

ESTABLISHING AND INSTITUTIONALIZING YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTER IN RUKUM-1

Aman Shrestha

Daayitwa Fellow with Hon. Mr. Ganesh Man Pun, Member of Legislature
Parliament of Nepal



DAAYITWA
NEPAL PUBLIC SERVICE FELLOWSHIP
WINTER 2015

Acknowledgement

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Daayitwa for providing me with a platform to work closely with the Member of Parliament (MP) and providing their invaluable guidance during the entire fellowship period. I want to especially thank the Daayitwa Fellowship Team, Mr. Busan P.K.D. Prasai, Ms. Subecha Dahal and Mr. Chhitij Bashyal for their kind support and guidance. I would like to heartily acknowledge and thank Hon. Mr. Ganesh Man Pun for his patience, guidance, and support in making this fellowship a success. His knowledge, sincerity towards work and willingness to implement the plan has been the guiding force for the fellowship. I would also like to thank all the Daayitwa Winter Fellows 2015 for their cooperation and encouragement.

Finally, I extend my gratitude towards all the youth organizations, key informants, interviewee, focal group discussion participants and well-wishers, who kindly forwarded knowledge and experience which has been the heart of this fellowship.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Youth in Nepal:.....	3
National Youth Policy 2010:.....	3
Youth and Small Enterprise Self-Employment Fund (YSESEF):.....	4
Yuwa Sajhedari Karyakram :.....	4
Government training:.....	5
Pratibha Samman Puraskar:	5
Rukum and youth organizations/initiatives in Rukum:	5
Yuwa Sanjal:	6
Gramin Yuwa Sarokar Kendra:	7
Sisne Yuwa Club:	7
Gatishil Yuwa Samaj Nepal	7
Shanti ra Bikashka Lagi Yuwa Sanjal.....	7
Rukumeli Samaj Bikash Kendra:	8
Micro-Enterprise Development Program (MEDEP):.....	8
Methodology:	8
Primary:	9
Secondary:.....	10
Key Findings:	10
Section 1 (Problems):.....	10
Section 2 (Solutions):	12
Discussion and Analysis.....	14
Conclusion and recommendations:.....	19
Reference:	22

Introduction

Youths are the pillar of nation. They are the present workforce, future drivers and change agents of a country. According to United Nations, youth is best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence. They make up significant portion of the world population. At the beginning of 2012, the world population surpassed 7 billion with people under the age of 30 accounting for more than half of this number (50.5%). According to the survey, 89.7% of people under 30 lived in emerging and developing economies, particularly in the Middle East and Africa (Euromonitor International, 2012).

Youths today face different realities than they used to 2 decades ago. The lives of youth today present a wide range of educational, family, employment, and health experiences that depart in major ways from those of youth one or two generations ago. These different experiences can be attributed to the effects of globalization, technological advances, and widespread economic development (Nugent, 2008). They grow from childhood, learn valuable skills, have their first job, get married, start their families and pave way for their future in this very stage of life. This transition presents immense challenges and opportunities for the nation today as there are more youth population than ever in the history of mankind.

The term "Youth" is very difficult to define because definitions differ in age ranges. The United Nations, for statistical purposes, defines 'youth', as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States. In much of sub-Saharan Africa, the term "youth" is associated with young men from 15 to 30 or even 35 years of age. Youth in Nigeria includes all members of the Federal Republic of Nigeria aged 18–35. In Vietnam, widespread notions of youth are sociopolitical constructions for both sexes between the ages of 15 and 35. In Brazil, the term youth refers to people of both sexes from 15 or 18 to 25 years old. In India, Youth are defined as those aged 15 to 29 in the national youth policy (2014). Similarly in Nepal, National Youth Policy 2010 defines youths as those aged 16 to 40.

No matter how "youth" is defined, most of the countries, especially developing and least developed country, are going through a phenomenon known as "youth-bulge." It is a phenomenon when the proportion of youth population is highest in the demographic pyramid. It is when the population of youth is highest compared to other age groups. In a country with youth bulge, as the young adults enter the working age, the country's dependency ratio-- that is, the ratio of the non-working age population to the working age population—will decline. If the increase in the number of working age individuals can be fully employed in productive activities, other things being equal, the level of average income per capita should increase as a result. The youth bulge will become a demographic dividend. However, if a large cohort of young people cannot find employment and earn satisfactory income, the youth bulge will become a demographic bomb, because a large mass of frustrated youth is likely to become a potential source of social and political

instability (World Development Report, 2012). This youth bulge provides both opportunities and challenge at the same time. So, to prevent a country from social unrest and generate capable and responsible citizens, countries have been focusing more on providing enabling environment for youths where they can gain skills, knowledge and prepare for their life. This phenomenon has also given rise to a term “youth development”.

Youth development means purposefully seeking to meet the needs of youths and build competencies that enable them to become successful adults. It means growing and developing skills and attitudes young people need to take part in society, now and in future. It is about young people gaining a:

- ❑ Sense of contributing something valuable to society.
- ❑ Feeling of connectedness to other and to society.
- ❑ Belief that they have choices about their future
- ❑ Feeling of being positive and comfortable with their own identity.

It is about young people being involved and having a say in decisions that affect them, their family, community and country and putting into practice and reviewing those decisions (Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa, 2002).

Every country aspires to provide favorable environment to their youths whereby they can gain essential skills to prepare themselves for future and take active participation in community and country’s development efforts. Taking knowledge from best practices and learning from past initiatives, Nepal has also put enormous effort to do so. Apart from national level, there are several efforts put by local government, I/NGOs and interest groups at district level. This report is the outcome of another effort put forward by the Member of Parliament (MP), Hon. Mr. Ganesh Man Pun to establish and institutionalize a Youth Development Center (YDC) in Rukum – 1, his constituency. The YDC is envisioned to be established as a support system for youths in Rukum, through which they can access information, gain valuable skills and knowledge as well as gain employment opportunities.

