



Background

Pathways to Wellbeing, Empowerment and Resilience for Adolescents and Youth (POWER 4 AY) Project is a five-year program/project funded by Bulgari and led by Save the Children Italy which is being implemented by the SCI country office in Nepal. The project locations covered a total of seven municipalities/rural municipalities from the 4 study districts, namely; Achham, Banke, Dailekh and Surkhet, located in Lumbini, Karnali, and Sudhur Paschim Provinces. The study sites were a mix of diverse geographical locations, including hill and terai. Also, the selected study areas comprised a combination of urban and rural areas.

The specific purposes of this baseline study are i) to establish foundational evidence for answering the research questions, ii) to Establish values for the indicators of the log frame at the goal and outcome levels for assigning or revising targets for indicator performance, iii) provide index and targets for indicators for forecasting indicator performance against their planned targets to aid effective management of the project, iv) provide an analysis of the moderator variables across the continuum of the socio-ecological model that either catalyze or contain positive change for the well-being of AYs and v) provide the baseline data for comparative analysis of the mid-term and final summative evaluation at project completion.

Center for Research on Education Health and Social Science (CREHSS) carried out this Baseline survey for Save the Children Nepal from Feb to June 2022.

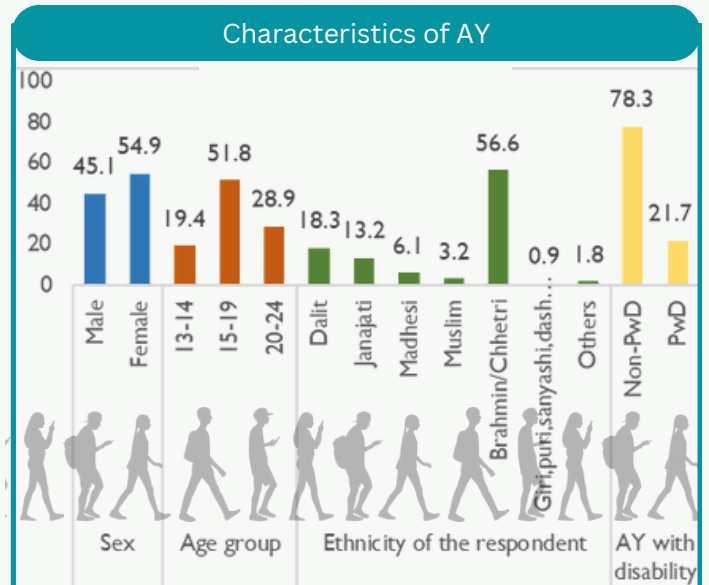
Methodology:

This study was cross-sectional in design and used a mixed-method approach that employed both qualitative and quantitative methods.

In the quantitative part, the adolescent and youth (AY) and parent/caregiver surveys were done using structured questionnaires. A total of 904 AYs and 293 parents were covered in the study. A systematic random sampling technique was used to sample the respondents. In the qualitative part, a total of 23 Focus group discussions (FGDs) and 26 key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted to gather necessary relevant information.

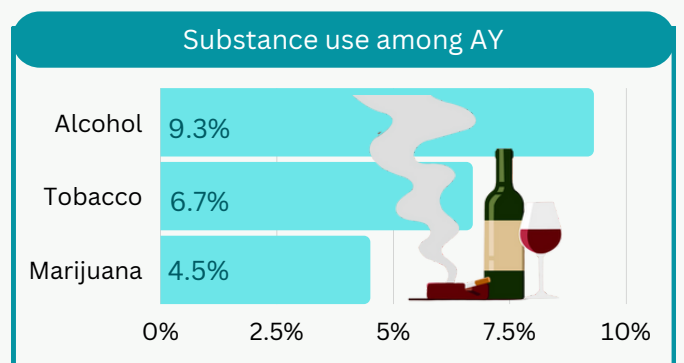
Key Findings

Characteristics of AYs aged 13-24 years: A total of 904 adolescents and youth (AYs) aged 13-24 years were covered in the study; among them, 197 were AYs with disability. Females accounted for more than half (55%) of the total respondents. The mean age of the AYs was 17.6 years with a Standard Deviation (SD) of ±3.1.



An overwhelming majority of AYs (94%) stated that there is an availability of the toilet facilities in their households. Majority of the AYs had access to electricity (82%). Regarding the AYs access to basic amenities, 44 percent had a television at their home, followed by Internet services (39%), Radio (29%), and computer/laptop (17%).

