Children Working in Private Homes

Child Labour Status Report 2009
There has been a long tradition of having young children work as domestic servants in homes in Nepal. Historically it was only wealthy families that could afford to have a child worker living with the family and helping with chores. In recent years, with increasing urbanization and a growing middle class, more children are working as domestic helpers.

While child domestic labor is prevalent throughout the country, the major concentrations are in the urban areas. Child domestic laborers perform work tasks in the home of third party or ‘employer’ under exploitative conditions including long working hours; little or no wages; working behind closed doors; physical or emotional abuse; no educational opportunities; denial of access to family, friends, health services; and insufficient food. In urban areas the work is usually limited to housework and caring for young children and the elderly. In rural areas, children will often be found doing the housework, cooking meals, doing laundry, collecting firewood and fodder, caring for livestock and helping with agricultural crops. There is often not a clear line between being an agricultural worker or a domestic worker. The same is true in small family-run hotels and restaurants. Children in these situations combine work caring for the family with help serving guests or cleaning rooms.

Children ending up as child domestics for many reasons. Family poverty is usually a key factor that pushes their children into domestic servitude. The loss of a parent, second marriage, displacement because of conflict, dysfunctional families, poor quality or costly education and cultural traditions are all factors in pushing these children into domestic work. Some children provide a needed income while for many households their absence represents one less mouth to feed. On the demand side, many urban middle class families hire children as domestic laborers. The younger the children are, the less likely they will be resistant or reluctant to do the work, they are less costly and they can be kept less exposed to the outside world. Many upper caste families prefer young girls that have not reached puberty and as they get older, they replace them with other younger girls.

“Brighter Futures has brightened my life. My dream to own my own tailoring shop is going to be true.”

Sharmila Pandel, Kathmandu Valley
The Brighter Futures program deliberately sought out children in the worst situations. NGO partners identified 37,327 child domestic workers and prioritized 20,338 for educational services. Of these children, 74% were in the 10-14 age range and most had been working for two to five years. Most lived in employers' homes. Of the households employing child domestics, the majority were employed by high caste Brahman and Chhetri families followed by Newars—most of whom work for the government and or are office workers.

Most employers, families of domestic child labor and children themselves do not see domestic child labor as a problem. Many feel this work provides them with better food, shelter and clothing. Domestic child labor though is often physically demanding with long hours of work. It results in social exclusion and closes educational opportunities. Even short periods of work can have very harmful effects on the child’s health, mental or social development. Children who enter domestic labor often leave their family at a very young age resulting in no or little connection to their family. Others return but having missed school find themselves hurried into child marriage. Being in child labor changes a child’s life and rarely improves their life. Many excuses and justifications are made for having child domestics, but at the end of the day the reality remains that children from poor families are exploited for the convenience and comfort of those better off.

**Domestic Workers**

Children engaged as domestic workers is regarded as a worst form of child labor as too often the conditions they work in fall within the international criteria for child labor:

- slavery or practices similar to slavery including debt bondage
- physical, psychological or sexual abuse
- work with dangerous machinery or goods
- work under difficult circumstances including long hours, and during the night
- unreasonable confinement to the employers house
- work that is likely to harm the health, safety and morals of children.
Work children do in private homes across Nepal exhibit all of these features. Children can be found pumping water in the middle of the night-operating dangerous pumps while their employers sleep; out on the streets at the crack of dawn to collect milk while their employer’s children sleep; are bonded to work for nominal sums so landless parents can survive in the village; are sexually abused or suffer psychological torment from the household they work for; and while everyone else is at school or work—are locked away behind high walls.

Children working in private homes are the largest group of child workers in Nepal. Nepal has a rapidly growing urban population, but recent research by CWISH in Kathmandu suggests that the number of households employing child domestics is going down. Based on the National Child Labor Survey the rapid assessment (National Labor Academy, ILO/IPEC,1996) there were 127,000 children in worst forms of child labor and of these, 55,655 (43.8%) children were in domestic child labor for urban areas and 17,152 children in bonded labor (most of whom do both house and farm work). A Rapid Assessment survey undertaken in Kathmandu in 2001 estimated that there were 21,191 children under 18 in Kathmandu, and 55,655 children under the age of 18 in domestic services in Nepal of whom 42,674 were aged 14 and under.

Over eight years from 2002-2009 Brighter Futures' NGO partners identified and collected detailed information on 37,327 children engaged in domestic service in 28 districts. More female than male domestic child laborers (69.12% female and 30.88% male) were identified. Of them, in terms of age, 74% of children were aged 10-14 years, 22% above 14 and 4% below 10 were employed in domestic child labor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Below 10 yrs</th>
<th>10 - 14 yrs</th>
<th>Above 14 yrs</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>882</td>
<td>17,706</td>
<td>5,703</td>
<td>24,291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>9,872</td>
<td>2,548</td>
<td>13,036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1498</td>
<td>27,578</td>
<td>8,251</td>
<td>37,327</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The children in the classes share their experiences of being far away from family environment and sometimes suffer physical and mental misbehavior by the employer and their family members. They don’t even have time for study as their workload gets even heavier on weekends.

*Domestic child laborer - Kathmandu*
Debt Bondage

Although the age-old practice of the Kamaiya (bonded labor) system was abolished by a government decree in July 2000, some forms of this system still remain. Despite the fact that debts of bonded laborers had incurred were declared illegal, former Kamaiya are still subject to exploitative labor arrangements and their children are still used as collateral as new and exploitative share cropping arrangements have replaced the system of debt bondage. Adolescent girls (often daughters of Tharu ethnicity, who used to work for landlords) are bonded as "Kamlahari" to do domestic and farm work. As it was abolished after the promulgation of Kamaiya Labor (Prohibition) Act, 2002, the Kamlahari system is illegal but still in practice for domestic workers and seasonal agricultural laborers often without the formal paperwork of the past. Children in bonded labor and working as Kamlahari are largely concentrated in the five mid & far-Western Terai districts of Dang, Banke, Bardiya, Kailali and Kanchanpur. Friends of Needy Children estimated that there were around 5,000 Tharu girls in Kamlahari in 2009.

In West Nepal, the indigenous Tharus have low literacy levels, few skills other than for work in agriculture and due to a lack of alternative opportunities often become indebted to land owners. As a result, nearly 20,000 Tharu families became trapped in exploitative situations and debt bondage. Despite the abolition of the bonded labor system it was closely linked to a number of social and economic issues that persist. In 2001, ILO estimated that 17,152 children remained in bonded labor (7,375 Banke, 6,123 Kailali, 5,643 Bardiya, 4562 Dang, Kanchanpur 2,641). The incomplete rehabilitation of ex-Kamaiyas families continues to result in them resorting to sending children as Kamlahari in nearby villages and urban cities.
Children From All Over Nepal

Children are brought from rural areas to cities or to the homes of the rural elite from every district of the country and also India. Despite this there are clear patterns and connections between where children are brought from and where they work.

The Brighter Futures partners identified the greatest numbers of domestics in the Western Terai cluster (35%) and followed by the Kathmandu Valley (22%), Eastern Terai (21%), the Central Region (12%) and Dhaulagiri cluster (11%). By district breakdown, the highest numbers of domestic child laborers were concentrated in the cities of the Kathmandu valley (22%) and that was followed by the districts of Jhapa (12%), Banke (9%), Dang (8%), Kanchanpur (8%), Bardiya (7%), Morang (7%), Chitwan (5%), Kaski (5%), with less than 4% in Kailali, Parbat, Myagdi, Baglung, Rupandehi, Nawalparasi, Makawanpur and Udayapur districts.