The report is organized in a report format suitable to present its outcome. The first section is introduction, second is youth in Nepal, third is introduction to Rukum and youth initiatives, fourth is methodology, fifth is findings, sixth is discussions and analysis, seventh is conclusion and recommendations. Rather than providing an overall view of youths in Nepal or Rukum, this report is aimed at providing relevant recommendations for the establishment on YDC in Rukum and its sustainability. This report also presents working module for the YDC which can be adopted by the YDC.

Youth in Nepal:

Nepal, a land locked country between China and India. According to 2011 census, the total population of Nepal is 26,494,504 of which 10,689,842 (40.34%) are youth aged 16-40 years, the age definition of youth as per the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS). 54.5% of the youth are female and 45.8% are male. Similarly, the sex ratio among the youth is 84 males per 100 females. Literacy rate of 16-25 years age group is 80% whereas it is 61.3% for 26-40 years age group. Out of the total youth, 748,000 males and 644,000 females have passed the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) or its equivalent degree.

1,475,692 youth (i.e. nearly 14% of the total youth) have been found to be abroad for employment and education. 162,548 youth (i.e. 1.52% of the total youth) have some kind of disability, of which 55% are male and 45% are female. Similarly, nearly 50% of the total male population and 42% of the total female population aged 16-25 years is economically active whereas in the age group of 26-40 years the proportion of economically active population is nearly 94% for males and 66% for females. In terms of occupation, the highest proportion of the youth population i.e. around 40% males aged 16-25 years as well as 26-40 years, and 70% of the female populations from both age groups are engaged in agricultural, forestry and fishery related work.

Education has been found as the major reason for 93.56% males and 60.67% females of 16-25 years age group, and 50.58% males of 26-40 years age group for not being economically active whereas household work is the main for 91.73% females of 26-40 years age group for not being economically active (Nepali Youth in Figures, 2014).

Youths in Nepal are hugely disappointed by the government efforts for them. In all the major political movements like peoples movement in 2007 and 2046, Maoist insurgency, "Jana Andolan" and "MadhesAndolan," youths were the major activists and strongly opposed the then government system. But failure to deliver the promises by every government system has led to mass demotivation and distrust among youths. This is one of the reasons why, more than 1500 youths go for foreign employment every day along with insufficient of economic opportunities, political instability and globalization. Among those who go for foreign employment, more than 90% of them are unskilled or under-skilled. Analyzing the bleak situation for youths in Nepal, there are some government efforts that promise to improve their situation. Some of these efforts are given below:

National Youth Policy 2010:

Analyzing the growing need to address needs of the youths and their vital role in all the major political movements, Nepal adopted its first ever National Youth Policy in 2010. The policy aims to target historically marginalized and conflict-affected group of youths. There are many provisions for youth development to increase their access to vocational trainings and employability, such as through capacity and skill enhancement, establishment of youth information and research centres, youth counseling and service centres, and youth employment promotion centres. However, the policy fails to deliver specific strategies and tactics to attain its goal, due to which no much progress is achieved in its implementation and no benefits to the youths have reached so far. The failure to execute most of the

provisions in the Policy can be attributed partly to systemic budget constraints and to the delay in setting up of the National Youth Council, the body through which all programs are to be implemented (Migration and Entrepreneurship in Nepal, 2013).

Youth and Small Enterprise Self-Employment Fund (YSESEF):

In 2009, the government of Nepal launched Youth and Small Enterprise Self-Employment Fund (YSESEF) aimed to increase self-employment in the country. The program is aimed at unemployed youths and small enterprise through which they can have access to collateral-free, low-interest rate loans of up to Rs. 200,000. This amount serves as a seed money or capital to start their own enterprise. Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) has been the partner of this program since the beginning due to its presence in all 75 districts of the country. The Fund is operationalized in four phases: i) application and registration at district Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI); ii) three-day orientation training on small business and entrepreneurship provided by CCIs; iii) application for a loan of up to NPR 200,000 through banks and financial institutions; and iv) utilization of the loan to establish new small-scale businesses or strengthen existing small-scale ones.

Though the plan is comprehensive and impressive, its functioning has been full of trouble. The government wants to involve private banks in the process, however, due to high risk factors; the private sectors are still uninterested in becoming a part of it. So the government is working through co-operatives in the country to lend loans to youths. The program is also highly accused of corruption at different levels. Poor monitoring system in the program has also generated big problem for its effective implementation. The YSESEF is under the control of Ministry of Finance and there is no collaboration among ministries to make it more effective. So, poor collaboration among government institutions has also hindered the success of YSESEF so far (Migration and Entrepreneurship in Nepal, 2013).

YuwaSajhedariKaryakram :

YuwaSajhedariKaryakram which means Youth Partnership Programme in English is a program coordinated and run by Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS). Through the program, the government aims to enhance the access to training programs among youths. Under the program, the Government works with private training providers under 60:40 funding agreement, which means, the government agrees to contribute 60% of the total budget required in conducting training programs for youths. But, the program has not gained much popularity and success in obtaining its objectives. There is very poor monitoring and evaluating mechanism in the programs which has generated many loopholes which has largely failed the program (Migration and Entrepreneurship in Nepal, 2013).

Government training:

The Government of Nepal provides entrepreneurship trainings through Vocational and Skill Development Training Centre (under the Ministry of Labour and Employment) and the Office of Cottage and Small Industries (under the Ministry of Industries). The main aim of the training program is to provide relevant skill and capacity to the Nepalese youth that would help them find employment in Nepal or abroad and help establish their own enterprise. It provides a week long entrepreneurship training to interested candidates who are selected through a process of interview and other selection criteria. The training is largely inadequate and benefits only handful of youths. For example, Vocational and Skill Development Training Centre target only 3,000 youths for 2011/2012 and Office of Cottage and Small Industries is even lower with 'entrepreneurship development training' targeted at only 100 for the year 2008/09, which was further lowered to 40 in 2009/10 (Migration and Entrepreneurship in Nepal, 2013). It may be because of financial shortage and resource constraint. There is poor monitoring mechanism as well as no long-term support to the trainees which has hindered the original target of the program. This may be attributed to lack of monitoring body at local and central level. So, there is a need of a separate program monitoring body that would support youth program at the district level.

