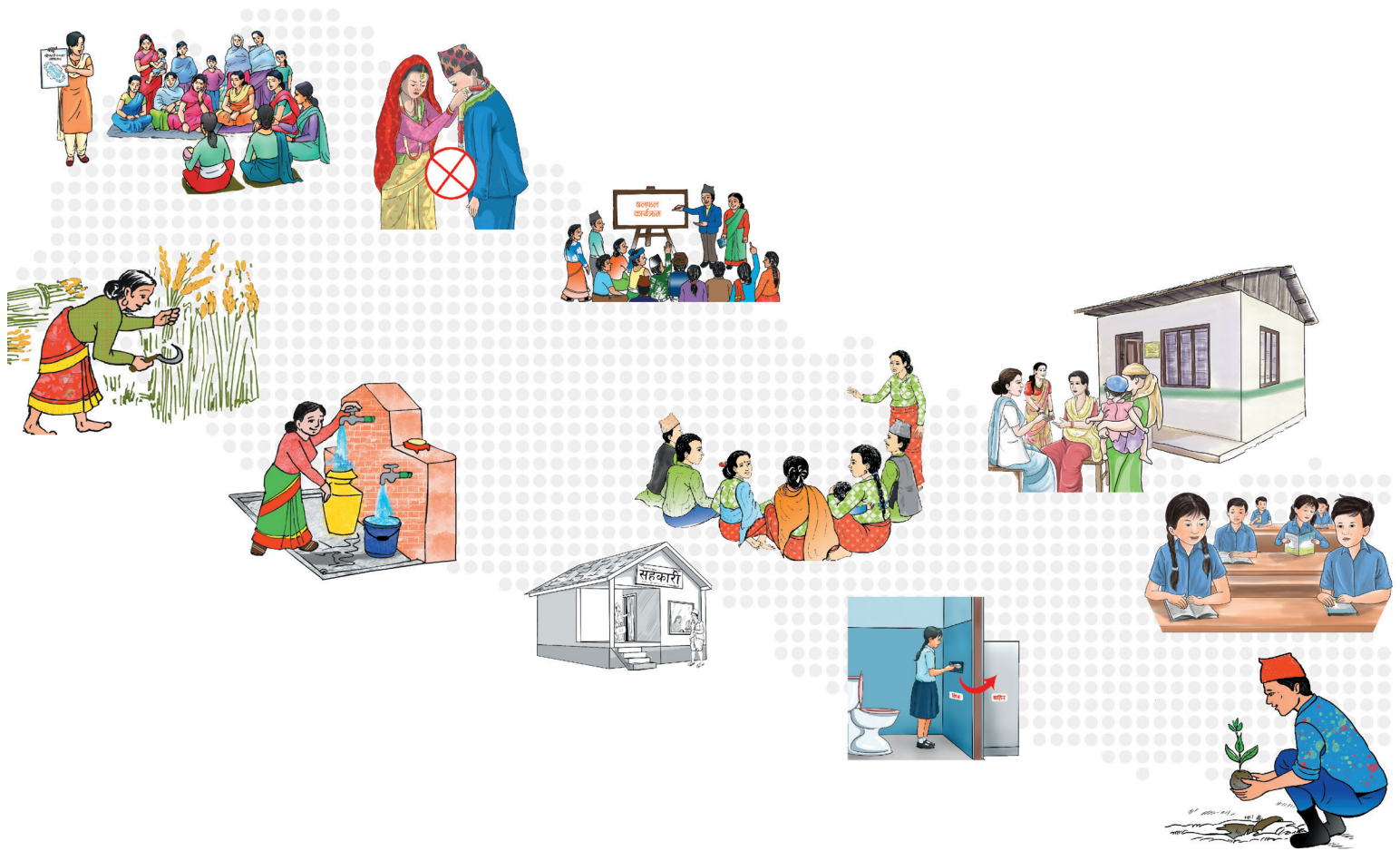


# Country Strategy 2021-2026

(including Covid-19 Response and Recovery Strategy 2020-2022)



 **Good Neighbors**  
International

Good Change for the World

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# Introduction

Good Neighbors International (GNI) has been working in Nepal since 2002 with the objective of improving lives of poor people, especially children, their families, and communities through education, income generative activities, health, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) service, child protection, disaster risk reduction, advocacy, and network building. From starting its work with 32 sponsored children under a Community Development Project (CDP) in 2002, at present GNI Nepal's presence has expanded to 19 districts with 13 sponsorship service-based CDPs and six CDPs. Every year, over 0.45 million people including 0.13 million children are directly benefiting from GNI Nepal projects.

Country Strategy 2021-2026 outlines GNI Nepal's strategic objectives and thematic priorities in four major sectors: child protection, education, public health, and social economy. GNI Nepal hopes that this strategy will guide to formulate and implement high-quality projects that improve the wellbeing of children, their families, and communities. Likewise, the strategic objectives and intended outcomes outlined in the country strategy will contribute to meeting the objectives and targets of national and local development priorities of the Government of Nepal, Sustainable Development Goals, GNI's Vision 2030, and GNI's Global Development Approach.

“Every year, over 0.45 million people including 0.13 million children are directly benefiting from GNI Nepal projects”





While designing the Country Strategy 2021-2026, GNI Nepal reviewed a wide range of policies and documents relevant to its strategy: needs of communities, national and local development priorities of the government, donors' funding opportunities, and institutional capacity of GNI Nepal. This strategy aligns with national and local development needs, project implementation experience of GNI Nepal, 15<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan of the Government of Nepal, Sustainable Development Goals, and GNI's Global Vision 2030 and Global Development Approach (GDA). In addition, reflection and learning from previous projects and interventions and interaction with beneficiaries and stakeholders were instrumental in conceptualizing the priorities and actions for the coming five years. Likewise, the COVID-19 pandemic and potential consequences were factored in designing the projects/interventions and targets for the next five years.

It is expected that GNI Nepal's Country Strategy 2021-2026 can be a great help to a wide array of stakeholders so that the projects will be implemented in a more integrated manner. It is expected that the objectives, interventions, and implementation approaches defined in this Country Strategy will contribute to improving the wellbeing of children, their families, and communities and ultimately support Nepal towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.





# Who we are



## VISION

Make a society where people live together in harmony

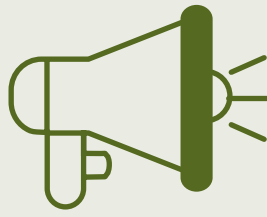
## MISSION STATEMENT

We strive in promoting wellbeing of children, their families, and communities and help them to achieve self-reliance

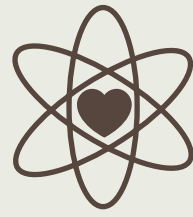
## CORE VALUES



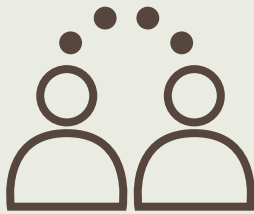
Empowerment and  
self-reliance



Promotion of rights  
of children



Cooperation and  
solidarity



Networking and  
Partnership



Transparency and  
Accountability

.....  
We strive to make a  
**society** where **people**  
live **together** in **harmony**  
.....

# Principles

## We support our suffering neighbors

### **Vulnerable communities as primary beneficiaries:** GNI



Nepal considers communities with limited access to basic services such as food, shelter, education, health, water facilities as vulnerable communities and primary beneficiaries.

## We empower people

### **Empowerment through people's organization:** GNI Nepal works



with people through self-help groups, cooperatives, child clubs, water users committees, health mothers' groups, project management committees, and community development committees and empowers them to perform their responsibilities as rights holders as well as duty bearers.

