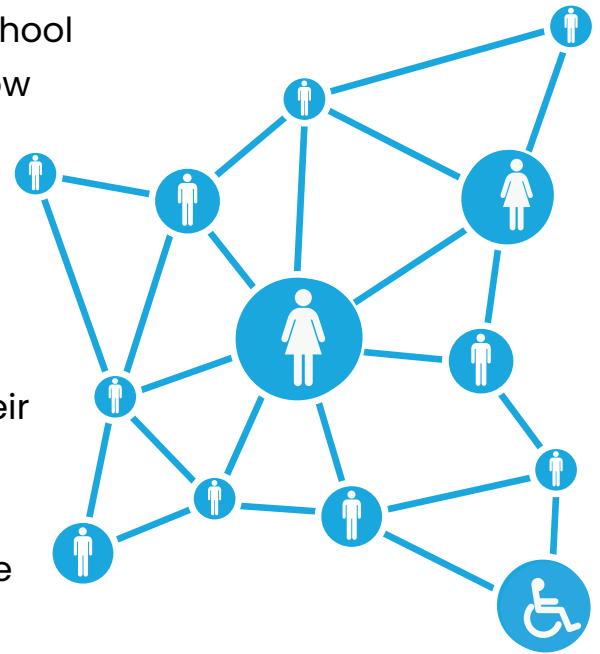# NETWORKED IMPROVEMENT COMMUNITIES FOR SCHOOL LEADERS TOWARDS EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Digital Learning Research Lab
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ABOUT THE PROJECT

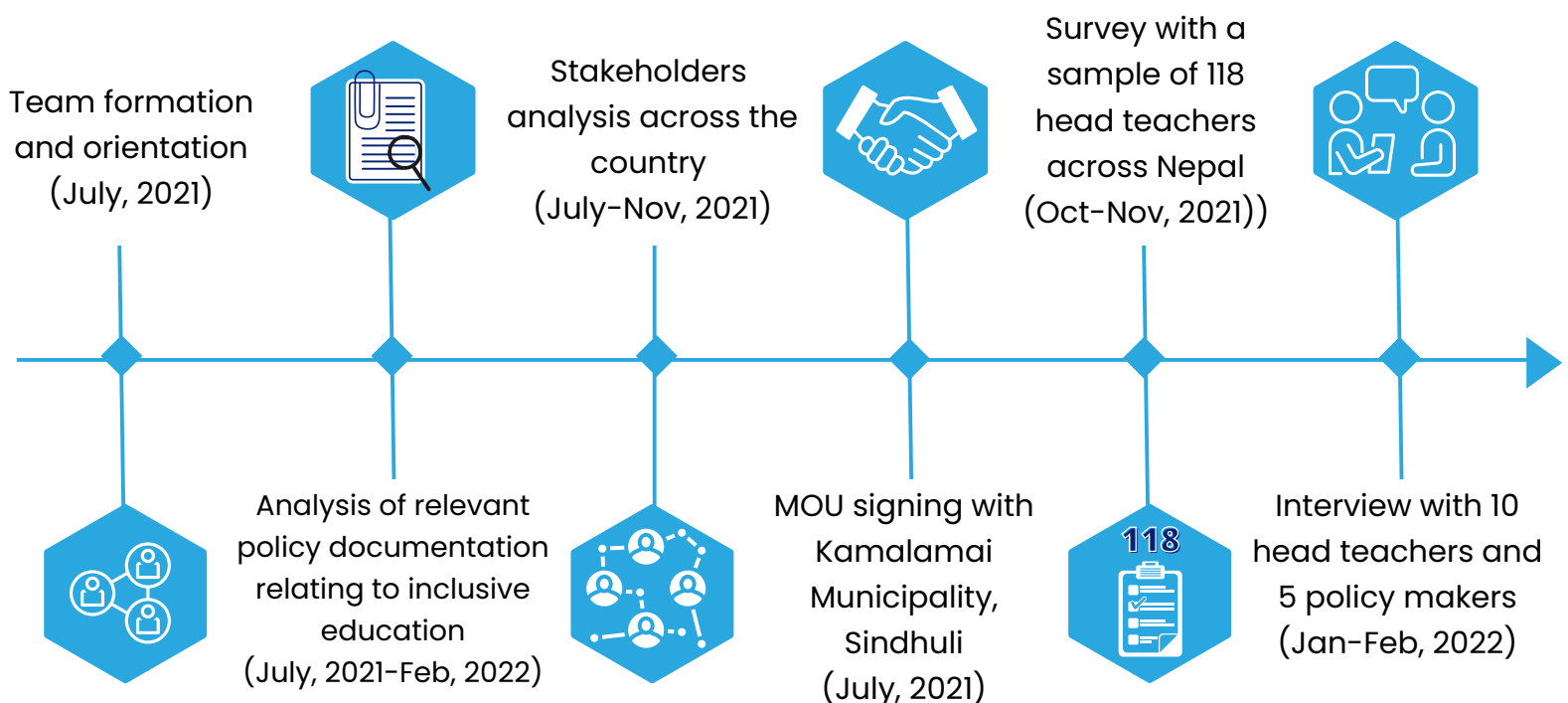The project, Networked Improvement Communities for School Leaders Towards Equity and Inclusion, seeks to explore how networks for school leaders - Networked Learning Communities (NICs), underpinned by an open learning platform, can be harnessed as a system-wide scalable method for building school leaders' capabilities to bring about sustainable changes in school practices which address inequalities in student access and learning in their institutions. The ambition is that through working collaboratively on small experiments to tackle 'micro problems' of inclusion, school leaders are able to increase their agency to bring about improvements in education equity. The project works with partners in three countries in South Asia: Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Nepal.

