cause of CEFM, widely accepted discriminatory gender and social norms like son preference, religious and traditional beliefs that uphold men’s status over women and girls, restrictive notions of femininity and masculinity, and the gendered division of labor in and outside the household all restrict women’s and girls’ rights, livelihoods, and decision-making power and drive support for CEFM.⁴⁵

⁴² Nepal Demography and Health Survey, 2022

⁴³ Women, Children, and Senior Citizens Service Directorate, 26 Years of Crime Data Against Women and Children, available at: <https://cid.nepalpolice.gov.np/cid-wings/women-children-and-senior-citizen-service-directorate/> last accessed on May 25, 2024.

⁴⁴ National Planning Commission, (2019), Nepal Multiple-Indicator Cluster Survey Report .

⁴⁵ Save the Children, RWUA and GNB Nepal, (2024), Gender and Power Analysis of Child, Early and Forced marriage in Madhesh province of Nepal

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Those who have received training or exposure might have changed, but the mindset of people from earlier remains the same towards the rights of underrepresented groups, such as girls, children with disabilities, LGBTQI+ children and Dalit children.

– Girl, 13, Karnali

“

These days, child marriages are often initiated by the children themselves. Some of my friends are getting married because they think it's the only option for them.

– Girl, Karnali

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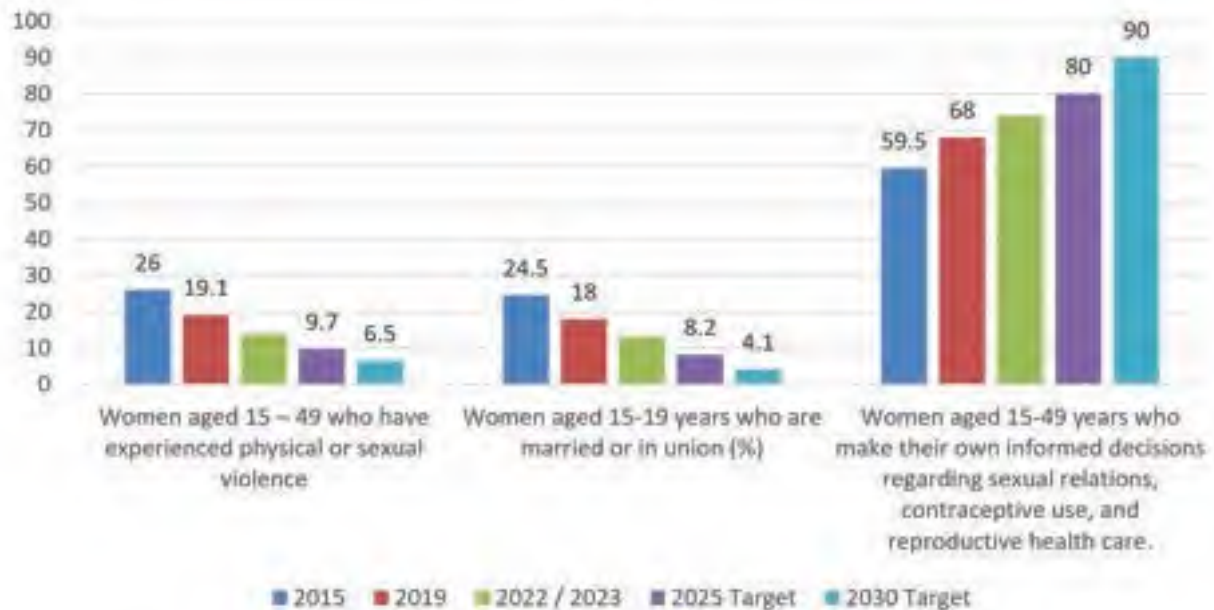
The situation of women and girls has improved more than before, but many marginalized people are still discriminated by the society. Discrimination based on caste, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity is still in practice.

– Participants from Madhesh and Karnali Provinces

The participants expressed that deep-rooted societal practice of arranging marriages for daughters at young ages worked as a push-factor for community members to arrange their daughters' marriages at young ages. The guardians take arranging daughter's marriages as a tough responsibility as well as a big burden. So, they take a daughter's marriage as an “earlier, the better” thing. As a result of poverty and illiteracy, the practice is going on. Indicator regarding female genital mutilation, particularly intersex genital mutilation is a hidden issue in Nepal.

