



SAATHI TEACHERS PROGRAMME

Primary **Must Not** Be Secondary

Newsletter

April - July 2026



Rehan is 7 years old. He sits in a classroom in Gunsā, a remote village in Sindhupalchok. He processes the world differently. In another time, another system, he would have been invisible — a statistic in a report no one reads.

[Read more inside...](#)

Saathi Teachers Programme @ 2026, Rehan & Diya, Gunsā

Globally, 53% of 10-year-olds in low- and middle-income countries cannot read and understand a simple story. **The World Bank calls this "Learning Poverty."**

In Nepal, national assessments show that only 42% of Grade 3 students can read Grade 1-level text. In rural government schools, that figure drops even further. ([Source: NASA](#)).

The stark disparity in learning outcomes between public and private schools compels us to focus on primary rural public education. This is not a failure of children; it is a failure of systems that treat primary education as secondary.

This publication celebrates the teachers who continue to learn, the communities that continue to believe, and the children who remind us every day why primary education deserves our greatest attention.

STORIES

IMPACT

APPROACHES

“For many children, the story of falling behind does not begin in secondary school. It begins much earlier.

It begins when a child moves up a grade despite struggling to read — rote-learning numbers rather than understanding them. These early years shape far more than academic achievement. They shape confidence, communication, curiosity, creativity and a child's belief in their own potential as well as developing love and joy for learning”

-Jimmy Lama, Co-Founder and Director, HELP

At Saathi Teachers Programme (STP), the belief **“Primary must not be secondary”** has guided our work since the beginning.



QUARTER AT A GLANCE

29

Saathi Teachers
Across Programme

1,000+

Children Reached
Annually

12

Schools Supported
Across 2 Districts

Saathi Teachers Programme @ 2026, Tanahun

KEY PROGRAMME UPDATES FEATURING IN THIS NEWSLETTER

- 7th Cohort Saathi Teachers' Journey Begins in their communities
- Leadership from within: Strengthened Team
- Fully funded partnership with Bandipur Rural Municipality
- Aasha ko Dhaago (Thread of Hope) for the women of change: A CAP initiative
- Findings of the Baseline Survey 2026 - Bandipur RM & Panchpokhari Thangpal RM
- Regular classroom observation and what they unfold
- Challenges and achievements in the classrooms and communities: 1st Quarterly Meet-up 2026

Featuring stories on why what we do matters, classroom observation insights, and more.



The 7th Cohort of

SAATHI TEACHERS BEGIN THEIR CLASSROOM JOURNEY

In April, our 7th cohort of Saathi Teachers embarked on their school placements. Following an intensive 24-day residential training focused on primary education frameworks, curriculum guidelines, and practical teaching strategies, here are the 10 Saathi Teachers of the newest cohort. They join the 18 already existing Saathi Teachers in the field.



Deepa Gharti Magar
Rolpa, Lumbini
Shree Shanti Basic
School
Bandipur RM-02,
Tanahun



Sarita Kumari Chaudary
Dhangadi, Sudurpaschim
Shree Satkanyamati
Secondary School
Paanchpokhari Thangpal
RM-05, Sindhupalchok



Babita Tamang
Sindhupalchok, Bagmati
Shree Bhotenamlang
Secondary School
Paanchpokhari Thangpal
RM-07, Sindhupalchok



Niru Dhami
Darchula, Sudurpaschim
Shree Padma Basic
School
Bandipur RM-03,
Tanahun



Riva Adhikari
Jhapa, Koshi
Shree Golmeshwari Basic
School
Paanchpokhari Thangpal
RM-06, Sindhupalchok



Sijan Karki
Makwanpur, Hetauda
Shree Chhimkeshwari
Secondary School
Aanboo Khairani RM-04,
Tanahun



Sanjana Surkheta
Kathmandu, Bagmati
Shree Bhotenamlang
Secondary School
Paanchpokhari Thangpal
RM-07, Sindhupalchok



Sabina Tiruwa
Melamchi,
Sindhupalchok
Shree Satkanyamati
Secondary School
Paanchpokhari Thangpal
RM-05, Sindhupalchok



Samita Thokar
Makwanpur, Bagmati
Shree Bhotenamlang
Secondary School
Paanchpokhari Thangpal
RM-07, Sindhupalchok



Sarita Dulal
Sindhupalchok, Bagmati
Shree Satkanyamati
Secondary School
Paanchpokhari Thangpal
RM, Sindhupalchok

KEY UPDATES FROM THIS QUARTER

As our new saathi teachers step into their classrooms, our broader journey continues—here are the key updates, highlights, and community stories that defined this past quarter.