PratibhaSammanPuraskar:

PratibhaSammanPuraskar also known as Talent Recognition Award in English is an award program organized by MoYS that recognizes youth who have significant contribution in their chosen professional field. As per the National Youth Talent Recognition Working Plan approved in February 2012, a certificate and cash prize of Rs 100,000 are to be given to three youths, youth groups or youth organizations that have made significant, unique and lasting contributions to the society (Migration and Entrepreneurship in Nepal, 2013).

Apart from above mentioned government efforts for youth development and promotion of employment, the MoYS also organizes various programs that recognize best practices in youth issues. They also organize various consultation programs to develop strategies and tactics for youth development. Recently, the GoN generated work plan to hire estimated 50,000 youths as volunteers for post-earthquake action. Furthermore, the GoN will soon endorse Youth Vision 2025 which will be published and implemented. The Youth Vision 2025 consists of specific strategies to ensure youth participation and involvement in mainstream development.

Rukum and youth organizations/initiatives in Rukum:

Rukum is a hill and mountain district of Nepal, located 280 km from Kathmandu, situated in Rapti Zone and Mid-western region with total area coverage of around 4877 sq km. Total population of the district is 2,08,567 where 1,09,408 are female and 99,159 are male

(Census, 2011). The average household size in the district is 4.98 and around 77,523 populations are economically active. The district is one of the least developed district in terms of development which was listed as 60th in development rank and 64th in terms of Human Development Index (HDI) in 2003. Currently the Human Development Index (HDI) of Rukum is 0.431 (Human Development Report, 2014). The district is listed among the 23 districts identified as lowest performing on development by United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

Characterized by poor development performance and infrastructural condition, Rukum is also one of the epicenters and most affected districts during ten years long civil war initiated by Maoist party. Being at the heart of the insurrection, Rolpa and Rukum Districts benefited little from the millions of aid dollars that had been spent in Nepal. Many analysts have explained the revolt as the result of rising expectations combined with continued or even increasing deprivation. (Leve, 2005). After the end of the civil war, some development efforts in the district have taken place. Roads are being built through local initiation creating access of many rural villages and settlement to market. According to Environment Statistics of Nepal, the road network of Rukum consists of 20 km graveled and 38.9 km earthen, but no black topped road in 2013. According to local residents, black-topped road reached the district headquarter, Khanalga (Musikot), only in 2014.

There are around six NGO's working in Rukum according to latest data presented by Social Welfare Council (SWC) and several INGOs like USAID, Save the Children and Red Cross Society operating in Rukum in various sectors.

Besides NGOs and INGOs, there are several youth organizations working in Rukum. Some of the youth organizations and youth networks operating in Rukum are as follows:

YuwaSanjal:

YuwaSanjal (meaning Youth Network in English) is one of the biggest youth networks in Rukum registered in Poush 1st, 2066 B.S. According to a member of the network, currently it is out of operation due to inactiveness of its members. In the past, the network had organized several awareness programs, drama, networking events and training programs for youths at Village Development Committee (VDC) level. They had also formed youth groups in many VDCs where they trained them on local planning and how they could take part in the planning process and hold local government accountable to them. However, the work was limited to forming the group and no further activities were carried out. A local journalist reported that, the network was formed through the initiation of Child Workers in Nepal (CWIN) Nepal. The network then became passive after the funding from CWIN stopped. However, according to the member of the network, it stopped functioning when there was excessive political intervention from political parties and partly also because the members had other priorities than the network itself. In a way, the network failed to sustain itself as it failed to hand over the leadership to their juniors or counterparts.

GraminYuwaSarokar Kendra:

GraminYuwaSarokar Kendra is another district youth organization operating since 2067 B.S. The organization implemented some projects related to agri-enterprise, self-employment and worked to collect feedbacks for national adolescent strategy development in Rukum. Currently the organization is working in *Yarshagumb (Yarsagumba is a unique caterpillar-fungus fusion that occurs when parasitic mushroom spores (Ophiocordyceps sinensis) infect and mummify a ghost moth larva living in the soil.)* collection and management project. It was informed that the organization has not yet implemented project that was directly targeted to youths in the district. Though the organization was set up for youth, they have subtle programs designed to benefit the youths directly.

SisneYuwa Club:

SisneYuwa Club is one of the oldest youth organizations operating in Rukum since 2048 B.S. The club had been organizing several youth related awareness programs, events and sports competition in the past. However, at present state, the club had not done any significant programs for youth in the district. Currently, they are working for big projects run through Poverty Alleviation Fund (PAF), Local Governance and Community Development Program (LGCDP) and District Development Committee (DDC). However, none of these projects or programs run by the club are directly targeted to youth in the district.

GatishilYuwaSamaj Nepal

It is another youth organization registered in 2066 B.S. Aimed at working for human rights, sports and other issues, the organization is not operational currently. The organization took over some projects for monitoring. However, it failed to do any further work for youths in the district.

Shanti raBikashkaLagiYuwaSanjal

It is yet another youth network established under the leadership and membership of several local journalists. Local journalist expressed that the network was established by group of young journalist to work in youth sector. However, due to several reasons, the network has not yet implemented any significant program or project that is directly targeted to youths of the districts.

Above mentioned organizations are some of the youth networks and youth organizations aimed at working for youth in Rukum. Though many of them might have succeeded to some extent, almost all of them are out of operation currently. Nonetheless, there are some

other NGOs that partially target youth in the district. These organizations among others are:

RukumeliSamajBikash Kendra:

RukumeliSamajBikash Kendra is one of the biggest NGOs in Rukum operating since 2061 B.S. The organization works in several sectors ranging from agriculture, house improvising, nutrition, food security to youth employment among others. Although other programs may or may not target youths in the district, Youth Self-employment Program is directly aimed at youths only. The program is supported by Save the Children. Through the program, the organization provides various skills-enhancing training to youths in the district. These youths are the one who acquire loan from Youth and Small Entrepreneurs Self Employment Fund (YSESEF) in Rukum. The main aim of this program is to provide relevant skills to those youths who are eager to start their own enterprise.