Furthermore, participants shared that even within the LGBTQI+ population, the intersex community faces heightened stigma and discrimination, stemming from gaps in knowledge and attitudes towards their issues. They are subjected to discrimination based on their sexual anatomy, and there have been instances of doctors and medical practitioners performing surgeries on children during their birth that can inflict permanent harm on intersex children. This has sparked discussions about the “best interest of the child” and the ethics of surgical interventions that have lifelong impacts, as they deny children the right to bodily autonomy. Leading to gender identity crisis during their adult life.

Goal 5



(Source: MICS 2019 / NPC, 2023)

Though the legal provisions provide for gender equality rights, sons are given more preferences than daughters in most Nepalese societies, with unequal status in families hindering their right to freedom of opinion and expression, the right to travel and participate, and freedom of recreational activities. Girls from poor and marginalized families are getting married earlier.

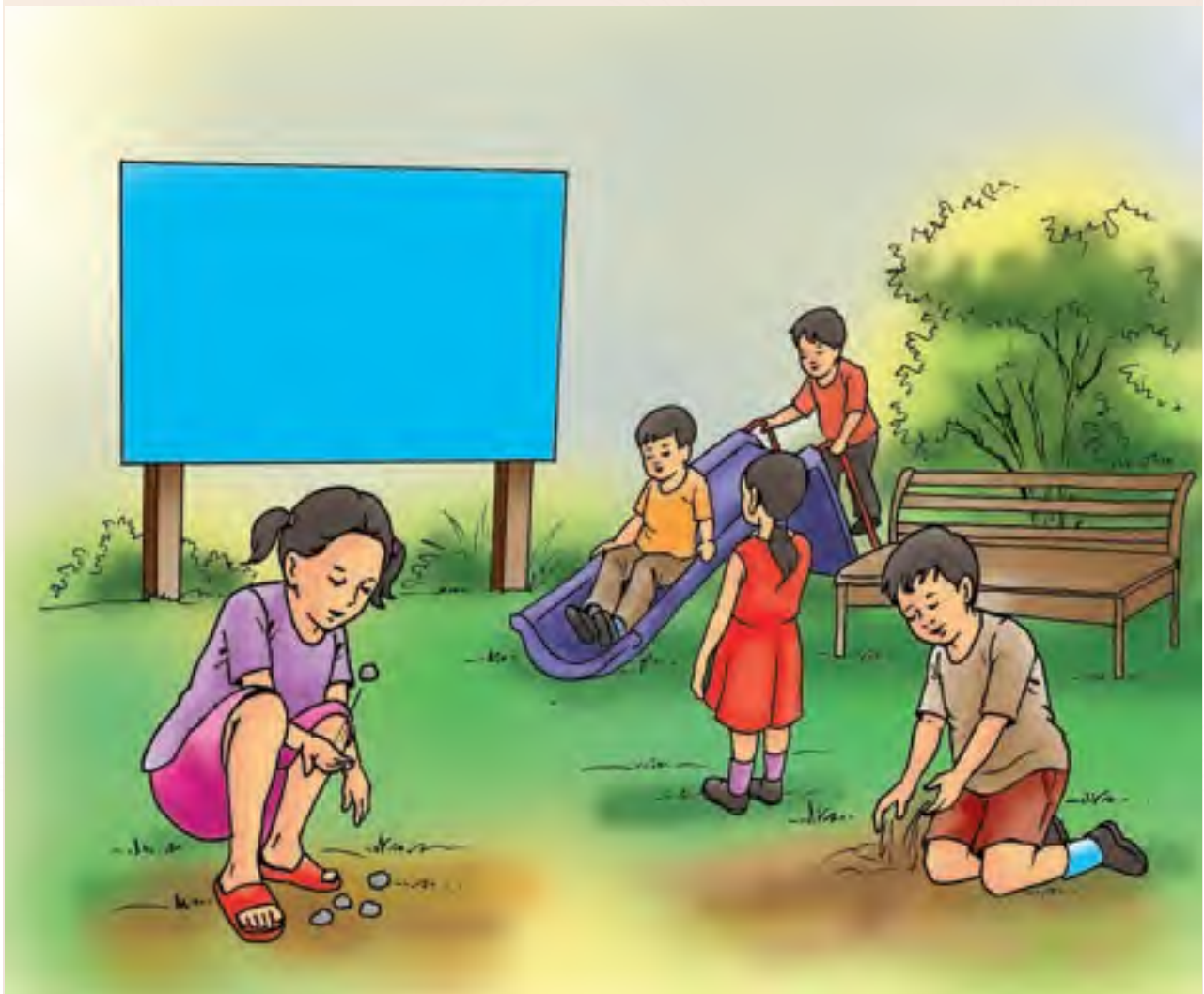
Good Practice: Children's Campaign Against Child Marriage

