



CHANGE STORIES

Imprint

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Foreword

**About the case study
and ECPAT Luxembourg**

Case 1



Kanchan's cherished dream

Kanchan Nepali originally hails from Dhading. When she was a child, poverty forced her family to migrate to Kathmandu and then later to Pokhara. It's been a decade already since her family arrived in Pokhara. Kanchan was only nine years old then. She took up a job in a bar when she was 11 years old. She also enrolled herself in the fifth grade of Pardi School in Pokhara while doing a job at a dance bar. It was not easy for her to carry out both tasks simultaneously.

Kanchan got married when she turned 14. She stopped studying after marriage. Her marital life was fine at the initial phase. But as the days passed, her relationship with her husband turned sour. She then began to stay at her maternal uncle's house, where she gave birth to her child.

Shakti Samuha, a partner organization of ECPAT Luxembourg, had started launching programs targeting teenage girls working in the entertainment sector. Kanchan expressed her interest in studying when she came into contact with Shakti Samuha. She resumed her study. Learning the importance of education, she started work in the evening, attended school in the morning and looked after her son in the day time.

Kanchan has now turned 19, studying in eighth grade. She has been working at a dance bar for the last nine years. She, now, wants to change her occupation as she has come to know that society does not regard it as a decent profession. Change has come in Kanchan after joining Drop-in centre. Knowledge and awareness of gender equality and rights she learnt during vocational education has deeply influenced her.

Now, she can reject the wrong offer if any customer approaches her inappropriately. After participating in a five-day peer education training conducted by the Center, Kanchan has realized that life can change with education and skills. She has already taken the training on beauty parlour for three months. She plans to pursue this work, along with other income-generating works.



Some customers used to talk in a lewd manner with me while I was at a dance bar. I had no power to deal with them. After joining Shakti Samuha, I learnt how to deal with it. Now I can tackle it.

– Kanchan Nepali

Case 2

Skill is important in life



Rama is 20 years old now. She started working in the adult entertainment sector since she was 15. She took up this job since it was easily available when she came to Pokhara from Chitwan. It was fine for her at the beginning, but now she wants to change the field of occupation.

Sirjana Nepali, who originally hails from Dhading, was 14 when she first signed up for a job at a dance bar. She lives with her family in Pokhara, now. Her younger sister also works in this sector. It is the sole source of livelihood for her family. Shakti Samuha had operated a Drop-in centre with the support of ECPAT Luxembourg. Rama and Sirjana had come into contact with Shakti Samuha.

They learned many things from the Drop-in centre. It was natural for teenagers to get attracted to the opposite sex while working at the dance bar. Rama

shared her experiences, “We couldn’t distinguish between right and wrong while working at the dance bar. The hands-on spa training and orientation provided by Shakti Samuha taught us the distinction between the two.”

Rama says the training boosted her confidence, that encouraged her to do something in life. Currently, Rama works as a massage therapist at Pokhara Lakeside. Despite negativity attached to this occupation, Rama is confident that she is maintaining discipline in her job. The death of her father had put a brake on her study when she was three years old. She is now studying at grade nine in a public school with the support of Shakti Samuha.

Sirjana has set up a tailoring shop after learning sewing skills from Shakti Samuha with assistance from ECPAT Luxembourg. She had got Rs 35,000 in financial aid. She quit the entertainment sector after she took up a tailoring job. Sirjana’s father, Rom Bahadur Nepali, is happy to see her daughter equipped with skills. They are running a tailoring shop now. They are earning their living out of it.

“Training and skills are important in one’s life,” she says. The useful training imparted by Shakti Samuha has boosted Rama’s confidence and encouraged her to change her life. It has taught her art of living.

“Training and skills are very useful in one’s life. The life skills I learnt through the training provided by Shakti Samuha not only boosted my confidence but also encouraged me to do something creative. It taught me to earn my living. I have decided to secure my future by utilizing these skills.

– Rama

Case 3

Collaborating with stakeholders

All stakeholders should come together to manage the entertainment sector effectively. Shakti Samuha has been working in collaboration with Pokhara Metropolitan City, local police and civil society in Pokhara. It has created an environment conducive to sort out the issue.

ECPAT Luxembourg-sponsored project has been endeavouring to make the entertainment sector free of sexual exploitation and ensure that children below 20 years of age will not be employed as staffers. The stakeholders are positive about it. Following several interactions and discussions between metropolis, dance entrepreneurs' association and police administration, issues related to this sector are identified.

Chief of the ward police office, Lakeside, Pokhara said the adolescent girls and women involved in the entertainment sector have been rehabilitated through the awareness programs launched by Shakti Samuha and its Safe House has given protection to the vulnerable.



“ The interaction among stakeholders is a step towards the solution. But this sort of work should be continued. The size of the entertainment sector widens with the urbanization. The issues related to this sector should be resolved by introducing policies at the state level.

– Nirmala Sharma, Chief at Social Development Division, Pokhara Metropolitan City.



“ We have learnt a lot of useful things from this project. This profession will succeed only when the entertainment sector is managed properly. If discrepancies continue with this sector, the government will ban it one day. If we manage it on time, we will benefit from it.

