



# UDAAN: School Transition and Retention

## Background

### **UDAAN: Accelerated learning Model**

UDAAN is a 11-month condensed learning model adapted and piloted by CARE Nepal. It is based on a government-approved curriculum, developed with CARE Nepal's technical assistance and Center for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD)<sup>1</sup>. UDAAN started in Kapilvastu district of Lumbini province of Nepal from 2013 and continued in other districts of Lumbini province. The program later replicated to the Madhesh province where the centers are running in Siraha, Dhanusha, Mahottari, Parsa and Rautahat districts of Madhesh Province and Banke district of Lumbini Province.

UDAAN/SOAR is an approach led by CARE Nepal where out-of-school girls<sup>2</sup> were provided with 11 months of condensed courses and helps them to re-integrate into formal schools. The main objective of this approach is to mainstream the out-of-school girls into the formal education system and to increase their life opportunities. By engaging parents, men, boys, government officials, communities, school authorities, school management committee (SMC) and religious leaders, UDAAN creates a supportive environment for girls to continue their education. In addition to UDAAN classes, the program empowers girls through discussions on topics such as menstruation, early

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<sup>1</sup> [Center for Education and Human Resource Development](#)

<sup>2</sup> Out of school girls: It could be both- girls who have dropped out from school or girls' who have never been to school of age group 10-14

marriage, sexuality, and discrimination against women and girls, fostering mutual support and enhancing their skills through extra and co-curricular activities.

Till date more than 190 UDAAN centers are established including mentors run UDAAN across Madhesh and Lumbini provinces and 49 mentor run UDAAN centers through mentorship approach in Karnali province. As per the data available, a total of 4369 out-of-school girls graduated from more than 141 centers across 9 districts in Madhesh and Lumbini Province including two repeated centers in Rohinihawa of Rupandehi and Dohani of Kapilvastu<sup>3</sup> and 49 mentor run Udaan center in four district across Karnali and Lumbini province.

### UDAAN Factsheet



### Approach and Learning

#### UDAAN curriculum

The UDAAN program delivers a CEHRD approved condensed curriculum on key four subjects (English, Mathematics, Social studies & Science and Nepali) including local curriculum where social studies cover the interdisciplinary subjects such as social and human value education, science, health & physical education. The curriculum is designed to accommodate diverse learning needs, the program employs a personalized approach where teachers provide individual supervision based on each student's proficiency level, using local languages for instruction to enhance understanding. The program's strength lies in its multi-grade, multi-level teaching methodology, implemented by trained facilitators who are skilled at addressing the varied academic needs of students. This comprehensive model combines structured

learning with flexibility, ensuring UDAAN girls receive the targeted support necessary to bridge educational gaps and achieve meaningful academic progress.

#### Periodic learning Assessment

The UDAAN program utilizes the ASER<sup>4</sup> learning assessment to track the UDAAN girls progress through structured assessments:

- Conducted at enrollment
- Administered twice during the academic year
- Completed as a final year-end evaluation

These assessments serve as critical tools for UDAAN facilitators to:

1. Identify specific learning gaps
2. Tailor instruction to individual needs

<sup>3</sup> These two centers were repeated due to poor learning outcomes of the learners

<sup>4</sup> [ASER Survey - ASER: Annual Status of Education Report](#)

Evidence from UDAAN projects demonstrates that regular ASER assessment correlates with measurable improvements in learning outcomes.

### **Learning level and Transition grade**

At the end of every UDAAN course, the UDAAN girls take an entrance examination at formal government schools to determine the grade level appropriate for their transition. Ensuring the correct grade placement is critical if a girl is placed in a grade that does not match her learning level, leading to difficulties in adaptation and learning gaps, making her more likely to drop out again. Therefore, strict quality control, balancing both age and learning level, is essential during the school transitioning process.

### **Addressing social norms, a key factor for transition and retention**

Addressing social norms is a key factor ensuring girls can travel safely from their homes to schools, especially when distances are significant. In Nepal's Terai-Madhesi communities, family honor holds immense importance, and girls are often perceived as the primary bearers of this honor.

In many communities, behaviors such as romantic relationships, elopement, sexual harassment, or even casual teasing are perceived as threats to family prestige and honor. As a result, families impose strict restrictions on adolescent girls' mobility, ensuring constant supervision to prevent any incidents during their pursuit of education. This often means girls are unlikely to be sent to schools located far from their homes or villages. To improve transitioning and retention rates in formal government schools, addressing these restrictive norms around mobility must be a top priority.

### **Regular Follow-up support**

CARE's experience demonstrates that providing intensive follow-up support during the first three months after transitioning to formal schools can significantly reduce dropout rates. For this reason, the girls' monitoring student attendance records are critical for identifying early warning signs of potential dropouts. Extended absences or sudden drops in attendance often indicate a high risk of students leaving school. When these patterns emerge, it becomes essential to investigate the underlying causes through direct engagement with families, particularly via home visits.

### **Regular coaching mentoring support to UDAAN Facilitator**

UDAAN facilitators receive comprehensive training, including both foundational instruction and ongoing refresher courses. The program provides monthly technical coaching and targeted mentoring to address specific content and methodological challenges - an approach that has demonstrated significant effectiveness. Additionally, facilitators participate in monthly collaborative meetings to discuss classroom management challenges and develop actionable strategies for improvement.

The monthly facilitators meetings rotate among different UDAAN Centers, offering facilitators valuable opportunities to observe diverse learning materials and classroom management techniques. This mobile approach has proven highly effective for skill-sharing and professional development.

