



her turn
educated. empowered. equal.

2013 Annual Report



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Abstract

Her Turn's annual budget for 2013 was NPR 2,254,788, our primary donors being Dining for Women and Catapult who supported the program through Nepal Teacher Training Innovations. Her Turn delivered workshops to 262 girls in 11 groups in Sindhupalchok district, 140 girls in 6 groups in Gorkha district and 17 girls from Kathmandu – total of 419 girls. We have trained 16 local women trainers who conducted these workshops. There were significant improvements in all areas of girls' knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding menstruation management, hygiene, child marriage, human trafficking and their confidence levels increased. We also discovered that much of the information girls acquire in workshops is well received by their communities, especially other women, who reported learning more about menstruation hygiene, the effects of child marriage, and the importance of girls' education. There were several noted examples of girls using the resources and knowledge they gained in workshops to address issues in their schools and communities, such as bullying or, in one instance, reporting a possible incidence of human trafficking. Schools were happy to receive the workshops and many male and female teachers reported that the workshops change girls' behaviors, leading them to participate more in class and extracurricular activities. Through the workshops, the teachers themselves became more aware of girls' issues in their own schools and communities and felt more capable at responding to their needs. Her Turn made numerous contributions to advocacy work concerning girls' issues worldwide and in Nepal, and celebrated International Day of the Girl with our very own [advocacy video, "Her Day."](#) For the 2014 fiscal year, Her Turn has already secured over USD 38,000 in funding and plans to reach at least 700 girls in rural districts.

About Her Turn

Her Turn is an education and empowerment program for girls aged 10 to 14 from rural schools in Nepal. The girl-centered and interactive workshops consist of 24 sessions and are conducted in groups of twenty girls. The curriculum equips the girls with essential life skills that pertain to their health and safety, and it helps them develop confidence and leadership potential. Specifically the sessions cover the issues of puberty, hygiene, nutrition, safe water handling, menstruation management, and safety concerns, such as bullying and discrimination, child marriage, human trafficking, sexual abuse and domestic violence. The program emphasizes the [importance of education](#) and throughout the program the girls [practice team work and inclusion](#). Girls are given a way to anonymously ask questions they are not comfortable sharing with the whole group, by writing them down and placing them in a "secret box;" most of the questions pertain to issues about puberty, menstruation, and child marriage.

During the course of the workshop, participants from each school form a Girls' Support Committee, whose role is to help girls at risk or the ones that experience any form of violence. The committee is equipped with a resource sheet that contains information of locally available resources and support: health care providers, legal response, psycho-social support, safe houses. At the end of the program, the girls decide upon and implement a small community project, and lead a community ceremony for their families, school staff, friends and other community members. These ceremonies act as spaces for girls to raise concerns about their issues – such as child marriage or human trafficking – and to demonstrate their newly acquired confidence and public

The most important part of the Her Turn curriculum was hygiene. If we don't pay attention to hygiene, it brings a lot of diseases. After participating in this workshop, my daily life has changed. Now I give more priority to hygiene. I wash my hands before and after eating meals. I use slippers while going to our hut toilet out, whereas before I used to go barefoot. I also speak without fear.

Her Turn participant, age 12

speaking skills. The girls introduce the newly formed Girls' Support Committee to their community and give speeches, perform stage plays and make pledges, e.g. to fight caste discrimination.

The workshop sessions are led by young local female trainers that live in the same communities the girls come from. Many of them come from indigenous, historically marginalized groups, such as Sherpa, Tamang, Gurung, or Dalit. They all have had similar experiences growing up as the girls they teach, and their knowledge of indigenous languages especially helps our younger participants, for whom Nepali, the language used in schools, is not a mother tongue. The workshop sessions are also attended by female observers, often teachers from a given school or community members. Their presence ensures institutional sensitivity and knowledge transfer – after the workshops male teachers also report that they learned about girls' health and safety issues.

During the workshops, we provide a full meal after every session for each participant and the trainers. These shared lunches serve as an informal space to discuss the workshop and develop friendships. They help mitigate some of the caste tensions girls grow up with, which prevent them from mobilizing and addressing their issues as a team. One of our trainers comments: “before the workshop the girls used to discriminate each other based on caste status. During the workshop they shared meals together and the discrimination stopped. They are more helpful to each other.” The meals also illustrate the parts of curriculum that cover nutrition and hygiene in an experiential education model.

All of our trainers attend and complete the training of trainers (TOT). In our model, we identify, interview and invite young women from the community to the TOT and we work with them for four to five days. Some of them are already teachers or have prior training experience, while for others this is the first time teaching. In the interactive process facilitated by a Master Trainer, the group asks questions about and discusses issues of gender imbalance and its cultural, political and social implications, and social norms surrounding girls and women. Each group is also taught facilitation skills. The second half of the TOT is dedicated to practice – each participant demonstrates chosen activities from Her Turn curriculum. This helps us identify and empower local women who are skilled and reflect the program's philosophy and values of confidence and empowerment. They then become Her Turn trainers and after the program continue to live in the communities where they can act as additional resource points.

