



ATOOT ANNUAL REPORT

2023 - 2024



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Atoot girls achieved many different things this programme year, with most participating in new and exciting adventures for the first time in their lives. They took educational trips to other districts in Nepal, played their first ever football matches on a futsal court with artificial turf and tried out for the ANFA (All Nepal Football Association) Academy's U-14 national selection camp. Atoot girls have grown from strength to strength the past year, demonstrating to themselves and those around them the natural power they possess. Our U-15 girls started their learning journey to becoming football coaches and educational teachers, now facilitating football sessions and educational classes for Atoot's youngest girls.

A WORD FROM OUR CO-FOUNDERS

To all Atoot Supporters,

It is our pleasure to write this letter to you. This annual report allows us to reflect and celebrate together Atoot's achievements over our past programme year.

From the moment Atoot initiated our on the ground programming in 2019, our organization's momentum has been on a very fast, upward movement. This past programme year, 2023 - 2024, continued to prove that when you create safe spaces for girls to flourish, growth and opportunities are endless. We are so proud of every single girl who has bravely taken the path never travelled in rural Nepal and joined Atoot. The work they do daily to find their own voice, make their own choice is exceptional.

Our small team at Atoot has made our success what it is today, putting their energies, hearts and souls into our work. We have been able to reach deeper within the existing communities our organization works in allowing Atoot to continuously, and organically, weave greater trust and confidence with our community stakeholders. We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to our team for the amazing work they do.

We would also like to thank all our gracious individual/organisational donors, funders and partners, without whom our work would not be possible. Please enjoy the successes and growth we made together in these upcoming pages.

In Solidarity,

Sarah Van Vooren & Mashreeb Aryal
Co-Founders and Executive Directors



OUR STORY

Atoot means 'unbreakable' in Nepali language. We took the name as it represents the girls we work with. Our girls are viewed as a burden; a liability. They are beaten down physically, emotionally, and mentally on a daily basis - yet still they rise - before sun up and far past sundown, bearing all the burdens of labour within their families' homes. Simply put, they are unbreakable.

Atoot was founded based on the need for safe and empowering spaces for girls that face inequality, discrimination and injustice in Nepal.

Atoot believes in the power of sport for the greater good. We believe sport is a tool to help bridge gaps, promote gender equality, build resilience, eradicate discrimination, level the playing field and build character/self-esteem.

OUR MISSION & VISION

Our mission is to avail equal educational and sporting opportunities to girls.

**Her Voice.
Her Choice.**



ATOOT & SDGs



GENDER EQUALITY

SDG 5

QUALITY EDUCATION

SDG 4

GOOD HEALTH & WELL-BEING

SDG 3

REDUCED INEQUALITIES

SDG 10

OUR IMPACT

95%

Atoot beneficiaries reported positive changes in their behaviour after joining Atoot.

99%

Atoot beneficiaries think that Atoot staff care about their well being and development.

88%

Atoot beneficiaries have made new friends at Atoot.

99%

Atoot beneficiaries think Atoot's football sessions are fun and challenging.

96%

Atoot beneficiaries think that Atoot's educational classes are fun and interactive.

84%

Atoot beneficiaries reported that workshops at Atoot have helped them know about their rights.

88%

Atoot beneficiaries believe that Atoot staff respect and listen to thoughts and concerns expressed within the community.

94%

Atoot beneficiaries' families encouraged them to stay in Atoot's program.

90%

Atoot beneficiaries recommend Atoot to others.

HIGHLIGHTS

Our U-15 girls had an educational trip to Palpa and a futsal tournament.

Their first-ever overnight educational trip with Atoot, the girls had an exceptional time - admiring the hills, visiting museums, palaces, and temples. The girls also had a thrilling futsal tournament, filled with teamwork, competitive spirit and a lot of fun, followed by a presentation ceremony where everyone got certificates, medals, football boots, socks, and kit bags. In addition to presenting trophies to the winners and runners-up, individual trophies were also presented to the ones who displayed positive team spirit, honesty, scored the highest number of goals during the tournament.