So far, the program has trained 70 youths (47 male and 23 female) in various programs like vegetable farming, poultry farming, tailoring and other technical sectors. The program is effective because it provides training to youth and enables them to have access to funds through YSESEF. It is also effective because of the monitoring that is done on regular basis by the organization as informed by the members of the organization. Three co-operatives currently provide 35 lakhs in loans.

Micro-Enterprise Development Program (MEDEP):

MEDEP is one of the most effective self-employment programs at national level. The program is also functional in Rukum. Though the program is not directly targeted to youth, they have a mandate to have 40% youth population in their program. The program has successfully trained hundreds of youth and helped them establish their own enterprise. There are many sectors from agriculture, shoe making to allo (Himalayan Nettle) production that has been very successful among youth in the district. After individuals are trained and have established their enterprises, they become the member of District Micro Enterprise Group Association (DMEGA), which then carries out other activities with established entrepreneurs.

Methodology:

In order to develop a model for YDC in Rukum, it was inevitable to have a good understanding on how past youth initiatives took place and what kind of works were done by them. Furthermore, it was important to know about the availability of local resources (human, technical and financial resources). In order to enhance the understanding about youth issues and potential in Rukum, two field visits were done. To come up with desired output, following methodologies were adopted:

1. Primary:

i. Focus group discussion:

It was important to have an understanding of local views on youth development and their expectations. It was not possible to carry out questionnaire survey all over the district. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was, therefore, organized with different youth groups. Around 10 FGDs were conducted in 7 VDCs of Rukum during first visit. Additionally, 7 FGDs were conducted during the second visit. The participants were local youths, college students, unemployed youths, youth political leaders and young professionals. Interesting findings on youth perception towards youth organizations, youth politicians, their expectations and their potential were found from the FGD.

ii. Key Informant Interview (KII):

One of the reliable methods to know about the working situation and potential in any place is KII. So, several KII was carried out with various organizations, professionals and leaders. KII helped to figure out the existing situation of youths in the district, different initiatives taken in past and possibilities of intervention and collaboration in the district. More than 30 key informants were consulted during the field visit in Rukum. Additionally, more than 10 young leaders from Kathmandu were also consulted for their expert opinions and suggestions. Some of the organizations consulted were RukumeliSamajBikas Kendra, YuwaSanjal, Rukum, MEDEP Rukum, Dimega, District Development Committee (DDC) Rukum, Youth Initiative (YI), Yuwa, Youth Action Nepal, AYON, youth politicians, journalists among others.

iii. District level stakeholder consultation:

Some of the stakeholders were identified who could support and collaborate with the YDC. They were also consulted through one-on-one interview. Some of the stakeholders were UNFPA, DDC, youth leaders from all major political parties, Village Development Committee (VDC) chiefs among many others.

iv. Field observation:

Field observation was an integral part of field visit to Rukum. Around 7 VDCs were travelled with the Member of Parliament Hon. Ganesh Man Pun. During the visit, many adults and youths were gathered for consultation. Observation was also done through the help of local people in local market places, offices and in villages. Apart from field visits, several programs on youth issues were attended and observed to gather further knowledge on youth issues.

2. Secondary:

a. Literature Review:

Literature review was an inseparable part of the project. Various national and international policies, newspaper articles, web-sites, journal articles were reviewed to give a direction to the project.

b. Videos and documentaries:

Various videos and documentaries on the web site, www.youtube.com was also observed to gather more knowledge on best and worst practices on youth issues.

Key Findings:

Adopting all the methodology aforementioned, there are some key findings. This key findings section is divided in two sections. First section describes existing problems identified through FGD, KII and observations. The second section attempts to illustrate solutions through the establishment of Youth Development Center (YDC), its functionalities and organizational structure.

Section 1: Problems

The study identifies the following problems and societal challenges in Rukum:

- **Unemployment:**As the entire country is under the trap of unemployment, same is the situation in Rukum. Findings from FGDs and KIIs point that unemployment is the biggest problem in the district. It can also be backed up by the statistics in Rukum, which illustrates, more than 60% of the youth population are not economically active while around 4% of the population is unemployed (Nepali Youth in Figures, 2014). While the unemployment rate may be very less, the number of under employed youths is huge. This condition has led to many other ramifications which will be discussed below.
- **Addiction/alcoholism:**Almost all the participants in FGD and KII reported that, there is a huge problem of alcoholism and other kind of addiction in Rukum. Majority of the population in the district are composed of Magar and other ethnic group classified as Janajati. Drinking is a common practice in the groups' traditional custom and rituals. This allows more freedom for youth to use alcohol in their families. This problem has further become even more serious because of unemployment. Unemployment means no work, which means more leisure time, which eventually leads to consumption of alcohol and other addictive substance with friends and families.