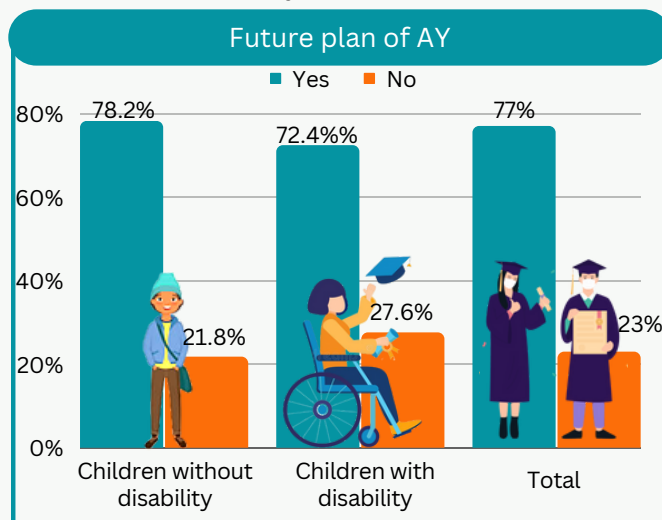
General Health conditions of the AYs: An overwhelming majority of the AYs (95%) knew about the place for seeking health-related services or information. Among them, 80 percent mentioned that they preferred a Government hospital for health services and health-related information. Regarding making the decision on health care, 62 percent of the AYs mentioned that their family all together take the decision, while 28 percent said that they took the decision of their health care by themselves. Nine percent of the AYs were found to use alcohol, 7 percent reported using tobacco, and 5 percent stated using Marijuana.



Disability: According to the six WG questions on disability, only 6 percent of AYs reported having a little difficulty and very difficulty in seeing, only 4 percent of AYs had a little difficulty and very difficulty in hearing, 5 percent AYs had a little difficulty and very-difficulty in

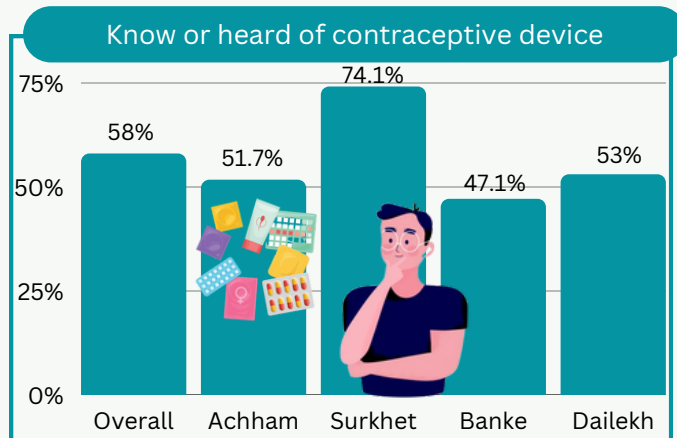
walking or climbing steps, 7 percent AYs each had a little difficulty and very-difficulty in remembering things and difficulty in concentrating, 2 percent had a little difficulty and very-difficulty in self-care and 3 percent had a little difficulty and very-difficulty in communicating.

Out of the 171 AYs aged 15-24 with some kind of disability, almost one-third (32%) were not currently in education. A lower proportion of the AYs with disability (72%) had planned their future goals than those without a disability (78%).



Similarly, AYs with disability were less involved in employment or internships in any agency (6%) than those without disabilities (8%).

Sexual and Reproductive Health: Out of the total females (N=85) aged 20-24 years who reported having married, only 2.4 percent (n=2) had married before the age of 15. Only 58% of the AYs mentioned that they knew or had heard about the methods of contraception.



The most well-known method of contraception was the male condom (75%), followed by Depo-Provera (53%), birth control pills (49%), and female condoms (39%). More than half (52%) of the AYs reported that they decided to use contraception jointly with their partner. Similarly, out of the 407 female AYs, 59 percent reported that they could say 'no' to their husband if they didn't want to have sex.

Out of the total AYs aged 13-24, the majority (81%) knew about the legal age for marriage/ indicated 20 years as an appropriate age to get married. Most of the AYs (75%) reported that they knew where to go if medical help on pregnancy-related matters (SRH) was needed. Among them, 70 percent mentioned they would go to the government hospital, followed by primary health center (62%), medical shop (57%), and private hospital (30%). Out of the female AYs and the wife/partner of the male AYs who have ever been pregnant (N=102), 72 percent had used SRH services during their pregnancy. Regarding the knowledge of AYs about the consequences of early pregnancy, 65 percent mentioned that early pregnancy increase infant mortality, followed by complications in childbirth (64%), abortion/health risk (48%), risk of anemia (40%), and school drop-out (37%).