## We promote cooperation and solidarity

### **Networking and partnership for cooperation and solidarity:** GNI



Nepal coordinates and partners with concerned ministries and line agencies along with grassroots organizations, local governments for all of its community development initiatives. GNI Nepal also actively participates in several thematic working groups of the Association of International NGOs (AIN) working in Nepal as well as development community clusters.

## We raise awareness of human rights and the role of duty bearers

### **Awareness-raising of rights**



**holders:** GNI Nepal sensitizes children, their families, and communities on basic human rights through orientations, education/awareness-raising/training sessions, and exposure visits. Community-based organizations (CBOs), social groups, grassroots networks are trained and mobilized for educating and disseminating information widely.

### **Capacity development of duty**



**bearers:** GNI Nepal works with local governments, public institutions, and networks (such as schools, health facilities, cooperatives, child protection committees, etc.) and strengthens public service delivery.

Continuous capacity development of rights holders and duty bearers enhances the confidence and skills of rights holders and duty bearers to fulfill their responsibilities, mobilize local resources, make prompt and smart decisions in difficult situations, and address community needs.



# Country Goal Statement

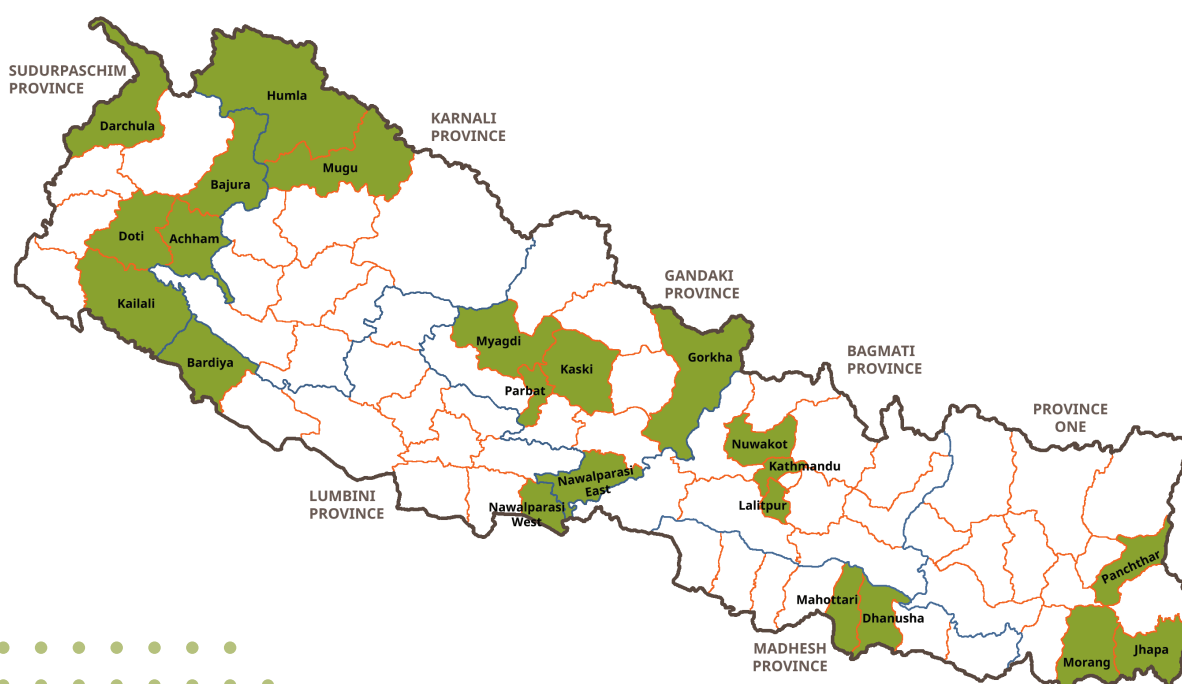
The strategic goal of GNI Nepal for 2021-2026 is

**Improved well-being of children, their families and communities**

## PROGRAM COVERAGE

GNI Nepal had presence in 19 districts out of a total of 77 districts in its 2016-2020 strategic period. Coverage will expand to an additional five districts that have been identified based on the Human Development Index, child literacy, and WASH, health indicators and wellbeing statuses.

Province	Working Districts 2016-2020	Working Districts 2021-2026
Province 1	Jhapa, Morang, Panchthar	Jhapa, Morang, Panchthar
Madhesh		Mahottari, Dhanusha, Rautahat
Bagmati	Lalitpur, Kathmandu, Nuwakot	Lalitpur, Kathmandu, Nuwakot
Gandaki	Kaski, Gorkha, Parbat, Myagdi, Nawalparasi-East	Kaski, Gorkha, Parbat, Myagdi, Nawalparasi-East
Lumbini	Nawalparasi-West, Bardiya	Nawalparasi-West, Bardiya
Karnali	Humla, Mugu	Humla, Mugu, Jajarkot
Sudurpaschim	Kailali, Doti, Darchula, Bajura	Achham, Kailali, Doti, Darchula, Bajura

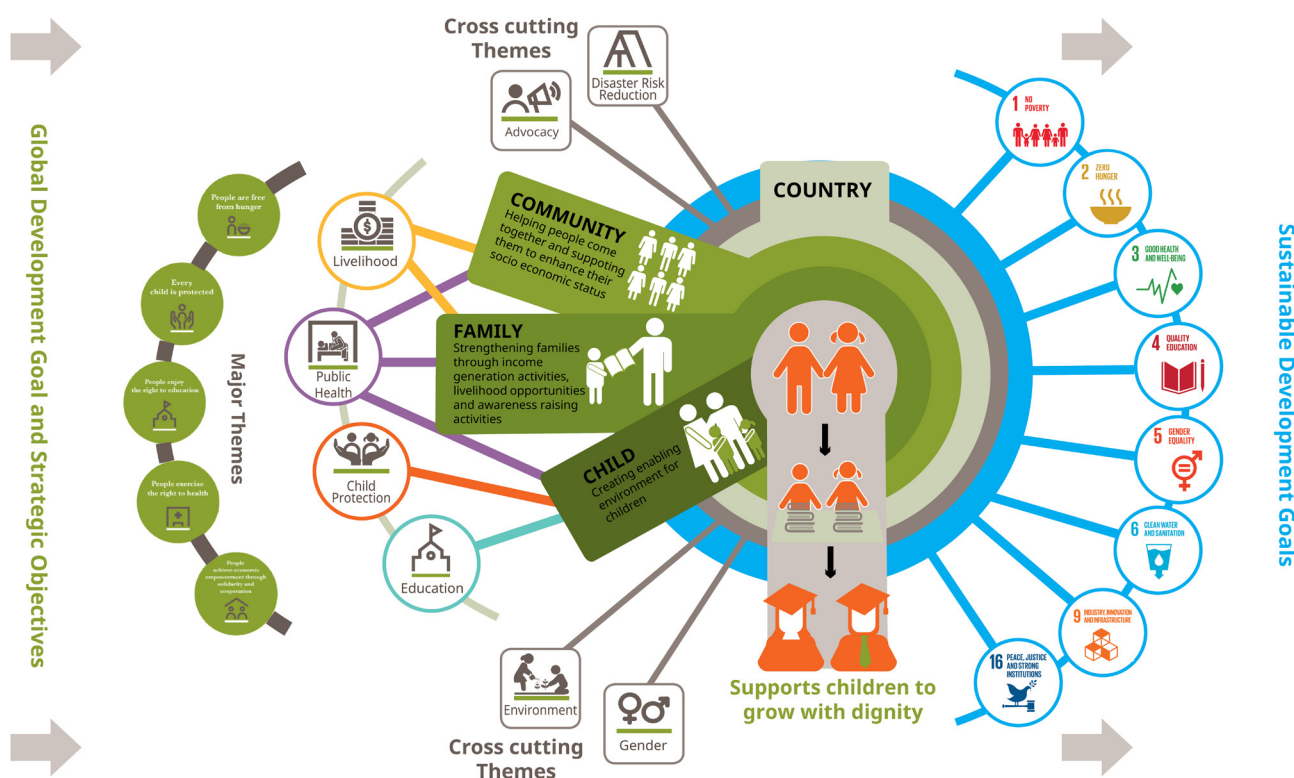


# Programmatic Model and Approaches

GNI Nepal upholds a child-centered community development model that focuses on the nurturance and holistic development of children and the improvement of their immediate environment. All of GNI Nepal's interventions have been integrated into a community-driven Child-Centered Community Development Approach and it puts the most marginalized, deprived, and hardest-to-reach children (individuals under the age of 18) at the center. We focus not only on children but also on improving the quality of life of their family members and helping their communities to achieve their long-term development aspirations taking into account the multi-faceted nature of community development.