– Laxman Gurung, Chairman at Dance Bar Association, Pokhara

Case 4

Premkala resumes school



Premkala is a permanent resident of Dullu Municipality-5, Dailekh. A marriage proposal came to her when she was studying in grade six. She was only 13 then, and her would-be husband was also underage. She stopped going to school once her marriage arranged.

When a rumour of her marriage circulated in her community, teenage youths associated with Dajubhai Samuha reached her house. They counseled her family members that underage marriage is illegal. Then her parents also agreed to cancel the marriage.

Already a dropout, she heard about Bindrasaini Balsulabh Center. The Center used to run regular classes and extra-curricular activities. The tuition classes conducted at the Center rekindled her interest in her studies. She resumed her study with the help of the Center's facilitator.

The Center's facilitator Nirmala Kumari Khadka says Premkala is free from child marriage which would have led to possible effects of miscarriage and illiteracy. Other teenagers also do come to the Center. All the children are aware of the negative impact of early marriage. The participants representing the Center also had actively participated in the child marriage free campaign launched by the ward.

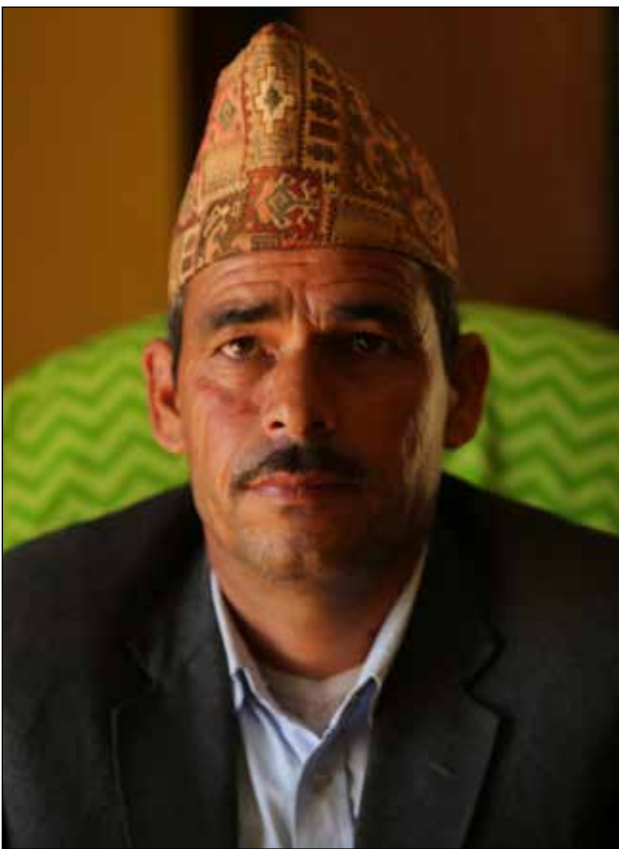
Premkala came into contact with Balsulabh Kendra (child learning Center) when she was about to quit school. The Center facilitated her to go to school. Nowadays, she goes to school regularly. The school has given a particular focus on her study, said Khem Bahadur Khadka, the headmaster of Nepal National Basic School. Changes have come in Premkala's thoughts and behaviours after she joined the Centre. Many students join the Center and participate in extra-curricular activities conducted by the Awaj organization in collaboration with ECPAT Luxembourg, which help them develop socially, mentally and intellectually.

“ I was about to quit school. Balsulabh Center encouraged me to go to school. I am regularly attending classes. I am doing well with my study. Teachers are also caring and helpful here.

–Premkala Nepali
Dullu Municipality

Case 5

Balsulabh Center to get continuation



“Earlier, we used to play in the dirt. Academically we were not good and were unwilling to go to school. But things have changed now. Now, we take care of sanitation. It has been helping us a lot in our studies, and we are always eager to go to school.” This is what Uma Bishwokarma, a participant of Balsulabh Center (child learning centre) at Brinda Saini Balsulabh Center of Dailekh district in western Nepal, has to say.

Some 25 students visiting the centre have been learning many things that they have not learned in schools. The coordinator at the centre helps them complete their homework and also memorize lessons.

Not only this, the children have become capable of singing, dancing and expressing their feelings in groups.

Eight ward centres run in communities in Dailekh and Baridya districts by Aawaj Organization with assistance from ECPAT Luxembourg have played a crucial role in the overall development of children. Some wards in the rural municipalities will be giving continuity to the centres even after the expiry of the project’s term.

“We have found the centre effective. That’s why we are thinking of giving continuity to it,” opines Ward Chairman Prem Bahadur Thapa of Dullu Municipality-5. Ward Chairman Kajiman Sunar of Badaiyatal Rural Municipality-2 of Bardiya is of a similar opinion. “We should learn from good works. We are thinking of giving continuity to these centres,” Sunar said.

““We found that the learning at the centres has been effective for children. They could learn many things that they have failed to learn in school. They are taught in small group. Not only study, the children are also involved in singing, dancing, playing and group works among other extra-curricular activities. So, we have made up our mind to give continuity to the centre.

- Chairman, Prem Bahadur Thapa
Dullu Municipality-5

Case 6

We won't let child marriage happen



Jamuni is a village located at Badaiyatal Rural Municipality in Bardiya district. There are rumours that a child-marriage is happening in the village. Some girls of a youth club in the village have been running around the village constantly. Ayushma Chalise, the leader of the youth club, is informing the ward chairman that a child-marriage is taking place in the village to stop it.