Education: It was found that 65 percent of the AYs had completed secondary level of education (9-12 grade). Seventy-one percent reported that they were currently studying at the time of the survey. Likewise, 21 percent of the AYs reported that they had ever dropped out of school. Among them, 38 percent mentioned that they dropped out of school because of a lack of funds, followed by needing to help/support their family (33%) and getting married (25%). Among the AYs who dropped out of school, 23 percent of AYs re-enrolled at school. The majority of the AYs (77%) mentioned that they had plans about what they will do in the future, the proportion being higher among female AYs (82%) than that of the males (71%). Similarly, 58 percent of the AYs felt that they have the will and means to lead change in their community/society if the right opportunity is given to them. Half (50%) of the AYs mentioned that the factor that motivated them to continue studying was to get better job opportunities in life, followed by studying to get a better chance in life (33%) and to earn a high income and get recognition from others by doing a good job (31% each).

Economic Entrepreneurship/ Employment of AYs: Out of the 729 AYs who were aged 15-24 years, the large majority (92%) were not currently employed or involved in any type of internship or training in any agency, private or government. This proportion was found highest in Achham and Dailekh (97% each) while lowest in Banke (69%). In terms of gender, a higher proportion of the females (94%) than the males (89%) were not currently engaged in any employment or training opportunities. Similarly, among the 171 AYs who had some kind of disability, 94 percent stated that they were currently unemployed in any job or training. Out of the 64 AYs who were currently employed, 36 percent were hired in a job through a signed agreement, and 58 percent (N=37) of them were able to save some money on a regular basis. Out of the total AY families surveyed, only 8 percent had accessed financial support (taken any loan) to allow their AY children to participate in formal education.

Participation and Leadership: Only 12 percent of the AYS were part of/involved in any groups or associations within their school, community, or youth group. The AYS who were not a part of any community network/group mentioned that barriers such as lack of self-confidence, lack of motivation, lack of plans/programs for youth, lack of time due to school/college, and ignorance of their voices restricted them to be a part of such groups. Regarding the support AYS need to overcome these barriers, 79 percent of them stated that they need support in education, followed by employment (49%) and life-skill education (48%). Notably, 87 percent of the AYS did not know any organization or groups that support AYS right in the community or municipality.

Satisfaction with the Municipality/Governorate: The majority of the AYS mentioned that they were satisfied with the educational support for going to school/college (71%) and health care services provided for them (70%). Similarly, 67 percent of them were satisfied with the prevention and care program for all types of violence, followed by youth support activities (66%), support for the creation of businesses for youth (60%), and youth employment support programs (59%). Likewise, 50 percent and above of the AYS each mentioned that they were satisfied with programs targeted for their personal empowerment, programs that encourage involving youth in municipal decisions, rehabilitation care for AY with substance abuse problems and care in shelters, and health care for adolescents in street situation. However, nearly half of the AYS was still not satisfied with the various services provided by the municipality, which widens the scope for further improvement of those services.

COVID-19: School remained fully closed during the COVID-19 pandemic that seriously disrupted the learning continuity of the AYS. The findings of the qualitative study revealed that many schools had adopted alternative teaching through community learning and virtual classes so that the students remain tied up with their studies; however, these means were not effective for all students. The lack of smooth internet access and proper alternative teaching mechanisms has been a barrier to all attempts to fill the gap in the education sector brought by the pandemic. COVID-19 had cut off most of the income-generating sources and led to financial scarcity for many families. As a result, many children and AYS were forced into labor work to support their families, which negatively impacted the AYS and their families.

WASH: The participants of the KIIs and FGDs expressed that AYS have inadequate access to water, hygiene, and sanitation facilities in their community. According to them, many schools had the availability of separate toilets for boys and girls as well as many schools have ensured the provision of the sanitary pads for the girl students; however, they complained

that toilets are poorly managed, and there is a lack of appropriate management of disposal of sanitary pads. In addition to that, during the interviews with the school teachers, they reported that only limited schools have disability-friendly toilets, handwashing stations, and classroom arrangements. According to them, they lack financial and material support to build disability-friendly infrastructures at their school.

Climate Change: The knowledge of climate change and its predicted impact was limited among the community people. However, school-going children, mainly those who were in secondary grades, had a certain level of awareness about climate change, its effects, and its mitigation measures. They have acquired this knowledge from their curriculum as well as through real-life experiences. The major occupation of the community people is agriculture. However, unfortunately, various harmful activities of humankind to the environment have given rise to climate change that has affected agricultural production to a larger extent. Key informants during the qualitative interviews also mentioned that despite the hard work in the field, farmers never get their expected crop yield.

Parent Survey: A total of 293 parents/caregivers were covered in the study. Thirty-six percent of the parents were aged between 30-39 years. Sixty percent of the parents were female. Similarly, 60 percent of the parents belonged to the Brahmin/Chhetri, followed by Janajati (15%) and Dalit (14%). Twenty-nine percent of the parents were illiterate, whereas 11 percent have completed up to a bachelor's and above.