GNI Nepal's child protection, education, and public health interventions directly benefit children. Social economy and public health programs benefit their families. Community members derive benefit from public health, infrastructural, awareness-raising, advocacy, and climate change adaptation (CCA)/ disaster risk reduction (DRR) interventions. Our interventions are driven by local needs. Our integrated community development approach is largely a bottom-up process and strives to attain holistic development along with supporting children to grow with dignity.


Following approaches have been integrated into GNI Nepal's work right from the planning to implementation, and evaluation stages.







## INTEGRATED CHILD-CENTERED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH



Community Development Project (CDP) of GNI Nepal is an integrated child-centered development approach, which considers children as primary stakeholders/beneficiaries. Their families and communities are the owners of the whole development process.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) stipulates child participation as a basic right. Children have the right to be heard, have a say in decisions concerning them, access to information, freedom of belief, and freedom of association. GNI Nepal supports children to grow with dignity with interventions focused on ensuring their right to health, education, and individual and social wellbeing. Children are enabled to exercise their rights proactively through child clubs and child club networks.

Aimed at improving the wellbeing of children, their families, and communities, GNI Nepal's interventions on education, child protection, public health, income generation, environment, and disaster risk reduction (DRR) complement each other. Gender, environment, and climate change adaptation cut across these core thematic areas.


## HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH (HRBA)

GNI Nepal employs a human rights-based approach (HRBA) and empowers rights-holders to claim and exercise their basic rights to education, health, livelihood, and social wellbeing. GNI Nepal promotes institutional and individual capacity of duty-bearers having the obligation to respect, protect, promote, and fulfill the basic rights of people. GNI Nepal's HRBA is underpinned by five key human rights principles also known as PANEL: participation, accountability, non-discrimination, equality, empowerment, and legality.



## LOCAL PARTNERSHIP AND CONTRIBUTION

As GNI Nepal's key local partners, NGOs collaborate with stakeholders including local governments, community-based organizations (CBOs), social and public institutions for implementation. As rights holders, community members are encouraged to participate in all stages and processes of planning, implementation, resource mobilization, and monitoring of GNI Nepal's interventions. Community Development Committees (CDCs) at the local level and Project Management Committee (PMCs) at the district level are targeted beneficiaries' representatives for GNI Nepal programs.

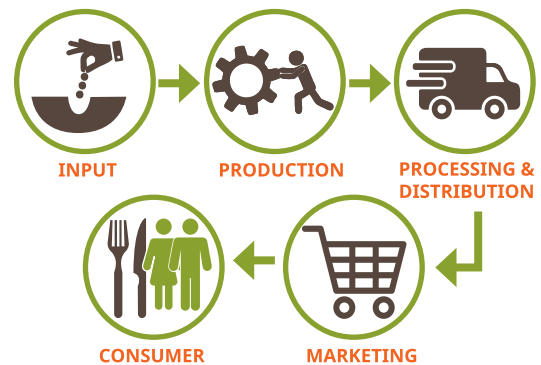




Local contribution has been seen to improve ownership and sustainability of gains made. Cash or in-kind contribution to key interventions such as infrastructure development, enterprises promotion, value-chain development, etc. is mandatory. At the planning phase itself, GNI Nepal explores possibilities for generating such local contributions.

### MARKET-DRIVEN APPROACH

GNI Nepal's enterprises and value chain development interventions follow a market-driven approach under which market trends and potential consumers are surveyed and analyzed. It gives a broader and vital understanding of the consumers, technology, and business environment needed for starting, growing, and sustaining enterprises.



### SENSITIVITY TO CONFLICT AND DO NO HARM

At all costs, GNI Nepal strives to avoid putting people at risk through its actions or interventions.





# Country Context



Nepal has made significant progress in poverty reduction and human development in the last two decades. Absolute poverty has been declining and HDI is improving albeit slowly. Nevertheless, absolute poverty at 21.6% is highest among South Asian countries and Nepal ranks at the bottom among countries having middle human development status. 28.6% of Nepal's population (7% of the urban population and 33% of the rural population) is multi-dimensionally poor.<sup>1</sup> In 2019, annual economic growth rate stood at 6.9% and per capita income increased to 1,051 USD. In fiscal year 2019/20, the GDP growth (at base price) is estimated to increase by 2.27%. (Economic Survey 2018/19/20).

With an HDI index of 0.602, Nepal falls in the medium human development category and ranks at 142 out of 189 countries and territories<sup>2</sup>. Reasons behind such a low HDI ranking are lack of basic infrastructure, low agricultural productivity, traditional discriminatory practices, lack of and unequal access to economic opportunities, remoteness, and natural disasters. Poverty and vulnerability in the country correlate with geography, caste, ethnicity, gender, and are exacerbated by environmental, climate, and disaster-related risks. Multi-dimensional development challenges, limited livelihood opportunities, poor service delivery, and vulnerability to climate and disasters are some other major related risks<sup>3</sup>. These root causes of vulnerabilities are steeped in Nepal's socioeconomic, cultural, and political contexts.

Nepal is implementing its 15th Five-Year Plan (2019-2024) which aims to make Nepal a middle-income country by 2030 and increase the per capita income to 1585 USD, economic growth to 10.1% per annum, literacy to 99% (from around 70% in 2021), and bring down poverty to 9%, an average growth of 5.6% per annum in the agricultural sector, 17.1% per annum in the industrial sector, and 9.9% per annum in the service sector. It incorporates the spirit of the SDGs that have been well-integrated into Nepal's national development frameworks.

<sup>1</sup> Nepal Multidimensional Poverty Index Report, 2018, Government of Nepal and Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, University of Oxford

<sup>2</sup> UNDP Human Development Report 2020

<sup>3</sup> UNDP Nepal Country Programme (2018-2020)

## Strategic Objective I

# Children are prevented and protected from exploitation and abuse



Child Protection





### Intended Outcomes

Strengthened child protection system at the local level

Sensitized children who can claim their rights

Promoted preventive and responsive support systems at the household and societal levels

### Targets



**22,000** children received support to continue education every year



**140** child protection committee's capacity development



**9,700** children trained on CRC



**1,650** child protection actors capacity development

32.8% of females and 9% of males are married before the age of 18.<sup>4</sup> Child marriage is not only a violation of several rights of children outlined in CRC, but it also has severe implications for the child's health, particularly the child bride. Child labor is also a major protection issue in Nepal. An estimated 286,000 children under the age of 17 are involved in waged labor (Nepal Labour Force Survey Report 2017/18). Child labor deprives the children of their rights to have education and health care services and also hinders their physical, mental, spiritual, moral, and social development. Children because of their age and limited physical development are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

<sup>4</sup> Nepal Multiple indicator cluster survey-2019

## STRENGTHENED CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Although there are a few organized committees, networks, and well-informed community members at the local level; however, they are not functional due to limited knowledge of child rights and child protection. Hence, these committees require technical assistance, capacity development support, and exposure to child protection systems. Similarly, child protection policies, systems, and mechanisms have not been adopted and adequately defined by many local governments.

