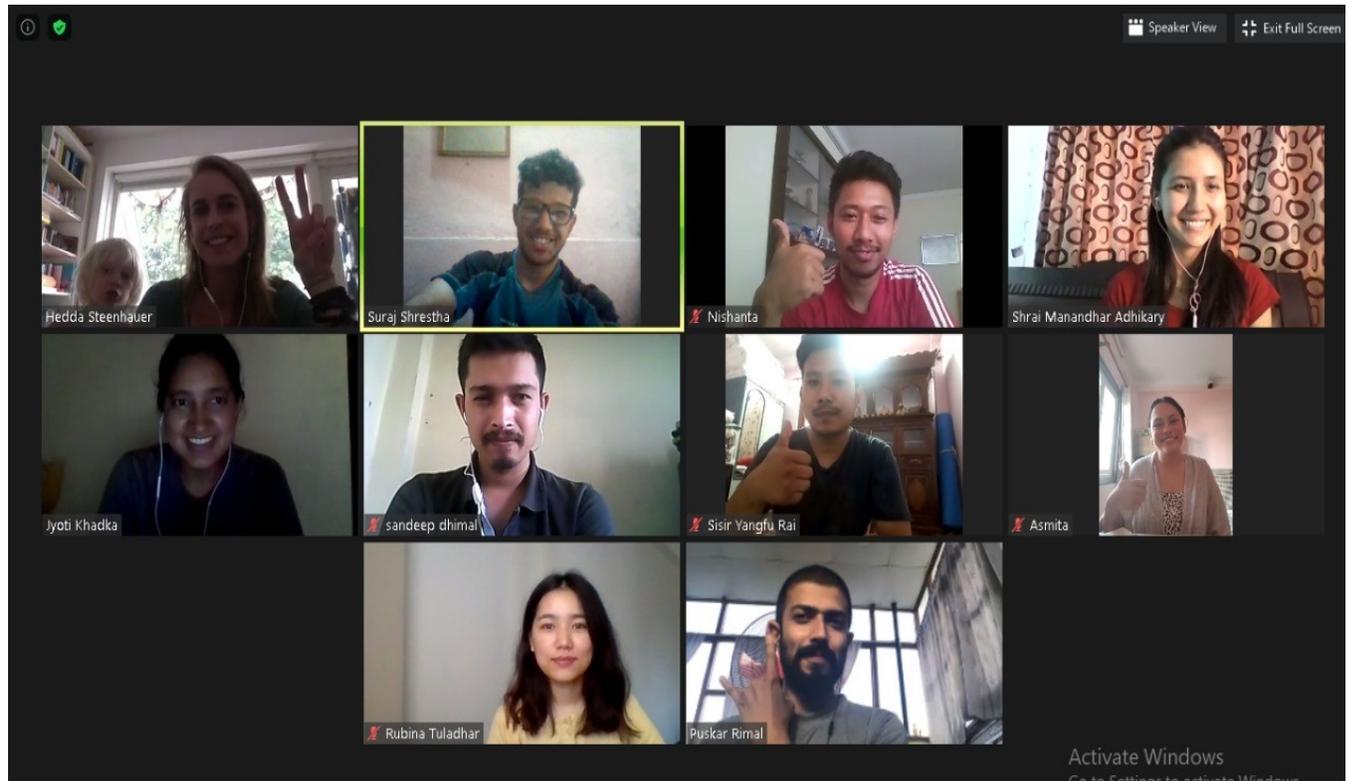


Yearly Report 2020



DATE: 2020-12-30

DOCUMENTED AND REPORT SUBMITTED BY: Asmita Bisunke (Youth Coach/Program Manager)