Child champions in Karnali Province have been actively raising awareness and conducting campaigns to prevent child marriages. Child clubs in both Karnali and Madhesh Provinces have proactively contributed to local governments' efforts to prevent child marriage. For example, Surunga Municipality and Khadak Municipality in the Saptari District (Madhesh Province) and Tilagufa Municipality in Kalikot (Karnali Province) have recognized the critical role of child clubs in combating child marriage in their communities. As a result, these municipalities have declared themselves child marriage-free.



On the Scorecard, two-thirds of the child participants expressed that there is low progress on Goal 5, while one-third indicated that there is no progress. This lack of progress is primarily observed in the areas of “Leave no one behind,” “Inter-connectedness,” and “Multi-stakeholder partnerships.”

-2	-1	0	1	2
Large Reduction	Small Reduction	No Progress	Low Progress	High Progress
		😐	😊😊	



GOAL 13: Climate Action

Nepal contributes 0.027% of the global greenhouse gas emissions. Green House Gas (GHG) emission from the commercial sector was 5% in 2015 and it is supposed to be reduced to 3.83% by 2022. GHG emission from the agricultural sector was 614 gigagrams (Gg) in 2015. GHG emission (CO₂) from the Industrial sector (cement and lime) was 632 (Gg) in 2015 and it was supposed to be reduced to 484.53 (Gg) in 2022. GHG emission (CO₂) from the energy sector (Industrial, transport & others) was 7959 (Gg) in 2015 and it was supposed to be reduced to 6101.9 (Gg) in 2022.



By 2022, 350 municipalities had prepared a local adaptation plan. In 2022, 6% of the annual budget was direct climate responsive. Only 51.68% of the schools were covered by climate change education.⁴⁶

There is no data on the number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population. Likewise, data is also missing for Green House Gas emissions from the transport sector and Green House Gas emissions from the industrial sector.

Nepali people, including children have experienced changes in the climate, weather, environment, and temperature. While these changes have not significantly impacted their education, safety, playtime, or family income, many water sources have dried up, making farming and animal husbandry more difficult. Disasters such as flooding and landslides are common during the rainy season in most parts of Nepal. Heat waves are affecting lives in Madhesh Province. Children from poor and marginalized communities are particularly vulnerable to such disasters as they lack proper housing that can protect them from extreme heat or cold. Most marginalized families reside in areas prone to landslides and flooding.

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Every year, disasters like flooding, and landslides affect our communities. This causes water scarcity in our community and also affects our farm.

— Girl, Karnali

husbandry more difficult. Disasters such as flooding and landslides are common during the rainy season in most parts of Nepal. Heat waves are affecting lives in Madhesh Province. Children from poor and marginalized communities are particularly vulnerable to such disasters as they lack proper housing that can protect them from extreme heat or cold. Most marginalized families reside in areas prone to landslides and flooding.

Furthermore, a study titled, “**Breathless Future**⁴⁷,” conducted in Kathmandu and Saptari by Save the Children, Kayapalat, and the Youth Alliance for Environment, reveals that the impact

⁴⁶ NPC, 2023.