Kathmandu pulls children from all over Nepal but the majority come from Tamang families in the surrounding districts and from Jhapa-despite it being far away. The traditional exploitation of Tharu children in west Nepal continues to result in large numbers of children being brought to the urban areas to work.
Reasons Children End Up In Domestic Work

Poverty is almost always the context for the early entry of children into regular work and into child labor. In many cases, the family has entered into debt by borrowing money from the moneylender and cannot repay it. Generally, these families are large and the parents do not have appropriate skills to match the market needs in the area where they live and so cannot find work. Families in rural areas who have no land or little land mostly depend on daily wages with poor wage rates. In addition to poverty, domestic violence, alcoholism, second marriage in the family, being raised by a step-parent, conflict, social discrimination and or having dropped out of school dropouts are other reasons of children entry into domestic servitude. Many parents see domestic work as a more safe option if the employers can offer better living conditions than their homes. The pressure by “dalals” (middlemen or labor brokers) or upper caste or elite families is often a factor. Families fear refusing to send a child to work as a domestic will result in them being denied scarce work opportunities.

Child domestic service remains one of the most common forms of child labor, particularly for girls. The Brighter Futures baseline surveys over eight years in 28 districts, found more girls, under 14 years of age, were employed in domestic service than in portering, mining, the carpet industry, brick factories or any other work. More girls are domestics (71%) compared to boys (29%) due to prevalent gender discrimination in the male dominated communities. Households also prefer girls to care for young children and do other household tasks.

While the Kamlahari system was formally abolished in 2002 it is clear that large numbers of girls from the Tharu community remain in exploitative child labor with or without formal bond paperwork. The Brighter Futures partners identified 3,039 Tharu girls and 699 boys working – of these few admitted to being Kamlahari or bonded but the fact remains that despite the lack of formal bonds children from the same families and communities continue to remain vulnerable to work as domestic.
The enrolment of girls in pre-schools, schools and vocational education is not encouraged in these communities. Even when they are enrolled, girls are too often compelled to attend irregularly or drop out to help with work at home or because of the distance to school, expense, lack of school toilets, harassment from teachers and older boys. Children regularly cite ‘dropping out of school’ as a reason for their entry into domestic service. Going to school was too difficult for them because schools were so far away. Even where schooling was available, it is often too expensive for poor families. Primary education is free, but in practice there are other related costs such as clothing, textbooks, and writing materials that are beyond the financial capacity of the families.

Girls too see domestic work as their first option if they need to leave for work while employers prefer girls because they perceive them as being more sincere and serious about their work. Many child domestics reported that their employers promised to enroll them into school but in fact the situation is different. Even in cases where those children have attended school before entering domestic work, they have to drop out. Losing the opportunity for an education has a tremendous impact on the morale or social development of the child. Long-term confinement and isolation in the employers’ house can have negative emotional and physical effect on the child, and social re-integration then becomes extremely difficult due to loss of culture, language and unmet desires and needs.
Remarriage Forces Laxman Into Child Labor

Laxman Kumal is 14 years old. When his mother died a year earlier, his father remarried a younger woman and sent him to Burtinbang Bazaar to work as a domestic helper. His employer had a small hotel that runs throughout the day and he worked there during the day time. When he was taken to the employer’s house, he was promised he would be enrolled in school but that did not happen. In 2008, the Brighter Futures NGO partner NESDO conducted a Jeevan Shiksha class near the bazaar for working children. Laxman was enrolled and successfully completed the course. He was then enrolled in grade five at Burtibang Primary School. When recalling the past, he describes it as miserable. He is happy now with enough to eat and chance to attend school.

Brighter Futures Strategy to Removed Children from Domestic Labor

The Brighter Futures program used a number of strategies for the prevention, protection, removal and rehabilitation of domestic child laborers. The partner NGOs, government line agencies, trade unions, employers and parents coordinated efforts for the successful prevention and protection of children in domestic child labor. These efforts included:

- Sensitization of children, parents, public and employers about the importance of education and social responsibility of the parents and employers to ensure the children’s access to education.
- Provision of education, including appropriate alternative non-formal education, school support, vocational education and training.
- Improving family livelihoods through income generation, micro-credit services to enable parents to support their children’s needs, including education, without needing children to work.
- Alternative job creation for older youths particularly through self-employment and agro and forest based enterprises to reduce dependence on exploitative work.
- Public awareness campaigns targeting parents and employers and social mobilization in source communities against domestic child labor.
- Building capacity of partner NGOs and local government to monitor child labor.
The Brighter Futures Program enrolled 20,338 children working as domestic helpers (14,337 girls and 6,001 boys) over eight years in education activities. The caste and ethnicity of the domestic child laborers were Tharu (23%), Janajati (23%), Dalit (18%), Brahman/Cheenni (17%), Muslim (8%), and remaining other, Tera cases. With Tharu being an ethnic minority in all 44% were Janajati, ethnic minorities.

### Table: Number of children domestic participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled into NFE classes</td>
<td>15,170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled into formal schooling</td>
<td>10,147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced family livelihoods</td>
<td>7,455</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Enhanced family livelihoods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-14 years</td>
<td>20,338</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the children were 10-14 years old. 15,170 children (75%) in this age range. There were 8,133 children or 4% under 10. The number under 12 decreased significantly over the eight years, with only a few being found in the last two years. By district breakdown, the highest number of the domestic child laborers were in Kathmandu valley (21%), followed by the districts of Kailali, Parbat, Myagdi, Baglung, Rupandehi, Makawanpur, Nawalparasi, Chitwan, and below 4% in Kanchanpur, Morang (7%), Kaski (5%), Dang (13%), Jhapa (10%), Barke (9%), Bardiya (8%), and remaining other, Tera cases. With Tharu being an ethnic minority in all 44% were Janajati, ethnic minorities.
Nonformal Education

Brighter Futures supported 16,013 domestic children to gain literacy and numeric skills in nonformal education classes. Nonformal education was seen as the main and key entry point for child domestics, followed by enrollment to school. Older children over 14 years of age that did not wish to join formal school moved on to vocational trainings. To make nonformal education more child friendly for domestic helpers-appropriate nonformal modular curricula and flexible class time were used. Counseling and recreation and referral to other services was also provided within learning centers.

Brighter Futures used a number of different nonformal education courses and curricula and approaches. Initially the project used the government’s Naulo Bihan curriculum for mixed classes of both boys and girls. This curriculum has formal school curriculum content and was designed for ages 8-12. Many child domestics found the curriculum too childish for their age and irrelevant. It was therefore decided a new curriculum was needed for mixed groups and older children. They also needed greater flexibility as children arrived and left at the whim of parents and employers, often being forced to return to their village homes or arriving mid-way through a course. Use of a text book requiring months to complete simply frustrated and disappointed them. The resulting Jeevan Shiksha curriculum used a modular approach so that children could arrive and leave at different times and pick up the modules that interested them or the group they joined within the class. For areas with large concentrations of girls the Lalima girls-focused health related curricula was used.
Class timings also proved a challenge. To get the co-operation of employers the NGOs initially tried to accommodate the employers by scheduling classes in the middle of the day for domestics when there was less work to do. Most children help in the morning to get water, collect milk, clean the house and prepare breakfast and get employers children to school. In the middle of the day they do laundry and more major cleaning tasks. In the evenings they prepare meals, clean up and do dishes. Many employers like children to watch the house while they are away at work and even convincing them to allow children to attend in the middle of the day was a battle. Once in classes though employers generally accepted the reality that they cannot hide a domestic and have to allow them an education. Some employers did however continue to disrupt their attendance insisting they work during festivals, or when they had guests or other commitments. Class facilitators then start visiting the homes to enquire why the child was absent for class-making employers hesitant to keep children home knowing it will attract attention.

