

A Report on Breaking the Barriers; a youth lead initiatives



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Background:

Youth are backbone of a society and a nation. Youth power is one of the strongest weapons of nation. The future of a country lies in hands of the youth. They have ambition, they have enthusiasm, they have vision, and they have dreams. The dreams of youth can bring their society and nation at the apex, their dreams can bring revolution in the whole world. The definitions of youth are varied by countries, in the context of Nepal, the national Youth Council Act, 2072(2015) has fixed the age group of 16 to 40 years as youth age. According to the census 2011, of total population 40.3% consists of youth population in Nepal and 65.1% population aged group of 15-64 in 2021 by UNFPA data in the globe. Therefore, we cannot isolate youth in any planning and development. Their involvement and participation is most in any short of planning or in development activities in fact they are the key stakeholders, beneficiaries and change makers of present world.

Youth engagement in development is most. Young people are an important stakeholders group for achieving inclusive development. Comparable to the experiences of women, people with disabilities, the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, queer (LGBTQ+) community, and those suffering from extreme poverty, youth has historically been excluded from policy and program decisions. In fact, while youth people represent a large proportion of the population in many developing countries, they are still regularly overlooked in the design, implementation, and monitoring of programs. In order for programs to be relevant, authentic and responsive to youth needs, young people must be involved in all phases of program.

Timely interferences focused at young people are more likely to yield a greater return for sustainable development than attempts to build these capacities later in the life cycle. Targeting youth, however, requires addressing the multidimensional barriers to inclusion they face. Some of the constraints they confront may be related to lack of opportunities or education, while others may be related to limited access to information and resources. Promoting youth inclusion makes good sense for progress.

It can be seen different actors are working for youths to address their multidimensional barriers. Though, there is not proper systematic approach as , we can see number of cases is uprising and cases related to rape and violence are significantly increasing, young people has limit access to right information and lack of opportunity to empower themselves , their issues has not taken seriously by concern parties.

The concept of **Breaking the Barriers** was developed as successor and achievement of the previous project ; **Connecting Dots** , which was done on 16 days of activism by Youth Hub , which has created a platform for the youth people to share their ideas, knowledge and inspire other to look for solutions related to youth SRHR, violence, gender issues through innovative approaches.

Breaking the Barriers provided wider platform for in depth discussion on the issues affecting them, it amplifier the unheard voices of youth and their issues to wider audience. It maximized the result and gave more power to accelerate youth initiatives to break the barriers and address the factors affecting them by active participation through different modes even in pandemic situation.

Introduction:

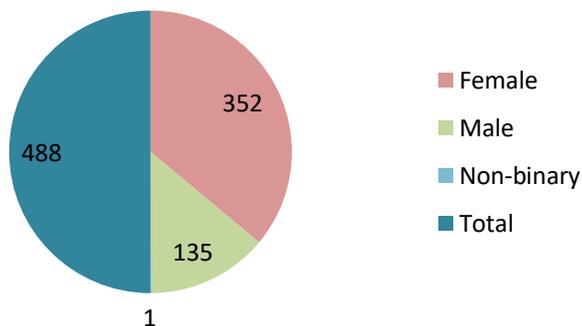
Breaking the Barriers; a youth lead initiatives for Gender Justice was the successor of previous project of Connecting Dots. This was jointly dreamed by several youth lead organizations; Yuwalaya, YAV Nepal, Hami Daju Vai, We for change and YUWA with Youth Hub. Development partner Plan International Nepal, Girls Gets Equal has supported entire journey to get result. The objective of this venture was to create a shared platform for youth to raise their concern and issued they have been facing and hold stakeholder accountable and celebrate joint efforts. Several innovative and creative endeavors were planned to achieve the objective with joint effort or various youth lead organizations and executed with their expertise.