Additionally, the meetings incorporate demonstration classes (micro-teaching sessions) where facilitators receive constructive feedback from peers. This practice not only enhances individual facilitation skills but also promotes cross-learning among participants.

### **Extra-curricular and leadership Activities**

The UDAAN initiative recognizes that combining classroom learning with extra-curricular activities, such as singing, dancing, quizzes, and debates enhances holistic development. A key component of this approach is the monthly Balika Sabha (Girls' Assembly), where UDAAN girls showcase their talents before parents and community members. These events not only foster creativity and self-expression but also build confidence and leadership skills as girls learn to present themselves in front of an audience. The encouragement they receive further motivates them to excel academically and socially.

### **Teaching Learning Methodology at Formal School**

The transition to formal government schools often requires girls to adapt from interactive learning methods to traditional lecture-based instruction, which can create significant learning challenges. Experience shows that these students typically require additional time and personalized teacher support to adjust to both their new grade level and curriculum demands. To facilitate this critical transition, we recommend providing continuous academic guidance and supervision throughout the first year, ensuring girls can successfully adapt to their changed learning environment.

### **Remedial class**

To ensure the sustained academic progress of UDAAN graduates and prevent dropout among academically struggling students, the program incorporates targeted remedial classes. These sessions provide crucial academic reinforcement, focusing on foundational concepts in core subjects like Mathematics, Science, and English that students may struggle after they are transitioned to formal schooling. By addressing learning gaps early, the remedial

classes help girls build confidence and competence, reducing frustration and disengagement that often lead to dropout. The support is tailored to individual needs allowing teachers to customize instruction based on each student's proficiency level. This intervention not only strengthens academic performance of UDAAN graduated girls but also fosters resilience, ensuring that the girls remain engaged in their education and successfully continue their education to higher grades.

### **Engagement with Formal school**

Teachers play a pivotal role in ensuring the successful retention of students in formal schools. When teachers offer support, guidance, and encouragement to struggling students, girls thrive under their mentorship and become motivated to catch up with their peers. Conversely, undue pressure or a lack of support can demoralize students, increasing the risk of dropout.

For UDAAN girls who have been out of the formal education system for years, one-year of condensed course is often insufficient to fully prepare them for regular classroom demands. These students require patient, individualized support from teachers to bridge learning gaps and adapt successfully. To address these challenges, the UDAAN projects are regularly engaging with teachers and school management committee through different customized training i.e curriculum pedagogy, assessment informed instruction, subject-wise remedial learning etc. Similarly, to create enabling environment at school, community score card (CSC), learning materials support, support on school improvement plan (SIP) and WASH related support has been provided to school. This ensures they understand the unique needs of UDAAN transitioned girls and other girls who are at the risk of drop-out which can provide the necessary academic and emotional support to those girls.

## Statistics and Figures

*Though the transition rate to school from UDAAN is around 90-100%, but study shows that around 25% of girls dropped immediately after they are enrolled in school or once the project ends due to lack of follow-up support.*

*The primary reasons for school dropouts among Udaan graduates are household workload and income generation activities, reflecting economic and social pressures on the girls.*

*Other significant factors include lack of parental support, disinterest in studies, and early marriage. Additional challenges include the distance to school, caregiving responsibilities etc.*

## Quotes from UDAAN Girls

*“Every week, we go to the Rural Municipality office to demand scholarships—because we know education is our right. If they ignore us today, we’ll return tomorrow.”*

- Udaan graduated girls, Farena Rupandehi

*“The education and remedial support provided by Udaan gave us the opportunity to improve our education. With the bicycles provided by the project, we were able to go to distant schools and study up to SEE.”*

- Udaan graduated girls, Dharampaniya Kapilvastu

*“If we hadn't continued our studies by enrolling in school after finishing UDAAN, we would all have gotten married.”*

- Udaan graduated girls from Belsapur Kapilvastu

## Girls led Advocacy

Project implementation has demonstrated that collective advocacy yields particularly effective results. When concerns about girls' education are presented jointly to School Management Committees (SMCs) and local government representatives, they consistently receive immediate attention and action.

For example, in Bishnupura's Jagriti Basic School of Rupandehi, UDAAN graduates successfully advocated for the issue for the solution by presenting their concerns to the SMC and ward chairperson. The issue regarding the improper management of drinking water was promptly addressed by the SMC through the installation of hand-pump (shallow tube well) at school.

Similarly, the other issues regarding the school not having classes beyond 8<sup>th</sup> grade and next secondary school being far. Following which, the ward chairperson approved the school for teaching classes higher than the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The school also received teacher management support from the local governments' resources.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The UDAAN condensed academic program, combined with targeted co-curricular activities, serves as the foundation for this empowerment allowing for the tailored instruction through multi-grade, multi-level teaching methodologies delivered in local languages. To sustain educational continuity, UDAAN projects implement strategic interventions including:

- Age and competency-appropriate school transitions
- Academic coaching and material support
- Institutional collaboration to foster supportive learning environments
- Advocacy initiatives amplifying girls' voices with local government
- Teacher engagement programs in formal schools

- Remedial support to UDAAN graduates' school enrolled girls
- Parent education sessions to strengthen family support
- Remedial support to the academically struggling UDAAN graduates' school enrolled girls

While these measures demonstrate effectiveness, persistent challenges remain. Deep-rooted social norms prioritizing family honor continue to present significant barriers to retention. Our research identifies the critical three-month transition period into formal schools as particularly vulnerable, necessitating intensive follow-up support and attendance monitoring to ensure successful adaptation to new academic environments. The program's periodic learning assessments enable facilitator to identify students needing additional support.