This is an example of how the teenagers are actively working to stop the child marriage existing in the community. After a few minutes, a group of girls meets Ward-2 chairman of the rural municipality.

he “A child marriage is happening in the village. We should stop it at any cost,” says Ayushma Chalise. They are trying to stop the marriage by meeting local social organizations, ward office and local representatives. The girls, who were trying to stop the child marriage at Badaiyatal Rural Municipality-1, Jamuni are the leaders of the youth club in the ward.

The ward of Badaiyatal rural municipality was declared child marriage-free on November 10, 2019. The leaders of the Future Rising Club had played a

crucial role in the declaration. “The youths are fulfilling their responsibilities with confidence and without fear. People’s representatives, administrators and police personnel are concerned about child marriage.” This statement by ward chair of Badaiyatal-2 clearly shows the level of awareness in the youths about child marriage.

Ayushma Chalise of Future Rising Club says she is in the campaign of abolishing child marriage rampant in the society. “We do not fear about any consequences. Threats often come, but we will never give up,” she said.

“We are actively working to stop child marriage even by seeking legal redress,” said Ayushma Chalise, a 12th grader at the local Amarjyoti Secondary School. Saraswati Shrestha is also an active member of the campaign. Treasurer of Future Rising Club Priyanka Chhetri shares that they have been facing pressure from different quarters while getting involved in social works. But, all of them are determined to make sure the ward continues to become free from child marriage. They have a belief that a good outcome is possible only when everyone is aware and active on this issue.

““ We have been warned to keep quiet. But, we are not afraid of such warnings. We won't let child marriage happen here again. We have told our family members that we have been involved in the campaign. Gone are the days when we kept mum.

- Ayushma Chalise
Future Rising Club, Badaiyatal, Bardiya

Case 7

They want a change



Kanchan hails from Tanahun. She has been staying in Pokhara for the past two years. It was mandatory to work to earn a living in the city. With the contact of her friend, she started working in a spa at the age of 18. She condemned the work she was doing at the spa once she started working there. Then, she came into contact with Shakti Samuha. She learned from Shakti Samuha about possible dangers in the spa sector and methods to protect herself from any kinds of exploitation.

“At first, I thought it was a bad sector. But, now after receiving knowledge and training, I can say that it can be made a decent occupation,” shares Kanchan. She has been taking beauty parlor training and is thinking of making a career in it.

Puja is involved in singing songs at dohori sanjh (a restaurant with singing and dancing). She shared that she has learned to work by identifying possible dangers in her occupation. I learnt knowledge and skills are very important, Puja shares, adding that the

things she has learnt from Shakti Samuha taught her how tread on the journey of life.

Chunmaya settled in Pokhara from Syangja. Chunmaya, who came to the city with a big dream, had to struggle a lot. She then started working in dohorisanjh to earn a living. After

working in dohorisanjh for one year, she is now receiving beauty parlor training.

“Our confidence has developed. Now, we can distinguish between wrong and right,” Puja shared her experiences. Kanchan, Puja and Chunmaya’s experiences about dance bar and entertainment sector show how a small help of a project can bring big changes in one’s life.

“Now, I have a will power that I can accomplish things in life. I would have been deprived of the opportunity, if I had not come into contact with Shakti Samuha.

– Puja Bishwokarma

Case 8

Awakening by Motikala



Motikala is 15 years old. Most of the families in Dailekh prepare for marriage of their daughters at this age while some are already married. But, Motikala's family members have maintained silence about it as she is herself active in a campaign against child marriage that was rife in her society.

She has been actively involved in announcing Dullu Municipality-4 of Dailekh, a child marriage free ward. She is joined by other girls and boys. Motikala is involved in educating people in her village against the malpractices, penning and singing songs against child marriage and publicizing the campaign.

Motikala is not alone. She has involved her friends in the campaign. Motikala has been actively involved in social activities before announcing the ward child marriage free. She is also aware of incidents of child marriage in the village. She is sure that the society will witness a change once child marriages are stopped.

She is of the view that things can't change unless the society is awakened.

Bharat Prasad Upadhyaya, ward chair of Dullu-4, says Motikala acted as a role model for many teenagers like her. Motikala's initiation in the context of Dalit community where there is a high rate of child marriage is exemplary. Mahendra Bhandari, Coordinator of Dajubhai Samuha, says Motikala is playing an influential role in creating social awareness campaign. Bhandari said,

“Motikala is a game changer in her society.”

Motikala's role in creating awareness from school to community is praiseworthy. She takes lead in chanting Deuda songs against social discrepancies such as child marriage and untouchability.

“We have to tell every household to give up marriage. Every household should know that marriage should not be done before 20 years of age. No one should be deprived of education. The society is awakening now. Things will not remain like in the past.

– Motikala Nepali, Dullu, Dailekh

Case 9

In favor of continuation of the program

Ward number four and five of Dullu Municipality will be giving continuity to the programs in the regions even after the wards are declared child marriage free. The wards are also preparing to continue running BalSulabh Center operating in the community. They are discussing to run the centers as organs of the local government even after the expiry of the project run by local partner organization Aawaj in an assistance from ECPAT Luxembourg.

