LEGACY LEADERS:

How Girls Are Claiming Agency, Voice, and Their Full Potential

TECH AGE GIRLS NEPAL

TAG Program Centers

Moti READ Center, Parbat

Deepshikha READ Center, Kaski

Godawari READ Center, Lalitpur

Jahada READ Center, Nawalparaasi

Tarauli READ Center, Chitwan

READ Nepal
Inspiring Rural Prosperity
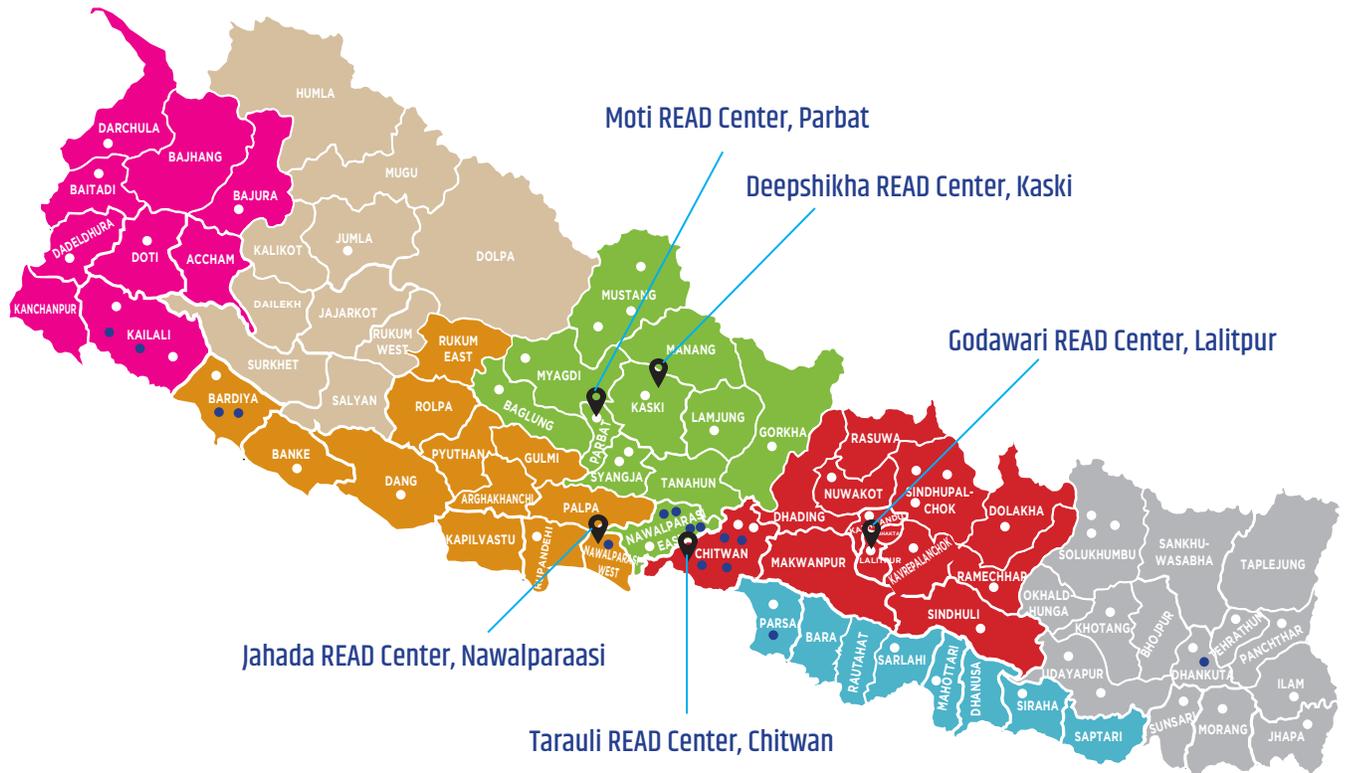
Legacy Leaders is a transformative girls' leadership and mentorship initiative launched by READ in partnership with the Stone Family Foundation and implemented from December 2023 to March 2025. Building on the proven success of the Tech Age Girls (TAG) program, Legacy Leaders introduced a powerful