3 day wellness retreat for Atoot staff

at Pokhara. A special workshop on workplace wellness was conducted, after which Atoot designed and implemented our Workplace Wellness Strategy (WWS). Our WWS takes a crucial step towards prioritizing the well-being of our incredible Atoot girls and our hardworking staff.

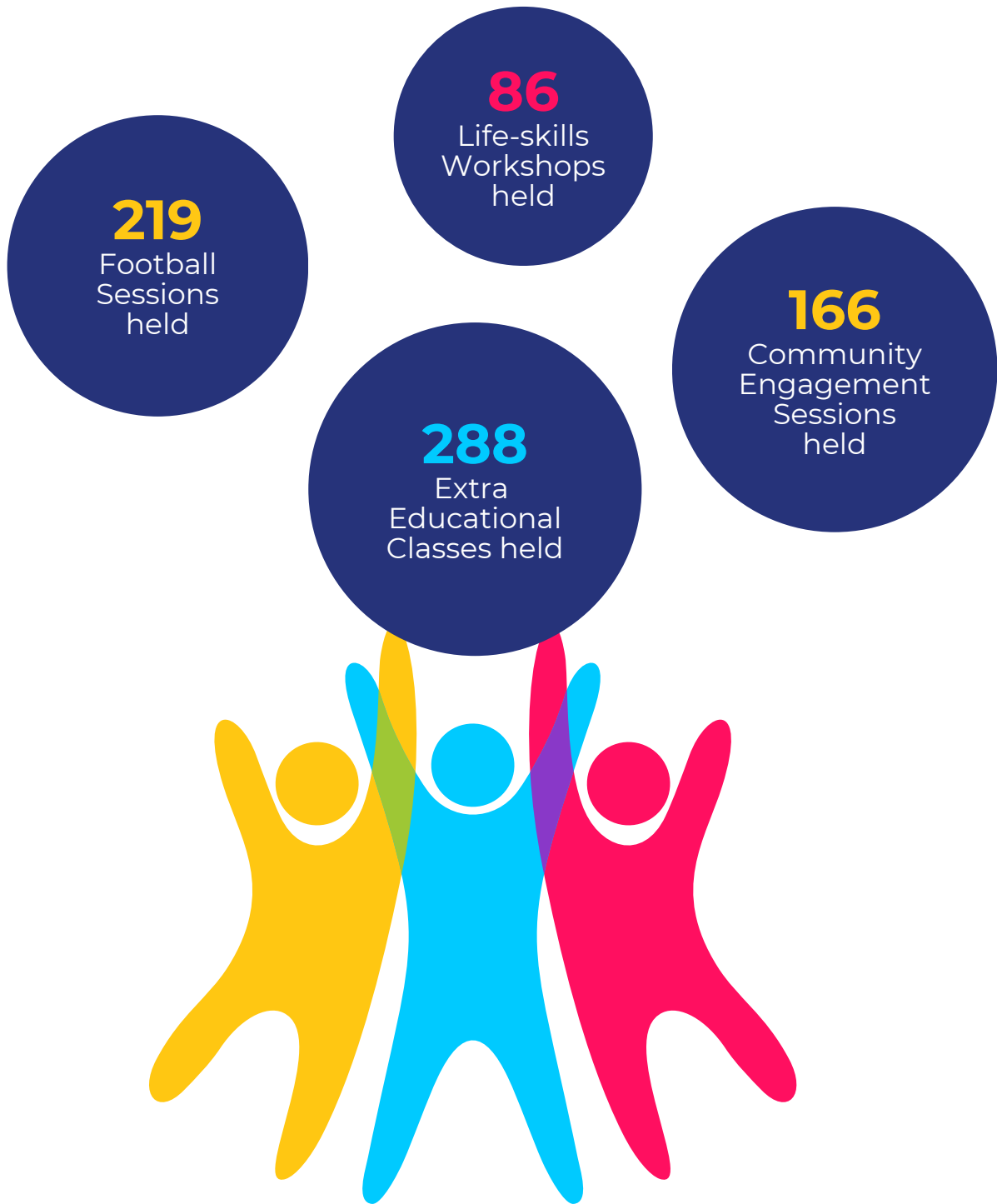
Festival24 Our Programme Officers, Monika and Alisha represented Atoot at Festival24, an international sport-for-good festival organised by Sport Dans La Ville uniting 500 young people from all over the world celebrating the values of the Olympics and sports. They attended the Sport for Good Forum as well as the Sport for Sustainable Development (S4SD) Summit: Faster, Higher, Stronger – Together For a Better Future, in Paris. They also had a chance to meet and shake hands with French President Emmanuel Macron!