PROGRESS SO FAR (JULY 2021-FEB 2022)

Team formation and orientation (July, 2021)

Stakeholders analysis across the country (July-Nov, 2021)

Survey with a sample of 118 head teachers across Nepal (Oct-Nov, 2021))

Analysis of relevant policy documentation relating to inclusive education (July, 2021-Feb, 2022)

MOU signing with Kamalamai Municipality, Sindhuli (July, 2021)

Interview with 10 head teachers and 5 policy makers (Jan-Feb, 2022)

## PLANS AND POLICIES MENTIONING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN NEPAL

- Children's Act 1992
- Consolidated Equity Strategy 2014
- Constitution of Nepal 2015
- Disability Rights Act 2017
- Disabled Protection and Welfare Act 1982
- Education Act 1971 (Seventh Amendment)
- Free and Compulsory Education Act Nepal 2018
- Gender Equity Act 2006
- Inclusive Education Policy for Persons with Disabilities 2017
- National Human Rights Action Plan 2010-2013
- Safe School Policy 2017

- National Plan of Action for Children 2004-2015
- National Policy and Plan of Action on Disability 2006
- School Sector Reform Plan 2009–2015
- Science, Technology and Innovation Policy 2020
- Special Education Policy 1996
- Education Master Plan 2013–2017
- 15th Periodic Plan 2019/20-2023/24
- School Education Sector Plan 2021- 2030
- School Sector Development Plan 2016-2023

GAPS BETWEEN POLICIES AND GROUND REALITY FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

Numerous plans and policies but lack of information
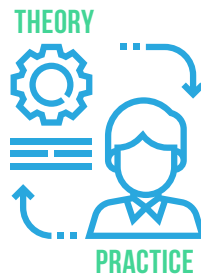
Feeble practice and lack of skills to bring theory into practice

Lack of preparedness & insufficient infrastructure

Spelled out issue but no targeted intervention

Inclusion & participation regarded as mere tokenism

Absence of M&E causing difficulty in assessment of actual (present) situation

SCHOOL LEADERS

The Education Act (7th and 8th amendment) and subsequent regulation (Education Regulation, 2059) have defined 31 different functions, duties and powers for school Head-teachers. These responsibilities are summed up here in three points:

- Goal setting through preparation of school's yearly, half-yearly, and monthly school plans and programs

- Building school culture by maintaining cooperation among teachers, students, and parents, and ensuring a respectful, ethical and disciplined school environment

- Teacher support through selecting & recommending teachers to the local government for training programs, assigning jobs and responsibilities to teachers and staff

INITIAL FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY WITH HEAD TEACHERS

12.7%
head teachers use a basic phone with no web browser
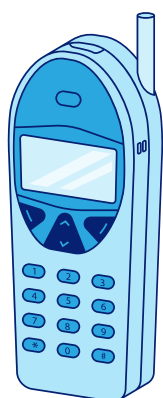
Usage of digital tools	Everyday	Less than 3 days	More than 3 days	Never
WhatsApp	77.97%	6.78%	11.02%	4.24%
Google docs	18.64%	22.88%	24.58%	33.90%
Powerpoint	23.73%	20.34%	20.34%	35.59%