Leadership from Within:

ALUMNI JOIN THE CORE TEAM



Sneha Shrestha
STP Primary Schools Coordinator



Roman Shrestha
Teachers Development Coordinator

Having served as 5th Cohort Saathi Teachers in Tripurasundari, Sindhupalchok, two alumni — **Mrs Sneha Shrestha** and **Mr Roman Shrestha** — have joined the Saathi Teachers Programme's core team.

Both bring invaluable classroom experience to their new leadership roles.

Their paths offer among the clearest evidence the programme has that its own graduates become its strongest next hires.

CO-FUNDING WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Lasting educational reform begins when the local government takes full and sustained ownership of the education of its youngest learners. In this spirit, **Bandipur Rural Municipality** has formed a partnership with HELP to launch the Saathi Teachers Programme, placing **Saathi Teachers in two schools: Shree Shanti Basic School, Parche and Shree Padma Basic School, Sukaura.**

Saathi Teachers do not replace local educators; they walk alongside them while municipalities invest directly in their presence.



Saathi Teachers Programme 2026 @ Bandipur RM

Aasha Ko Dhaago (THREAD OF HOPE)



Saathi Teachers Programme @ 2026 - Aasha Ko Dhaago (CAP) Project

The **Community Action Project (CAP)** is an initiative within the Saathi Teachers Programme that began in **2022**, led by 4th Cohort Saathi Teachers **Sunita Sherchan** and **Sanjita Shrestha**, with a focus on Parenting Education. This initiative addresses the educational needs of children beyond classroom walls and helps communities navigate the challenges they face. Carried forward by successive cohorts, it continues into 2026.

In **Gunsa**, 6th Cohort Saathi Teachers Joshana and Diya are sustaining this spirit through "**Aasha Ko Dhaago / Thread of Hope**" — a sewing training initiative launched on 11 June 2026.

Led by trainer **Mr Indra Pariyar**, the six-month programme equips 15 local women with sewing skills. Upon completing the training, each participant will receive her own sewing set, transforming their craftsmanship into a sustainable livelihood.

This project is generously funded by **AMF** through **Adventure Aid**. We are deeply grateful for their support.

Woven into the Mission: STORY OF THE GIRL WHO CAME BACK

Name: Babita Tamang

Role: 7th Cohort Saathi Teacher (Grade Teaching)

Placement: Shree Bhotenamlang Secondary School

Background: B.Ed. in Mathematics



Saathi Teachers Programme @ 2026 - Saathi Teacher Diya

Saathi Teachers weave connections not just across classrooms and communities, but within the very fabric of their own lives — and of our organisation as a whole.

For Babita Tamang, that connection took over a decade to come full circle.

When she was a 13-year-old Grade 9 student in Melamchi-08, she received a simple red **school bag** through the School in a Bag programme. It was, at the time, just a bag. She could never have imagined that thirteen years later, that same organisation would draw her back.

Her path was neither immediate nor effortless. Driven by a deep commitment to rural education, Babita applied to the Saathi Teachers Programme not once, not twice, but three times. On her third attempt, her persistence paid off.

Now holding a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics, Babita sits on the other side of the classroom at Shree Bhotenamlang Secondary School — teaching foundational mathematics to young learners and standing as living proof to her students of where education can take them.

Once, we placed a bag in her hands. Today, she returns with a heart full of purpose, giving back tenfold.

THE LAUNCH OF GRADE TEACHING MODALITY



Replacing fragmented subject rotations, a single teacher now takes complete ownership of a grade.

To ensure this shift truly transforms the primary wing, five Saathi Teachers in Gunsa and four in Bhotenamlang are now putting this model into practice—guided and mentored by a dedicated Primary Schools Coordinator, Sneha Shrestha.

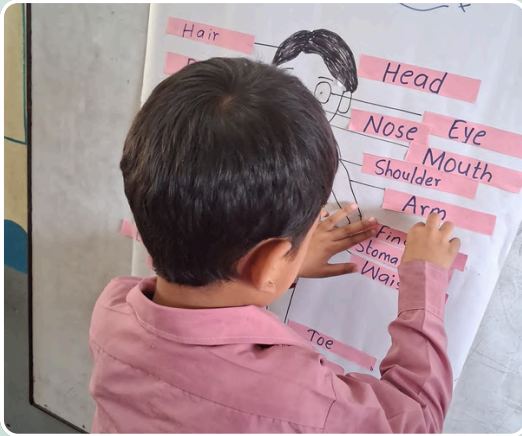
A child in Grade 2 might see four different teachers a day. Who truly knows that child? Who tracks their progress over time? Who notices when they stop trying? This fragmented system means that subtle learning gaps, neurodivergent behaviours, and emotional distress can go undetected.

