

YOUTH FOR ACCESS TO ABORTION FOR YOUTH

Showcasing the youth led advocacy for
safe abortion in Nepal



ACCESSIBLE

SAFE

LEGAL

A Success Booklet

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WHO ARE WE ?

Visible Impact is a young-women-led organization that aims to create visible impact on the lives of women, girls and youth by unleashing their social and economic leadership through beneficiary partnered innovation. Visible Impact has been working on three core issues: women and girls' championship, new generation leadership and global health with focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The Safe Abortion Action Fund (SAAF) is the only global fund focused exclusively on the right to safe abortion. To date, SAAF has committed \$56 million of funding to 210 organizations in 73 countries around the world. SAAF provides funding and support to organizations in low- and middle-income countries to work on abortion advocacy campaigns, research, attitude-transformation, and the provision of safe, high quality abortion care.

YAY THEORY OF CHANGE

01

GOAL

Young people of Nepal have access to quality, stigma free and youth friendly safe abortion services and information.

OBJECTIVE 01

To increase the capacity of 35 young people aged 16-29 years, throughout all 7 provinces of Nepal, to advocate for quality, stigma-free and youth-friendly safe abortion services at national and provincial level, by March 2022.

OBJECTIVE 02

To increase the understanding about safe abortion among young people at national and provincial level and to transform negative attitudes towards safe abortion, by March 2022.

OBJECTIVE 03

To clarify the values of safe abortion among media professionals at national and provincial level and to transform the negative attitudes towards safe abortion, by March 2022.

OBJECTIVE 04

To create a pathway for more effective and strong advocacy efforts by documenting accomplishments, best practices, and lessons learnt, by March 2022.

OUR IMPACT



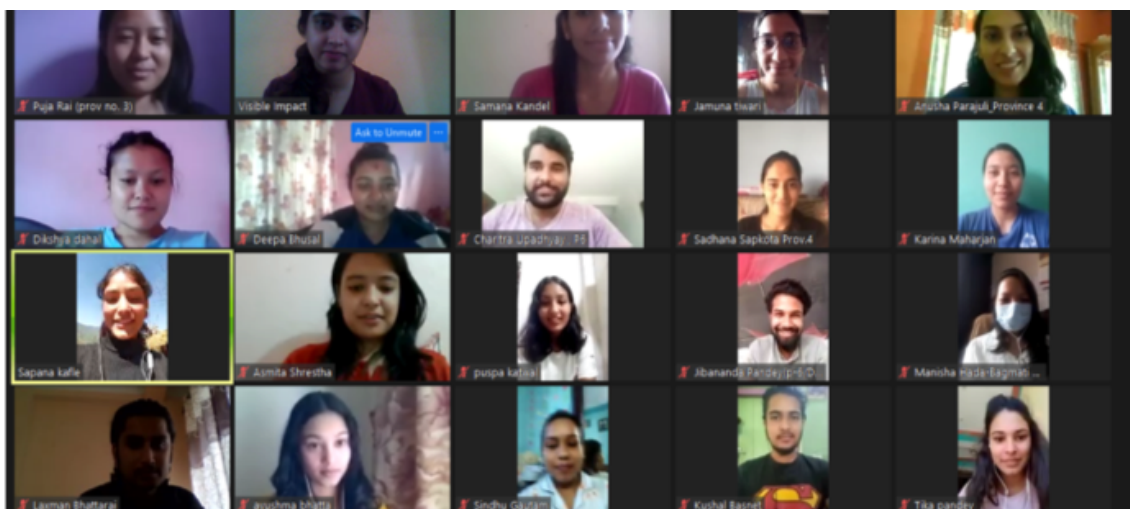
- 35 youth champions unleashed
- 7 provinces reached
- 2 progressive policy documents formulated
- 7 provincial issue briefs produced
- 87% increase in knowledge in average about safe abortion
- Attitude on safe abortion become positive by 20%
- 3 lobby meetings with policy makers initiated and attended by the youth champions
- 16 media fellows unleashed from 7 provinces
- 56 factual media contents about safe abortion published
- 9 forums where the policy makers have provided positive remarks about safe abortion
- 2,678 people reached directly through 91 community events
- 9.8M reached through radio Public Service Announcement (PSA), 200K reached through audio drama series and 200K through TV PSA, 5.8M reached through audio drama series
- 4165 information booklets distributed
- 500 stickers disseminated
- 1 media toolkit developed
- >150 participants reached through webinar series
- 111K US dollars in investment

