Save the Children

SLAM DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION REPORT

DEC 2021	Save the Children Norway

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Table of Contents

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

Executive Summary

From 2019-2021, a Task Team consisting of team members from Save the Children Norway, Save the Children Nepal, and Informed International embarked on a collaborative effort to develop and pilot a school leadership and management (SLaM) project model. This initiative (the SLaM Pilot) built upon the findings of Save the Children Norway's 2013-2017 *I'm Learning* pilot projects in Cambodia, Uganda, and Zimbabwe which found the importance of school leadership and management for achieving a quality learning environment. The initiative also fit within Save the Children's Quality Learning Framework (QLF), seeking to develop a project model that addresses Foundation 5: school leadership and management.

The SLaM Pilot, funded by Norad, had two main objectives:

1. Document the programming model and theory of change for improved school leadership and management that can be taken to scale, and
2. Develop technical capacity in Save the Children and document experiences from using Developmental Evaluation (DE) as an approach for research-based innovation and programme development.

This report captures the results and lessons learned of the SLaM Pilot which was led by the SLaM Task Team and carried out in partnership with 14 schools in the rural municipality of Dailekh district, located in Nepal's Karnali Province.

The development of the project model was guided by a Developmental Evaluation approach, a methodology pioneered by Michael Quinn Patton. Developmental Evaluation (DE) assists social innovators develop social change initiatives in complex or uncertain environments. DE originators liken their approach to the role of research & development in the private sector product development process because it facilitates real-time, or close to real-time, feedback to program staff thus facilitating a continuous development loop.[1] The Task Team had 4 team members focus on Developmental Evaluation, gathering data and feeding back that data into the Task Team for evidence-informed decision making.

From 2019-March 2020 the project carried out several visits, situation assessments, and workshops with school leaders to better understand the context of school leadership and develop project model interventions. This was done by collaboratively developing school leadership and management principles, identifying enabling factors and barriers, as well as reviewing potential interventions. Ultimately the team identified interventions that fell within three broad categories: leadership training, school governance, and communication for development.

Leadership training (called the Leadership Institute within the model) is based on a competency framework of 11 competencies spanning across 3 different domains: leading learning, effective management, and distributed leadership. The Leadership Institute consists of expert-led, peer, and self-directed learning activities to build leadership skills across the domains.

The school governance category of interventions aims to create a participatory approach to school self-assessment and school improvement planning. It also encourages schools to reflect upon

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[1] Developmental Evaluation. Better Evaluation (December 2021).
https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/developmental_evaluation

their effective school leadership by self-assessing on the SLaM principles rubric. Finally, schools had the opportunity to utilize and apply their effective management skills through a micro-grant application, implementation, and review process.

Communication for development is a set of interventions that aim to improve communication between school leaders and the broader school community (parents, community members) through interventions such as school message boards and parent teacher meetings. It also encourages sharing between schools, creating a support network for school leaders, through a virtual community of practice (V-COP).

The project aimed to launch these interventions in Q2 of 2020. Unfortunately, the global COVID-19 pandemic, right before the planned launch of interventions, closed schools within the province and prevented the majority of Task Team members from traveling to the areas. The period of Q2 and Q3 2020 were spent discussing ways that the SLaM project model should pivot within the environment of COVID. It was ultimately decided the project should not pivot greatly during the pandemic. In Q3 2020 Save the Children Norway reprioritized the interventions that were identified in the initial phase of the pilot. These reprioritized interventions would be phased for development and implementation considering the changed context. The decision was also made that there would be no more face-to-face Task Team meetings, due to the pandemic, and many of the implementation and developmental evaluation activities would rely heavily on Save the Children Nepal staff.

From Q2 2020 onward the Task Team had to take an approach of implementing interventions as possible given the pandemic (considering school opening schedules and the ability to gather people safely). At the end of Q3 and beginning of Q4 2020, the school message board and governance interventions were implemented. By 2021 the team was able to implement school self-assessments, school improvement planning, microgrants, and Leadership Institute interventions. After each intervention activity there was the opportunity to gather virtually to hold 'Developmental Evaluation Workshops' in which the team reviewed data, discussed reflections, and improved upon the intervention design.

Overall, the Task Team and programme participants reflected that the developmental evaluation approach was effective in establishing community buy-in and ensuring that the interventions were contextual, relevant, and meeting the needs of participants. It also enabled the programme team to pivot during the global pandemic – a very complex and uncertain time.

By the end of the Pilot in December 2021, most of the interventions had been implemented (with exception to the V-COP) but they had not been implemented for a full year, as intended. In addition, the phasing of interventions was haphazard (as a result of the pandemic), so the team did not have the ability to examine synergies across interventions nor to understand how interventions could support one another.

The SLaM project model is a promising intervention which has potential to greatly impact school learning environments. It is based on intentional collaboration with programme participants, co-creating a solution that works within the context. Given the challenges of the pandemic, further piloting and testing is required to refine the model and adapt it to a global context.

Chapter 1:
Introduction to SLaM Pilot Project

Introduction

This report summarizes the process that was undertaken during the development and pilot implementation of a School Leadership and Management (SLaM) project. In doing so, it identifies pivot points, key lessons learned, and discusses next steps for improving school leadership and management. The data presented in this report were collected through a Developmental Evaluation (DE) approach.

Background

From 2013 to 2017, Save the Children Norway piloted the Quality Learning Framework (QLF)-based project model, *I'm Learning*, in Cambodia, Uganda, and Zimbabwe with the aim of developing an effective programming model for improving the quality of learning environments (in line with the QLF framework) and supporting improvements in children's learning and development in school. A major finding in the project evaluation was that participatory school-based management and leadership was essential for achieving lasting school improvements. It was found that where school leadership and management was more effective, it acted as a driving force for change and improvement, while conversely, less effective leadership and management suppressed a school's results. It was experienced that stronger involvement and participation in school management and leadership contributed to a mind shift around quality education, joint ownership, and responsibility for creating good learning environments for children.[2]

In addition to this finding from *I'm Learning*, Save the Children had also identified a gap in programming guidance available to country offices on the fifth component of the Quality Learning Framework, that being School Leadership and Management. These factors prompted Save the Children Norway and Save the Children Nepal, in collaboration with Informed International, to develop and test a programme model in Nepal on School Leadership and Management (SLaM), emphasizing participatory school-based management and leadership in basic education programming for strengthened and sustained impact of QLF-based interventions targeting school improvement.

The two-year pilot was implemented in the rural municipality of Dailekh district, located in Karnali Province in Nepal. Fourteen schools participated in the pilot phase, as displayed in the map of Figure 1.

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[2] See Ryall, C & Zook, L (2018). I'm Learning Summative Report, Save the Children Norway.
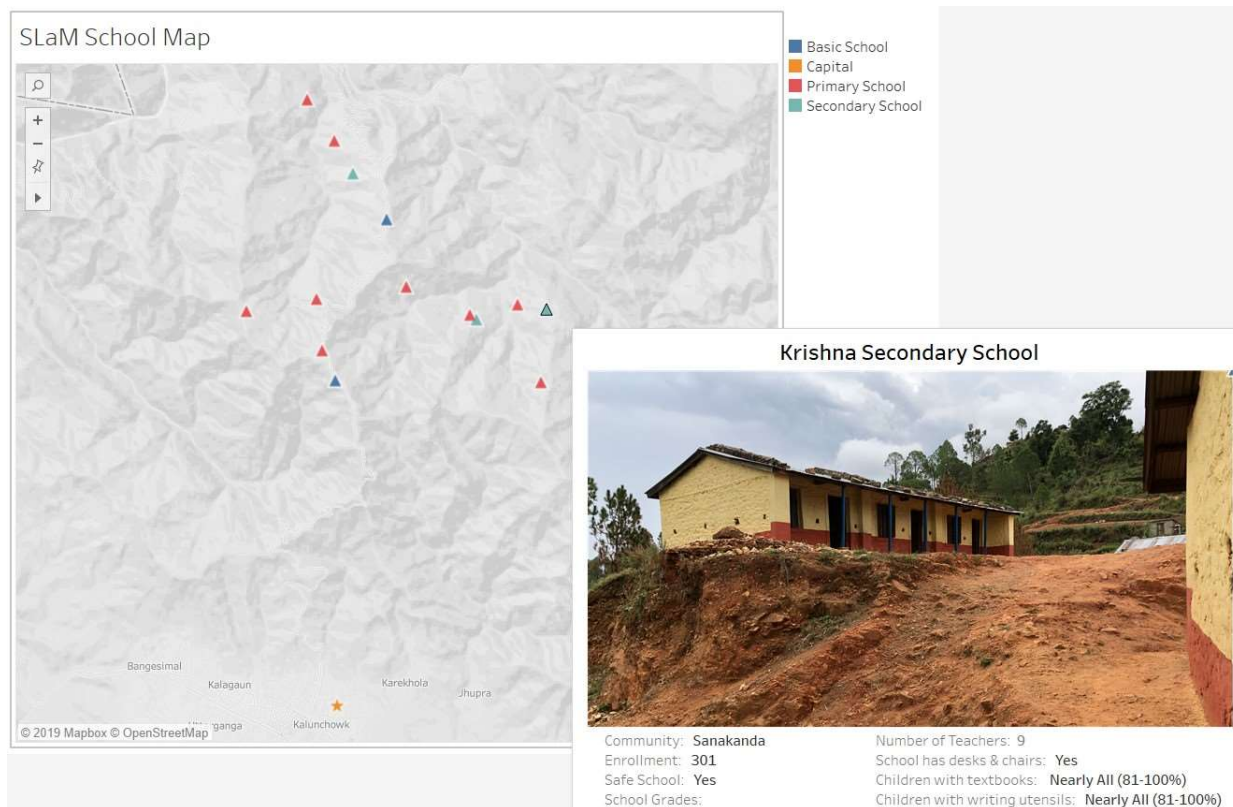
Figure 1 Map of 14 schools in Dailekh district taking part in SLaM Pilot

Objectives of SLaM Pilot

The SLaM Pilot, funded by Norad, built upon the learnings of the *I'm Learning* project and had two main objectives:

1. Document the programming model and theory of change for improved school leadership and management that can be taken to scale, and
2. Develop technical capacity in Save the Children and document experiences from using Developmental Evaluation (DE) as an approach for research-based innovation and programme development.

Through these two objectives the pilot aimed to support the overall NORAD ambition of 'leaving no one behind,' meaning supporting *inclusive* school leadership and management.

SLaM Pilot Roles & Responsibilities

The SLaM pilot was implemented through a collaborative Task Team approach, bringing together representatives from Save the Children Norway (SCN), Save the Children Nepal (SCIN), and Informed International. Although it was a collaborative effort, the main roles and responsibilities of the pilot can be described as follows:

Informed International: Responsible for the technical development and design of the project through the production of programming and evaluation deliverables.

SCIN: Responsible for the implementation of the program according to the agreed project plan. Implementation was to be done in conjunction with the local implementing partner, SOSEC. SCIN

was also responsible for contributing to the technical inputs of the project design with a particular focus on contextualization.

SCN: Overall coordination, budget holder, technical sign-off, responsible for the alignments with SCI and SCN guidelines and overall strategic objectives, as well as reporting to Norad.

Figure 2 displays the make-up of the Task Team members. The intent was to have representation on the Task Team from the four different project partners, including having representation from both the education and MEAL technical staff.

Figure 2: Members of the SLaM Task Team

Alongside the main roles and responsibilities, this staffing structure and the commitment of all ten people was determined as necessary to achieve both objectives of the SLaM pilot project.

Due to a limited consultancy budget, the Task Team decided partway through the pilot project to split the technical development and design of the project components. While Informed remained responsible for the overall design of the project model, SCN and SCIN took on the responsibility of developing several components of the model (School Message Boards, Parent-Teacher Meetings, and V-COP).

Structure of the Report

This report summarizes the work done for the SLaM over the two-year pilot. It is organised in to four chapters. The middle two chapters align to the two objectives of the SLaM pilot project:

Chapter 1: Orients the reader to the pilot project including the project development and developmental evaluation approach.

Chapter 2: Reflects on the development of the SLaM project model and the current state of that model based on learnings from the developmental evaluation (SLaM pilot project objective 1).

Chapter 3: Summarizes the project's work to develop technical capacity in Save the Children using developmental evaluation (SLaM pilot project objective 2).

Chapter 4: Brings together the 3 previous chapters to draw conclusions, key learnings, and discuss next steps.

SLaM Pilot Methodology

Developmental Evaluation approach

The formulation of the SLaM project model took a Developmental Evaluation (DE) approach. DE is used to support the innovation process in organizations and projects by collecting and analysing real-time data in ways that lead to informed and ongoing decision-making as part of the design, development, and implementation process. This approach was identified as being especially useful in situations like SLaM, where there were not pre-determined outcomes and the pathway to success was still to be determined.

What is Developmental Evaluation?

Developmental evaluation is used to support the innovation process in organizations and projects by collecting and analyzing real-time data in ways that lead to informed and ongoing decision making as part of the design, development, and implementation process. DE is an especially useful evaluative approach in situations where there are not pre-determined outcomes and the pathway to success is still to be determined. In these circumstances, DE can help answer questions like:

- What key themes, priorities, and recommendations are emerging as the innovation takes shape?
- What do initial results reveal about the design of the innovation? What implications does it have for implementation plans?
- What variations in effects are we seeing across implementation sites? What does this mean for the design of the innovation and the implementation approach?
- How have different values, perspectives, and relationships influenced the innovation and its outcomes?
- How is the larger education system (district/provincial) responding to the innovation?

DE differs from traditional forms of evaluation, including formative and summative, which are implemented through a linear problem-solving approach. When the goal (outcome) is clearly defined and the problem well understood at the outset, the process for identifying the best solution and testing its effectiveness is straightforward. When the problem is complex and the potential solutions varied, developmental evaluation allows for continuous adaptation and improvement, using rigorous data to inform innovation.

Developmental evaluation uses many of the same data collection techniques as other evaluation methods. The difference is that evaluation elements take place alongside programming activities, so learning happens at the same time. By undertaking evaluation alongside programming activities, DE provides unique and important contributions for an innovation which are not features of formative or summative evaluation approaches.

As the SLaM project approach was emerging, Developmental Evaluation was used for the first two years of the pilot. The purpose of this was to enable authentic and contextualized insights to arise throughout the project development journey, allowing Save the Children to identify in a timely manner emergent themes and address challenges that arise, thereby continually adapting and improving the project as it progresses.

The DE focused on programme innovation and development. The evaluation methodology, therefore, was agile, quickly adapting to the needs of project participants. In the first year, the focus was to engage stakeholders in the development process, identifying stakeholders' needs/priorities, and develop interventions to address those needs. Implementation of interventions were to begin in the second year, during which data collection exercises with relevant stakeholders would capture how effective the SLaM model was in meeting their needs and expectations and feedback into the ongoing evolution of the model. While this approach was followed to an extent, as is discussed in subsequent sections of this report, programme development and implementation piloting were not necessarily clearly split between year 1 and year 2. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic had an influence on the DE design due to school closures and restrictions on implementation of activities, factors that contributed to extending the project timeline by seven months. As such, the DE plan adjusted to this situation and played both roles throughout the project period.

Why Developmental Evaluation for SLaM?

The most prominent issue complicating *I'm Learning's* research initiative was the concurrent project development alongside the research. The longitudinal study, conducted by external local research partners in the three project countries and led by University of Oslo, had an underlying assumption of measuring impact of a fixed programme design. As such, frequent changes to the programme design affected the sensitivity and validity of the research findings.

Secondly, although a rich dataset was gathered by the research teams, the project implementation teams did not benefit from knowledge or learnings gathered from the research, as these data were purposefully kept separate from project implementers.

Finally, the rigid research frame did not sufficiently capture emergent themes, trends, and lessons from a project model that exemplified contextualization and innovation. While the research endeavoured to provide answers to research questions concerned with the impact of changes to QLE on student learning outcomes, there was a missed opportunity to identify particular programme components that did (or did not) make a difference to the success of *I'm Learning*.

As the SLaM project approach was similarly emerging, it was recommended that the pilot use Developmental Evaluation for the first two years of the pilot. The purpose of this recommendation was to enable authentic and contextualised insights to arise throughout the project development journey, allowing Save the Children to identify in a timely manner emergent themes and address challenges that arose, thereby continually adapting and improving the project as it progressed.

DE Questions

In a traditional research approach, an intervention would be conceptualized and implemented with attention to assure high fidelity of the intervention. However, as SLaM was developed over multiple years and was designed as a social innovation in a complex environment, developmental evaluation questions were used to guide program innovation and design. Table 1, below, provides the items that needed to be developed during the SLaM pilot and the developmental evaluation questions associated with those products. This table was used throughout the pilot to guide the Developmental Evaluation activities to answer the questions outlined in Table 1. As the team gathered information and learned, the findings were used to inform what needed to be developed for the project model.

Table 1 Developmental Evaluation Framework for SLaM

What has to be developed?	Developmental Evaluation Questions
1. Common understanding of the stakeholders contributing to or affecting school leadership and management.	What stakeholders are involved in the school leadership and management complex system? What are their roles and responsibilities related to school leadership and management? What are the strengths, challenges, opportunities, and aspirations for effective school leadership and management?
2. Definition of effective school leadership and management, through effectiveness principles.	What behaviours are observed in someone showing strong school leadership and management? What behaviours are not associated? What principles are associated with those behaviours? How are those principles translated into action?
3. Understanding the extent to which effective school leadership and management is being demonstrated within the identified schools.	How do stakeholders evaluate their own contribution to effective school leadership and management? How do stakeholders evaluate their own adherence to the school leadership and management principles?
4. Goals for the SLaM project model to achieve effective school leadership and management.	What do we want effective school leadership and management to look like, according to our principles? How would stakeholders like to improve their school leadership and management?
5. Understanding of barriers and enabling factors to effective school leadership and management across stakeholders.	What positively affects one's ability to contribute to effective school leadership and management? What prevents one's ability to effectively contribute?
6. Overarching project model (set of interventions)	For each barrier identified, what stakeholders are involved? What are the stakeholders' motivations? What are possible strategies for overcoming the barriers? How do possible strategies map to feasibility and impact mapping?
7. Interventions addressing barriers identified and prioritized.	For each barrier identified, what stakeholders are involved? What are the stakeholders' motivations? What are possible strategies for

	overcoming the barriers? How do possible strategies map to feasibility and impact mapping?
8. Implementation approach including technical content, timelines, partners, milestones.	Do all intervention schools want to prioritize the same interventions? Can all participants prioritize the same interventions? Why/why not? Do the schools want to follow the same timeline? What content is needed for prioritized interventions? Who is responsible for each component? What milestones and timelines can be set to develop content?
9. Shared consensus among all stakeholders of roles/responsibilities for SLaM.	Are all stakeholders aligned regarding their role and responsibility for effective school leadership and management? Are further discussions/sensitizations needed to ensure there is buy-in from all stakeholders?
10. Data collection and reporting system established that amplifies voices, opinions, and experiences; teacher and head teacher feedback; including Save Nepal operational feedback, Save Norway with managing NORAD relationship.	What data can be collected from all stakeholders throughout the pilot process? How will this data be gathered, analysed, and fed back to the program? With what frequency? How will unexpected critical incidents be handled?
11. Process for operationally addressing any challenges that are identified through the data collection and reporting system.	What categories of feedback do we expect to receive? Who should be made aware of this feedback? With what frequency? How will unexpected critical incidents be handled?
12. Documents outlining alignment of SLaM principles, curriculum, and implementation approach to MoE standards and policy.	What documentation is needed? Who is the primary audience for the documentation?
13. Sustainability strategy.	To what extent are interventions sustainable? What would sustainability of each intervention look like? How can sustainability be strengthened?
14. Regional applicability strategy.	To what extent are interventions that were developed in this pilot applicable and appropriate for other contexts? How can regional applicability be strengthened?
15. SLaM Project Model and Theory of Change	Given the experience piloting the project, does the drafted Theory of Change accurately capture the components and relationships within the project? How can we adapt the existing Theory of Change to capture the emerging project model? How do we ensure that Theory of Change provide space for development of contextualized interventions?

As described in the following section, the development and pilot of SLaM was significantly delayed due to the global pandemic. As such, the Task Team was able to make progress on the tasks outlined in Table 1 through #8, with some work as well on #9, #10, and #15. It is recommended that these additional pieces be developed after the project model has been fully implemented for a year.

Timeline of SLaM Pilot

Timeline: Planned

The timeline in Figure 3 shows the major milestones that were planned to guide the development of the SLaM project model. The red lines show events, whereas the green lines show products that were developed. The yellow lines show points during which progress markers were intended to be used to inform and interject data into the Task Team's thinking and ultimately the evolution of the project.
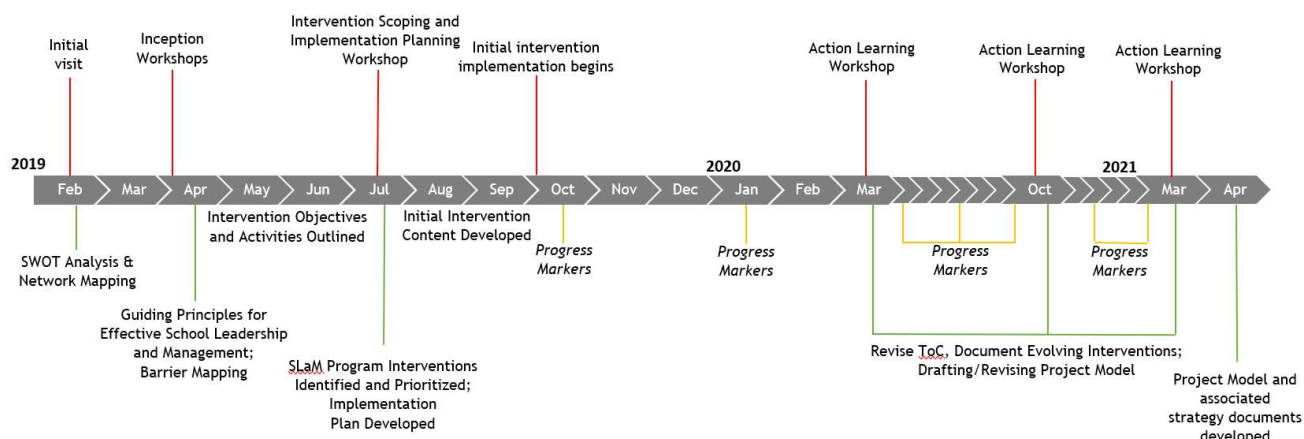
Figure 3 Initial pilot timeline from January 2019

COVID-19 Global Pandemic

Although not all timeline adjustments were due to the pandemic, most of the adjustments were because of, or significantly influenced by, the global COVID-19 pandemic. As reported by the World Health Organization[3], the first COVID-19 case in Nepal was recorded on 23 January 2020. The number of cases began increasing from the third week of March 2020 and by the end of 2020 there were 260,593 cases, with 1,856 recorded fatalities.