⁴⁷ <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/breathless-future-unveiling-the-impact-of-air-pollution-on-children-and-women-in-kathmandu-and-saptari/>



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Our government prioritizes infrastructural development and industrialization. Development is not sensitive to climate and the environment. Infrastructural development and industries are affecting our environment. Harmful toxins come from industries. Plastics are everywhere and polluting our environment.

— Boy, Madhesh



of deteriorating air quality on children, women, and vulnerable communities is both differential and systemic. The report states that exposure to hazardous air leads to respiratory ailments, pneumonia, asthma, bronchitis, compromised lung function, skin diseases, and neurodevelopmental problems. Women are particularly prone to pregnancy loss, lung cancer, and elevated blood pressure, among other health conditions. Children and women spend more time indoors and are exposed to poor household air quality due to cooking fuels, adding to their vulnerabilities.




A quick review of existing research shows that air pollution is predominantly understood solely as a health issue, often ignoring its intersectional impact on people’s socioeconomic status.

Furthermore, the effects of air pollution on children and their families, especially those from disadvantaged communities, extend beyond health. Air pollution restricts outdoor mobility for children and their families, limiting their educational continuity and developmental potential due to irregular school attendance, reduced outdoor play, and fewer social interactions.

Interactions with children and young people in cities most affected by air pollution reflect a common concern: the loss of economic opportunities for their families, particularly those engaged in daily wage work, due to restricted mobility and exposure to polluted air. This further impacts their livelihood and household finances, including their ability to provide children with nutritious food and medical care. These challenges affect child education, food security, nutrition, livelihood, and overall quality of life. Additionally, the resulting stress levels can trigger various mental health issues. While



two-thirds of the participating children perceived Nepal’s progress in achieving the goal of climate action as limited, almost one-third believed there had been no progress or even a regression in this area. The lack of progress was primarily noted in “Leave no one behind” and “Multi-stakeholder partnerships,” while regression was observed in the inter-connectedness of the climate action goal with other SDGs.

-2	-1	0	1	2
Large Reduction	Small Reduction	No Progress	Low Progress	High Progress
				

GOAL 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

Nepal was ranked 79th in the Global Peace Index 2023. The GPI 2023 shows that Nepal’s position and score have degraded in the Global Peace Score compared to positions in 2015.⁴⁸

Under SDG 16, birth registration and violence against children were reviewed. The Census 2021 report suggests a good progression on the birth registration, with 74% children under the age of 5 registered with civil authority.



The child participants shared that the intensity or severity has decreased but physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by their parents, guardians, and teachers is still common. Children aged 1-14 who experienced psychological aggression or physical punishments was 81.7% in 2015 and 77.6% in 2022.⁴⁹ The achievements and targets illustrated in the SDGs revised indicators of National Planning Commission suggests the physical and humiliating punishment during the last one month has decreased to 60% in 2019 and 44% in 2022 with an aim to end by 2030.⁵⁰

Girls reported they are touched and harassed in such public places. They do not feel safe in markets, gatherings at festivals, or while traveling by public vehicles.

⁴⁸ Global Peace Index 2023.