new dimension: mentorship by TAG alumni, known as Senior TAGs (Sr TAGs). In this round, 100 Sr TAGs mentored 286 younger adolescent girls—Junior TAGs (Jr TAGs)—at a pivotal stage when many are making critical decisions about their education and future. These Jr TAGs, in turn, trained nearly 2,200 peers through cascade trainings and outreach activities—greatly amplifying the program's reach and impact across their communities.
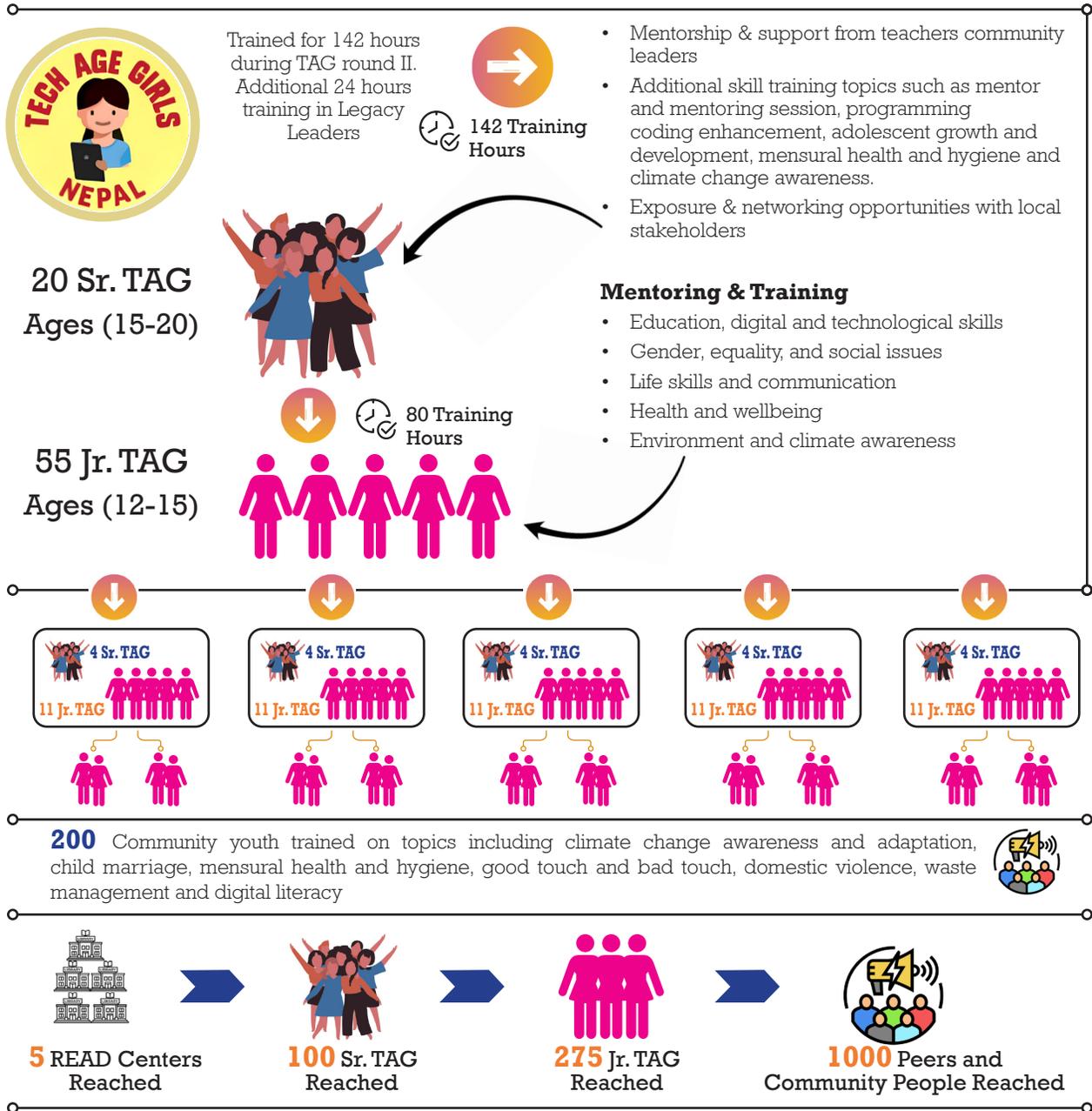
Legacy Leaders exemplifies the cascading model of TAG—where each generation of leaders trains and uplifts the next—ensuring long-lasting, self-perpetuating community-rooted change.