The pandemic forced the Government of Nepal to close all schools across the country at the end of the 2019-2020 school year in March 2020. The schools remained closed for 8-9 months, at which point local governments started to reopen schools (at the end of 2020). During this period, the effects of the pandemic were acute in Karnali province with it having 11% of the overall positive COVID-19 cases in the country, while only being 6% of the population[4]. Gurans Municipality, the locale for the SLaM schools was also significantly affected. Unfortunately, with schools having to close again due to a second wave that hit the country in April 2021[5], schools in Gurans remained closed until September 2021.

While school closures significantly impacted and delayed the implementation of SLaM interventions, international travel restrictions, which started in March 2020, also prevented in-person meetings among the Task Team.

Timeline: Actual

Figure 4 shows the timeline that took place during the SLaM pilot. Events and activities are shown in red while products and deliverables are shown in green.

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[3] https://www.who.int/about/accountability/results/who-results-report-2020-mtr/country-story/2020/nepal-story-on-covid-19-vaccine-deployment-a-good-start
[4] World Health Organisation (2021). Situation Report on COVID-19: Karnali Province.
[5] https://www.unicef.org/nepal/media/14216/file/Child_and_Family_Tracker_-_Education.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2jkD5NbDxc-y04wevOeDy-D9ziNvFxP2VRDpWr0Hnshku-CEUwxg3khjM
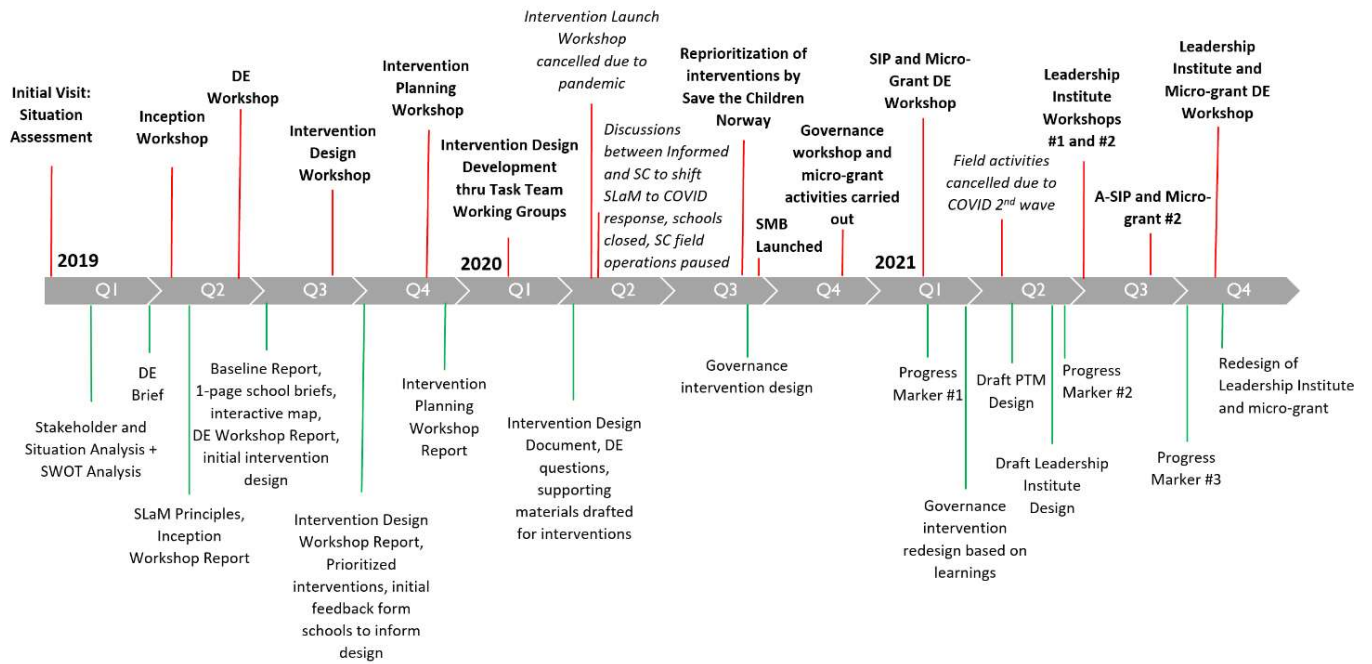
Figure 4 Timeline of pilot activities, actual

As shown in Figure 4, activities generally went as planned until the COVID pandemic in March 2020. The period of Q2 and Q3 2020 were spent discussing ways that the SLaM project model should pivot within the environment of COVID. It was ultimately decided the project should not pivot greatly during the pandemic. In Q3 2020 Save the Children Norway reprioritized the interventions that were identified in the initial phase of the pilot. These reprioritized interventions would be phased for development and implementation considering the changed context. The decision was also made that there would be no more face-to-face Task Team meetings, due to the pandemic, and many of the implementation and developmental evaluation activities would rely heavily on Save the Children Nepal staff.

Lessons Learned Regarding Timeline

The SLaM pilot was designed to be a collaborative undertaking between international teams based in the US, Norway[6], and Nepal. Initial design plans included several face-to-face Task Team meetings as well as school visits. Unfortunately, the pandemic closed schools and international travel right before the SLaM implementation was to start.

To a certain extent, the SLaM pilot was fortunate to have a developmental evaluation approach and several months to adapt in the new context of the global pandemic. On the other hand, the timing of the pandemic was rather unfortunate as interventions had not been launched yet, so there was not a foundation on which to build.

The decision to phase/stagger the development and implementation of SLaM interventions was necessary considering the changing context and ongoing school closures. However, this did mean that the full SLaM model was not piloted for a year, as initially intended.

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[6] With 1 Save the Children Norway staff being located in Myanmar for a proportion of the programming.

It is worth commending the team for its adaptability during this time. The Nepal team, in particular, took on greater responsibility for facilitating workshops, overseeing implementation, and carrying out data collection for developmental evaluation than initially planned. Although this final report is limited in its findings due to the COVID disruptions, it is worth celebrating what this team accomplished during an uncertain and challenging time.

Chapter 2:
Development of the SLaM Project Model

Introduction

This chapter outlines the process that was undertaken for the development of the SLaM project model, in doing so reflecting on what was learned and how that learning influenced the evolution and trajectory of the model. The process follows the steps outlined in the DE Framework from Chapter 1.

Understanding Programming Context

Baseline Objectives

A significant amount of time was dedicated to understanding the context of the 14 schools within the SLaM pilot. This was undertaken using an exploratory approach, the activities and results of which are summarized and presented in this section. In doing so, the team also addressed DE objectives #1- #5:

1. Identify the stakeholders contributing to or affecting school leadership and management.
2. Define effective school leadership and management, through effectiveness principles.
3. Determine to what extent effective school leadership and management is being demonstrated within the identified schools.
4. Articulate goals for the SLaM project model to achieve effective school leadership and management.
5. Identify barriers and enabling factors to effective school leadership and management across stakeholders.

Objective 1: Identify the stakeholders contributing to or affecting school leadership and management

Method: Situation and Stakeholder Analysis

From February to April 2019, the SLaM Task Team gathered data from school stakeholders situated at the municipal, provincial, and national levels through in-person interviews using structured qualitative questionnaires. Interviews sought to understand who the stakeholder was and how s/he engaged in school improvement, within the operating context of Gurans municipality. Furthermore, stakeholders were asked to reflect on the strengths, opportunities, challenges, and aspirations for effective school leadership and management.

During this exercise, the following people were interviewed:

- 5 representatives from the MoEST
- 2 representatives from Centre for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD)
- 4 government officials representing the Karnali Provincial Education Office
- Chairperson and 2 secretariat members of the Chamber of Commerce in Surkhet
- 4 Head Teachers, 1 Teacher, and 6 SMC members from SLaM schools
- Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Education Manager, and 4 representatives of Gurans Municipality
- Professor at Kathmandu University's School of Education (Director, Master of Education Leadership programme)
- Education Manager and Education Officer at UNICEF – Nepal

Interviews were transcribed and analysed in alignment with objective 1. Results from this analysis were then used to inform workshop discussions in pursuit of answering objectives 2 thru 5.

Results

The situation and stakeholder analyses are summarized in the map presented in Figure 5. The map depicts the school at the centre, with three concentric circles of stakeholder groups, each having varing levels of influence and interest in the schools located in Gurans municipality, Karnali province. The first circle shows those stakeholders located closest to the school, having involvement with it on a daily basis and heavily influencing every aspect of school operations and results, as they are also directly impacted by the school. These stakeholders include students, parents, teachers, head teacher and SMC. Without a quality head teacher and classroom teachers, a quality school cannot function. It takes students, parents, and SMC members working in collaboration with these teachers to create an enabling learning environment. A unique feature of this stakeholder group are the low student and teacher populations in the schools within the municipality. Many schools have less than 100 students and five or fewer teachers, with 8 of the 14 SLaM intervention schools falling into this category.
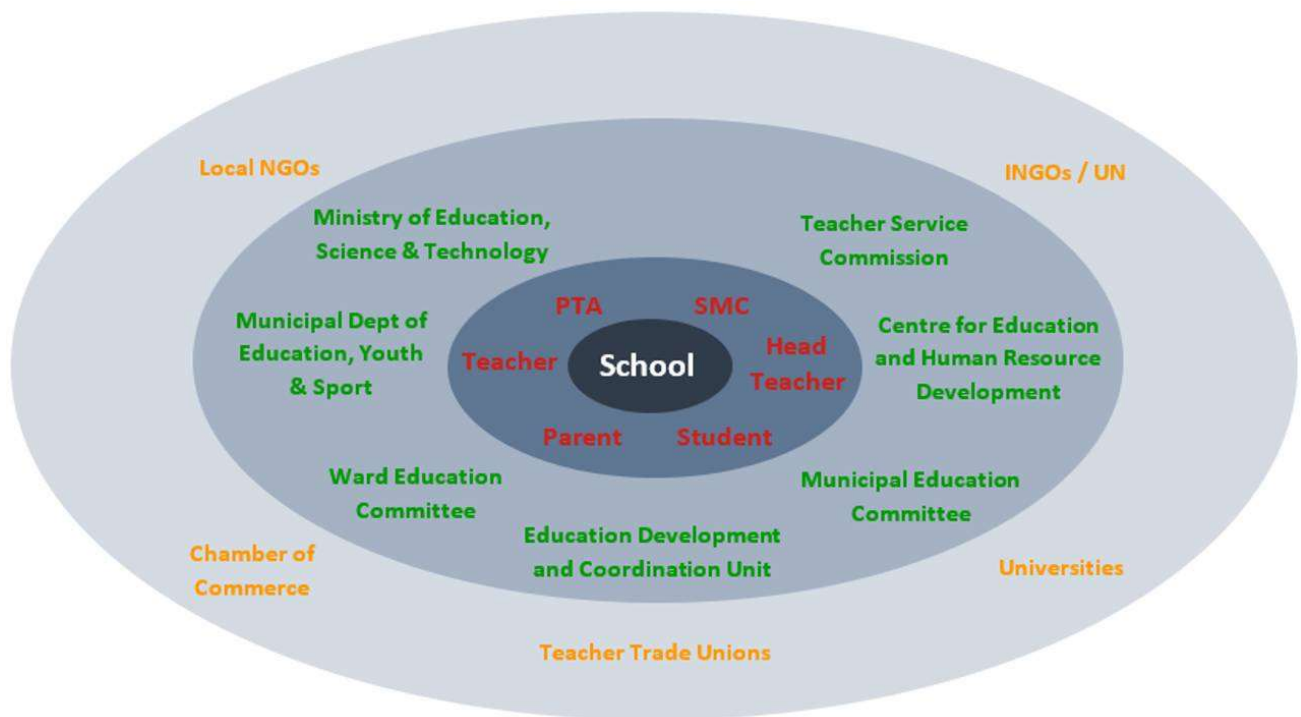
Figure 5 SLaM Stakeholder Map, 2019

A second tier of stakeholder is still within the broader education system but not involved in day-to-day interactions with the school. These stakeholders are national, provincial, district, municipal and ward level governmental entities that exert influence and authority over the school through policy, regulation, training, etc. The ward and municipal education committees hold the most interest in the schools located in Gurans, meeting regularly with the first-tier stakeholders like the head teachers and SMC members.

The third-tier stakeholders have the least authority over schools and have no policy or regulatory mandate. Based upon their own objectives, third tier stakeholders work with first and second tier stakeholders to support school interventions and results. For Gurans municipality, local NGOs and teacher unions have the strongest presence and influence among this group.

The stakeholder interviews were compiled into Table 2, which outlines the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder and how those roles and responsibilities relate to the SLaM project model development.

Table 2 Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities

Stakeholder	Description of Stakeholder	Relationship to SLaM
Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST)	Sets policy and standards for education. The parameters of this are set out in the new Education Act. Policy is also guided by the School Sector Development Plan. Within these frameworks, MoEST can also develop some packages in conjunction with other authorities like CEHRD or CDC that can be sent out to provinces as minimum standards (eg head teacher 30-day training). MoEST has retained one structure at district level called EDCU. The EDCU provides coordination, managing national requirements for local level (eg exams and teacher transfers outside a municipality).	MoEST will set minimum requirements for school leadership and management such as minimum qualification for head teachers or the competencies of head teachers (through national competency framework). SLaM model design should be informed by such policy/standards. SLaM should also feedback its experience linking standards to programming to MoEST.
Centre for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD)	Tasked with preparing annual work plans and budgets and the annual strategic implementation plans, as well as developing training standards and packages and coordinating and working with Education Training Centre (ETC) at provincial level. CEHRD undertakes many tasks previously done by the Department of Education, but without the mandate for direct implementation to schools.	CEHRDs 30-day management training to head teachers as well as the 30-day pedagogical training to teachers are important programs for SLaM to factor into its intervention design.
Curriculum Development Centre (CDC)	Develops curriculum framework, textbooks, exams, continuous assessment system and other resources to support teaching and learning in schools.	CDC guidelines will influence the leading learning component of SLaM.
Teacher Service Commission	Licences (accredit), regulates (standards) and monitors the criteria for the recruitment, appointment, deployment and promotion of teachers at the provincial/municipal level. TSC is also involved with developing/conducting eligibility tests for head teachers. Policy states that all teachers should be licenced through the TSC, with provincial and municipal employing teachers certified by TSC.	To improve teacher management and classroom teaching, SLaM should align with TSC standards, as well as be informed about TSC initiatives targeting teacher & head teacher professionalism.
Teacher Unions / Professional Associations	Various teacher unions and teacher professional bodies exist. The largest with more than 70,000 members is the Nepal National Teachers Association. NNTA advocates for teachers with government, supports initiatives to improve the quality of education and the relationship between teachers and parents. In Dailekh district, seven teacher unions are present, each linked to a different political party.	With such a large network and influence in the education system, teacher unions could be a strategic partner for SLaM, especially to help scale-up and help with managing political neutrality in schools.
Karnali Provincial Authority	The role of the provincial education directorate is currently being formulated. It is in a transitional phase while the provincial education policy is being finalised. The intention is for the provincial authority to support the development of structures and technical capacity at provincial and municipal levels so schools can receive the assistance they need. The Karnali Province also distributes budget for infrastructure improvements and facilitates the establishment and monitoring of model schools in the province.	The provincial authority is only established since January 2018, but with its current development plan having education as its prime objective, SLaM should regularly engage to keep them up to date. Having done this, the Karnali province will be very important to support scaling SLaM after the pilot phase.

Stakeholder	Description of Stakeholder	Relationship to SLaM
Gurans Municipal Authority & Education Committee	The key function of municipality is to monitor the quality of education in its 47 schools, ensure sufficient teaching and learning resources, raise awareness with the community about the importance of education and enable out of school children to enrol in schools. The municipality provides a range of supports to schools such as funding and the provision of contract teachers. For budget, the municipality provides about 12 million rupees in 2019, covering areas such as WASH, ICT, fences, maintenance, English language classes and 26 teachers.	SLaM should engage Gurans municipality in education policy and through the MEC, ensuring leadership and management is a key priority for both. Also, with changes to per child funding to schools, the municipality is the principal source of non-salary budget. This is an important consideration for support to SIPs.
Ward Education Committee	In the municipality there are 8 wards, with 4-8 schools in a ward. The Ward Education Committee (WEC) is the key structure for managing education issues, with this committee comprised of the ward chairperson, head teachers and SMC chairpersons. Wards seeks to enhance education outcomes in schools through improving infrastructure and building capacity of teachers, coordinating this through annual plans (developed from all schools' SIPs). The WEC also endeavours to solve educational issues affecting schools in the ward, but if they can't, they take the issue to the municipality.	The ward is the lowest administrative level in Nepal and is the closest to the school. Given SLaM is full ward coverage, it should engage ward authorities in aspects of leadership capacity development, including emphasising its linkage to SIPs and education quality outcomes.
Chamber of Commerce	Promotes trade and commerce of its membership. There is a national federation that supports district level chambers, with one being in Dailekh. With members of district chambers being the leading businesspersons in the district, the members are likely people to be SMC members as well as support fundraising for schools. Dailekh has more than 6,000 business, with Gurans municipality having more than 600.	Chambers of commerce can support leadership training and mentoring of school leaders. It is also likely that the Chamber of Commerce can fund awards/ incentives for SLaM initiatives.
School Management Committees	Advise head teachers on school management/operational issues. Take responsibility for gathering student enrolment and ensuring regular attendance. Undertake activities to support the school to be a place of learning, where student achievement is high, teachers are regularly attending, and the materials/resources needed are available. The SMC convenes a meeting once every 2 months but can also call a special meeting if the need arises. There are usually 9 members, at least 4 are female. All members have to be parents of students in the respective school.	SMCs are a primary target for SLaM and will be a main conduit to enabling engagement of the school community and the success of the SLaM model. SLaM interventions should support SMC capacity building as well as coaching SMCs to run demonstrate effective leadership in school forums (eg SIP)
Head Teachers	Leads the school jointly with the SMC, with whom the head teacher is an adviser. Facilitates/writes the development of the school improvement plan and works with the WEC to incorporate it into the Ward education plan (which then goes up to the municipal education plan). Attends municipal and ward meetings that focus on the schools (monthly in case of the municipality). Monitors teacher attendance and performance.	A key target for SLaM. Head teachers will be involved at all levels of the project interventions.

Surveyed stakeholders identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and aspirations of school leadership and management in Gurans Municipality as presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Strengths, Gaps, Opportunities, and Aspirations for SLM in Gurans Municipality

STRENGTHS	GAPS
• Federal constitution and new Local Government Operations Act empowers local government/communities to manage schools. • 30-day management training for head teachers	• Resource person role has ceased. Currently no direct technical support role to schools. • Gaps in teaching quality, including no subject specialists in schools (especially for math)

• 30-day in-service training to teachers on pedagogical practices • Significant funding support from municipality to schools (more than $12 million rupees to support the 47 schools in 2019) • Municipal/Ward education committees monitor schools and provide management support • Monitoring systems for child attendance and learning achievement has been established in this municipality. • Schools hold meetings with parents to update on school activities, on student learning achievement and issues of concern.	• Accountability of teachers to teach full allotment of hours and cover the entire curriculum • Insufficient number of qualified teachers in schools • Low availability of teaching and learning resources in schools • No dedicated head teacher role in schools • Gaps in school level capacity for annual planning, financial management, monitoring teachers. • Schools struggle to effectively engage parents
OPPORTUNITIES	**ASPIRATIONS**
• Increase municipal government staffing for education and build its capacity to provide technical support to schools • Support SMC capacity development in planning (SIP), monitoring and governance • Provide other capacity building supports like exposure visits to model schools and coaching of head teachers • Strengthen planning processes at school, ward and municipal levels so that plans target needs for improving the quality of student learning • Develop improved monitoring processes at school, ward and municipal levels • Implement a teacher performance management system • Improve parental engagement with schools and the value they place on their children receiving a quality education.	• Dedicated Head Teacher roles in schools • More women in school leadership roles • SMCs to be able to effectively run/govern schools • Develop and implement the local level education policy, strategy, and curriculum based on the local context (20% of curriculum to be locally developed) • Continuous assessment system of student learning (establish and make functional) • Schools are more child friendly, including being safe, have playgrounds, appropriate learning materials, and life skills courses (like building agricultural skills). • Better governance, planning, teacher accountability, transparency and resource management to improve the real situation of schools, especially student learning achievement.

Of note, Nepal's new decentralized system was identified as a strength. Through this arrangement, the Centre for Education and Human Resource Development provided head teachers with a 30-day management training course, while all teachers received 30 days of in-service training on pedagogical practices. The local municipality provided significant funding support to schools, giving more than 12 million rupees to the 47 participating schools in 2019, while Municipal and Ward Education Committees monitored schools and provided management support. Additionally, within the municipality where SLaM was piloted, the government instituted a monitoring system for child attendance and learning achievement, holding meetings with parents to update them on school activities, student learning achievements, and issues of concern.