Table 1. Usage of digital tools (per week) by head teachers

No active internet in 30.5% schools

Interaction between head teachers increased during COVID pandemic

- Connectivity issue
- Workload pressure
- Other (lack of ICT knowledge or opportunity, less effective training)
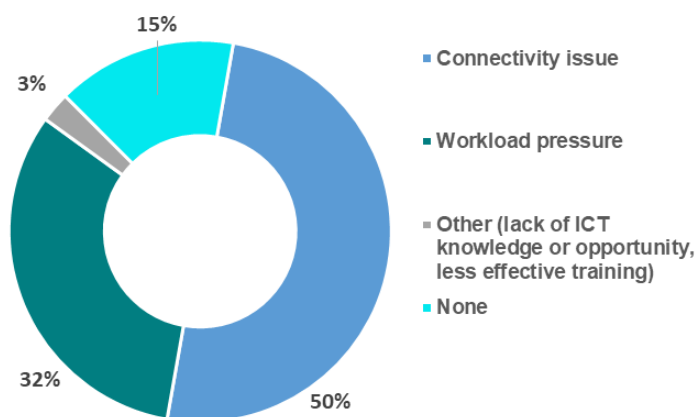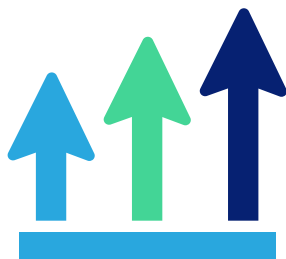- None

15%
3%
50%
32%

Fig 1. Factors that could prevent HT's participation in online course in the future

INITIAL FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY WITH HEAD TEACHERS

Attitudes & values towards inclusion

- All students are treated equally in terms of age, gender, caste, ethnicity, religion and abilities.
- All HTs believe special priority/ attention should be given to differently-abled children.
- Nearly all HTs believe all children should be in school but some believe there should be separate schools, for example, for street children.
- All want to operate classes for Children with Disabilities (CWDs) (deaf was most stated), but have absence in skilled manpower.

Leadership Actions

DEMONSTRATED THROUGH
- Lead in School Management Committee(SMC) or Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
- Conducted parents awareness programs
- Designed & implemented scholarship schemes
- Lead collaborations across national & international agencies
- Supervised skill development programs
- Introduced disability-friendly classrooms.
- Implemented counseling trainings
- Conducted campaigns & schemes to encourage enrolment

CONSTRAINTS
- Less decision-making power
- Need permission from SMC for collaboration
- Require further capacity strengthening

Head Teachers (HTs)
(aggregate findings from 10 interviews)

ICT use & skills

- Almost all HTs use basic ICT tools for management and administrative purposes while only some use them for teaching-learning (in science and math subjects).
- More than half have reported using Integrated Educational Management Information System (IEMIS).
- A few said they use Center for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD) virtual classes.
- All HTs used online platforms (Google Meet & Zoom) extensively during pandemic.
- Most HTs joined Messenger group chat with other head teachers.
- A few HTs use CUG sim card for free calls and internet services.

Leadership Behavior

- Conducted classroom observation & some provided detailed feedback after the observations
- Created log books to monitor daily activities in the school
- Initiated trainings for teachers in management, accounting , evidence-based teaching as well as psycho-social counseling
- Collaborated with local government, NGOs and INGOs   to provide aid to the needy students   (i.e. uniform, bags, meals, sanitation kits)

INITIAL FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY WITH HEAD TEACHERS

Disadvantaged student group	None	Less than 10%	More than 10%
Children with Disabilities (CWD)	38.14%	57.63%	4.24%
Dalits	12.71%	44.92%	42.37%
From labor class families	20.34%	38.14%	41.53%
From minority groups	31.36%	41.53%	27.12%
Janajaati	5.93%	10.17%	83.90%
Nomadic Children	75.42%	19.49%	5.08%
Orphans	12.71%	72.03%	15.25%
Poor backgroud	4.24%	32.20%	63.56%
Refugee Children	94.07%	3.39%	2.54%
Street children	86.44%	9.32%	4.24%

