A digital tool transforms education in rural areas : https://risingnepaldaily.com/opinion/a-digital-tool-transforms-education-in-rural-areas

A new e-learning tool reduces the number of school drop-outs, improves education and adds excitement to teaching/learning for teachers and students.

Not long ago, most students of Hatuwagadhi rural municipality of Bhojpur district were reluctant to go to school. But now they can't wait to go to school because of new learning technology started at school. And despite the government prioritising education, progress to improve the quality of education is slow due to inadequate teaching methodologies, and lack of appropriate learning tools. But after new e-learning tool has been introduced in four government schools of Hatuwagadhi rural municipality with the support of the Renewable Energy for Rural Areas Programme (RERA), learning became easier and more effective and students started to enjoy attending classes more.

Four schools—Panchakanya Basic School and Shilasutkeri Primary School of ward no: 4, Bidhyapokhari Lower Secondary School of ward No: 8 and Jalapa Lower Secondary School of ward no: 9—have adopted an e-learning tool developed by Midas E-class Pvt. Ltd. The novel teaching tool with its animated audio-visual techniques and display features has garnered the attention of the students.

Around 485 students and 20 teachers from these schools have directly benefited from the training. The new tool has not only triggered the children's interest in education but also improved the quality of education. Now, the children attend their classes on time and stay until the end. Students have developed a keen interest in the audio-visual method of learning, according to teachers. The number of school dropouts has also fallen after the introduction of the new tool.

Tanka Thapa, principal of Bidhyapokhari Lower Secondary School, Hatuwagadhi-8, Bhojpur, says: “We found that this method of teaching is very useful and effective. Students are drawn to it because it delivers classes in an interesting style. They are not only interested to learn more, but have also started to concentrate on their studies.” Also, many parents have welcomed the teaching method in rural schools. They are also happy to see that it has made their children eager to go to school.

Under the objective to improve the quality of education, the rural municipality had provided the schools with a computer and a projector. But lack of electricity meant, the equipment wasn't utilised for the purpose. After the installation of a 1200 watt peak solar system in the schools with the support from the Alternative Energy Promotion Center (AEPC), e-learning became possible. RERA contracted Midas E-class in Kathmandu to organise training on the electronic education system.
RERA is a German-Nepal technical cooperation programme to improve the access of rural households to renewable energy in the country. The German contribution to RERA is provided by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). RERA is jointly implemented by the Alternative Energy Promotion Center (AEPC), Government of Nepal, and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

Prem Kumar Rai, chairman of Hatuwagadhi rural municipality, is a former teacher. He is excited that his own initiative for the quality of education has come to fruition. He has planned to expand the method to all the schools in the rural municipality.
The programme has already spread its wings. After the success of Midas e-learning method in the schools of Bhojpur district, the RERA programme has also successfully implemented this method in 7 government schools in rural municipalities of Sudoor Pashchim Pradesh.
Previously, Midas e-learning had been used only in schools and villages with access to electricity and electronic equipment. The RERA-intervention showed that renewable energy technologies in off-grid areas can provide access to critical sectors such as education and information to people of remote rural areas. The innovative use of electronic learning tool powered by solar energy demonstrates that the nexus between energy and education can help overcome challenges in providing education to the children of remote communities.

- Renewable Energy for Rural Areas (RERA) Team