The baseline identified gaps that were to be addressed by the SLaM programme. The main gaps identified were lack of technical visits and follow-up training. Stakeholders described gaps in teaching quality as there are no subject specialists in schools. Furthermore, schools struggled with an insufficient number of qualified teachers and no dedicated head teacher role. Problems

existed ensuring accountability of some teachers to teach their full allotment of hours and cover the intended curriculum, and there were gaps in school-level capacity for annual planning, financial management, and monitoring teachers. Low availability of teaching and learning resources in schools made it difficult for teachers to teach and students to learn, and ineffective engagement between schools and parents left a gap in the holistic learning environment for all students.

Finally, stakeholders expressed many opportunities and aspirations for improved school leadership and management. In accordance with the Local Government Education Act, stakeholders wanted to see schools in Karnali Province develop a local curriculum, taking up 20% of teaching time to pair with the national curriculum. A functional, continuous assessment system of student learning was desired, while schools should be more child-friendly through increased safety, playgrounds, appropriate learning materials, and life skills courses. To support these items, stakeholders had an aspiration for SMCs to effectively govern schools. In summary, better governance, planning, teacher accountability, transparency, and resource management were identified as needs to improve the real situation in schools, especially student learning achievement.

Objective 2: Development effective school leadership and management, through effectiveness principles

The Task Team decided to ground the SLaM pilot project in principles, in hopes of that grounding providing a steady foundation for complex systems (such as that observed within the context of the pilot). Principles are useful for informing and guiding decision and choices. In Michael Quinn Patton's 2009 book on Utilization Focused Evaluation, he states 'principles-drive people are motivated by deeply held values expressed through principles that translate values into behaviours". Principles are broader than goals can be considered infinite pursuits. That is, one does not fail or succeed but rather continuously seeks to 'live out' principles in an ever-changing world.

Given the nature of leadership and the complexity of challenges these leaders face, the Task Team felt that grounding this work in collaboratively developed principles would act as guidance for reflecting upon achievement. Furthermore, when faced with difficult decisions, the principles could act as guidance for supporting and informing decisions. By collaboratively developing principles, the Task Team ensured that all program participants were aligned to a common vision of effective school leadership and management. Most importantly, workshop participants reflected that their voices and opinions were reflected in the principles.

<u>Method: Inception workshop with key stakeholders</u>
A sample of representatives from the 14 intervention schools came together for an Inception Workshop in April of 2019. Participants were comprised of the following stakeholder groups:

- SCiN Nepal – 2 Kathmandu based staff leading education programme and MEAL (SLaM Task Team members)
- SCiN Nepal – 5 Surkhet based staff supporting education, MEAL & programme management (2 of which were SLaM Task Team members)
- Head Teachers – 5 head teachers from 2 wards within the target municipality of Gurans
- SMC members – 4 SMC members from 2 wards within the target municipality of Gurans
- Local authorities – 5 people including Ward Chairs, municipal education office and Gurans municipality vice chairperson.

- SOSEC – 3 local partner staff supporting implementation of Norad project
- SCN – 2 staff with education and MEAL expertise (SLaM Task Team members)
- Informed International – 2 workshop facilitators (SLaM Task Team members)

The participants split into small groups tasked with brainstorming and drafting principles for SLaM consistent with the discussions had in the first half of the workshop. The small groups were organised as follows:

- Team 1: SMC
- Team 2: Ward/Municipality Representatives
- Team 3: Head Teachers & Teachers
- Team 4: Implementing Partner + Surkhet-based Save Nepal Staff
- Team 5: Save Norway + Kathmandu-based Save Nepal staff

All groups then presented their list. The day finished with categorising and matching the principles, as displayed in the picture below. The categorisation aligned with the thematic areas agreed earlier in the day.

Principles were refined and finalized using the GUIDE Framework[7] for evaluating principles. GUIDE is an acronym and a mnemonic specifying the criteria for a high-quality principle statement. A high-quality principle (1) provides guidance, (2) is useful, (3) inspires, (4) supports ongoing development and adaptation, and (5) is evaluable.
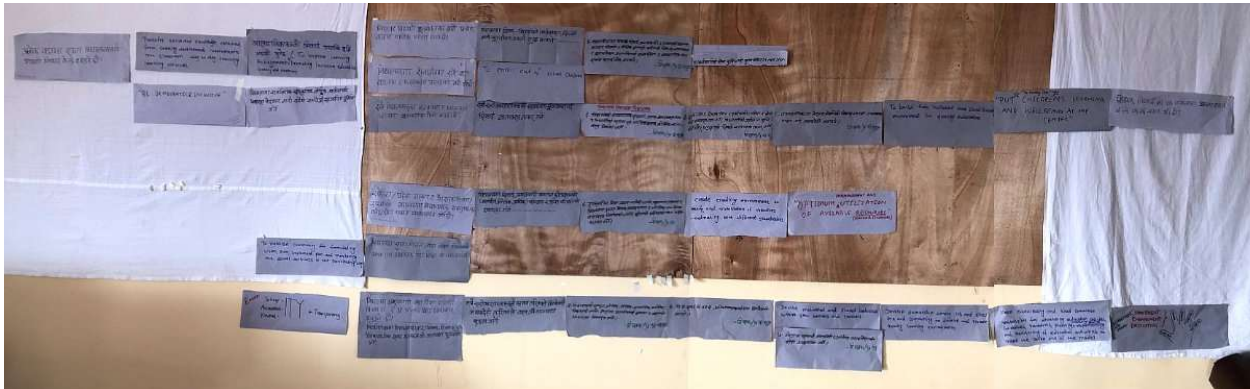
Figure 6 Brainstorming SLaM Principles

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[7] The GUIDE framework was developed by Michael Quinn Patton. His book Principles-Focused Evaluation outlines this framework in detail and is the source of the information in this section.

Figure 7 Workshop participants revising SLaM principles

Results

During April's Inception Workshop, participants reflected upon a global research brief on the factors influencing effective SLaM. Combining local knowledge and global research, the workshop participants split into groups based on stakeholder group and developed a list of characteristics of effective school leadership and management. Those characteristics were then categorized and summarized into SLaM project principles. After 1.5 days of refinement and adjustment, the team agreed upon the principles as outlined in Table 4.

Table 4 Principles for effective School Leadership and Management

Category	English Principle
Learning & Wellbeing	Children's learning and wellbeing is at the centre of the work.
Distributed Leadership	Ensure meaningful participation of all concern stakeholders to develop common vision, plan and implement accordingly for promoting quality education.
Resources	Manage and properly utilize resources to promote educational activities in school.
Political Neutrality	Maintain political neutrality in all educational activities and decision making for the school.
Inclusive Education	Ensure an inclusive learning environment for all, and prevent any discrimination based on culture, gender, religion, language, geography or disability.
Teacher's Professional Development	Seek to understand and timely respond to factors that influence teacher performance.
Values	Follow and demonstrate accountability, transparency, integrity, and dedication.

Safe/Child-Friendly Schools	Promote safe and child-friendly quality learning environment.
Policy Alignment	Align plans and programs with municipal, provincial, and federal education act and policies.
Sharing and Learning Culture	Encourage honest sharing and learning among all stakeholders within and between the schools.

Objective 3: Determine to what extent effective school leadership and management is being demonstrated within the identified schools

Method: School visits

In June 2019, the SLaM Task Team visited all 14 schools within the SLaM pilot project. The goal of the SLaM school visits was to understand the starting point of these schools in terms of the Quality Learning Environments and the SLaM Principles. All school visits began with the School Observation and ended with the Save the Children Personal Reflection. Depending upon the schedule for the day, the Head Teacher Interview, SMC FGD, or the Student FGD was also carried out.

Survey questions were created through a process of mapping principles across stakeholder groups. Survey tools were reviewed and piloted by the Save the Children Nepal staff. Finalized survey tools were translated into Nepali and back translated to English for validation. Save the Children Nepal staff were trained on the tools and served as enumerators during data collection.

Tools and Sampling:

- School Observation Survey; 14 schools
- Head Teacher Interview Guide; 4 schools
- SMC Focus Group Discussion Guide; 4 schools
- Student Focus Group Discussion Guide; 3 schools
- Save the Children Personal Reflection Guide; completed by 2-3 enumerators at each of the 14 schools.

Survey responses were compiled through a participatory exercise with the SLaM Task Team. After reflecting on the school visits, the Task Team held a 3-hour workshop to compile and determine the baseline starting point for the schools. In addition, the team set goals for each Principle, addressing the 'current state.' Responses to survey questions were compiled into a database and used to confirm the results of the debrief workshop.

Results

To answer this question, stakeholders were asked a series of questions regarding their role in school leadership and management. In addition, the school was observed, as it is fundamental to the SLaM Theory of Change (ToC) that effective school leadership and management results in high quality learning environments.

The School Observation Survey was carried out at all 14 SLaM Intervention Schools. Enumerators toured each school while discussing questions in the survey with the Head Teacher. Most of the schools (11 out of 14, 78.6%) had male Head Teachers. All (100%) of those Head Teachers taught classes in the school. Depending upon the type of school (primary, basic, secondary), she or he was responsible for 4-7 classes per day. This was an important factor to be considered in the

SLaM project design as the Head Teachers spent the majority of their days teaching, rather than managing the day-to-day activities within the schools.

The SLaM intervention schools varied greatly in size, ranging from total school enrollment of 20 to 424. Similarly, the schools differed greatly in the grades which they serve. The school with 20 students only had grades 1 to 3, whereas the school with 424 students was one of 2 schools in the pilot that offered ECCD to Grade 12. Four schools offered ECCD to Grade 3 classes; four offered ECCD to Grade 4 classes; four offered ECCD to Grade 5; one offered ECCD to Grade 6; one offered ECCD to Grade 8; and one offered ECCD to Grade 9.

The physical surroundings of the schools are described in Table 6. Only half of the schools met the criterion for the school site being safe from hazards. Most of the schools had big trees near the school building, which could fall or were in landslide-prone areas.

Table 5 School Environment Results, 2019

	# (%) of schools meeting criterion
Playground has adequate space for all children to play games	9 (64.3%)
Play equipment available	7 (50.0%)
Playground is safe	5 (35.7%)
School site location is safe from hazards	7 (50.0%)
Fence present around schools	4 (28.6%)

Figure 5. Status of Buildings on School Grounds
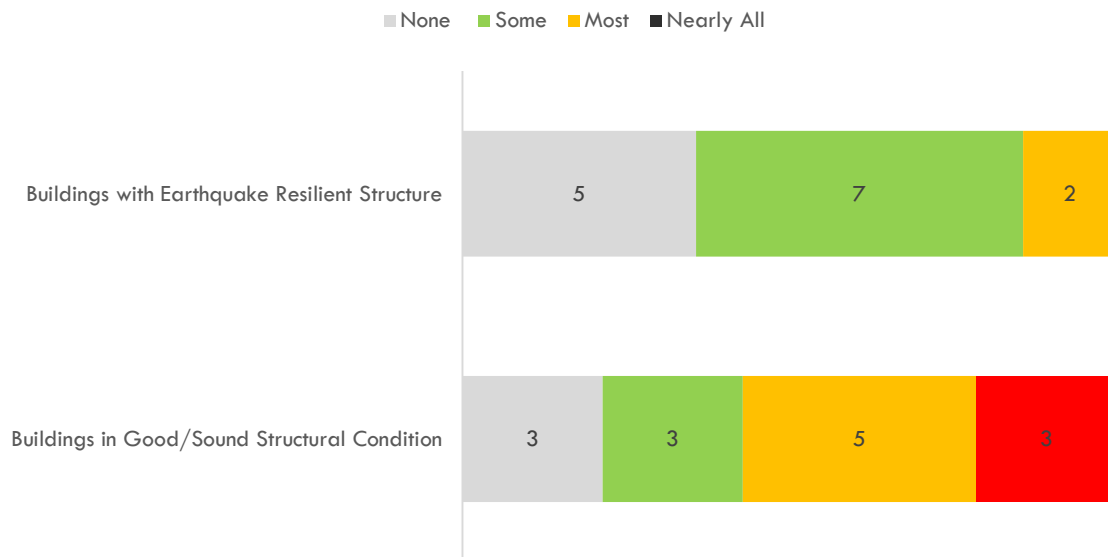
Figure 8 Status of Buildings on School Grounds, 2019

All schools had latrines, with pupil to latrine ratios ranging from 12 pupils:1 latrine to 304 pupils:1 latrine. On average, schools had 1 latrine for every 62 pupils. Most schools (64.3%) had a separate and lockable latrine for girls, but only one school offered facilities or programming for menstrual hygiene. That school had a private disposal/incineration facility for disposable napkins available and offered a napkin distribution programme.

All schools except for one had drinking water available for students, with 9 (64.3%) of the drinking water points being accessible students with a disability. Only four (28.6%) of the schools had functioning handwashing facilities available, with half of those (2) having soap available at those handwashing facilities.

Most schools (12 out of the 14) had very clean environments, free from rubbish and garbage. This is mostly likely because all but 1 school had a garbage/waste management system within the school. This was the most discussed item from the Child Focus Group Discussions that children identified as a strength in their school (see Figure 5).

Within the classrooms, only slightly more than half of the schools (8 out of 14) had appropriate seating and space for the children. The same proportion of classrooms had evidence of locally created learning materials. Only four (28.6%) of the classrooms had children's work displayed on the walls and 35.7% of the classrooms had supplementary reading materials available for children. Encouragingly, nearly all children in the classrooms visited had the current lesson's textbook/exercise book and a writing utensil.

Figure 6. Children with Learning Materials
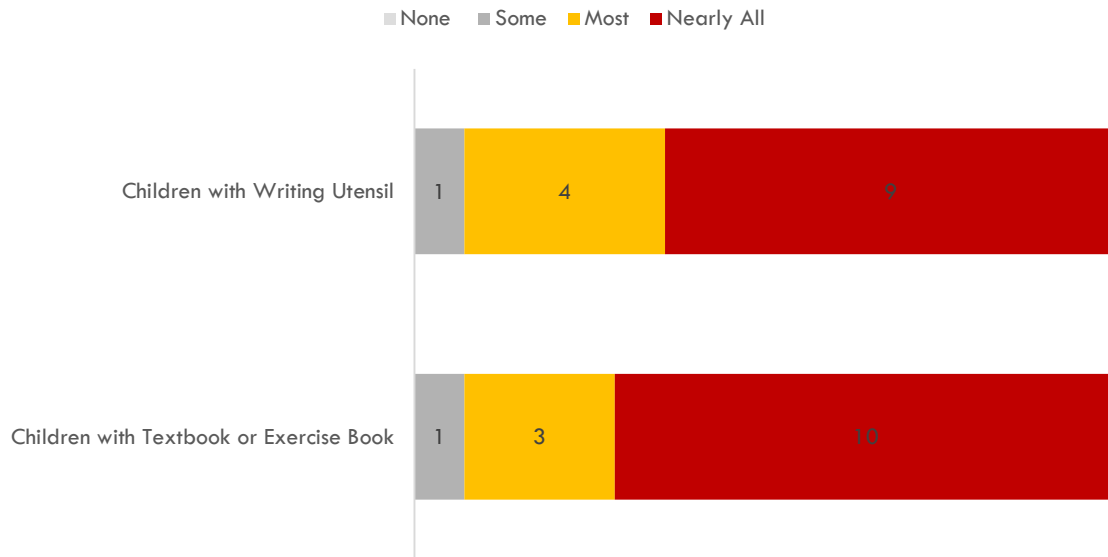
Figure 9 Children with Learning Materials, 2019

Only 1 classroom was disability friendly, having a ramp to the classroom. It is important to note, however, that Nepal is an extremely challenging environment for children with disabilities as the

schools are located on mountainsides, and trekking trails, filled with rocks, are the only way to access many of the schools.

Four Head Teachers were interviewed to gain understanding into their motivations and the challenges they face in the school. At four different schools, SMC chairpersons and representatives were interviewed. The results of these interviews are discussed below.

<u>Motivations</u>
Two of the Head Teachers stated that their strong desire to create a model school continues to motivate them. Others mentioned the good relationships and engagement with community members, SMC chairpersons, and other teachers/head teachers in the community helped to support and motivate them. Two of the head teachers described regular meetings with head teachers in the area, but two of the head teachers stated that a formal process is not currently in place. Still, they often connect with one another via phone.

<u>Engagement with the Community</u>
The Head Teachers identified the following ways to interact with stakeholders in the community:

- Child clubs
- Meetings with parents
- Regular meetings with SMC and PTA
- Community Forest User Group (CFUG)
- Specific events such as:
    - School enrolment campaign
    - Social audit

While the head teachers were able to list a variety of different events and activities that facilitated interactions between community members and the schools, when asked what proportion of parents are actively engaged in the school, responses varied greatly from 20% to 75%. One teacher responded: *Only 20-25% of parents are self-active; they visit school at least once a week, but if you request contribution all parents are engaged; rest of parents belong to poor economic background so are too busy in work for their livelihood.* Interestingly, the head teacher who described over 75% of the parents being actively engaged in the school also said those parents are *meaningfully* engaged, contributing to the school through labor and ensuring that all children attend school. All other head teachers said that participation in the school was not meaningful as parents are distracted with domestic work and are not aware of their role at the school.

<u>Quality of Instruction</u>
When asked about their satisfaction with the quality of instruction in the school, 3 head teachers said they were not satisfied with the quality of instruction and 1 head teacher said he was satisfied. The satisfied head teacher described that learning achievement of students was above 60% and the school had regular attendance, the school had good infrastructure, and the teachers worked well together. To maintain and encourage this achievement, he regularly developed learning materials and conducted weekly/monthly tests, providing feedback to students, and sharing results with parents. The head teachers that are not satisfied described challenges with their time, having to teach several classes each day themselves, leaving them very little time to offer support to teachers. Therefore, they observed that teachers were not able to develop and use the locally developed teaching and learning materials, were not using daily lesson plans, and were unable to effectively integrate learning materials into lessons. Even in cases where lesson

observation and constructive feedback was provided, it did not seem to be enough support to the teachers.

Interestingly, the SMC representatives that were interviewed stated that they were generally satisfied with learning achievement, although none of the SMCs could provide information on testing scores. One SMC described partial satisfaction, recognizing that children from the Dalit community have poor performance and that the literate parents showed more interest in children's performance than illiterate parents. As such, their school struggled with diverging performance, with children of illiterate parents having irregular attendance. Furthermore, many parents did not have interest in meeting with the SMC.

<u>School Improvement Plan</u>
Three of the four head teachers had a School Improvement Plan (SIP) and developed it in collaboration with SMC, teachers, and parents. Initial training on the SIP process was provided by the Resources Centre. Given the recent transition of the government structure, the majority of the head teachers expressed a need to re-work the SIP to effectively align with the Palika; however, one head teacher had submitted a re-aligned SIP to the Palika but had yet to receive feedback due to an under-staffed Palika office.

Of the four SMCs interviewed, two said that the school had a SIP, but only 1 was able to identify priorities that were articulated in that SIP, which are: improving the playground, planting trees and flowers in the school, maintaining the quota of teachers, and starting ICT education.

<u>Resources</u>
Evident throughout the baseline process, the schools within the SLaM project were under-resourced. A few of the Head Teachers described collecting money and donations from parents for construction and classroom maintenance, although they expressed that the donations were sporadic and not sustainable. One was recently able to install a reservoir tank in the school, supported by a local NGO. Another head teacher described: *I forcefully requested donation of 12 hundred per parents for school; I requested to Palika to appoint new facilitator while ECCD facilitator was in long maternity leave. This was only so my school was in provision with the new education policy.* Yet another Head Teacher stated: *The Palika provided fencing wire and poly for fencing, but we must manage additional resources to complete the task. There is mandatory provision of 15% community contribution (labour during work). I purchased seven packs of cement in loan from supplier. After managing the cement and other resources, SMC and parents denied contributing from their side. But after organizing various meetings, they agreed to provide the contribution and started the fencing work.* Stories like this are evidence of the misalignment between policy and resources provided to the schools, leading to head teachers having to think creatively to generate funds for their schools.

All head teachers described resources as their biggest challenge since taking on their role. Due to shortages of resources, they described covering costs of the school from their own salaries. Additionally, two of the four respondents described gaps and distances between the school and the parents.

Three of the four SMCs interviewed had not seen the school budget. The one that described having seen the school budget could not provide any information regarding it. However, all SMCs described the opportunity to look at the budget during the social audit.

<u>School Safety</u>
According to the SMCs, none of the schools had guidelines, policies, or strategies in place to ensure children were safe in the school. One school had an earthquake and fire drill. Two schools introduced complaint/ suggestion boxes, but it seemed that the younger children struggled with this concept, so they wanted to find a solution that enabled feedback from younger children who may not be capable of writing yet. All SMCs said that their schools are inclusive and do not have discrimination within the school, although they noticed differences in performance among Dalit students. All schools described declaring the school as a Zone of Peace and stated that politics were not influencing decisions in the schools. However, one individual did describe that politics occasionally entered the school decision regarding construction and hiring of teachers.

During the student focus group discussions, they described that only talented students were invited to take part in extra-curricular activities. Furthermore, students described friends that didn't attend school due to child marriage, the long distances to the school, or the need for students to carry out domestic work for parents.

<u>Challenges</u>
Both head teachers and SMC members were asked about the biggest challenges currently facing the school. It is important to note that all schools identified different challenges, some of which are listed below. However, the underlying challenges of few resources and poor engagement of community members seem to underpin all these challenges. Additionally, some of the schools with very small enrolment sizes struggle to advocate to the Palika for additional support, putting them at an even greater disadvantage.