In addition to using a modular curriculum two delivery approaches were used to make classes more accessible. The fixed scheduled class time based on a common agreement or a drop-in centre approach called an Open Learning Center. This drop-in centre stays open for at least six hours a day and most of the year enabling children to attend for as long as they can at their convenience. The Open Learning Centers have responded better to the needs of domestic child labor by providing nonformal literacy education combined with information and awareness on different social and child rights issues, recreation and other services.

A 'social preparation' approach was also adopted to prepare children working as domestics and their employers with continuous interaction, review and reflection meeting that helped to ensure working children attended nonformal education(NFE) and were later supported to transition to school.

“Being the son of a ex-bonded labor, my personal situation pushed me to became a Kamlakari. I didn’t see my family for a year. Through the Learning Centre, I was able to enroll into school in grade seven. Now I am back with my family and able to continue my school. I have understood the importance of education. It inspired me to go to school; it will help me to make a better future for myself.”

Kalpana Chaudhary, Kiknapur-7, Kanchanpur
Major Challenges

- **Bonded Labor** — Although bonded labor is no longer legal in Nepal, the circumstances for many children have not changed much. Tharu girls in particular continue to be in exploitative labor.
- **Fixed Schedule For Classes** — Fixed schedules for domestics were not suitable for many domestic child workers as they could not get away from their work on time.
- **Workload and Un-cooperative Employers** — Many employers are not interested in allowing the children to attend school and isolate them in the house refusing to allow them to attend classes.
- **Irregular attendance** — Even when the employers allow the child to attend school or vocational training, most children do so only after their domestic tasks are completed. The children are often reported by the facilitators as arriving late and leaving early, attending irregularly, or being distracted from their work.
- **Range of Abilities** — Children arriving into domestic work have a wide range of education backgrounds—from illiterate to dropouts from the junior grades to seniors—who have been pulled from school to work.

Lessons Learned

- **Stepping Stone** — Many children in domestic servitude enroll in NFE classes as a stepping-stone to school.
- **Outreach** — Field workers need to make frequent visits to employers, to convince them to send the child to classes and ensure regularity.
Krishna’s Commitment To Help Other Children

Krishna Chaudhary, 16 years of age, was born in Bardiya District and has been working as a Kamlahari (domestic worker) for 6 years in Mahendranagar, Kanchanpur District. She does not know the exact place of her home in Bardiya, perhaps somewhere in Neulapur VDC. Both her parents died eight years ago. She went to Mahendranagar with the help of her uncle. She has an elder sister and elder brother. Their parents had a two Kattha of land. Her sister got married and younger brother went to India a couple of years ago to work and has not returned back yet. Krishna says “There is no hope to return back to my parents’ home place now”. She worked for five years in the house of her former employer and shifted to a relative’s house last year.

Brighter Futures NGO partner BASE found Krishna during the baseline survey conducted in Kanchanpur during August 2007. Krishna was enrolled in an Open Learning Center along with her friends for nonformal education. Krishna has change a lot this past two years. She has progressed quickly with her studies and built her confidence. Krishna says being in the Learning Center gave her the opportunity to express her feelings among other working children that have been facing the same problems as she did. She is able to express her feelings about her situation through poems and songs. Krishna was excited to be selected as the leader of the Adarsha Child Club. In April 2007, she was enrolled in school in Grade Six and has now been promoted to Grade Seven. The School Management Committee was so impressed by her achievements that they let her enroll without charging any admission fees. Her employer also agreed to send her to school. Krishna says getting the chance to enroll in school made her very happy. She appreciates the Learning Center run by World Education and BASE and also her employer for supporting her to attend. She would also like to continue her efforts to benefit other working children through her child club.
School support

To attend formal school 7,455 (37%) domestic child workers in Brighter Futures received educational support. The majority of these children had successfully completed nonformal education classes while others were school dropouts who were able to return directly to school. Of them, 63% were girls and 37% were boys. The in-kind support provided to these children included the admission fee, tuition fee, examination fee, school dress, books and stationery. Of all the working children receiving support, domestics were the largest group and dominated the school support recipient list (52% of those getting support).

Most Successful Approaches

- **Strong Co-ordination** – Partner NGOs used a series of regular consultations with parents, employers and schools in the process of enrolment. This advocacy helped ensure a strong commitment to keeping children in school once enrolled.

- **Nonformal Education Creates the Bridge to School** – Nonformal education is a main approach to transition to formal school system. The nonformal education class first meets the child workers need for emotional support and socialization. Participation in classes helps children catch up lost years or months of schooling enabling them to enroll in higher more age appropriate grades.

- **Multi-year Funding** – Children who enrolled previously received school support for the subsequent years during the project period. Employers were encouraged to pick up a greater share of the cost for older children continuing to work. By recognizing their contributions to the schooling many were more willing to financially support and encourage the student. Children completely removed from domestic work and returning to their families were also provided ongoing support where possible.

- **Improving Family Livelihoods** – Complementary to the provision of school support, a limited number of families of children in domestic work were provided with access to microfinance. This has been especially helpful in ensuring that children in domestic child labor, once they have been withdrawn, do not revert to child labor.
Major challenges

- **Workload and uncooperative employers** – Some employers are not interested in allowing children to attend school or even to socialize with other children. Irregular attendance and trouble completing homework are often problems.

- **Curriculum Relevance** – The teaching methodologies used in schools, the textbook content and the non-inquisitive nature of students often results in these children completing school without having acquired basic life skills or sufficient qualifications for the workforce.

- **Government Scholarships** – There is a gap in the government scholarship system which is based on a quota system which provides scholarships for Dalit, girls, gifted students, etc. Many working children fail to fall in any of the categories and despite being more needy are not eligible under any category.

- **Free Education** – In 2004 the government made all primary level education free. In 2008 they extended free education up to the end of Grade 8. Despite this many schools have been charging for admission and examination fees, compulsory “donations” and other school support. Schools claim that they are under-resourced by government and can not follow this policy or they would have to close the schools.
Lessons learned

- **Multi-year school support** – Most of the school support beneficiaries need extended school support at least for secondary education to the end of Grade 10 and the School Leaving Examination.
- **More Focus on Girls** – Many more girls are in domestic service and are usually younger and in poorer working conditions. Boys, in general, receive more social support to attend school and girls domestic workers typically have had less education. Discrimination combined with a weak educational foundation make working girls more vulnerable to dropping out. The school support helped reduce the gender gap between boys and girls in education.
- **Mobility** – Aside from the large numbers of child domestics, nonformal education proved more suitable for this intervention due to their age and as they are less mobile than other sectors and can attend school regularly.
- **Changing Teacher Attitudes** – Teachers have generally not respected the situation of child domestics and have instead berated them for poor attendance and incomplete homework. Building teacher awareness of the exploitative conditions under which these children work through regular staff visits has helped make teachers more supportive and many have become advocates for these children.
Vocational Education

To meet the need for vocational education a range of options were used depending on the age and circumstances of the child. Vocational centre-based skill training, agriculture and forestry training, apprenticeships and self-employment education program were provided for youth aged 14 and above. Self-employment was a popular option for girls coming from rural areas with few employers. This helped them to develop an alternative way to reduce their financial poverty and promote themselves as independent and self-employed youth entrepreneurs. These classes included literacy, numeracy and business skills through experiential business learning with a microfinance component.