TAG is a holistic leadership development program for girls, developed by IREX and introduced in Nepal by READ in 2018. It combines technology, leadership, and life skills training with practical assignments and community engagement. Designed to build key 21st-century competencies—such as higher-order thinking, collaboration, adaptability, and resilience—TAG is delivered in three phases: broad-based ICT and leadership training; advanced skills development and community projects for top performers; and, finally, a national leadership summit and the formation of local Girls Leadership Groups to sustain local action. To date, 1,071 young women have graduated from TAG in Nepal, formally training 7,078 peers and reaching more than 50,000 individuals through informal outreach.

Legacy Leaders adapts the TAG approach for a younger age group through a structured mentorship model that is both deeply personal and highly scalable. By pairing younger girls with slightly older peers from their own communities, the program fosters mutual learning, confidence, and aspiration. At the same time, mentors strengthen their own leadership skills and deepen their impact as changemakers. Local teachers also played a key role, advising Sr TAGs as they guided their Jr TAG mentees. Community projects gave participants the opportunity to apply their skills in real-world contexts—raising their visibility and demonstrating the power of young, female leadership.

In this round, community projects focused specifically on climate change mitigation and adaptation. From organizing awareness campaigns on sustainable practices to launching greening initiatives and climate action workshops, participants showcased how youth-led action can be a transformative force in building community resilience.
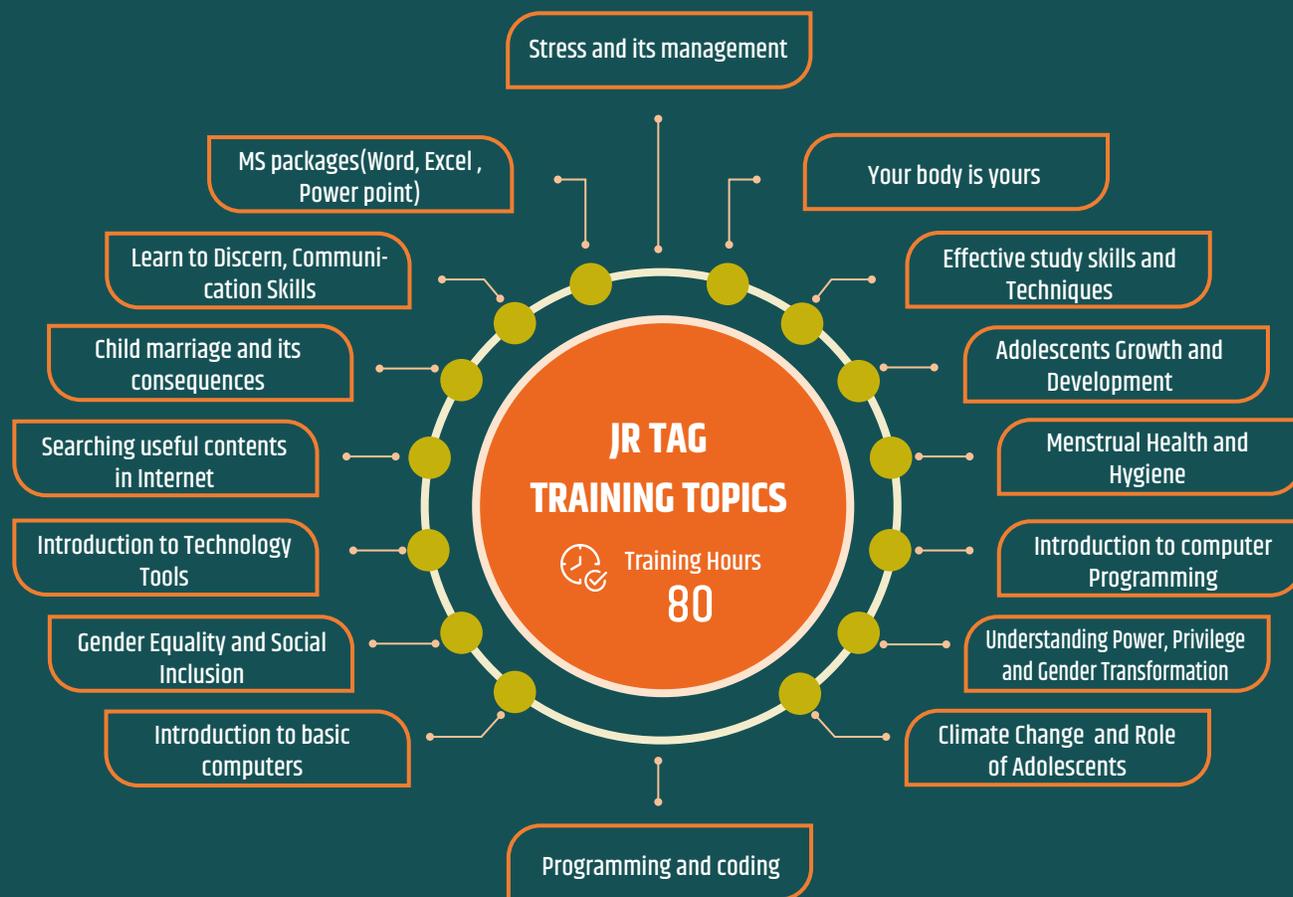
WHAT TAG LOOKS LIKE AT A READ CENTER

TECH AGE GIRLS NEPAL

20 Sr. TAG
Ages (15-20)

55 Jr. TAG
Ages (12-15)

Trained for 142 hours during TAG round II. Additional 24 hours training in Legacy Leaders

142 Training Hours

80 Training Hours

- Mentorship & support from teachers community leaders
- Additional skill training topics such as mentor and mentoring session, programming coding enhancement, adolescent growth and development, mensural health and hygiene and climate change awareness.
- Exposure & networking opportunities with local stakeholders

Mentoring & Training

- Education, digital and technological skills
- Gender, equality, and social issues
- Life skills and communication
- Health and wellbeing
- Environment and climate awareness

4 Sr. TAG — 11 Jr. TAG   4 Sr. TAG — 11 Jr. TAG   4 Sr. TAG — 11 Jr. TAG   4 Sr. TAG — 11 Jr. TAG   4 Sr. TAG — 11 Jr. TAG

200 Community youth trained on topics including climate change awareness and adaptation, child marriage, mensural health and hygiene, good touch and bad touch, domestic violence, waste management and digital literacy

5 READ Centers Reached → **100** Sr. TAG Reached → **275** Jr. TAG Reached → **1000** Peers and Community People Reached

The program operated in rural areas of 5 districts—Parbat, Kaski, Lalitpur, Parasi, and Chitwan—each through a sustainable, locally-led READ Community Library and Resource Center (READ Center) eager to implement and sustain the program. The program was implemented in close coordination with the Municipality and Ward offices, District Education Office, and schools adding value to the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) of Nepal's Ministry of Education and its goal to provide quality education, gender-friendly schools, and empower girls to create a better future.

Program Impact

The Legacy Leaders initiative had a ripple effect that extended far beyond its 286 Jr TAG participants—reaching families, schools, and entire communities. Through the structured mentorship model, these younger adolescent girls gained confidence, developed digital and life skills, and began setting higher academic and

JR TAG
TRAINING TOPICS

Training Hours
80

- Stress and its management
- Your body is yours
- MS packages(Word, Excel , Power point)
- Effective study skills and Techniques
- Learn to Discern, Communication Skills
- Adolescents Growth and Development
- Child marriage and its consequences
- Menstrual Health and Hygiene
- Searching useful contents in Internet
- Introduction to computer Programming
- Introduction to Technology Tools
- Understanding Power, Privilege and Gender Transformation
- Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
- Climate Change and Role of Adolescents
- Introduction to basic computers
- Programming and coding

professional goals. At the same time, the 100 TAG alumni mentors experienced significant leadership growth. As they guided and trained others, they deepened their communication, facilitation, and problem-solving abilities, and many reported increased confidence in public speaking, organizing community events, and engaging with authority figures such as teachers and local officials.