1. Proper management of toilets: no separate latrines for girls.
2. Lack of drinking water.
3. Attendance due to low engagement with parents.
4. Playground safety.
5. Lack of mid-day meal.
6. Long and unsafe commuting time for students. One SMC described: *The children of G4-G8 leave home at 7:30 and reach the school at 10 because of the distance to the school. They need to walk around 2.5 hours but then have no mid-day meal.*

Children identified the desire to change the following items in their school:

1. Provision of sanitary pads.
2. Improving the playground because it's currently rocky and dangerous.
3. Ending corporal punishment.
4. Providing mid-day meal.
5. Manage school bus for those who have to travel from far distance.
6. Manage safe drinking water facility.
7. Keep toilets clean and accessible to all students.
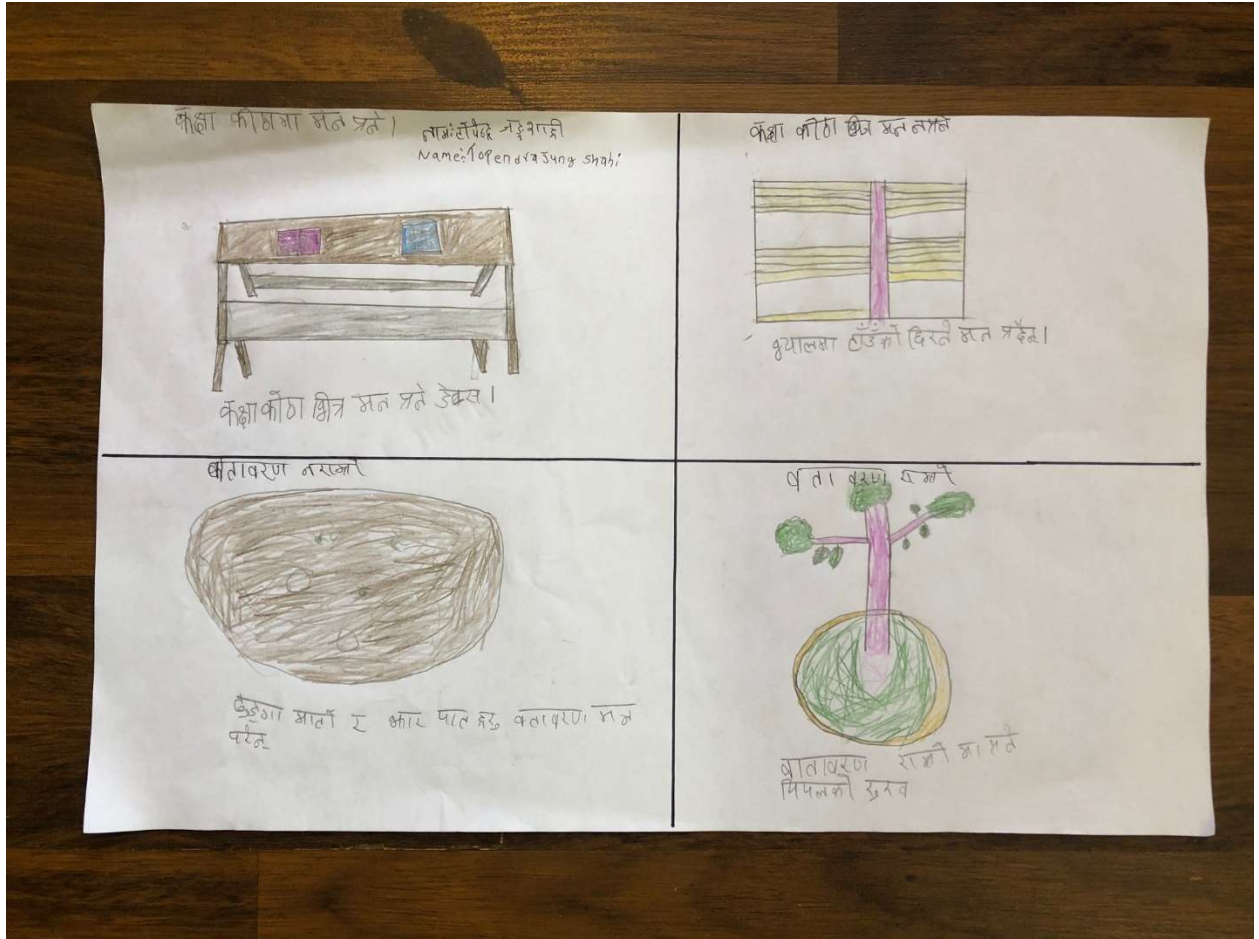
Figure 10 Child drawing during Focus Group Discussion, 2019
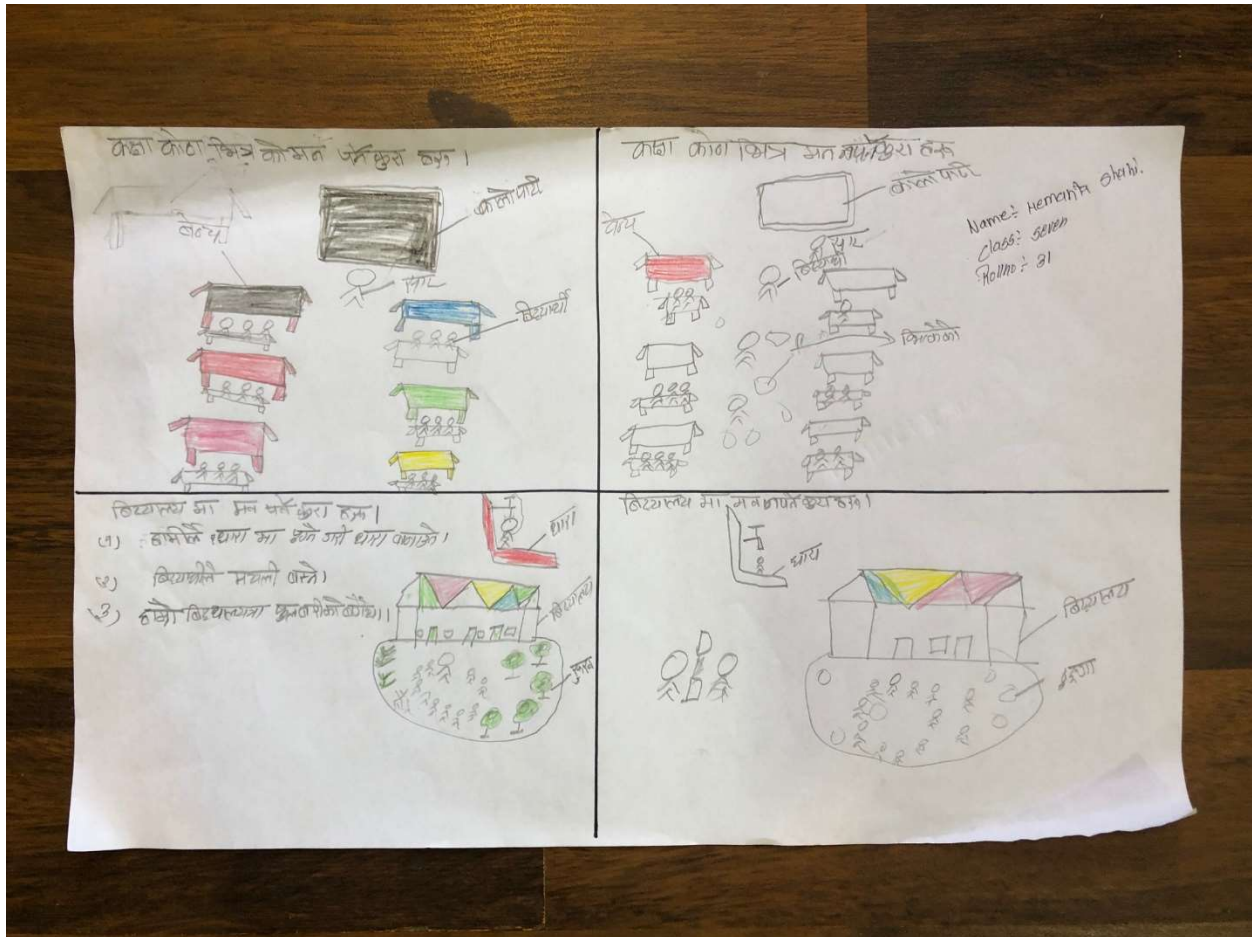
Figure 11 Child drawing during Focus Group Discussion, 2019

Objective 4: Articulate goals for the SLaM project model to achieve effective school leadership and management

Method: Participatory exercise with stakeholders
After visiting the schools, the team of stakeholders that participated in the inception workshop came back together and discussed their findings. Qualitative analysis methods were utilized to identify trends across the schools.

For each School Leadership and Management principle, the key trends were documented in a matrix form. The team then discussed and articulated what the goals were for each principle to improve upon the baseline status.

Results
During an afternoon workshop among SLaM Task Team members, the survey results from the baseline data collection and the Personal Reflections, which each Task Team member completed after visiting a school, were compiled by answering and discussing the following two questions for each principle:

1. Regarding this principle, what do I currently see in the schools I visited?
2. Regarding this principle, what do I want to see in the schools I visited (after SLaM)?

The rich discussion among Task Team members is compiled and represented in Table 6, which provides the situation of the schools at baseline and the goals for the SLaM project, articulated against the SLaM principles. Progress over the length of the program was measured using these baseline descriptions and assessed against the goal statements.

Table 6 Principle, Baseline, and Goal

Principle	What I currently see	What I would love to see
Learning & Wellbeing	• Irregular student attendance • All SMC are not familiar with learning achievement • Poor home learning environments (lack of help with homework) • SIP has plan to improve learning achievement, but it is not being reviewed regularly • All children have textbooks but there are little to no supplementary reading materials. Some classrooms are print-rich but many classrooms are empty. • Less than 50% of schools had locally created materials • Inconsistent continuous assessment also not done according to the need basis • Lack of remedial courses • Children are very tired from long walks to school and lack of mid-day meal • Average learning achievement below 60% • Conduction of co-curricular activities and extra-curricular activities irregularly	• All stakeholders (SMC, teachers, parents) will practice attendance audit system in the school • The teachers, children, and parents will be engaged to develop and use locally-developed TLM and SMC will monitor proper use of materials also provide the feedbacks • Learning achievement will be on the agenda of the HT and SMC monthly meeting, teachers/staff meetings and parents' meetings • School carries out regular monthly assessment (continuous assessment) and HT carries out the assessment every 6 months of the children and adapt remedial teaching appropriately • Schools should consult with every child about their background, hobbies, capacity identification, inform the respective guardians and teach accordingly • Plan for extra-curricular and co-curricular activities and its effective promotion • Parents should visit school every day turn by turn for the purpose of monitoring the school activities
Distributed Leadership	• SMC members are simply rubber-stamping • Rare meetings that bring together all stakeholders • Little parent engagement • Participation is not *meaningful* • All schools had 5-year plan (SIP), but not all (~50%) had 1-year action plan (ASIP) • SIPs are achieved in terms of infrastructure but not other areas • Leadership is dominated by SMC Chair and Head Teacher but not including all SMC members • Child-clubs present but children are not engaged in decision-making but practice of child participation started in some schools • Some children know about their rights but are failing to take on their duties	• Clear roles and responsibilities are understood and practiced by Village and ward education committee, SMC, parents, PTA, Children, Head Teacher, Municipality, • SIP is developed, implemented, and monitored in a participatory way by all SMC members, parents, children, teachers and other stakeholders.
Resources	• Common for SMC Chairperson to not be able to recall budget and expenditures • No monitoring of expenditures • One instance of SMC being asked to sign blank checks • Local government is allocating budget for infrastructure, not teacher training, etc. although local government is allocating funds for teachers • While there is a lot of funding available from the municipality, municipality should be focused on priorities (short-term and long-term)	• Annual budget is developed based on need and prioritization by all stakeholders and reflected in the SIP. • Budgeting process maps potential funding sources, and these resources are mobilized to fund the annual plan. • Budgets consider long-term spending needs such as maintaining, repairing, and replenishing resources.

Principle	What I currently see	What I would love to see
	• Some instances of using local organizations and community to gather budget and resources • Computer rooms – 1 school not functioning, other was functioning (single subject kids were most excited about) • Questionable prioritization of space and resources – children sitting in single room while space is available for meeting space • Lack of classrooms, inadequate classrooms	• Budget allocated for the capacity development of SMC, PTA, HT and teachers • Budget allocated for the learning exchange between SMC, PTA, HT and teachers • Capacity development of the teachers on technology friendly teaching learning practice in schools
Political Neutrality	• Disturbance from political parties • Difficult to measure and observe • Potentially happening a ward/municipal level rather than at school level? • Will need to monitor when decisions are being made • Schools are declared as zones of peace. • Communities with little access to decision-making parties don't receive resources • Resource allocated without assessing the need/requirement by the village education committee	• Local government allocates funds based on need rather than affiliation or connection. • Stakeholders practice as zones of peace. • Monitoring system in place to monitor equitable allocation of government funds. • No formation of brother/sister organizations by the political parties and conduction of political programs in schools • Regular/smooth running of schools during cultural programs/festivities too and during elections • No involvement of the teachers in political programs during their school time
Inclusive Education	• Teachers treating children differently based on performance • Differences between boy and girl students' and teachers' participation • No disability structure but how would the child access the school in the first place? (consider government policy which requires it) • Check enrolment/out-of-school data from NORAD baseline • Girls weren't playing on playground • Because the playground has narrow space, small children are facing problems • Language is not a barrier • Children state there is no discrimination • There are violations of code of conduct	• Teachers and students are oriented to and practicing the code of conduct. • Corporal punishment is not used in the school. • Opportunities that empower girls within the school are provided. • Trainings for the guardians on positive parenting • Teachers adjust teaching to meet the unique needs of *all* children. • School mechanisms like child clubs should be inclusive • Children who require additional assistance should practice peer teaching and learning and focus on the remedial classes as well
Teacher Professional Development	• Difficult for Head Teacher of small schools to provide coaching/mentoring given all of the responsibilities that HT has • TLM were lacking (especially for math), so do teachers need training on skills to use these? • Lacking curriculum guide in classroom • Lost resource person, regional teacher training college isn't functioning – structural issue	• Head Teachers have the knowledge and skills to provide effective coaching and mentoring to their teachers. • Head Teachers carry out effective coaching and mentoring of all teachers. • Palika implements system of Teacher Professional Development responsive to unique needs of each school. • Teachers know how to make and use effective teaching and learning materials.

Principle	What I currently see	What I would love to see
	• Teachers may be trained but need further coaching, support, materials, follow-up to apply in the classroom • Missing lesson plans, observation plans • No sustainability of initiatives	• Teachers are given trainings on the need basis • Updates maintained for teachers training details • SMC should ensure that the teachers are utilizing learnings after attending the trainings • Application of the training skills in classroom should be one of the criteria for acknowledging the best teacher
Values	• Budget / expenditures was not transparent (SMC members unaware) • Schools had TEACHER poster which shows values that a teacher should exhibit (Thoughtful, Energetic, Amazing, Caring, Helpful, Encouraging, Responsible). • Social Audit encourages accountability but isn't reliable • SIP achievement lacks accountability, SIP is mostly used for documentation / admin task • Teachers are physically present but not teaching to best capability; quick to leave classroom • Some schools have suggestion/complaint box and response committee • SMC members are taking part in all this work without pay or compensation • Voluntarily travel to request funds and resources; have to go the extra mile to get anything • No relevant trainings for the staffs and teachers who maintain accounts • Responsibility not undertaken seriously by the support staffs	• Results of Social Audit and progress against ASIP/SIP are made publicly available to all stakeholders. • All schools have a suggestion/complaint box with a functioning response committee. • SMC, Teachers, and Head Teachers follow the SLaM principles. • Acknowledgement according to the evaluation of SIP • Full application of the training skills in classroom • Mechanism to effectively address suggestions and complaints of all sides • Planning of school annual budget, review and revision in every six months and share it with the public • Healthy and smooth accounting procedures • Work together with the SMC, PTA, Parents, Teachers and other stakeholders working in the education sector to enrol and maintain retention rate of school going children • Punctuality of teachers, their full dedication and quality time in class • Develop sense of ownership within stakeholders related to schools • SMC, PTA and parents should be present at the aforementioned time and provide enough and full time for the overall development of the school
Safe/Child-Friendly Schools	• School procedures and policies are not in place (no first aid kit) • No safe road to reach school • To safe pathway to toilets • Children travel very long distances to attend school (It is found that some of the students walk 4-5 hours daily to attend school) • Landslide is a major issue for some schools • Animals on schoolgrounds • Corporal punishment still prevails in some schools • Some students threaten the teachers as well	• All schools follow the government policy on school safety. • All schools have a school policy on feeding that ensures that children are not hungry throughout the day. • All schools have separate, lockable latrines with menstrual hygiene management system (if applicable) and handwashing stations. • Effective implementation of school health and nutrition in accordance with the school health and nutrition guideline • Safe school learning environment without terror in all schools

Principle	What I currently see	What I would love to see
	• Many schools did have fencing • School buildings were in good condition; a lot of repairs happening • Adequate toilets • Toilets available, but not separate at all schools; in mixed conditions (most of them don't have water facilities) • Inconsistent handwashing stations • Drinking water not ideal – present, but shared and the taps are not child friendly and disable friendly • Menstruation hygiene management observed to be not present in 11 of the schools but readymade pads distributed in some of the schools • Waste disposal management present at all schools but waste management system not developed in some schools (like incineration in open places) • School health and nutrition activities not implemented according to the plan	• No distribution and purchase of cigarettes, tobacco, and harmful substances as such in the school premises • Formulation of waste management procedures and its implementation
Policy Alignment	• HTs not aware of policies, very little coordination • All HTs meet with Palika monthly • Desire to align school-level policies to Palika level policies given new Local Government Education Act.	• All Head Teachers are aware of policies and meet with Palika monthly to coordinate. • Activate ward education committee and formulation of ward education plan and its implementation
Sharing and Learning Culture	• HT meeting is designed to share best practices, but it is simply a submission of information, not learning and sharing • Networks are not present that facilitate communication between school stakeholders – HTs, SMCs, Teachers from different schools • No learning visits • No ward education committee to facilitate learning between schools • Trainings may take place, but learning is not shared with colleagues • Comments/Suggestion box present in some schools (and response committee) • Very few networking opportunities for ideas and best practices between/among teachers, there was a cluster approach but that ended last year.	• Ward Education Committee facilitates learning across schools for all stakeholders: SMCs, Head Teachers, and Teachers. • Head Teacher meeting is being used effectively for sharing best practices. • Regular meeting of SMCs within the ward and learning exchange practice

Objective 5: Identify barriers and enabling factors to effective school leadership and management across stakeholders

Method: Barrier and Enabling Factor Mapping

During the Inception Workshop, stakeholder groups discussed and filled out a Behaviours/Enabling factors worksheet. These worksheets identified enabling factors for behaviours that are essential for supporting achievement of the principles. The worksheets also identified barriers that prevented one from achieving the principles. An example of the worksheet is shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12 Behaviours Enabling Factors Worksheet Example

All sheets were then translated from Nepali to English, compiled, and analysed for common themes. Interventions were designed to encourage enabling behaviours and discourage or overcome barriers.

Results

The first step of this activity resulted in listing the main roles/responsibilities for each stakeholder in the room with regard to effective school leadership and management. Those roles/responsibilities are outlined in the first column of Table 7.

Then for each behaviour, the group documented positive behaviours, negative behaviours, and the enabling factors for each. The results of the positive and negative behaviours, as well as enabling factors, aligned to main school leadership and management responsibilities are outlined in Table 7.