Out of the total parents, 113 had at least one child who was married and among them, an overwhelming majority supported their children's intentions to delay marriage (94%) as well as to delay their pregnancy (97%). However, among those parents who mentioned that they don't support their children's intentions to delay marriage, the common reasons mentioned for not supporting were: i) they think that it is better to get married early ii) it is a rule of their family to get married early and iii) in their community, everybody gets married early (28% each).

Conclusion:

Out of the total AYS surveyed, 22 percent (N=197) were AYS with disability. Thirty-two percent of the AYS with disability aged 15-19 years were not currently in education. A lower proportion of the AYS with a disability (72%) had planned their future goals than those without a disability (78%). Similarly, AYS with disability were less involved in employment or internships in any agency (6%) than those without disabilities (8%). This indicates the program requires to focus on the education and employment of the AYS with disability. Similarly, 30 percent of the AYS aged 15-19 years had at least one child; this means early pregnancy was common among the AYS who were below the legal age to get married and give birth (below 20 years). Thus, advocacy and awareness to address early marriage and teenage pregnancy are crucial.

Thirty-four percent aged 15-24 were not currently enrolled in formal education. The proportion of the re-enrolment of the AYs in the education system after drop-out was found to be very low. In addition, re-enrolment was found to be more than two times lower among the girl AYs than that of the boys. Similarly, a large majority of the AYs (92%) who were aged 15-24 were not currently employed or involved in any type of internship or training in any agency. Moreover, the majority of the AYs (77%) had future plans such as plans for employment, education, skill learning, and doing business. Half of the AYs mentioned that they were studying to get better job opportunities, a better chance in life, earn a high income and get recognition from others.

A considerable percentage of the AYs aged 13-24 years were unaware of the legal age for marriage. Out of the female AYs and the wife/partner of the male AYs who have ever been pregnant (N=102), 28% had not used SRH services available to them during their pregnancy. A considerable proportion of the female AYs (41%) was unable to make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations.

Only 12 percent of the AYs were found to have been involved in any groups or associations within their school or community. Similarly, a substantial proportion of the AYs was not found confident to lead in their community/society. Moreover, female AYs were found to be less active than male AYs regarding having the will and means to lead in their community/society. This indicates the low level of empowerment among the AYs to become an agent of change.

S/N	Indicators	Respondent/Sampling frame	Indicator value (%)	95% CI	
				Lower	Upper
Indicators for AYs					
1	Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in union before age 15, and before age	20-24-year women	2.4	0.9	5.7
2	Proportion of youth aged 15-24 years not in education	AYs 15-24 years	33.6	30.2	37.0
3	Proportion of youth aged 15-24 years not in employment	AYs 15-24 years	91.8	89.8	93.8
4	Completion rate (primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education)	AYs 13-24 years	Basic 71% Secondary 5.8% Upper secondary 0.6%	67.9 4.3 0.1	73.9 7.3 1.1

5	Proportion of women aged 15-49 who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations	AY 15-24 years women	59.2	54.4	64.0
6	Minimum age AY indicate as appropriate to get married	AYs 13-24 years	80.6	78.0	83.2
7	Proportion of AY who use SRH services	AYs 13-24 years	71.6	62.8	80.4
8	Proportion of AY who re-enroll in the education system	AYs 13-24 years	22.5	16.5	28.5
9	Proportion of AY who are employed, including apprenticeships, or internships	AYs 13-24 years	7.1%	5.4	8.8
10	Proportion of employments that provide for decent working conditions	AYs 13-24 years	35.9	24.1	47.7
11	Proportion of AYs who report they can save money on a regular basis	AYs 13-24 years	27.0	12.7	41.3
12	Proportion of A&Y (m/f) making use of informal (e.g. VSLAs) or formal financial services (e.g. banks, cooperatives, mobile money, etc.) to take out loans, make payments at facilitated conditions	AYs 13-24 years	7.9	6.1	9.7
13	Proportion of A&Y reporting improved satisfaction in access or quality of community/private / public services (milestones)	AYs 13-24 years	16.7	14.3	19.1
14	Parents'/ caregivers' / community members' attitude towards their children's / AY intention to delay marriage / pregnancy	Parents of the AY	Support for Delay marriage= 93.8 Support on delay pregnancy= 97.3	89.4	98.2 100
15	Proportion of AY families who access financial support to allow their AY children to participate in formal education (loan)	AYs 13-24 years	7.9	6.1	9.7
16	Proportion of AY who feel they have the will and means to lead change in their community/society	AYs 13-24 years	58.2	55.0	61.4
17	Parents'/ caregivers' / community members' attitude towards their AY children's needs	Parents and key informants	94.2	91.1	97.3

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