Formation/re-formation of child protection committees at the community, rural municipality, and municipality levels assists for institutionalizing duty bearers' roles and responsibilities. Capacity development interventions for child protection committee members, local government officials, and other actors help them to get educated on key child rights issues, respond to child protection issues, and facilitate case management. Interventions that are based on research/assessments support formulation and implementation of child protection policies/guidelines and will contribute to institutionalize and sustainability of grassroots child protection systems.



### INTERVENTIONS

- ◆ Mapping of child protection committees
- ◆ Formation/reformation of child protection committees
- ◆ Training for child protection actors, and local government officials
- ◆ Strengthening child case reporting mechanism
- ◆ Research/assess child rights issues
- ◆ Policies/guidelines formulation and implementing them at the local government level

## SENSITIZED CHILDREN WHO CLAIM THEIR RIGHTS

GNI Nepal's child protection interventions aim at sensitization and promoting the participation of children so that they can deal with child protection issues at their home, school, and community. Children are powerful change agents and knowledge disseminators among their peers, family members, and community members. At schools and communities, children are organized into child clubs which are further organized into child club networks and under their aegis, they conduct/participate in extra-curricular activities and awareness-raising activities related to child rights.

Besides these efforts by children, at many GNI Nepal partner schools, continuous support for children, their clubs, and networks is required for enhancing their capacities, promoting their engagement in child rights campaigns, and dealing with the problems children face at home and in public spaces. School management committees also need to be sensitized on child rights for effectively managing children's issues at school.

Capacity development of child clubs and networks will strengthen their knowledge, skills, and participation to deal with child protection issues at school, home, and in public. Complaint handling mechanism at the schools will give an outlet to problems troubling children and help them to seek solutions.

### INTERVENTIONS

- ◆ Formation/re-activation of child clubs and networks
- ◆ Capacity development of child clubs and networks
- ◆ Organization of awareness-raising/social action events through child clubs
- ◆ Life skills training for children
- ◆ Complaint handling mechanism establishment and operation
- ◆ Capacity development of children on complaint handling mechanism operation



## PROMOTED PREVENTIVE AND RESPONSIVE SUPPORT SYSTEMS AT THE HOUSEHOLD AND SOCIETAL LEVELS

Children's Act 2018 of Nepal highlights the responsibilities of parents, community, and institutions for protecting child rights including individuals' roles and responsibilities for ensuring care, protection, and personal development of children. Wide disparities within communities in terms of socioeconomic standing, caste, ethnicity, gender, and education have resulted in challenges for the holistic development of children and in fulfilling their rights.

Our interventions will enhance awareness of parents, caregivers, and community members' awareness of child rights and enable them to better care and create a conducive environment at home and in their communities. Issue-based social dialogues and advocacy events at the local and national level will inform and urge policymakers towards addressing the needs of children. Needy children and their families will receive immediate response and support.

### INTERVENTIONS

- ◆ Community awareness-raising campaigns
- ◆ Training for parents, and community members on child rights
- ◆ Research/studies on child protection issues
- ◆ Advocacy events/social dialogues
- ◆ Immediate response and support for needy children and their families

Strategic Objective II

# Children enjoy the right to quality education



Education



## Intended Outcomes

Improved access to and quality of education

Improved management and accountability at schools

Enhanced resilience of schools

## Targets



**116** child-friendly classroom construction



**281** renovations/ maintenance work is carried out at schools



**345** schools have a resilient learning environment



**346** schools have child friendly classrooms



**402** schools have better teaching-learning facilities



**650** schools' management system gets strengthened



**2,150** teachers' capacity development



**4,100** community-level stakeholders' capacity development



**22,000** children receive educational materials every year



**42,000** children participate in learning opportunities



**50,000** parents receive parental education

Over the years, investment in the education sector has risen substantially. To enhance equitable access to education at all levels, policy, program, and institutional reform measures have been adopted. As a result, the number of children enrolled in the first grade with early childhood development experience is 66.9%<sup>5</sup>. Net Enrolment Rate (NER) at the primary level (1-5 grade) and basic (1-8 grade) had reached 96.9% and 92.7% respectively<sup>6</sup>. The promotion rate stands at 82.4% in grade 1 and 92.6% in grade 5. The proportion of pupils reaching grade eight is 79.3%, while the gross enrolment in secondary education (grades 9-10) is 60.6%. The ratio of girls and boys having basic education (grades 1-8) has just reached parity, and the NER in secondary levels stand at 88.9% respectively. Literacy rate among 15-24 years age group was 88.6% in 2015 and reached 92% in 2019 (Flash Report 2019/2020).

5, 6 DEO Flash Report – 2018/2019



Despite these improvements in education, the overall academic performance of children is unsatisfactory. 20% of basic level students in Nepali and 32% in mathematics subjects have below average performance<sup>7</sup>. The learning achievement scores in major subjects like maths, English, and Nepali is 35%, 48%, and 41% respectively does not meet School Sector Reform Plan targets. Additionally, in the basic level 240,641 children are still out of school (Flash Report 2019/2020).

Highly encouraging are increasing enrolment rates. Conversely, necessary conditions need to be made so that students complete secondary education (grade 12) and children from disadvantaged groups are identified, enrolled, and retained at school<sup>8</sup>. Education quality is another issue that public schools in Nepal are grappling with and addressing it requires sustained efforts from all concerned.



## IMPROVED ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION

In the past two decades, Nepal has made significant progress in creating access to education. However, there are many challenges in access and quality of education. Inequity in access persists due to socioeconomic, geographic, and ethnic factors. Key barriers in children's enrolment and regular attendance are consequences of poverty, social exclusion, disability, migration, social norms, and gender bias. As the anticipated targets have not been achieved, the primary focus should be on ensuring access and quality.

### INTERVENTIONS

- ◆ Construction/renovation of school infrastructure
- ◆ Teaching-learning packages (science lab, library, furniture, computer lab, etc.) support
- ◆ Child-friendly classroom management
- ◆ Education materials for children
- ◆ Capacity building of teachers/facilitators on pedagogical practices
- ◆ ICT integration in education (SMART Classroom)
- ◆ Focused early grade reading interventions and extra-/co-curricular activities (E/CCA)

<sup>7</sup> NASA – ERO Report, 2018 (published in 2019)

<sup>8</sup> NEC Nepal, 2020



## IMPROVED SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In Nepal, education policies and plans assume key roles and responsibilities of school stakeholders, parents in particular in school governance. Sensitizing school stakeholders of their roles and responsibilities and facilitating cooperation amongst themselves can potentially contribute to improving the governance of a public school.

However, in the new federal setup, many local governments are yet to formulate context-based policies and plans that suit their students. Sociocultural status and limited formal education have been shown to lead to lowered/less frequent engagement of parents in school management. As a result, school management and governance mechanisms are yet to be synchronized with national education policies, plans, and programs.

Interventions that are targeted at school management committees/parent-teacher associations (SMCs/PTAs), head teachers, and local government (LG) focal persons will sensitize them on policy and provisions of school management and accountability and their capacity will be developed for introducing specific provisions. Parental education, awareness-raising, and community mobilization for school activities will support in bridging the gap between community and school. Focused assistance to LGs for formulating an education plan will be provided which is expected to promote and prioritize access to and quality of public school education through continuous engagement of stakeholders in education management. Action research on ICT-based education among GNI partner schools will generate knowledge for replicating the model on a wider scale.