Table 7 Enabling factors and barriers for responsibilities of school leadership and management

Responsibility	Positive behaviours and enabling factors	Negative behaviours and barriers
SC Nepal / SOSEC Nepal		
Capacity assessment of school management committee and head teacher	• Existing policy promotes actors to conduct training • Demand from teachers drives on-site coaching/mentoring • SMC requests being informed on results achieved	• Limitations of project resources (staff / time / money) results in inability to include every teacher • Short project timeframe results in inability to support teachers according to request • Project limitations result in irregular capacity assessments
Facilitate planning and capacity building	• Request from stakeholders is required to conduct training • Sharing at meetings helps in the coordination of capacity building • Joint monitoring with local stakeholders enables the provision of training resource books	• Stakeholders lack comfort with technology which results in an inability to include everyone because tech is needed for these activities • Insufficiently skilled facilitators lead to untrained facilitators • Insufficient budget
Rural municipality officials		
Assist in coordinating and expanding the networks, and identifying the resources	• Continued projects bolster financial and technical support • Commitment to school improvement encourages resource mapping • Tri-part agreement enables matching funds	• Program implemented in limited areas results in insufficient resources for requests • Program principles enables less hardware support
Coordination and collaboration with education-related INGOs/NGOs	• Monthly meetings provide opportunities to connect with education-related INGO/NGOs • Village office must develop NGO mobilization guidelines to promote the sharing of roles and responsibilities • Joint monitoring plan development would encourage joint monitoring	• Increased meetings, discussions, and interactions could improve perceptions of INGO/NGOs among stakeholders • Consistent submission of INGO/NGO budgets and programming plans, presented to village council, would increase trust • Taking on more roles and responsibilities leads to seeking more rights than being responsible
Participatory local education policy development	• Host regular meetings to facilitate discussion among all stakeholders • Develop ward education plans in all wards based on SIP • Share background information and agendas prior to group meetings to encourage	• Implement school as a 'zone of peace' to discourage occasional strikes • Implement a community statistics management system to overcome lack of basic statistics • Improve efficiency and timeliness of creation of education acts to

	productive discussions in Village Council that leads to agreement on plans	be approved by federal and provincial government
Share the best practices of school	• Schools asked to share best practices should be encouraged to do so through different media • Inter-school visits encourage sharing of best practices at R.M./H.T. meetings • Rotational meetings encourages the showcasing and promotion of best practices	• Establishment of clear and transparent selection criteria for best practices could eliminate controversies in how best to improve schools • Measurement of best practices should focus on educational aspects only to eliminate biases and contention among stakeholders • Provide recognition of achieving best practices to encourage those who are doing well to keep going and motivate others to follow their lead
Head Teachers / Teachers		
Develop and ensure implementation of school's annual education plan	• Effective communication enables inclusion of all stakeholders in planning process • Securing / selecting educational materials according to lesson themes/topics increases education achievements among students • Resource management enables teachers to prepare and implement lessons easily	• Lack of time limits ability to plan lessons • High expectations / ambitious plans result in inability to complete plans
Monitor and evaluate classrooms	• Impartial evaluations enable feedback to teachers based on regular monitoring and evaluation • Providing incentives motivate students and teachers to attend regularly • Increase in quality teaching leads to achievement of students	• Limited time to monitor classrooms leads to a lack of regular monitoring • Lack of transparency, honesty, and integrity leads to limits
Coordinate among teachers, students, and parents	• Prepared agenda promote regular staff meetings • Door-to-door campaigns enable environment for meeting everyone • Parent gatherings allow opportunity to clarify educational, physical, and financial matters	• Work schedules and/or looking for work limits presence of parents at school
Maintain financial transparency	• Honesty, integrity, and transparency encourages financial decision-making through SMC • Financial trainings provide opportunity to share expense details with parents • Responsible head teacher will publish expense details on information boards	• Lack of training in finance sometimes leads to poor decision-making related to finances • Carelessness sometimes leads to finances not being shared on time
Conduct regular PTA/SMC and staff meetings & implement decisions made	• Provide decision-making rights through regular meetings	• Unclear/no agendas lead to unfocused regular meetings

	• Desire for democratic decision-making encourages sharing of meeting agenda with stakeholders ahead of regular meetings • Develop monitoring plan to evaluate the decision made at regular meetings	• Inadequate decision-making processes leads to lack of participation at regular meetings
Maintain good school governance	• Follow policy and guidelines to encourage honest and transparent behaviours • Encourage transparency by reviewing school income and expenditures every 6 months • Encourage staff participation in promoting good governance by applying the policies and guidelines with teachers, students, and other stakeholders	• Lack of personal, honest, and transparent behaviours leads to lack of honest and transparent behaviours among others in the school • Lack of improvement in head teacher behaviour discourages other stakeholders from following the same school policies and guidelines • Lack of reviews of school income and expenditures in the past has resulted in encouragement of head teachers to share income and expense details
SMC		
Carry out coordinating role with units related to school, parents, teachers, government, and non-government agencies	• Regular meetings / discussion should be used to make financial, physical, educational, and social decisions • Valuing efficient decision-making results in the division of roles and responsibilities • Easy/fast decision-making and problem-solving is required due to stakeholders' needs/schedules	• Lack of interest in coordination leads to lack of identified roles and responsibilities • Lack of concern for proper use of resources is the result of internal disagreements • Regular meetings are not conducted due to lack of thinking in schools' best interest
Carry out student enrolment door-to-door campaign	• Government policy promotes SMC meetings for student enrolment campaign • Meeting parents at an external location increases the likelihood of success • Scholarship and other benefits promoted through door-to-door campaign increases likelihood of bringing out-of-school children back to school	*None provided during exercise.*

As the SLaM Task Team processed the enabling factors and barrier analysis, the following trends were identified:

- **Sense of helplessness regarding capacity building.** This was mostly expressed by Save the Children and SOSEC staff. It seems that demand is high for training but project timelines, budgets, lack of quality facilitators, limited time to process materials were listed as barriers. Building upon this, municipality officials lack plans and clear guidance around capacity building showing a lack of leadership / support throughout the government system.
- **The entire school system struggles with accountability.** Monitoring of teachers by head teachers is highly valued, but lack of time to conduct monitoring and transparency in the process is limiting effectiveness. The lack of an established process for monitoring seems to be a concern across stakeholders. Furthermore, the SMC is expected to take part in financial

planning process and sharing but this often is not carried out due a lack of financial training and knowledge.

- **Lack of coordination among schools, parents, teachers, and the government.** The exercise revealed accusations of mishandled responsibility, complaints of how responsibilities are divided, lack of concern for stewardship of resources, and claims that other stakeholder groups have 'no interest toward the school'.
- **Stretched resources and time.** Underlying most of the points is a trend of lacking resources (material, knowledge/skills, as well as time) to effectively carry out all of the demands that are placed on each of the stakeholder groups. This was expressed by Save the Children and SOSEC staff as well as head teachers who serve as full-time teachers in addition to their head teacher roles.

Intervention Design

Objective 6: Overarching project model (set of interventions)

The interventions outlined arose out of eight months of working with head teachers, SMC members, parents, and Save the Children staff in Dailekh, Nepal to understand the current state of school leadership and management, identify barriers to achievement, and determine ways for strengthening. These results were articulated in the previous section on Understanding the Context and DE Objectives 1-5.

Each of these interventions was mapped against the components of SLaM's Theory of Change as shown in Table 8, with check marks showing which interventions align to which components of the Theory of Change. Given these exercises the team felt that they had an initial list of interventions to be discussed by the SLaM schools during a validation exercise.

Table 8 Primary components of SLaM's Theory of Change addressed by First Iteration of Interventions

Intervention	Improved Capacity in:			Children, parents, teachers, and community are motivated to participate in school improvement	Collaborative school self-assessment, planning, and implementation	Social Accountability
	Leading Learning	Distributed Leadership	Effective management of human, financial, and physical resources			
School Message Board					✔	✔
Talking Book	✔	✔		✔		
Digital Networking Platform	✔					
Leadership Training: Head Teachers		✔	✔	✔		
Leadership Training: SMC		✔	✔	✔		
Leadership Training: Municipality		✔	✔	✔		
School Governance Workshop		✔			✔	✔
Parent-Teacher Meetings	✔	✔		✔		
School Performance – planning, monitoring, reporting	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔

As shown in Figure 13, the interventions fell into 3 broad categories of:

- Communication for Development: strengthening the communication between the schools and the communities to build distributed leadership throughout the school community.
- Leadership Training: ensuring that school stakeholders have the skills and capacity to effectively lead.
- School governance: positively impacting the school system, building transparency and accountability across all stakeholders.

Communication for Development	Leadership Training	School Governance
• School Message Board • Talking Book • Digital Networking Platform	• 3 streams: 　• Head Teacher 　• SMC 　• Municipality	• 1-day School Governance Workshop • Parent-Teacher Meetings • School performance - planning, monitoring, reporting

Figure 13 Initial Intervention Designs

Objective 7. Interventions addressing barriers identified and prioritized.

Since the initial interventions were brainstormed by the SLaM Task Team, the next step was to ensure that school representatives were oriented to the proposal and had the opportunity to provide feedback into the intervention designs. This also provided an opportunity for the broader SLaM pilot to help prioritize the proposed interventions.

Method

In an Intervention Design workshop (September 2019), 14 Head Teachers, 14 SMC Chairpersons, 2 representatives of Gurans Municipality, 4 Save the Children Nepal staff, 1 Save the Children Norway staff, and 1 Informed International staff member met to:

- Assess the extent to which stakeholders are exhibiting principles in practice as documented by the participants in their journals
- Outline the SLaM intervention design and gather feedback from workshop participants
- Prioritize SLaM interventions

To assess the extent to which stakeholders were exhibiting principles in practice, stakeholder groups were asked to reflect upon their journals and identify 2 principles they are actively working on and 2 with which they are currently struggling.

To outline the SLaM intervention design and gather feedback from participants, the SC Nepal staff presented the intervention ideas and facilitated a plenary discussion on the proposed workshop.

Finally, building upon these 2 activities, the group mapped each potential activity against a graph of feasibility and impact. This was done as a group, encouraging discussion, debate, and deliberation to ensure interventions could be prioritized.

It is with the information generated from the Intervention Design Workshop in September 2019 that the Task Team used to inform the Intervention Design Planning Workshop in November 2019.

The results of both of these workshops are presented here.

Figure 14 Intervention design workshop participants.

Results
The results of the SLaM principles reflection activity are shown in Table 9.

Table 9 Journal reflections regarding achievement of principles

Principle	Head Teachers		SMC		SCiN / SOSEC	
	Working on	Challenge	Working on	Challenge	Working on	Challenge
Learning & Wellbeing	✓✓✓✓✓✓ ✓✓✓✓✓		✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓ ✓✓✓✓✓		✓✓✓✓ ✓✓	
Distributed Leadership	✓✓✓✓✓			✓✓✓✓		✓✓
Resources	✓	✓✓✓✓✓		✓✓✓✓✓		✓✓✓
Political Neutrality	✓✓	✓✓✓✓ ✓✓	✓	✓✓✓		✓✓✓✓
Inclusive education	✓✓		✓✓✓✓ ✓✓✓✓		✓	
Teacher's Professional Development				✓✓✓✓	✓✓✓✓✓	
Values	✓					
Safe/child-friendly schools	✓	✓✓✓✓ ✓✓	✓✓✓✓		✓	
Policy Alignment		✓✓✓		✓✓		
Sharing & Learning Culture	✓✓	✓✓✓✓✓		✓✓✓✓✓		✓✓

As shown in Table 9, Head Teachers most commonly reported that they were actively working on the principle related to learning and wellbeing as well as distributed leadership. They were challenged by the principles related to resources, political neutrality, safe/child-friendly schools, and a sharing and learning culture. SMCs, on the other hand, reported most actively working on learning and wellbeing within the schools and inclusive education. This group was challenged by distributed leadership, resources, teacher's professional development, and sharing and learning culture. Save the Children and SOSEC similarly focused on learning and wellbeing as well as teacher's professional development while struggling with political neutrality and resources.

With the successes and challenges related to the principles outlined, the team then transitioned to discuss the interventions and to what extent they can be effective in overcoming challenges identified. The interventions in Figure 13 were presented workshop participants for discussion and feedback. The team struggled to get much feedback from the workshop participants. The facilitators tried several different strategies to engage the workshop participants including a game on communication (whispers) as well as probing. Unfortunately, these approaches were not successful, and the workshop participants did not offer much feedback regarding the proposed interventions during the overall plenary. Reflection from workshop facilitators (Save the Children Nepal and Informed International staff) was that the challenge in engaging workshop participants in these discussions illustrates the lack of experience these participants have in actively taking part in programme development. Throughout the pilot project facilitators found it a challenge to get reflections and opinions from the participants. The team used a variety of strategies to overcome this challenge, but it does speak to a larger challenge which is that community members are not used to being collaborative partners in development projects. In a way, this project had social and behaviour change goals/aims of the project participant, as well – which, of course, takes time. The initial activity of building the principles together is one example of how the Task Team overcame this challenge but it is could be further strengthened over time within these schools. The team should also expect similar (if not more) challenges in new contexts.

Figure 15 Workshop participants demo one proposed intervention, Amplio's Talking Book.

During an additional day of the workshop, facilitators broke participants into groups (mixed by stakeholder type and school). Each group was assigned 1 proposed intervention and provided with discussion questions. The discussion questions and results are summarized as follows:

Group 1: Leadership Trainings

- Are the topics outlined appropriate? Anything not needed? Anything missing?
- Are there any trainings that should combine the 3 streams (head teacher/teacher, SMC, ministry officials) or should the 3 streams be kept separate for all trainings?
- How/when do we carry out trainings without taking stakeholders away from school? Please outlined a suggested schedule.

A few strategies for the leadership trainings that were identified during the discussion are highlighted below, in particular:

- Head Teachers and SMC should include being in the training of the municipality on their planning processes.
- Request for subject-wise stakeholders (such as in math)
- Recommended initial trainings at the start of the school year with refresher trainings coming monthly, quarterly, and annually.
- The proposed trainings will take a lot of time away from teaching, so request that trainings be scheduled for weekend, public holidays, and school holidays.

Interestingly, SMC representatives questioned the merits of the trainings, saying it was wasting time since schools should have teachers that are already fully trained. This again points to an ongoing theme of each stakeholder group blaming others, a challenge SLaM grappled with throughout the programme. The team recognized that the social accountability component of the SLaM project model was particularly important considering this context. As such, there was effort to have different stakeholder groups share their experiences and perspectives through the governance workshops and SLaM principles rubric. In addition, skilled facilitation at meetings/workshops ensured that every group was given an opportunity to voice perspectives and share experiences.

Group 2: Communication for Development

- For each of the 3 proposed sub-components of Communication for Development, provide reflections on the feasibility for implementing and potential impact of suggested sub-component.
    - Are sub-components filling a gap or are there already school initiatives that cover some of the interventions?
- Consider parent-teacher meetings, would this take place in the school or within households?
- For each sub-components, what steps are needed for implementation?
    - Outline a suggested schedule for implementing the three sub-components.

The discussion amongst the group was generally supportive of communication for development initiatives that were proposed. They stressed the importance of meetings between SMC, PTA, and government officials throughout the year. Additionally, the group identified the lack of a resource person in the Palika to be a challenge which is preventing teachers and head teachers from being aware of technology advancements.

Interestingly, some tension was identified between SMC and head teachers. SMC suggested that teachers and head teachers be assessed regarding their knowledge of education policies. Save the Children staff facilitated discussion among the groups which ultimately agreed that policy capacity building would be part of SLaM programming.

Group 3: Digital Networking Platform

- What capabilities do we need in a digital networking platform?
    - Suggestions so far: resource management, communication/chat boards, photo sharing capabilities
- Consider Head Teachers, Teachers, and SMC members: do they all have access to network thru a smart phone or computer?
- The current proposition is to have 1 platform, with 3 different streams, so that stakeholders across schools can connect. Thoughts or reflections on this?
- What steps are needed for implementing this intervention?
    - Outline a suggested schedule

Conversations within this group revolved around requests for additional IT support within each school such as laptops, internet, and projectors.

Regarding availability of phones – the team found that head teachers and teachers had smartphones but not all SMC members did.

The team also discussed how technology is being misused in schools that do have it. There is a nearby school that has Wi-Fi but the school is misusing it, just watching YouTube and using it for Facebook. This was an important note to the importance of a strategy to be developed alongside the implementation of any technology interventions for SLaM.

The results of the feasibility-impact mapping activity are shown in Figure 16.

FEASIBILITY-IMPACT INTERVENTION MAPPING

DE WORKSHOP – DAY 2

FEASIBILITY

Values
Foster parental awareness on the possible effects that celebrating local festivals has on school activities.

Values
Formation of social audit committee

Distributed Leadership
Build capacity of school stakeholders on SIP development and implementation.

Learning & Sharing
Learning from training should be the main agenda at Palika level SMC meetings

Resource Management
Formation of resources management committee comprising WEC, NGO, livelihood cooperatives, SMC, parents, teachers, for budget requirements to achieve the school's yearly plans based on SIP.

Learning and Wellbeing
Conduct supervision of all students' attendance on a monthly basis and reward the best students every term

Learning & Sharing Culture
Share learnings from trainings and workshops in teachers meeting

Safe/Child Friendly
School safety policies and code of conduct

Learning and Wellbeing
Every 2 months, the SMC meeting agenda should include monitoring of and feedback to teachers on the use of educational materials in classes.

Political Neutrality
Conduct ward level discussions to resolve politically influenced conflicts among teachers and other school stakeholders

Inclusive Education
Workshops on Code of conduct (COC) committee formation, COC prep and awareness raising to school stakeholders

TPD
Provide specific subject trainings to teachers (eg in mathematics)

Distributed Leadership
Six monthly monitoring and supervisions on SIP implementation by stakeholders - SMC, PTA, WEC, CC, Teachers, NGO (currently done annually)

Learning and Wellbeing
Honor or Reward best teacher

Resource Management
Ward/Municipality level stakeholders should monitor the physical infrastructure / resources of schools, prepare reports and address problems accordingly

Political Neutrality
Do not establish sister/brother organizations of political parties in schools

Inclusive Education
Positive parenting training/ awareness to parents

TPD
Reward best Head Teacher / Teacher at Municipality/ ward / school levels

Political Neutrality
Neither teachers or students should take part in political programs that cause absence from school or disrupt the school program.

Safe/Child Friendly
Foster school health and nutrition

Distributed Leadership
Capacitate WEC, SMC, PTA, and child clubs (CC) on their roles and responsibilities annually.

Learning & Sharing Culture
Conduct national or international level training workshops and learning visits

TPD
Every teacher maintains a teacher record book with lesson plans. Head teachers, SMC / School supervisors carry monitoring and provide feedback to teachers.

Policy Alignment
Hold regular meetings of head teachers at municipality and ward levels

Inclusive Education
Empower female students through leadership development opportunities.

Values / Safe/Child Friendly
Establish a complaints committee and provide training to its members

Policy Alignment
Wards formulate education plan and implement it

Policy Alignment
Orientation on municipal education policy and plans, as well as ensuring school SIPs align with municipal policy/plans and its implementation approach/ timeline

Resource Management
Conduct inter-ward school visit program (includes a teacher teaching at another school for a day/week)

IMPACT

Figure 16 Mapping of interventions against feasibility and impact levels

It is with this information gathered from programme participants that the SLaM Task Team held planning discussions to narrow the intervention approaches and discuss the approach for designing and piloting each intervention.

The result of the planning workshop was an outline of materials required (outline for the intervention design document) for each intervention and a 'lead' who was responsible for coordinate the working group for the intervention. The results of this discussion are in Table 10.

Table 10 Working Groups for Intervention Design Working Groups (Initial)

Intervention Area	Coordinator
School Message Boards	Sine
Talking Book	Cameron
Digital Networking Platform	Yam
School Leadership	Cameron (with support from Laxmi)
Governance Workshop	Lisa
Parent-Teacher Meetings	Atma Ram
Planning, Monitoring, Coaching	Matrika / Binod

The initial goal was to have the intervention designs drafted by mid-December allowing thorough time for review, revision, planning, with an implementation launch of March 2020. As discussed in the next section this timeline was tight considering the amount of content that needed to be developed. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the launch from taking place in March 2020.

! After an initial trial with the Working Groups, coupled by the stressors of the pandemic, the team pivoted and changed roles and responsibilities for the development of the interventions. This included the responsibilities of intervention design being shifted away from the Save the Children Nepal team due to their need to shift resources and time to COVID response within their programming areas, as well as changes to the intervention design. The intervention focus was narrowed, with one component of the Talking Book being dropped and the planning, monitoring, and coaching component being integrated into the interventions of the Leadership Institute and Governance. The revised intervention areas and roles/responsibilities for this are shown in Table 11.

Table 11 Intervention Areas and Person(s) Responsible (Adjusted)

Intervention Area	Person Responsible

1. Communication for Development
   • School Message Boards, Parent-Teacher Meetings
   • Virtual Community of Practice (V-COP)
	
	Sine
	Luke

2. Leadership Institute (Expert-led, learning with peers, self-directed learning)	Cameron
3. Governance (SIP workshop, SLaM rubric, micro-grants)	Lisa

As discussed in the roles and responsibilities as well as the lessons learned, this had significant implications for Informed's contract, shifting budget for travel into intervention design, placing the responsibility on the Informed team rather than the Working Groups for the development of content for SLaM.

The Talking Book intervention was dropped, a decision taken by SCN leadership in close consultation with SCiN[8], based on concerns about the complexity and risks involved with the logistics and import of the Talking Book during lockdown, high costs, and ongoing questions regarding sustainability of the intervention. Given the stress of the pandemic, limited time, and budget, SCN leadership determined it best to focus efforts on other interventions rather than the Talking Book.

Given the collaborative nature of the SLaM pilot project, the dropping of the Talking Book intervention in August 2020 did have unintended consequences. Several of the Task Team members felt surprised by the decision. Unfortunately, task team members had spent a significant amount of time developing content and the operational design of the intervention, thinking that it was a good tool to address some of the challenges created by the pandemic – particularly enabling school leaders to directly connect with students and their parents.

Additionally, the proposed SLaM interventions had been introduced, discussed, and refined alongside the school leaders. As such, school leaders had been introduced to the Talking Book prior to the decision for it to be cancelled. This led to questions and confusion among the school leaders and required significant communication efforts by the SLaM project coordinator.

Finally, it is unfortunate that Amplio (the supplier of the Talking Book) had worked hard to negotiate the contract, sort out import taxes, and had volunteered time developing a contract strategy (under false understanding that the contract was being signed and included consulting days). The cancelation of the intervention came 24 hours after the final contract had been negotiated. This led to poor relations among the organizations, particularly Amplio, a small NGO with limited resources.

This is an example of one of the challenges with such a collaborative approach to project development and points to lessons learned for better communication and consultation.

Starting in September 2020 the SLaM intervention was best conceived of in three main components: Communication for Development, Governance, and the Leadership Institute.

Objective 8. Implementation approach including technical content, timelines, partners, milestones.

From December 2019 to March 2020, the working groups developed intervention design documents. Each intervention design document included:

- Background / justification for the intervention
- Contextual considerations for the intervention to be implemented in Nepal
- Relevance / relation to other SLaM interventions
- Goal of the intervention
- Key activities, deliverables of the intervention
- Timeline for implementation
- Theory of change
- Risks/Limitations
- Key indicators of success
- Sustainability plan
- Developmental evaluation questions
- Intervention supporting materials such as workshop / training guidelines, resources, etc.

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[8] There are differing perspectives of this as the SLaM Task Team Coordinator (SCiN) was unaware of the decision and continued to work on the contract negotiations after the decision had made. Additionally it was communicated to the consultants that the SCN Education Technology Specialist was unaware of the discussions and decision until it had already been made.

The intervention design documents were to be updated as implementation took place, incorporating lessons from field implementation and adapting the approach as necessary. It is important to note, however, that the teams struggled to create sufficient guidance and implementation approaches using the working group structure and on the limited time allocations available for the project. With the changes instigated by COVID-19, the working group model ceased to move forward. Along with the other changes to the intervention design described earlier in the report, the technical content, timelines, and implementation approach all adjusted. Details of each intervention area is outlined below.