Table 2. Enrollment status of disadvantaged student groups
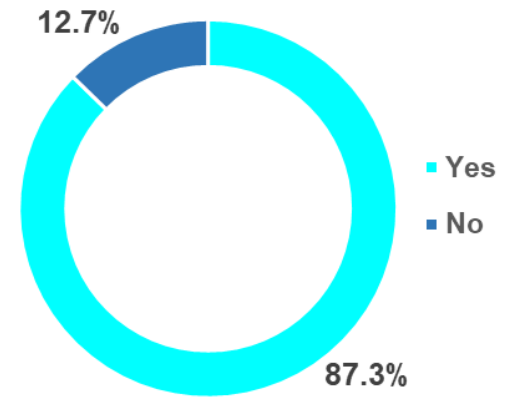

12.7%
87.3%
- Yes
- No

Fig 2. Does your school's SIP (School Improvement Plan) and SDP (School Development Proposal) ensure issues of inclusion and equity?
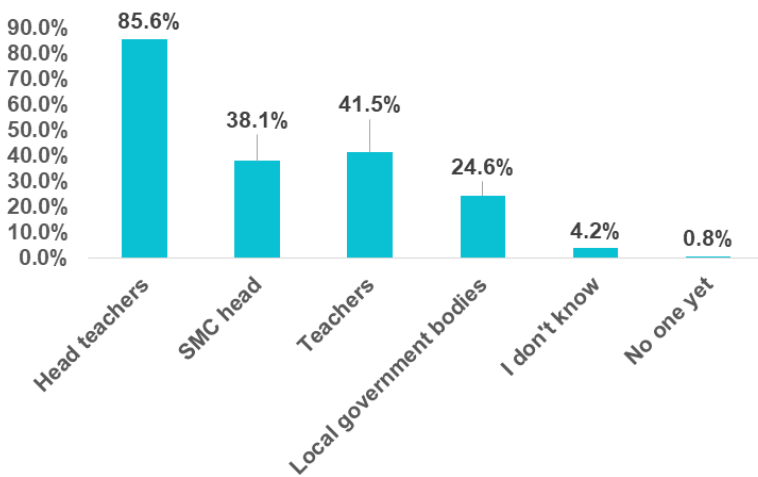

Fig 3. Who has formal responsibility for inclusion at your school? (multiple choice)

60.2% head teachers have never attended any professional development courses or training on inclusion

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DESIGNING A COURSE FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

Resources that provide information/knowledge on inclusive educational policies with both online and offline versions

Content that focuses on skill development, leadership as well as data management & usage

Content that aids head teachers to develop/ help other teachers develop skills that promote inclusion

Course focusing on practical approaches that head teachers can perform with their existing time constraint
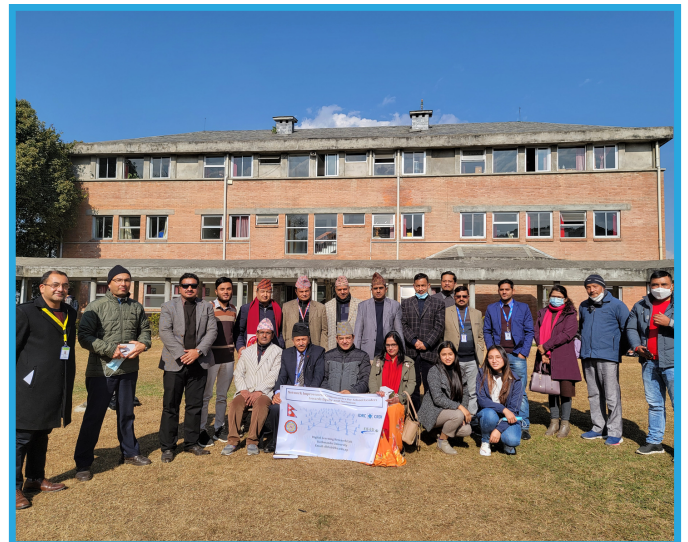
GALLERY

MOU Signing between Kathmandu University and Kamalamai Municipality, Sindhuli (16 July,2021)

Stakeholder Meeting at Kamalamai Municipality, Sindhuli (13-15 Aug, 2021)

Sharing Project Overview to headteachers of Janakpur (Oct, 2021)

Group photo after stakeholder meeting at Kathmandu University (24 Dec, 2021)

Sharing Project Overview to Head Teachers at Education Training Centre, Dhulikhel (8 Apr, 2022)