Major Achievements:

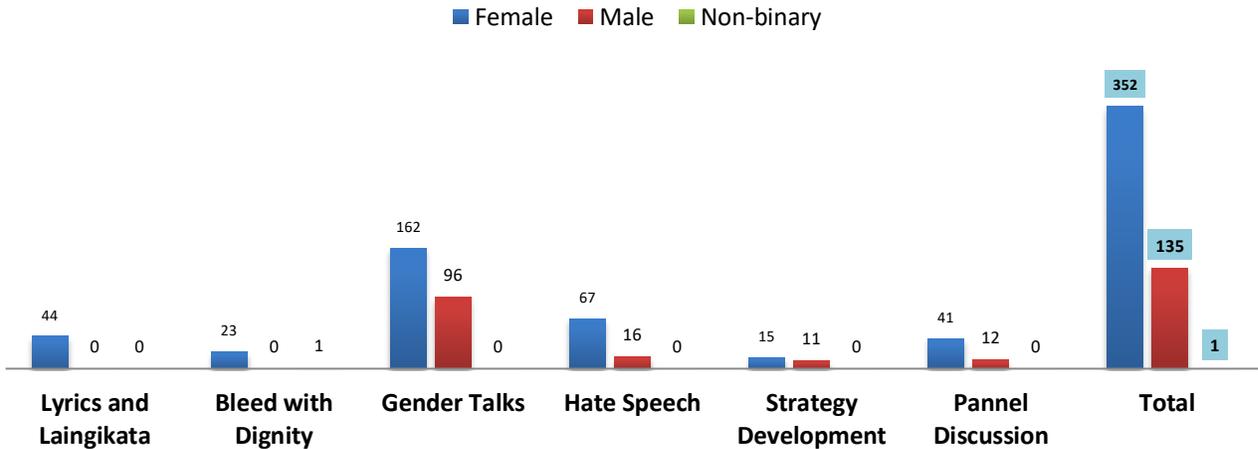
- Reached 488 youths directly through various innovative activities throughout the project.
- More than 72% Female youth and one non binary youth have been participated directly in project activities.
- Success to create shared platform to share youths concerns and issued they have been facing though various talks event, interactions and creating social platform and hold stakeholder accountable and celebrate joint efforts.
- Success to shape out the Youth Hub by finalized of governance and structure. It helped to shape the values and structure of Youth Hub and helped to build same level of understanding among the member of Youth Hub.
- Adolescent girls were trained on prerequisites of reusable pad-making and its necessary materials, cutting and sewing techniques and methods of usage.
- Youths were trained and informed about Hate Speech though series of interaction and social media campaign.
- Created the virtual platform to showcase youth's talents and express their concerns related to their barriers.
- Maximum mobilization of media for creating youth awareness through disseminating right information to youths on youth's concern topics.

Total youths reach throughout the project;

Total Reach



Reach activity wise



Highlight of the Project Activities

Bleed with Dignity

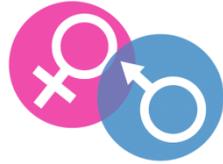
Under the “Girls Get Equal” global campaign, ‘We’ for Change Celebrated Menstrual Hygiene Day 2021 by organizing informative sessions on menstrual hygiene management and extensive pad-making training to 21 young menstruates and a non-binary youth. The project focused on increasing menstruator’s access to locally manufactured, affordable, hygienic and eco-friendly-reusable pads and motivating all gender to advocate for a dignified period without any shame and hesitance.

This project intended to ensure women, girls and all menstruators feel comfortable and confident during their periods, which in turn would make them more likely to advocate for themselves, excel in school/work, and start conversations with menstruation that may mitigate societal stigma. *(Detail activity report in Annex)*



Achievements

- 22 adolescent girls were oriented on Girls Gets Equal campaign, project timeline and modules and the objectives.
- 22 youth girls were trained on prerequisites of pad-making and its necessary materials, cutting and sewing techniques and methods of usage.
- Digital booklet with graphic and distractive information on women’s reproductive health, different menstrual products and their effect on users , step-by-step tutorial on reusable pad making techniques and its proper used has been developed and shared through digital platforms.



Gender Talks

YAV Nepal and Youth Hub hosted two different talks event on gender. The first talk was hosted on gender, gender based violence, and gender justice in the Corona pandemic. The open discussion was intended for youths to spread knowledge about gender based violence and current statues in Nepal. The event guided a network of young people and encourage them to locate spaces, where they can make a significant difference through peer-to-peer discussions. There was participation of key speakers from different sectors; women right activist and a lawyer to speak about the gender, gender based violence and gender justice in corona pandemic from a legal perspectives, intersectional gay youth right activist to get insight on topics of gender, gender based violence and gender justice in COVID-19 pandemic from the LGBTIQ+ members of our society, President of Main Engagement. The discussion went very intensive and interactive, active participants have put their questions and speakers answer them with their practical knowledge and experiences.