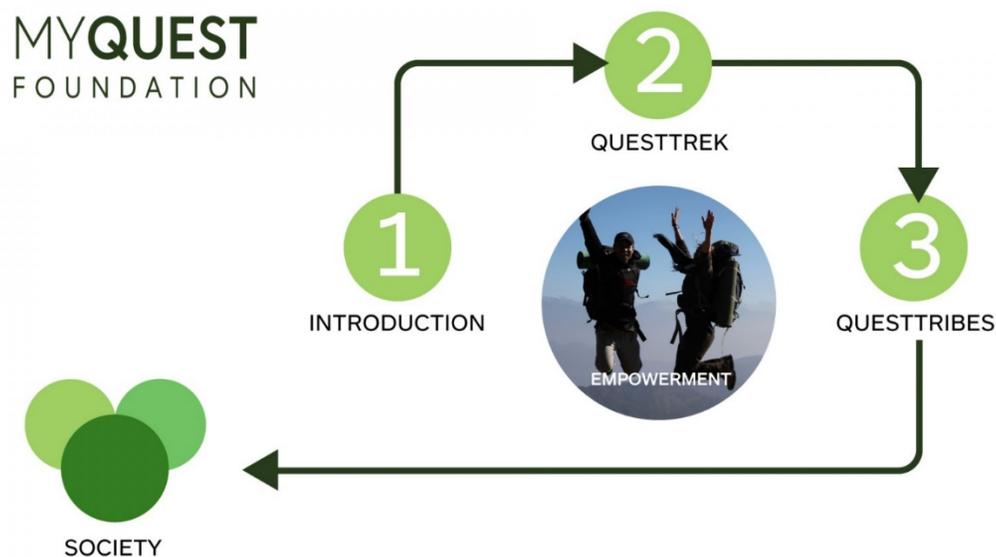
We cannot teach people anything. We can only help them discover it for themselves. Galileo

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1. Introduction



In 2020, Mountain Child Care officially became MyQuest Foundation. A new name but we continued to work with the same dedication and passion to inspire and encourage Nepali youth from economically and socially challenged backgrounds (16–23) to become independent, self-sufficient and mentally healthy young adults.

It was a challenging year, with COVID-19 and resulting measures to stop the spread of the virus causing us to postpone all QuestTreks and trainings. The team in Nepal was able to quickly adapt to these circumstances though and worked tirelessly to connect with the youth digitally



1.1. Covid-19 Pandemic and Lockdown in Nepal

The first case of COVID-19 in Nepal was confirmed on 23 January 2020 when a 31-year-old student, who had returned to Kathmandu from Wuhan on 9 January, tested positive for the disease. It was also the first recorded case of COVID-19 in South Asia. Between January and March, Nepal took steps to prevent a widespread outbreak of the disease while preparing for it by procuring essential supplies, equipment and medicine, upgrading health infrastructure, training medical personnel, and spreading public awareness.

The second case was confirmed on 23 March 2020 in Kathmandu after which a nation-wide lockdown came into effect on and lasted until 21 June. It was eased after June allowing limited local public transport, opening of shops and restaurant.

However, the announcement also saw a surge of people entering Nepal from India. After the Nepal registered 1016 cases of Covid-19, the authorities decided to impose second lockdown till September.

Even though the Lockdown in Nepal is over but Nepal continues to maintain restrictions nationwide to curb the spread of coronavirus disease as of

Jan 15. Although Nepal is generally relaxing international and domestic restrictions, some controls continue like restrictions in transport services, travel guidelines, entry-exit and so on.



Nepal Police requesting Public to stay inside home in Lockdown



2. MyQuest Foundation Programmes for the Youth

MyQuest foundation is building the next generation of leaders in Nepal. We encourage the youth to become change agents for their environment, contribute positively to their society and help them to build their nation. We offer an intercultural Personal Leadership Programme for Nepali youth. Through coaching, they discover their qualities, talents, strengths and life purpose. They take part in our carefully designed one-year programme, starting with **Introduction**, then six-day trail in the Himalaya- **QuestTrek** and one year follow up training- **QuestTribe**

2.1 Introduction

Participants must be at least 16 years old when they enter the programme. The main selection criterion is the motivation. MyQuest team visits the organizations for the 1st introduction programmes. Youth learns about a one year designed programmes and make commitments to the programme. After taking in account their commitment towards our programme, we invited them for 2nd Introduction where the



Introduction and selection of the youth for the Programme

Nepali participants met the Dutch participants and trekking gears were handed out to everyone.