### INTERVENTIONS

- ◆ Develop capacity of SMCs/PTAs, headteachers, and focal persons
  - ◆ Introduce special mechanisms
  - ◆ Parental education, awareness-raising, and counseling
  - ◆ Support local government units in formulating local-level education plans
- Action research on ICT-based education and results dissemination

## ENHANCED RESILIENCE OF SCHOOLS

In Nepal, many schools are vulnerable to disasters, as their physical infrastructures do not meet safety standards. Nepal is implementing the Safe School Policy 2019 and Comprehensive School Safety Minimum Package 2019. Raising awareness of students, incorporation of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and school safety in the curriculum, floods, landslides, and earthquakes, and related preparedness, safe infrastructure, capacity building, retrofitting, maintenance, etc. have been included as disaster mitigation measures.

A resilient school is one that can absorb disturbances, changes, reorganize, and still retain the same basic structures and provide the same services to the students and community. GNI Nepal will support partner schools in strengthening their institutional capacity to adapt and implement school safety measures including making physical infrastructure resilient.

Risk assessment will provide a detailed picture of schools as regards their vulnerability towards disasters and hazards. Based on it, a school safety plan can be drawn and resource allocation and necessary action can be taken. GNI Nepal will facilitate the construction and renovation of school infrastructure meeting national resilient school standards. For capacity building on school safety and preparing municipal level DRR and school safety action plans, local governments' engagement and collaboration will be actively sought.

### INTERVENTIONS

- ◆ Multi-hazard risk assessment of schools
- ◆ Formulate school safety plans
- ◆ Retrofit/construct resilient school infrastructure
- ◆ Facilitate the preparation and implementation of municipal-level school safety plans
- ◆ Collaborate with LGs to promote school safety practices
- ◆ Orient parents and local stakeholders on school safety
- ◆ Develop and disseminate awareness-raising materials on school safety



## Strategic Objective III

# Community members utilize essential health- care services and facilities



Public Health





## Intended Outcomes

Improved health service delivery  
at the local level

Ensured access to quality WASH  
facilities and services

Improved health  
behavior and practices

## Targets



**1** lab set-up at the  
Provincial Hospital



**22** health facilities  
have maintenance  
work carried out



**36** community  
WASH facilities are  
constructed



**37** health facilities  
are constructed



**119** schools receive MHM  
interventions



**140** health facilities receive  
equipment and utilities  
support



**25,000** children have their  
health examined



**6,900** community members  
reached with behavioral  
change education



**1,340** health personnel and  
committee members' capacity  
development

In the past two decades, the health sector in Nepal has witnessed an improvement in the overall health of the people. Concerted efforts resulted in a decrease in Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR), from 539 per 100,000 live births in 1996 to 239 in 2019. Aligned with the SDGs, Nepal aims to reduce the MMR to 70 by 2030. There has been a significant decline in child mortality over the last five years reaching 28 per 1000 in 2019<sup>9</sup>. Neonatal mortality dropped to 16 in 2019<sup>10</sup>. Overall, the nutritional status of children has improved. Nepal Health Sector Strategy 2015-2020 outlines four strategic directions: health system reform, equitable access, improved quality of services, and multi-sectoral approaches. In the new federal setup, local governments are better positioned to initiate and implement health care activities. The main difficulty in ensuring universal health care is poor management, access to health services, in particular for the poor and marginalized communities;

9, 10 Nepal – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (NMICS), 2019



and maintaining quality<sup>11</sup> of an already constrained public health system. A focus on preventive measures through increasing awareness can be instrumental in promoting the wellbeing of rural population. Hence, collaboration with local governments can be instrumental in strengthening local health institutions. Nepal has made notable progress in the WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) sector though a considerable proportion of the population still lacks access to improved water supply and sanitation facilities<sup>12</sup>. 85% of Nepalese households had access to improved water sources and 62% had access to sanitation facilities (Central Bureau of Statistics 2011). However, 82.2% of households are using contaminated water<sup>13</sup>. In 2016, the involvement of users in the process of planning and implementation had increased to 87.3% and 87% in the water supply<sup>14</sup>.



Aiming to bring universal WASH coverage to its citizens, the Government of Nepal has made considerable efforts to improve the water supply and sanitation situation in the country by formulating and enforcing several WASH policies, guidelines, and acts.

## IMPROVED HEALTH SERVICE DELIVERY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Nepal registered notable achievements in reducing maternal, under-five, infant mortality rates, and other health indicators. National Health Policy 2019 has mandated subnational governments to equitably and efficiently deliver basic health services including provisioning preventive and promotive care on reproductive, maternal, child health, and nutrition services.

Many health facilities located in rural and remote areas lack basic infrastructure and facilities to provide basic health care services to general people. Adequacy and availability of skilled human resources and capacity of the health personnel are other major challenges in ensuring smooth delivery of health care services.

Construction/renovation of health facilities and providing equipment and basic utilities will strengthen the operational capacity of local health facilities. Capacity building of community health workforce will enhance knowledge and skills required to deliver quality and specialized health care services. Capacity building interventions for health facility operation and management committees will equip them with the know-how for operating health facilities following national standards.

### INTERVENTIONS

- ◆ Construction/renovation of health facilities
- ◆ Support health facilities with equipment and basic utilities
- ◆ Capacity development of the health workforce
- ◆ Strengthening operation and management of PHC/ORC
- ◆ Capacity development of health facility operation and management committees
- ◆ Collaboration with LGs for strengthening health facilities and their services

<sup>11,13</sup> National Review of Sustainable Development Goal, Nepal – Government of Nepal, National Planning Commission, 2020

<sup>12</sup> Nepal state of sanitation report (2000). National Sanitation Action Steering Committee, Kathmandu.

<sup>14</sup> Ministry of Water Supply and Sanitation (MWSS) (2016). Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Sector status report 2016.

## ENSURED ACCESS TO QUALITY WASH FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Nepal has made significant progress in expanding access to water and sanitation over the last few decades despite tremendous challenges such as poverty, difficult terrain, conflicts, and disasters. However, the functional status of water schemes and the quality of water remains poor with 71% of all water sources and 91% of those used by the poorest quintile have been found contaminated with *E. coli*<sup>15</sup>. More than 20% of community schools lack improved water and sanitation facilities, and 19% lack gender-segregated toilets and menstrual hygiene management facilities (UNICEF Nepal, 2019).

Although Nepal had committed to ensuring access to basic water supply and sanitation to all people by the end of 2017, the earthquakes of 2015 affected its achievement. Additionally, lack of resources, technology, and capacity of stakeholders including WASH committees mar the prospect of ensuring WASH services and facilities in rural schools and communities.

Proposed WASH facilities construction and renovation interventions including water schemes and toilet construction at schools and health facilities will ensure better WASH services for students and patients/service seekers. School-based interventions on menstrual hygiene management promote adolescent girls' school attendance. GNI Nepal facilitates the construction and renovation of community-based water supply schemes for increasing access to quality drinking water.

In communities and at schools, GNI Nepal works together with WASH committees. These committees are local actors for developing, implementing, and maintaining WASH facilities and services. Capacity building of these committees ensures local resource mobilization, ownership of WASH facilities and services, and promotes sustainability.