Families became more supportive of girls' continued education, and began involving them in decisions around school, work, and marriage. For example, the percentage of Jr TAG parents reporting family conversations about finances and priorities rose by 28% (from 13.9% to 42.2%), while the proportion of Jr TAG participants who felt they could influence family decision-making increased by 68.9%, reaching 95.2% from a baseline of 26.3%. Teachers and school staff also grew more aware of gender dynamics in the classroom, with many adopting more inclusive and participatory teaching methods. Meanwhile, community leaders and local governments acknowledged the value of youth-led climate initiatives and expressed growing interest in supporting similar efforts in the future.

To assess the impact of Legacy Leaders, READ employed a mixed-methods approach that combined quantitative and qualitative data. This included baseline and endline surveys with both Jr and Sr TAG participants and their families; focus group discussions with participants, parents, and teachers; and key informant interviews with school leaders and local government officials. To capture the practical implications of shifting attitudes, READ also partnered with schools to collect data on exam scores and participation in extracurricular activities. This baseline data was then compared with similar data gathered at midline and endline to track progress over time.

The following are some highlights from these findings.

Cultivating Agency & Skills for Success

- Jr and Sr TAG participants and their families have gained greater choices and the ability to solve their own problems through collective effort, shared commitment, and access to resources.

Systemic Change

- Attitudes in the community towards the abilities and opportunities for young women have shifted significantly, paving the way for broader societal change.

Inclusive Reach

- The program effectively reached those most in need, fostering stronger connections among all community members and promoting ongoing collaboration.

Self-Propagating

- A ripple effect emerged as Sr TAG participants used the READ Center platform to strengthen the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of Jr TAGs—who, in turn, shared what they learned with their peers.

Sustained Solutions

- Local ownership of the program has led to increased investment, ensuring the continuation of similar opportunities for empowerment.

Cultivating Agency and Skills for Success

Academic Achievement

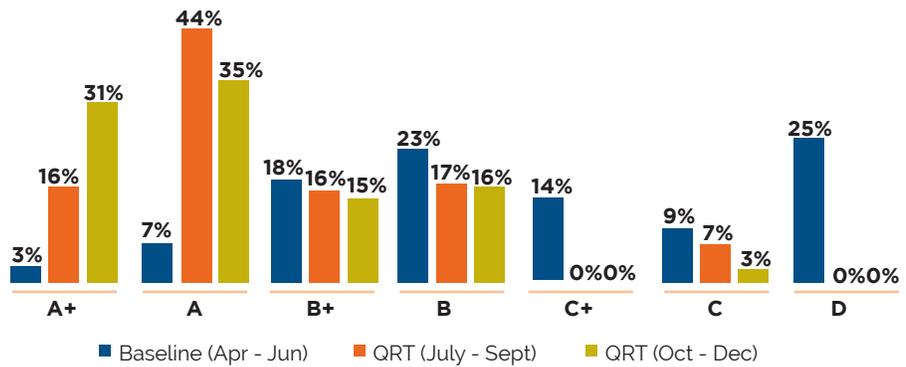The Legacy Leaders program contributed to marked academic improvements among participants:

98% of participants reported that their grades improved after joining the program.

Independent data from schools confirmed these self-reported gains, showing significant increases in exam scores across core subjects:
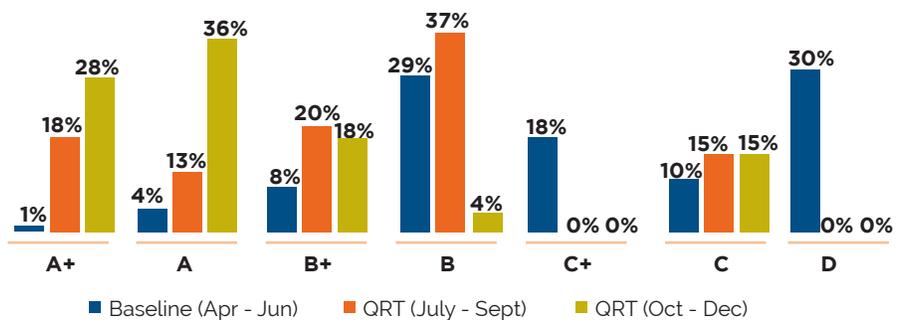
Mathematics: 66% of participants received an A on their most recent exam, up from just 10% at baseline. Notably, no participants received a D, compared to 25% at the start of the program.

Junior TAG Score Trend - Mathematics

Grade	Baseline (Apr - Jun)	QRT (July - Sept)	QRT (Oct - Dec)
A+	3%	16%	31%
A	7%	44%	35%
B+	18%	16%	15%
B	23%	17%	16%
C+	14%	0%	0%
C	9%	7%	3%
D	25%	0%	0%

Science: 64% of participants earned an A on their latest exam, compared to only 5% at the outset. The number of students receiving a D dropped from 30% to zero.

Junior TAG Score Trend - Science

Grade	Baseline (Apr - Jun)	QRT (July - Sept)	QRT (Oct - Dec)
A+	1%	18%	28%
A	4%	13%	36%
B+	8%	20%	18%
B	29%	37%	4%
C+	18%	0%	0%
C	10%	15%	15%
D	30%	0%	0%

English: 60% of participants achieved an A on their most recent exam, up from just 1% at baseline.