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

RECRUITMENT AND CONDUCTION OF SAFE ABORTION “BOOTCAMP” FOR PROVINCIAL YOUTH CHAMPIONS

35 youth champions from seven provinces were selected through youth networks and an open application process. The champions consisted of 69% female and 31% male and represented diversity in terms of geography, ethnicity, income status, educational background, etc. The social champions included health care professionals such as health assistants and nurses, students, and young people engaged in civil society organizations and social activism.

The youth champions were equipped with safe abortion bootcamp, that consisted of eight online sessions, spread over a month, in two cohorts. They were trained in Value Clarification and Attitude Transformation (VCAT), conducting local campaigns and public sensitization events, and organizing lobby meetings.



Picture 1 | Online bootcamp for youth champions

Though the bootcamp had to be shifted to online from earlier plan of in-person due to COVID-19, quickly adapting the manual to online version and focusing on youthful learning ensured effective delivery. The session was made youth-friendly using online but low data consuming tools, interactive discussions, participants’ exercise, case studies, role-plays, mini breakout room discussions etc. In order to ensure retention of the learning, review was done every day, feedback was incorporated immediately in the next sessions, and reading materials and session records were provided beforehand, etc. Upon the completion of the bootcamp, 100% of the participants stated that they were now confident to conduct community sessions and lobby meetings.

CONTINUOUS MENTORSHIP AND MONITORING



Picture 2 | Mid-term review and refresher with provincial youth champions

To build on the bootcamp, a three-day residential review and refresher workshop was organized in Kathmandu in March 2021. This allowed the participants to meet each other in person, learn and share their experiences, renew their action plans and review the sessions from bootcamp such as technical aspects of safe abortion, advocacy and organization of lobby, intersectionality between abortion and gender.

Furthermore, the project team ensured that each champion received mentoring and support for trouble shooting through continuous follow up. Messenger groups served as sharing platforms, while review meetings also allowed cross-provincial learnings. The project staff attended online sessions facilitated by the youth champions and provided them feedback. Any relevant opportunities, reading materials or experiences were shared continuously to keep the champions updated on the issue.

Monitoring visits in all the seven provinces were also made to observe the sessions and provide support and feedback.

YOUTH-LED COMMUNITY CAMPAIGNS ON SAFE ABORTION

After the bootcamp, the youth champions were launched to their respective provinces to conduct community activities.

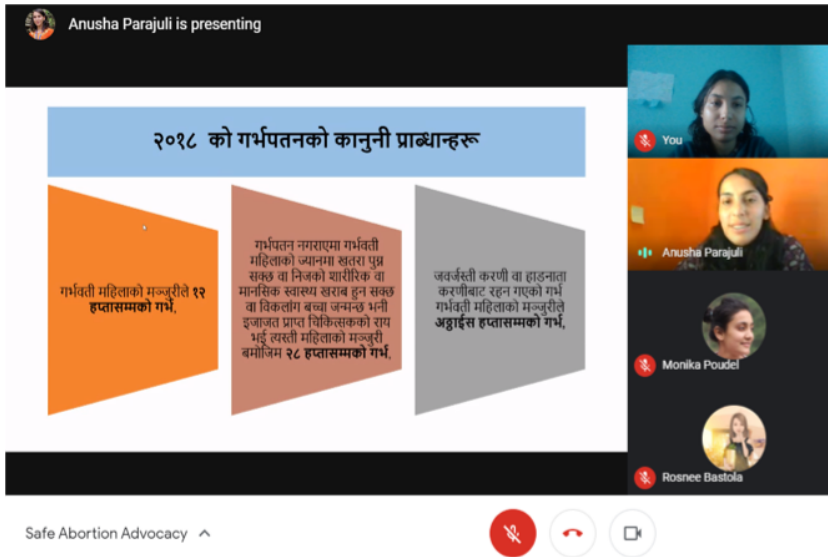
2,678 participants were reached directly through 91 community events. Each event was around one hour long. The sessions were tailored to the province's need, but the issue of discussion generally included Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), contraceptives and its linkage with safe abortion, myths and misconception of abortion, national provisions for safe abortion, methods of safe abortion, current status of abortion in Nepal, abortion stigma, social construct and role of men in abortion, etc.