### INTERVENTIONS

- ◆ Construction/renovation of WASH facilities at school and health facilities
- ◆ Capacity development of local WASH committees
- ◆ Support school for promoting MHM facilities and services
- ◆ Construction/renovation of community water supply schemes
- ◆ Water quality surveillance and treatment

<sup>15</sup> WASH status of Nepal, UNICEF, 2019 retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/nepal/water-and-sanitation-wash>

## IMPROVED HEALTH BEHAVIOR AND PRACTICES

Poor sanitation and hygiene behavior and practices may intensify the spread of communicable diseases. Traditional sociocultural practices in rural areas and dismal health-seeking behavior impact the health status of the rural populace, mainly women and children. Women and children are encouraged to visit local health institutions and avail themselves of free maternal and child health care. However, only 56% of pregnant women had been found to have four ANC check-ups and 63% attended institutional deliveries<sup>16</sup>. Only 68% of children were fully immunized in 2018-2019.

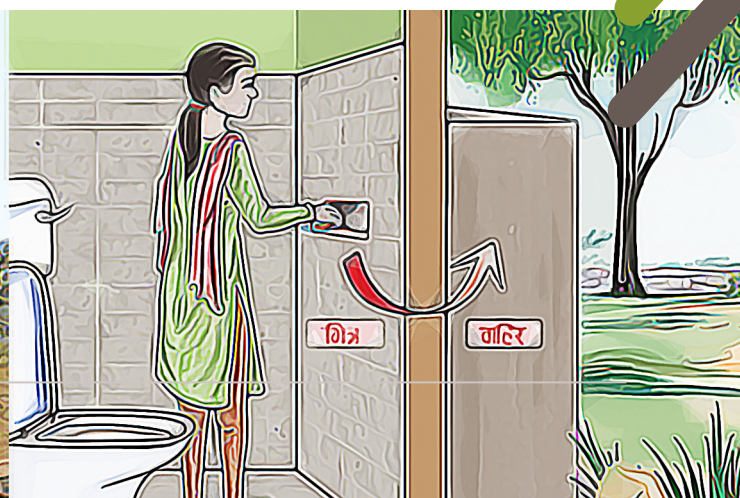
As is evident, community members need to be educated and sensitized on health-seeking behavior including sanitation and hygiene practices for a healthy life. Visitations to local public health institutions, good sanitation, hygiene, and healthy behavior among children, families, and communities should be encouraged through behavior change communication campaigns and interventions.

Community health and WASH literacy events will sensitize children, their families, and community members on improved sanitation and hygiene practices. Health education sessions targeted at adolescent girls and children will encourage them to adopt hygienic practices at school and support them to disseminate knowledge to their family members, and community. Public service announcements (PSAs) broadcast on local FM radio stations will reach all sections of the rural population.

At the local level, female community health volunteers (FCHVs) play a crucial role in encouraging women and children to seek maternal and child health services from local health facilities. Hence, interventions targeted at FCHVs will enhance the health-seeking behavior of community members, mainly women, and children.

### INTERVENTIONS

- ◆ Community health and WASH literacy drives
- ◆ School-based adolescent health education
- ◆ School WASH campaigns
- ◆ PSAs and awareness-raising events on improved WASH and health-seeking behavior
- ◆ Capacity development and mobilization of FCHVs
- ◆ Basic health and nutrition sessions for pregnant and lactating women





## Strategic Objective IV

# People achieve economic empowerment



Social Economy





## Intended Outcomes

Expanded employment and  
income opportunities

Enhanced community resilience  
for food insecurity

## Targets



**36** cooperative  
businesses  
establishment



**41** economic  
infrastructure  
development



**58** local markets  
are developed/  
strengthened



**75** cooperatives'  
institutional  
development



**4,050** individuals receive  
business development service



**11,290** individuals receive  
micro-enterprises development  
support

➤➤➤➤➤ Agriculture is the backbone of Nepal's economy. As of 2021 it accounts for around 33% of GDP, employs two-thirds of the population, and around one-third of Nepal's total land is used for agriculture. Land fragmentation, conventional farming methods, poor knowledge, lack of improved seeds, fertilizers, and irrigation, erratic weather patterns result in low agricultural productivity. Major cereal crops are paddy, maize, millet, wheat, barley, and buckwheat and major cash crops are oilseed, potato, tobacco, sugarcane, jute, cotton, and rubber. Even though Nepal is an agrarian country but many households in the mountain districts of Nepal experience food shortages for 4-9 months a year. More than 50% of the districts in Nepal are considered food-deficient (FAO 2021).

Agriculture in Nepal needs to be modernized, diversified, commercialized, and marketed. Towards this end, agricultural inputs, such as irrigation, electricity, transportation, and agro-credit need to be made available. Technology-driven agriculture inputs and facilities, market-based enterprises, and increased access to financial services can lead to better income generation opportunities for the rural poor in Nepal.

## EXPANDED EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME GENERATION OPPORTUNITIES

The number of absolute poor in Nepal is declining every year and significant achievements have been made in poverty reduction in the past two decades. However, poverty persists in rural areas due to a lack of income generation and entrepreneurial opportunities. Many youths are involved in low-paying and low-productive agricultural and informal sectors. Lack of adequate knowledge, skills, technology, entrepreneurship, and financial capital are major hindrances in commercializing extant conventional farming. Economic and employment opportunities for youths, women and indigenous communities are also significantly low.

GNI Nepal emphasizes the promotion of income generation and employment through community-based social enterprises and by mobilizing local resources. Market-based value chain development in agriculture and livestock and micro enterprise development are GNI Nepal's key priorities for expanding employment and income opportunities in rural and remote areas of Nepal.

Cooperatives are leading grassroots institutions for promoting income and employment opportunities. Institutional development support for them will help bridge the financial access gap facing potential entrepreneurs. Agro-value chain development of key products creates employment and better income for farmers, producers, and entrepreneurs through diversified products and market linkages. Technical and vocational training will be targeted at youths to make them skilled to compete in the local job market and secure better-paying employment.

### INTERVENTIONS

- ◆ Institutional development support for cooperatives
- ◆ Promotion of cooperative businesses
- ◆ Micro- and small-enterprises development support
- ◆ Promotion of financial access through revolving fund
- ◆ Economic infrastructure building for enterprises development
- ◆ Agro-value chain development support
- ◆ TEVT/on-the-job training
- ◆ Job market promotion and improving

## ENHANCED COMMUNITY RESILIENCE FOR FOOD SECURITY

Although food security in Nepal has improved in recent years, still 4.6 million people are food-insecure, with 20% of households mildly food-insecure, 22% moderately food-insecure, and 10% severely food-insecure<sup>17</sup>. In rural and remote areas that are far from markets and transportation costs are high, food prices tend to be costlier and more likely to be food-insecure compared to urban households. Malnutrition among rural children and women is persistent. 36% of children and 1.84 million pregnant and lactating women are malnourished<sup>18</sup>.

Climate change and natural disasters are also affecting agriculture. Rural and poor farming households seek alternative income generation opportunities and sustainable livelihood. For better agricultural yields, smallholder farmers in rural and remote areas will be supported with agricultural inputs and technology. Alternative income generation opportunities for rural farmers will be created through technology transfer, skills development, and providing small-scale production facilities.

GNI Nepal intends to introduce 'school-to-home kitchen gardening' to transfer kitchen gardening skills from children to their families. It will help increase the intake of green vegetables. Climate-smart agriculture and enterprises and modern and improved technologies will be introduced for increasing agricultural production in remote and rural areas.