2.2 QuestTrek

MyQuest Foundation works with Nepali participants from youth homes who have faced challenges in upholding their basic rights and family support. We invite youths to join our youth leadership programme which starts with a six day personal leadership trail called QuestTrek. With youth from The Netherlands and Nepal, they go on a quest to discover what is important for them in their lives. More than 400 youths have successfully benefitted from our programme since the establishment of Mountain Child Care, now MyQuest Foundation, in 2011.



Quester Dhana sharing his QuestTrek experiences to coach

Sisir in QuestTrek 2019

In 2020 we have not been able to facilitate a QuestTrek as we used to do due to covid-19. We didn't stop with our mission though. We anticipated and brought all our trainings online to support the youth with their mental wellbeing.



2.3 QuestTribes

QuestTribes is the follow-up programme after the QuestTrek where the youth continue to learn and act on their personal development plan within the safe learning community. QuestTribes Consists of six interactive, group coaching and training days in which the youth can focus on their personal goals they found and set during their QuestTrek.



Youth writing in their insights and feelings
In their QuestBook during the QuestTribe training

Every six weeks a QuestTribe training day is organized so that the youth have time in between to learn, test, explore and work on assignments, challenges or inquiries that they are given during the QuestTribe day. They share their victories, doubts, challenges and experiences with their tribe and coaches. Again, due to covid-19 we have not been able to facilitate the trainings in 2020.

3. Programme (After the Covid-19 Pandemic & Lockdown)

As the COVID-19 pandemic started spreading worldwide, MyQuest Foundation could not continue QuestTrek and QuestTribes as usual because of the lockdown and other restrictions. It was an uncertain situation for everyone. A report from UN Health authorities stated that the lockdown and resulting economic crisis has hugely impacted the mental health of everyone, but especially people in vulnerable situations such as older people, women and youth. MyQuest Foundation plays a key-role for youth and their caretakers and has adapted the regular programme so that it can continue during COVID-19.



After the complete nationwide lockdown, a lot of youth were very worried about the situation and faced many uncertainties. They felt alone and unheard. Partner organizations were worried too to witness anxieties and challenges that the youths were facing due to lockdown and spreading disease. Due to lack of manpower and economic resources, partner organization were unable to appoint counselors or coaches. So in order to learn more about their emotions, feelings and their way of dealing with the situation, the MyQuest Foundation team conducted an brief assessment (See the Annex 1) when youths were asked ‘how are they dealing with the situation?’, most of the youths answered that they were confused and had no idea about how to deal with the situations, they shared that they lacked the proper guidance to deal with the challenges caused by pandemic and the lockdown. (See annex 1 and 2).

3.1 Interactive Session for the Youth Facebook Page

Following the assessment to learn about the youth’ situation due to the lockdown, the team created a safe online platform called ‘interactive sessions for youth’ where the youth could contact their coaches and friends whenever they needed. With the aim to provide the right information, positive coaching tools and right COVID–19 news resources. The interactive sessions for youth page has more than 200 active members, where they can read news from trustworthy sources, get inspired and find a community to share and connect.