- **Demotivation:**The youths in Rukum have lost their faith in any development intervention in the district. There are multiple reasons for this. Interventions are very limited in number or benefit very few youths. On top of that, most of the interventions are not notified to majority of the youth, which means, there is nepotism, selection bias as well as repetition of participants in multiple program. There is very little opportunity for youths to exploit and even if they have some, there is a high level of competition. The only option they have is to go abroad for employment and that too as unskilled laborer for low paying jobs. As a result, a large number of youths are demotivated and are unwilling to support or participate in development activities or other community activities.
- **Foreign employment as a trend:** Youth migrating outside Rukum to seek employment has been established as a trend. Almost all the participants inform that, more than 85% - 90% youth in their VDC have gone abroad for employment. Most of these youths migrate as a labour with no skill or semi-skill. This has been set as a trend as most of the youth, literate or illiterate, are willing to migrate abroad rather than work in their own place. They are not interested in traditional work like agriculture, handicraft or blacksmith. Most of them are interested in migrating to Gulf countries or Malaysia or if nothing works, to India.
- **Lack of access to information:** Unanimously youths expressed that they do not have any access to information related to youth policies and programs in their district. Most reliable source of information is radio. But most of the youths in the district do not prefer listening to radio. So, most of the information aired through radio programs are missed by the youths. At VDC level, there is no mechanism of providing information to youths on various district level programs. Most of the participants' blame that the programs are affected by nepotism which is why, real target people do not really have access to many programs.
- **Early marriage and its ramification:** Early marriage is very much rampant in Rukum. Though the Census report illustrates mean age of marriage as 21.5 and 19.8 for male and female respectively, many female tend to get married in their early or mid-teen age. This trend of early marriage has many ramifications. First of all, male counterparts have sole economic burden of a household, since female counterparts are more engaged in household chores over income generation. Furthermore, this burden increases with having to raise children. Since they get married at an early age, they do not have marriage registration. Divorce rates among young couple is reportedly increasing day by day giving rise to the number of single mothers in the district, which has shown to negatively impact the children. Early married couples are less likely to continue their education which can harm their future employability. Female counterparts may face health issue due to early age birth and even cognitive power of the child may be hampered.
- **Misuse and little of use of ICT:** Information and Communication Technology (ICT) like computer and internet has very little penetration. The 2011 Census indicates that only 294 and 71 households out of 41,856 have computer and internet in their homes respectively. Mobile phone, nonetheless, has penetrated more than half of the

population. The Internet is seldom used to access information and for other productive activities. Many informants informed that, youth use internet mostly for social media, such as Facebook. while mobile phones have generated negative effect on young adolescents and early youths. As a policeman in the area informed “teen girls are especially vulnerable as they use mobile to communicate with young males. Most of them have good conversation through mobile phone and elope during their first meeting. In-fact, mobile phones has increased early marriage cases in many communities”.

- **Lack of networking among youth:** From consultation with all the participants, it was found that there is no program or activity that creates a platform where youths can network with others. Even the youth organizations aforementioned did not organize such programs sufficiently for youth networking. There are some youths who have good network but most of them are through political affiliation This lack of networking has created chronic problem in information sharing. Furthermore, this has hindered collaboration among youths since they are not informed on what others are doing. However, this doesn't mean that there is no networking at all. Youths from similar work or daily life have personal networks, but it has not expanded as it should for broader collaboration.

Section 2: Solutions

In this section, we discuss on the solution that has been identified through interaction with key informants, professionals and youth in Rukum. Here we also present a model of Youth Development Center (YDC) that is envisioned to coordinate and support youths in the district. Some of the solutions identified are as follows:

- **Conduct employment generating programs with good monitoring mechanism:** All the youths and professionals express that there must be some employment generating programs for youths. In the past, many such programs have been implemented. However, most of them have benefited only handful of youths. The failure can be attributed to the poor monitoring system that creates loopholes for participants to take trainings or loans, but not be held accountable for results and repayment. Millions of rupees have been invested in vain for such programs. Another reason for failure of such programs is that there is very little initiative implemented to support such programs for youths. Most of the programs provide training and loans to youths who establish their enterprise. But there is additional need of support in various aspects like business promotion, technical assistance and finance management. Furthermore, poor market connectivity has also hindered such programs. An organization that provides trainings, connects with financial institutions for loans, and links with markets is required to generate successful youths in the district.
- **Design and Implement programs that would engage youths:** Most of the youths in the district are either unemployed or underemployed. Most of the times they are free which they utilize in unproductive tasks like gambling, drinking, roaming around and so on. So, programs that would engage youths in one way or other are essential. As

informed by a local journalist, many programs for youths implemented previously created only groups but did not engage them in productive work which is the reason, most of them did not yield much results. Programs that would inform youths in various issues, involve them in community activities, planning and decision making as well as monitoring of development programs can engage youths for longer time. This will maximize positive use of their time on productive tasks rather than wasting time.

- **Awareness programs:** Many youths in Rukum do not have good access to information which leaves them unaware of many issues, programs and projects related to youth. There is immense need of awareness programs on early marriage and its ramification, addiction, use of ICTs, economic opportunities, local planning process and youths' involvement in monitoring and evaluation of local development projects. In addition to awareness programs, youths also need motivation to participate in productive activities through interaction programs with successful people from Rukum.
- **Promote use of ICT:** Use of computer and internet among youths in Rukum is minimal. Most of them use mobile phone, but mostly for communication and entertainment. There is an immense need, therefore, to promote positive use of ICT in the district. There are few institutions that provide basic computer training. However, these institutions may not be affordable to many youths. In order to promote ICT, there is a need to establish a tele-center where youths can use internet and computer at affordable rates. Furthermore, they should be taught to use internet and computer effectively to generate positive effect in their daily life.
- **Conduct youth networking programs:** Since there is no platform in Rukum which promotes youth networking, there is a demand of organizing program in the district which can inform youths on various issues and summon them in one venue. The event then can be used as a networking event where all the youths can come together and share accomplishments and challenges. This can foster networking as well as collaboration among various groups of youths in the district.

Discussion and Analysis

Rukum is one of the most under-developed district of Nepal. Youths in the district are highly demotivated and skeptic on any development activity in the district. In past there were several youth organizations, clubs and initiatives that promised to work on youth issues, However, due to various reasons, almost all of them have failed to target youth issues. Some of these organizations failed to sustain itself due to financial reasons or failure to pass on the leadership to others. While others failed due to political interference of political parties. Whatever the reasons may be, there is an acute need of platform for youths where they can have a sense of belonging, and gain required skills for economic and social well-being. Furthermore, they need a support system that can help raise youth issues and link them to various opportunities. So, in order to fulfill the needs of youth in Rukum, a Youth Development Center (YDC) has been envisioned.