Traditional methods of abortion such as roots of a plant called as "Kubindo" and a sharp long object called "Jhir" are still being used by many women in the rural communities as a method of abortion.



Picture 3 | Community session with FCHVs and other stakeholders in Sudurpaschim province

The participants of the community session included Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs), school going adolescents, college students, communities of specific rural municipalities /municipalities, nurses and health workers, etc. Diversities of ethnicity, geography, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity, economic condition, etc. was included to the extent possible. The participants were selected by the youth champions based on their existing networks and the needs identified in the community.



During lockdown, the youth champions conducted the sessions online, so that the conversation keeps rolling, at the time when SRHR services might be neglected.

Picture 4 | Online youth session on abortion

These community sessions have been instrumental not only in raising the issue in the community, but also in busting the myths and raising awareness on the legal and health provisions of abortions. Most of the youth champions reported that the community sessions were positively received by the community. Many people in Nepal are unaware of the recently developed “The Right to Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Act, 2075 (2018)”. Therefore, youth champions have been taking this opportunity to aware general public and even health workers about this recently developed act.



“The session clarifying the value of contraceptives over abortion was extremely useful because there is an increased prevalence of pre-marital sex among young people leading to unwanted pregnancy and unsafe abortion.”

-Female Community Health Volunteer, Sudurpaschim province

Picture 5 | Community session at Sudurpaschim Province

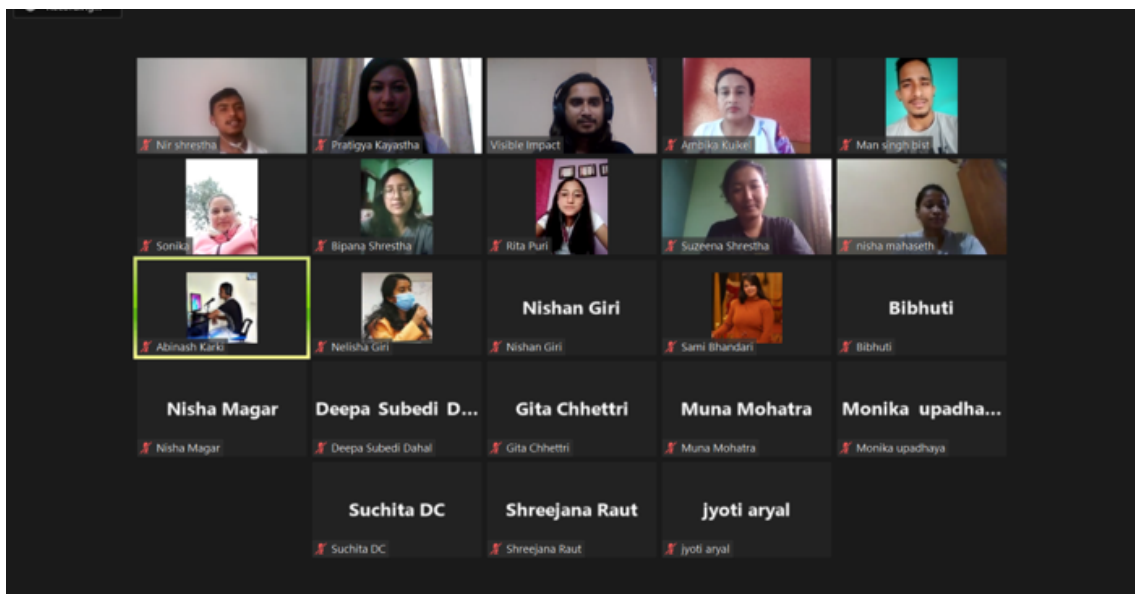
“I was unknown about medical abortion. I never thought that abortion was possible just through medicine. I used to think that abortion can only be surgically done. Now that I know about this, I feel good that I took part in the session.”

