

Policy Art Brief (2):

Youth Researchers as Generational “Translators” in Educational Policy

Prepared by Youth Researchers* in Nepal



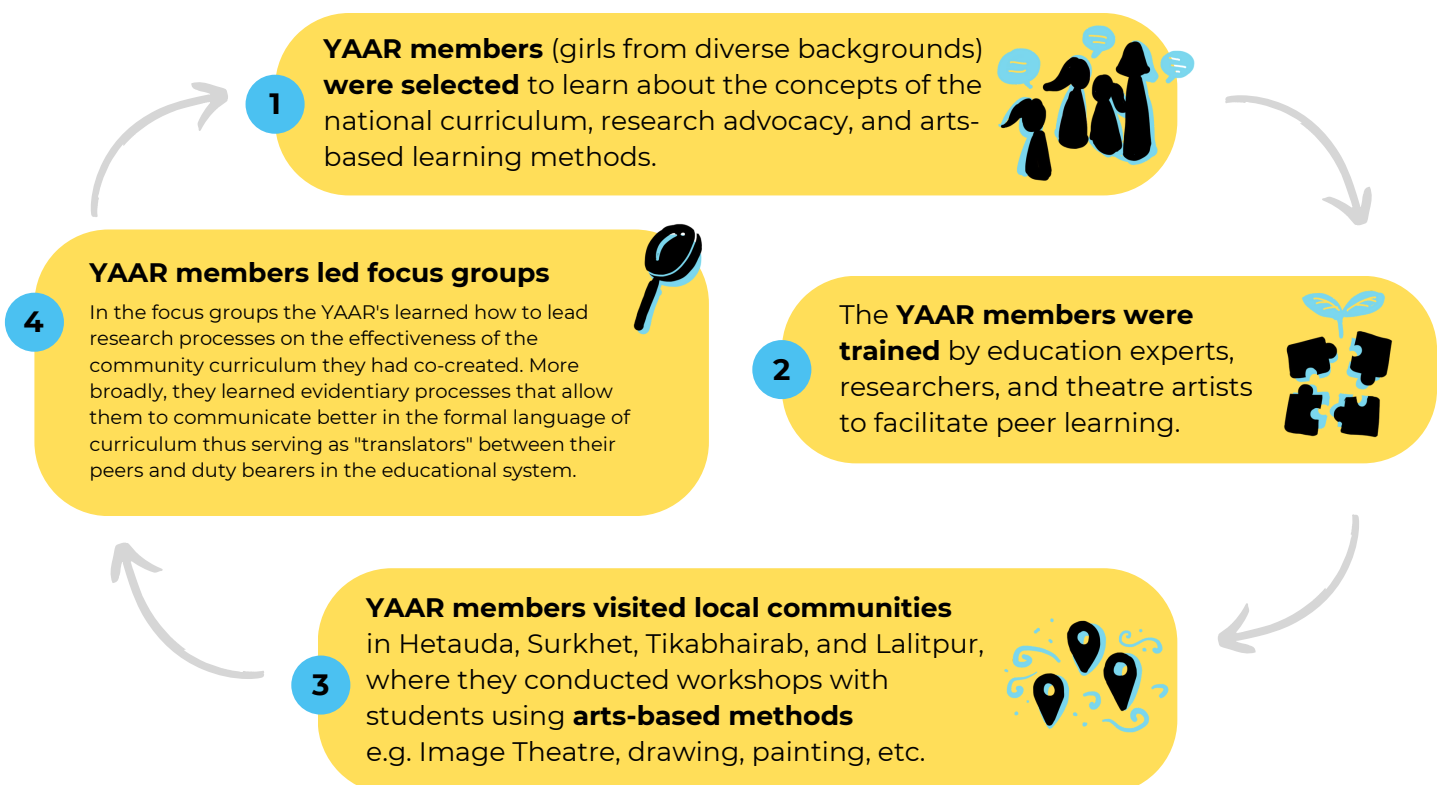
INTRODUCTION

National education policies and curricula play a profound role in shaping the experiences and future of the youth and the communities they belong to. A large part of youth’s lives is spent in formal education, but they have little influence over it. The process of formal curricula development often overlooks the voice and perspective of the young people they are designed to serve. This creates a gap between the educational systems and the needs and communication styles of young learners.

Arts-based methods recognise that youth are not passive recipients of education but active agents capable of contributing to policy development and positive change. arts-based approaches can enable positive youth engagement to create a “two-way form of communication” between young people and decision-makers to inform policy.

METHODOLOGY

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



RESEARCH FINDINGS



When leading the focus group, **youth researchers can easily connect with children and youth**, as they share similar experiences and realities. These age similarities foster trust and rapport, making the students openly share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences with youth researchers, enabling high-quality and nuanced research findings.



Youth researchers developed strong leadership skills as they took the lead in the research projects. They also enhanced verbal and written communication skills as they designed survey questions, conducted interviews, and presented their findings. They developed the capacity to analyse data.



Youth researchers became personally invested in the issues within the education sector. This investment can lead to a long-term commitment to improving educational outcomes and opportunities for young people.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Integrate youth research into national and organisational policies of all major educational bodies.** Youth researchers can inform policy development. Each year, national and international organisations working on education issues produce research studies related to educational issues. These studies should engage youth researchers to ensure that youth perspectives and voices are heard.
- **Increase opportunities for youth policy journals and conferences.** Youth researchers will be encouraged to continue if their publications are cited and disseminated within the academic and policy communities. Youth policy journals can be further promoted through awards and recognition for outstanding young researchers.



YAARs at UNESCO-MAP Roundtable 2023. Credit: UNESCO Office in Kathmandu

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