

Evaluation of the Quality Education Programme in Solukhumbu, Nepal

Key Findings

The Quality Education Programme in Solukhumbu (QEPS) is implemented by Himalayan Trust Nepal (HTN) with support from the Himalayan Trust New Zealand (HTNZ), and with financial support from New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and HTNZ.

The QEPS is progressing well, with 15 out of 23 output indicators achieved and six on track. From the 23 short-, medium-, and long-term outcome indicators, 15 have been achieved, 6 have made good progress, and 2 are behind. The QEPS's success lies in its integrated approach, blending resource provision with capacity-building of teachers and school and government officials. High-quality training, strong materials, and close coordination with local governments have earned stakeholder trust. Achieving positive outcomes in Solukhumbu is hampered by student dropout rates, limited human and financial resources among schools and local governments, School Management Committee (SMC) and Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) members' turnover, and challenges with teacher performance management. These factors are largely beyond the control of the QEPS and rooted in broader regional and national challenges. QEPS ensures Value for Money by adapting to changes and through careful planning and budgeting.



While QEPS enhances teachers' skills, their effective use depends on schools' access to classroom materials and stable teacher placement. However, schools and local governments may struggle to maintain classroom materials without ongoing support, underscoring the need for stronger exit planning as the QEPS will end in 2025. The QEPS can further improve by strengthening coordination with government, improving PTA and SMC engagement, and developing a clear and shared understanding of sustainability plans and exit strategies because currently local governments and schools have no or limited understanding of when the QEPS ends.

The QEPS benefits from local co-funding and alignment with national education policies, ensuring federal support. Public support in New Zealand to support Nepal is strong and rooted in Sir Edmund Hillary's legacy. Any future education programme should consider expanding early years education from grades 1-3 to grade 5, formalizing agreements with schools and local governments, promoting volunteerism, and improving disability awareness.

Lessons Learnt

Local governments in Solukhumbu face (human) resource constraints in overseeing the education sector. This highlights the need for education programmes like the QEPS to provide sustained support, set realistic expectations, engage strongly, and improve onboarding processes for local stakeholders. Schools are also likely to encounter ongoing staffing and financial challenges. Quality education relies on a combination of teacher training and resources, but challenges with performance management and incentives for teachers can reduce their motivation to apply new

skills. QEPS's training is highly regarded for its collaboration with the Center for Education and Human Resources Development, enhancing the legitimacy and government's sense of ownership over the QEPS. Finally, schools should improve their understanding of disability, often underestimating the number of students with special needs. Improving awareness can help teachers identify and address disabilities more effectively and affordably.

High-priority recommendations for future programming

For Federal/provincial activity design and implementation

- The Activity should strengthen engagement with federal/provincial institutions via MoUs to align efforts, as needed.

For Local Government Level

- Ensure all local government work is guided by MoUs outlining roles, responsibilities, and sustainability goals.
- Support local governments, as appropriate, in leading and implementing coordination and learning mechanisms among education stakeholders.
- Assist local governments, as appropriate, in implementing education policies, creating local curricula, and establishing teacher performance management for quality, child-friendly education, and Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI).
- Institutionalise joint monitoring between the QEPS and local governments to provide feedback on implementation and teaching.

For Implementation at School Level

- Ensure training for SMC and PTA members reaches all members of these bodies.
- Ensure that quality education aspects are integrated into School Improvement Plans.
- Establish a school-level mentoring system for less experienced teachers, utilising the Teachers Mentoring Tools from the Center for Education and Human Resources Development to promote continuous feedback and improvement.
- Enhance the training curriculum by integrating GEDSI further and creating materials for teachers, SMCs, and PTAs on safeguarding and identifying students with disabilities.

For the management of the Activity

- Embed sustainability and exit planning in the Activity Design, supported by a shared understanding of sustainability among HTN, HTNZ, and MFAT.