⁴⁹ National Child Rights Council, (2023), Annual State of Children Report

⁵⁰ National Planning Commission, (2023), SDGs revised indicators



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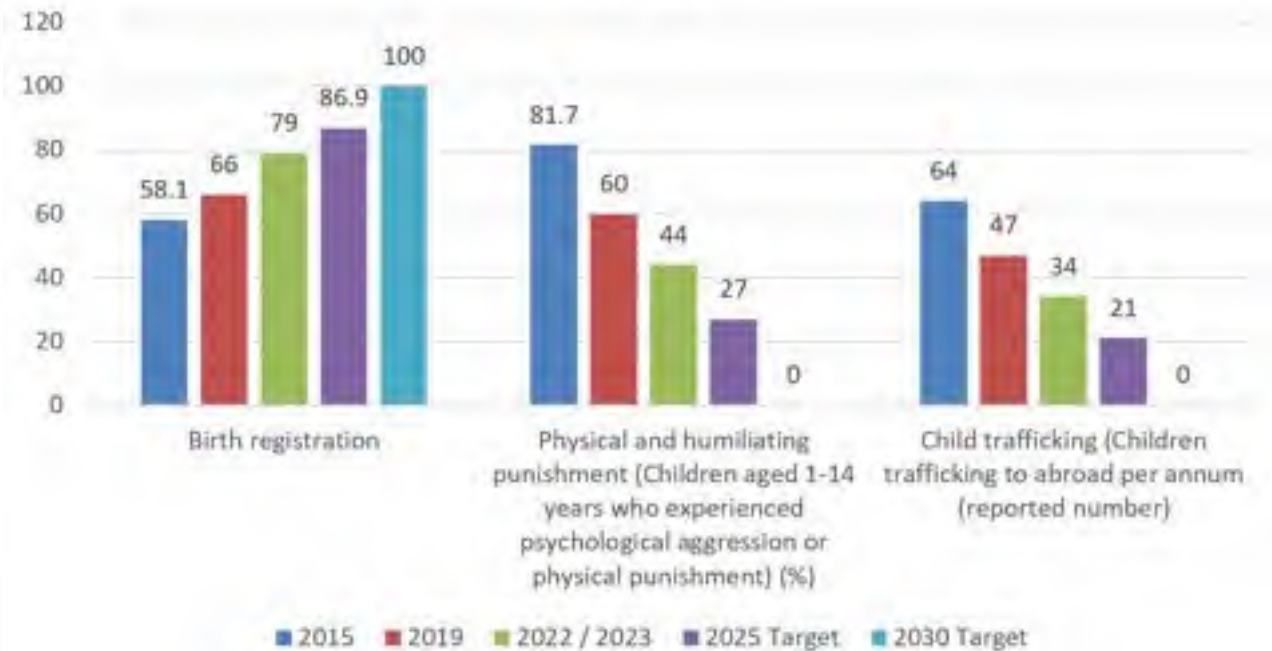
In public places, such as buses or public programs (Fair/Mela), we feel uncomfortable because of the harassment we experience.

**— Girl participants
in Madhesh Province**

In the 2022/23 fiscal year, Nepal police registered 2144 cases of child sexual abuse and exploitation, including rape (1515), attempt to rape (228), unnatural sex (34), and child sexual exploitation (367). 98% of these cases were against girls. The cases of boys (2%) were related to unnatural sex.⁵¹

⁵¹ National Child Rights Council, (2023), Annual State of Children Report

Goal 16



(Source: NPC, 2023)

Cases of digital harm / online harassment and bullying are growing each year.⁵² Cybercrimes, including cyberbullying against girls, are on the rise. During the years 2022-2023, a total of 9013 cases of cybercrime against women and children were reported.⁵³ Out of the total cases, 130 victims were girls, 4590 were women, and 512 victims were people identifying as LGBTQI+.⁵⁴ An exploratory research conducted by Save the Children in 2023 highlighted various forms of abuse and violence stemming from online to offline contexts, encompassing sexual abuse, mental stress, hatred, and bullying. The same study found that 10.4% child respondents of Madhesh and Karnali province were asked to send text or pictures on social media, with this trend being more noticeable among girls (13.6%) than boys (3.7%).

And additionally, 7.5% children reported encountering an uncomfortable situation after meeting someone in real life whom they initially knew online and 6.1% children reported occasional online threats and blackmailing.⁵⁵



One of my friend's photos was edited and misused online. She went through a lot of mental stress. The case was reported and police intervened, but her anxiety remained.

— Girl 15, Karnali

⁵² Cyber Bureau, Nepal Police, 2024.

⁵³ Nepal Police, Annual factsheet on cybercrime and suicide 2022/23 fiscal year, Women, Children and Senior Citizen Service Directorate of Nepal Police

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Save the Children (2023), An Exploratory Research on Online to Offline forms of abuse and violence against children in Nepal. Progress Inc. and Save the Children, Kathmandu. Nepal



“
There’s not a safe reporting mechanism. If we complaint, people would make us target and threat us.
 – Girl, 16, Saptari

Children shared that despite large numbers of crimes committed against children, most cases go unreported because of a lack of a child-friendly justice system with a safe reporting and referral process.