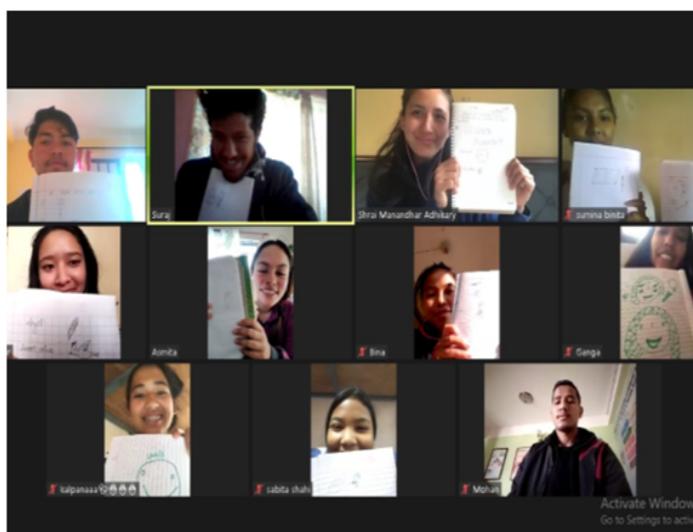
When asking youths about their opinion about the interactive Facebook page, they said they have found it interactive, fun and informative. They said it appropriate medium to connect with friends from other organizations and with coaches in need.



3.2 Webinars for the youth

For youth between age 16 and 24, it is difficult to deal with the uncertain situation themselves. With school closures and cancelled events, many youth are missing out on some of the biggest moments of their young lives — as well as everyday moments like chatting with friends and participating in class. Thus, the coaches successfully more than 15 webinars for the youth of different organizations on various topics such as dealing with stress and anxiety, positive mindset, kindness and building connections with each other during these difficult times. Youths from BlinkNow Valley, Ama Foundation, Umbrella Foundation, Creative Nepal, Saathi Foundation, SOS Bahini, Namaste Children Charity, Ester Benjamin Memorial Foundation actively participating in the webinars.

One of the QuestTrek from home youth participant shared that she found this webinar unique and very interactive. She further added that the webinar allowed her to share her feelings and emotions which she had not experienced in other webinars she attended. She said that she learnt to be expressive about her opinions and emotions and about her inner qualities.

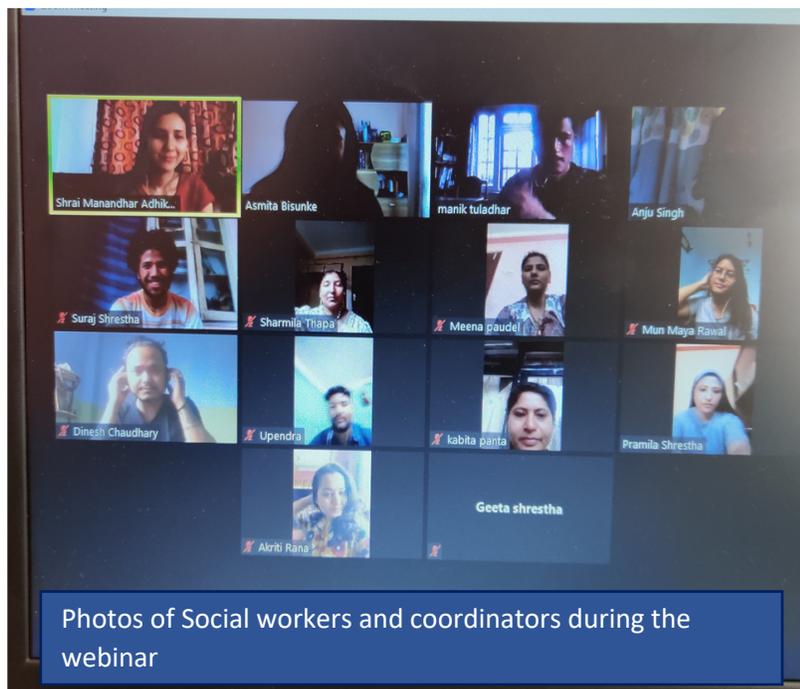


Youths participating in activities during webinar



3.3 Webinars for social workers/program coordinators

Due to the constant work of social workers and coordinators for the youth, the coaches felt that they might need support too during this challenging period. By supporting the caretakers of the