YDC in Rukum will be an organization structured and organized to support youth in various aspects. It will work actively in multiple roles and sectors. It will act as a "tele-center" where youths can visit to access various information on youth issues, policies, programs, and activities. They will have technical assistance on agriculture and tourism promotion. In order to do so, the YDC will need a solid structure with defined roles and responsibilities. A model of the structure of the YDC has been presented below:

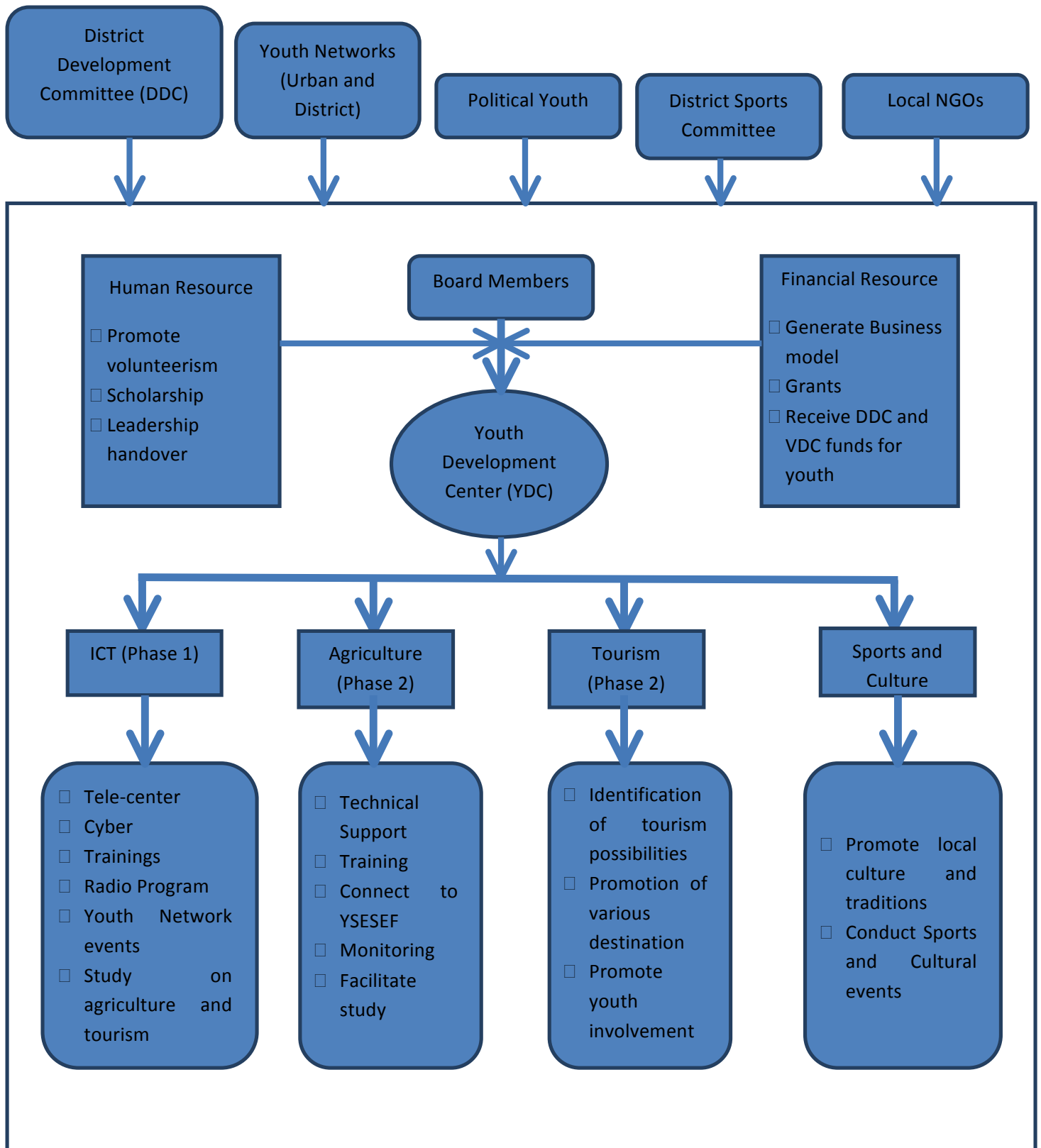


Figure: Working sector and module of YDC.

Above diagram illustrates the organizational chart envisioned for YDC in Rukum. The diagram postulates different components of the YDC which are described in detail below:

- **Collaboration:** Collaboration among and with existing institutions and youth organizations is essential for the success of YDC. It helps in learning from their failures and success as well as generates more human resource. Furthermore, the YDC cannot function independently amidst the presence of prominent network established before. So, all the youth organizations, NGOs, and government institutions can be vital partners and collaborators of the YDC.
- **Board Members:** Board Members will be the decision making body for YDC. It will consist of members from District Sport Development Committee, District Youth Information Center, youth politician and professionals like journalists and NGO workers. This mixed pool of youth will make all the decisions for the YDC in various fields. They will also be responsible to manage the human resources and well as finance for the YDC. Local youth politicians should also be the board members as there is high political influence in the district. They will be responsible to manage political intervention and protect the YDC from negative political intervention.
- **Financial Management:** For any activity, there is a need of finance or fund. The finance can be managed through various sources like grants from other organizations, personal donations. However, just to be dependent on grants and donations may not be sustainable. So, the YDC can also establish a café. The profit from café can be used for management purpose. Furthermore, funds can also be raised from foreign migrants who earn from their work abroad. A campaign to raise fund from them can be organized as it has been done in Rangsi VDC in Rukum. Additionally, government investment through DDC and also at VDC level can be managed by designing and implementing relevant programs.
- **Human Resource:** Human resource is very much essential to implement activities from YDC. For this, the YDC must hold two employees who will be responsible to work and look after YDC. As youths are highly mobile, the employees should be kept in roll-out basis where they will serve around two years and their tenure will end. A scholarship scheme for talented and energetic youth should be managed for 2 – 4 students. The scholarship should be provided on a condition that, the recipient should return and serve for YDC not more than 2 years. This will ensure retain youth in the district, increase youth participation in YDC, enhance ownership on YDC as well as supply talented human resource for the YDC. Furthermore, efforts should be made to gather volunteers for its activities in different parts of the district.