Local wards have expressed their commitments to give continuity to the program by utilizing the budget allocated for the sector of children.

Speaking at a child marriage free zone declaration program of Dullu Municipality-4, ward chairman Bharat Prasad Upadhyaya said, “Whatever happened is past. From now onwards, no one can get married below 20 years of age. We will not let anyone go scot-free in this case.”

Similarly, ward chair of Dullu municipality-5 Prem Bahadur Thapa urged one and all to inform the ward in case of child marriage taking place in the society saying that even if marriage is done a day before one turns 20 it is illegal. Thapa also urged one and all to abide by the law since the ward is declared child marriage free zone.

The community in the village gripped by the malpractice of child marriage is awakening after Dullu Municipality-4 on November 16 and Dullu municipality-5 on November 18 announced the wards as child marriage free and took ahead the campaign. The wards have experienced that they have learned many things from co-work with Aawaj Organization with assistance from ECPAT Luxembourg.



Chief of Dullu Municipality Ghanashyam Adhikari said that the project has created areas to work in social sector, adding that the project will be expanded in the other wards as well.

The ward has said that it will embrace the lessons learned through the projects. We will not let this program die out. The declaration of child marriage will not remain limited to formality. The statement by ward chair Bharat Prasad Upadhyaya indicates that the program will continue. So does the commitment of Prem Bahadur Thapa. He says, “We will not leave it in the middle. We have to pay our attention to it since it is a burning problem of the society.”

“We will continue the program. The announcement of child marriage free ward will not be a mere formality. We will allocate regular budget and hold programs. The awareness in the village won't stop.

– Bharat Prasad Upadhyaya

Ward Chairman, Dullu-4

Case 10

When Ganesh turned a singer....



The task of ending child marriage...

We will accomplish it jointly...

Ganesh Bishwokarma is from Dullu-5, Ruju. Ganesh, 14, is an eighth grader at a local school. He had almost dropped out from the school due to a poor economic condition. But, he was able to continue his studies following assistance from Aawaj Organization and ECPAT Luxembourg.

Ganesh is a frequent visitor of Bal Sulabh Kendra in the community. Such centers facilitate students in studying. Students are also involved in extra-curricular activities at such centers.

Ganesh, who used to feel shy to say his name, learned how to proudly introduce himself and speak his mind at the center with confidence. His learning is not limited to that. He got involved in a boys' group formed to stop child marriage and other malpractices evident in the community. His study continued to improve.

Nowadays, he is being recognized in his locality as a child singer. His melodious voice has started receiving applause from many. He has been helped even to record his song. Ganesh has become a center of attraction in local fairs and special programs.

Chairman of Dullu municipalilty-5 Prem Bahadur Thapa says Ganesh is actively participating as a leader in the Dajubhai Samuha formed in the community. He further said Bal Sulabh Centre, Yuba Samuha and Dajubhai Samuha have played important roles in declaring child marriage free ward.

“Earlier, I used to feel shy while speaking. Now, I can express myself freely. The boy that was always playing in the dust and shy of speaking has turned into a singer. The center provided me courage to sing.

– Ganesh BK, Ruju, Dailekh

Case 11

A story of a people's representative

Kajiman's dream comes true



Kajiman Sunwar is the ward chairman of Badaiyatal Rural Municipality-2 in Bardiya district. He has dreams of bringing change in his village although he has turned 75 already. Kajiman always thought that child marriage invites poverty in the society and makes poor poorer. He had a firm belief that the society can't progress unless child marriage is eradicated.

After being elected as ward chairman in the local elections held some two and a half years ago, he had thought of eradicating child marriage. But, conveying it to each and every household and stopping child marriage was a tough nut to crack.

Then, Aawaj Organization with assistance from ECPAT Luxembourg launched the child marriage eradication project in Badaiyatal-2.

Different programs were held in the ward following the launch of the project. All the concerned stakeholders in

the wards set to hold programs to educate people in the society against the child and forced marriage.

Kajiman shares that now he is capable of stopping child marriage after being entrusted with the role of implementing the law. He is of the opinion that sometimes strict measures are necessary to control the society. Kajiman is optimistic that everyone will support his stern role to eradicate child marriage.

The community has been informed that if someone opts for underage marriage (below 20 years of age), it will not be registered, and the children born through such parents will be deprived of benefits. Kajiman says child marriage should be stopped for the prosperity of Nepal. It will push the future of the next generation into darkness. Thus, the ward has tried to bring the rate of child marriage into zero and his collaboration with it through Awaj is an important experience in his life. Rural municipality and ward are mulling to arrange budget to give continuity to Bal Sulabh Centers.

“ Child marriage pushes next generation into darkness. Thus, we are working to bring child marriage to an end. Partnership with Awaj Organization and ECPAT Luxembourg is a major achievement and learning for us. We are discussing about giving continuity to BalSulabh Kendra and rural municipality and wards allocating regular budget for the area.

– Kajiman Sunar, Chairman Badaiyatal -2

Case 12

Lesson learnt by Bhabindra

Bhabindra Singh Thakuri got married at a young age of 15. Bhabindra, a permanent resident of Shantipur in Badaiyatal Rural Municipality, had eloped with a local youth.