During the workshop the girls learned a new word for menstruation. Before this workshop they only knew the word *nachhune* which is a Nepali word for untouchable. Many Nepalis believe that a menstruating woman is impure. It shows that negative perspective towards menstruation. Now the girls use the word “menstruation” and learned it is natural and normal.

Her Turn trainer

Her Turn was designed after thorough needs assessment conducted in different villages of Sindhupalchok district. The process included in-depth interviews and focus groups discussions with girls, women, teachers and community members. Extensive desk research also helped to identify the most relevant issues and strategies. The curriculum was developed based on international recommendations for girl-centered programming¹ and the program meets several criteria that the International Center for Research on Women identified as effective strategies to delay age at marriage². These include empowering girls with information, skills and support networks, educating parents and community members, and encouraging supportive laws and policies. It covers some of the most pressing issues that Nepali girls face, for example, 41 per cent of girls marry before the age of 18 – some of the highest rate in Asia, and it is estimated that between 10,000 and 15,000 women and girls are trafficked from Nepal every year. Perhaps because the program addresses these and other pressing issues and prevention mechanisms, it is well received not only by the girls, but also their parents and communities.

1 Austrian, K. and Ghati, D. 2010. Girl Centered Program Design: A Toolkit to Develop, Strengthen and Expand Adolescent Girls Programs. Population Council.

2 Malhotra A., Warner A., McGonagle A., Lee-Rife S. 2011. Solutions to End Child Marriage. What the Evidence Shows. The International Center for Research on Women

Her Turn curriculum was designed by Ola Perczynska, who currently also manages the program. Ola has Masters in Culture and Society from the University of Lancaster. She has prior experience in international development from the West Bank and Nepal, where she implemented and coordinated educational and water and sanitation projects. The field activities are coordinated and monitored by Wongmu Sherpa. Wongmu was born in Solukhumbu district of Nepal and completed her intermediate in Arts and Humanities in Kathmandu. She is currently pursuing Bachelors in sociology and rural development.

Our Year

Between March and May 2013, we refined the curriculum, developed the TOT process and reviewed our monitoring and evaluations tools and methodology. We also conducted several field trips to Sindhupalchok district in order to speak with local women's organizations about issues of child trafficking and early marriage, recruit trainers and conduct TOT.

In May and June, Sumati Shakya and Wongmu Sherpa delivered a Her Turn workshop in a government secondary school in Teku – one of the most impoverished areas of Kathmandu. The workshop helped us develop and refine the training process for trainers and determine the efficacy of delivering the curriculum in urban settings. Of the 17 participants, only one was originally from Kathmandu and the rest of the girls came from 12 rural districts, having moved to the capital with their families during the civil war. The girls represented six of Nepal's many ethnic groups, including many highly marginalized groups like Dalit and Tamang.

In July, we started operations in several villages of Sindhupalchok district, where we have worked with four schools. The district is a well known hub for human trafficking – many of girls and women trafficked to India come from the region. Recent trends indicate that girls are also increasingly being trafficked to China. Two of the schools were in the area which borders Tibet, in the middle of traffickers' route to China and by the border crossing. In November we expanded our geographical focus and started working in Gorkha district. The reason to move to that area was the reports of particularly high rates of child marriage in the Manbu Village Development Committee (VDC.) While reliable statistics are unavailable, out of 140 of the girls with whom we have worked, 3 were already married at the age of 14 but still in school. We were unable to determine with certainty how many of their peers were married and had dropped out, but both the school staff and the community members admitted the issue was a problem. Since all these marriages are “love marriages” as opposed to parental “arranged marriages”, it was crucial to raise awareness of the girls of the consequences of marriage. One 14 years old married participant told us, she didn't know what child marriage was before the workshop but that today she knows and would not have gotten married if she was to decide now.

The workshops were delivered by sixteen young women who, after attending and completing our training of trainers (TOT), became Her Turn trainers. The most successful trainer, Asmita Bomjom, from the district of Sindhupalchok, also helped train future trainers. We are thrilled to report that the attendance rates during the workshops exceeded 96 per cent – far above girl's average school attendance rates. The girls, school staff and communities report an increase in girls' confidence levels, leadership skills, and initiative. A principal told us that

I wish people in my society would maintain harmony among them no matter what religion, caste, and gender they are from. I wish to see society discouraging people to drink alcohol, take drugs, smoke and play cards. I would like to see people not discriminate and humiliate anyone because everybody is equal. I wish there would be no conflict and violence between husbands and wives. I wish there would be no cases of child marriage. I wish there would be no domestic violence or violence against women. If such changes would take place, then I would feel more secure.

Her Turn participant, age 13

after Her Turn workshop, the girls successfully “shifted the culture” of their school and community. The findings of the impact assessments that we conduct in each of the schools can be found below.

The community projects girls implemented in these schools included: purchasing white boards for classrooms, cleaning products, sports equipment, sanitary pads for the girl students, microphone and speaker, sound system for school, girls' bathroom door locks and dustbins for bathroom. After the workshops our trainers reported girls demonstrating less caste discrimination based on observations in classrooms and at break. The meals participants share after workshops serve to break down traditional caste divides which necessitate that people from different castes do not share food. In-depth interviews with the teachers from the schools where we worked revealed that girls have become more active, more confident, they play sports with the boys and demonstrate more initiative in classrooms. Interviews also reveal parents' satisfaction with the changes in their daughters' attitudes and behaviors.