To address larger classroom sizes and deepen student-teacher relationships, STP piloted Grade Teaching at Shree Satkanyamati Secondary School (Gunsa) and Shree Bhotenamlang Secondary School. To support this transition, we partnered with the Center for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD) to deliver an intensive four-day residential workshop on the national curriculum for over 20 participating teachers.

GRADE TEACHING ENHANCEMENTS

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual Learning Portfolios for students Tracks long-term student growth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous Assessment System (CAS) Aligned with municipal evaluations |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tailored Student Support Targets specific learning gaps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated Practical Pedagogy Activity-based structured lesson plans |

CLASSROOM STORY: DIYA & REHAN



With regular support from STP Schools Coordinator Sneha Shrestha, meaningful progress is continuously reshaping classrooms. Sneha shares this story from Gunsá:

In Grade 2 at Gunsá, Saathi Teacher Diya Tamang works alongside Rehan, a young student who processes the world differently. Through individualised learning strategies under the Grade Teaching approach, Diya has created a supportive environment tailored to Rehan's unique learning style — one that keeps him engaged with his peers rather than left behind.

This is not simply a heartwarming anecdote. It is proof of what happens when a child is met with patience instead of policy.

Seven-year-old Rehan is bright and academically capable, but his high energy often created friction in the classroom. Under a standard subject-rotation system, his lively nature was easily misconstrued as disruption, leaving him at risk of falling behind.



Drawing on her training in child psychology and active pedagogy, Diya looked past the behaviour to the child behind it. Through targeted one-on-one sessions, she redirected Rehan's restless energy into focused discovery — turning a classroom challenge into a breakthrough.

Where there was once friction, there is now leadership. Rehan began staying after school hours to build games, flashcards, and quizzes alongside Diya for his classmates. Now, instead of drifting away in thought, he engages in class and voluntarily asks for extra homework.

"These changes might seem small, but to me, they mean a thousand times more."

-Diya Tamang, Saathi Teacher (6th Cohort)

BASELINE LITERACY & NUMERACY ASSESSMENTS



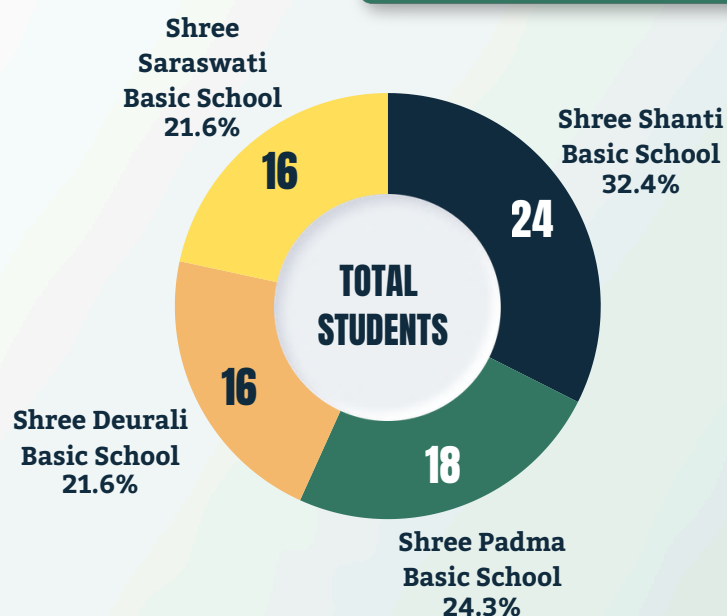
Led by **Evaluation, Impact, and Documentation Officer Raj Karki** alongside the Saathi Team, we completed baseline assessments across Grades 1 to 5. Using **KoboToolBox** for digital data collection, collecting socio-demographic profiles and the **ASER tool** to evaluate literacy, and numeracy skills, the assessments covered two key regions: Sindhupalchok and Tanahun.

NEW BASELINE: BANDIPUR, TANAHUN



In May, we assessed the **numeracy and literacy skills of 74 students** across four schools in Bandipur Rural Municipality to establish a baseline as our Saathi Teachers begin working there. Our Saathi Teachers are placed in two of these schools and will teach for the next two years. The remaining two schools will serve as control schools, enabling us to assess and compare the programme's effectiveness in the years ahead. Currently, the literacy and numeracy skills of students in both groups are at comparable levels.