Atoot photo exhibit at Harvard University. Ishan's photo exhibit "Women of Dohani" and Atoot girls'

photo exhibit "Hamar Jindagi. Hamar Sapane" ("Our Life. Our Dreams.") was jointly exhibited at Winthrop House, Harvard University.

Tri-country collaboration visit through collaboration grant by Global Fund for Children for their PEAK partners. Alisha and Mashreeb visited Centre for Development and Peace (CDP), Meherpur, Bangladesh and Sabuj Sangha, Sundarbans, India as part of this collaborative project.





WHAT WE OFFERED



FOOTBALL SESSIONS

- Continuous and uninterrupted football sessions were conducted 5 days a week, throughout the year. The girls had access to a safe and supportive space to finesse their football skills, instilling life values through the game.
 - Our U-15 and U-12 girls had competitive futsal tournaments in Butwal (a city close to the village Atoot works in) on a futsal court. The girls are used to playing in their makeshift pitch (a public grazing field that is uneven) and playing on a court with artificial turf, actual goal posts and a demarcated pitch was an exciting opportunity for them. The girls displayed their passion for the game and demonstrated exceptional leadership skills, teamwork, and respect throughout the tournament. We also distributed medals, certificates, trophies to the girls, which they were delighted to receive.
 - Atoot girls were distributed football jerseys, boots, socks, bags and even shin guards. This was the very first time the girls were receiving any sort of football equipment.
 - Distributed sports bras to U-15 girls! Shout-out to our incredible partner The Sports Bra Project for helping facilitate this. This is the very first time they are ever wearing something like this, and now it is much more comfortable for them to run around and play.
 - Post football session reflections have been a welcomed addition to our football session. This session allowed our girls to analyze the game and reflect on their performance, while also helping the staff to re-design the session based on the reflections of the girls.
 - Atoot took ten U-13 girls to the All Nepal Football Association (ANFA) Academy district selections in Butwal, their first time on a real football ground. This experience was both enlightening and exciting, as they travelled outside their villages, played on a proper field, conversed with the selectors in English and Nepali language (both foreign for them) and interacted with female footballers. Two of them even got selected for provincial level trials but couldn't go further.
- Our U-15 girls had a week of football coaching training! Our Programme Officer, Monika trained the girls on making session plans, how to draw diagrams of the activities for the session, and then had them coach turn by turn the following week.
 - During our 3-week summer wellness break, the U/15 girls led football sessions - handling equipment, organising games, and overseeing younger U-12 and U-7 participants. It was a successful coaching experience for them!

EXTRA EDUCATIONAL CLASSES

- Continuous and uninterrupted educational classes were conducted 5 days a week, throughout the year. Our high quality classes were intrinsically linked with our football program, as our sessions were tailored to teach/practise what the girls have learned in the classroom on the pitch.
- Academic Year End Annual Assessment conducted for 76 girls, in April 2024. Each received an individualised report card with comments.
- Sudama, one of our U-15 girls, led a week of Math classes for the U-7 group, focusing on numbers and counting. She designed and conducted engaging, activity-based lessons, with guidance from Monika and Sharanya. A huge step in the empowerment of our young girls as leaders and role models in their communities!
- A lot of experiential and play based learning was incorporated in our educational classes. Different experiments/practical sessions were conducted to learn about scientific concepts such as how sound travels, floating and sinking.
- Our intern Rima led a class project 'Story of my Life' with the U-12 girls. The girls made picture books on their lives - myself, my home, my family, my animals, my food, my play. They drew and collaged to make their own individual picture books. There was also an exhibition of the project, where the girls dazzled everyone with their confident presentations in front of a large audience!