<u>Leadership Institute</u>
Implementation approach
The Leadership Institute was designed to build capacity across 3 dimensions of school leadership (11 competencies): lead teaching and learning, effectively manage the school, and engage parents and community members, as shown in Table 12.

Table 12 Leadership Institute Dimensions and Competencies

1. LEAD TEACHING AND LEARNING	2. EFFECTIVELY MANAGE THE SCHOOL	3. ENGAGE PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS
1.1 Vision for student learning: Supports teachers in identifying and planning for each student's learning needs, ensuring equitable learning opportunity for all children.	**2.1 Establish school goals and priorities:** develop, implement and monitor long term and short-term goals, priorities and plans for school improvement using a participatory approach utilising data on student learning and teaching practices.	**3.1 Support parent involvement in student learning:** supports and equips teachers and parents to continuously collaborate to improve children's learning progress in both the home and school.
1.2 Promote high quality teaching: monitors teaching quality through lesson observation and provides coaching support to teachers. Works with teachers to use data from student learning assessments and lesson observations to better target children's learning needs.	**2.2 Manage school resources effectively:** establish procedures and processes to efficiently organise and manage school financial, physical and human resources in line with school vision and improvement plans.	**3.2 Communicate effectively:** actively seeks to communicate in multiple ways with parents and the wider school community to effectively share information and gather feedback.
1.3 Enable teacher professional development: encourage teacher's self-reflection, goal setting and growth by supporting TPD planning, facilitate peer learning networks and encourage a professional development culture in school.	**2.3 Foster accountability and transparency:** model exemplary professional behaviour and ethical standards in line with their formal roles and responsibilities. Promotes accountability and transparency through forums like the social audit, SSA and school message boards.	**3.3 Practice distributed leadership and build a collaborative culture:** foster an environment that is mutually supportive and collaborative, where stakeholders have agency and accountability in decision making, planning, implementation and monitoring/ evaluation.

1.4 Improve own practice as a school leader: seeks to continuously improve own professional practice as a school leader in line with the 10 SLaM principles.	2.4 Promote a safe, positive and inclusive environment: emphasise teacher and student's wellbeing and implement strategies that promote a positive, safe and inclusive learning environment.	

These competencies were identified based the government of Nepal's policy guidance[9], data collected within SLaM, and global literature. The SLaM pilot narrowed the focus of the capacity building to the 4 competencies associated with the first dimension: leading teaching and learning. The decision to narrow the focus was because of the limited implementation timeline (1 year). The decision to focus on the leading teaching and learning dimension was because the SLaM Task Team articulated that bringing qualitative improvements to school commences with improving teaching and learning within the school. Given the year of implementation, there had to be prioritization of leadership institute competencies to ensure a manageable content load for participants. As such, within the dimension of leading teaching and learning, the specific activities were identified based on the baseline data collection findings and the context within target municipality.

The SLaM pilot aimed to build the knowledge and skills of Head Teachers and Municipal Education Officials toward the strengthening of the 4 competencies within the Leading Teaching and Learning dimension through two 3-day workshops. While the workshops delivered expert-led training, they also included activities to support peer and self-directed learning.

The first workshop took place 4-6 August 2021. The second workshop took place 27-29 August 2021. The workshops were facilitated by Save the Children Nepal and SOSEC staff and had all 14 schools represented throughout the workshops. The workshop objectives are summarized as follows:

Table 13 Prioritized Competencies for SLaM Pilot in Nepal (1 year of implementation)

Workshop 1	Workshop 2
Competency 1.1: Vision for Student Learning - Understand the benefit of school-based continuous assessments system - Know the components and requirements of school-based continuous assessments system - Ability to apply continuous assessments in classrooms **Competency 1.2: Promote High Quality Teaching** - Understand the role of a coach and discuss characteristics of successful coaches. - Establish a shared understanding of good teaching - Understand the need for coaching within current teacher support practices - Review classroom observation protocols that promote a relationship of trust and collaboration between teacher and observer	**Competency 1.3: Enable Teacher Professional Development** - To understand the application of government policy frameworks for teacher competency, teacher performance appraisal and teacher professional development. - To be able to apply the local context to the requirements of teacher professional development, as expressed in national policy. - To be familiar with planning requirements and templates for teacher professional development - To articulate next steps for applying policy frameworks of teacher competencies, performance appraisal and professional development within schools of Gurans municipality. **Competency 1.4: Improve Own Practice as a School Leader**

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[9] The government of Nepal has policy guidance but not competencies for school leaders.

- Discuss and practice observation, note-taking, listening, promoting reflection, and effective ways of giving feedback	- Build knowhow on practices that enable personal growth and development as a school leader - Understand the SLaM Principles and their representation of goals for good school leadership - Be familiar with the SLaM Rubric and its purpose of self-assessment for school leaders - Apply self-assessment results using the SLaM rubric to professional development planning and reflection

The institute builds capacity through an approach comprise of 20% expert-led, 30% learning with peers, and 50% self-direct learning approach[10]. For each competency there are 4 targeted self-directed learning tasks: investigate, reflect, plan, and monitor.

Figure 17 Leadership Institute Capacity Building Approach

Task Team

To support self-directed learning, readings were made available to workshop participants in an effort to orient participants to the content and reflection questions intended to facilitate discussion among the group on the virtual community of practice (V-COP) platform[11]. In addition, the workshop participants committed to journaling twice a month[12]. For each competency, the workshop facilitated (prior or during) self-directed activities of investigate and reflect. During the workshop, participants were oriented to planning and monitoring activities.

As an example of the learning with peers activities integrated in the Leadership Institute, schools were to develop a CAS plan for grades 1-3, collectively with teachers in the school, by the 3rd of September.

DE Questions & Methodology
The Task Team aimed to answer the following DE questions (categorized by learning approach) related to the Leadership Institute:

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[10] Modeled after the Enabling Teachers Common Approach.
[11] The discussions did not take place on the V-COP component was not initiated prior to the workshop.
[12] SLaM documentation actually suggests journaling 10 minutes every day.

Expert-led training:

- Was the guidance followed or adapted? If so, why? Should we adopt into global documentation?
- Are head teachers actively participating in the workshop?
- What is the head teachers' opinion regarding the usefulness, relevance, and satisfaction of the expert led workshops?
- Is the workshop leading to gains in leadership?

Learning with peers:
- How beneficial do head teachers find learning with peers activities?
- Are there characteristics of more successful / less successful learning with peer activities?
  - Does there need to be intentional partnering?
- Are ministry officials effectively leading the learning with peers activities? If not, why not?

Self-directed learning:
- Are the self-directed tasks being carried out? If not, why not? What further support is needed?
- Did the stakeholders find the readings helpful / useful?
- How can we continue to provide access to new/helpful resources?

To answer these questions, the team documented the expert-led workshops through detailed reports and carried out debrief sessions among the Task Team. In addition, all workshop participants completed an evaluation form following the close of the second workshop. The Task Team uses these data sources to hold a DE workshop in October to discuss the intervention and inform updates/adjustments needed.

DE Findings
Findings from the Developmental Evaluation activities are outlined per the questions above.

Was the guidance followed or adapted? If so, why? Should we adopt the changes into global documentation?

Changes to the Leadership Institute documentation were made by examining the workshop reports and discussing the workshops as a Task Team. A summary of the changes made to the Leadership Institute documentations are presented in Figure 18.

SLAM LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE – WORKSHOP 1

PLANNED WORKSHOP CONTENT	ACTUAL WORKSHOP ACTIVITY
1. Self-directed learning (workshop pre-read) • 4 readings totalling 17 pages • 4 reflection questions	• Readings were translated and distributed two weeks prior to workshop • Unclear if readings were read. No written responses to the questions
2. Introduction to teacher coaching and why the role of a coach is important	• Appropriate and engaging content on teacher coaching • Strong reflections were provided based on pre-workshop survey results
3. Lesson observation and feedback to teachers	• Appropriate and engaging content (e.g. role play) on teacher coaching • Strategies and resources provided were helpful • Currently, there is no systematic lesson observation and coaching
4. Introduction to continuous assessment (CAS) and classroom-based techniques	• Appropriate and engaging content. • No information captured on results of session activities • Variation – HT from Surkhet facilitated a session not CAS related
5. Establishing and planning for CAS in schools	• Variation – ETC trainer delivered the session • Appropriate content and use of ETC trainer deepened understanding
6. Learning with Peers – post-workshop tasks	• Conduct lesson observation & coaching to teachers • Review and develop plan for CAS in grades 1-3 (by Sept 3rd) • Completion of tasks was inhibited by lockdown/school closures (Covid)

SLAM LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE – WORKSHOP 2

PLANNED WORKSHOP CONTENT	ACTUAL WORKSHOP ACTIVITY / RESULTS
1. Self-directed learning (workshop pre-read) • 4 readings totalling 15 pages • 4 reflection questions	• Pre-reads translated and distributed on time? • Recommendation: follow up before the training whether documents read. • 4 reflection questions were not posted to VCOP before workshop
2. Introduction to TPD and experience within schools of Gurans municipality	• Appropriate content, but insufficient time allocation to complete session • Using local survey data enabled relevant contextualisation of topic • Reflection on current practices with six thinking hats and forcefield analysis provided useful strategies for encouraging participant engagement
3. Practical and Effectual TPD activities plus individual and school TPD plans	• The session was appropriately designed. Participants strongly engaged. • Encouraged participants to think differently, that there are different ways and effective means for TPD that are not limited to training workshops
4. Planning for TPD	• Session was designed appropriately. Strong participation and engagement. • Action plan completed, including scheduling TPD planning activity in schools • Who is following up and supporting these activities?
5. SLaM rubric, self assessment and group participatory sessions	• Session content was followed, was appropriate and all participants engaged • SLaM principles are being used by schools but they struggle with Principle 4 • Reflection on criteria and processes for achievement of SLaM Principles • Unclear if participants understand rubrics and the requirement for SLaM
6. Learning with Peers - post-workshop tasks	• Commitment to regularly journal twice a month. Guidance was 10 min daily • SLaM Rubric Self-Reflection (12th Nov); SLaM Principles Action Plan (30th Nov) • TPD plans developed with each teacher

Figure 18 SLaM Leadership Institute Workshop Reflections

Based on the feedback in the Figure 18, the Leadership Institute documentation was adjusted and updated. Overall, Save the Children Nepal expressed high levels of satisfaction with the documentation provided in the training materials.

One note was that the PowerPoint presentations for Workshop 1 were provided to Save the Children Nepal at a time close to the training which prevented adequate translation of those materials. This challenge was remedied for the 2nd workshop.

Other reflections on the Leadership Institute included challenges with the time allocated for training. In particular for competencies 1.1 and 1.3, the content was difficult to deliver within the time allowed for the workshop. This was on both sides – from the perspective of the facilitators, it was difficult to get through all the materials and from the perspective of the participants, it was challenging material that required more time to interpret and digest. The workshop content has been adjusted to better account for time constraints – simplifying a few activities.

Are head teachers actively participating in the workshop?

All schools participated in the workshops and the reports all identified high levels of engagement. There were two instances noted in reports and reflection workshops that enhanced participation in the workshops. In the first workshop there was a role play on effective listening strategies for coaches. The second workshop had an activity on using the "six thinking hats" to examine recommendations for improving teacher professional development.

What is the head teachers' opinion regarding the usefulness, relevance, and satisfaction of the expert led workshops?

Results of the Leadership Institute participant evaluation form are presented in Figures 19 and 20. Overall, participants expressed agreement with statements that the workshops were useful, relevant, and satisfactory. Of particular note, the level of agreement decreased with statements regarding self-directed/peer learning and the time and effort required of the training was reasonable.

To what extent do you **agree** with the following statements:

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Strongly disagree ■ Disagree

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral
Workshop 1 supported my learning as a school leader	5	11	
Pre-reads were practical for role as a school leader	5	11	
Workshop 1 supported my TPD learning	4	12	
Leading Teaching & Learning component is practical for school leadership	4	12	
Training content met expectations	3	13	
Workshop 2 supported my learning as a school leader	2	14	
Workshop 2 supported my TPD learning	2	14	
Carried out Competency 1.1 Learning with Peers activity	2	14	
Carried out Competency 1.2 Learning with Peers activity	1	15	
Pre-reads were helpful prepare for SI training	2	13	1
I understand the requirements for self-directed / peer learning	5	7	4
Time and effort required is reasonable	1	9	6

Figure 19 Leadership Institute Evaluation Results, Level of Agreement, 2021

The SLaM Institute is **useful** for school leaders in:
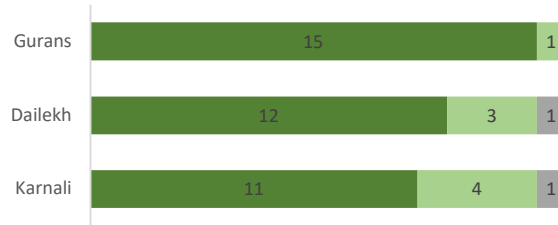
Figure 20 Leadership Institute Evaluation Results, Usefulness, 2021

Is the workshop leading to gains in leadership?

Although a standardized knowledge assessment was not carried out, participants were asked to identify 3 things that they learned during each workshop. The results of this question are presented in Figure 21.

In Workshop 1, most participants identified learning continuous assessment, the virtual community of practice[13], and coaching/mentoring practices. In workshop 2, participants reflected on learning the SLaM rubric self-assessment, general teacher professional development, and teacher performance appraisal.

What did you learn during the workshops?

Participants were asked to list 3 things that they learned during each workshop...
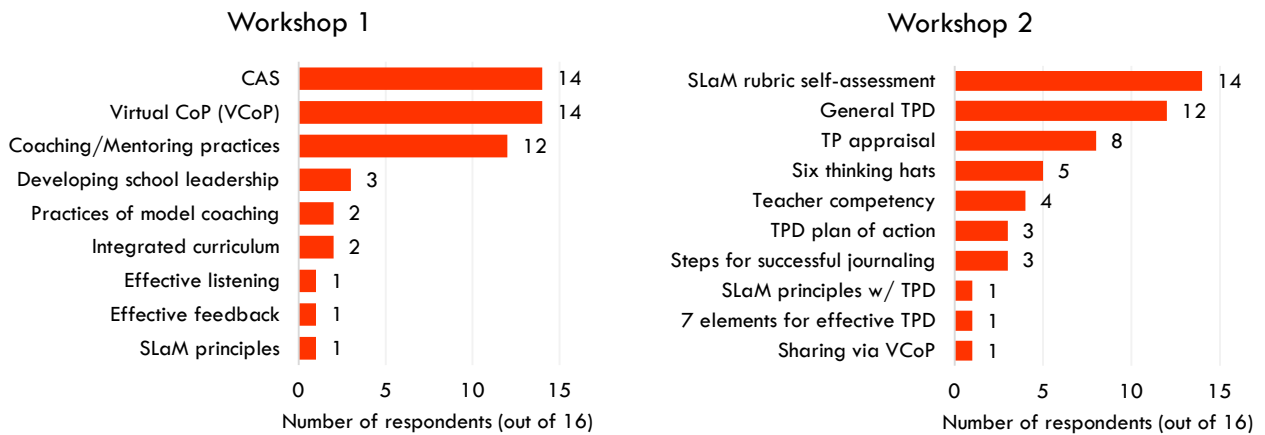
Figure 21 Leadership Institute Evaluation Results, Learning, 2021

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[13] Note that the virtual community of practice was not a competency within the Leadership Institute

How will you change your ways of working as a school leader?

Most respondents describe that they will be providing more coaching and mentoring to teachers as well as practicing the SLaM principles and preparing action plans.

"Coaching and mentoring – Feedback to teachers after observing classroom teaching practice. To establish learning and sharing culture with peer learning."

"Prepare action plan to implement SLaM learnings from SLaM institute training workshop (CAS, Self-assessment, and VCoP) and emphasize on practice of VCoP."

Figure 22 Quotes from the Leadership Institute Evaluation Form

A knowledge and practice assessment was not carried out because the capacity building approach was not only expert-led activities (capacity needed to be built across a mix of expert, self, and peer learning activities). As discussed elsewhere in this report, once self and peer activities are implemented, it would be worth assessing the extent to which these activities improved leadership practices.

How beneficial do head teachers find learning with peers activities?

In discussion with the Task Team, it was determined that this question was not appropriate *yet* given the short time frame of the Leadership Institute implementation to date. However, as shown in Figure 19 workshop participants reported having carried out the recommended learning with peers activities from Workshop 1. Evidence of this would be the CAS plan, however, these have not been shared with the Task Team at the time of this report.

Are there characteristics of more successful/less successful learning with peer activities?

Given the limited implementation timeline we have not had the time to identify more/less successful learning with peer activities.

Are ministry officials effectively leading the learning with peers activities?

Given the limited implementation timeline we have not had the time to identify more/less successful learning with peer activities.

Are the self-directed tasks being carried out? If not, why not? What further support is needed?
As shown in the evaluation form, Figure 19, there are mixed results when it comes to understanding the self/peer directed learning activities. While these were initiated in the Leadership Institute workshops, there has been little evidence of planning and monitoring of self-directed activities (at least little evidence visible to the Task Team).

Did the stakeholders find the readings helpful / useful?
A majority (15 of the 16 respondents) stated that the pre-reads were helpful. It is important to note, however, that the level of agreement is significantly less than for other questions (significantly fewer 'strongly agreed' than other questions).

How can we continue to provide access to new/helpful resources?
Participants identified the V-COP as a key tool for continuing to share new/helpful resources. Unfortunately, the fact that the V-COP has not been implemented alongside the Leadership Institute, it is difficult to say how/to what extent additional resources are accessed/used through the V-COP.

> **Provide any other comments you have about the evaluation questions, the SLaM Institute, or other recommendations for supporting her professional development of school leaders.**
>
> Half of the respondents provided comments to this question:
>
> - Need more clarification on CAS, V-COP is effective at present pandemic situation.
> - Regular monitoring, coaching, mentoring, and feedback is needed.
> - Need training on CAS (Grade 1-3) evaluation.
> - Training should be more relevant and contextual.
> - Need more practical knowledge and action from Palika education officials to make teacher's performance appraisal effective instead of just formal.
> - Provide more TPD training based on teacher's real needs.
> - Survey more on the TPD needs and training as per the demand.

Figure 23 Qualitative feedback from the Leadership Institute Evaluation Form

Conclusions

Overall, the Leadership Institute expert-led trainings were a success when measured by facilitator's reflections on the materials and participation as well as participant's reflections on the usefulness, relevance, and satisfaction.

The main challenge identified with the expert-led trainings is timing. To address the challenge of limited time for expert-led training, there are two possibilities: either decrease the learning objectives (content) or increase time/support provided.

Regarding decreasing learning objectives, the SLaM pilot provided expert-led training for 4 of the 11 competencies. This was provided in 1 year. An option could be to decrease the number of competencies covered in 1 year to 2, aligning the SLaM pilot approach to that of Save the Children's common approach for Teacher Professional Development (TPD). This would have implications for how long SLaM would need to be implemented and is a discussion for the Save the Children considering time/resources. The Leadership Institute Guidance documentation includes options for how best to build capacity. If 2 competencies are completed each year, it would take over 5 years for SLaM school leaders to complete all 11 competencies. Of course, school turnover would further challenge/complicate this approach. One other option would be to carry out a baseline assessment of the schools to prioritize competencies for a particular context and programme timeline.

Regarding increasing time/support provided, the SLaM pilot was limited to 6 days of face-to-face training for the Leadership Institute. Limiting the days spent in training was purposeful by Save the Children, recognizing the importance for teachers to be in the classroom. However, as a point of reference, SLaM allocated 1.5 days for CAS whereas the MoEST previously trained on CAS for a period of 5-10 days. A few options to balance these competing priorities[14]:

- Partner with the Provincial Education Training Centre for these trainings.
- Organize trainings on school breaks.
- Provide further support for capacity building through the community of practice (a combination of the Virtual-COP and the face-to-face COP/Save the Children visits).

The SLaM pilot was limited in its ability to visit schools for coaching and mentoring due to the pandemic. There is potential that in the future (post-pandemic) Save the Children's additional support

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[14] The Leadership Institute Guidance has been updated to align to the school calendar with ideal timing of these workshops taking place during school breaks.

through regular school visits could effectively supplement the expert-led training. This would need further monitoring and evaluation.

Related to this, the Task Team has little knowledge regarding the extent to which self-directed and peer learning activities were carried out. Deadlines for activities (such as the development of the CAS and TPD plans) have passed but the Task Team has not reviewed documentation/evidence of these plans. This is due to the inability to visit schools but also due to delays in implementation of the V-COP intervention which would have been a source for facilitating these learning activities.

Finally, the Task Team has identified a challenge in not having a Trainer of Trainers (ToT). The SLaM pilot was designed without ToTs given the idea that interventions would be collaboratively developed among all Task Team members (including those then implementing the tasks). However, given time constraints much of the development of materials/guidance documentation was done by the consultants. Building in time[15] to then orient/train Save the Children Nepal/SOSEC staff should be a priority in the future as the pilot heavily relied upon these staff reading the materials and orienting themselves.

Governance

Implementation approach
The SLaM baseline found, regarding school governance, that policies are in place that support transparency, accountability, and participation. However, stakeholders do not follow the guidance and policies established by the ministry. Thus, the SLaM Task Team defined the goal of SLaM's governance programming to be to make the existing process of School Self-Assessment, Social Audit, A-SIP/SIP more participatory and effective.

Implementation approach
To do so, the Task Team identified the intervention activities and deliverables described in Table 14.