Junior TAG Score Trend - English

Legend: Baseline (Apr - Jun), QRT (July - Sept), QRT (Oct - Dec)

Grade	Baseline (Apr - Jun)	QRT (July - Sept)	QRT (Oct - Dec)
A+	1%	26%	16%
A	0%	40%	44%
B+	26%	15%	16%
B	38%	16%	17%
C+	13%	0%	0%
C	11%	3%	7%
D	9%	0%	0%
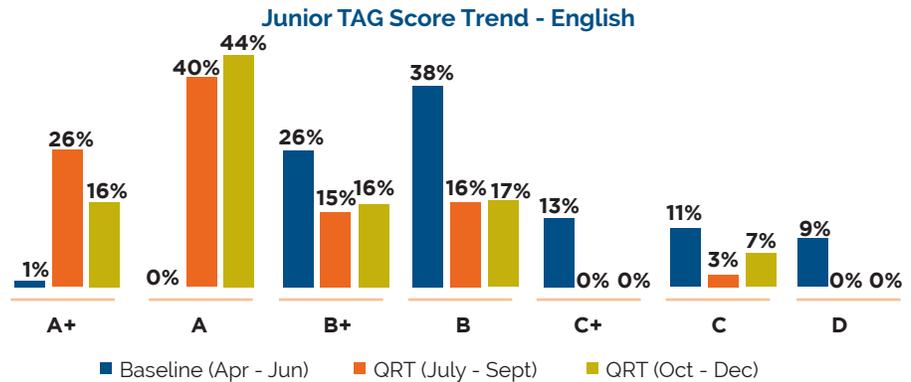
Participants demonstrated dramatic gains in digital literacy over the course of the program. On the endline IT exam, the average score rose to **81.4%**, compared to just 23.2% at baseline.

The program significantly enhanced participants' ability to use the internet for academic purposes. At endline, **87%** of participants reported they could effectively use the internet to support their studies—an increase from just 13% at baseline.

> *My daughter wasn't very good at her studies before, but after participating in this program, her studies have improved significantly.*
>
> **- Parent**

Agency Gains Among Jr TAGS

The younger adolescent participants reported significant gains in personal agency, confidence, and community engagement as a result of the program:

97% of participants now feel capable of raising their voice against discrimination and violence—up from just **23.2% at baseline.**

95.6% believe they have the ability to provide support to others **(up from 31.3%).**

79.1% report occasionally or frequently working with others in their community to solve problems **(up from 18.9%).**

88.7% believe they have the power to change their community **(up from 18.2%).**

44.9% feel their voice is heard and considered by local authorities and decision-makers **(up from 9.7%).**

95.9% have already taken action toward achieving the life they envision for themselves (up from 38.4%).

97.8% feel confident in their ability to balance personal, academic, professional, and community goals (up from 37.7%).

94.9% now describe themselves as fearless (up from 28.1%).

70.1% of participants now talk with their parents about pursuing higher education (compared with 23.5% at the start of the program).

92.7% express confidence in their ability to get the job they want once their education is complete (up from 32.7%).

> *Before joining TAG, I never imagined that I could stand up for others or lead change in my community. Now, I am organizing street plays and discussions about climate change and child marriage. Seeing the impact of these activities motivates me to do more. This is how real change begins.*
>
> **- Nisha Sapkota- TAG participant**

> *Before TAG, my daughter never talked about higher education. Now, she openly discusses her aspirations, directly asks for our support, and even explains why investing in her education is important.*
>
> **- Parent**

Agency Gains Among TAG Graduate Mentors

Through the Legacy Leaders program, Sr TAG mentors—graduates of the original Tech Age Girls program—not only maintained their significant gains in agency, but further deepened them through the experience of mentoring younger participants and applying their skills meaningfully within their families, schools, and communities.

Community engagement grew significantly. At the start of their mentorship, only **27.1%** of participants had taken part in 10 or more community events; after mentoring, this figure nearly doubled to **52.1%.**

100% of mentors now believe they can actively work to reduce discrimination in their communities, an increase from **93.8%.**

98% are now contributing to family decisions, up from **92.7%** before serving as mentors.

Frequent conversations with parents about future educational plans rose to **89.5%,** from **60.4%** prior to mentorship.

100%

of mentors feel their school sees them as a leader and change agent (up from 93.8%).

53%

now believe it is extremely likely that people in the community know who they are, compared to 32.3% at the start of their mentorship journey.

The number of mentors who felt their voice was heard and considered by local authorities increased from

66.7%

to **82.3%.**

The mentorship experience also strengthened their future aspirations:

97.1%

of mentors have decided to pursue a higher level of education because of TAG (up from 91.1% before mentorship).

83.8%

plan to attend university—a significant increase from 72.2% at the start of their mentoring experience, and just 21.5% before they first joined TAG as participants.

These findings underscore the transformative ripple effect of the TAG program—not only on Jr TAGs, but also on the older girls who guided and inspired them.

"One participant successfully advocated for a math teacher whose position was vacant for 5 months for our school during a "Mayor with Students" session. Shortly after, the school received a new teacher.

-School Principal

TAG helped girls believe in their potential. With the skills and confidence, they gained, girls worked hard in their studies, secured good positions and most of them earned a scholarship. This opportunity is not just mine, it's proof that hard work, dedication and support can change lives.

-School Teacher

Everyone now uses apps like Pathao and InDrive (similar to Uber) for travel, which I didn't know how to use before, but my daughter taught me, and now I can use them to travel independently.

-Parent

Systemic Change : Shifting Norms in Homes, Schools, and Communities

Beyond individual growth, the Legacy Leaders program helped catalyze broader shifts in community attitudes and behaviors—particularly among families, schools, and peers—laying the foundation for more supportive environments for girls' leadership and education.