Self-employment and Economic Education Program

Self-employment was identified as being the most appropriate vocational training for 3,169 youths and were enrolled in the Self-employment and Economic Education Program (SEEP). The graduates are now running a range of different small businesses established from their savings and loans from their microfinance groups. Domestic workers tend to be well suited towards entrepreneurial activities as they are typically less mobile than most of other sectors. SEEP graduates learn money management skills and start managing money better and as a result are able to extract themselves and at times help their families escape from the cycle of debt bondage.
Economic Education-an Eye Opener

Roshan says, "My father had taken a loan from a moneylender but over the years my father could not pay back the loan. Even when my father had paid back the amount of loan taken, I was still sent to work as a domestic worker against the loan. When I wanted to enroll into the SEEP class organized by SAHARA the moneylender refused to let me join."

When the NGO facilitator talked with the moneylender Roshan came to know that at the time of giving the loan the moneylender had obtained his father’s thumbprint on the bond paper by doubling the loan amount. Now they knew the moneylender had exploited them. SAHARA then helped Roshan leave domestic work and he joined the SEEP group. Roshan says, "I got an opportunity to return to my family and have started a small business to help support my family. This program has been my eye-opener."

Roshan Chaudhary, Surunga-4, Jhapa
Most Successful Approaches

- **Combination of Both Economic Education Business Literacy** – The SEEP curriculum has content that first helps youth develop money management, other valuable life skills like communication, team work, planning and information gathering as well as strengthening literacy and numeracy skills. These skills are then built on through discovery learning to develop business management skills.

- **Discovery Learning** – With just knowledge on starting a business youth often never take the step of actually starting a business. Through discovery learning youth have the experience of having tried to produce a product or service and make money doing so. Having done this is a group builds the confidence to take this forward or start a new business on their own.

- **Linkage To Training For Relevant Practical Skills** – The SEEP beneficiaries did a market assessment and based on their available time and resources and the market demand chose a product or service for their business. NGOs linked beneficiaries to relevant practical skills training using a local expert, government training program or private provider. These practical skill trainings helped participants produce a better quality of product or service and be more professional managing their micro-enterprise.

- **Access to Microfinance or Technical Resources** – Through SEEP-individual beneficiary started savings. These accumulated savings created a capital fund for lending or NGOs linked beneficiaries to existing savings and credit organizations for access to credit for their businesses.
Major challenges

- **Time Constraints** – Domestic child workers found SEEP challenging for participation due to their lack of time. Employers of children over 14 expect long working days from them and are reluctant to see them engaged in other work for themselves, as this may result in them leaving poorly paid domestic work.

- **Sustaining Microfinance** – Domestic child workers have a high turnover. It is therefore difficult to sustain groups for migrant working youth for long. Despite this, youth learn valuable money management skills, understand savings and credit and are prepared to join existing microfinance groups in their home community.

- **Rural Children in Urban Areas** – Geographically, certain businesses are more relevant to specific areas; agro-based ventures are feasible in the rural areas but, in urban areas it is difficult, where there is lack of land. Many children especially girls planning to return to rural villages are interested in learning skills for commercial agriculture.

- **Impatience** – When starting to engage in microfinance with small groups and small savings not all members can get a loan at one time. Waiting a long time for a loan can result in frustration and increase the chance of a member dropping out of the group.

Lessons Learned

- **Connecting Education to Practical Use** – Most beneficiaries had never applied what they had learnt to any practical use in their lives. Through SEEP they learnt how to turn their education into useful tool for developing new economic and social life skills as young adults.

- **Transferable Skills** – Many of these skills are transferable skills and graduates have found them useful both for self-employment and at the same time these skills have made them more marketable enabling many to find other better employment.

- **Urban and Rural Relevance** – The program works well with either urban or rural youth since the business skills that are taught can be utilized anywhere the beneficiaries live.

- **Creation of Successful Youth Entrepreneurs** – SEEP enables youth to either establish themselves working alone, with a group of friends or with family depending on their situation, resources needs and skills. While the incomes may be small most were able to earn more than they had in domestic servitude.
Occupation Specific Vocational Skill Training and Apprenticeships

As Brighter Futures focused on younger children in the worst labor conditions fewer older children were provided with vocational education. For 619 youths of legal working age in domestic child labor, training was provided for marketable skills. Vocational centre-based skill training along with apprenticeships for the youth were organized. Increasingly it is older children in hazardous work that need vocational education to enable to access more acceptable work for their age.

The number of vocational trainings, varied by district, was based on available local resources and links to local market demand. Beneficiaries were drawn to conventional occupations like carpentry, tailoring, mason, driving and more recently beauty parlor, electrical wiring, industrial plumbing, television repair, waiter, general welding services. These occupations are highly competitive with limited job openings. Often graduates have difficulty securing such work as driving as they can not get the legal papers needed to secure a license.

Most Successful Approaches

- **Social preparation and negotiation** – To motivate and choose appropriate vocational training, the career planning manual and workbook helps youths pick suitable options and having realistic expectations they are more likely to persist with these options.
- **Seeking of job markets** – Vocational trainings were focused based on available local resources and linked to local market.
- **Work based apprenticeships** – Training is provided by skilled trainers in a locally owned workshops/ factories. Apprenticeships typically result in great job placement compared to other forms of vocational training
- **Links to other institutions** – Some of the districts were able to link to other for theoretical aspects through other institutions. Nonformal education or SEEP helped those that needed more life skills, market analysis skills, money management habits.
Changing Fortunes

Sita Pariyar’s father disappeared five years ago. Until then life had been manageable for the family, and Sita had been in school in Grade Six. Life changed dramatically for the family and Sita had to dropout from school to become a child domestic worker in the house of a wealthier neighbor in Surunga VDC, Jhapa. Working hard she was helping support her family of five. The family had a small hut with a very rough roof that leaked badly. Their family could hardly manage day-to-day life with it was difficult to feed the family.

A year ago Sita came to know about the vocational skill training being organized by NGO-SAHAIRA Nepal. As it was her interest and related to their families past occupation she enrolled in a tailoring training. After the training she opened a tailoring shop. SAHARA Nepal also provided her with a sewing machine. On an average she earns Rs 150 per day. Since then Sita has been growing her business, and recently she was able to hire a co-worker. Sita says, “Nowadays I easily earn and support my family. All my three younger sisters and brother go to school. I have also started some personal savings. Now I don’t have to desperately worry about daily household needs. I had not realized that a small support could bring such a big change and happiness in my life”.

“Now I do not go for work in the house of other rich people. SEEP changed my savings habits. Through group fund six members started pig-raising among six members and earned an income around Rs 20,000 by selling of piglets. My parents are also happy.”

Rupa Chandhary, Dang
Major challenges

- **Narrow Focus** - Training centers are usually very focused on technical aspects and beneficiaries who need more life skills; market analysis skills, money management habits do not get these skills from most center-based training providers programs.

- **High Cost** - Vocational center-based skill training or apprenticeships are still critical. Issues of high costs involved and problems of low employability of the trainees make these less attractive options. Vocational training, especially apprenticeships are difficult to set up especially when resources per child are so limited.

- **Finding Mentors and Businesses to Take Apprentices** – Although a preferable option to vocational training, apprenticeships are challenging as they require community outreach and relationship building to convince employers to take on a young and inexperienced individual.

- **Skill Accreditation** – Only CTEVT can certify the skills gained under the apprenticeships. This is however costly (Rs.2,000 per apprentice) and difficult to arrange in many districts.

- **Out-Of-Date Training** – The training centers are often use old-fashioned training methods and are not up-to-date with the workplace needs.
Lessons learned

- **Growing Need For Vocational Training** – As the numbers of children in primary school increase and the numbers of younger children in child labor decrease there are higher numbers of dropouts at the secondary level entering child labor. Increasingly it is older children in hazardous work that need vocational education to access more acceptable work for their age.