Demographics

In 2013, Her Turn program reached 419 participants: 262 from Sindhupalchok district, 140 from Gorkha district, and 17 girls from Kathmandu.

School	District	Village	Girls
Teku Secondary School	Kathmandu	Kathmandu	17
Shree Sansari Mai Secondary School	Sindhupalchok	Thulopakar	74
Shree Devi Secondary School	Sindhupalchok	Petku	56
Shree Thamigau Primary School	Sindhupalchok	Thamigaun	22
Tatopani Secondary School	Sindhupalchok	Tatopani	110
Shree Bhawani Higher Secondary School	Gorkha	Manbu	116
Shree Narabuddhi Primary School	Gorkha	Manbu	24
TOTAL:			419

While the program is intended for girls aged 10 to 14, in Gorkha district we have been asked by the schools to include girls aged 15. Girls that age are also at high risk of child marriage – in the villages in Gorkha where we worked “child love marriage,” is becoming popular and school staff expressed the need to include older girls.

Age table

Age 10	Age 11	Age 12	Age 13	Age 14	Age 15
66	68	62	63	98	9
18%	19%	17%	17%	27%	3%

Our participants currently attend a range of class levels, from two to nine. The high span stems from the fact that many girls do not start their education at age six (theoretically the year of admission into grade one); many of them are sent to school at later ages. Twenty three per cent of participants attended grade six, one fifth was in

Grade table

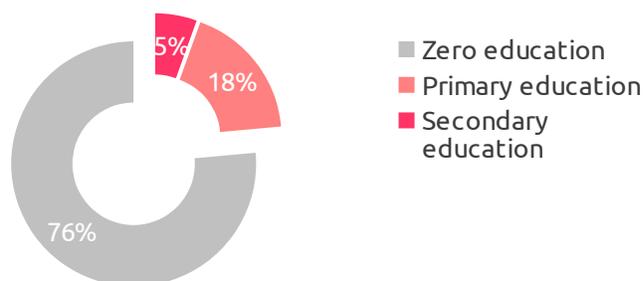
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9	14	47	73	83	71	40	30
2%	4%	13%	20%	23%	19%	11%	8%

grade five and nineteen per cent grade seven. The remaining 38 per cent were divided between grades two, three, four, eight and nine.

Seventy six per cent of our participants' mothers have never gone to school and many of them are illiterate. Eighteen per cent of girls' mothers have some level of primary education, which means they have finished their schooling somewhere between grades one and five. Five per cent of girls' mothers have some level of secondary education, between grades six and ten. The majority of participants' mothers and fathers work as farmers.

Because of social gender norms prevalent in the villages of Nepal, girls are expected to work in the households and on the fields, which often leaves them little time to study. All of them report having daily chores such as cooking, laundry, fetching water, cleaning, working in the fields. On average the girls report having to work for two hours every day, with fifteen per cent of them working 2.5 hours or more, and one per cent – five hours.

Mothers' years of education



Evaluation Methodology

At Her Turn, we attempt to evaluate our programming in a thorough and comprehensive manner. We use a knowledge, attitude, practices (KAP) approach and employ both qualitative and quantitative methods to assess program's impact not only on girls, but also on their families and schools. For quantitative assessment, we use surveys that the girls fill out before the workshop and after its completion. Both questionnaires have many of the same questions that pertain to their knowledge of health and safety, their attitudes towards various aspects of gender equality, and their self-reported levels of confidence and sense of empowerment. Before the workshop the questionnaires also include questions regarding demographic data, their mothers' education, the amount of house work the girls perform daily, and such. After each group completes their workshop, we analyze how the girls' answers changed over the course of the workshop.

The data from the questionnaires is complemented by information gathered from in-depth interviews with trainers, teachers, parents and the girls. These dialogues allow us to confirm the self-reported data from the questionnaires, assess the process of knowledge transfer from girls to others, determine whether girls' behavior in school have shifted and gain a deeper understanding of the impact the program has. During the interviews we also ask girls and trainers about the parts of curriculum that were most useful and relevant, and the ones that were least useful, and whether any activities were difficult to understand. This allows us to identify potential gaps in our curriculum and address them.

I will only get married after I become capable, self-reliant and independent. I will complete my education first and will get married when I become 25-26 years old.
Her Turn participant, age 11

We conduct most of the interviews with parents in their homes, and the surveys and all of the girls and teacher interviews take place in schools. Both the questionnaires and the interviews are conducted in Nepali and then translated into English. During the interviews, we follow a general outline of questions for each type of interviewee and ask for more depth information where pertinent.

Findings

Quantitative

Knowledge

The most significant impact of our workshop was in girls' knowledge of the legal age of marriage: it increased by 79 per cent after the program, up to 92 per cent. Thirty two per cent more girls, 69 per cent before the workshop and 100 per cent after, knew what child marriage was and its health, legal and social implications. These findings are especially important considering that the child marriage rates in Nepal are still at staggering 41 per cent³. Of these marriages, a growing number are "love marriages" chosen by girls themselves, often against their parents wishes, as opposed to arranged marriages, where the families arrange their children's spouses⁴. For more information, please see our [article in the Guardian's Adolescent Girl Hub on the challenges this practice presents for development practitioners](#). In this context, the number of girls who declare after our program that they will not marry before the age of 20 and will react if their friends were to plan their own wedding, seems promising.