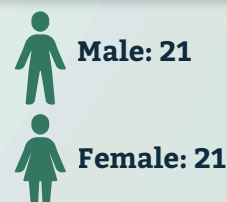
74 SURVEYED IN BANDIPUR



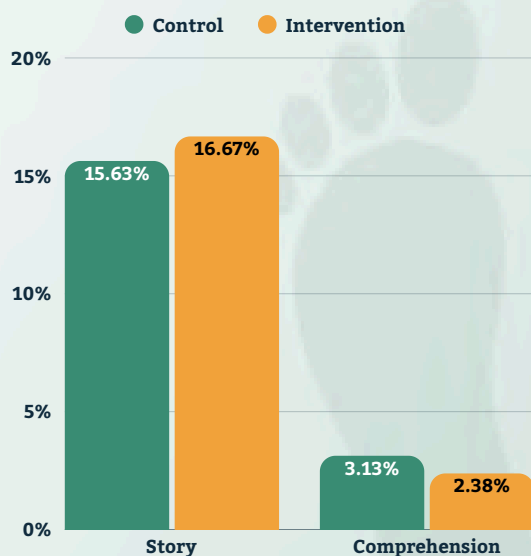
CONTROL SCHOOL: 32



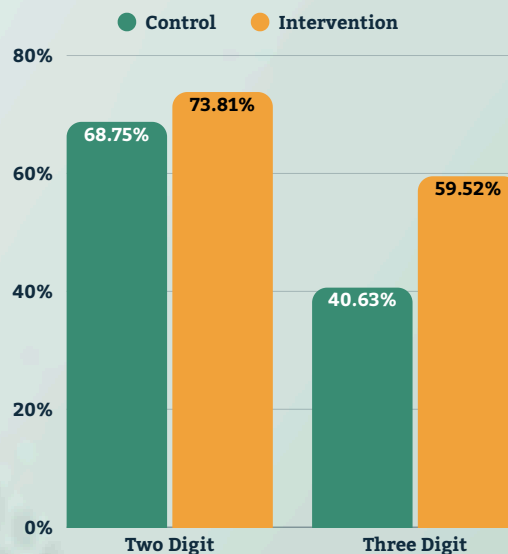
INTERVENTION SCHOOL: 42



English Subject - Overall



Math Subject - Overall



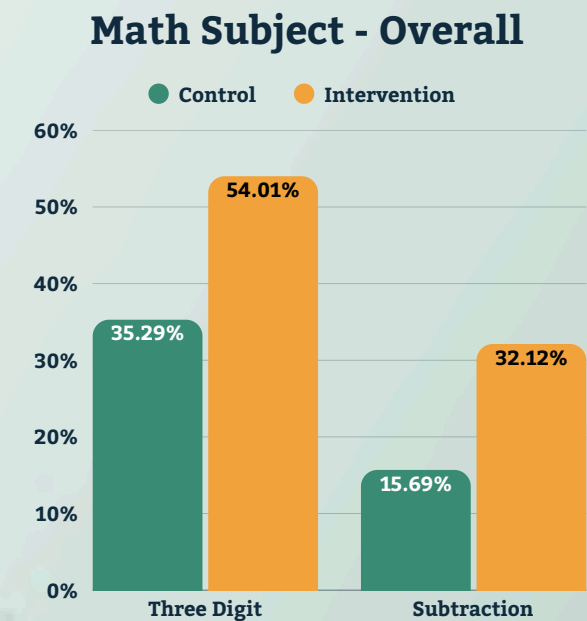
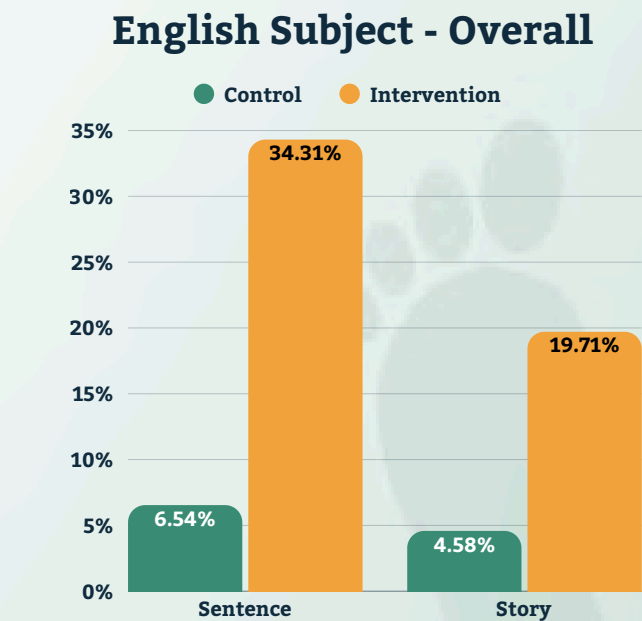
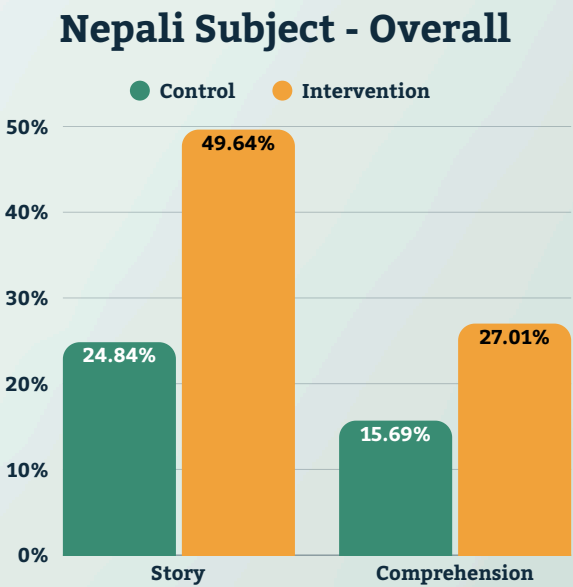
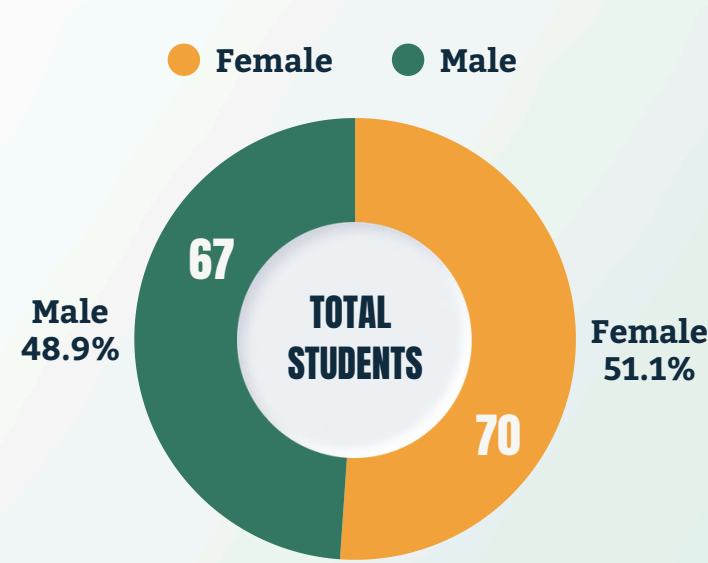
As shown in the graphs, approximately **16%** of students in both the control and intervention schools are able to read a short English story, while around **3%** in each group can comprehend the story. For numeracy, a similar proportion of students in both groups can identify two-digit and three-digit numbers (**~70% and ~50% respectively**). These results will provide a sound basis for comparing progress between control and intervention schools in the years to come.

TWO YEARS ON: SATKANYAMATI'S NUMBERS ARE MOVING

In 2024, HELP assessed the literacy and numeracy skills of students in Classes 1 to 5 at Shree Satkanyamati Secondary School in Sindhupalchok. This year, we returned to assess the same indicators. The results tell a genuinely encouraging story, with double-digit improvements across several literacy and numeracy measures.