- **Apprenticeships For Relevance and Employment** – Apprenticeships continue to be the best form of vocational training for many seriously disadvantaged child laborers. Apprenticeships have several major benefits over centre based trainings for domestic child labor; children learn life and work skills that can immediately be put to use such as being on time for work, appropriate behavior in the workplace, an understanding of the real skills required for a specific job within a sector and likely income and learning to deal with customers.

- **Training Centers Lack Connectivity to the Workplace** – Beneficiaries from training centers don’t build a connections with the sector’s employers and need far more support to secure work.

- **Duration** – For some occupations short courses are inadequate and beneficiaries need many months or even years of training making certain training opportunities cost-prohibitive and difficult to obtain recognized certification.

Improved Family Livelihoods

To improve family livelihoods to enable poor families to keep children out of child labor, 997 families with children that were in or had recently returned from domestic work were supported. In addition, other families in the same community prone to child labor were supported through microfinance to improve livelihoods. This support included vocational training, agro-forestry, literacy and economic education, in-kind grants to start a micro-enterprise, or access to microfinance depending on the situation of the families.
Poverty is a major factor in children entering child labor as domestics along with reliance on local elites for employment which makes families vulnerable to pressure from employers to provide children as collateral for loans or as a “favor” to please them or their city relatives. Families of working children are the poorest of the poor, and are not generally reached by other microfinance and livelihood programs. Lack of access to formal banking system and the high cost of loans from local moneylenders deprive them of the opportunity to borrow, save and invest in productive activities. This traps them in the situation they are in with poor people remaining poor and force to sending their children in child labor.

Brighter Futures provided support to a limited number of families to help remove children from worst forms of child labor or to prevent other children in the same communities ending up in child labor.

**Self-help group**- The program provided training to parents to form self-help groups. These self-help groups were formed with the families and communities of child domestic including those in bonded labor in Bardiya district in the Western cluster, Kaski in the Dauligauri cluster, Jhapa and Morang districts in the Eastern Cluster. 60 self-help groups started savings and credit activities with 730 members. By January 2009, the family self-help groups had Rs 145,220 ($1,838) saved in their business development fund from their own contributions. The groups had provided Rs 500,780 ($6,339) as loans to 277 group members in order to initiate income generation activities. As these groups are fairly new they will continue to grow and provide an ever-increasing amount each year. All the NGO partners have experience with larger savings groups and so will be able to help sustain these groups.

**Agro-forestry**- In land poor communities 117 households were engaged in planting and farming of vegetables and medicinal plants. Many of these groups have been provided with public land on lease. The groups members started making savings and are also making a profit from vegetable farming.

“Now we don’t go to moneylender for loans. I have taken loan from our group and invested in vegetable farming.”

*Sonchiriya Tharu, Baniyabhar, Bardiya*
Most Successful Approaches

- **Solidarity group approach** - To support families, the Brighter Futures NGO partners worked with groups of families, of child domestics, in village clusters in highly prone areas. Families in the targeted community were motivated by NGOs to organize themselves into groups.

- **Self-help group approach** - Providing these families with opportunities to access savings and credit, economic literacy or training for livelihoods is the key approach. The small self-help groups are accumulating savings for capital fund and access to lending for all members. The groups have also adopted various innovative methods like working together as farm laborers and contributing at least one day’s wages in the group savings fund.

- **Long term commitment and sustainability** - As an asset building strategy it assists families by reducing risk and emphasizing a self-reliant approach among them and instills better money management skills that have ongoing benefits.

Major challenges

- **Time to Build Capital Fund** – In the early stages, the amount in the group fund is limited, all members can not get loans immediately and are unable to initiate livelihood activities or start micro-enterprises even though they are ready.

- **Limited Markets** – The rural markets are small and lack diversity while the distances to larger market are a constraint for the poorest families and especially for women and daughters-in-law.

- **Scale** – With such limited access to credit the families have difficulty scaling up small businesses making it hard for them to compete against stronger players and achieve economies of scale.

- **Book-keeping** – Record keeping for savings and credit activities and meeting minutes are important but many members of these groups are either illiterate or semi-literate. In many cases these groups have been assisted by NGO members, facilitators and children to maintain records.

- **Need For Longer Term Business Development Services** – Families of working children have limited capacity due to their literacy levels, lack of experience running micro-enterprises, limited access to financial resources or technical expertise they will need ongoing support.
Lessons Learned

- **Sustainability and Growing Impact** – The small self-help groups and larger savings and credit groups are growing and each month have a greater impact on generating income.

- **Diversification of Livelihoods** – Being heavily dependent on one farming activity or daily wage labor increases vulnerability. Families have identified a range of investments that have the potential to raise incomes and reduce vulnerability.

- **Saving Encourages Families to Better Manage Money** – Having some savings families want to do more and save more. They increase savings by minimizing non-productive expenses from cigarettes and alcohol and unplanned purchases. With the opportunity to save, many members have been extended additional credit after leveraging the self-help funds to access other credit programs.

- **Wider Impacts On Community** – Working with the families of working children has increased knowledge about exploring alternative income sources within the community and self-employment opportunities. A new confidence to express their views and assess information has been seen. This has also resulted in greater inclusion with even the most excluded communities making changes.

- **Impacts In Muslim Communities** – Women from the Muslim community who were not allowed outside the village, now as a result of the family livelihood activities say it has helped bring them out from the four walls of their house, as their families are convinced of their role in helping improve the families situation.

- **Removal Of Children From Child Labor** – The families in the group are proud of their achievements and see not having children in child labor as a matter of pride. Expansion of savings and credit services can have a potentially significant impact on both sustainability of program and child labor reduction.
Other Services

World Education and its partner NGOs have strengthened and expanded other services that affect child labor through extensive collaboration in the district and community levels.

Child Protection Committees – Many of the Brighter Futures NGO partners have established Child Protection Committees at the community level with mother groups, community service centers and in schools to provide community based safety nets and emergency support for trafficking survivors, working children and children in crisis situations. Partner NGO CWISH in Kathmandu is a pioneer in working with child domestics and has close collaboration with Metro Police Circle and Nepal Police Women and Children Service Centre to protect children, youth and women from all kinds of rights violence.

Child Friendly Villages– The “Child-Friendly Village” is one of the strong approaches for socialization of children and their families/communities through continuous interaction, review and reflection. Partner NGO BASE is a pioneer in this approach in the mid and far West Terai. The issue of child domestic labor has gradually become more of an issue at the local level where child labor issues are discussed and increasing the level of awareness about the child domestic workers and the exploitative circumstances. Child groups have been actively campaigning for free primary education, scholarship support to marginalized children and prevention and withdrawal of child laborers. The child clubs working with youth groups are working together in community mobilization and fund raising.
Local government and private sectors efforts against child labor – NGO partner-CWISH has been promoting municipality and local government interventions through community action research and action programs that address domestics workers in collaboration with 14 municipalities includes Kathmandu, Madyapur Thimi, Lekhanath, Nepalgunj, Gulariya, Bharatpur, Ratnanagar, Hetauda, and Biratnagar. At the district levels private entrepreneurs in groups such as the Gulariya Chamber of Commerce have provided in-kind and staff support for Open Learning Centers for domestic child labor. SAHARA, Jhapa, Nari Bikas Sangh, REEC and other NGOs have strong microfinance programs and have been able to help these children and their families access to additional microfinance services when required.