The girls come every day to the workshops, even when it's raining. In the beginning they hesitated to speak in front of the group. Now they are not shy and they speak confidently. When something bad happens or they are at risk, they know how to deal with it.

Her Turn trainer

Other significant areas of growth were menstruation and hygiene: by 52 per cent and 48 per cent respectively. Knowledge about proper menstruation management rose from 54 per cent to 98 per cent. Many girls agreed that menstruation management was the most relevant part of curriculum – perhaps because it is otherwise taboo and not talked about openly – and these numbers suggest that the new knowledge made a significant difference in girls' day to day lives.

The knowledge about what to do in cases of domestic violence rose by 53 per cent. After the workshops, as many as 98 per cent of participants declared that they knew what to do when they or someone they know is experiencing domestic abuse. Ninety seven per cent of girls knew what to do when they or someone they know was being bullied – 42 per cent more than before the workshop. This knowledge was demonstrated in several cases during the workshop, when the girls that had been bullied or even sexually harassed by their male peers reported it to the teachers, who were able to react and stop the bullying.

In terms of girls' favorite issues to learn and discuss, 26 per cent of girls responded that they liked all the topics covered. Twenty percent of girls reported that menstruation workshops were their favorite topic, illustrating a gap in regular school curriculum. Eighteen per cent of girls said empowerment was their favorite part of the program, eleven per cent reported hygiene and seven per cent bullying. When asked about what was most relevant, as many as 24 per cent of girls said knowledge of menstruation, which again confirms the need for information on this traditionally taboo but pervasive issue experienced by every woman. Eleven per cent of girls reported that bullying was the most relevant. Perhaps a higher number of girls

Subject	Favorite	Relevant
menstruation	20%	24%
empowerment	18%	5%
hygiene	11%	7%
bullying	7%	11%
human trafficking	6%	5%
child marriage	4%	9%
domestic violence	4%	8%
all	26%	18%

3 Nepal's Demographic and Health Survey. 2011. Ministry of Health and Population Nepal, New ERA and ICF International Inc.

4 Maharjan R. K., Karki K. B., Shakya T. M., Aryal B. 2012. Child Marriage in Nepal. Research Report. Plan Nepal, Save the Children, World Vision International Nepal

preferred the bullying workshops because not every one can personally relate to other issues, like e.g. human trafficking, while on the other hand everyone has at least witnessed bullying. Child marriage was said by 9 per cent of the girls to be the most relevant issue while 8 percent reported domestic violence. Eighteen per cent of the girls responded that everything was relevant.

For more details on the knowledge shifts, please see the Impact Assessment Chart appendix.

Attitudes

Our baseline and impact assessment surveys are designed to also reflect shifts in girls' attitudes. These pertain to their own feeling of confidence and empowerment, as well as beliefs relating to gender equality or acceptable behaviors. The biggest shift we observed was in the area of acceptance of domestic violence. While before the workshop almost half of participants reported it was OK for a man to hit his wife, afterwards 97 per cent of girls thought it was unacceptable, meaning that 49 per cent of girls changed their mind on this issue. Thirty six per cent more girls also thought that women can be as successful as men in any kind of work, an increase from 59 to 95 per cent. A quarter more of participants thought they were as important and as intelligent as boys their age.

Regarding girls' self-perceptions, we have observed several significant changes. Thirty eight per cent more girls said they felt strong after the workshop and the number of participants who reported they often felt shy and insecure decreased from 72 per cent to 37 per cent – this was confirmed in our interviews, please see below. Twenty two per cent more thought they were in control of their lives and reported voicing their opinions in school. Ninety one per cent said they were active, and 92 per cent felt strong – an increase from 70 per cent and 71 per cent respectively. All these attitude changes are encouraging considering the gender norms in rural Nepal, where girls are often perceived and internalize depictions of women and girls as shy, passive, and lacking decision power.

For more details on the attitude shifts, please see the Impact Assessment Chart appendix.

Qualitative

Our qualitative impact assessment is based on in-depth interviews with trainers, teachers, parents and girls. Parents and teachers are asked similar questions – what they knew about the workshops, what their daughters told them, changes in their daughters, and changes in the communities or schools after the completion of the workshops. The girls are also asked about the part of the curriculum they find most relevant and the changes in their attitudes.