But after marriage, she could not continue her studies. Her family members mistreated her nor did they allow her to study. Her husband also started caring about her less. Circumstances forced her to return to her maternal home. Her husband married a second wife.

She was studying in Grade 11 while her husband was a school dropout, when they got married. She was traumatized by the incident of polygamy at the age of 17. But, with the help of a counselor of Awaj Organization with assistance from ECPAT Luxembourg, she was encouraged to move ahead in life. She then continued with her studies with the help of the organization. She is currently studying in Bachelor's second year.

She has learnt a lesson from an immature decision she had taken at a young age. She is of the opinion that she made a mistake by marrying three years ago and has learnt life lessons from the mistake. She shared that she was able to move on, thanks to assistance from Awaj Organization. She recalled that she reached a condition of eloping as the rumors of love affairs spread across the village. There are many reasons and excuses to getting married early, she said, adding that such things should be overcome.

With the experience of child marriage leading to polygamy, Bhabindra says that it is inimical to one's life and that it can be halted with counseling of guardians and family members.



“ Child marriage resulted in polygamy. Child marriage held for any reason is a personal loss. Child marriage can be reduced if we talk with guardians. We should not be afraid of speaking in front of guardians. I went through a similar case.

– Bhabindra Singh Thakuri, Bardiya

Case 13

Mamata is empowered

Her name is Mamata (name changed). She got married at a young age of 19 years. She was forced into a flesh trade by her husband within one month of marriage. She was married to a youth in a village in Sunsari some four years ago. She protested against her husband for pushing her into flesh trade, but it all went in vain. She then gave birth to a baby.

She was in a state of confusion after her husband didn't work but started searching customers for the flesh trade. But, she was not in the condition of sharing her plight with anyone. She came to know about Shramik Mahila Sajha Manch after she had arrived in Itahari for a blood test. She expressed her problem to Shramik Mahila Sajha Manch, a local partner of ECPAT Luxembourg.

She revealed how her husband and family members forced to meet the expenses of the house through flesh trade. She was often thrashed when she did not accept it. When she faced such problems in her new home, she began to stay in the maternal uncle's home and decided to divorce her husband. She has been visiting the organization time and again. Her self-confidence has been boosted following counseling by the organization. She is planning to earn a living by learning a skill.

After she came into contact with Shramik Mahila Sajha Manch, she has developed some confidence following mentorship with the institute. She wishes to learn skill-based training to change her source of earning for better life.



“ I had nowhere to express my feelings. I even didn't tell my father and mother about my situation. The suggestion and assistance that I have received from Shramik Mahila Sajha Manch has inspired me to live.

- Mamata

Case 14

Joint efforts pay off



It has been proven in Itahari that a joint effort will yield a good outcome. The stakeholders have agreed to manage entertainment and hotel businesses in Itahari, a major hub in Eastern Nepal.

Itahari is developing into an important destination in the eastern part of Nepal. This sub metropolis, the main entrance to Province 1, connects Tarai with hilly regions. This city at times hits the headlines due to incidents of flesh trade at hotels. Hotel entrepreneurs were worried about it.

Hoteliers have agreed to prepare a code of conduct, endorse it and implement it after rounds of discussions with Itahari Sub Metropolitan City, Hotel Association of Itahari, Area Police Office and Shramik Mahila Sajha Manch, a local partner of ECPAT Luxembourg.

Chairman of Hotel Association of Itahari Jeevan Parajuli shared that the preparation and implementation of code and conduct will be helpful to make hotels responsible and disciplined.

A joint effort yields a good outcome. He is optimistic that the path devised by the code of conduct will make the hotels modest and respected.

DSP Krishna Kumari Adhikari says the code of conduct will help manage the hotel and she is optimistic that it will control the possible sex-related incidents. Project Officer Parwati Limbu says Shramik Mahila Sajha Manch has been co-working to prepare the code of conduct. Shramik Mahila Sajha Manch is hopeful that it will create a different environment regarding rights and benefits of working women.

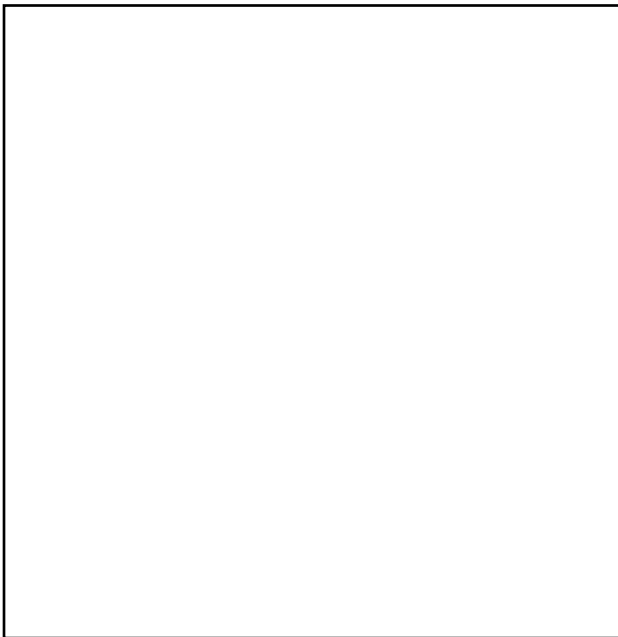


“ The preparation and implementation of code of conduct will help to make hotels responsible and disciplined. The code of conduct will pave the way for making hotel business decent and respected. We will be capable of systematizing it with the help from all the sides.