The child participants expressed that power is centered on those who have access to powerholders. One of the participants expressed, “People who have access to people in power have justice, whereas under-represented groups do not have that privilege. Children on the basis of their caste, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, language, skin color, religion, or how they look are teased, bullied, and harassed in most communities and schools.”

Child participants emphasized that despite efforts to ensure their meaningful involvement in decision-making spaces, biases, power dynamics, and societal norms often hinder their participation. Tokenistic engagement and limited influence in conversations further marginalize children. Additionally, capacity-sharing sessions often exclude children not affiliated with child clubs or leadership platforms, creating further gaps in inclusion.

Majority of child participants agreed that there has been limited progress in achieving the goals of peace, justice, and strong institutions. Two-thirds of them expressed that there is low progress in Goal 16, reflecting their scores accordingly. Additionally, one-third of participants noted there is no progress, primarily in areas related to “Leaving no one behind” and “Multi-stakeholder partnerships” to create violence-free homes, schools, and communities.

-2	-1	0	1	2
Large Reduction	Small Reduction	No Progress	Low Progress	High Progress
		😐	😊😊	

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CHILDREN

3.1 CONCLUSION

Poverty, hunger, poor health and nutrition, lack of education, and gender inequality create a vicious cycle that entraps many children and their families in Karnali and Madhesh in a negative intergenerational feedback loop. Due to their economic hardships, families often compromise their children's education and health. Many boys from impoverished families drop out of school at a young age and migrate to India for labor, while girls are often forced into early marriages. In impoverished households, where hunger and lack of education prevail, children—particularly girls, children with disabilities, LGBTQI+ children, Dalit children, and those from marginalized groups—bear the brunt of the consequences. These children often become the primary labor force or breadwinners for their families, or they end up in child marriages. Children, especially girls, children with disabilities, those from Dalit and marginalized communities, and LGBTQI+ children, feel unsafe in public gatherings, festivals, or while traveling in public vehicles.

Participants also noted that poverty is closely linked to adverse climate conditions. Children from impoverished families are the most vulnerable to extreme heat waves, cold waves, flooding, and similar disasters. Many families reside in homes that cannot shield them from extreme weather and are located near rivers or in areas prone to landslides. Grazing land, wetlands, and water sources are disappearing, leaving people without government support for climate adaptation.

3.2 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CHILDREN

Increased investment in essential and quality services for children:

Despite best intentions to ensure meaningful child participation, children access to decision-making platforms are often marred by biases, and structural challenges. Biases, power dynamics, and harmful societal norms often marginalize children, limiting their participation to being tokenistic. Addressing this requires proactive measures to address barriers and ensure inclusivity via introduction of child-centered social accountability tools, and mandatory participation of children in all levels of decision-making. Furthermore, capacity-sharing sessions should be broadened to encompass children beyond structured affiliations, such as, child clubs, fostering a more representative and participatory environment. In addition, increased investment in essential, inclusive and quality social services for children including child-sensitive and gender responsive social protection, universal health coverage, nutrition and child protection systems should be ensured and monitored. These are the building blocks of just, prosperous, peaceful and sustainable communities.

Addressing Unconscious Biases and Harmful Social Norms & practices:

Despite strides in Nepal's child rights landscape, deeply ingrained social norms continue to impede

institutions like schools, police, and health services. This involves promoting awareness, unconscious bias and diversity training, and fostering inclusive policies to ensure equitable access to services for all children.

Prioritizing Mental Health of children:

The escalating mental health challenges among children demand urgent attention. However, the current lack of child-friendly counselors and psycho-social support services hinders access to life-saving and vital resources. Particularly marginalized groups like the LGBTQI+ community and children with disabilities face compounded barriers due to practitioners' limited understanding and perceived biases. To address this gap, there's a critical need to expand mental health services tailored to children's needs and promote community awareness initiatives. Furthermore, combatting stigma and misconceptions surrounding mental health is essential to foster a supportive environment where children feel empowered to seek help without fear of judgment or discrimination.