The second interaction was conducted between local elected representatives and youths on gender equality, gender inclusion and gender justice virtually. This talk event was also conducted in same format with main objectives to provide platform and encourage people to connect with local authorities and question law, to promote gender justice and promote discussion with youth. It supports bridging between youths and local elected representatives and discussion on gender related issues. Key speakers from different related field representatives were invited and rigorous interaction was held with youths. 66 youths were actively participated and interacted directly with local representatives on gender related topics. The representative Srijana Bajrachara from supporting partners Plan International and key speakers Bipana Dhimal , a feminist , Sarita Kuwar, deputy chief of district women and children coordination committee , Bhaktapur, Durpata Pandit , Head of Department of social development department , Madhyapur Thimi Municipality, Dipak Bisunkhe and Tara Khadka, Executive board members of Suryabinayak Municipality .

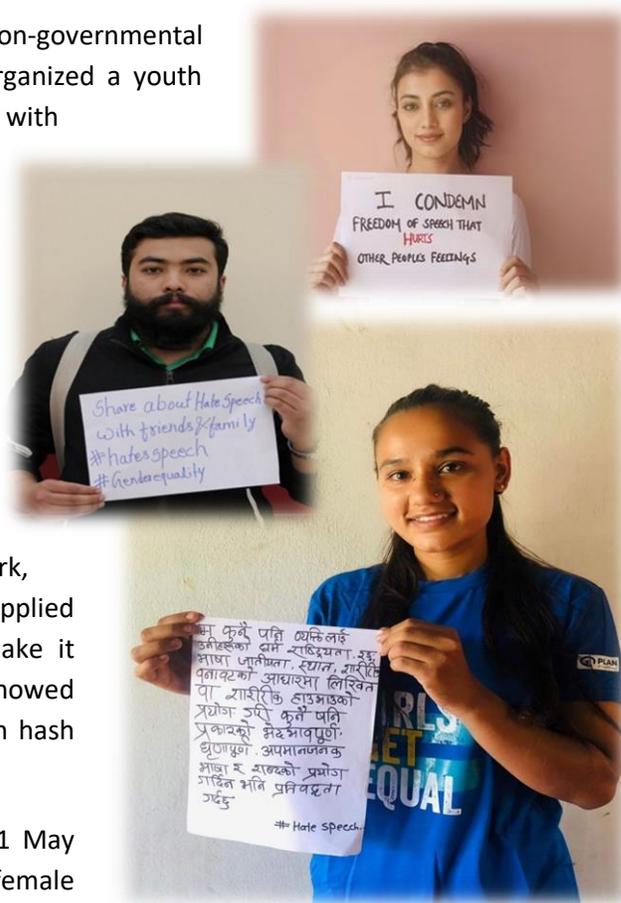
The discussion was triggered and carried on with participants awaking and challenging questions by participants to the speakers. Some of the key thought-provoking questions asked by participants were; further planning of municipality to resolved gender based violence, why not critical action were not taken for the reduction of gender violence even after four years of local government service ? What would be youth's roles for supporting in management of following issues? What is the status of gender-based violence in municipality level? and do municipality maintain the records and take actions?, As the subject of gender-based violence was addressed, people focused on violence against women and some on violence against men, but why LGBTIQ+ peoples issues were not talked ? *(Detail activity report in Annex)*

Achievements

- 66 adolescent girls and youth were actively participated and directly interacted with local government representatives on Gender related topic.
- Succeed to build Communication Bridge and create forum among youths and local elected representatives to discussion on Gender related topic.
- Supported to influence and advocate on local level planning and implementation by addressing gender related issues, justice, violence, inclusion and equality .

Hate Speech

Yuwalaya, a purely youth-led, non-profit, a non-governmental organization working for and with adolescents has organized a youth consultation workshop on Hate Speech in collaboration with Youth Hub and member organizations, which was supported by Plan international Nepal in different phases with different methods. Frist phase of one day workshop was conducted physically, in which 18 youths (11 F and 7 Male) were actively participated and exchange their ideas in workshop and showed their commitments against Hate Speech through media. Sessions focused on, Introduction of Hate speech, Target group of Hate speech, Level of affects, victim, abused, Hate speech Vs. Free Speech and Market place of Ideas Theory. Ideas sharing, group work, group consultation and individual commitment were applied in workshop facilitators Mr. Sujat Shramanera to make it more effective. The Individual commitments were showed fight against Hate speech at the end of workshop with hash tag and click the pictures.