-Youth Participant of community session

Youth champions collaborated with government health centers, civil society organizations such as Family Planning Association of Nepal, Marie Stopes Nepal, different schools and universities to ensure ownership of diverse stakeholders on the issue.

Furthermore, Visible Impact as part of the SheDecides Nepal movement organized an Open House in collaboration with Beyond Beijing Committee Nepal and Right Here Right Now Nepal. An Open House targeting young people which featured podcasting, spoken word poetry and an intensive discussion on different aspects of safe abortion was organized on 30th September, 2020. Two Facebook live sessions was also organized on the safe abortion week through Facebook page of Who Decides? Campaign. These sessions were focused on addressing the context of safe abortion amidst the pandemic and analysing abortion through a gender lens.

SENSITIZATION WEBINARS



Picture 6 | Webinar on Abortion and Disability

I was unaware that abortion is also required by people who might not identify themselves as women. I had taken sessions on abortion before but the intersection of abortion and gender identity was new for me.

- Reena Bhagat, Nursing Instructor and Youth Champion

To build on community campaigns led by youth champions, webinars to sensitize young people were also conducted to allow larger reach. Four webinars on abortion and intersectional issues (sexuality, disability, digital advocacy, sex selective abortion) were conducted. They covered issues like sexual behaviour, contraception, sexual violence, sexual orientation, comprehensive sexuality education, laws, religion, culture, representation of people with disability in SRHR policies, etc. The facilitators were youth SRHR activists allowing peer learning model. In order to assess the change in knowledge and attitude of the participants pre and post-test was done during the sessions.

LOBBY MEETINGS

3 lobby meetings were organized with provincial government and stakeholders in Province 1, Bagmati Province and Sudharpaschim Province with concerned stakeholders to discuss the youth related safe abortion issues in provincial policies and programs. These meetings have sensitized the provincial government on the youth lens in safe abortion programs, and also raised commitment towards enabling environment for young people to access safe abortion services in the provinces.

One of the representatives of ward-5 of Dhangadi submetropolitan city shared how she had participated in a number of sessions organized by different NGOs but she had never been on any program on safe abortion. She shared that the data of unsafe abortion is worrying and programs such as this requires to be organized at community levels.

In Province 1, the stakeholders present also committed to organize more community based sessions on Safe Abortion for young people in collaboration with youth champions of YAAY. In Bagmati Province, Health Minister expressed "We are very serious about youth issues and we try our best to address them. This is also the reason why all of us have participated in the meeting today. Thank you for bringing all of us together, this will have a significant contribution in shaping our budget plan for the upcoming fiscal year." Furthermore, Dhangadi municipality even committed to ensuring budget for safe abortion programs in the next fiscal year.



Picture 7 | Lobby meetings at Province 1 and Sudurpaschim Province respectively

PROVINCIAL ISSUE BRIEFS

In order to sensitize stakeholders and present them with factual and value clarifying information about safe abortion in their provinces, province specific issue briefs have been developed and disseminated in all the seven provinces. These briefs have been developed after conducting series of Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with service providers, post abortive women, policy makers, etc at all the seven provinces. The issue brief includes the background of the province, highlights on issues of Safe Abortion in the province and recommendations based on the issues. These issue briefs will serve as a handy document to advocate and sensitize on safe abortion.

PUBLIC SENSITIZATION THROUGH IEC MATERIALS



Picture 8 | Booklet developed by Visible Impact in collaboration with NHEICC

In coordination with National Health Education Information and Communication Center (NHEICC) under Ministry of Health and Population, an IEC booklet has been developed. It is a two pager document with youth-friendly illustrations in Nepali language that comprises of the legal provisions on safe abortion and links of websites, social media pages and toll free numbers to help young people access more information on safe abortion. It has been distributed through community sessions.

Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on safe abortion was broadcasted on a national television 14 times for 14 consecutive days. The PSA's reach as provided by the television network is as such: YouTube: 15000, Online viewers: 5000, real time viewers: 250000.

Audio PSAs linking safe abortion and COVID-19 were developed in seven languages (Nepali, Maithili, Magar, Tamang, Doteli, Limbu and Tharu). The PSAs developed in local languages were aired on twelve radio stations with a reach to 43 districts.

