

Background

The strategic goal for WVI Nepal Country Strategy (2021-2025) is 'to improve the well-being of 0.8 million children, in particular, the most vulnerable ones, to be protected from violence, well-nourished, able to access quality and inclusive education and to experience positive and peaceful relationship in their families and communities. The weak indicators in education sectors, particularly poor learning outcomes of the basic education, triggered WVI Nepal to include inclusive and quality education technical programs among the priority sectors.

Center for Research on Education Health and Social Science (CREHSS) carried out this Baseline survey for World Vision International Nepal from August to September 2021.

Objectives:

The overall objectives of the baseline were to assess the current status of Area Programmes in terms of Inclusive and Quality Education indicators and establish the starting status of the indicators in order to enable to track the changes over time through the M&E process;

Methodology:

The study was conducted across the 5 APs of the three districts (Bajhang, Doti, and Achham), namely Kailali East, Bajhang East, Bajhang West, Doti East, and Doti West, where WVI Nepal's intervention has been planned for the current strategic cycle (FY 2021-2025). This baseline study adopted a mixed-method comprising the quantitative strand as the predominant method; and the qualitative strand provided explanations, triangulated the information, and supplemented the quantitative findings. As a part of the quantitative method, a cross-sectional survey including a school survey and Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) survey among all grade three students (1520 children) from program-supported schools (75 schools) were conducted. In addition to that, a user's satisfaction survey was conducted to measure the outcome of Citizen Voice of Action (CVA). The indicators related to the Educational Facilities and Reading Camps were assessed through an observation checklist of Schools and Reading Camps, respectively. However, the ability of the Field Researchers to apply the observation checklists to verify the responses from the respondents was limited by the status of school opening, as many of the schools were not fully open during the survey because of COVID-19 pandemic

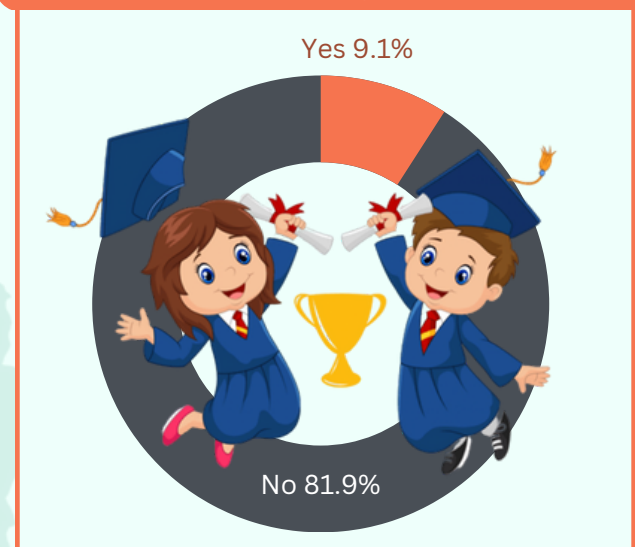
Furthermore, the 20 FGDs (4 from each APs, each from male child, female students, male parents, female parents) and 10 interviews were conducted among children, parents ensuring representation of diverse groups including the status of RC/ Non-RC,

representation of girls/ boys, mothers/ fathers, local governments (Palika), and schools' authorities (SMCs, Education Office). Univariate (frequency, percentage, mean), bivariate (chi-square test), and multivariate (binary logistic regression) analyses were performed.

Key Findings

The baseline results demonstrate that the children's learning outcome is very weak, evidenced by the fact that only 9.0 percent of children of grade-3 are able to demonstrate the minimum proficiency levels.

Achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading



Multivariate analysis shows that children aged 10 and above were 1.5 times more likely (aOR=1.506) to achieve at least a minimum proficiency level than children below 10 years. The children of other APs than Kailali East were less likely to achieve at least a minimum proficiency level. However, this variable is not significant.

One-third (33.2%) of children could not read a simple story of the EGRA test or were not able to correctly respond to a single question out of six questions. Further, the mean number of reading of alphabets/letters (30.5), matras (22.6), words (13.1), and non-words (10.0) explains the situation of a weak learning outcome. The quantitative and qualitative data suggest that a weak learning environment at home, at schools, and socio-economic factors of the families where children come from has much affects children's learning.

Slightly more than half (51%) children reported that household members engaged in at least 2 literacy activities with them in the past 1 week. Bivariate analysis shows that type of APs, mother tongue, caste/ethnicity, literacy status of father and mother, and registered status of the child have an association with household members engaging in at least 2 literary activities with them in the past 1 week. For instance, As the table

illustrates, the value baseline value of household members being engaged in literacy activities is significantly high ($p < 0.001$) in Doti E (73.7%) and Doti W (56.3%) and lowest in Bajhang W (19.7%), based on what the children expressed. A significantly higher proportion ($p < 0.01$) of children from Dalit (53%), Tharu (52%), and Brahmin/Chhetri (51%) than Janajati (20%) reported that household members are engaged in at least 2 literacy activities with them in the past 1 weeks. Similarly, a significantly higher percentage ($p < 0.01$) of children reported that whose father can read (54%) and mother can read (64%) engaged in at least 2 literacy activities with them in the past one week. Multivariate analysis also supports the finding of bivariate analysis.