Across the board, the interviewed girls' favorite part of the workshop was the topic of menstruation, covered in two sessions of the curriculum – one devoted to cultural norms and practices surrounding menstruation, the second focused on female biology,

I see a huge change in the girls. Now they play football with the boys. Before girls were shy to eat, now they eat as much as they can and ask for more three times. They use the words of "girls' empowerment" all the time.
Her Turn trainer

physiology of periods and hygienic menstruation management practices. Many interviewed girls said they previously had felt ashamed when they were menstruating and were unsure of how to properly manage their periods. Through Her Turn, they learned that menstruation is a natural part of becoming a woman and nothing to fear. As a 12 year old participant told us, "I think that Her Turn is important because it taught me not to be afraid of my period, and that menstruation is a perfectly natural part of growing up. I used to hide my dirty underwear. Now I know to use pads and that I need to properly wash my underwear and dry it in the sun." The knowledge of menstruation and "what's normal" is also communicated by the girls to their female family

members and is spread in schools. Because women's periods are taboo in many cultures of Nepal, women don't talk about them and are not sure whether what they are experiencing every month is natural or a cause for concern. A mother told us that she learned about healthy menstruation practices from her daughter, who received the information during the workshop. She said, "I used to worry a lot about the quantity of blood I lost during my period. My daughter came home with handouts provided by Her Turn... and showed me that I had nothing to worry about." One male health teacher also said that he learned the details of menstruation for the first time through materials provided with our workshop. The male principal of Devi Secondary School, Ribon Bahadur Basnet, saw the impact of the menstruation curriculum as well. At the conclusion of the workshop a part of the community project designed by the girls was the purchase of some emergency menstrual pads, which the girls raised some funds for themselves. He said that "seeing the impact of these two events, I now regret not putting more effort into providing a safe environment for young girls going through puberty." These accounts from teachers and principals are important, as they will continue working with classes of girls in their schools for years to come. We hope that in the future they will use the new awareness of issues surrounding menstruation and knowledge of healthy practices to educate others.

Every participant interviewed said she felt a new sense of confidence and self assurance after taking Her Turn workshops, which confirms the quantitative data from questionnaires. One of the students at Sansari Mai Secondary School told us, "I used to feel scared to do the things I love like poetry. I now participate fearlessly in school activities. I just did a poetry workshop and read my poems in front of everyone." Another Sansari Mai student said that "the skills [she] learned at Her Turn gave [her] the confidence to speak up." Parents and teachers expressed similar sentiments. Many noted a significant shift in girls' demand for equal treatment of girls and boys in their homes and schools. We believe this is another important transformation because girls are often disproportionately burdened with household chores, which affects their school performance since they have little time to study.

During the workshop I learned about hygiene. Now I always wash my hands and use slippers while going to out hut toilet. Now I can speak to my parents confidently about child marriage, it's not good and it should be stopped. The problem that affect the girls' life in this community is girls or women don't get opportunities to be leaders. Girls are not allowed to attend meetings. Girls have to go to their husbands' house after marriage but a boy has the right to stay in his own house. Girls have no right to property and no decision power.
Her Turn participant, age 12

Teachers reported that the girls became more active class participants and more involved in their communities in both sports and other extracurricular activities. As teacher Nani Maya Gurung told us, "After the workshop, the girls fearlessly played with the boys and the boys welcomed the girls in their games and sports." The principal of Thamigaun village school, the smallest school in which we have worked this year, also reported that after the program girls had started playing sports with boys. For their community project, the girls decided to purchase a sound system for the school. The principal expected the girls to ask boys or others to help make the purchase since the shop was far away, but it was a group of our participants who walked to the shop several hours away (accompanied by a teacher), bought the equipment and together they carried it themselves all the way back to the school. The principal attributed their initiative to the girls' increased self-confidence and independence.

Another example of girls' local advocacy efforts happened in Teku, Kathmandu, during their community project's implementation. One of the issues they planned to address was the lack of waste bins in school toilets, which makes it difficult to dispose of used sanitary pads. The girls agreed to purchase waste bins, but the woman in charge of school maintenance opposed the idea because it was a man who cleaned the toilets after school and he would have to deal with items related to menstruation, considered to be culturally impure and polluting. The newly formed Committee members held talks by themselves with the school's administration and eventually

convinced them of the importance of having waste bins in toilets for girls. As such, the girls were able to successfully complete their community project and get the bins installed.

Parents and teachers have been receptive to girls' new demands for equality. Shree Devi Secondary School teacher Nirmala Karki explained that teachers always used to discriminate against girls in her school, giving boys more of their attention and energy. But she said, "since the workshop, there has been a marked change in the way the staff treats our students. Girls are given the same amount of attention as boys and treated as equals (or at the very least much closer to equals). Teachers used to prevent girls from participating in football matches, but now they don't." Participation in certain sport games, such as soccer, is perceived by community members as evidence of the girls' growing equality in schools.

The girls said they had shared the information they learned with their mothers and sisters. Some of the health and safety practices were adopted in homes, such as boiling water, covering drinking water, and paying closer attention to eating a balanced diet. One interviewed mother said "we have started to cover our water and make sure not to drink unboiled water." Others reported learning better hygiene practices from their daughters, such as using shoes outside of the home and in the toilet.

The main problem girls face articulated to us was an excess of household chores. In our anonymous baseline questionnaires, 88 per cent of girls admit that there is violence in their communities, but the girls who were interviewed remained hesitant to speak openly about it. The girls said that they felt capable of handling encounters with human traffickers should they arise, and one of our participant from the border area, upon seeing what looked like a situation of girl trafficking, tried to alert both the police and a local anti-trafficking organization. The former refused to react, claiming it was not their responsibility, and the local NGO's contact numbers weren't answered when called.