### INTERVENTIONS

- ◆ Agricultural inputs and technology support
- ◆ Provision of alternative income generation opportunities
- ◆ School-to-home kitchen gardening
- ◆ Community awareness campaign on food and nutrition
- ◆ Promotion of climate-smart agriculture and enterprises



<sup>17</sup> Nepal Demographic and Health Survey Report, 2016  
<sup>18</sup> WFP Nepal, country brief – October 2020



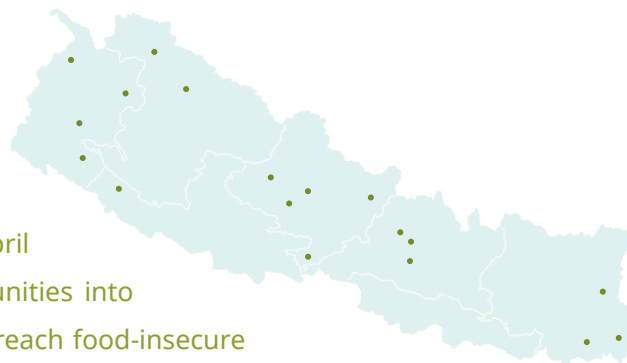
# COVID-19 Response and Recovery Strategy 2020-2022

## BACKGROUND

The first COVID-19 patient was confirmed in Nepal on 24 January 2020. On 24th March Nepal went into 'lockdown' and ever since life has not returned to normal for millions of children and their families across the country. Children have not been able to attend school and their parents have lost their jobs as economic activities have ground to a halt. Trade, tourism, remittance flow, and agriculture, and economic activities have been severely disrupted making people more vulnerable to stress, poverty, disease, and death.

Nepal is expected to be among the hardest-hit countries economically, owing to its low per capita income and combination of imports of food and other essential commodities and export of labor and remittance<sup>19</sup>. This multi-faceted vulnerability could mean that Nepal faces a "double or triple burden" due to COVID-19<sup>20</sup>.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, GNI Nepal has been supporting essential medical equipment, food, and non-food items, and WASH and education interventions to central, provincial, and local governments across 19 districts of Nepal since April 2020. As COVID-19 will continue to impact communities into the foreseeable future, GNI Nepal will continue to reach food-insecure households with food and livelihood support, rural children with alternative learning programs, central and local governments with medical equipment and non-food items, and communities with public service announcements and radio shows, WASH support and services, awareness-raising interventions, and mental health programs.



## STRATEGIC GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

**Goal:** To protect communities vulnerable to COVID-19 and support them to return to normalcy

### Objectives:

- Marginalized and vulnerable communities have increased access to essential services and facilities
- Strengthen resilience of communities through an integrated development approach

<sup>19</sup> World Food Programme. "Economic and food security implications of the COVID-19 outbreak. An update with insights from different regions," 14 April 2020.

<sup>20</sup> World Food Programme. "COVID-19 Targeting and Prioritization Paper," 28 April 2020



## COVID-19 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY FRAMEWORK

1

### PREPAREDNESS

- Facilitating community-wide communication and collaboration among all concerned actors
- Enhancing awareness of COVID-19 and preventive measures

- Monitoring COVID-19 situation in working areas
- Responding to urgent health care, education, and livelihood needs of the communities

### RESPONSE

2

3

### RECOVERY

- Supporting rapid recovery of livelihoods of people affected by COVID-19
- Seeking innovative opportunities for growth and development in a post-pandemic period

## THEMATIC PRIORITIES AND INTERVENTIONS

### Child Protection

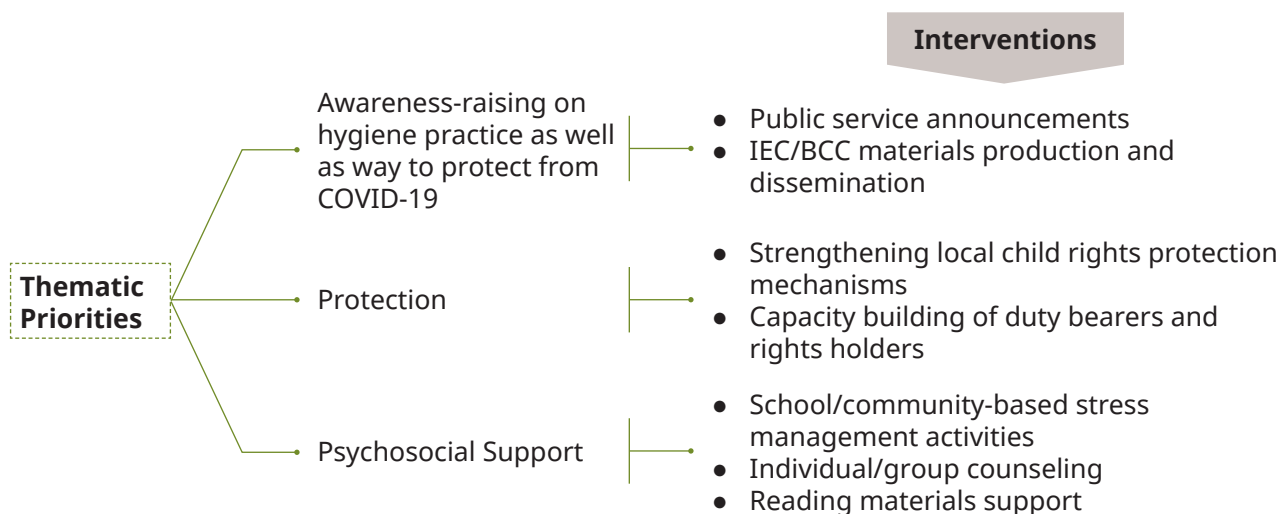
Children living under COVID-19 are at a heightened risk of contagion, violence, abuse, neglect, and long-term psychosocial problems. Additionally, the virus could cause the death of parents or guardians leading to economic problems, reduced income, stressors, family breakdown, out-migration, poverty, etc. putting children at risk of poverty, child labor, food insecurity, and possibly child marriage.

As schools have not yet fully reopened, children are still confined to their homes; they have been reported as having mild changes in behavior including a feeling of loneliness, stress, loss of appetite, sleep, etc. They might have been witness to violence at home. While the country grapples with the virus, child protection mechanisms and actors may not be able to focus their attention on child protection issues.

GNI Nepal will conduct child rights campaigns to prevent child abuse, violence, and exploitation at home and outside and organize mass education campaigns to continue educating the rights holders and duty bearers on child rights and child protection. Additionally, we will focus on enhancing the mental and physical wellbeing of children during and after the pandemic through one-on-one and group psychosocial support sessions remotely and in person.



Children living under COVID-19 will be given a chance to participate in sessions from home and express their pent-up feelings. They will learn positive coping methods while minimizing the impact of traumatic experiences. It is expected that such interventions will benefit over 10,000 children directly.