Specific Regional Trends

The Brighter Futures Program has reached out to a large number of domestics in nearly all of the project districts. These districts were grouped into five clusters by region. Each cluster has its own issues and connections that affect children’s engagement as domestic helpers.

Eastern Region

This region includes five Terai districts- Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari, Dhanusha and Sarlahi and three hill districts – Udayapur, Khotang and Okhaldhunga. The majority of 4,043 (72% girls and 28% boys) recipients in this cluster in the worst forms of child labor were domestics followed by porters. In all 5,324 child domestics, were reached with multiple services. In this cluster the numbers of child domestics were Jhapa 2087, and Morang 1,347, Udaypur 338, Dhanusha 158, Sarlahi 78 and Khotang 35. Children from Jhapa 362, Morang 249, Sunsari 185 and Sarlahi 770 were found working as domestics and in other forms of child labor in the Kathmandu Valley. The majority of the child domestics (74%) were in the 10-14 years age range. They were concentrated in municipalities and metropolitan areas, including Biratnagar in Morang district. Ethnically the largest percentage of domestic child labor were Janajatis (26%) with Rai, Limbu and Tamang and Magar ethnic groups present, followed by Dalits (19%) Brahmin/ Chhetri (17%),Terai castes (14%), Muslim (12%) and Tharu (7%)
In all 2,628 child domestics were provided with nonformal education classes (Jeevan Shiksha, GATE, Learning Centers). School support was provided to 1,422 child domestics, mostly as a secondary service. 1,104 child domestics participated in economic education sessions along with microfinance activities in Self-employment Education Program. These participants were then supported by NGOs, communities and families to start small businesses to enable them to leave exploitative labor. 150 youth in the 14-18 age group were provided with vocational centre-based skill training and work-based apprenticeship. Families in child labor prone communities are being supported to access microfinance and economic education in Jhapa and Morang districts. Altogether 30 self-help groups were formed with 248 group members (78 members in Jhapa and 437 members in Morang). Agro-forestry doing leasehold forestry was also initiated with 20 families in Jhapa district with children’s families.
Challenges and Lessons

○ The percentage of migrated or internally displaced children coming down from other hilly and neighboring districts were few. Around 89% of children working as domestics in these districts came from rural areas of the same district.
○ Children come from many different settlements. Reaching these scattered families with other interventions such as microfinance or livelihood development is difficult. More efforts are needed to mainstream these disadvantaged families in other development initiatives.
○ There is a disproportionate number of girls working as domestics in the Eastern Cluster making the GATE program classes which uses a curriculum that is tailored for girls most appropriate.
○ The family support program to improve and diversify livelihoods has built linkages to microfinance institutions for additional financial access. The income generation and livelihood capacity of the families of domestics children has increased. Their nutritional status has also improved and, most importantly, they are able to support their children to leave work and enroll in school.

Kathmandu Valley

Kathmandu Valley includes Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur districts. These three districts attract the greatest numbers of child domestic laborers that migrate or are trafficked from all over the country to work. The Brighter Futures Program identified and provided educational services to 4,218 (61% girls and 39% boys) child domestic laborers over eight years. The number of child domestics, with 5,768 children received multiple services. Brighter Futures found the major sources of children were neighboring districts; Kavre, Sindhupalchowk, Nuwakot, Dhading, Makawanpur. Smaller numbers came from Dolakha, Ramechhap, Okhaldhunga, Jhapa, Morang and Sarlahi. Within the cluster, the children working as domestics were Janajatis (38%), Brahmin/Chhetri (29%) and Dalit (8%), Tharu (7%), Newar (7%) with smaller numbers from other Terai castes.
World Education and its partner NGOs in the Kathmandu Valley provided to 2,998 child domestics with nonformal education (Jeevan Shiksha, Learning Centre, Naulo Bihan and GATE) over the years. School scholarships were provided to 1,972 child domestics which indicates that many children were able to transition to school after receiving accessioning nonformal education. Many more returned to their home districts to return to school. A further 659 adolescents and youth participated in the Self-employment Economic Education Program and 139 youths were provided vocational skill training.

**Challenges and Lessons**

- In urban areas space for conducting nonformal education classes was difficult to find and expensive. It is also difficult to get community contributions of time for class management committee.
- It used to be rare to find Dalit children working as domestics as many upper castes considered these children to be “untouchable”. However, the number of Dalit domestic workers increased sharply in the last years of the project. Firstly fewer children are available to be child laborers as more attend school and secondly as caste discrimination erodes, the desire to have a cheap workers overcomes other prejudices.
- The highest percentage (74%) of child domestics were 10-14 years of age.
- Employer resistance to a child’s participation in education programs is greatest in this cluster. It is difficult to get direct access to children if employer’s are obstructive. Labor inspections are rare and do not currently extend to private homes.
- For children in vocational programs employers are not supportive as once they get training they seek better jobs in the city or return home.
- Vocational training is a challenge when working with migrant youth. It is not easy to find space, land or time to develop a business while still working. Children’s homes are full and rented accommodation is cost prohibitive for these children. Providing vocational skill training is most challenging in terms of training costs and opportunities for employment after training with intense competition.
Central Region

This region is comprised of three Terai districts- Parsa, Nawalparasi and Rupandehi and three hill districts – Makawanpur, Chitwan, Nawalparasi and Dhading. Children in domestic service were a key target group in this cluster. Brighter Futures Program identified and delivered services to 2,171 (71% girls and 29% boys) child domestic laborers over eight years. The number of child domestics, with 2,901 services provided. The numbers by district were Chitwan 911, Makawanpur 451, Rupandehi 379, Dhading 188, Nawalparasi 133 and Parsa 109. The municipalities and urban areas including Birgunj, Hetauda, Narayangadh, Bhairahawa and Butwal had larger concentrations of child domestics. Girls (71%) were the majority of workers compared to boys (29%). The focus of beneficiaries was on the 10-14 years aged groups (77%). The numbers of child domestics needing to be withdrawn were greater than the numbers due to a scarcity of funding especially in Chitwan and Parsa.

Within the central region districts the beneficiaries were Janajatis (32 %), Dalit (19%), Brahmin/Chhetri (16%), Tharu (13%), Terai castes (7%) and Muslim (6%) with smaller numbers of Newar and others. The majority of the Janajatis were Tharu, Tamang and Chepang. A sub-sector of Dalit were Doms who were found in Parsa district working as domestics servicing numerous homes, performing such tasks as cleaning toilets and washing dishes. While these Dalits working as domestics are employed by higher castes they are typically not allowed to prepare food, are often not even allowed in the house and do their chores outside. Although the Doms do not constitute large numbers, almost all of the identified Dom children were illiterate.

In all, 1,823 child domestics attended nonformal education classes (Jeevan Shiksha, Naulo Bihan, GATE). Around 472 child domestics received school scholarships, mostly as a second service. Vocational education was provided for older children with 528 child domestics participating in the Self-employment and Economic Education Program and 78 youths vocational centre-based skill training and work-based apprenticeship.

"Being in the nonformal education class was a stepping-stone for me to continue my education."