We found some examples of progress in the areas of bullying and sexual harassment. Jeena Luitel, our trainer at the Tatopani School, told us about a sixth grade girl who had been sexually harassed over the course of three months by a peer, who kept touching her inappropriately. After the workshop, the girl knew to confide in a trusted adult. She went to the principal, the harassment stopped and the boy was punished. Similarly, one of the girls from Shree Sansari Mai Secondary School was bullied by a boy. During the workshop she learned how to act in this situation and she turned to the Girls' Support Committee to intervene. The Committee and teachers talked to the boy and the bullying stopped.

I want to marry when I'm between 20 to 25 years old at the earliest because first I want to become a capable and independent girl. It's not good to marry at an early age. An early marriage is like cutting one's own legs with an ax. It is also illegal. Early marriages will not let a girl achieve her aims and her body won't be fully developed. Early marriages will increase torture and halt personal growth of the child. The number of children also grows due to early marriage. So, I will marry after I become independent and capable.

Her Turn participant, age 12

While child marriage still plagues some of these communities, it seemed that Her Turn has helped to spread awareness of its severe consequences and the legal age for marriage, 20 years old. In Petku, a teacher observer, Nani Maya Gurung, stopped a girl from being married off by her parents. She told us, "A +12 girl, 18 years old, wanted to go to Kathmandu to seek employment. Her parents refused to let her go, wanting her to get married as soon as possible. For weeks, the family argued about what the girl would do. She came to me for help. Having observed the Her Turn workshop, I knew that marriage before the age of 20 is illegal in Nepal. I went to the parents with this information and convinced the family to allow the girl to go earn an income in Kathmandu. Though reluctant at first, they finally agreed. Now the girl is working in Kathmandu."

In Gorkha the problem of early marriage also persists, albeit in a different form. The marriages happen because of a girl's and boy's decision (called "love marriages") and not as forced arranged marriages. Three of our

participants were already married at fourteen. These child brides usually meet a boy in the village, elope with him, and when they come back the couple is considered married. The girl moves to the boy's parents' house and the families organize a ceremony. The fact that the love marriages among adolescents are on the rise points to a dramatic need for awareness raising programs for girls and boys. Of seven girls we have interviewed in this community, all were committed not to marry before the age of twenty. They also declared that if their friends were to marry, they would try to convince them not to by educating them about the consequences. If that didn't help, several of our interviewees said they would go to the police. These statements show us that for these girls, the issue is serious, and that they create a peer pressure that acts as a protection mechanisms for their friends. The fact that girls were also across the board more willing to report illegalities, whether in early marriage, abuse, or other issues, represents a positive long term shift that may help make police and state services more sensitive, responsive, and accountable to girls' and women's security, health, and social issues.

When asked how the community can support girls and empower them, many of the workshop participants, parents, and teachers expressed a need for parents to learn a similar curriculum to that of the girls. A mother of a Her Turn participant said, "the adults in this community need to be better educated in order to support girls' education and empower them. I think that my generation needs to understand the value in girls' being educated and why they should not discriminate [against girls]."

Partnerships and Advocacy

Her Turn developed several partnerships in 2013. We became a partner of [Girls Not Brides](#), a global partnership to end child marriage that brings together civil society organizations from around the world to tackle child marriage at the grassroots, national and global levels. We became a featured organization of [Girls' Globe](#), a network of people and organizations working to improve the lives of women and girls and through it, change the world. Her Turn is now also an institutional member of [The Association for Women's Rights in Development \(AWID\)](#), an international, feminist, creative, membership organization committed to achieving gender equality, sustainable development and women's human rights.

In my 24 years, bullying, sexual harassment, and menstruation were never talked about formally with the students. Her Turn has made me and my staff realize just how important talking about these things are. We will continue to talk about these issues moving forward as a school. I see Her Turn as necessary, not optional. The girls here now are confident and carry themselves with the knowledge that they are equal to boys and can accomplish what they commit themselves to. I thank Her Turn for shifting the culture in my school.

School Principal

Another area of our work is advocacy. We are thrilled to see the increasing presence of girls' issues such as child marriage or access to education on a global agenda. More and more media and organizations raise awareness of these critical issues and there seems to be a higher level of understanding of how girls can be protected and the value of their education. Our contribution to these debates have included:

- Two posts on Girls' Globe blog: "[Educated, Empowered and Equal: Her Turn Program, Nepal](#)" and "[Combating Child Marriage in Nepali Villages](#)".
- Our blog post titled "[Child marriage in Nepal: what about girls?](#)" was featured on Girls Not Brides page in August, and in June it was published in a national English daily Republica.
- Two papers submitted to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: "[Submission of Her Turn to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Study on preventing and eliminating child, early and forced marriage](#)" and "[Child Marriage as a Health Issue – Nepal Case Study](#)".

- In August, we participated in a live Q&A session at [the Guardian's Global Development Professionals Network](#). The session focused on finding strategies to end harmful behaviors and beliefs that prevent girls from reaching their potential. Full session can be read [here](#), and a round up of the expert advice from the live chat panel can be found [here](#).
- On October 11th 2013, we have celebrated the second International Day of the Girl. Many media outlets and organizations covered this new and important holiday. Her Turn has celebrated in a variety of ways. We have been [one of the selected programs featured at The United Nations Girls' Education Initiative \(UNGEI\) website](#). On the same occasion we published a piece in Nepali Times, the biggest English national weekly in Nepal: "[Let's talk about girls](#)". Finally, to celebrate this important day, in a collaboration with other organizations and individuals, we have created an advocacy video called "[Her Day](#)" which has been widely shared on social media by groups like Girls' Globe and Girls Not Brides.

