

Exploring Arts-based Methods in the Social Science Curriculum (Grades 6-8)



Prepared by Youth Researchers* in Nepal

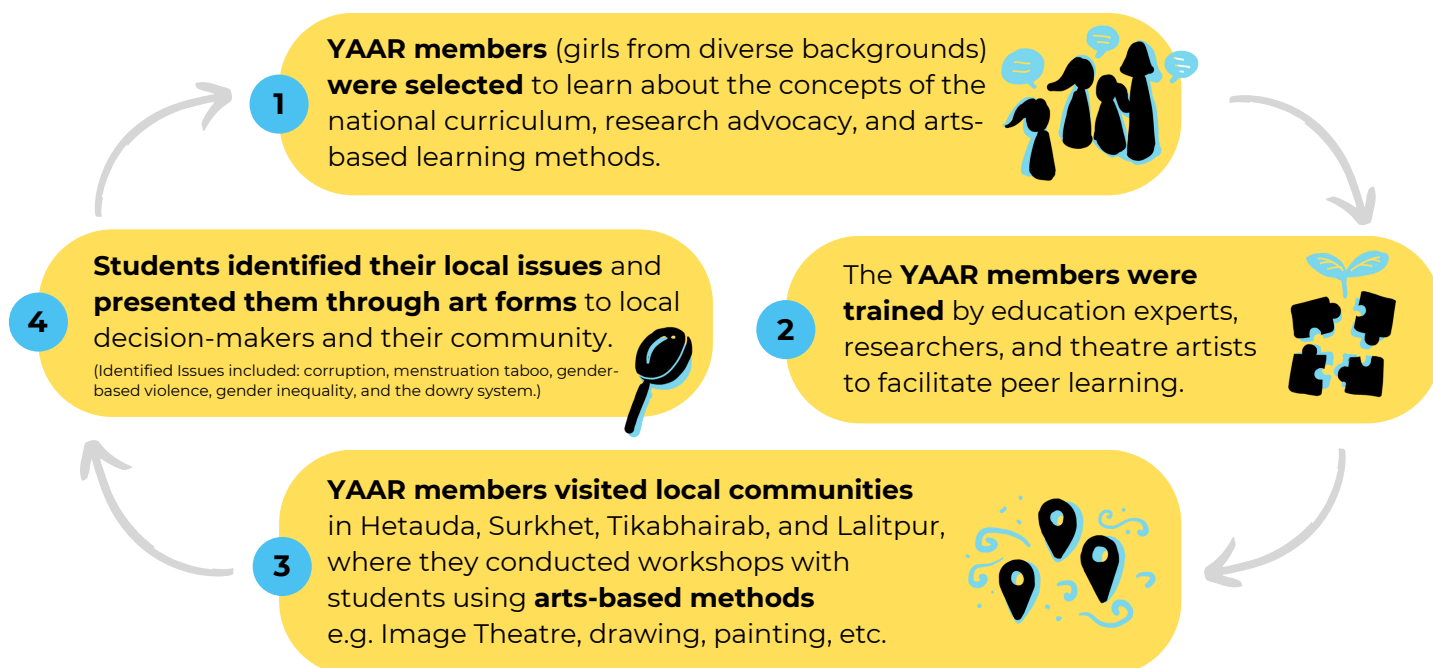
INTRODUCTION

Nepal's national curriculum, as per the National Curricular Framework (2076 BS), is designed to encourage students to learn and develop critical thinking as well as practical skills. The curriculum proposes that "learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together" are primary goals. Thus, the Curriculum Development Center (CDC) incorporates various practical methods of teaching in its curriculum and designs it in such a way that students are the forerunners in implementing educational materials (CDC, 2023). However, effective implementation of the curriculum provided by the CDC requires further development.

The Mobile Arts for Peace (MAP) project worked with children and young people to inform the local curriculum using local arts-based methods (e.g. Deuda, Mithila Arts, Image Theatre). Nepal's social sciences curriculum notes the importance of project-based learning approaches for students to explore social problems and propose potential solutions (Basic Curriculum - Social Sciences Grades 6- 8). Thus, this policy brief proposes ways to use arts-based approaches to close the gap between rote-teaching methods and CDC requirements for the new curriculum.

METHODOLOGY

The Youth Advisory Advocacy Research (YAARs), a group of 30 youth researchers, conducted arts-based lessons, focusing on Image Theater, to identify young people's own issues. The steps are shown in the diagram below:



DID YOU KNOW ?

The arts-based learning method, according to our findings, is low-cost and time-effective. This method integrates local cultural forms and knowledge production.



Experiential and student-centred learning approaches

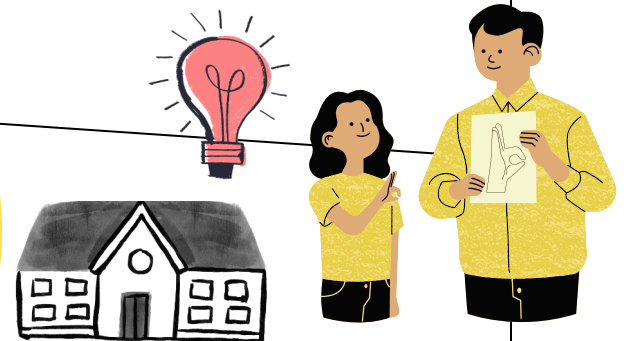
Arts-based methods cover topics in the curriculum in a deep and meaningful way. Topics can be taught through peer-based and experiential learning approaches using arts-based methods. This reduces the burden on teachers and encourages a student-centred approach.

Students shared positive reviews on peer-based learning. They are more willing to learn and retain information through this method.

Peer-based learning can also help students be more independent and curious, increasing their critical thinking and leadership skills.



Peer-based learning



Students-teachers collaboration

The participatory arts-based approach enables teachers and students to work together. Students are more proactive in discussing and finding solutions themselves through arts-based learning.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Promote peer-based teaching-learning AND assessment in schools.**

According to the curriculum designed by the CDC, 70% should be based on self-learning, 20% on peer activity, and only 10% should be based on teachers' instructions. Thus, it should also be the same in the case of assessment. Peer-based assessment should be encouraged as it will increase the value of peer-based activities. By incorporating peer-based assessment, the curriculum will add value to the self-learning process and also be better received by parents and society.

- **Increase budgets for peer-based activities to empower youth with life skills like budget management, and money management early in life.**

Schools in Nepal spend the majority of their budget on physical infrastructure and salaries. While these expenses are a necessary part of the educational curriculum, they are now over 80% of the budget, which may be excessive. Increasing funding for youth-led activities will have multiple benefits, including (1) reducing the burden on teachers to adopt new teaching-learning approaches with limited training, (2) increasing the chances of project-based learning occurring in the classroom, (3) teaching young people life skills such as budgeting and money management through experience in managing school clubs and learning materials.



*Image theatre by YAARs.
Credit: Karkhana Samuha*

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Ramila Tamang: Ramila is co-lead of the Karkhana Samuha YAAR (Youth Advisory Advocacy Research) Forum. She is a recent +2 graduate. She is interested in pursuing politics or journalism as a career. Her dream is to have a career that goes beyond just taking and can make a difference in many villages of Nepal, like her own, which are often ignored.

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Reference:

- 1 Pant, B.P., Luitel, B.C., Bjønness, B., & Gjötterud, S. (2023). "Science" and "art" as ways of knowing in school education in Nepal for an inclusive learning environment. Discover Education, 2.