Similarly, a 6-episode audio drama series that focuses on the abortion stigmas, myths, legalities and young people was aired in all the 7 provinces which had an estimate total reach of 5,800,000.

DEVELOPMENT OF ACCESSIBLE IEC BOOKLETS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (BLIND AND LOW VISION) AND PRODUCTION OF STICKERS WITH INFORMATION ON SRHR SERVICES INCLUDING SAFE ABORTION.

The booklet that was developed in collaboration with National Health Education Information and Communication Center (NHEICC) has also been developed in braille and larger font to cater to the needs of the visually impaired and those with low vision. They were distributed across all the provinces in collaboration with the relevant organizations.

Similarly, stickers with Safe Abortion message have also been disseminated to different bus networks namely Sajha Yatayat, Nepal Yatayat, Mayur Yatayat, Prithvi Rajmarg Yatayat, etc. through the transportation committees responsible for operating bus route inside and outside Kathmandu Valleys.

MEDIA FELLOWSHIP FOR FACTUAL COVERAGE ON SAFE ABORTION

Media plays an impertinent role in delivering factual information on stigmatized issue like safe abortion. However, due to lack of sensitization, Nepalese media often do not use appropriate titles, words or pictures, or do not cover about the issue adequately. To combat this, 16 media fellows were selected from across the 7 provinces in two batches. The media fellows were provided two-days residential training on value clarification and factual coverage on safe abortion. After this, the fellows would produce one factual and sensitizing article on national or local print or online media once a month.

“Even as media personnel, I was not aware of the impact of unsafe abortion in the lives of women. I had the opportunity to learn about the laws and the factual way of writing article on abortion which, I think, has made my reporting better.

- Pratibha Jha (Media fellow, Madhesh province)

22 articles were published by the media fellows. The articles included diverse issues starting from basics of SRHR and contraceptions to more sensitive issues like challenges of accessing safe abortion services, young people’s access to safe abortion, etc.



Picture 9 | Various articles published my media fellows

A media toolkit has been developed on “How to Report on Abortion? A toolkit for Media and Public Communication Professionals” under the project Youth for Access to Abortion for Youth (YAAY) in both English and Nepali languages. It is a toolkit for media and public communication professionals and is addressed to media and public communication professionals to facilitate rights-based and factual reporting on abortion. Both the toolkits are available on our website as well: [Media Toolkit on How to Report on Abortion.](#)

SUCCESSFUL CASES

GORAKH SARKI: THE STORY OF PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION



**Gorakh Sarki, Youth Champion,
Sudurpaschim Province**

Meet Gorakh Sarki. He is from Dhangadi Metropolitan City, Sudurpaschim province. He is the Social Mobilization Officer at National Dalit Network. Being a part for YAAY project was his first experience working for safe abortion.

He comes from one of the most rural provinces of Nepal where information and access to sexual and reproductive health and rights is compromised. The deeply rooted socio-cultural norms like patriarchy and chhaupadi curbs conversation, let alone access to these services. Abortion is highly stigmatized causing lack on correct information and leading people to choose unsafe methods.

As a youth champion for safe abortion, Gorakh and his team organized various discussions and workshops where he invited important stakeholders and local governments. Before getting into abortion, it was important to make people talk about SRHR. These community events helped them reach out to people and explain them about the province's status on SRH, and the need for work on SRH in the communities. They then built on SRHR to discuss about abortion and its issues in their community. Whenever they conducted discussions and advocacy events, they would ask 2-3 participants add up their personal opinions and needs that they felt for SRH and safe abortion. They also made sure that they would invite local leaders and government to the program as much as possible, so that they could see for themselves the need in the community.

The community events also allowed Gorakh and his team build stronger network and continuous sensitization with the local government. Gorakh was invited to several ward level meetings where he even got the chance to present about budget allocation for SRH in his ward. His proposal was successful and the ward allocated a separate budget for SRHR and abortion related activities for the next fiscal year.