– Jeevan Parajuli
Chairman of Hotel Association, Itahari

Case 15

Early marriage harms



Asmita Giri from Dullu municipality-10, Gamadi, ran away from home at the age of 16 after her parents found her with her partner. Asmita was first approached by the boy through her friends. After being approached time and again, she started contacting the boy through her friends' mobile phone, which they had lent her.

Like in any other parts of the country, contacting each other through phone calls or through Facebook messenger is a common new culture that has spread among teenagers in Dailekh. Conversations through phone calls often lead to teenagers falling in love and being infatuated with each other. Relationship before marriage or going on a date before marriage is something the locals in rural Nepal still frown upon. Hence, scared about having their relationship being found out by the family and villagers, young couple like them decide to get married on their own or elope.

Asmita, who was pampered by her parents at her own home, knew little about household duties. After coming to her in-laws' place she found her life more difficult. Her partner worked in India and the affection she got from him slowly died down in the course of time. At a very young age her mother-in-law discouraged her to study let alone going to school. At the age of learning and playing she was forced to fulfill her household chores that started early in the morning by sweeping the floors.

Asmita was later confronted by Awaj counselor Geeta who counseled both her and her in-laws, showing how early marriage affects the health of children and bars them from getting opportunities. Though the counseling didn't affect the in-laws, it did make her realize that what happened was wrong and with the help of the counselor she came back to her mother's home.

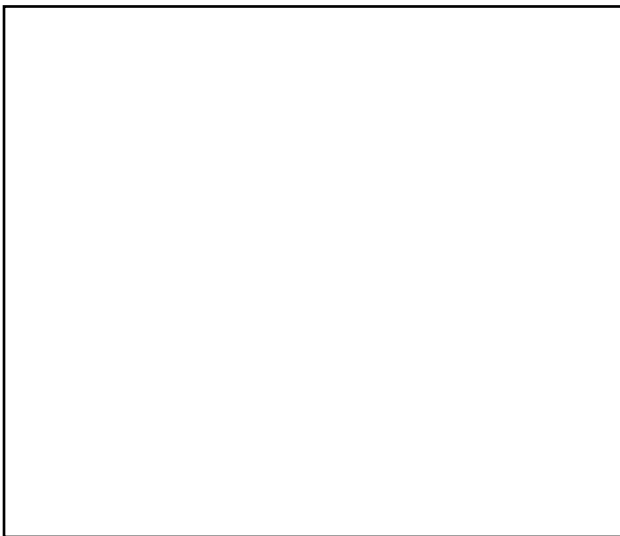
She continued with her schooling right after returning to her home and will be appearing her SEE this year. While meeting her friends she never misses to talk to them about the effects of early child marriage so that they don't have to go through her plight. Asmita loves her childhood and enjoys it dearly and wishes to do well in her studies and look after her family one day.

“An early marriage affects the health condition of children and bars them from getting opportunities in life.

- Asmita Giri

Case 16

Early marriage is wrong(Photo)



Sahejad Ali Halwai from Bardiya got married at the age of 15 by the custom of her community while her husband was 17. As a single breadwinner of the family, her husband went to Jiri, a hilly region of Nepal, to work as a laborer. Even though Sahejad's parents live an hour's drive away, her visit was limited to once a year. After one year, at the age of 16, she gave birth to her daughter. Since her husband was at Jiri, she cared for her daughter with the support of her mother-in-law. Because of early pregnancy, she suffered from a number of health issues too, putting her health at risk.

She was the mother of one-year old girl, when she was first visited by social mobilizer of Awaj. It has been two years since she attended the meetings. This meeting has imparted knowledge and information related to early child marriage, income generation and life skills to live. She started raising the voice against early marriage in her community. Social mobilizer motivates her to do income generating activities so that she can support her family and care her children. After a number of counselling and life skills training, she decided to open a small shop in her community

focusing on community needs. Receiving seed money, regular counseling and entrepreneurship training boosted her confidence.

When she started generating income from the grocery, she built a toilet close to her house. Earlier, they used to go to field or forest for toilet purpose. She also dug a well in her courtyard for drinking water. Earlier, they had to depend on the community tap which is 10 minutes far from her home. She started using a refrigerator which she had received as a gift from her parents. Since they have no money to pay the electricity bill, the refrigerator had remained idle for years.