A second phase of workshop was held virtually on 21 May 2021 for the member of Girls Out Loud Nepal. 28 female members participants were actively participated the workshop. The participants have rigorously discussed on topic, Hate Speech and collect the maximum information about topic along with identified the roles of youths to fight against Hate speech. According to the participants feedback almost 100% rate it very well and suggested for more sessions on different other youth related topics.

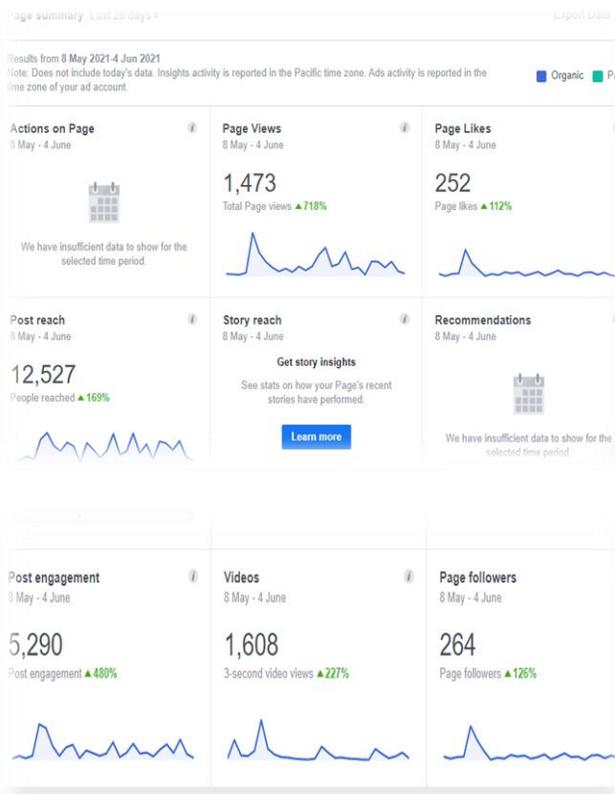
The third phase of workshop was conducted on 30 May 2021 for the volunteers of Girls get Equal campaign virtually. 37 Volunteers (28 F and 9 M) of Girls Get Equal were actively participated and by sharing their incident/experience that they observed, witnessed , Aside from that , small group discussion, group work made workshop shop more interactive. The important session about individual commitment on fight against Hate Speech were done and shared through social media. (Detail activity report in Annex)

Achievements

- 83 youths including Girls Out Loud Nepal and Girls get Equal campaign volunteers were trained on Hate Speech.
- Youths showed commitment to fight against Heat Speech by massages with hash tag, clicking picture and shared in social media.
- Youth were encourage to share the information they have gain in the workshop to wider people in their peer groups and communities
- Success to disseminate information on Hate Speech to wider audience through social media campaign

Social media campaign on Heat Speech

Social media campaign on Heat Speech was hosted by Yuwalaya in collaboration with Youth Hub Nepal with support of Plan International Nepal by coordinating with Youth Hub members organizations; YUWA, Nepali Brothers, YAV Nepal, 'We' for change, SOCHI, and RHRN-Right Here Right Now Nepal handled a Facebook page with was named as Youth Hub Nepal. Through the page, Hate Speech related information was posted. As preparation for campaign the team has research and study on topic, coordinated with crew members, collects the commitment photos of participants of workshops and prepared Flyers related to Hate Speech. Number of regular post Flyers, commitment photos and information on Hat speech were done for spreading wider audience on Hate Speech related information was successes and reach has been increasing remarkably. The campaigns develop critical mass that has knowledge and information on Hate speech. Moreover, many people and organization were demanding for workshop on Hate Speech, which clearly shows that the youths are encouraged and interested to get knowledge on this topic.