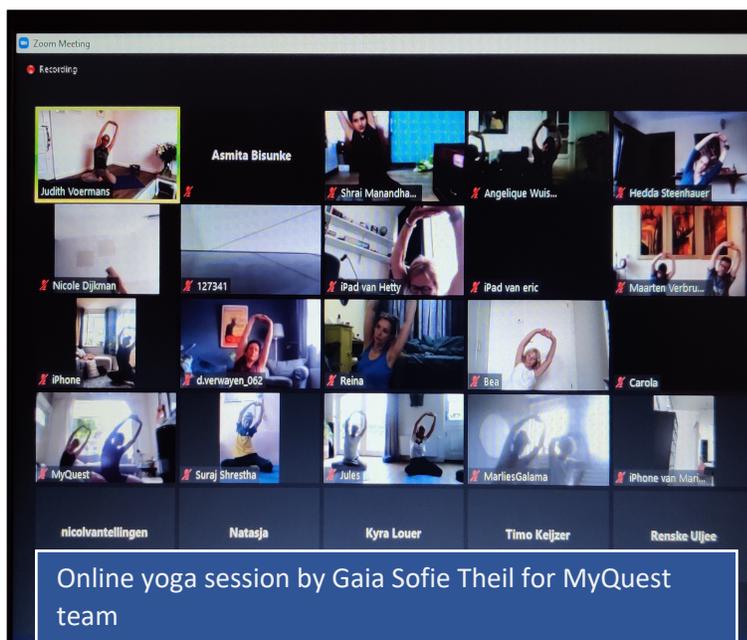
youth, we indirectly support the youth. The coaches organized 4 webinars for the staff members of organizations on various topic such as 'connectivity and new work approach', 'how to deal with anxiety and stress during the difficult periods of time', how to stay mentally healthy', and 'how to deal with youth who are under great tension'.

Social workers and coordinators from Shangri-la, Creative Nepal, Saathi Foundation, Umbrella Foundation and Himalayan Children Charity actively joint our webinars and shared that this webinar was a platform to share and discuss on how to deal with the situations altogether. They further mentioned that it helped them to communicate their challenges and struggles as social workers and youth support system, and also helped to find solutions to deal with the situations that they never dealt before.



3.4 Webinars for the Freelance Coaches

Before the coronavirus pandemic and lockdown, MyQuest Foundation core team used to



organize freelancers training program every 1 month gap. Now because of the coronavirus pandemic. The webinars for our freelance coach pool has been continuously running every two weeks since the beginning of the nationwide lockdown. To stay motivated, active, to support each other, the core team of coaches and freelancer coaches have been

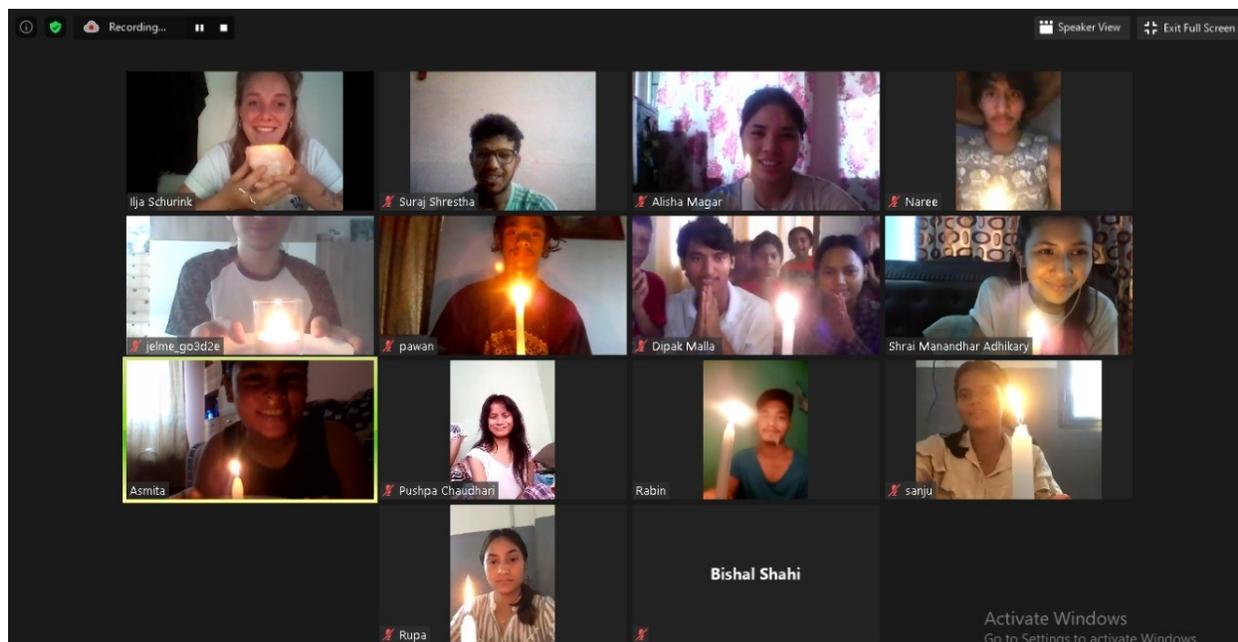
actively participating in the webinars. The coaches did various webinars on the topic of 'mental health', 'resilience', 'how to stay positive', 'kindness and self-love', 'covid-19 lifestyle', 'how to cope with stress and anxiety', 'online coaching'.