Investing in Holistic Quality Education with Life Skills:

A comprehensive strategy to combat structural barriers like poverty and inequality, as well as issues like corporal punishment and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), is needed for education reform. Prioritized actions aimed at improving children's learning achievement are extremely important. Schools must prioritize creating violence-free environments, fostering open dialogue on sensitive topics, and equipping educators with the necessary training and resources to support diverse student needs. Furthermore, life-skills-based vocational training and career counseling should be introduced in school settings to build competence and promote sound decision-making related to career choices among students.



Additionally, a functional school management committee and parent-teacher association, alongside empowering school-based child clubs to engage meaningfully in decision-making processes, is crucial for promoting a learning environment conducive.

Child led and informed climate actions:

During the child consultation, children expressed concerns about climate change discussions often being conducted in isolation, with a technical and expert-led approach that overlooks their lived experiences and the impacts on their communities. They stressed the importance of making climate conversations more child-friendly by using accessible language and approaches to raise awareness about the impact of climate change on their development and well-being.



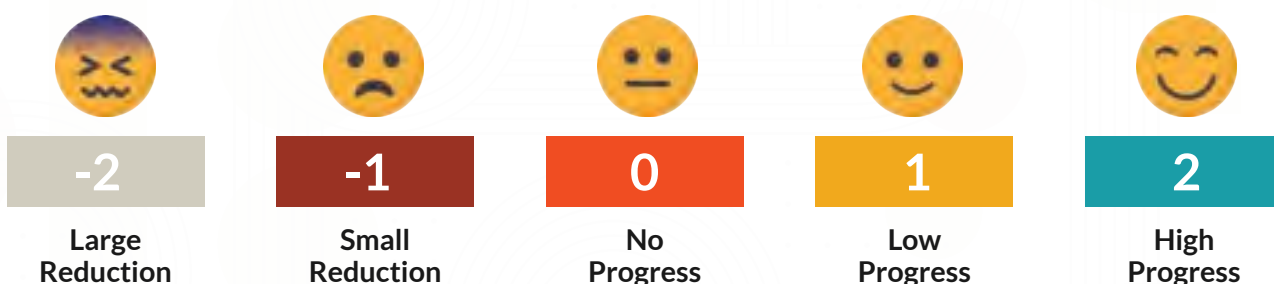
There is a growing consensus among children, young people, and organizations that children and youth should be included in climate discussions, focusing on their lived experiences and context-based policy dialogues. To achieve this, it is essential to form coalitions and build momentum with like-minded organizations and child and youth networks to influence local and provincial governments. Children and youth must also be empowered to lead climate justice campaigns and discussions, advocating for change in their communities. This involves recognizing their role as influencers and experts and modeling them as leaders in climate justice efforts.

To ensure that climate policies and processes are informed by children, it is crucial to prioritize awareness-raising and advocacy efforts that involve children and young people from the outset. This ensures that their voices are heard, and their perspectives are incorporated into climate decision-making.

ANNEX 1: CHILD SCORECARD

INTRODUCTION TO CHILD SCORECARD TOOL

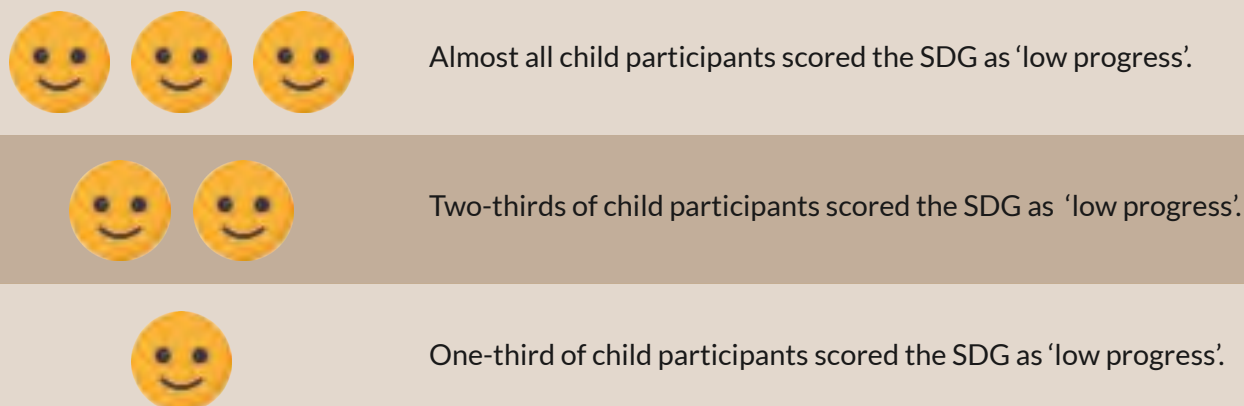
Save the Children has developed the Child Scorecard to assess the progress of child-related SDG implementation. This child-friendly and child-informed tool has been translated and pre-tested with children to ensure contextualization and the use of child-friendly language and signage. The scorecard offers grading, such as “0” for no progress, +1 for low progress, +2 for high progress, -1 for a very slight reduction, and -2 for a significant reduction. Each grading scale is accompanied by a relevant emoji to make it engaging and accessible to children.