The data were collected from 137 students (M: 67, F: 70) and graphs below show promising results.

137 STUDENTS SURVEYED



As shown in the graphs above, compared to **2024**, around **25%** more students are able to read a short Nepali story, whereas around **11%** more students are able to comprehend that story in 2026. In the case of English language, around **28%** more students are able to read a simple English sentence, whereas around **15%** more students are able to read a short English story. A similar trend appears in numeracy skills as well, compared to **2024**, around **19%** more students are able to identify three digit numbers whereas around **16%** more students are able to perform subtraction in **2026**.

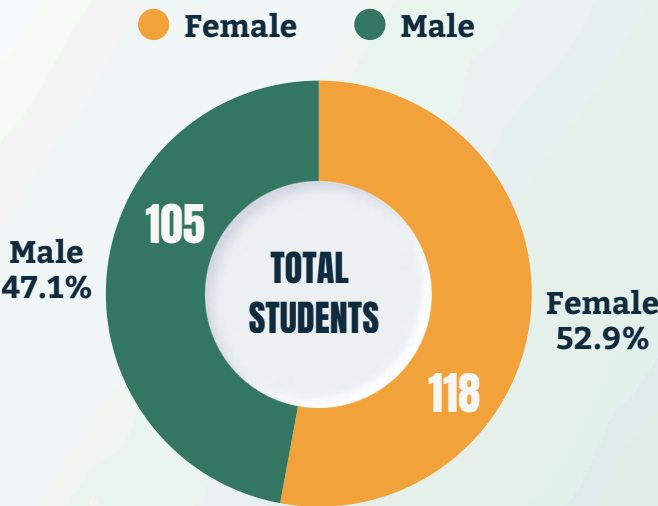
BHOTENAMLANG: A NEW APPROACH, A NEW BASELINE

This year, we extended Grade Teaching support to Shree Bhotenamlang Secondary School. Our Saathi Teachers are currently working as Grade Teachers in Classes 1 to 3. Results will emerge in the years ahead, and this year's data will serve as the baseline against which the effectiveness of Grade Teaching is measured.

