

## POWER 4 AY

## Pathways to Wellbeing, Empowerment and Resilience for Adolescents and Youth

## CONTEXT

Nepal has made progress in poverty reduction but remains a lower-income country, with adolescents and youth—over 40% of the population (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2021)—facing intersecting challenges, particularly among women and people with disabilities. Around 2% of the population lives with a disability; among them, children make up 30%, with over half out of school and often neglected (Disability Research Center, Kathmandu University, 2016). In sexual and reproductive health, 17% of women aged 15–19 begin childbearing (NDHS, 2016), and 37% of women aged 20–24 were married before age 20 (NDHS, 2022). While secondary school enrolment has reached 61.6% (Ministry of Education, 2023), barriers from poverty and youth outmigration for education and work has created gaps in local skills development. Economically, the NEET rate is 21% (National Planning Commission, 2019), and youth unemployment stands at 19.2% (ILO, 2022). Over 82% of Nepali youth have sought work abroad, often underpaid and at risk of exploitation (ILO Nepal, 2014), with a 102% increase in labor migration between 2019 and 2023—the highest in Asia—due to limited local opportunities (ILO/ADBI/OECD, 2024). Comprehensive, youth-centered interventions are essential to harness Nepal's demographic potential and promote equitable development.



**TIMEFRAME & IMPLEMENTING AREA:** 1 July, 2021 - 30 June, 2026. 7 municipalities of Banke Nepalganj sub-metropolitan city, Surkhet (Barahtal Rural and Birendranagar Municipalities), Dailekh (Narayan and Dullu Municipalities) and Achham (Panchadewal Binayak and Mangalsen Municipalities) districts.



**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Contribute to improving wellbeing of adolescents and youths most impacted by inequality and discrimination in Banke, Surkhet, Dailekh and Achham in Nepal.



**EXPECTED PARTICIPANTS:** 7,981 Adolescents and Youths 13-24 yrs: 976 (490 girls and 484 boys) Very Young Adolescents with and without disabilities; 7,005 (3,520 female and 3,485 male) Older Adolescents and Youths with and without disabilities

## OUTCOMES

## 1. Improve Adolescent and Youth Choices Towards Avoiding Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting / Early Marriages

Life skills, functional literacy & numeracy, and adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASRH) training equip youth with the tools to make informed choices, avoid early pregnancy and marriage, and pursue personal and professional goals. Young people are empowered to lead change in their communities, supported by parents, caregivers, and community members engaged in behaviour change initiatives that foster an enabling environment. Collaboration with the health sector further strengthens the availability and quality of youth-friendly ASRH services.



2024 Mid-term evaluation shows remarkable progress among female adolescents and youth in making informed decisions about their health, relationships, and contraceptive use. Qualitative findings confirm that life skills training significantly boosted young people's confidence, communication, leadership, and emotional regulation—strengthening their ability to influence positive community change.

## 2. Increase Gender Transformative and Inclusive Functional Literacy for Adolescents and Youths and Support Educational Pathways for Adolescents and Youth

Adolescents at risk of dropping out due to financial hardship are supported to continue or return to school through a project bursary fund, with additional support mobilized from public and private actors. Catch-up and remedial classes help those struggling academically, while education providers are strengthened in gender equality, safeguarding, inclusion, effective methodologies, and improved WASH facilities.



2024 Mid-term evaluation findings show that parental support has grown stronger, with 97.6% of families showing positive attitudes toward their children's education while 75% of adolescent's families have accessed financial support to enable their children's formal education. Furthermore, re-enrolment to school has reached 97.6% of adolescents, a 30.2% increase from baseline.

## 3. Increase Adolescent and Youth Decent Employment

To support successful transitions into decent work, the project helps young people develop livelihoods by strengthening their functional literacy and numeracy, providing market-relevant business and vocational skills, and nurturing micro-enterprises. Participants are connected to markets and private sector partners to sustain their economic activities, while cooperatives are strengthened to enhance young people's financial inclusion through improved access to financial services.



2024 Mid-term evaluation findings show that the project has contributed to increasing the employment rate among adolescents and youth from 7.1% at baseline to 35% at midline. Furthermore, 11% of young people are found making use of informal or formal financial services to take out loans and make payments at facilitated conditions.

## 4. Age, Gender, and Disability Responsive Services, Policies and Plans in Support of Adolescent and Youth's Personal Development and Economic Empowerment Are Developed WITH and FOR Adolescents and Youth

The project supports adolescent and youth networks to lead community change in areas as sexual and reproductive health and climate resilience. By linking them with local governments, private sectors, and communities, it empowers youth to advocate for their rights through dialogues, campaigns, and funding for youth-led initiatives—creating spaces for meaningful participation and policy influence. The project also partners with local governments to implement actions benefiting young people, including improved WASH access for the most vulnerable families.



The programme works with rights guarantors to make services more inclusive, accessible, and responsive to youth needs. 2024 Midline evaluation findings show that 63% of adolescents and youth reported satisfaction with municipal services, 55.1% higher than at baseline. Young people are also supported to mobilize through peer networks, with 54.1% reporting that their network is active.

Adolescent and youth wellbeing depends also on a supportive environment. The project promotes change across all levels of the **SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL MODEL**—engaging youth, families, communities, services, and systems. It collaborates with local governments, NGOs, Organizations of Persons with Disabilities, the private sector, financial institutions, and education and health providers.