Two years ago, sexual and reproductive health as a human right was completely new for me. This journey has been a huge learning opportunity, and I am glad that I am able to contribute something for the community as well. The training and mentoring I have received has been the biggest motivating factor for me. In the abortion bootcamp at the beginning, I have to admit that I was shy and hesitant. I myself was not comfortable discussing reproductive organs in presence of female friends. When I saw that other participants and organizers were talking openly about it, I started looking it from a rights-based perspective. Today, I confidently and proudly advocate for safe abortion in my community. I cannot thank Visible Impact enough for this opportunity.” shares Gorakh.

“When I saw that other participants and organizers were talking openly about it, I started looking it from a rights based perspective. Today, I confidently and proudly advocate for safe abortion in my community.”

- Gorakh Sarki, youth champion, Sudurpaschim province

YAAY: THE CASE OF GROWTH OF A YOUTH-LED ORGANIZATION



Picture 10 | Youth champions receiving capacity development bootcamp

Youth for Access to Abortion for Youth (YAAY), that is funded by Safe Abortion Action Fund has been instrumental in supporting a youth-led organization grow.

Visible Impact had been working on the issue of safe abortion since the beginning, but was focused at the national level for policy change. This project allowed it to reach to all the seven provinces of Nepal.

Through community events, the project has reached to several grassroots, participants from low-income families, geographically and ethnically diverse population, people with disabilities etc. Visible Impact also produced a booklet in collaboration with National Health Education, Information and Communication Center (NHEICC), which is its first publication on abortion in collaboration with the Government. The visibility from the project has contributed to Visible Impact being a part of Reproductive Health Rights Working Group (RHRWG) and Safe abortion sub-committee of Family Welfare Division.

Furthermore, being one of the largest projects in terms of resources, the project also supported to refine the organizational system and policies. The initial project design training, and other learning-sharing meetings has built the staff capacity as well.

The resources, illustrations and documents provided by SAAF has been adequately utilized in producing its own IEC materials. SAAF has been a flexible and supportive donor, that allowed honest sharing, that eventually allowed to improve the project effectiveness.

In the context where youth-led organizations are struggling to secure authority and resources, this project has supported to prove that investment in youth led advocacy yield much larger and sustainable results.

PRATIBHA JHA: THE STORY OF POWER OF MEDIA IN ADVOCACY



Pratibha Jha, Journalist

Pratibha Jha is a journalist by profession and interestingly, a student of law. When she was 17, she became a radio jockey because she was offered to host a radio show in her mother tongue- Maithili. She joined journalism out of fascination, but today is proud that she is able to touch so many lives through media.

She has worked with prominent media houses like Radio Mithila, Appan TV, Desh Sanchar among others. Having grown up in Janakpur region of Madhesh province, Pratibha became familiar with the challenges that women and girls face to access their sexual and

reproductive health services when she was curating the media contents. She became determined to be the voice of the voiceless, and expose the situation faced by Madhesh women. That motivated her to apply for Visible Impact's media fellowship.

SAAF fellowship was an eye-opener for her because she was value clarified on safe abortion that provided her new dimension towards the issue. She herself had negative attitude towards abortion, but once she saw it from human rights perspectives, she was convinced. The session on using correct pictures and words enlightened her. Eventually, she published three articles in the local online portal during the fellowship. Her colleagues and seniors appreciated her writing. "I am glad that my fellow journalists have also started writing about this issue. Four articles have already been published by others as well" she shares.

However, being a Madhesi women writing about safe abortion was not easy. Her family questioned if she did not have anything else to write about, that she had to talk about safe abortion for young people. Also, gathering authentic data was a challenge. She travelled to and fro several government institutions and communities to obtain it. "In the course I have built rapport with important stakeholders, I am confident that now I can easily write about these issues", shared Pratibha.

When she was gathering stories of abortion experiences, one of the women from a village was a teacher. Pratibha was surprised that despite being a teacher, she was not clear on the how to access safe abortion services. Due to community stigma, she was forced to uptake unsafe abortion services that almost led to death. “These days, women from the community refer to me for information on safe abortion. My colleagues also refer others to me – she is the expert on the issue, they say”, she shared proudly.

“This fellowship has been extremely beneficial for me. I will keep writing about it even after the fellowship, my colleagues will keep writing about it. I just wish that we could have this fellowship for at least ten media professionals in each province, so that the ripple effect can be created”

- Pratibha suggests.