Ad

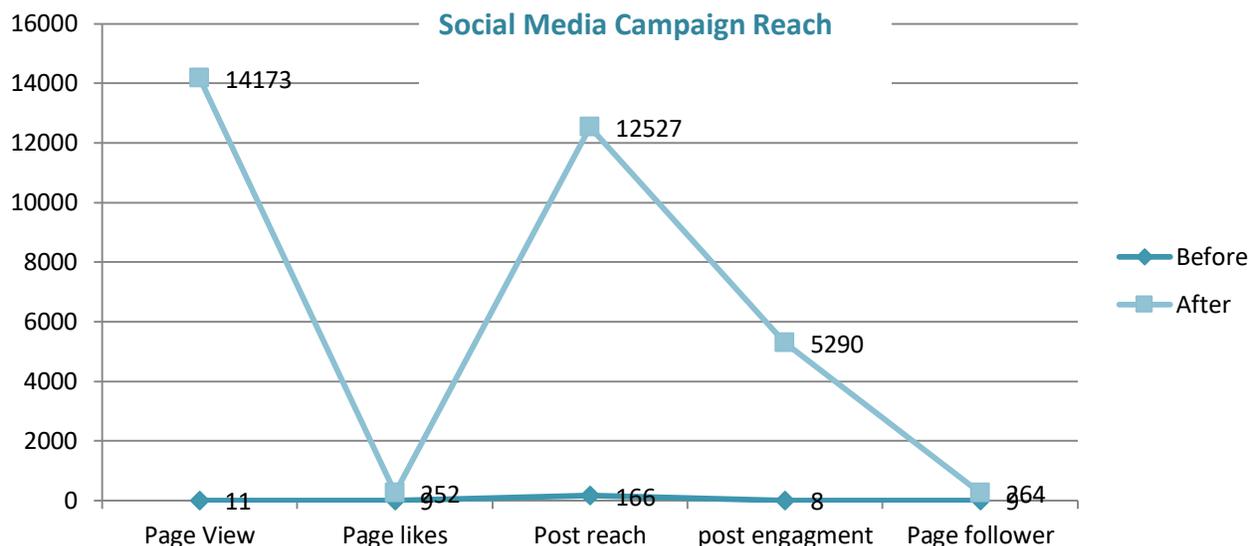
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The social media campaign were tracked by page views, page likes , post reach, post engagement and page followers etc. comparing to before and after the campaign . it was recorded that page view before campaign was 11 and increase up to 1473, same way, page likes increase 252 from 9, post reach 12,527 from 166, post engagement 5290 from 8 and page follower increase 264 from 9 . Even 696 members of people liked and 736 members followed the Youth Hub page. (Detail activity report in Annex)

Hate Speech is an abusive or threatening speech which expresses hate or encourages violence against a particular group or individual on the basis of religion, nationality, race, identity or sexual orientation.

Levels of affect by Hate Speech: Individual, Family, Community, National, International.

Possible strategies to fight against Hate Speech: Addressing root causes, drivers and actors of hate speech; Engaging and supporting the victims of hate speech; Using technology; Using education as a tool for addressing and countering hate speech; Capacity development; Engaging with media; Supporting like-minded organizations.



Lyrics Laingikta

YUWA in collaboration with Youth Hub with the support of Plan International Nepal under its Girls Get Equal Campaign organized a Training session on Gender, Sexuality and Media followed by a discussion session under the same theme with the title 'Lyrics Laingikta and More'. The three-day program was organized virtually. A total 44 female participants representing 4 different provinces (17 from Bagmati, 1 from province 2, 6 from province 1, 3 from Gandaki and 13 from Lumbini), diverse ethnic background and different level of education background with the age range from 17 to 22 years which included young girls from Girls Get Equal Campaign of Plan International Nepal. Day one was the training session on concepts of gender and sexuality and its representation in the media. The following days were the discussion session where participants put forward their views and ideas about why and how different forms of media perpetuated certain gender norms and how to push beyond that narrative. *(Detail activity report in Annex)*

सहभागी १, समानता
ल्याउनको लागि सर्वप्रथम
महिलालाई नै अवसरहरु दिनु
पर्छ र प्रत्साहन गर्नु पर्छ।

Participant 2 "Unequal
distribution of work is
creating barrier in socio
economic development

सहभागी ३. हाम्रो समाजको पहिला देखिको
चलन नै यस्तै छ महिला घरको काम गर्ने
सकेसम्म जागिर नगर्ने, गरेपनि पहिलाको
घरको काम अनि पछि जागिर गर्नु पर्छ भन्ने
हुन्छ तर पुरुषलाई चाहि जागिर पछि घरको
काम गर्नु हुदैन भन्ने सोचाई हाम्रो समाजमा छ

Social Media Contest

To engage young people in the topic of gender and sexuality through creative contents a social media contest was organized. Interested youths from all the diverse groups of youth were requested to submit any form of contents (poems, printings, short stories, animation videos, memes, blogs, and massages) on any components of gender sexuality and linkage with media. The best ten contents were selected and rewarded with prizes and their contents were shared through the social media handles of YUWA Youth Hub and Plan International.