Domestic child laborer, Kathmandu
Challenges and Lessons

- Girls education continues to be an issue for disadvantaged girls in this region with a disproportionate number of girls ending up in domestic work.
- Children work as domestics for a short period of their lives but this often ends their formal schooling and results in an early marriage.
- Janajatis dominated this cluster and were followed by Dalit—much more effort is needed to ensure their inclusion in child labor and education programs.
- For employment in non-exploitative jobs there are larger urban areas and markets in the plain districts than hill districts and greater employment opportunities. Vocational education and training is complex and costly and for children just 14 or 15 years old needs more time and improved course designs compared to those currently offered by training institutes.
Western Region

This region is comprised of five Terai districts- Dang, Banke, Bardiya, Kailali and Kanchanpur and one hill district – Salyan. Domestics were a key target group in this cluster except for in Salyan district. The Western Cluster had the largest overall numbers of domestics with 37% of all child domestics identified nationwide working in this region. The Brighter Futures Program identified 10,523 children in this region and was able to provide educational services to 7,557 (74% girls, and 26% boys) child domestics over eight years. The highest number of services-10,427 services were provided in this region. The majority of beneficiaries (75%) were 10-14 years of age. In the municipalities and towns such as Tulsipur, Ghorahi, Nepalgunj, Gulariya, Tikapur, Dhangadhi and Mahendranagar there were large numbers of child domestics. In Dang, Banke, Bardiya, Kailali and Khanchanpur many girls were in domestic work with the majority being Tharu girls entering as Kamlahari. Many shared that their parents were former Kamaiya or that their parents had received advances for their work suggesting that the tradition of exploiting these girls continues with or without bond papers. The numbers of girls being found below 14 though did decrease dramatically over the eight years showing that this tradition is gradually changing.

Within the cluster, indigenous Tharu children were found to be the highest numbers of 3,738 (49%) with Muslim (13%), Dalit (12%), Janajatis (7%), Terai caste (6%) and remaining others. By district the numbers of child domestics were highest in Dang 2,609, then Banke 1,751, Bardiya 1,573, Kanchanpur 790, Kailali 520 and Salyan 314. For Kailali and Kanchanpur, though the number of actual children may be higher. In these two districts World Education ended its program in 2004. In Kailali, it was due to the low numbers, number of other providers and conflict whereas in Kanchanpur the level of effort fluctuated depending on the impact of conflict on the program.

In Bardiya, an NGO, Friends For Needy Children (FNC) collected a data in 2008 from 11,501 families. They found 2,014 children (64% girls) aged 6-14 years were out of school and 247 girls were Kamlahari and a further 87 children were working and 67 children were working in India. Dang, Banke, Bardiya, Kailali were found to have the majority of Tharu girls entering into bonded domestic servitude as Kamlahari.
Within the cluster, 6,833 child domestics participated in nonformal education classes (Jeevan Shiksha, GATE, Naulo Bihan and Learning Centers). Many attended a bridging program after nonformal classes for improved transition to school. Of the child domestics 2,800 received school scholarships, mostly as a second service. Vocational education was provided for older children with 481 child domestics participating in the Self-employment and Economic Education Program and 218 youths vocational centre-based skill training and work-based apprenticeship.

To improve family livelihoods the most child labor prone communities were supported to access microfinance and economic education in Bardiya district. Two approaches were used with 23 self-help groups formed with 243 group members for the most needy families and a further 282 were organized into 10 microfinance groups for economic education who together saved Rs. 78,160 (US$1,028) and loaned Rs.1,23,817. These groups reported their first achievement as being escaping from debt to employers and local moneylenders-a major cause of them sending children in to child labor. These loans are often for essential medical care, seed, or food during lean periods which they can now cover from group savings. Many of the families have invested in additional livelihood activities, leasing land for commercial crops, keeping poultry, pigs or goats. This is gradually increasing incomes while reducing dependency on erratic employment or one or two major employers. In Dang, a small agro-forestry effort was initiated for the families of children in domestic work focusing on production of medicinal plants and vegetables on degraded public land taken on lease.
**Challenges and Lessons**

- In the Western Terai high numbers of children enter the workforce and this is closely linked to a number of social issues. These include the incomplete rehabilitation of ex-Kamaiya families, most often Tharu families, as well as longstanding Kamlahari system. Migration from neighboring hilly districts was fueled by conflict and large numbers of children lost parents in these and neighboring districts hastening their entry to exploitative child labor.

- Children in bonded labor came from poor and landless families in five Western Terai districts. Despite the abolition of bonded labor (Kamaiya system) including Kamlahari system – girls were found working as bonded workers engaged as domestics. Most were working in the Western Terai but Tharu girls were also found working in Kathmandu and other districts from these districts.

- Providing direct or indirect services to the families of domestics is difficult. They are hard to locate and are often scattered.

- World Education and partner NGOs in Bardiya District have had coordination efforts with district level government and other organizations. As a result, Gulariya Chamber of Commerce & Industry & Commerce and District Child Welfare Board in Bardiya in mid-West supported for additional facilitators and materials.

- “Child-friendly Villages” proved a strong approach for socialization of children and their families/communities through continuous interaction, review and reflection.
Dhaulagiri Region

The Dhaulagiri cluster included the hill districts- Kaski, Baglung, Myagdi and Parbat. In this region the major concentration was on child porters with some children domestic and mining work. Dhaulagiri cluster identified the least number of children in domestic work. The Brighter Futures Program delivered the services to 2,349 (73% girls and 27% boys) child domestics over eight years with 2,953 services being provided to these children. The largest metropolitan area– Pokhara in Kaski district had the highest numbers of child domestics. In all the numbers of child domestics supported were Kaski 1098, Parbat 525, Baglung 427 and Myagdi 299.

The majority of child domestics enrolled as beneficiaries were aged 10-14 (73%). In contrast to other regions in this cluster Dalit (51%) children dominated the child domestics with 73% being girls. The next largest ethnic groups were Brahman/Chhetri (23%) and Janajati (15%) and remaining small numbers from other groups. Of the ethnic minorities most were Magar and Gurung.

In all 1,731 children in domestic service were provided basic non-formal education most using the Jeevan Shiksha curriculum in scheduled classes and Open Learning Centers in Kaski and Myagdi districts. School scholarships were another key intervention with 789 children getting scholarships to attend formal school.

Vocational education was provided for older children with 397 child domestics participating in the Self-employment and Economic Education Program and 19 youths vocational centre-based skill training and work-based apprenticeship based on the local market demand. The most needy families were identified for help to improve and diversify livelihoods with 50 families of domestics being supported through 7 self-help groups to access microfinance and economic education in Kaski district. Agro-forestry activities in Parvat and Baglung also helped small numbers of families with a child in domestic work improve their livelihoods.
Challenges and Lessons Learned

- Modest school scholarships that covered school fees, school uniform, stationary and textbooks helped fulfill the longstanding desire of many child domestics to go to school.
- The target beneficiaries and their families are extremely poor and come from remote and scattered communities making providing services to them after removal from child labor extremely difficult.
- Income generation and livelihood development for families of child domestic workers resulted in improved incomes, and improved nutrition and most importantly families were able to support their children to leave work and enroll in school.
- Older youth and adolescents participating in self-employment education were able to run small businesses mobilizing their savings that helped them undertake income generating and livelihood activities.
Overall Outcomes and Impacts

The Brighter Futures Program worked with large numbers of NGOs in many districts to provide an education to child domestics and remove them from work. The impacts of this huge effort were many and positively affected both individual lives and communities attitudes to child labor. The most significant impacts were:

Nonformal Education Program
- Through nonformal education classes child domestics mastered literacy and numeracy and gained valuable life skills.

School Support Program
- The majority of child domestics were below minimum working age, and should be in school. With 7,455 child domestics successfully transitioning to formal school these children now have a greater likelihood of staying out of child labor and breaking the cycle of child labor within their own families.
- Vulnerable girls were enabled to attend school with 63% of those receiving support being girls compared to 37% boys.
- School scholarships enabled children in domestic work to attend school and ensured their continued retention in school.
- Once enrolled in school most working children had reduced working hours and were able to continue their education until completely removed.