CRITICAL ACTIONS LEADING TO PROJECT SUCCESS

QUICK ADJUSTMENTS, ESPECIALLY DURING COVID

Youth for Access to Abortion for Youth (YAAY) grew through learning by doing, and applying the learning for subsequent adjustments. For instance, COVID-19 and its induced lockdown came as a huge challenge early on the project. The flexible donor partnership allowed quick adjustments.



Picture 11 | Community session after lockdown

The bootcamp manual that was created for offline training was converted to online version. One batch of offline training was converted to two batches of multiple sessions. The PSAs designed for theatres were moved to television as lockdown made people watch television more. The youth who were planned to be reached out at futsal ground was skipped, and instead deeper penetration was made through radio Public Service Announcements (PSAs) in local languages. As lobby meetings were not possible in the beginning, its preparation by formulating provincial issue brief was emphasized. Hence, continuous adjustments based on the context was impertinent to the project.

SUPPLEMENTING ONLINE ACTIVITIES WITH PHYSICAL EVENT

As soon as the first wave of lockdown was eased, Visim organized a mid-term review and refresher training, to further stress the learnings of the online session and guided the local and provincial advocacy journeys of the youth champions. Previous experience has shown that remote mentoring only through online medium is not effective for a country like Nepal with poor network connections. However, supplementing it with physical events served to be an essential aspect of capacity building of youth champions. **Other physical sharing opportunities were created through monitoring visits as well.**



Picture 12 | Monitoring visits to Gandaki Province and Madhesh Province

YOUTH AT THE FOREFRONT



Picture 13 | Community session with stakeholders at Bagmati province

Youth for Access to Abortion for Youth (YAAY) has been designed for youth, by youth. In a society where linking sexual health with young people is out of norm, advocating for safe abortion services for young people was extremely challenging. However, the project mobilized young people ensured that they are leading change at the community staying at the forefront.

When the segment of the population that is not engaged much started speaking for themselves, it ensured that youth issues are brought to the surface in policy design and programming. This also ensured sustainable impact even after the project completion.

TAILORED APPROACH RATHER THAN BLANKET APPROACH

The project worked across all the seven provinces with their unique contexts, needs and approaches. The project let the young people take lead in deciding their action plans according to their context. Some provinces focused on sensitizing the policy makers, some health workers while some on mobilizing young people. The issues of discussions during the community events varied widely. This tailored approach rather than blanket approach increased community interest and ownership on the issue.

CONTINUOUS MENTORING AND MONITORING



Picture 14 | Session with community members at Sudurpaschim Province

This project was focused on changes at the grassroots with remote support from Kathmandu.

Continuous mentoring and troubleshooting support were provided to each youth champion and media fellow from the project team.

Chat groups, sharing sessions, follow up calls and personalized conversations supported to amplify learning and sharing.

STARTING THE DISCUSSION WITH HEALTH LEADING TO ABORTION

The discussion on safe abortion openly in the community is never easy. Even in metropolitan cities, the youth champions struggled to establish the agenda. When the approach was changed and the discussion started with health, then sexual and reproductive health, then finally to safe abortion as a right, the discussion became more fruitful. This is a longer approach but proved more fruitful to create reception and ownership in the community.

FOCUS ON LOCAL MEDIA FELLOWSHIP

The idea behind media fellowship was to reach to the mass with factual information on safe abortion. The first batch of media fellows included renowned national level medias as well. When it was quickly realized that the national media houses are busier and are less likely to be able to complete the fellowship, the focus was made on local and online media houses. This allowed the articles to focus on local context. Furthermore, young journalists were more committed and interested than established ones, because they saw this as a learning opportunity.



Picture 15 | Media fellowship training

CONTINUOUS MENTORING AND MONITORING

While delivery of information related to safe abortion through community session was the main approach of the project, the learning was reinforced using complementary methodologies. Different booklets and flyers, position papers, media articles, stickers, public service announcements in radios in local languages, social media posts and contests etc. reinforced the message from the community session about legal provisions and available services of safe abortion in the community.

FLEXIBLE PARTNERSHIP

SAAF has been a flexible and supportive donor. The provision of flexibility to design and redesign activities supported to make adjustments based on the actual need at the grassroots.