Changing Parental Mindsets

A significant shift in attitudes toward girls' futures is emerging in communities with sustained TAG programming. The Legacy Leaders program was implemented in the same five communities where the second round of the Tech Age Girls (TAG 2) program had previously taken place. Baselines between the two programs show significant shifts, suggesting **a growing belief in girls' leadership and academic potential since TAG was first introduced to the communities.** For example, in 2023, parents of TAG 2 participants expressed low expectations for their daughters' futures, with average ratings of **1.5 out of 5** for pursuing higher education and **2.2 out of 5** for entering professional careers. However, by 2024 when the Legacy Leaders baseline was completed with the new participants' families —parents in these same communities reported much higher expectations: **4.2 out of 5** for higher education and **4 out of 5** for professional careers.

Even with these higher baselines, the program contributed to a noticeable shift in how parents view their daughters' potential and role in society:

- In the baseline, **18** families agreed with the statement: *"Daughters are born to get married, so there can be or needs to be less investment."* By the end of the program, only **4** families held this belief.

- **96.6%** of parents now believe their daughters can be leaders in the community—up from **50.7%** at the program's outset.

- **95.9%** of parents report that they now actively oppose child marriage when they see it in their communities, a major increase from **63.7%** at baseline.

- **42.2%** of parents now report having family conversations about finances—up from only 13.9% before the program.

- The program also helped shift gender roles within the household. In **54** families, parents reported an increase in their brothers sharing household chores—contributing to more equitable divisions of labor and recognition of girls' time for study and growth.

Increased Respect at Home and in School

Jr TAG participants also experienced a transformation in how they were perceived and treated within their homes and schools:

- At school, **91.2%** of participants feel that they are seen as leaders by their teachers and peers, compared to **19.9%** at the start of the program.

- **95.2%** of participants now believe they can influence decision-making within their families, a dramatic rise from just **26.3%** at baseline.

> *TAG participants are the heart of our community. We proudly call them our municipality ambassadors as they raise climate awareness, lead local efforts, and help shape policies. Their voices make a real difference.*
>
> - Mayor, IDI Phalebas, Parbat

> *TAG participants are real catalysts of our community for their active role in climate change awareness. They are ambassadors of the municipality, advocating for climate change awareness and inspiring local initiatives. As the we discuss local government programs, policy-making, and budget allocations, they are always considered.*
>
> -Mayor of Bardaghat

> *One day, while cleaning the school, I was about to burn plastic and other trash. They told me that burning plastic harms the environment and advised me to sort and dispose of waste properly. They later themselves separate the degradable and no-degradable wastes. They also run awareness programs in schools and communities about waste management, health issues, and safe and unsafe touch every month. I feel so proud of them.*
>
> -School Principal

Inclusive Reach

The Legacy Leaders program intentionally prioritized inclusion, ensuring that girls from diverse social backgrounds had access to the opportunity to lead and learn.

- **38.8%** of participants came from historically marginalized castes, highlighting the program's commitment to reaching underserved communities and addressing systemic inequities.

Shifting Perceptions of Gender Roles

The program also played a pivotal role in challenging and transforming traditional gender norms among participants and their families, promoting greater inclusivity:

- At the start of the program, **46.6%** of participants believed that men made better doctors. By the end, this dropped sharply to just **2.9%**.

- **60.8%** initially believed that women were more suited to receptionist roles—a view that declined to **6.6%** by program end.

- Beliefs about caregiving roles shifted significantly as well. At baseline, only **16.3%** disagreed with the idea that girls are better suited than boys to care for their siblings. By the end of the program, **72.7%** of participants rejected this stereotype.

These findings underscore the program's success not only in reaching girls from marginalized backgrounds but also in transforming their views about gender, roles, and capability—laying the groundwork for more equitable futures.

Self-Propagating Change

A defining strength of the Legacy Leaders program is its ability to catalyze self-propagating change—where empowered girls pass on their skills, knowledge, and attitudes to their peers, families, and communities. Through both formal and informal channels, the program created a ripple effect that extended far beyond the original participants.

READ Centers played a central role in this process, providing a consistent and safe space where girls could lead, mentor, and mobilize others. The exponential impact of Legacy Leaders was evident at multiple levels—from TAG graduates mentoring younger girls, to participants educating their siblings, classmates, and even parents.

By building the skills and confidence of **286 Tech Age Girls** participants, Legacy Leaders enabled a multiplier effect that reached thousands:

- TAG participants conducted formal **trainings for 2,196 peers and reached an additional 1,356 youth through community projects.** Training and projects focused on youth-prioritized topics such as **climate change mitigation and adaptation, safe and unsafe touch, digital literacy and cybersecurity,** and **menstrual hygiene awareness.**

- Many of these sessions took place in schools, health centers, and community gatherings—helping to destigmatize sensitive issues and foster open dialogue among youth.

- Assuming each trainee shared their learning with their household, an estimated **14,208 individuals** were indirectly impacted through these cascading outreach efforts.

When students enter the computer lab, many feel confused because they don't know how to use the computers or what to do with them. Most of them have no experience with computers. However, the TAG participants have gained strong computer skills. When these girls enter the lab, they confidently turn on the computers and start working on MS Word or even create awareness infographics using Canva. Seeing this, other students ask the TAG participants for help and request them to teach them as well. I feel so proud of my girls.

- TAG Mentor Teacher

When I joined TAG, I was unsure of my abilities and hesitant to take up leadership roles. But now, I mentor junior participants, teaching them the skills I have gained and encouraging them to dream high. It's satisfying to see them grow and contribute to our community, just I have been doing.