Now the freelancer coaches organize webinar on various coaching related topics as well. And the coaches mentioned that they've learnt a lot during these period. They shared that the webinar have provided platform to learn about their feelings, not only that they said webinars gave them ability understand youth's emotions and situations more than before.



3.5. QuestTrek from Home Webinars for the youth

As the trekking season in Nepal was cancelled, so were all our QuestTreks. As an alternative, the MyQuest team developed a **webinar series** called 'QuestTrek from home'. This is a five-day programme with the aim of providing the essence of QuestTrek's leadership training through online webinars by the guidance of the coaches.



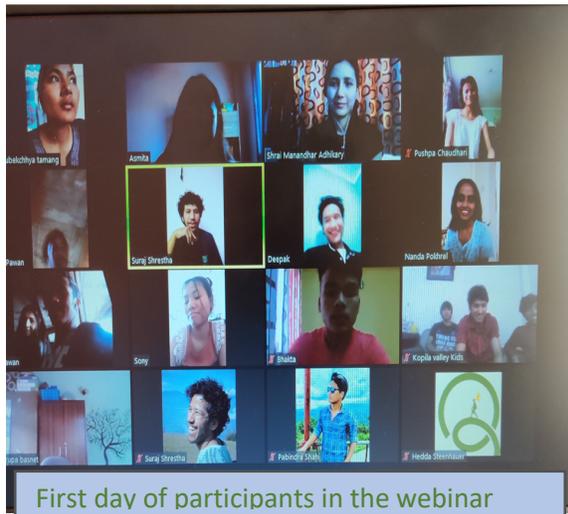
Youths in one of the exercise during QuestTrek from home webinar

This programme is inspired by original QuestTrek trail's content which is the mixture of Motivational Interviewing, Theory U and Coactive Coaching. In 2020, MyQuest Foundation organization altogether 5 QuestTrek from home programmes. Whereas, *60 youths* from BlinkNow Valley, Ama Foundation, Creative Nepal, Saathi Foundation, Ester Benjamin Memorial Foundation, Supreme School actively participating in the webinars. See the testimonials of the youth in the (annex 3)



4. Results of the QuestTrek from Home Webinar

Day 1: Listening



The first day of QuestTrek from home starts from the day of open mind. Participants starts their day with the introduction and energizer. The platform was provided for the youth to reflect on their qualities, listening to their inner voices and importance of setting goals. The webinar gave them platform to reflect, to share their fears, worries, and also gave them opportunities to interact with the same age

Group youth from different organizations during the covid-19 pandemic. Participants were very happy to be the part of the 5 days QuestTrek from Home webinar.