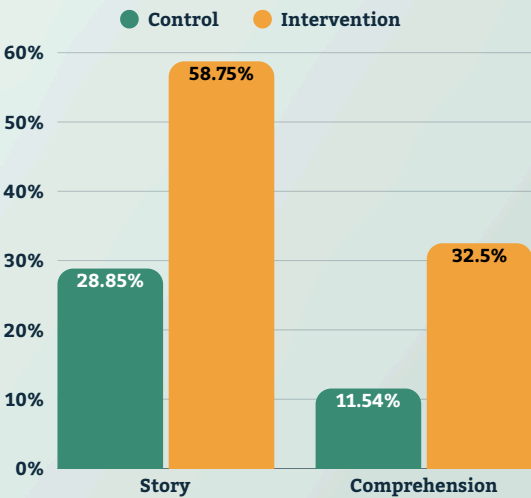


With the exception of Class 1 data, literacy and numeracy skills in Classes 2 and 3 have shown improvement. The decline in Class 1 results is likely because the 2026 survey was conducted at the start of the academic year, before Saathi Teachers' work had time to take effect. This challenges us to refine our approaches and strengthen support for foundational learning from the very first weeks of school.

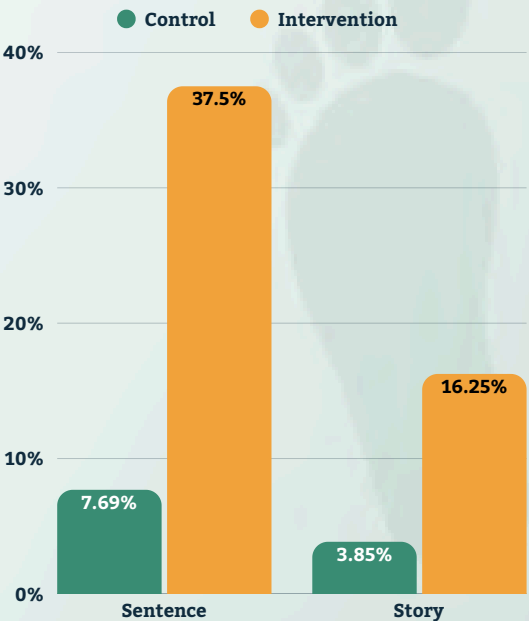
223 STUDENTS SURVEYED



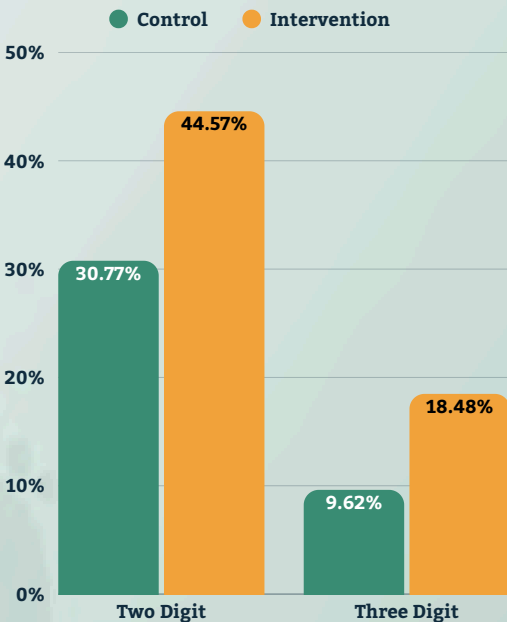
Nepali Subject - Grade 3



English Subject - Grade 3



Math Subject - Grade 2



The graphs above show that compared to 2024, more students studying in class 2 and 3 have improved their literacy and numeracy skills in 2026.

INSIDE THE CLASSROOM & COMMUNITY

Choosing to Stay for Year Three

Why three dedicated Saathi Teachers chose to extend their service into a third year:

"Over two years, I have built relationships that matter. I have seen growth that is real. I want to keep encouraging these students, supporting their dreams, and creating a space where they feel valued."