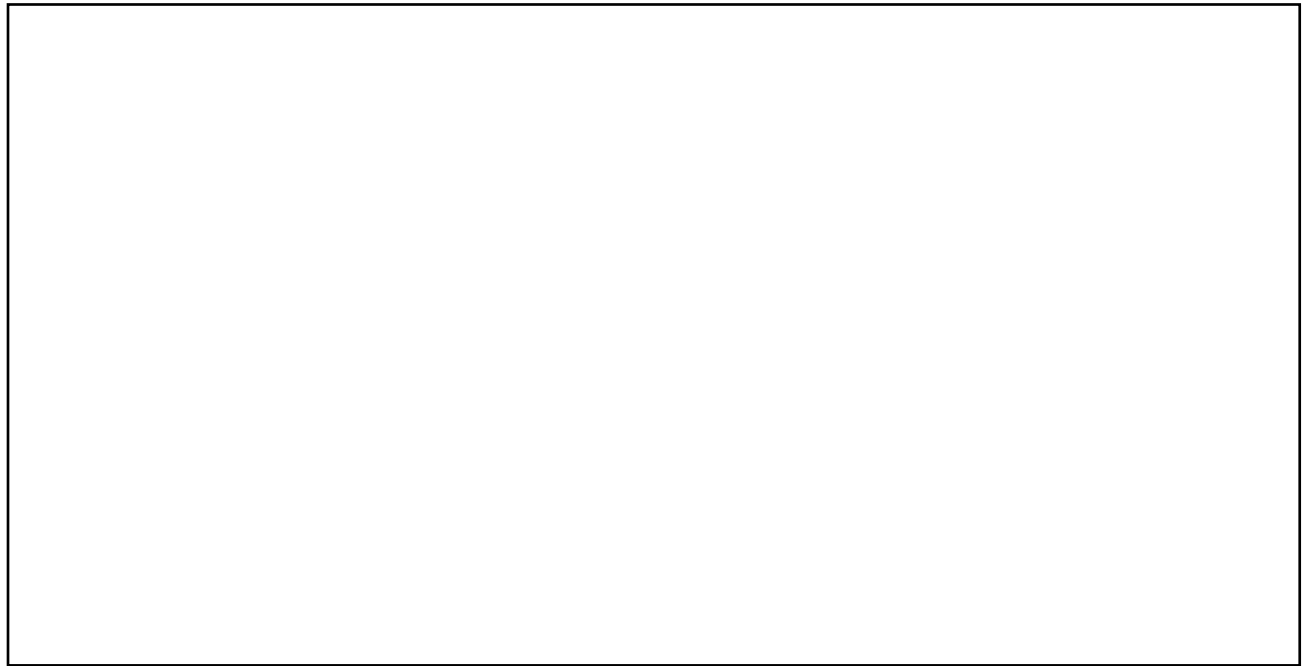
Now, she uses the refrigerator to sell cold drinks and keep foods for her family. Though she knew that young child should be provided nutritious food, she had no sufficient food at home earlier. Now, she brings food with her earnings and gains knowledge to use local available foods in her life skills training. When she started to earn and bring changes in the family, her family supported her to run the shop from 7 am to 9 pm. She started saving Rs 100 per day at a local saving cooperative. Finally, she decided to call her husband back home. She helped her husband to buy a tractor on loan. Now, he is driving a tractor in her community. Earlier, her husband and her in-laws were rigid and conservative about family ethics, customs and tradition. Now they are liberal and understanding.

“ In my community, now everyone knows that the early marriage is wrong. Change should start from our own home. Life became easier when I started to earn money.

- Sahejad Ali Halwai

Case 17

Spa girl to entrepreneur



Sita Shrestha from Kharidhunga, Dolakha came to Kathmandu in her early childhood with her family searching for good life. As she was from the poor family background and having primary education only, she did not find any suitable job.

One day, her relatives offered her a job in spa. She started working in the spa for 15 to 16 hours a day. Sometimes the customers showed abusive behaviors to her. But at the same time, the salary paid by the spa was very nominal which was insufficient to survive in Kathmandu.

At the age of 17, she was connected with Biswas Nepal through the outreach workers. At Biswas Nepal, she got opportunity to build her capacity on different subjects, life skills, entrepreneurship, and gender-based violence. After a number of meetings, counseling and training, she realized that it would be better to engage in income generating activities than depend on others.

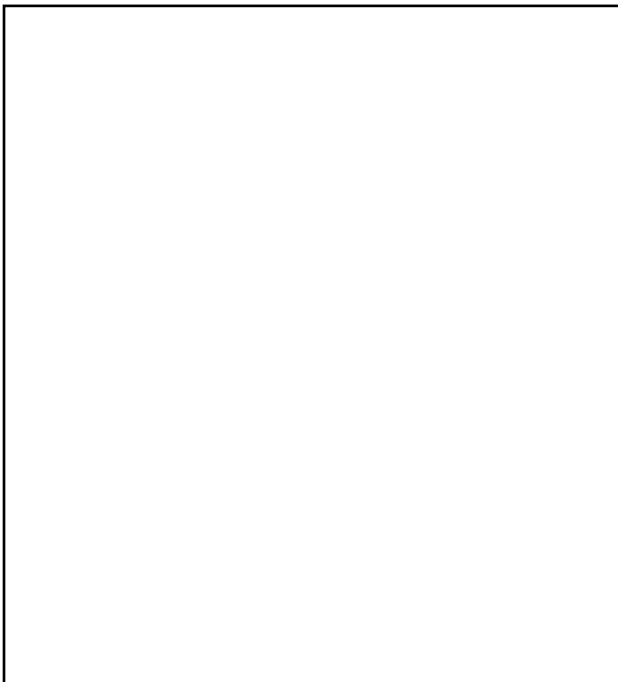
With the support from Biswas Nepal, she opened a vegetable shop at Kapan, north of Kathmandu. She also invested from her saving. Nowadays, she wakes up early in the morning at 3 pm and goes to wholesale market to buy green vegetables. She is making good income from her shop. She shared that she can save from Rs 50,000 to 60,000 per month.