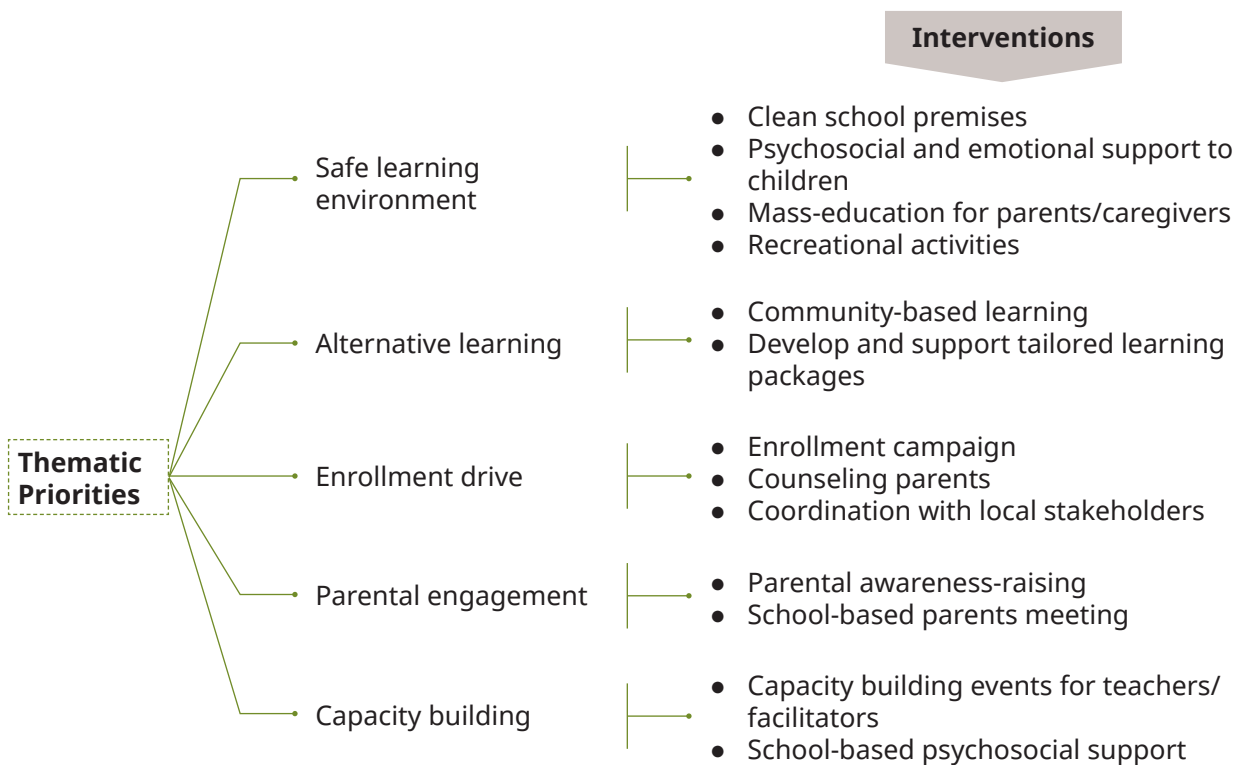
## Education

To curb the spread of the virus, educational institutions in Nepal closed on 19 March 2020. A nation-wide lockdown followed soon after. Ever since an estimated eight million Nepali children have been forced to stay away from school. Mid-April marks the beginning of a new academic session in Nepal. Last academic session's examinations could not be organized due to the pandemic. Unfortunately, half of the Academic Year 2077 (2020 CE) is already behind us. In a highly optimistic scenario, schools will be open after eight months of the beginning of the closure in March.

Working jointly, the Government of Nepal and I/NGOs have introduced alternative learning initiatives across radio, digital, TV, and other platforms including online classes, virtual learning resources, self-learning materials, awareness-raising, audio-visual classes, radio lessons, radio programs, and community-based learning facilitation.

To support school reopening, GNI Nepal will help schools to sanitize learning spaces and premises, educate parents on safety measures against COVID-19. As we believe no one should be left behind in getting an education, we will encourage out-of-school school learners' parents to send them to school and capacitate teachers to make them able to deliver quality education to their pupils.





## Public Health

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the public health care system in Nepal was under strain. As the curve is getting steeper, health facilities are in greater need of ICUs, ventilators, and protective equipment. Without them, the frontline health workforce cannot function and save lives. At the community level, families lack sufficient knowledge or in-depth understanding of COVID-19, sanitation materials and report an increasing shortage of money for health checkups.

The capacity of the health system and the community correlates with the capability of the communities to respond to the impact of COVID-19 on their health and wellbeing. A strong public health care system means the most vulnerable lives are saved from illnesses and the coronavirus outbreak.

GNI Nepal will facilitate minimizing COVID-19 case incidence in communities through providing medical equipment, testing kits, installation and renovation of hand-washing facilities, campaigns and interventions on community WASH, strengthening local health system, and menstrual hygiene management support for girls living under COVID-19.



## Thematic Priorities

Strengthen local health facilities

- Support materials to health facilities (PPE, hygiene materials, sanitizers, and other medical items)
- Handwashing and WASH stations at health facilities
- Capacity building of health workers on providing health education and treatment

Health education

- Health education sessions at school and in communities
- PSAs on COVID-19 prevention and protection against it
- FCHVs and mothers' groups mobilization

School health support

- Handwashing stations at schools
- Hygiene and MHM kits
- Renovation and reactivation of WASH facilities

## Interventions

## Livelihood

COVID-19 pandemic adversely affected the livelihoods of workers in the formal and informal sectors. 31.5% of the workers have lost their jobs and 74% have not received their salary since the lockdown started in March 2020. About 60% of workers are jobless with average monthly incomes down by 95% (UNDP 2020). Around 700,000 Nepali migrant workers could return due to the COVID-19 crisis. Another 300,000 are expected to return from India. They will add to the burden of joblessness (NPC 2020). Most of the workers from daily wage laborers, employers of private companies, hotels, restaurants, domestic and international transport, and returnee migrants, have seen severe impacts on their income and livelihoods.

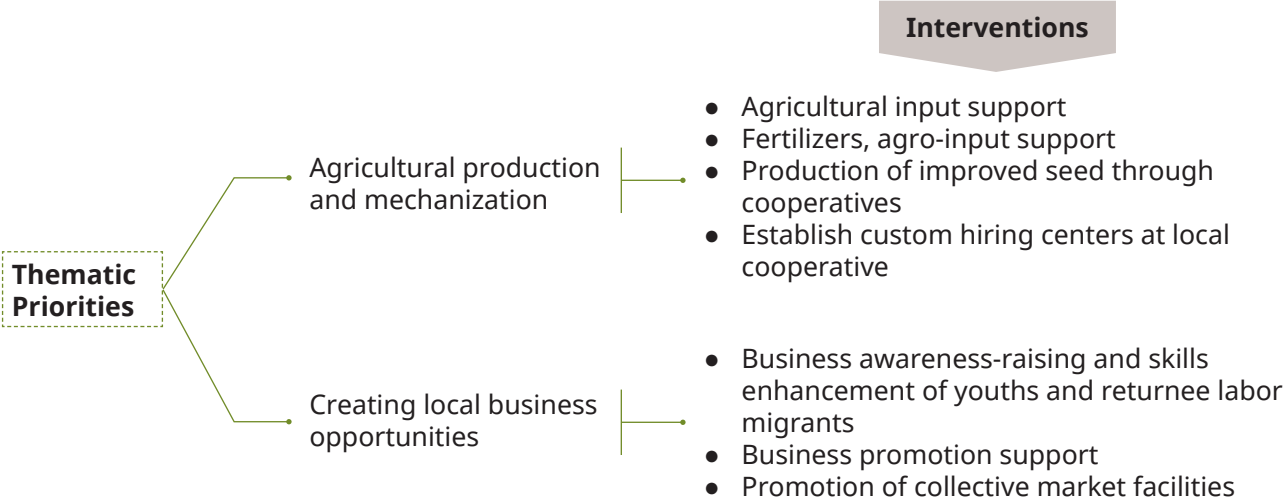
GNI Nepal, as a response to the livelihood recovery of COVID-19 affected families, provided food packages to food-insecure families, and seed support to smallholder farmers across 19 districts. As most of the GNI Nepal-targeted families are economically poor, COVID-19 has directly impacted their livelihoods. Lack of employment opportunities, returnee labor migrants, poor access to agriculture inputs, and lack of food items in rural and remote areas worsened the situation.







GNI Nepal will support the poor and smallholder farmers in increasing agricultural production through agricultural input support. Similarly, certain interventions will target youths, especially, returnee labor migrants for enhancing their business skills and promoting local business opportunities. More than 3,000 youths are expected to benefit from these interventions.



## Empowering People, Transforming Communities

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