Bijay's ambition for his students goes much deeper. The two years only just established the foundation.



Bijay Baidhakota
Shree Satkanyadevi
Primary School, Bhotang



Priyanka Pandey
(Shree Shanti Basic School,
Parche)

"I am completing my bachelor's degree while working closely with the rural government. This isn't just a job, it's where I'm learning to lead, communicate, and create better classrooms."

Priyanka sees her third year as an invaluable opportunity, not just for her students, but to advance her own leadership journey.

"Learning alongside these students gives me energy. Their trust made it impossible to leave. This year, I'm focused on practical life skills, discipline, and confidence. The things that last beyond exams."

Some places make a home in our hearts. For Umesh, his teaching journey has become a home he built away from home.



Umesh Adhikari
(Shree Satkanyadevi Primary
School, Bhotang)

We are immensely proud of our Saathi Teachers—their dedication inspires us, and as they enter their third year, we are giving our absolute all to support them every step of the way.

World Environment Day Celebration by SAATHI TEACHERS

On **5 June**, Saathi Teachers across all clusters facilitated student-led activities to mark **World Environment Day**. Activities included school clean-ups, waste management demonstrations, tree-planting initiatives, and creative drawing and essay sessions designed to nurture ecological awareness and community responsibility among primary students.



CELEBRATING 14 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP WITH GUNSA



A special gathering at Shree Satkanyamati Secondary School, Gunsa brought together HELP representatives, the founder, newly arrived Saathi Teachers, School Management Committee members, and the local community — building collective ownership and clarifying shared goals for the academic year. It was a fitting celebration of a partnership now entering its fifteenth year.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS:

Our Programme Coordinators and Teacher Development Coordinators (TDCs) established regular classroom monitoring schedules across key partner schools to support both newly placed and returning cohort Saathi Teachers:

1. Tanahun District



Visits focused on early-stage integration, lesson delivery, alignment with local municipal curricula, and how effectively teachers were applying strategies gained during their 24-day pre-placement Saathi School training.

Targeted observation visits across 6 schools were carried out by TDCs Safina Maharjan and Roman Shrestha. These served as the first official observations for Cohort 7 teachers, alongside regular monitoring rounds for Cohorts 5 and 6.



2. Sindhupalchok District

Regular classroom observations were conducted by **Deputy Programme Coordinator Aruna Shrestha** and **Primary Schools Coordinator Sneha Shrestha** — marking the first official observations for Cohort 7 since placement.



Key highlights included witnessing the Grade Teaching modality flourishing at Shree Satkanyamati Secondary School (Gunsa) and Shree Bhotenamlang Secondary School, and evaluating overall teaching practice, feedback adherence, and active student engagement.

To extend learning beyond textbooks, we facilitated attendance for two workshops in June: "Empowering Classrooms" (8 June) for four Saathi Teachers, and "Progressive Assessment for Empowering Learning in Primary Grades" (7 June) for three core team members, to strengthen strategies across all clusters.

A SAATHI TEACHER'S FORMULA: TEACHING BEYOND THE CURRICULUM

On an ordinary morning at Shree Bachhalamai Basic School, learning wasn't found in textbooks. It was simmering in a massive iron pot over an open flame. When an extra pair of hands was needed to prepare the midday meal, **Saathi Teacher Anmol Tamang** stepped right in — rolling up his sleeves to stir lunch for his students.



In moments like these, teaching transcends the curriculum. Our Saathi Teachers do whatever it takes to ensure a child feels nourished, supported, and ready to learn.

Seeing their teacher cook and serve their lunch brought smiles, warmth, and a renewed sense of trust to the classroom that afternoon. True educational leadership is rooted in service, community, and care.

CLUSTER HIGHLIGHT: TUBU 2026 (TUNING-UP & BUILDING-UP)

Growth happens when educators learn together. Our **Lungdaar cluster** of Panchpokhari Thangapal successfully hosted its first **TuBu** (Tuning-Up & Building-Up) professional learning session for 2026, bringing together 17 Saathi teachers for a day of collaboration.

Hosted by Saathi Teachers **Aavaash Sunuwar** and **Anmol Tamang** at Shree Bachhalamai School in Lekharka and anchored in the **SLP (Share, Learn, and Plan)** model, the gathering was a vital space to **reconnect, reflect, and rejuvenate**.

Through enriched discussions on classroom challenges, expert guidance from TDCs, and interactive games that strengthened team bonding, Saathi teachers left re-energised and ready to bring joyful, strategic learning back to their schools.



We look forward to hosting upcoming TuBu sessions across our other clusters and will share further updates in our next newsletter and on our official social media channels.