“ I had no knowledge of entrepreneurship before. I used to think that entrepreneur means person investing big amount of money with big plans. Biswas Nepal opened my eyes and even I became an entrepreneur.

- Sita Shrestha

Case 18

Sabitri's journey towards success



Sabitri was 19 years old. Her life was difficult when she came to Kathmandu with her mother from a hilly district Solukhumbu. She was six years old. Her mother decided to migrate to Kathmandu when her husband married a second wife. Sabitri had one brother and sister. She was the elder sister of her house. She started to search another job when her mother's earning was not sufficient to meet the daily expenses. When she came into contact with a woman involved in the entertainment sector, she started to work in a dance bar. She was 13.

She looked a bit older than her real age. She witnessed a lot of discrepancies in dance restaurants after she joined the occupation. But there was no option to it. She was studying then and wanted to send her siblings to school. She was inexperienced when she first joined

the field. She worked as a waiter at a dance bar.

She took up this job when her mother fell ill. As the time passed by, she started losing her interest in the job. Customers used to touch her private parts, ask her to sit by them and hold her hands. "I had to tolerate all these things," she said. While she was working at a Teku-based restaurant, she came into contact with Biswas Nepal.

Biswas Nepal with assistance from ECPAT Luxembourg was working against the child sex abuse. In this context, outreach workers from Biswas met with her. Outreach workers called her to New Road-based Milan Center. After putting forth her problems, the organization provided her necessary counseling and useful training. She and her younger sister had received financial assistance from Biswas Nepal. It proved helpful in improving her life.

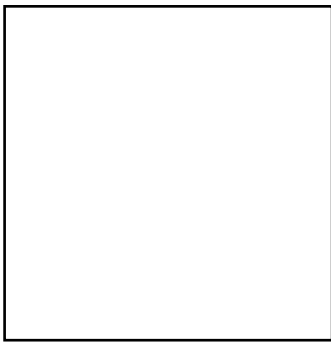
Sabitri, who was once involved in a dance restaurant, works as an outreach worker now. Now-a-days, she is working to raise awareness among teenagers involved in the entertainment sector. It has boosted her confidence. She is happy to assist teenage girls undergoing the same plight she experienced before.

“As an outreach staffer, I feel good to assist many teenage girls undergoing the same kind of plight I had experienced in the past.

- Sabitri Basnet, Kathmandu

Case 19

Ranjita's shop



Ranjita Khadka originally hails from Lalbandi, Sarlahi. She had no jobs, nor skills, when she was in Sarlahi. After she came to Kathmandu, she had to work hard to meet expenses. She started working in a canteen. One of her legs had some problem. The income from the canteen was not sufficient even to pay the house rent. Her urban life was getting tougher in Kathmandu.

Then she came into contact with Biswas Nepal. In a meeting with outreach workers of Biswas Nepal, she told them about her problem. She started visiting the center following meeting with the outreach officials. Then, she received useful training and counseling. It made her more confident. With the financial assistance from the organization, she was able to establish an eatery. She named it after her daughter Samira. It's already six months since it was established. She earns from Rs 4,000 to 5,000 from this restaurant per day. Her daughter studies in a private school. She does not have to wait until a month for her salary like in the past.

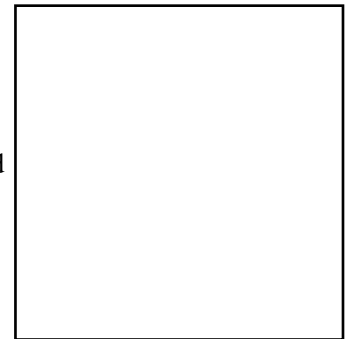
“ Many changes have taken place since I started running a restaurant. I decide everything here. I am making good income from it.

-Ranjita Khadka, Kathmandu

Case 20

Elina runs a vegetable shop

Elina Karki had vivid dreams when she came to Kathmandu from Okhaldhunga three years ago. She thought life would be more comfortable in Kathmandu. As the time elapsed by, her dreams began to gradually die down. Her earning was Rs 5,000 per month. It was insufficient to meet her household expenses.



One day, Elina came in contact with Biswas Nepal. She told the organization that she wanted to change her occupation. She decided to run a vegetable shop following the organization's counseling. Biswal Nepal with assistance from ECPAT Luxembourg provided her financial assistance.

She has been running a vegetable shop for the last one year. She is making good money from it. She had no plan to running any kind of business earlier, nor did she have the confidence. Now, she sells vegetables worth Rs 6,000 to 7,000 per day. With that, she has realized a big change in her life now since the time she worked in a canteen. She is happy with her business. She earns about Rs 20,000 per month on an average. Elina is grateful to Biswas Nepal for financial assistance.

“ Earlier, I had no idea. Following counseling from Biswas Nepal, I decided to run a vegetable shop. I have realized a change now. This program has opened my eyes. It encouraged me to change my life.

- Elina Karki, Kapan Kathmandu