Youth Acts: Stronger Resilience for SRHR

To ensure that correct information is being disseminated, YUWA reached out to five experts (Health professionals) from different sectors of SRH; **mental wellbeing, gynecologist, nutritionist, COVID19 specialist and urologist** who will answer a series of questions from the young people gathered by Google forms as well as curate contents they seem necessary that individuals should know in order to maintain their SRH and mitigate respective issues and problems at home. The videos were developed and disseminated via social media pages and shared to Youth Hub partners and YUWA's local and provincial partners. *(Detail activity report in Annex)*

Achievements

- 44 young girls' from 4 different provinces were trained gender and sexuality and its representation in the media.
- Created the platform to showcase the creativity of the young people and highlight the issues related to Gender and its presentation of media through creative contents.
- Success to disseminate correct information and measures on different SRH information and services.

Strategic workshop/monthly meeting and content development workshop for Girls Out Loud Platform

Hami DajuVai has conducted virtual Youth Hub first strategic planning meeting to bring the same level of understanding and formalize the structure and governance of Youth Hub on 6 May 2021, which was followed by second meeting on 4 June 2021. The first meeting was to take inputs from the Youth Hub member organizations on the strategic paper. The meeting helped to shape the values and structure of

Youth Hub in more concrete ways. With that new provision and values such as provision for individual membership, Zero tolerance policy against the discrimination, creation of safe space was introduced in the strategic paper.

The follow up meeting on 4th June 2021 finalized the structure of the coordination committee. The representatives form Youth Hub member including donor organization Plan International Nepal were present in the meeting. In consensus of the members under the guidance of Plan International Nepal the structure and modality of coordination committee was finalized.



Panel discussion program on Queer children and 10 years National Plan:

The international Day against Homophobia, Trans-phobia and Bi-phobia is observed on May 17 and aims to coordinate international events that raise awareness of LGBT rights violations and stimulate interest in LGBT rights work worldwide.

National Child Rights Council (NCRC) is the official designated body under the Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizen obligated and assigned to protect and promote the rights of the child. NCRC is currently developing a new National Children's Policy and 3rd 10 years National Plan of Action (NPA) for children. NCRC and various child rights agencies have been consulting with children in this regards. We came to realize that, the children from queer the community are still not heard in this process thus Hami DajuVai together with YouthHUB organized a one-day consultation to collect inputs and suggestions from children belongs to queer communities which need to be reflected on upcoming policy and NPA. The event was organized on 17th May and diverse queer community leaders i.e. child representative, a representative from Gay, Lesbian, Asexual, queer with a disability, Dalit queer, intersex, journalist, ethnic community, transgender. The event not only engaged various groups of the queer community but also based on socio-politically marginalized groups within the Queer community were invited

Social Media Campaign:

Under the social media campaign Hami DajuVai is managing a face book Girls Out Loud-Nepal supported by Plan International Nepal. The group created a virtual safe space for the girl's age group of 16 to 24. 300 and plus new members were welcomed by this group. Along with new members Hami DajuVai facilitated in implementing new rules and moderation tools which helped to manage and streamline the

Achievements

- Finalized of governance and structure of the Youth Hub. It helped to shape the values and structure of Youth Hub and helped to build same level of understanding among the member of Youth Hub.
- A panel discussion on Queer Children and 10 year National Plan gave opportunity to put their thoughts and inputs from children belongs to queer communities which need to be reflected on upcoming policy and NPA
- Created a virtual safe space for the girls where they can share their ideas and get information on Gender, Gender Equality, Gender inclusive and Gender justice.

activities in the group. Hami DajuVai also moderated and facilitated member of GOL-Nepal to take participation in Youth Engagement Programs and training s conducted by Youth Hub member organizations. *(Detail activity report in Annex)*

COVID-19 Situation and Adaptation in project activities:

As everyone aware the situation of COVID-19, the second phase of COVID cases has been rapidly increasing day by day as well as dead rate in our country. Nepal government has announced restriction from 26 April 2021 and still continues till 14 June 2021. All sectors were closed and affected including the learning platforms of youths. Considering the situation, the project has adopted the alternative modes to carry out the activities and reached wider audience. Initially it was design to carry out activities physically later it was redesign and adopted virtual mode to carried out through zoom cloud meeting application. Most of the activities were well executed by virtual mode including Gender Talk by YAV Nepal, Strategic workshop/ monthly meeting and content development workshop for Girls Out Loud Platform by Hami Daju Vai, consultation workshop on Hate Speech by Yuwalaya and Bleed with Dignity by 'We' for Change.