FIRST QUARTERLY MEET-UP 2026

Between **17 and 19 July 2026**, 29 Saathi Teachers gathered at the GAN Learning Centre for a three-day meet-up.

Day 1 opened with reflective sharing circles where teachers openly discussed real-world classroom and community challenges, from navigating severe baseline learning gaps and community scepticism about noise in interactive lessons to managing safety and behavioural issues.

[Read more on 2083-Quarterly Training Report].



Saathi Teachers Programme @ 2026 First Quarterly Meet-up

The day culminated in a visit to the **Mathematics Lab at Hilltown School in Kirtipur**, which featured an interactive session hosted by **Prof. Dr Hira Bahadur Maharjan, Mr Rajan Tendulkar, and Mr Ramesh Prasad Awasthi.**



Saathi Teachers Programme @ 2026 at Hilltown School, Kirtipur

Day 2 focused on creative Math and English pedagogy led by **Prof. Laxman Luitel and Mrs Anupama Mukhia**, alongside an empowering session with **Mr Jigme Sherpa**, who inspired teachers to realise that leadership begins by taking initiative right where they stand.



Saathi Teachers Programme @ 2026 w/ Mr. Laxman Luitel



Saathi Teachers Programme @ 2026 w/ Mr. Jigme Sherpa

Day 3 delivered practical workshops on **Positive Behaviour Management** with **Ms Prema Budhathoki** and **multi-grade teaching** with **Ms Meena Sharma and Ms Binita Shakya**. An insightful session on the **Continuous Assessment System (CAS)** by expert trainer **Mr Medin Lamichhane**, who urged teachers to view assessment as an ongoing, supportive process tracking each child's individual growth.

*[This quarterly training was organised in addition to the initial Saathi School Training provided to teachers prior to their school placements, which you can read more about in **the 2082 Saathi School Report**]*

The gathering concluded joyfully with a World Cup Football Quiz and live match screening, celebrating the hard work of our Saathi teachers and core organisers **Sujit Rai, Aruna Shrestha, Safina Maharjan, Roman Shrestha, and Sneha Shrestha.**



Saathi Teachers Programme @ 2026 w/ Mrs Prema Budhathoki



Saathi Teachers Programme @ 2026 - Sharing Circle



Saathi Teachers Programme @ 2026 w/ Mr Medin, Mrs. Meena & Mrs. Binita

LOOKING AHEAD

Following Cohort 7's placement, we look forward to welcoming incoming CU volunteers to work alongside our Saathi Teachers. We also anticipate conducting more classroom observations, hosting TuBu reflection sessions, and sharing more stories from our teachers as we continue our shared work.

1. **Weekly Sharing:** Continuing regular peer reflection and collaborative problem-solving.
2. **Classroom Observations:** Conducting planned observations to monitor teaching practices and provide targeted feedback.
3. **Individualised Students Portfolio:** Designing and distributing portfolio holder files to track and document individual learning progress across our partner schools.
4. **Follow-up Training for the Grade Teaching Modality**
5. **Impact Survey in Anbhukhaireni:** Evaluating foundational literacy and numeracy levels among Saathi students.
6. **Training for Headteachers in partner schools:** Following success to our previous Headteacher training session, the next one has been scheduled for the upcoming quarter.
7. **Mid-Year Learning Gathering:** Reuniting Cohort 5th, 6th and 7th Saathi teachers for a shared reflection, learning, and collaboration
8. **Preparations for Impact Conference is Underway!**



"I had options to pursue various other opportunities, but the Saathi Teachers Programme gave me a real sense of purpose. It helped me understand what truly satisfies me: creating a lasting impact in education."

She brings a rich, multidisciplinary background to the classroom, ranging from serving as a Local Government Mentor with International IDEA and receiving WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) training to completing media training in radio journalism and content writing for national online platforms.



Sanjana Surkheta

7th Cohort Saathi Teacher

Grade Teaching at Shree Bhotenamlang Secondary School
MA Literature

SUPPORT OUR WORK!

With your support, we can continue placing dedicated Saathi Teachers in rural public schools, equipping young minds with foundational literacy and numeracy, and ensuring that primary education is never treated as secondary.



Your Donation

Make Your Donation Here

Your valuable contribution directly empowers rural classrooms and supports sustainable community development.

THANK YOU!

None of this would be possible without the trust of our communities, the dedication of our teachers and staff, the commitment of our municipal and funding partners, and everyone who believes in the power of education.

OUR GRATITUDE TO

International Partners



Local Government Partners



पाँचपोखरी थाङपाल
गाउँपालिका



आँबुखेनेनी
गाउँपालिका



बन्दिपुर
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