-Simran Rai- TAG Participant

I am a schoolteacher, and I used to rely on my colleagues to prepare exam papers. But after learning from my daughter, I can now create them on my own. This has helped me improve my skills and gain more confidence in my work.

-School Teacher

The Mothers of Moti Prove Education Has No Age Limit

Inspired by their daughters' success in the Legacy Leaders program, a group of mothers in Moti, Nepal made a bold decision—it was time to return to school.

Watching their daughters grow in confidence, leadership, and digital literacy sparked something powerful. Sangita Sunar (28) and Laxmi Tiwari (32), both of whom had to leave school early due to early marriage, felt their long-lost dreams reignite. With the support and encouragement of their children, Sangita is now attending Grade 8 classes alongside her daughter, and Laxmi has resumed her secondary education.

These mothers are a living testament to the program's ripple effect: when girls rise, they lift their families and communities with them. Their journey proves that it's never too late to learn—and that empowered daughters can inspire empowered mothers.

Sustainable Change

The Legacy Leaders program not only impacted individual participants—it also strengthened the capacity of the very people and institutions that supported them. By investing in advisor teachers, coordinators, and community-based platforms like READ Centers, the program laid the groundwork for long-term, self-sustaining change that will continue well beyond the life of the initiative.

Enhance Skills of Advisor Teachers And TAG Coordinators

Advisor teachers and TAG coordinators played a critical role in the program, advising the Sr TAG mentors and helping to train the Jr TAGs. Through the program, these leaders gained greater understanding of the challenges some of the most marginalized participants were facing, and enhanced their own digital literacy skills, improved their confidence in classroom management, and learned to embrace the gradual nature of transformative change. Some of their reflections include the following:

> Working with participants from marginalized communities was different. I began to understand their joys and sorrows on a deeper level. Participants who couldn't communicate effectively before are now solving problems by sharing their feelings.
>
> — Mentor Teacher

> ''While taking a class on gender and social inclusion, TAG participants pointed out discrimination between sons and daughters. It was a powerful moment of learning—for them and for me.''
>
> — Mentor Teacher

> ''During the TAG program, I gained valuable insights as girls from marginalized communities overcame their initial fears and learned essential computer skills. Though I was nervous at first, witnessing their progress made the journey incredibly rewarding.''
>
> — TAG Coordinator, FGD

> ''I've started assigning group projects and teaching digital citizenship topics like cyber safety and social media use. I now feel more confident teaching topics like menstrual hygiene, which used to make students shy. They now ask for sanitary pads without hesitation.''
>
> — Mentor Teacher

A Platform for Ongoing Impact

The long-term sustainability of the Legacy Leaders model is reinforced through READ Centers, which serve as hubs for ongoing youth leadership and technology training. These Centers now house the knowledge, tools, and trained facilitators needed to continue supporting adolescents beyond the program timeline. Centers have actively worked closely with local governments throughout the program to build their ownership and buy in. As a result, Legacy Leaders is already influencing local systems, encouraging more inclusive, youth-

focused development initiatives. Four of the five local governments have already pledged funds to support future training programs.

Implementing programs like TAG through locally rooted, self-sustaining READ Centers ensure that the work continues—not as a one-time intervention, but as a community-led movement.

MEET THE PARTICIPANTS

The following stories highlight a few of the remarkable girls who took part in the Legacy Leaders program. In their own words, they share how the experience helped them build confidence, claim their agency, and begin to drive change in their families, schools, and communities.

▶ **Bishnu Musahar –** Jr. TAG, Jahada READ Center, Parasi

''I am Bishnu Musahar, a 13-year-old girl from the Musahar community,'' she begins. ''I used to be quiet and believed whatever my grandmother said.'' Like many girls in her community, Bishnu faced harsh expectations early in life—teased for her weight, told she wouldn't find a husband, and pressured to marry instead of pursue school. ''In my community and school, I am often teased for being overweight. At home, my family insisted, 'Since you're fat, you should get married soon.''' But through the Tech Age Girls (TAG) program, Bishnu found her voice. ''I became more confident. I learned about my rights and how to speak up for myself.'' She began organizing awareness programs about child marriage, gender-based violence, and caste discrimination, warning even her own family: ''If anyone forces me to marry, I would report it as child marriage.'' Since I am quite young, community members sometimes found it difficult to trust what I shared. To strengthen my credibility and earn their trust, I made sure to thoroughly study and gather accurate and legal information beforehand by reading relevant books from the library. I also had the content I prepared for awareness programs reviewed and approved by my TAG coordinators. This process helped me build greater confidence both internally and externally. This process not only helped me become more confident both internally and externally, but also enriched my knowledge of my country's legal policies and information. Additionally, these efforts helped me earn respect in society.

Bishnu's courage sparked not only change in her own life, but in her grandmother's outlook as well. **''I used to believe girls should marry young, often by 14 or 15,''** her grandmother admits. **''But Bishnu joined the TAG program and changed my thinking.** She explained that getting married before 20 is illegal and harmful.'' Now, the woman who once discouraged education promises to never pressure her granddaughter into marriage—and to share what she's learned with others. Their story is a powerful example of how change takes root not just in classrooms and communities, but within families. ''I am now in Grade 8,'' Bishnu says proudly, ''doing well in my studies and focused on building a bright future for myself.''