SO, DOES YOUTH LED ADVOCACY WORK ?

YES !



IF THE DESIGN IS YOUTH FRIENDLY

Young people are always looking for innovative ways of engagement. Anything that is designed targeting them should be fun and informative. The bootcamp for youth champions at the beginning of the project used youth friendly learning techniques even in online version. The refresher training was also interactive and engaging unlike lecture-based training. Similar approach was utilized throughout the project.

IF THERE IS CONTINUOUS MENTORSHIP

Young people are willing to commit easily, but might get off easily as well. To ensure that they are able to perform their responsibilities effectively, they require continuous mentorship. One-time training is rarely effective when working with young people. However, even small investments in regular conversations yield much effective results for young people.

IF THE YOUTH LEAD THE CHANGE

Since the project was led by young people, it eased communication between community, young people and project management team. The power hierarchy was dissolved to a large extent, supporting effective learning and sharing. Hence, youth leading the change is essential for holistic and sustainable reach.

Young people are motivated with non-monetary benefits like leadership. When given proper mentorship and forum for leadership, they are motivated to work and be visible in the community. Visible Impact engaged the youth champions on other forums and platforms beyond the project activities, and also sent them resources regularly to keep them updated. When young people see that being engaged with that organization can boost their career and develop their leadership, they are willing to engage more effectively.

“Before I attended this program, I used to think that those who perform abortion are not good people but that perception has changed after this program.”

-A youth with disability participant



Being a male, I thought it was going to be difficult to lead a session on safe abortion in the community. However, the participants were quite appreciative that a trained youth was providing them information on safe abortion.

- Nishan Rana, Youth Champion, Lumbini province)

IF THE YOUTH ARE COMPENSATED FAIRLY

Though young people are motivated with non-monetary benefits too, they also need to be compensated well for their time and effort. Visible Impact mobilized the youth champions as volunteers and compensated only for their direct costs, but the project team have strong realization that the motivation would have been stronger if they were compensated for their time too.

IF THERE ARE APPROACHES TO MITIGATE DROP OUTS



Picture 16 | Community session with stakeholders at Karnali province

One of the risks identified in the beginning of the project was youth champions' drop out. Hence, Visible Impact recruited five youth per province and that proved to be effective because some of the youth dropped out for jobs or further education. This approach allowed the learning and networks to be intact and handovers to be smooth even if one champion dropped out.

IF THE YOUTH ARE ALREADY ENGAGED IN THE COMMUNITY

The young people who did not have any prior affiliation with any organization struggled more to coordinate activities compared to those who already had engagement in the community. Recruiting social champions who are already affiliated and have some experience is essential to ensure that the rapport building time is shortened, and project activities can pick up quickly.

WE ARE PROUD THAT

YAAY raised the discussion on safe abortion that were led by young people. Communities where abortion was highly stigmatized saw people eventually starting to discuss on safe abortion. We now have 35 youth champions all over the country, who have been sensitized for life and will continue advocating even after the project closure. These young people have not only been discussing on this, but are also leading change. They are being invited by the government to design programs and allocate budgets on safe abortion.

Often, abortion remains a small chapter in “Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights” which is not discussed out openly, but we have developed important resources which focuses on unleashing the capacity of young people to speak about abortion from a rights-based approach including advocating at the provincial and local levels about it.

Overall, the policy discussions have shifted to the grassroots. Collaborations are being done on the ground, and provinces are including youth friendly SRHR and abortion in their policies and programs.

- THE PROJECT TEAM

SOME HIGHLIGHTS

"It is a much needed topic to discuss among men as men should be equally aware and informed about safe abortion."

- Student from health background

"We had some knowledge on safe abortion but this session helped us refresh our knowledge."

- School Students

We are not provided any information on abortion or contraception in our classrooms. These sessions helped us understand different aspects of safe abortion, which we were unaware of.

- Students of one of the session

"It is good to have such program once in a while. These information should be shared among every women in every locality through organization of such programs."

- Student of Grade XI

"A lot of NGO representatives come to our school and conduct sessions but most of them do not teach us clearly. There are very few like you who help us understand and learn."

- School Students