The majority of the schools (68%) are under the 'unsafe' category when assessed with the use of the Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF) of the Ministry of Education Science and Technology. Almost all of the three pillars of CSSF (Pillar I: Safe Learning Facilities; Pillar II: School Disaster Management; and Pillar III: Disaster Reduction and Resilience Education) are weak, and among them, the pillar-three is the weakest.

As the Government of Nepal has been promoting the Early Grade Reading Programme, governance of the schools has been given more importance in recent years in this program. Notably, 53 out of 75 schools have got some supervision from the education authorities.

In order to retain students at school, particularly those children belonging to poor income family backgrounds, and also to impart nutritional needs of children, mid-day meals provided by 54 schools (72.0%) have been found useful and notable.

Despite a trend of constructing separate toilets for girls, due to inadequate water for toilets and handwashing facilities, only 18.7 percent (14 schools) have met the basic sanitation facilities.

COVID-19 has affected two academic years of the children, thus dragging their learning achievements back. Given that over half (57.1%) had no alternative education (like learning materials broadcast by TV/ Radio, Remote tuition through internet-enabled sessions, creating social media groups, print lesson materials distributed through community networks, phone learnings) at all, alternative learning solutions have become crucial.

Recommendations

Based on the findings for quantitative measurement and consultations with the stakeholders, the baseline measurement team provides the following key recommendations to promote the quality of education at the basic level.

1. Provide training to teachers on using appropriate teaching-learning, including preparation and use of the local materials. Encourage teachers to apply core teaching skills by technical support and hold schools accountable to apply the appropriate method of pedagogy.
2. Improve learning atmosphere in the classroom, maximizing print-rich environment; improving sanitation facilities at schools
3. WVI Nepal and Partner NGOs are advised to work with the governments to prepare costed plans and policies regarding school governance, safe & inclusive physical facilities, including sanitation facilities at schools. Further, evidence of learning from the local level can be better connected at Province Level (Sudur Paschim), which can help the provincial government to review the policies.
4. Form, equip, and activate CVA groups to raise awareness on the minimum standards of education, including P MEC, to help upgrade the standards to the minimum levels.
5. Enhance the quality and frequency of monitoring and supervision of the reading clubs by the school authority. Enhance reading club standards with attention to promote learning aids in the local language.
6. Improve parents' involvement in the Reading Awareness Workshop sessions and encourage parents to promote learning of the children at home, as parental involvement is the key enabler of good learning outcomes.
7. Continue working on innovative approaches of alternative education to enhance the education of children in the poor and disadvantaged areas.
8. WVI Nepal and partner NGOs are advised to work with the local governments to enhance school safety by promoting a school safety framework giving due attention in safe learning facilities, school disaster management, and DRR & resilience education.
9. It is advised to conduct a study on barriers of children with disabilities to benefit from the current education systems and facilities at schools, which can provide ways to improve the facilities and learn atmosphere for them.



Code	Indicator	Value
C2A.21685	1- Proportion of children in Grade 3 achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading.	9.0%
C4A.02622 2	2- # and % of schools meeting preparedness and safe-operating standards in order to mitigate risks.	17.3% (13 of 75)
C2D.0295	3- Percentage of children completing basic level (aligned with SDG indicator	87.0%
C2A.21686	4- Proportion of UL trained teachers utilizing skills acquired to teach reading.	0.0%
C2A.23988	5- % children (boys, girls) reporting an increased frequency of participation in literacy activities with household members	50.6%
C2A.24023	6- % UL reading clubs achieving minimum standards	40.0% (30 of 75)
C2A.23989	7- Proportion of UL schools receiving supervision by a trained local education authority	70.7% (53 of 75)
C2A.22960	8- Proportion of parents and caregivers who promote learning for children aged 3 to 5 years	41.3%
C2A.23987	9- % of Grade 1-3 UL classrooms with print-rich environments	66.7% (50 of 75)
C2D.23171	10- Proportion of education facilities with basic sanitation facilities	18.7% (14 of 75)
C2C.26091	11- # and % of interface meetings facilitated by CSOs or community volunteers	AR (TBD)
C2D.23018	12-- Proportion of users who are satisfied with the education services they have received	69.3%

Code	Indicator	Value
NA	13- Proportion of schools meeting Prioritized Minimum Enabling Conditions (PMEC)	16.0% (12 of 75)
C2D.24275	14- : #/% of schools participating in CSSF interventions who have included disaster risk management (DRM) component into annual school improvement plan (SIP), generated through a participatory school level workshop as per MOE directions in Annual SIP updating guidelines.	33.3% (25 of 75)
NA	15- Percentage of schools providing mid-day meals for early grade children	72.0 (54 of 75)



Suggested Citation:
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