Vocational Education and Training
- 3,905 older youth of legal working age participated in vocational centre-based and apprenticeship a work-based training. This enabled these adolescent youths to gain marketable skills and access less exploitative work.
- 730 families of children in domestics, who are the poorest of the poor, and not generally reached by other microfinance and livelihood programs now have access to microfinance services, and knowledge and skills to improve livelihoods.
- In addition to specific vocational skills the youths gained important transferable skills that will be useful on their return home including literacy, numeracy and life skills such as communication skills.
Community Awareness and Advocacy

○ Communities are more aware of child labor issues and minimum working age. As a result partner NGOs, working children and parents raised their voices and concern through all forums available at national, district and local levels.
○ NGOs are able to use the Child Labor Spectrum and recognize those children in the worst conditions that most need help.
○ Parents and employers are more committed to identify and support child domestics to attend nonformal education or to go to school. Many schools have started to provide their own scholarships to working children.
○ A significant reduction in child marriage-as youth-and girls in particular, return to school.
○ Madrassa schools are recognizing the issue of child domestics and doing more to encourage children to continue their education and not enter child labor.

Best Practices and Recommendations

Staff and community preparations – Extensive preparation is required in bringing domestic child laborers into programs. Almost always they are only allowed to attend education programs after the domestic tasks have been completed. In the beginning children were arriving late and leaving early, attending irregularly, or being distracted by their work. Awareness among the children and parents and employers is needed to get a commitment to education. Trained NGO staff/field workers, frequently visited employers, lobbying them until they sent the child worker to nonformal classes, school or other vocational training. Organizing Village Orientation Programs also helped inform communities about the proposed program activities and its benefits at the community level and facilitated formation of Class Management Committee.

Relevant Curricula and Accessible Nonformal Education – Many children in domestic service informed staff that they were school dropouts as they had failed in the final exam. Many wanted to return to school but had limited free time. They found using the Jeevan Shiksha curriculum in Open Learning Centers a good starting point. The modules were interesting and they could gradually spend more of their time in the centers. They also found the modular curriculum helped them build on skills for a return to school.
**NGO capacity and collaboration** – For economic and social reasons, or because parents and society do not having a true understanding of a child domestic laborers situation many are accepting of this exploitative work. Over time the issue of child domestics has gradually become recognized at the local and national level. The Brighter Futures Program through advocacy and the work of its NGO partners has increased awareness of the needs and rights of these children in many child labor prone districts.

**Re-integration through education** – Effective use of nonformal education and school scholarships helped withdraw domestic child laborers and enabled them to return to formal school or access alternative non-exploitative employment as a result of participating vocational skills training.

**Innovative community based self-help groups** – Addressing family livelihoods to reduce child labor showed its benefits. Incorporating economic education helped families assess their situation and money management skills. Engaging them in microfinance helped them save money, get out of exploitative debt arrangements and learn to access credit to invest in their livelihoods. Loans for livelihoods, training and learning to access leasehold forestry options helped families to increase food production and incomes. Families were also able to diversify livelihoods making them less dependent on exploitative employers. This approach not only enabled them to remove their children from child labor but is sustainable and likely top prevent younger siblings from entering child labor.
**Child-friendly School Environments** – Supporting schools in urban areas with large populations of working children, most of whom were domestics, and in rural areas where these children come from had major impacts. The Brighter Futures program established Parent-Teacher Associations to engage the whole parent community in strengthening the school and improving efforts to enroll and retain students, improve the physical infrastructure of schools, help disadvantaged students access scholarships and other support and improve the quality of education in schools. This helped keep children in school and discouraged parents from sending them in to child labor.

**Linkages and Co-ordination** – Many program districts have good collaboration with other organizations for complementary services and greater impact. For example, the Federation of Gulariya Industry & Commerce and District Child Welfare Board in Bardiya in the mid-West have supported the program with additional facilitators and materials.

**Policy and advocacy** – Awareness raising at the community level and policy and advocacy work at the national level were best practices impacting the numbers of children in domestic service. Efforts to map school communities and enroll children through the Welcome to School campaign; liberalization of school admission policies; introduction of free and compulsory education; and mainstreaming of madrassa into the national education system are all having an impact making fewer younger children available for child labor.

**Child Labor Spectrum** – Use of the Child Labor Spectrum developed with participation of a range of stakeholders helped partner NGOs and key stakeholders at the district level to identify and appreciate the actual circumstances of child domestic laborers enabling them to prioritize those in the worst conditions for services.
Recommendations

Greater Government Role Needed – With a lack of local government and too few Labor Inspectors there has been little active efforts to address the illegal employment of children. Local government should be engaged to apply pressure on exploitative employers and to use available legal options.

Nonformal Education and Vocational Programs Should Respond to Need – Many government and NGO programs for nonformal education and working children are based on quotas not on need. This results in less needy children that fit program designs being included while those in the worst working conditions are not. More NGO and government education programs need to be demand driven and be located in both rural and urban areas that are either origin and destination communities.

Holistic Educational Programs – With children coming from a range of ages and educational backgrounds child labor programs need to include formal, non-formal and vocational education to be effective with opportunities for children to progress from one program to another. Long-term support is needed to enable the most needy children to continue their schooling.

Improving Family Livelihoods – Addressing income generation and the livelihoods of the poorest of the poor is the most sustainable way to keep children out of child labor. All poverty programs should give a priority to single-headed households, the poorest of the poor with children out of school or in child labor.

Social Safety Net – Children that are orphaned or abandoned by their parents end up in domestic servitude to survive. Orphanages and children’s homes are full or these children are never connected to these homes. District Child Welfare Boards need to pay more attention to children in crisis circumstances and work to build alternative living arrangements such as care by the extended family or foster care to prevent these children ending up in exploitative labor.

Partnership and Media Mobilization – Joint partnership with government line agencies, media, other networks, private sector groups, Trade Unions, teachers unions and community can result in a concerted effort and are essential for scale and success.
World Education Brighter Futures partner NGOs providing services for children working in private homes.

- Children Women in Social Service and Human Rights (CWISH)
- Backward Society Education (BASE)
- Banke Unesco Club
- Gramin Bikas Manch
- Kathmandu Metropolitan City
- Nari Bikas Sangh
- National Educational & Social Development Organization
- Tharu Women Upliftment Center
- Rapati Green Society
- Child Worker in Nepal
- Banke Mahila Aarthik Swabalam Ban Kendra
- Tharu Community Development Forum
- Sustainable Community Development Program (SADIKA)
- Association Rural Women Development (Gramin Mahila Bikas Sastha)
- Rural Women Development Centre (Gramin Mahila Utthan Kendra)
- Chartara Youth Club
- Aama Milan Kendra
- Pohlara Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Rural Environment Empowerment Center (REEC)
- Child Welfare Society
- Integrated Community Development Center
- Prayatnashik Community Society (Prayas Nepal)
- Community Women Development Center (CWDC)
- Suryodaya Yuva Club
- Arunodaya Youth Club
- Youth Club Narayanghat
- Women Awareness Protection Centre
- Children Contact Centre
- Child Development Society
- Center for Child Studies for Development
- Community and Family Welfare Association
- Sahara Nepal
- Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN)
- Child Protection Organization
- Community Legal Research Center
- Nepal Red Cross Society
- Concern for Children and Environment Nepal (CONCERN)

The Brighter Futures Program is an eight year initiative supported by the USDOL with matching support from UNICEF, WFP and private donors to eliminate child labor though education. Over eight years the project has provided educational and other support to 43,291 children working in the worst forms of child labor in Nepal and 72,140 children at risk.

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