There was constraint on adopting virtual mode as well such as instability of internet connections of participants from different part of areas, difficult to show sewing techniques online because of poor visibility, some technical issue and limitation on practice sessions. Though, it was best alternate way that we could adopt and gave our project design in complete shape.

Lesson we learnt

- The biggest lesson we have learnt this time during the project was shifting programme modality from physical to virtual due to the Corona Pandemic situation. Virtual mode became best alternative mode to carry out the event and get access to the maximum number of youths and target groups of the project.
- Media is one of the fastest and easiest ways to reach maximum youths to spread correct information on Gender Justice.
- People do want to shift towards reusable pad and menstrual cup. However, the deep seated feeling of thinking the menstrual blood is dirty and unhygienic has led to many people to be too comfortable with sanitary pads available in the market. The main cause of active (and mostly privileged) menstruators not shifting to using reusable pad is because of the tedious task of having to wash it regularly and not knowing how to carry around the used product safely. Which the menstrual cup, the fear of foreign object entering the body was frequently mentioned by the participants.
- Talk events and interaction can fill the gaps and bridge between youths and local leaders to put their views and thought on youth related issues that need to be address in planning and development activities.
- While developing the session for 3 days training under Lyrics Laingikta by YUW, it was felt to introduce the concept of intersectionality to the participants, however due to issues like lack of material in Nepali language and the communication barrier during virtual sessions, this concept did not translate best. Also, the concept of intersectionality we felt were complicated for novice

learners and advocate and hence moving forward, the concept of intersectionality will be focused on more advanced learners or advocates or during in person sessions.

- Sign language interpreter mobilization in training helped to provide accessible information to the people with hearing impairment

Challenges we faced and action taken to mitigate the challenges

- Since most of the project activities has been conducted virtually considering the current CORONA pandemic situation with restrictions technical difficulties, poor internet connections, difficulties to show sewing techniques during pad making training, miscommunication among team member during social media campaign etc. have been faced. To address these challenges the Zoom sessions were recorded and shared them later through social media.
- The participants with less knowledge/practice of sewing faced a challenge to get the technique right. Recorded sessions were shared after training to all participants to get the techniques right.
- It was difficult to convince participants from different organizations to attend training of Hate Speech due to CORONA situation. The team has shared all the preparation of preventive measures that has been going to take during training to ensure the safety measures during training.
- Under the Lyrics Laingikta and more, three days session on Gender and Sexuality, The bulk of the participants were native Nepali speakers thus YUWA under the suggestion from Plan international was to facilitate the sessions in Nepali which was a challenge for YUWA as the lead for SRHR department, there was communication problem between the facilitator and the participants. To overcome this, an expert was hired to deliver the training in Nepali for the ease and comfort of the participants.

Recommendation & Way forward

The project has success to achieve that targeted goals and break the barriers of youths between the youths and a society and stakeholders. It played significant role to bridge between the youths and local leaders and put their concerns and issues to address and reflect in planning and implantation. Different youth lead organizations with shared vision with innovative ideas and activities were executed well. Infact, it created the impetus among the youths and youth groups to work in youth empowerment to contribute the overall development of society. This project gave Youth Hub in further drive towards structure and formalized. The results were maximized with joint effort of youth lead organizations with huge youth's engagement and maximum reach though various modes.

The approach that project has adopted considering this pandemic situation was well planned, it ought to be consider in future days as the corona situation has been recurring. The Innovative ideas in activities design were youth focused, that helped to reach maximum youths. Hence, the innovation on activities design should be continuing. And media engagement and mobilized were another strong part to get success , As youths are fond of using social media, the campaign through social media were fit plan. The most significant thing was the partnership and collaboration with different youth lead organizations and development partner. Therefore, the same partnership should be continue to give Youth Hub strong back up and do such tremendous project in coming future.

Ethical Consideration

This project has followed all the ethical consideration as committed to, we all the Youth Hub member organizations were sensitive towards safety of children and girl child, gender diversity and Plan's Child safeguarding policy and gender and inclusion policy. There was not any malpractice of child labor and promote any kind of discrimination in work culture. The project has dealt and paid person based on their skills and performance not based on their gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity and other identities. The project respect and maintain communication channel and deadline though out the project period.

Annex: Detail activity reports;