Challenges

The major challenge over the last months of 2013 was political instability in Nepal. The November 2013 Constituent Assembly election was preceded by country-wide strikes which paralyzed public transportation and other services. For several weeks the protests impeded our work, as field trips were unsafe and we could not conduct any field activities. This unexpected development caused a delay in the schedule. After the elections we were quickly back on track and working with two schools in Gorkha district in December, and thankfully the November election occurred without major incidences of violence or disruption.

Another challenge we have experienced is in hiring process of our trainers. While we aim at working with young women, often from lower castes, who our participating girls can easily relate to, the hiring process comes under significant pressure from local leaders. We were variously pressured by influential locals, including staff in the schools, to hire women they preferred or had connections with. In our model we employ trainers based on skills and merit as opposed to local patron systems. We have dealt with these pressures by being transparent about our hiring process (as detailed above) – from identifying potential trainers, to the TOT, to selecting the women who best match our criteria.

We also faced significant questions regarding part of our referral model. Girls are provided with a set of local resources they can contact to address their needs; however, we discovered in one incidence that girl on the Nepal-Tibet border attempted to contact both the police and a national anti-trafficking NGO with field office in the area, to report an incidence of trafficking she witnessed. The NGO's various numbers weren't answered and the police referred the girl to that very organization, claiming it was the NGO's responsibility not their own. While we are pleased that our efforts have encouraged girls to seek state and civil services that are established and funded to address their security issues, Her Turn cannot hold such services accountable or guarantee their provision. In the future, Her Turn plans on addressing this issue (see below).

I noticed huge changed in girls after participating in this workshop. They are more active. Now they know they shouldn't have an early marriage. They are fearless and not shy to ask question in classroom. They become more helpful and are more curious to learn new things. They can also raise awareness about domestic violence.

Teacher

Lessons Learned and Plans

Her Turn is committed to developing the efficacy of its programming work and developing new and innovative solutions to problems local women and girls share with us during our work. We are constantly monitoring our programs and seeking new ways to put this vision into effect. Based on our work programming this year we have learned the following lessons and have made the following plans:

- Due to the politicization of hiring at a local level, we needed to and have instituted a completely anonymous recommendation system for locals to recommend young women they think would make good Her Turn trainers. Previously community members were asked publicly, which made them subject to local politics. We believe that by making recommendations anonymous we will have a larger, more diverse pool of candidates to choose from.
- Programming also needs to be sensitive to girls who have already been married and are still in school. We plan on developing more services available to address their needs since they have already been married and face a different set of challenges. We are considering ways to include girls who have already been married and dropped out of school into our programming. Older girls also frequently make requests for similar programming since much of the information is applicable to them. A workshop series may need to be developed for older girls focusing on other issues, such as reproduction and family planning.
- Her Turn program and the information it presents the girls with is valued by the community, in particular mothers and female relatives of the girls who are often under informed about menstruation and other issues. Our programs will be adjusted to include information that is not currently relevant to girls, such as information about uterine prolapse, but frequently discussed and requested by their mothers and older women in the community.
- The meal the participants share at the workshops are crucial to building friendship and solidarity between the girls, who often are divided amongst themselves along caste and other communal lines. Conservatively, many cultures in Nepal prohibit sharing food with people from different castes or ethnicity because of beliefs surrounding purity. Meal time therefore became a highly symbolic time where girls shared food together and were united by their role as girls in their communities instead of divided along caste/ethnicity. This time also served as a space for girls to ask questions and raise discussions about material in classes. In the future the participants will be serving other girls in their group on a rotation basis, which we believe will further help bridge caste divisions present in their communities.
- Systemic integration of workshops with school staff, community leaders, local NGOs, and women are as much a part of the program's accomplishment as the delivery of the workshops themselves. Many of these individuals reported the awareness they had gained and steps they had taken following the program's implementation to address girls' issues and support their education. We plan on building the program's integration with local civil society groups, development interventions, security services such as the Women's Police Cell and other state services as much as possible.
- We are often asked why we only work with girls. Teachers, parents and boys alike ask us and express the need for a similar program for male students. While many of the issues covered in our curriculum are girl-specific, others such as the problems of domestic violence, caste discrimination or bullying are relevant for boys too. There are issues of boys' puberty that they struggle with, just as the girls with

theirs, when they lack access to information. They also participate in child marriages, especially given the trend towards “love marriages.” Boys and men can be important allies to the girls and through workshops boys can become strong advocates for gender equality in their communities. In 2014 we would like to pilot a workshop for boys, where they would learn health and safety issues, gender equality, girls' empowerment and respect for women and girls.

