



2019

ANNUAL

REPORT

“Empowered voices, Safer Futures”

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ABOUT FIGHTBACK

Fightback is a social enterprise committed to preventing violence and harassment through practical and preventive safety skills. We work with women, girls, and communities across Nepal to build the mental, vocal, and physical skills needed to prevent, mitigate, and respond to violence and harassment.

Our work is grounded in **prevention, participation, and respect**. We believe that **safety education is a right, not a privilege**, and that every individual deserves the knowledge and confidence to live without fear.

HOW FIGHTBACK STARTED

Fightback began in 2013 as a collaborative initiative led by Paritran's Director and co-founder, **Vikrant Pandey**, together with **Uddab Thapa Magar**, a highly experienced martial arts and self-defense practitioner.

By integrating Vikrant's expertise in risk management with Uddab's extensive martial arts background, Fightback developed a program that goes beyond traditional self-defense. The Fightback approach combines **mental preparedness, vocal assertiveness, and physical self-protection**, enabling participants to prevent, reduce, and respond to violence and harassment effectively.



OUR VISION

To create a society free from the risk of sexual violence.

OUR MISSION

To build mental, vocal, and physical skills to be safe.

OUR GOAL

To increase the prevention and response skills of individuals.

The Three Pillars of the Fightback Program

Building violence prevention and response skills by strengthening awareness, confidence, and critical thinking. This pillar focuses on recognizing risk early, understanding consent and boundaries, and making informed decisions to prevent or respond to violence.



MENTAL

Strengthening assertive communication and the effective use of voice. Participants develop tactical verbal skills for boundary-setting, de-escalation, and help-seeking in unsafe situations.



VOCAL

Teaching easy-to-remember, hard-to-forget self-protection techniques. Emphasis is placed on escaping threats, protecting personal space, and maintaining personal safety rather than confrontation.



PHYSICAL

LEADERSHIP REFLECTION

Message from the Founding Director

Vikrant Pandey ***Founding Director***

As we reflect on 2019, I am filled with gratitude and resolve. We continued our journey with a clear mission: to end gender-based violence and build safer, more inclusive communities across Nepal. While global conversations about safety, consent, and equality grew louder, we remained deeply rooted in local action working directly with girls, women, boys, and marginalized communities to transform fear into confidence and silence into voice.



This year reinforced a core belief that safety is not a privilege-it is a right. Through school-based safety education and self-defense training, we reached students in diverse schools equipping them with knowledge to understand consent and violence prevention, alongside practical self-defense skills. Seeing students learn to assert boundaries, overcome fear, and walk with confidence reminded us daily why this work matters.

We practice inclusion at Fightback and in 2019, we deepened our commitment by creating specialized programs for visually impaired women, women and children affected by HIV, women engineers and young girls from undeserved backgrounds. We believe safety education must be accessible to all, especially to those most at risk. This year, our voice as an advocate also strengthened. We carried local stories on an international platform by joining global movements like 16 Days of Activism, Orange the World, Generation Equality, and Women Deliver 2019. Our participation in Women Deliver in Vancouver and global self-defense incubators further positioned Fightback as a growing social enterprise within the worldwide movement for gender justice.

Our growth was guided by credibility and learning. An independent impact assessment by Coffey International helped us reflect on our impact and improve our program. Being featured at platforms like Google Business Group Kathmandu Bizfest and Bizstart, we reaffirmed that social impact and sustainability can-and-must go together.

Our gratitude to all the schools, community partners, organizations, donors, volunteers and most importantly, every participant who chose to learn, speak up, and stand up for their safety every day. None of our programs would be possible without your trust. Your belief in Fightback fuels our mission.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to deepening our impact, expanding inclusive safety education and advocating for a future where every individual- regardless of gender, ability, or background, can live without fear or violence. The journey is long, but, together, we are building safer communities.

2019: YEAR IN REVIEW

In 2019, Fightback focused on empowering girls, women, and marginalized communities through safety education, self-defense training, awareness campaigns, and global engagement. Through school programs, inclusive training initiatives, international representation, and evidence-based reflection, Fightback strengthened its mission to prevent gender-based violence and build safer communities across Nepal.

2019 | OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS



**3500+ Women and
Girls Empowered**

Successfully completed comprehensive safety and self-defense training programs across Nepal.



**11+ Institutions
Reached**

Partnered with diverse schools and community organizations to institutionalize safety education.



**500+ Marginalized
Individuals Engaged**

Delivered specialized, inclusive programs for women with disabilities and those affected by HIV.