“I am so excited to meet new people and to talk with them. I am an extrovert person and this webinar has given me opportunity to interact with new friends even in the lockdown. I am so happy”, said one of the participant during the sharing session in the webinar.

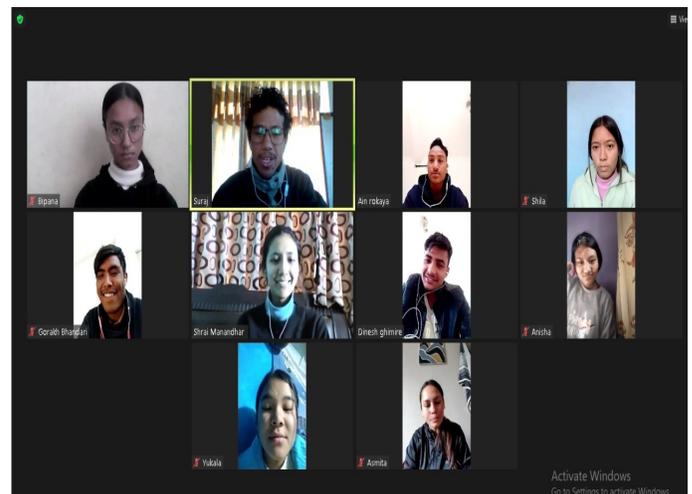


Day 2: Observing and sensing

The second day started with the check-in and energizer. Day 2 QuestTrek from Home webinar was designed from the main Programme QuestTrek. The session started with the mindful meditation session, then the coaches asked the participants what does the trust means to them. This day was about trust so the youths shared about what trust means to them. And the story of trusting themselves and people who matters. "I learnt that by only trusting myself, I can be confident to achieve goals in my life," one of the participant said.

Day 3: Letting go

The third day is the day of letting go. In a smaller group (1 coach and 4/5 youths) participants wrote down what was holding them back, and what voices do they want to leave behind. "My voices that tells to that I am not good enough so I want to get rid of this voices", one of the participants wrote in his diary. Later in the whole group, participants had to burn all their negatives voices in the candle. One of the participant shared that it was one of the beautiful webinar he has ever attended.



Day 4: Into the real world

The fourth day of the webinar was all about their future plans, and realistic approaches to reach the goals. Participants made planning and steps to reach their goals. And shared it in the group with each other. Participants said that it helped them to think about plans, realistic goals and what their priorities are. One of the participants said that, he didn't plan for the future goals as the situation was very uncertain. He further added that the webinar program motivated him to be optimistic in life. Participants shared their future plans and steps to reach the goals with the coaches and friends during the webinar.

Day 5: Acknowledgements

The fifth day is the last day of the 1.5 hours long webinar series. This day is about sharing their genuine their new goals, learning and experience from QuestTrek From home webinar. "I find this webinar very different and interactive, as this webinar allows us to share more about our real challenges, struggles and many more. I feel so grateful to have introduced in this QuestTrek from home webinar series", said one of the youth participants.



5. Conclusions and Recommendations

As the COVID-19 pandemic started spreading worldwide, MyQuest Foundation could not continue QuestTrek and QuestTribes as usual because of the lockdown and other restrictions. It was an uncertain situation for everyone. Teenage or adults, everyone was suffering from the uncertain challenges and situations. As MyQuest Foundation could not continue the programs like QuestTrek trails for the Nepali and Dutches youth.

The team decided to try the digital method to connect with the youths during the pandemic. Even though the digital webinars were challenging for the team in Nepal, MyQuest team were able to connect and provide trainings to 200 of youths and more than 50 social workers working for children & youths. The youths had a platform to connect and share their challenges through webinars. Youths shared that the webinar program has impacted them directly, as in not feeling alone, sharing their fears, releasing stress and anxiety and staying hopeful for their future. They found it practical at that time and enjoyed the online space too. Just having fun releases so much tension and positivity and connection is what the youth needed to cope with the situation.