The YDC is envisioned to work in four broad sectors. These sectors along with its tasks are explained below:

- **Information and Communication Technology (ICT):** In the age of globalization, youths from Rukum are far behind in ICT sector. So, to enhance their knowledge on ICT and its uses, the YDC will perform following tasks:
 - The YDC will act as a tele-center, where, youths will be able to access information on government services, policies, programs, vacancies, credits and entrepreneurship. Furthermore, they will also be able to access information on health, Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), Education and child development and other youth issues.
 - The YDC will provide computer training to youths. Basic computer training will be provided to youths through local trainers and teachers. Advanced computer training will also be organized according to the need and demand from the youths. Youths will be familiarized to the “Internet” and will be taught positive use of it for personal as well as community development. Additionally, they will also be trained to not just access but also generate local contents and upload it on the internet. It will foster positive use of ICT will be promoted through various programs and case studies.
 - A web-site explicitly dedicated to Rukum and its youths will be developed. The web-site will consist of information on youth issues; promote local products and tourism of the district. It will be totally managed and promoted by the youths involved in YDC.
 - A radio program will be designed and aired in local radio station. The program will broadcast information related to emerging youth issues where, youths from the district will be encouraged to showcase their skills and knowledge.
 - The YDC will coordinate with YIC and YC to ensure as many youths as possible to have access to information through ICT.

- **Agriculture:** Agriculture seems to be fading away from youth interest in Rukum. The YDC will try to revitalize and commercialize agriculture through through following strategies:
 - The YDC will be a skill center for youths. It will provide vital agricultural training to them where they will acquire knowledge on cultivation of vegetables, fruits, bee farming, and animal husbandry. Moreover, it will incubate best ideas in the districts and connect to various organizations to make their idea a reality.
 - The YDC will connect the youths to Youth and Small Entrepreneurs Self-Employment Fund (**YSESEF**) after they receive the training. This will ensure their access to credit to start their own business and promote self-employment among youths of the district. It will also be a basis for proper utilization and efficiency of the available fund.
 - The YDC will utilize already trained and established entrepreneurs by various organizations like Micro-Enterprise Development Program (MEDEP) and District Agriculture Office. This will ensure availability of local trainer for the program. When required, the YDC will also manage experts from various

organizations and government agencies for the promotion of advanced training programs.

- **Tourism:** Tourism is another sector that has potential in Rukum. It can benefit many youths if proper planning, promotion and implementation can be done effectively. In order to promote youth involvement in tourism, the YDC adopt following strategies:
 - The YDC will coordinate and collaborate with Tourist Information Center in Rukum to carry out feasibility study and other activities in tourism sector.
 - The YDC will approach and facilitate youths to train them as local tourist guides. It will approach necessary government agencies for it.
 - The YDC will provide cook, management and cultural promotion ideas to youths in the newly established trekking trails and encourage them to promote tourism through professional treatment to tourists.
 - The YDC will also promote its touristic places through various media tools and web sites, nationally and internationally.

- **Culture and Sports:** Sports and Culture plays vital role in bringing youth together. So the YDC will conduct sports and cultural events to engage youths in these events. It will also be an event for youths to increase their horizon of network.

Above mentioned sectors where the YDC will work is not an easy task. It needs time and effort to reach to its goals mentioned above. So, the YDC should aim to work in one sector in the beginning. It should build its “good-will” among the people and organizations of the district. Just the sectors mentioned above may not be the solutions, there are underlying problems which can unfold as the task goes on. In order to be in its lane and ensure youth participation in its programs, the YDC must adopt the three lens approach to youth participation.

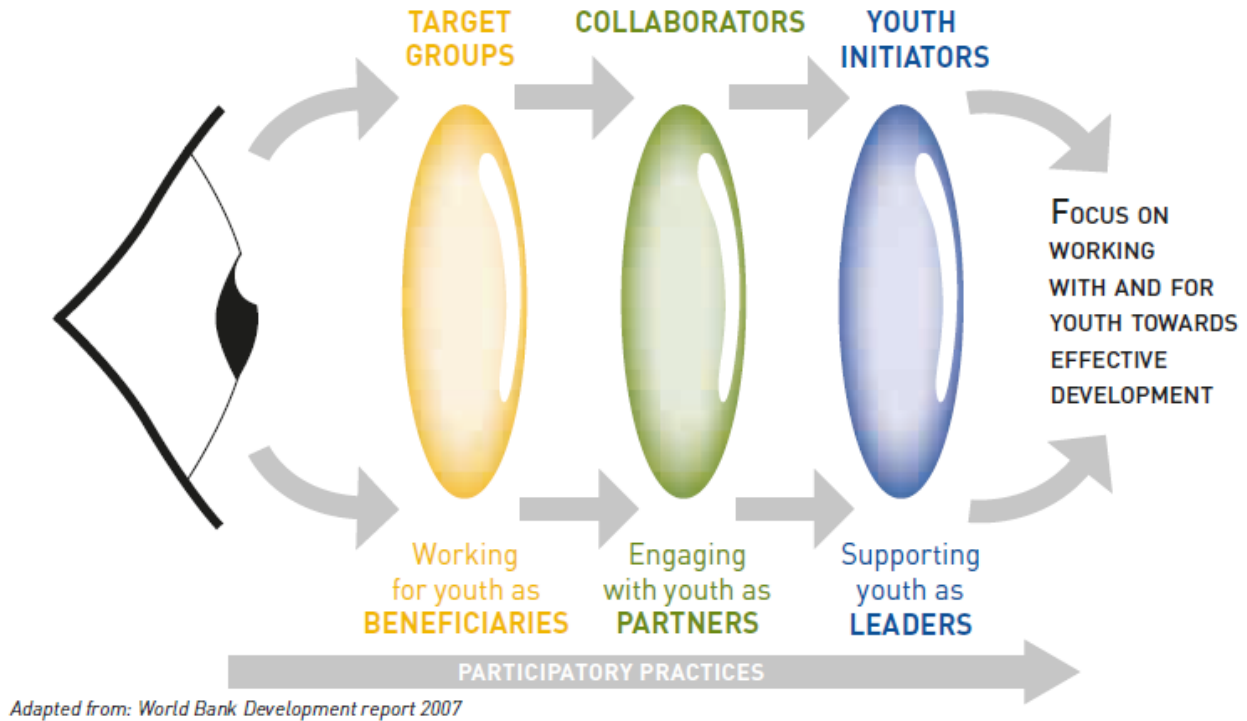


Figure: Three-Lens Approach to Youth Participation (Source: Youth Participation in Development, 2010)