Table 14 SLaM Intervention Activities and Deliverables

Intervention Component	Objective	Facilitators	Participants	Deliverable	Frequency
1-Day Governance Workshop	Clarify roles and responsibilities of school stakeholders	Save the Children Nepal, SOSEC, Municipality representative	Representatives of the SMC, PTA, Student/Child Clubs, Community, head Teachers, Teachers	Accountability matrix, agreed to and signed by all school stakeholders, posted at the school	Occurs once at each school, to 'kick off' SLaM Governance initiatives
Participatory School Self-Assessment & School Improvement Planning	Facilitate and support QLF school self-assessments 4 times per year by: training head teachers in school self-assessment methodology as part of regular quality assessment and assurance; supervision and facilitating school self-assessments	Save the Children Nepal, SOSEC to facilitate the first year, gradually building capacity of school stakeholders	Representatives of the SMC, PTA, Student/Child Clubs, Community, head Teachers, Teachers	Consolidated self-assessment results, produced quarterly and used for informing the School Improvement Plan (SIP), posted on board outside of school, communicated via School Message boards, PTMs, and Talking Book	At least 1 time a year
Micro-Grants	To build capacity of school leaders to	Save the Children,	Head Teachers, teachers, SMC	Completed proposal that	One per year,

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[15] Consultants did provide calls to orient staff to the materials, but these were limited (difficult to find times for meetings and were limited to 1-2 hours given virtual nature of meetings).

	identify, apply for, obtain, and manage funding that supports achievement of A-SIP/SIP objectives.	SOSEC, Municipality review and approve grants		meets quality standards. Completion of grant implementation report.	aligned to A-SIP.
SLaM Rubric	Embed practice of reflecting on SLaM school leadership principles and developing action steps to carry out principles.	Save the Children Nepal, SOSEC to facilitate the first year, gradually building capacity of school stakeholders	Representatives of the SMC, PTA, Student/Child Clubs, Community, head Teachers, Teachers	SLaM Rubric completed with scores and displayed on the school message board.	School assessment: 2 times a year Self-assessment (Head Teacher): 4 times a year

At the time of implementing the 1-day governance workshop and participatory school self-assessment (SSA) and school improvement planning (SIP), the pandemic prevented groups of greater than 15 people from gathering. Given this, the SLaM pilot implemented the 1-day governance workshop, participatory SSA, and SIP activities all as a 2-day governance workshop held at each school. This revised 2-day governance workshop took place in November 2020 over a 2-week period, with Save the Children Nepal and SOSEC visiting each school. At each school there were 15 people (representatives of teachers, SMC, parents, students) that took part in the workshop.

For the 2021 A-SIP, Save the Children/SOSEC provided limited support through a 1-day workshop with all head teachers. The head teachers were then to go and facilitate the participatory approach.

In November and December of 2020, the schools completed a micro-grant application, linked to their SIP. Schools implemented those grants and a completion report was written in June 2021. The Task Team carried out a DE workshop reviewing the grants in February 2021 which informed a revised approach to the grant process, implemented in August 2021.

The SLaM rubric was introduced to 4 schools in November 2021 through school visits by Save the Children Nepal and SOSEC. The target was to have all 14 schools complete the SLaM Rubric by the end of November, but this was not achieved.

DE Questions
The following Developmental Evaluation questions were examined for each of the governance components.

SIP/ASIP
- Was the SIP workshop design carried out?
- Did the SIP workshop get us what we wanted?
  - Increased participation of stakeholders in the SIP development?
    - Why or why not?
    - Do we have reasonable expectations of participation in the SIP?
  - A more contextually sound SIP?
- Have we created sustainable change in how the SIP is created?

Micro-Grants
- Was the Micro-Grant application process carried out the way we intended?
  - Applications
  - Review process
- Did the activity get us what we wanted?
  - Did the micro-grant designs align to the SIP and to SLaM Principles?

- o   Did the head teachers get experience designing and writing a high-quality grant application?
- Have we created sustainable change in practice? Do we have confidence that head teachers are able to design and write grant applications moving forward?
  - If not, what would it take to get us to this point?

SLaM Rubric
- Are head teachers regularly using the rubric to reflect and plan?
- Are communities regularly using the rubric to reflect and plan?
- Are the plans being shared to the communities?
  - o   To what extent is sharing the plans leading to accountability?
- To what extent are the SLaM principles being progressed/demonstrated?

In early 2021, the Task Team translated and reviewed 3 SIPs and micro-grants during a Developmental Evaluation Workshop. In mid/late 2021, the Task Team translated and reviewed the A-SIP and micro-grants from 2 schools. These were again discussed during a DE workshop to inform program adaptation. The SLaM Rubric workshops were facilitated by 2 Save/SOSEC staff. They were provided with DE questions for reflection which were reported on to the Task Team.

DE Findings
Findings from the Developmental Evaluation activities are outlined per the questions above.

Was the SIP workshop design carried out?
The DE workshop reflecting upon the SIP workshop identified a challenge of time, stating that the workshop could easily have taken 3 days as opposed to 2 due to the limited time for meeting during a day (approximately 4 hours of workshop after welcomes, breaks, and closing activities). Otherwise, the plan of the SIP workshop was followed.

Did the SIP workshop get us what we wanted?
Increased participation of stakeholders in the SIP development? A more contextually sound SIP?
The schools did complete a school self-assessment and school improvement plan in a participatory way. However, the review of the 3 SIPs revealed that there were still gaps in the SIP from what the Task Team had desired. In particular, there was little to no focus on teacher performance nor teacher professional development. Objectives and activities listed in the SIP were broad/general, lacking evidence of innovation/creativity which the SLaM projected had hoped to achieve. Overall, the Task Team felt that the objectives were too many (unrealistic for the time period) and the budgets available to the schools. A review of the budget showed that the schools had unrealistic expectations.

It was during the reflection process that the team learned that the MoEST has a SIP review tool. This review tool should be used in the future when reviewing the SIP. This could point to a challenge of rolling out interventions without thorough input from the entire Task Team. Additionally, the Task Team reflected that the SIPs could have been strengthened had the SIP development taken place after certain components of the Leadership Institute – which is now a recommendation in the revised Theory of Change.

Have we created sustainable change in how the SIP is created?
The 2020 SIP process was encouraging, showing evidence of a participatory approach/community engagement in the development of the SIP. Given constraints within implementation, little support was provided to the schools for the 2021 A-SIP development (1-day workshop across all schools). There were mixed results – some of the schools reported limited engagement in the participatory approach whereas others (such as Durgadevi) which facilitated a participatory approach.

Of note, a Save the Children Nepal staff member reflected: 'If SLaM wasn't happening, it is unlikely any of the SLaM schools would have an A-SIP right now' which shows some improvement – at least the schools are developing A-SIPs – however shows very little progress toward sustainable change to the SIP/A-SIP process.

Was the Micro-Grant application process carried out the way we intended?
There were two rounds of micro-grant applications during the SLaM pilot. During the first round, the application process was not carried out to plan because the implementation of the micro-grant was challenged by the need for Save the Children to disperse funds by 31 December (for fiscal year reporting). This led to limited review/feedback on the micro-grant applications. Based on the findings of the DE workshop (reviewing micro-grant applications), the review process/tool was revised to better support coaching and clarify guidance for schools.

The second round of micro-grant applications used the revised guidance including a 1-day orientation. This provided an opportunity for better coaching during the grant application development. As a result of the strengthened coaching, schools completed 2-3 rounds of revision for their grant applications.

Did the activity get us what we wanted? Did the micro-grant designs align to the SIP and to SLaM Principles? Did the head teachers get experience designing and writing a high-quality grant application?
The review of round 1 grant applications found the majority of schools requested money for technology interventions. These interventions lacked strategy and there was no clear linkage to the SIP nor SLaM principles.

The second round of grant applications improved upon the first round with stronger linkages to the A-SIP and SLaM principles. There was still an emphasis on ICT in the grant applications, but these proposals had a stronger strategy around them than in the first round. Of interest, one of the proposals reviewed asked for a TV to be funded to provide educational programming as the school lacked teachers for classes. The Task Team reflected that the emphasis on ICT may have been a result of the COVID pandemic and school closures, with a hope that ICT would help bridge the gaps caused by the pandemic.

Based on the baseline findings, schools have little to not experience writing grant applications like those provided in SLaM. Given this starting point, the rushed time schedule, and the limitations of guidance for round 1, there was significant progress made between round 1 and round 2 of grant applications, an encouraging finding for the building of capacity for grant application such as this.

Have we created sustainable change in practice? Do we have confidence that head teachers are able to design and write grant applications moving forward?
The Task Team reflected that secondary schools have more capacity for writing and carrying out the grants than the primary schools. So, while there has been significant progress made, SLaM has not been able to address some of the system-level challenges that very small schools face within Nepal. In the case of SLaM, 5 of the 14 schools have 3 or less teachers. These teachers have limited time to write, carry out, and build capacity for attaining grants. On the other hand, several of the larger schools reported having written and being awarded other grants, which is encouraging.

Are head teachers regularly using the rubric to reflect and plan? Are communities regularly using the rubric to reflect and plan? Are the plans being shared to the communities? To what extent are the SLaM principles being progressed/demonstrated?
The SLaM Rubric was implemented in 4 schools in November 2021. Given this, it is too early in the process to be able to comment on the Developmental Evaluation questions as articulated.

It is important to note, however, that the results of the SLaM rubric revealed most schools rating themselves at the level of a 3 (out of 4) on the SLaM principles. Further investigation is needed to determine if this is due to the calibration of the rubric or the discussions (facilitation) that took place during the workshops. In addition, it is possible that as the schools become more familiar with the principles that they will rate themselves lower.

Conclusions

The governance activities made progress on creating a participatory approach, facilitating transparency and distributed leadership. There is limited evidence that sustainable change was achieved – something that needs further support and investigation to better understand what it takes to create sustainable change within governance for these schools. Of particular importance is the need to examine the time which is required to achieve change and then to sustain that change.

This SLaM intervention identified differences between small and large schools within the SLaM pilot. This is an important finding which needs to be considered when implementing SLaM in different contexts. It is likely that further, targeted support is required to help support the small schools which are particularly stressed with limited staff, resources, and capacity.

Except for the SLaM rubric, the other governance interventions were implemented prior to the Leadership Institute expert-led workshops. This was a result of the global pandemic and many of the scheduling/gathering challenges that arose as a result of the pandemic. That being said, it is strongly recommended that in the future, expert-led trainings drive the activities of the governance intervention. That is, school leaders need to have develop the skills required to drive the participatory approaches outlined in the governance interventions.

SLaM Project Model

The SLaM Task Team started the pilot project with an initial theory of change which was used to guide the development of the project model. The initial theory of change was explored and revisited throughout the pilot as the team learned and adapted through the Developmental Evaluation process. As shown on the following page, the initial theory of change highlighted the importance of capacity in leading learning, distributed leadership, and effective management of resources as well as the importance of participatory approaches to build a broad school community that has shared vision and responsibility for the school. The initial theory of change did not specify the interventions or activities that the SLaM model would employ to create enhance leading learning, distributed leadership, and effective management.

The revised theory of change (shown in the pages that follow) incorporates the activities of the SLaM model and suggests an ideal phasing of those interventions so that the activities and expected outcomes are building upon one another. This is illustrated in the initial work to develop principles, followed by the leadership institute and governance activities. An additional shift between the initial theory of change and the revised theory of change is the emphasis on the school leaders (head teachers and SMC chairs) for driving the participatory approach within the school community. As such, initial activities lead to personal transformation and skill building of those leaders in order to effectively engage others such as teachers, SMC members, and the PTA.

The phasing of activities/interventions is based on the knowledge and experience gained through the pilot. The phasing in the revised theory of change, however, has not been piloted and is worth assessing, evaluating, and adapting as future Country Offices pilot the project model.

Initial Theory of Change

Revised Theory of Change

School Leadership and Management (SLaM) Theory of Change

Save the Children.

SLaM Activities

- Review evidence for effective school leadership and management

- Explore barriers and enabling factors for school leaders within programming area

- Collectively reflect on definition of effective school leadership and management

School leaders collaboratively develop principles for effective school leadership and management

Continuous reflection on achievement and action planning on principles through:

SLaM Activities

- Journaling
- SLaM Principles Rubric
- Peer Engagement (Virtual Community of Practice)

School leaders build contextually-relevant competencies such as:

- Continuous Assessment
- Teacher Professional Development
- Teacher Coaching

SLaM Leadership Institute

Head Teachers, SMC Chairs, Municipal Officials take part in:

- Expert-led Workshops
- Self-directed learning
- Learning with peers

School leaders are motivated to follow principles and take part in ongoing learning and improvement

School leaders have improved capacity to demonstrate:

- Leading Learning
- Distributed Leadership
- Effective Management

Accountability

School leaders undergo personal transformation to take action on:

○ Participatory School Governance

○ Communication

through contextually-relevant interventions such as:

- Governance workshop
- Participatory school self-assessment and school improvement planning
- Micro-Grants
- Parent Teacher Meetings
- School Message Boards

School leaders ignite collaborative action for school improvement (PTA, SMC, community, municipality)

Transparency

Participation

School community is empowered to create change within the school and to advocate for policy/system level change

Chapter 3:
Reflections on the Developmental Evaluation Process for SLaM

SLaM Developmental Evaluation Background

As discussed in the introduction to SLaM, Developmental Evaluation (DE) was the evaluation approach taken to assist the team in the development of the SLaM project model. DE was the appropriate approach considering the SLaM initiative required innovation and an iterative approach within a complex context.

SLaM's DE Approach

An initial DE Brief for SLaM was created in February 2019. This DE Brief had to fit within the budget allocated by Save the Children Norway for DE within the SLaM pilot project. Keeping the budget in mind, the DE brief outlined the DE Framework for SLaM, a proposed timeline of milestones, and a list of expected deliverables:

Developmental Evaluation supports innovation development to guide adaptation to emergent and dynamic realities in complex environments. Innovations can take the form of new projects, programs, products, organizational changes, policy reforms, and system interventions. A complex system is characterized by a large number of interacting and interdependent elements in which there is no central control. Patterns of change emerge from rapid, real time interactions that generate learning, evolution, and development – if one is paying attention and knows how to observe and capture the important and emergent patterns. Complex environments for social interventions and innovations are those in which what to do to solve problems is uncertain and key stakeholders are in conflict about how to proceed.

MICHAEL QUINN PATTON (2010)

- SLaM Guiding Principles
- Network map of stakeholders, partners, and relationships between entities
- Asset map of resources in the community related to school management
- Progress marker reports
- Project model design document and toolkit, including theory of change that can be used in additional contexts
- Learning journey document that outlines the 2-year developmental evaluation process

The initial DE Brief goes on to state:

Close collaboration between Save the Children Norway, Save the Children Nepal, and Informed International evaluators is critical to the success of the project. Many data collection exercises are conducted as part of the standard programming process, so it is essential that a field based Save the Children staff member function as a liaison between evaluators and programming staff.

It is also important that M&E staff at all levels work closely together. Save the Children Norway M&E staff member(s) will ensure the project is meeting the larger M&E goals of the organization, while Save the Children field-based staff will lead much of the data collection work. Informed International evaluators will rely heavily on these relationships to meet the goals of the developmental evaluation.

Within the SLaM Task Team there were 5 monitoring and evaluation specialists identified to be working on developmental evaluation activities, with support of the SLaM project coordinators:

- Developmental Evaluator for Informed International
- MEAL Specialist for Save the Children Norway
- MEAL Specialist for Save the Children Nepal
- MEAL Coordinator for Save the Children Nepal (2019-2020)
- SLaM Project Coordinators, Save the Children Nepal

Note that all 5 members of the DE team for SLaM had limited time availability for the project. None were full time for DE. In the case of the Nepal-based MEAL staff, one staff member had no time allowance for SLaM (but made an effort to take part) and one had a 5% time allowance. Consequently, the MEAL staff rarely had opportunity to contribute to the DE tasks. Thus, the project coordinator was required to absorb the role for DE while also fulfilling their main role of implementing the project.

This team led the development of data collection tools, analysis and reporting through progress markers, and facilitated DE workshops throughout the project. In the spirit of Developmental Evaluation, the team utilized tools and approaches as needed.

To meet contractual agreements between Informed International and Save the Children Norway, this final Developmental Evaluation Report was also commissioned.

This section of the report reflects upon the extent to which DE facilitated the creation of the SLaM project model. It outlines how the Task Team used DE, what worked, what did not work, and lessons learned regarding DE as it was used for the SLaM pilot project.

Overall, this chapter reflects upon SLaM's use of DE juxtaposed with USAID's Practical Guide for Implementing Developmental Evaluation[16]. The review recognizes that USAID's Guide for Developmental Evaluation may assume more resources available to organizations carrying out DE than that which Save the Children often operates under. That being said, as a leader within DE for international development (and due to a dearth of other DE references for international development) this resource does offer a helpful perspective when assessing SLaM's DE work.

Developmental Evaluation Appropriateness

Developmental Evaluation provides an approach to evaluation that is quick and ongoing, and takes an iterative approach to data collection, analysis, and feedback. Evaluators work closely with stakeholders to co-create timely adaptations throughout the program cycle, allowing for system changes as well as changes in targeted outcomes. Ideally, DEs serve as an intervention on programs, ultimately becoming an integral part of their functioning. In doing so, DE: enables timely, data-based decision-making and adaptation; supportive innovative, complex programming; and focuses on learning.

The USAID Practical Guide to Implementing Developmental Evaluation asks if any of the following criteria apply (if so, DE could be an appropriate solution!):

The project/program/activity is...

- Operating in a rapidly changing or otherwise complex environment,
- Operating with an undefined or untested theory of change,
- Piloting highly innovative approaches that need further refinement
- Seeking to achieve complex outcomes that may need to change over time, and/or
- Likely to require potentially drastic modifications to its approach.

The five criteria outlined are all relevant to the SLaM pilot. The programming area for SLaM was rapidly changing because of the decentralized government system. It also can be seen as a complex environment with many actors and stakeholders, compounded by the challenge associated with systemic poverty and a lack of resources, as is the case with almost all development initiatives. This was especially the case considering the global pandemic.

As described in the previous section, the pilot had an initial theory of change which highlights the importance of school leadership, building upon the findings of the *I'm Learning!* project. However, the

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[16] USAID (2019). A Practical Guide for Funders. Developmental Evaluation. https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/15396/ImplementingDE_Funders_20.pdf

details and methods through which school leadership could be strengthened was lacking, as this detail needed to be developed, tested, and refined during the length of the project.

The project sought to achieve complex outcomes of enhanced school leadership and management although these needed to be further defined and better understood over time.

Given the design, intent, and situation of the SLaM pilot, Developmental Evaluation is seen as appropriate for the context.

Assessing an Organization's Developmental Evaluation Readiness

An objective of the SLaM pilot was to develop technical capacity in Save the Children and document experiences from using DE as an approach for research-based innovation and programme development. After working with Save the Children to implement a Developmental Evaluation it is worth reflecting on the organization's readiness to carry out such work.

In a 2021 webinar on Developmental Evaluation for the World Food Programme, Michael Quinn Patton reflected that 'Developmental Evaluation requires leadership, commitment, and tolerance to ambiguity to work in large organizations. It requires breaking evaluation stereotypes as compliance and accountability functions to realize their visions.'

There are several tools recommended for assessing an organization's readiness for DE such as the Spark Policy Institute's DE readiness assessment tool, the CLA Framework, and the Tamarack Community Institute's DE Diagnostic Checklist. Pulling pieces from these readiness assessment tools, USAID created the flowchart in Figure 24 to help an organization assess DE readiness.
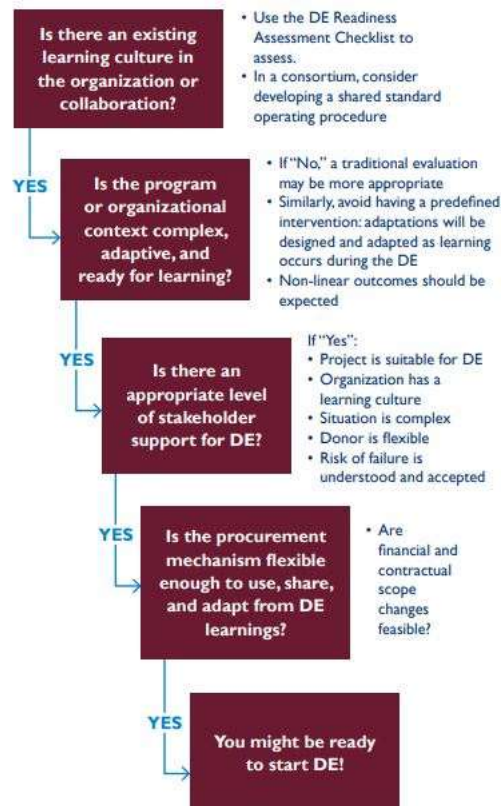

Figure 24 DE Readiness Flowchart source: USAID (2019) Guide to Implementing DE

Each of these questions is reflected upon in light of the SLaM developmental evaluation experience.

Is there an existing learning culture in the organization or collaboration?
Based on findings from the *I'm Learning!* pilot project, Save the Children Norway and Norad have both shown interest in collaboration as well as building a culture of learning. Save the Children Nepal was not part of the *I'm Learning!* pilot review but expressed interest in taking part in the collaborative approach of the SLaM pilot. Furthermore, the project team worked hard to establish rapport among the 14 SLaM pilot schools, ensuring that they also were ready for learning and supported the DE approach.

In 2020, SLaM Developmental Evaluators had the opportunity to interview the Task Team members as well as project participants. In general, all responses were very positive regarding the participatory nature of SLaM. The Chairperson of Ward 5 stated 'Projects usually come directly to the Palika, but this is the first project that came to be developed alongside us.' Participants further expressed the importance of all the SLaM activities carried out to date, stating that these activities led to stakeholder ownership of the project model design.