- Solar System Exhibition by U-15 girls. A 2-day exhibition was held, where the girls created brochures with drawings and interesting facts about the sun and each planet in the solar system. They gave their presentations in a mix of English, Nepali and Awadhi, in front of a large audience with great confidence.

LIFE SKILLS WORKSHOP



- Bi/tri weekly life-skills workshops imparted undiscovered knowledge otherwise not discussed or taught in their schools, family life or communities. We engaged in group discussions around various issues such as the Girl Child, Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Child Marriage, Human Trafficking, Rights of Children, Girl Empowerment, Menstruation, Hygiene, Environmental Issues, Importance of Savings etc.
- Our workshops on savings and the implementation of our savings programme has been very successful. Atoot girls have slowly started understanding the importance of maintaining some savings and have begun regularly depositing small amounts of money each week with the Atoot staff which we safe-keep for them at our 'bank'.
- We used various new play based activities for learning throughout our life skills workshops:
 1. Painted on rocks, drew thank you cards, made informational murals/banners
 2. Photographed different aspects of gender-based realities.
 3. Dramas about child marriage, gender-based violence, communal environmental sanitation, etc. These workshops have given the beneficiaries different avenues to better understand - and break down - daily norms which are ingrained in their lives & society.
- Workshop on power of our words for the U-12 girls. Upon noticing the increasingly rude behaviour with each other and using quite a lot of swear words, a fun activity based workshop helped the girls understand how negative words can leave a scar and how a 'sorry' can help ease the pain.
- Workshop on good touch-bad touch with the U-15 girls before Holi (festival of colours celebrated by putting colour on each other). This was important new information for them. Many of them have had experiences and witnessed abuse without knowing it, but now they have vocabulary to help them express such. Some of the girls also shared some of their personal experiences.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Atoot conducted regular weekly home visits to our beneficiaries' homes and regularly engaged with various stakeholders in the community throughout the year.
- Atoot girls conceptualised, wrote, directed and performed an original drama which they performed in front of community members. Hundreds of community members showed up to watch the play performed by the girls on environmental sanitation, which is a rarity in our context. By participating across all platforms, the girls formed a strong feminist community to speak up for themselves and others.
- Parents allowed the girls to go for a 3 day trip with Atoot staff. Atoot has built a sense of trust within the community through our daily engagement, by having their voices heard and opinions valued. The parents thus didn't hesitate to send their girls on a 3 day long trip.



AWARDS

Atoot was awarded with the **prestigious Football for Good Award presented by Common Goal at the World Football Summit in Sevilla, Spain.** During this two-day summit, Atoot was able to celebrate & advocate its work using football as a platform to empower marginalised girls in rural Nepal.

Accolades at Junoon!

Through the year, Atoot participated in various Junoon competitions which were conducted by our partners The Unify Collective (previously The Barefoot Edu Foundation) in India. Junoon was a series of regional competitions with several components - drama, podcast and zine making, rap performances, and much more - Junoon Create, Junoon Connect and Junoon Compete.

Atoot girls won the 2nd position in the Junoon Create project, where the girls performed a drama on community sanitation titled 'Saaf Rakho. Saaf Raho.' (Keep Clean. Stay Clean.).

Atoot girls crafted a podcast episode on the importance of toilets for basic sanitation, titled 'Yatra Swachhata ki Aur' (Journey towards Cleanliness), for which they won the third position.

Pratima secured first position in the Performing Arts: Rap Category.

A group of Atoot girls won second position in the Nukkad Natak (Street Play) Category for Junoon Compete.

Congratulations to all the winners! We are so proud of how our girls participated with such gusto throughout the competitive series!