The above mentioned figures illustrates youth through three lenses. Youths can be beneficiaries, partners as well as the initiators. Similarly, the YDC must work with the youths as beneficiaries, partner with them to implement its activities and work with the leaders who are initiating new or better ideas. Different lenses can be relevant and adopted at different time and context. This finally results in high youth participation and in YDC and communities development as a whole.

Conclusion and recommendations:

A Youth Development Center (YDC) in Rukum is not just a want but also a need for youths in the district. The talent, enthusiasm, creativity and energy of the youths must be diverted to a productive path that not just benefits the family and community but also their personal development. Till date, many initiative has tried to so, but, there has been very little success. Learning from their failure and success, a new chapter for the youth sector must be designed and implemented. For this, the YDC will be a model, which, if implemented effectively, can create an incubating environment for youth development. This will generate well trained and skilled human resources not just for the community but to the whole nation.

Though the plan has been laid out, there can be various barriers that can raise adaptive challenges for its future. In order to ensure smooth functioning and sustainability of the YDC, following recommendation can be very useful:

- It is vital to create a strong, talented and experienced core team which will serve as core working group as well as the board members. These members must have commitment to serve as a team and selflessly make decisions that would benefit all youths from the district. Their and organizations vision, mission, goals, roles and responsibilities should be clear to avoid hindrance. Furthermore, this team should be inclusive of political as well as non-political youths to ensure proper collaboration among them.
- The core team must have plans to hand over their leadership successfully to future generation. Most of the previous initiatives failed because they did not plan and work on passing the leadership. Too long service for YDC may be harmful for both organization and individual. The team should be able to recruit, orient and train new young people regularly in order to sustainably supply skilled human resource.
- Politics has strong grip and influence in the district. Many initiatives have failed to sustain due to political intervention. So, a concrete plan and team to manage unhealthy politics and maintain healthy politics for the YDC is essential.
- Collaboration among local institutions and organizations is inevitable for maximum utilization of locally available resources. So, YDC must function as a bridge between youths and opportunities, for which, collaboration among various local organizations must be done. Additionally, it helps to stop duplication of programs and promotes mutual learning.
- Not just collaboration locally but also between rural and urban youths should be ensured. It helps in sharing or knowledge and mutual growth. The YDC should establish strong partnership with national level youth organizations. They can support the YDC with their knowledge and resources which is vital for sustainability.
- YDC may not be able to implement all the programs listed above immediately. So, it should strategically implement programs stage wise. In the first stage, working in ICT can be vital. While working in ICT, it can build up its “good-will” among other organizations and youth through regular networking and discussion events and programs. Since everything is not clear and more study is required to work in other sectors, the YDC can work on building the base for other sectors in first few months or a year along with establishment of its “good-will”.
- Before implementing any programs, the YDC must consult with local youths to insure their participation. It should be designed and implemented according to the needs of the local youths.
- The YDC should align its work with government policies and programs. This helps in gaining their support to achieve national goals and objectives.

The YDC to be established in Rukum is a need for the youths of Rukum. It will be an organization that can implement the National Youth Policy, its plans and programs. It can ensure youth participation in all level of development in the district. In the absence of effective support system for youths, youth development and their participation in countries development initiatives is not satisfactory. A support system like YDC can and will ensure youth participation in development. It will ensure youth participation in critical sectors like ICT, Agriculture and Tourism. Furthermore, there is a need to revive youth motivation. The YDC envisioned to be established in Rukupromises to deliver a complete package for youth that will ensure youth development along with their participation in country's development.

Reference:

- British Council, *Youth Survey of Nepal*, 2011
- Central Bureau of Statistics 2014, *National Population and Housing Census 2011: Rukum*, Central Bureau of Statistics, Kathmandu.
- DFID, *Youth Participation in Development*, 2010
- Leve, L. (2007) 'Failed Development' and Rural Revolution in Nepal: rethinking subaltern consciousness and women's empowerment, *Anthropological Quarterly*, 80(1)
- Ministry of Health. (2002). *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa*. Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Youth Affairs.
- Ministry of Youth and Sports 2010, *National Youth Policy 2010*, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Kathmandu.
- National Planning Commission (2014),
- Nugent, Rachel (2005). *Youth in a Global World*. Washington, DC: Population Reference Bureau.
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) Nepal. 2014. *Nepal Human Development Report 2014: Beyond Geography Unlocking Human Potential*.
- UNFPA (2014), *Youth in Numbers*
- World Bank (2013). *Migration and Entrepreneurship in Nepal*. Nepal. : The World Bank Group
- World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development*. Washington, DC.
- World Bank. (2006). *World development report 2007: Development and the next generation*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank Group.

Websites:

- <http://blog.euromonitor.com/2012/02/special-report-the-worlds-youngest-populations-youth-initiatives>.
- <http://blogs.worldbank.org/developmenttalk/youth-bulge-a-demographic-dividend-or-a-demographic-bomb-in-developing-countries>
- <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf>
- <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/events/prizes-and-celebrations/celebrations/international-days/world-radio-day-2013/statistics-on-youth/>
- <http://www.youthpolicy.org/factsheets/>
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Youth>