PROGRAMS AND KEY ACTIVITIES IN 2019

1. School-Based Safety and Self-Defense Trainings

In 2019, Fightback continued its mission to empower the next generation by delivering comprehensive safety education across schools and communities in Nepal. These programs ranged from intensive multi-day workshops to focused one-day sessions, equipping students with both mental and physical tools for protection.

Core Curriculum: Our training goes beyond physical defense, addressing the root causes and indicators of violence:

- **Awareness:** Understanding consent, identifying harassment, and recognizing types of abuse.
- **Prevention:** Strategies to mitigate physical, verbal, emotional, and sexual violence.
- **Action:** Practical self-defense techniques tailored for individual safety.



2019 Partner Schools: We successfully collaborated with a diverse range of educational institutions, including:

- **BlinkNow-supported programs:** Four local schools participated in intensive 4-day programs held during the *#16Days of Activism campaign*.
- **Sanskrit International School, Halchowk:** Delivered a specialized 3-day curriculum.
- **Surkhet Outreach:** Conducted training at Kopila Valley School.
- **Specialized Sessions:** Including boys-only training at **DAV School** and programs at **St. Xavier's, LRI School, SOS Children's Village, and Apex Life School.**



The feedback from participants and educators highlighted a significant shift in student behavior. Key outcomes included:

- **Psychological Growth:** Students reported a reduction in fear and a marked increase in alertness and self-respect.
- **Boundary Setting:** Improved ability to assert personal boundaries and communicate needs.
- **Inclusivity:** Formerly shy students demonstrated a visible increase in confidence, participation, and self-expression.

TESTIMONIALS FROM PARTICIPANTS



“I remember talking about bullying and how to stand up against it in the Fightback training program. Also, it was important to learn about the weaker body parts of boys. The training made us kick the dummy and it gave us confidence that we can actually hit boys if needed.” **KII Girl 9 Endline.**

“In Fightback training I learnt that if somebody attacks me, I need to either fight back or I need to run away to the safe place. If this situation comes, I would see if someone is coming and tell the person to help. If I get caught in such a situation, I will use my hands and legs. And if I find mud around me, I will throw the mud in the attacker's face so that I will find a safe place.” **KII Girl 1 Endline**



2. Inclusion-Focused and Marginalized Group Training



In 2019, Fightback placed strong emphasis on inclusive safety education through specialized programs for vulnerable groups:

Women and girls with disabilities

- Conducted a targeted 3-day self-defense training in Bhaktapur specifically designed for women and girls with disabilities
- Partnered with Prayanta Nepal to deliver specialized safety program tailored for visually impaired women

Women and children affected by HIV

In collaboration with SETU Nepal, facilitated safety and awareness sessions for women and children living with or affected by HIV, focusing on empowerment and stigma reduction.

Women engineers

Marked International women in Engineering Day by providing specialized safety training for 150 women, addressing the unique challenges women face in technical and field-based roles.

Youth empowerment

Strengthened the resilience of over 100 young girls through safety training programs supported by Zonta Club

“After the Fightback training, I feel safer than before as now I know how to avoid risky situations. I have now become more aware of my surroundings and if anything happens, I can push the person, shout and ask for help.”



3. Community and Organizational Training

Fightback also delivered safety education beyond schools through community and organizational engagement:

- Conducted One-day Fightback training for United Mission to Nepal staff (men and women)

- Delivered a specialized awareness session at the 15th National Convention of Science Clubs of Nepal (NCSQC)

- Hosted Safety education workshops at the Women of the World (WOW) event in Janakpur Dham

- Conducted Safety training for employees of Marie Stopes to enhance workplace safety



GLOBAL REACH

Campaigns Against Gender-Based Violence

Fightback actively participated in national and global advocacy campaigns to amplify awareness and action against gender-based violence:

#16Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

#OrangeTheWorld

#GenerationEquality

#WomenDeliver2019

These campaigns combined training, advocacy, and awareness-raising activities to promote prevention, consent, and community responsibility.

In 2019, Fightback amplified its international presence by participating in key global forums. These engagements were vital in aligning our local methodologies with international standards and fostering high-level partnerships.

Women Deliver 2019 (Vancouver, Canada)

Represented Fightback at the world's largest gathering on gender equality and the rights of women and girls. Participation in this conference allowed us to exchange innovative solutions with global leaders and advocates.

SPRING and DFID Welcome Reception

Attended an exclusive reception ahead of Women Deliver, hosted by the SPRING Accelerator and the UK Department for International Development (DFID), strengthening our network with international donors and social enterprises.