Annexes

Annex 1 Example of youth Case Studies during 1st Phase Lockdown

| How are you dealing with the situation | How are you utilizing your time during lockdown? | What changes/problems have you faced since lockdown? | If you faced any problem due to lockdown, have you communicated in your organization? | What kind of help can we provide at the moment? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| By staying at home and taking precautions | I spend my time learning cooking skills because I work in restaurant, talking with friends and families, studying and watching movies | I have become lazy staying at home. Foods aren't available easily. | Yes, I have discussed this with social workers from our organization and they have supported me with the finance. | Could you please give some time for one on one coaching |
| Staying at home. And communicating with family and friends and asking them to stay at home. | Reading books, being creative, making crafts and cooking | Now I feel lazy and bored staying at home. I feel like I am forgetting normal life. | I am frequently in contact with the social workers from our organization | Thank you for help. I am enjoying online interactive sessions. It has made me productive. |



| | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| <p>Spending quality time with my family at my home.</p> | <p>Daily chores at home keep me busy. Sometimes I use my phone to pass time. I am studying for my upcoming exams as well.</p> | <p>I am having financial problem. The market rate for the basic goods is high. Other than that everything is good.</p> | <p>Yes, they will help me they said.</p> | <p>Connecting and sharing platform with the coaches.</p> |
|---|---|--|--|--|



Annex 2 Example of Case Studies on Partner organizations during 1st Phase Lockdown

| What is the current situation of your youth living inside and outside of youth home? | How youth are utilizing this time of lockdown for personal development? | What kind of role is your organization playing to help the youth in this situation? | Is there anything that we can help you with, based on our area of work? |
|--|--|---|--|
| Our foundation has brought everyone back who moved out from the youth home to take care of them and to provide proper safe environment | Organization has made daily routine for the junior and senior youths. They practice math, English, geography. We also organize fun time and movie nights. | We are taking care of all the members and youths living in the family. Currently we are 50+ people in the youth homes. | The initiation of online interactive sessions for the youth is a wonderful approach. Youths will be productive this way. |
| All the youth are doing fine. Some of them have gone to their homeland. | As the exams of the youth are nearby, they are using this lockdown for study. They are also doing some creative tasks such are painting, reading online tools and watching movies. | We are, at the moment, working from home and supporting as guardian. We have provided their monthly stipend few days before lockdown. | Not really for now. We will come to you if there is anything |



| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>All the youth are living in the youth home and they are indoors. Our donor have asked not to allow any of them out of premises till situation becomes normal again. Warden sir is talking proper care of them.</p> | <p>We have designed a program to keep them busy with something interesting and motivating. Among them, watching movies, drawing competition, learning kitchen work, playing indoor games are what they are enjoying.</p> | <p>As most of the people, we have also focused on their safety. For this, we have asked them to follow the preventive guidelines.</p> | <p>The youth living inside home are not allowed to use the gadget. It means, they may not have access to Facebook group. For this, you can add our warden so that he can share the messages.</p> |
|---|--|---|--|



Annexes 3 Testimonials from the youth

“One of the beauty of this webinar is that it’s not just only listening to mentors like other webinars or classes, it’s different; it’s more about us. I shared so much about myself with my coach, learnt so much about myself in these 5 days. I’ve got wonderful gift from Myquest Foundation in these uncertain times.

– *Gopini (Saathi)*

“I couldn’t communicate easily with new people because of my introvert nature. But, after joining this webinar, I feel comfortable sharing my thoughts. My biggest ‘aha’ moment was the fire ritual when I burnt paper written about my fears that was holding me back. I felt so relieved after that session.”

– *Manita (Child Help and Care Center)*

“No matter how grumpy or lazy I feel in the morning, it’s another level of excitement during the webinar session. It is so much fun yet I learn a lot every day.”

– *Dipak (BlinkNow)*

“I can’t believe that this is the last day already. Can we please do it again next week?”

– *Alina (BlinkNow)*