Is the programme or organizational context complex, adaptive, and ready for learning?
The programme context was most certainly complex in that schools where programming was taking place were vastly under-resourced. Regarding adaptive and ready to learn organizations -- At the start of the programme it was unclear of the programme participants as well as the organization (Save the Children) were ready for learning. There were instances where Save the Children's organizational culture made it difficult to maintain this – most notably, staff within Save the Children (particularly within the Country Office) are over-stretched, often working on several projects with competing priorities and timelines. As such the time and space required for active learning and adaptation was simply not available.

While it was apparent throughout the SLaM intervention that the Task Team was committed to learning, there was more hesitancy among the team members when it came to tolerating ambiguity. In the same 2020 interviews, staff within the teams expressed concern regarding the ability to generate impact data from such an approach. Furthermore, there were questions regarding how to assess the magnitude of feedback before adjusting/shifting approaches – thus ensuring we are still agile to requests from project participants while also not being so flexible as to not move forward. One staff member reflected that DE could be applied to small project but not large ones, as those require more rigorous reporting. Patton (2017) suggests that this 'dismissal' of DE results to be expected with a new approach such a Developmental Evaluation but would also encourage further work with the group to reflect upon usefulness of data collected.

Is there appropriate level of stakeholder support for DE?
There are many stakeholders for the SLaM Pilot. The programme participants were supportive of DE because it elevated/amplified their voices in programme design and implementation. Save the Children staff were supportive of DE but struggled with the limitations of DE (not being able to quantify impact and report in 'standard' ways). Additionally, staff were challenged by their limited time and resources to spend on DE so while supportive, were unable to actively contribute.

As the SLaM pilot Task Team and the consortium of organizations that came together for this initiative started transitioning toward Developmental Evaluation practice, it was observed that there were still significant challenges and 'old practices' that prevented the practice from being fully embraced. It is strongly recommended that the teams continue to learn and evolve when it comes to Developmental Evaluation since this kind of shift in mindset cannot happen immediately and/or overnight.

Of note, the SLaM project coordinator was responsible for most of the DE activities within the field. This is not a best practice as that project coordinator is not 'impartial' to programming. This challenge was compounded by staff turnover of that coordinator role as well as the pandemic preventing field visits by both local and international staff.

Is the procurement mechanism flexible enough to use, share, and adapt from DE learnings?
Where the project identified challenges was in the procurement mechanisms being flexible enough to use, share, and adapt from DE learnings. There were allocations within the contractual obligations for refinement of products based on learnings but there were not allocations to build out new interventions or radically change/shift existing interventions if needed. In an effort to meet deadlines and deliverables, only minor changes were ever made to project model interventions. For example, although the project team felt that shifting the micro-grant implementation schedule would be best for the programme (considering documentation, scheduling, resources for review/coaching to ensure quality), the team was unable to do so because of fiscal year reporting. As such, the team rushed micro-grant implementation to meet budgetary deadlines.

Budgeting for Developmental Evaluation
Budgeting for a Developmental Evaluation can be a challenge. The USAID Guidance for Implementing a DE states that 'adaptive and flexible contracting can be a key to DE success and that the lack of such flexibility is often a major barrier'. Budget items often included in a Developmental Evaluation include workshop expenses, data collection costs, data analysis costs, travel, and daily consulting fees. It is highly recommended that a Developmental Evaluator be a full-time staff, embedded within the programme and either based in the field or traveling there regularly.

Given the structure of SLaM, with the proximity of the field to the SLaM coordinator, schools visits and data collection costs associated with school visits was flexible. However, the principal Developmental Evaluator had very limited days through the consultancy with SLaM[17]. Compounding this limited time was the inability to travel to the field because of the pandemic. This limited interaction meant that the Developmental Evaluator relied heavily on Save the Children Nepal staff for sharing results and reflections from the field.

Perhaps the most challenging aspect about the budget for the DE was the limited amount of DE consulting time spread out over 2.5 years. This meant that, rather than being embedded within the programme, the Evaluator had to spend significant time trying to 'catch up' on SLaM activities and conversations that a limited contract prevented her from being a part of but were important for the DE activities.

As a point of reference, USAID recently published a brief[18] reflecting on 10 years of Developmental Evaluation within the organization. The agency has funded 14 DEs since 2010, 7 of which were country-specific, 3 global, and 4 based in Washington, DC. The average USAID DE lasted 2.6 years. Between 2010 and 2020, USAID expended approximately $8 to $10 million total on Developmental Evaluations. It was found that DE budgets depended on duration, team structure, level of engagement, activities, and location, however, duration was the biggest cost driver. 79% of the DEs cost over $500,000 and 64% of the DEs reported team sizes between 7 and 10 staff.

The USAID Implementation Guidance discusses the tension between deliverables-based contracts and the Developmental Evaluation approach. Before embarking on another Developmental Evaluation with consultant it is strongly recommended that this Implementation Guidance be reviewed so that a contract can be developed that allows for necessary flexibility as the DE evolves over time. This includes a section within the Guidance on Managing and Monitoring a Developmental Evaluation.

Developmental Evaluation Deliverables
Developmental Evaluation produces engaging and utilization-focused deliverables as needed throughout the programme. For the SLaM intervention, this included (but was not limited to):

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[17] The principal Developmental Evaluator was based in Seattle, USA. The initial contract included 5 one week trips to Nepal for DE activities over the 2 year pilot. This limited provision was reduced further by the pandemic, with the last 3 planned trips canceled.
[18] USAID. 10 Years of USAID Developmental Evaluation.

- Workshop Briefs: 2-page engaging briefs summarizing key findings/outputs of workshops
- DE Workshops: Virtual workshops (during the pandemic) which allowed Task Team members time to reflect on an discuss intervention activities/DE findings.
- Workshop Reports: Longer narrative reports documenting discussions from workshops
- Interactive Map: An interactive map was created using Tableau which mapped the SLaM schools and included in photos and baseline findings
- School Briefs: 1-page summaries of each of the SLaM schools
- Progress Markers: Snapshots of implementation progress, achievements, reflections, challenges
- Survey Briefs: Engaging PowerPoint presentations or 2-page briefs highlighting surveys that were conducted among participants, Task Team members, or others.
- DE Plans for each intervention: this includes DE questions, associated tools, and write-ups/reports based on those tools.

These deliverables were targeted to the Task Team to inform, prompt discussions, and stimulate thinking. The team embraced these reporting techniques and the engagement with materials shared in creative way was observed to be quite high. This was promising as all stakeholders engaged with findings and the Task Team often had interesting and innovative conversations prompted by a DE deliverable.

Developmental Evaluation Outcomes

While the deliverables listed in the preceding section can be useful in and of themselves, there is a larger question of the overall outcome of the Developmental Evaluation. The DE Implementation Guidance states 'outcomes can come in a variety of forms: large or small, program level or sector level, relationship based or institutional,' best illustrated by Figure 25.

FIGURE 10: DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION, EVOLUTION OF PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES

Mintzberg, H., Ghoshal, S., and Quinn, J. B. (1998). The Strategy Process. Prentice Hall, 1998.
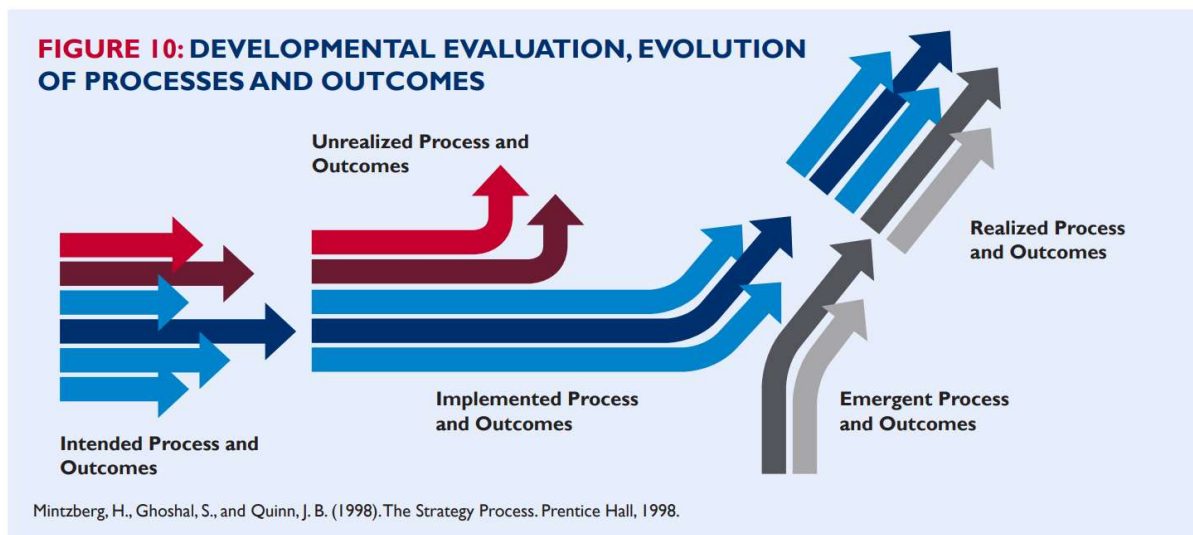
Figure 25 Developmental Evaluation, Evolution of Processes and Outcomes. Source: USAID DE Implementation Guidance

Surveys of Task Team members and school stakeholders identified the outcomes of the Developmental Evaluation for SLaM:

- **Encouraged community buy-in:** Both Task Team members and school stakeholders reflected that the Developmental Evaluation approach led to greater community buy-in of the programme by encouraging a collaborative process throughout the intervention design and implementation.

- **Led to a contextualized approach:** By giving time and space for intervention design, the programme effectively understood the context in which it was operating. This is best exemplified by the Leadership Institute and Governance components of SLaM, both of which required a thorough understanding of existing tools, requirements, and practices.
- **Informed intervention design and adaptation.** The ability to interject surveys and reports was essential for ensuring that the SLaM intervention design and implementation approach was evidence informed.
- **Empowered team to embrace complexity and ambiguity.** This Task Team set off to develop a set of interventions to enhance school leadership and management within poorly resourced schools in rural Nepal. The COVID-19 further compounded the challenges. A standard evaluation approach may not have been *useful* during such a challenging time. The Developmental Evaluation approach, however, not only captured the work the team did to adapt programming, but it informed those adaptations, acting as an additional support during these challenging times.

Lessons Learned

The Developmental Evaluation that was used for the SLaM pilot is a new approach for the Save the Children Norway and Nepal offices. The following lessons learned were documented over the course of the pilot programme:

- **Being part of a collaborative Developmental Evaluation Task Team requires time.**

Assessing organizational readiness for Developmental Evaluation is essential and, more importantly, allowing time for adjusting/changing is required. The SLaM pilot was able to do significant capacity building on Developmental Evaluation through workshops and trainings.

More traditional implementation and reporting mechanisms were often the default request among the Task Team – which may have been due to habit but also due to the need for deliverables on which to structure the consultancy contract. Often there were requests for assessments and reports to be linked to pre-determined outcomes and taking standard evaluation structure of methodology, results, and implications. Implementation of interventions was assumed to be top-down, rather than collaborative, with Task Team members requesting explicit direction on implementation guidance including workshop PowerPoints and scripts

There was great progress made to develop a collaborative group of stakeholders to co-create an initiative. Ultimately it wasn't enough time. Staff from Save the Children were pulled in so many different directions and the added stress of the pandemic meant that most efforts for collaboration were challenged. While this was apparent throughout the pilot project, it is best exemplified by the effort to schedule Task Team calls weekly or bi-weekly through the pandemic. It was extremely rare for the entire Task Team to be present. While meetings were recorded and notes were shared among the Task Team, there was a lost opportunity to have meaningful conversations and discussions among the entire Task Team without everyone present on the calls. This prevented quick and real time changes/adaptations to programming, a key component of DE.

If an initiative such as this is taken on again in the future, it is recommended that proper staff resourcing, and time allocations be made in order to ensure Task Team members have the time required to actively participate in discussions and learning.

- **Developmental Evaluation requires at least one full-time Developmental Evaluator.**

This project aimed to carry out a Developmental Evaluation with two part-time evaluators, both of which had different/other responsibilities within SLaM. This not only meant that the evaluators could not be fully embedded within the programme due to time constraints, but it also meant that it was difficult for the evaluator to remain external to the implementation.

Based on the findings from the SLaM pilot, as well as other DE best practices shared by USAID, it is recommended that there be at least one full-time Developmental Evaluator for any Developmental Evaluation initiatives in the future. It is recognized that this would be a significant shift from current funding/resource allocation within Save the Children programming, but it does seem to be necessary to truly carry out Developmental Evaluation.

One area of discussion among the Task Team is the difference between DE and action research, with reflection on whether action research could be better suited to the budget often available for Save the Children programmes. Michael Quinn Patton describes the differences as well as intersections between DE and action research in his 2011 book titled: D*evelopmental Evaluation*. While DE is utilized for exploration, development, and emergent themes; action research is often used to solve a particular problem. DE was well suited for the SLaM Pilot considering the complex context and undefined project outcomes. Now that the model has been established, the project team could utilize action research to futher develop and refine the model.

- **Capacity building for DE was successful but should be considered separate from that of carrying out a Developmental Evaluation.**

An objective of the SLaM pilot was to build capacity of Save the Children in the Developmental Evaluation approach. While there was partnership between Informed International and Save the Children throughout the pilot project, there was not a specific capacity building approach and methodology. This is because of the limited funds available for the Developmental Evaluator – funds which had to be focused on carrying out the DE for SLaM. This meant that the capacity building of Save the Children staff was more through collaboration and joint learning, rather than following a strategic plan. Based on the Task Team interviews, Save the Children staff have embraced Developmental Evaluation and are interested in applying it elsewhere throughout Save the Children programming.

Chapter 4:
Discussion

Conclusion & Discussion

The SLaM pilot project was an ambitious undertaking to collaboratively develop a project model that strengthened school leadership and management. The timing of the pandemic was unfortunate, preventing the Task Team from meeting in person and many of the interventions from being implemented in a timely fashion. Despite the challenge of the pandemic, the team successfully collaborated to firstly explore and understand the context of school leadership and management within Nepal and secondly to develop a project model to strengthen that school leadership and management. The achievement of both components was facilitated through a developmental evaluation approach. The main findings and implications of the developmental evaluation are summarized here – presented as achievements, challenges, and lessons learned of the project model design, project implementation and use of developmental evaluation.

Achievements

The key achievements of the SLaM pilot project are as follows:

Project Model Design

- **Built consensus and buy-in with school community during the project.** This was done through the developmental evaluation approach but can also be replicated in other countries through the first activities of collaboratively developing school leadership and management principles as well as identifying enabling factors and barriers.
- **Developed a contextually relevant project model.** By using a collaborative approach, the SLaM project model was contextually relevant to the programming context. Specific examples of this include the modules within the Leadership Institute that build upon the government's continuous assessment as well as the governance interventions that interlink with existing annual school improvement planning processes.

Implementation

- **Implemented governance, leadership institute, and school message board interventions during the pandemic.** As shown in the intervention timeline, the Task Team successfully implemented the intervention components of governance, the leadership institute (dimension 1), and installed school message boards throughout the school communities.
- **Agile implementation during the pandemic.** The pandemic led to several school closures and also prevented the Task Team from meeting together. The Task Team was able to adapt and implement interventions as time allowed which speaks to the team's strong ability to adapt to changing contexts. This was enabled by the DE approach of the project, which built in trust, transparency, and communication across project stakeholders.

DE Approach

- **DE approach enabled continuous learning across Task Team and school communities.** As described by the Task Team and project participants, the DE approach facilitated learning. Unfortunately, several Save the Children staff expressed disappointment with not being able to spend *more* time thinking about, researching, and developing school leadership and management components but, overall, the approach truly enabled learning.
- **DE approach enabled the team to pivot during COVID-19 pandemic.** As described above, the foundation which was set by the DE approach allowed the team to pivot during the COVID-19 pandemic. This meant distributing roles and responsibilities across the Task Team while also transitioning to virtual meetings and trainings.

Challenges

The key challenges of the SLaM pilot project are as follows:

Project Model Design
- **Time intensive to develop Leadership Institute modules.** The development of the Leadership Institute took far more time than originally anticipated. This is mostly because of the amount of content that was developed (extensive facilitator guidelines, detailed/designed PowerPoint presentations, and handouts). In addition, however, it took a great deal of time to ensure that the modules were consistent with national guidelines and international practices. As the modules were developed by the international consultants, this required a great deal of research – which often required translating Nepali guidelines into English. The original intent was for these modules to be developed collaboratively and facilitated by time in-country. The pandemic prevented this from being possible and also prevented the consultants from being present during the trainings, so additional time was required to develop extensive training materials and orient staff to materials.
- **Collaborative development is challenging.** The benefits of working collaboratively are numerous and have been described previously- however, it would be remiss not to also mention the challenges of working collaboratively. Forming an effective team takes time and it is important to ensure everyone is clear on roles and responsibilities. In a virtual context the consultants found it challenging to have all Task Team members present for calls or to receive feedback from Task Team members on the deliverables that had been drafted.

Implementation
- **Full year of implementation was not achieved.** As described, due to the (school closures), a full year of implementation (as originally intended) was not achieved. Thus, some of the synergies between interventions and long-term outcomes could not be observed/assessed.
- **Lack of clarity regarding project management, implementation timeline.** As is often the case with international cross-country teams, it was simply difficult for all Task Team members to track the progress of intervention development and implementation. With so many moving pieces in a virtual context, the team would have benefitted from a strong project management system.
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DE Approach
- **Best practice is to have a local Developmental Evaluator (separate from implementation) embedded full-time in the programme.** The recommended practice by Developmental Evaluators is to have a full-time Developmental Evaluator embedded in the programme. Given limitations (budget and timelines) this was not possible and Task Team members needed to wear many different hats. As such, it is unlikely that the Developmental Evaluators could remain unbiased and separate from implementation although, as discussed in this report, the team made every effort possible to mitigate potential biases.
- **Inability for international team to visit the field meant increased responsibility of data collection and documentation for Save the Children Nepal.** The Save the Children Nepal and local implementing partner (SOSEC) teams had increased responsibilities because of the global pandemic. The teams put in extra time and effort to document field visits and workshops in an effort to help share learnings and observations across the Task Team.
- **DE approach is new to Save the Children Norway and Save the Children Nepal.** In the same way that any new methodology or approach is expected have its challenges, the Developmental Evaluation approach was new to Save the Children Norway and Nepal. Given this, the team invested in capacity building regarding the approach and was continually learning how best to integrate DE into practices.
- **Due to implementation delays, DE was unable to assess a full year of implementation.** School closures and limitations regarding the ability to meet in groups delayed implementation. As such, not all of the initial Developmental Evaluation questions were able to

be investigated. Interventions such as the Virtual Community of Practice (V-COP) were significantly delayed and thus were not part of the initial pilot.

Lessons Learned
The key lessons learned of the SLaM pilot project are as follows:

Project Model Design
- **The 14 SLaM schools as well as Save the Children Nepal struggled to find the time and resources needed to contribute to the design and development of the project model.** A particular challenge in this context is that most of the Head Teachers in the SLaM schools also served as teachers, meaning that they had very limited time to take part in leadership and management activities within the school. Similarly, Save the Children Nepal staff had limited time to dedicate to SLaM, often trying to squeeze meetings and documentation reviews into already very full schedules.

Implementation
- **Key components used to develop the model should be replicated in new programming areas to ensure buy-in.** The initial activities of developing principles and examining/identifying enabling factors and barriers were not initially intended to be part of the project model. However, the team realized the importance of these activities for building community buy-in and now recommend that these activities be part of the project model moving forward.
- **A trainer of trainers (ToT) needs to be carried out to support the implementing Country Office.** Facilitators of the workshops described challenges in being able to carry out the SLaM project model due to the level of content and training it required. As such, a more formal Trainer of Trainer approach should be developed.
- **Teacher Professional Development requires significant time and, as such, the SLaM Leadership Competencies should be limited (or prioritized) for each year.** Save the Children recommends TPD covering two competencies in a year. Given the 11 competencies within the SLaM project model, it is recommended that these competencies be prioritized based on context.

DE Approach
- **Significant and flexible resources are required for developmental evaluation.** The Developmental Evaluators were fortunate to have relatively flexible deliverables, allowing them to adapt/change as the programme needed. This is essential for Developmental Evaluation and, as discussed in the report, even additional funding to support a full-time Developmental Evaluator could have been helpful. It is imperative that future Developmental Evaluations consider the significant and flexible resources required to properly carry out.

Next steps
In order to build upon the momentum of this pilot, the following are recommended next steps:

Project Model Design
- **Further translation is required for scale-up in Nepal.** The majority of the programme materials are in English and further translation would benefit the programme implementation.
- **Materials are specific to Nepal and need additional work to contextualize to contexts outside of Nepal.** The Leadership Institute and Governance components tried to align materials to the Nepali government system. For example, pre-reads for the Leadership Institute were specific to the Nepali context. While there is overlap in content, approaches, concepts, it is likely that materials may need to be tailored to other contexts (or made more generic for a global model).

- **The interventions were somewhat siloed because of the delays in intervention design and implementation.** It is worth examining synergies / staging of interventions in future iterations of SLaM. The Task Team has recommended staging based on this initial pilot, as represented in the Theory of Change. For example, the Leadership Institute can serve as the foundation on which other interventions, such as the V-COP, can be introduced. The V-COP can then be used to strengthen and reiterate the Leadership Institute objectives.

Implementation

- **Recommend piloting for a full year to refine model prior to scaling outside of Nepal.** Related to the point above regarding staging of interventions, this initial pilot was unable to 'test' the interventions for a full year, nor as they could be phased to build upon another. A future pilot should implement interventions as articulated in the revised Theory of Change and allow the implementation to take place for at least one full year, as outlined in the SLaM project model guidance document

DE Approach

- **The DE approach was limited given the short implementation timeline.** Recommend that Developmental Evaluation is used to refine the model and inform the development of a global project model (not specific to Nepal) prior to an impact assessment being carried out.