Men's Empowerment Self-Defense (ESD)

Incubator (New York, USA): Participated in a specialized incubator organized by ESD Global. This engagement focused on involving men in the self-defense movement, broadening our approach to violence prevention and positive masculinity.



Impact: These international platforms significantly enhanced Fightback's visibility and provided access to a global network of practitioners, ensuring our programs remain at the cutting edge of the Empowerment Self-Defense (ESD) movement.

ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH AND CREDIBILITY

To ensure the long-term effectiveness of our programs, Fightback invested heavily in rigorous research and organizational sustainability throughout 2019.

Research and Impact Evaluation

Independent Impact Assessment: Independent Validation by Coffey International (UK)

Coffey International conducted a comprehensive **independent evaluation** of our programs. This assessment provided vital data-driven insights that have since been integrated into our curriculum to enhance learning outcomes and program efficacy. This rigorous academic approach allowed us to isolate the specific effects of our training on the lives of young women.

- It was a **quasi-experimental impact evaluation**
- **Methodology:** Collected baseline and endline survey data from **1091 participants across 7 schools** in Nepal. Quantitative analysis assessed changes in knowledge, risk recognition, confidence and recall of self-defense strategies while qualitative interviews explored participants' lived experiences and self-reported behavioral changes subsequent to the training.
- **Findings:** Findings showed a dramatic **increase in knowledge and safety skills** recall among trained girls, rising **from 10% at baseline to 90%** at endline. Furthermore, **confidence levels improved to 88%, perceived personal safety skills to 96%**, and the **ability to use their voices to assert boundaries to 99%**. Beyond safety skills, quantitative measures indicated enhancements in mood, energy, and overall life satisfaction, while qualitative interviews revealed increased self-efficacy and psychological well-being. [\[Read more about impact study here\]](#)

Grand Challenges Canada (GCC) Grants

Fightback embarked on a transformative journey to move beyond traditional training and establish a scientifically validated framework for violence prevention. This was made possible through a prestigious partnership with **Grand Challenges Canada (GCC)**, marking the start of a **funding period (2019–2022)** dedicated to rigorously testing and scaling our "Mental, Vocal and Physical" safety model.

The Goal: Our primary objective for this funding period is to **reach over 120 schools** across Nepal, ensuring that safety education is not just a localized effort but a national standard for adolescent protection. By training thousands of students, we aim to build a robust evidence base that proves preventive education can fundamentally reduce the risk of violence and harassment.

Advancing the Social Enterprise Model

GBG Kathmandu Bizfest & Bizstart 2019

Fightback was selected as a featured startup at Nepal's largest technology and business expo. This platform allowed us to showcase our innovative approach to a crowd of over 10,000 visitors.

Strategic Positioning

We successfully solidified our identity as a **social enterprise**, demonstrating that women's safety and empowerment can be advanced through a self-sustaining, scalable business model.

FIGHTBACK

GBG Kathmandu #BizStart
Fightback

FIGHTBACK

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND MEDIA PRESENCE

Fightback's mission is amplified by a strong network of institutional partners and a growing presence in national media. We believe that collective action is the key to creating a safer environment for women and children.

Our Institutional Partners

In 2019, we collaborated with leading international and local organizations to integrate safety education into broader developmental and humanitarian goals:

- | **World Food Programme (WFP):** Collaborated on safety initiatives within humanitarian frameworks.
- | **United Mission to Nepal (UMN):** Provided specialized staff training to enhance organizational safety culture.
- | **Marie Stopes:** Delivered professional safety training for healthcare and administrative employees.
- | **SETU Nepal:** Partnered to provide critical awareness and safety sessions for women and children affected by HIV.



Fightback in the News

Our work in 2019 was featured across major media platforms, helping to bring the conversation of empowerment and self-defense into the mainstream:

- | **Janata Samachar:** Featured coverage of our community-based training and impact.
- | **Radio Kantipur:** Broadcasted interviews and awareness segments, reaching a nationwide audience.

“2019 was a year of profound growth and global connection for Fightback. From the schoolyards of Surkhet to the global stage in Vancouver, we have proven that when individuals are equipped with mental, vocal, and physical tools, they don't just survive, they thrive. Our journey toward a society free from the risk of sexual violence continues. We invite you to stand with us as we transform fear into fortitude in the years to come.”



M8C3+J99, BAGDOL RD, LALITPUR 44600
www.fightbacknepal.com



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