PANELS, FORUMS AND SUMMITS

- Programme Officer Alisha attended the Women's Sports Leadership Academy (WSLA) residential programme at the University of Chichester, UK, which was a journey full of learning, growth, collaboration, networking and support for her.
- Programme Officers Monika and Sweta participated in our partner Global Fund for Children's (GFC) "Partnership to Educate All Kids" (PEAK) South Asia Convening in Kathmandu, Nepal where they explored the play-based approach of grassroots organization across Bangladesh, India, and Nepal. The Atoot team conducted a fun, participatory group activity that showcased our use of sports to empower girls and young women.
- Upon invitation from the Dutch Foreign Ministry, Atoot's Co-Founder & Executive Director Sarah attended the Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy 2023 Conference at The Hague, Netherlands. During the two-day conference, she met and networked with countless people: diplomats, foreign ministers, global ambassadors.
- Atoot was invited to the Equal Together: Creative Gender Actions event hosted by the British Council Nepal in Kathmandu. Our Programme Manager, Sharanya had a chance to meet and interact with various organisations and actors working towards gender justice and gender equity in Nepal.
- Our Co-founder Mashreeb visited Armenia for the in-person convening of the Anti-Corruption Advisory Board founded by Global Fund for Women. While there, he had the opportunity to visit a Sport-for-Development organisation in Armenia called Girls of Armenia Leadership Soccer (GOALS Armenia).
- Set in the backdrop of semi-final week during the 2024 Men's Football European Championship, Atoot attended the Common Goal Berlin Forum where over 200 representatives from 50+ global organisations came together to unite the world of Football for Good.
- Our Co- Founder and Executive Director, Sarah, was asked to be a special guest speaker at the Future Leaders in Football summit hosted by sportxdevelopment, GIZ and DFB.
- During Festival24, Monika and Alisha attended the Sport for Good Forum hosted by Sport Dans la Ville and the Olympic Committee. Monika proudly opened up the Forum with a small speech about her incredible journey with Sport for Development. They also attended the Sport for Sustainable Development (S4SD) Summit: Faster, Higher, Stronger – Together For a Better Future, in Paris hosted by Agence Francaise de Development (AFD), the Olympic Committee and the Government of France.

STORIES OF CHANGE

U-15 girls taking classes with the U-7s!

One of our U-15 girls led the classes for a week with the U-7s. The way she patiently dealt with the tiny tots was amazing to see. It was also such a surprise to see the way the young ones responded to her and behaved so well while in class! Any instruction she gave them such as 'form a line' or 'sit in place', they would do immediately without any delay or chaos. Having someone from their own community, speaking their own language, teaching them in class was novel for the kids as well and it seemed like they looked up to her. The girls are building their leadership skills within their own communities and re-writing their life's own narrative.

U-15 girls as Coaches!

Our Programme Officer, Monika, conducted a week-long football coaches training for our U-15 girls. Monika equipped the girls with the fundamentals of being an inclusive and adaptable coach, among many other key competencies. Further the girls prepared session plan on what skills that want to deliver and took turns to deliver the session. Some of the U/15s also coached the youngest group of girls in our programme. Together we are building a generation of change makers, who will break down generations of social, cultural and economic barriers.

Smashing the Social Narrative, One Boy at a Time!

There has been a drastic shift in Atoot boys' all-around behaviors, especially within their own household. Atoot boys are now helping in daily household chores: preparing & cooking food, cleaning utensils, sweeping the floors, etc. Furthermore, they are now respecting the girls/women in their lives. This is an exceptional milestone. In the rural villages we work with, boys grow up with no responsibilities, do whatever they want & are never expected to help around the home. This systematic shift in societal norms is a true game changer in our communities.

CHALLENGES

- Extreme weather conditions, posing difficulties for the staff and the girls to attend the programming.
- Lack of proper football pitch to play football. We have been using an unused agricultural field as a makeshift pitch with uneven ground level. The mud path to the ground also gets very muddy and slippery during the rains.
- Managing multi-level multi-age group girls during all sessions. A more diverse age range of girls are now coming regularly to our program. It is difficult to effectively plan and manage classes and football sessions for such diverse groups.
- Programme breaks upon request by the girls (plantation, harvesting, festivals like Dashain & Tihar) + Summer breaks, leading to low numbers of girls attending post breaks and it takes time for attendance to stabilise once programme resumes.

THE ROAD AHEAD

- Atoot girls participation at various football tournaments, extra-curricular competitions, and festivals, at district, regional and even national/international levels.
- Community Center at Dohani (the village in which we operate), equipped with library + computers for the girls to study during their leisure time.
- Atoot girls taking up coaching responsibilities for the girls in nearby villages.



PARTNERS

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