Emoji Grading Explainer:

- 1 emoji represents one-third of the total participants who scored.
- 2 emojis represent two-thirds of the participants.
- 3 emojis represent nearly all child participants scoring the same.

Below is an example:



GOAL 1: NO POVERTY



Principles	-2	-1	0	1	2
1. Universality				😊😊😊	
2. Leave No One Behind (Access)			😐	😊😊	
3. Interconnectedness and Indivisibility (Policy Coherence and Experience)				😊😊😊	
4. Transformative				😊😊😊	
5. Multi-stakeholder Partnerships (Voice/Agency Building)			😐	😊😊	
Overall rating			😐	😊😊	

GOAL 2: ZERO HUNGER



Principles	-2	-1	0	1	2
1. Universality				😊😊😊	
2. Leave No One Behind (Access)				😊😊😊	
3. Interconnectedness and Indivisibility (Policy Coherence and Experience)				😊😊😊	
4. Transformative			😐	😊😊	
5. Multi-stakeholder Partnerships (Voice/Agency Building)				😊😊😊	
Overall rating				😊😊😊	

GOAL 3: HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



Principles	-2	-1	0	1	2
1. Universality				😊😊😊	
2. Leave No One Behind (Access)				😊😊😊	
3. Interconnectedness and Indivisibility (Policy Coherence and Experience)				😊😊😊	
4. Transformative			😐	😊😊	
5. Multi-stakeholder Partnerships (Voice/Agency Building)				😊😊😊	
Overall rating				😊😊😊	

GOAL 4: QUALITY EDUCATION



Principles	-2	-1	0	1	2
1. Universality				😊😊😊	
2. Leave No One Behind (Access)				😊😊😊	
3. Interconnectedness and Indivisibility (Policy Coherence and Experience)				😊😊😊	
4. Transformative				😊😊😊	
5. Multi-stakeholder Partnerships (Voice/Agency Building)				😊😊😊	
Overall rating				😊😊😊	

GOAL 5: GENDER EQUALITY



Principles	-2	-1	0	1	2
1. Universality				😊😊😊	
2. Leave No One Behind (Access)			😐	😊😊	
3. Interconnectedness and Indivisibility (Policy Coherence and Experience)			😐	😊😊	
4. Transformative				😊😊😊	
5. Multi-stakeholder Partnerships (Voice/Agency Building)			😐	😊😊	
Overall rating			😐	😊😊	

GOAL 13: CLIMATE ACTION



Principles	-2	-1	0	1	2
1. Universality				😊😊😊	
2. Leave No One Behind (Access)			😐	😊😊	
3. Interconnectedness and Indivisibility (Policy Coherence and Experience)		😞	😐	😊	
4. Transformative				😊😊😊	
5. Multi-stakeholder Partnerships (Voice/Agency Building)			😐	😊😊	
Overall rating		😞	😐	😊😊	

GOAL 16: PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



Principles	-2	-1	0	1	2
1. Universality				😊😊😊	
2. Leave No One Behind (Access)			😐	😊😊	
3. Interconnectedness and Indivisibility (Policy Coherence and Experience)				😊😊😊	
4. Transformative				😊😊😊	
5. Multi-stakeholder Partnerships (Voice/Agency Building)			😐	😊😊	
Overall rating			😐	😊😊	



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