- While we do involve communities and the girls have a chance to present their newly acquired skills to their families, neighbors and teachers during our community ceremonies, we think bigger community involvement would be beneficial. Some community members we interviewed suggested that parents need to be educated on the importance of girls' education, the consequences of child marriage and other issues covered in our curriculum. Hence, we are also planning to develop a short curriculum for parents, which would be delivered by our trainers. It would address all the issues girls identified as problematic, such as gender discrimination in the households – unequal burden of domestic work, which leaves girls little time to study. Parents will also discuss the value of girls' education.
- Mentors can be important role models for young people who can help them become responsible adults and we have seen trainers effectively mentor the girls in their workshops. We would like to build on this dimension of the program by creating “Girl Support Committee Mentorship program” that would allow us a long term presence in the communities and help us monitor longer term impact and build sustainability. Our mentors, who will come from the same communities where they work, would be trained to help girls navigate in a culturally appropriate manner the conflicts between empowerment and gender equality, and traditional values. They will also serve as a resource for girls at risk of child marriage or human trafficking, children who suffer from domestic violence or abuse and service as a key contact point for Her Turn to gather information about what is happening locally and report to national level advocacy bodies, NGOs, INGOs, and donors when necessary. We are planning to add the mentorship program to Her Turn workshop in 2014.

Recommendations for Policy makers, Researchers and Development Practitioners

Based on our field work we would also like to make the following suggestions to various stakeholders which we believe would enhance programs and advocacy related to girls' issues in Nepal and worldwide:

- Additional research on “love marriages” amongst children in Nepal is needed to adapt current and future program to new paradigms of love and relationship amongst adolescents. Initial studies⁵ and our field interviews increasingly report that child marriages are occurring on behalf of children's own volition and agency. Their motivations for doing so are unclear and while much of this trend is locally attributed to an increase in access to technology, like mobile phones and the internet, we know little about girls' and boys' motivations for eloping. Such a trend suggests that community based interventions that address child marriage might be ineffective because it is minors who are deciding to elope and marry early, not their parents.
- More research is also needed on boys' issues and how to include boys in girls' empowerment work. There is no doubt that boys also suffer the effects of bullying, but a deeper understanding of the particular gender issues they face have yet to be fully explored in Nepal.

5 Maharjan R. K., Karki K. B., Shakya T. M., Aryal B. 2012. Child Marriage in Nepal. Research Report. Plan Nepal, Save the Children, World Vision International Nepal

- Build the accountability of state and civil services to girls and sensitize them to girls' issues. Girls are unlikely to make use of such services and trust them in the future if they are unreliable or insensitive to girls' and women's issues. Donors, policy makers, stakeholders, and government officials should see girls' empowerment and engagement as an opportunity to build longer term trust and accountability in state services and civil society.

Appendices

Budget Overview

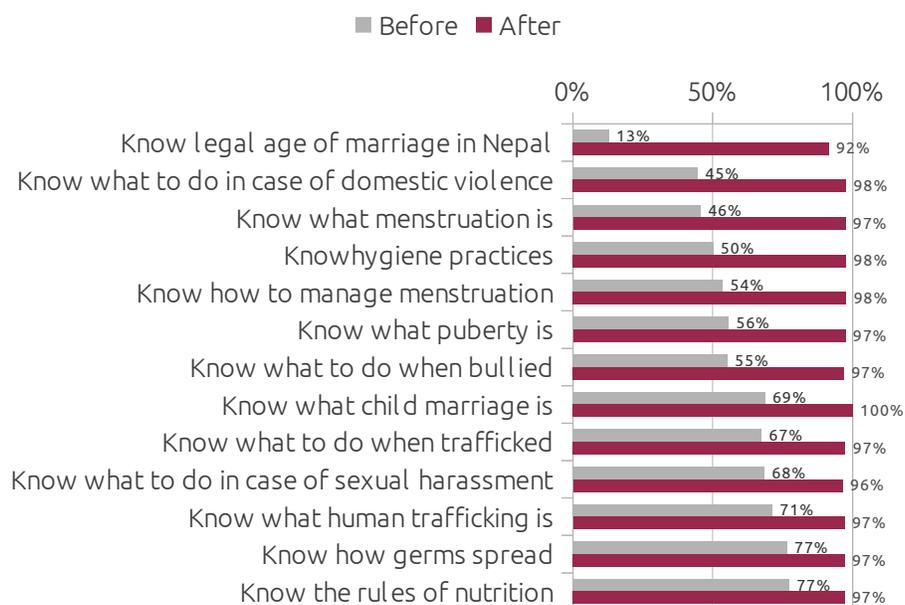
The total sum of expenses in 2013 was NPR 2,251,963. Of that sum, 46 per cent was spent on staff salaries, 33 per cent on meals during the workshops and community ceremonies and 10 per cent on workshop supplies, which include community projects. Transportation and accommodation during the field trips, communication and the training of trainers account for 2 per cent each, and the admin cost was 4 per cent of total spendings.

The cost per girl is NPR 5,381, which using average exchange rate from the period covered, 95 NPR/USD, means USD 57 per girl.

Category	NPR	%
Workshop supplies	214,464	10%
Meals	744,887	33%
Staff salaries	1,044,918	46%
Transportation and accommodation	50,118	2%
Communication	48,775	2%
Training of trainers course	53,981	2%
Office supplies	7,645	0%
Admin	90,000	4%
TOTAL:	2,254,788	

Impact Assessment Charts

KNOWLEDGE



ATTITUDES

■ Before ■ After