▶ **Sneha Sharma –** Jr TAG, Deepsikha READ Center, Kaski

"I struggled with anxiety and depression due to experiencing bad touch," shares Sneha Sharma, a 13 year old JR TAG participant from Kaski. "However, after joining TAG, I gained confidence and overcame these challenges. I decided to leave my past behind and raise awareness in my community and society to bring

positive change." Inspired by her transformation, Sneha launched a series of awareness campaigns on safe and unsafe touch, conducting school workshops, cascade trainings, and street dramas. After surveying peers in her community, she discovered that many children (7 out of 10 children) aged 10 to 18 had experienced inappropriate touch in schools, public places, and public buses. ''I realized it was not just my problem but a widespread issue. This made me determined to bring about change.''

Her efforts soon gained the support of teachers and local authorities. ''Initially, some teachers were reluctant to focus on these topics,'' Sneha recalls. ''But after I explained the importance and benefits of the programs, they began supporting me wholeheartedly.'' **Her advocacy helped push the local municipality to install CCTV cameras on public buses, and her school committed to expanding awareness programs.** ''Now, everyone knows me as a change maker,'' she says proudly. ''I motivate people, raise awareness, and organize programs to create positive change in society.'' Through TAG, Sneha not only found her voice—she amplified it for others who needed one too.

▶ Prasamsha Sharma – Jr. TAG, Moti READ Center, Parbat

''My inner aspirations to work towards a better community motivate me to try and make small impacts,'' says Prasamsha Sharma, a Junior TAG participant from Parbat. With a deep concern for climate change, she focused her efforts on waste management after noticing how ''dirty roads and unpleasant smells created an undesirable atmosphere.'' Unmanaged waste in her community was causing pollution, spreading disease, and damaging crops—problems that were ''quite easy to identify.'' With a group of friends, Prasamsha launched awareness campaigns to educate people on the dangers of burning plastic and the importance of proper waste separation.

Despite her young age, she persisted through skepticism and dismissive remarks—''Why is a girl participating in such programs?'' community members questioned. ''At first, I had trouble dealing with such comments, but later, after they saw the positive consequences of my actions, they kept quiet.'' Her work soon influenced real change: families stopped burning plastic, began separating waste, and even reused containers for home gardening. **With her leadership, the local ward office arranged a permanent dumping site—an idea sparked during one of her community clean-up drives.** ''Now we have a mutual relationship where we help each other in times of need,'' she reflects. Through collective effort, her community not only reduced pollution but also discovered a new spirit of cooperation and unity.

▶ Sangita BK – Jr. TAG, Tarauli READ Center, Chitwan

''As a Dalit, I have faced caste-based discrimination and untouchability from a young age,'' shares Sangita. ''My experiences trigger me to work toward eliminating such discrimination so that others do not have to suffer the same injustices.'' Through the program, Sangita found both a platform and a peer network to begin

confronting the deep-rooted caste-based exclusion in her community. Together with fellow TAG participants, she led small-group discussions to raise awareness, engaging villagers in conversations that were once considered taboo. ''My goal is to gradually eliminate caste-based discrimination from my community,'' she explains.

Sangita's activism is already sparking tangible change. ''Previously, people of higher castes would not eat food touched by us, but now they visit our homes and even ask to drink water,'' she says. Her advocacy has reached formal spaces too—she has spoken in ward-level meetings and participated in official awareness programs where ''local authorities listened attentively and discussed the issue at length.'' Although the discrimination she experienced—such as being barred from temples and communal taps—once made her feel excluded, her leadership is helping build a more inclusive community. ''These efforts have provided hope for the victims… and led to new opportunities, such as the ability to live in a society where individuals are not shunned based on their caste.''

▶ Nisha Sapkota – Sr. TAG, Deepsikha READ Center, Kaski

''After participating in the TAG program, I learned numerous things that inspired me to create positive change in my community,'' says Nisha Sapkota. Determined to stop child marriage and encourage adolescent girls to pursue education, Nisha began organizing awareness programs and street dramas focused on rights, opportunities, and the dangers of early marriage. **''When I see that my efforts have led to girls going back to school, child marriage decreasing, and parents becoming more aware, I feel even more motivated to continue working,''** she reflects. Her work also includes promoting the safe and purposeful use of digital technology among youth, helping shift attitudes around education and digital access.

Despite initial community resistance—''Many people said they didn't need awareness and ignored it''—Nisha persisted. With support from her school and ward office, she helped initiate classroom awareness sessions, collaborated on training programs, and inspired real change. ''Now, community members have stopped allowing children to use social media carelessly,'' she notes. Her leadership has not only reduced child marriage rates, but also created lasting pathways to opportunity. ''Today, I am working as a teacher at my own school,'' she says proudly. ''Community members listen to me now because I'm part of TAG and actively involved with the community library.'' Through resilience and collaboration, Nisha is helping to reshape the future for girls in her community.

About READ

READ facilitates the creation of self-sustaining, community-led library and resource centers that serve as foundational platforms for unlocking a community's social and economic potential. With 139 centers across Nepal, Bhutan, and India, READ is building cohesive, inclusive, and resilient communities where everyone—especially the most marginalized—can access and benefit from the knowledge, resources, and opportunities needed to shape dignified and fulfilling futures. The TAG program exemplifies the READ Method, a facilitation approach refined over 30 years of community-led development. This approach emphasizes fostering individual and collective belief in the ability to address challenges and build better futures. Studies have shown that this method effectively nurtures social trust and collective action, enhancing communities' capacity to come together and tackle pressing issues. As a result, communities experience a range of positive outcomes, including increased literacy rates, improved household incomes, and greater opportunities for women, girls, and other disadvantaged groups. READ extends its sincere gratitude to the Stone Family Foundation, as well as the Jahada, Tarauli, Godawari, Deepsikha, and Moti READ Centers, and all participating community members for their partnership in driving this transformative change.