



Mortgaged Futures? Diary Research into Youth Livelihoods and Debt during COVID-19

Presenters



Anna Barford
Research Professor,
University of Cambridge



Kaajal Pradhan
Country Manager,
Kindernothilfe (KNH) Nepal

Physical presence : SIAS Meeting Hall
Virtual presence : <https://bit.ly/fhrss14>
Date: 19th January 2026 (Monday)
Time: 3:30 to 5:00 p.m (NPT)

About Future Himalayan Research Seminars

Future Himalayan Research Seminar Series on Environment and Development is a research sharing platform to present recent and ongoing studies where researchers can meaningfully engage with each other and share knowledge. Not limiting itself to presentation and feedback loop, the seminar is also a platform for researcher to build social and intellectual relationship with contemporaries and experts from diverse array of research tradition within the overarching theme. The research seminar series is a bi-monthly event with open access to everyone interested. The seminar is planned for 1.5 hours, with first 45 minutes for presentation and the later half dedicated to audience engagement through discussion and debate.

Seminar Overview

This seminar shares insights from a qualitative study examining the social and economic impacts of COVID-19 on young people in Nepal, who were particularly vulnerable due to the nature of their occupations. Drawing on more than 700 weekly diary entries from 50 respondents collected over a four-month period in 2021, the research uses a diary-based approach to capture young people's lived experiences, emotions, livelihood disruptions, and coping strategies during the pandemic.

The findings reveal widespread economic and social precarity at both individual and household levels, compounded by limited access to social protection. Among various coping mechanisms, many young people relied on debt to manage income fluctuations, often resulting in long-term financial and social obligations and forcing difficult, life-altering decisions such as discontinuing education or moving into risky forms of work.

Presenters Profile

Anna Barford is a Research Professor at the University of Cambridge. Her research focuses on work and employment, as well as the social dimensions of technology, business, and sustainability. She has particular interest in youth employment, inequalities and social justice. Anna is currently researching how artificial intelligence can be used for social good and is interested in the potential of AI for Disaster Risk Reduction in Nepal. Anna has previously led research on living wages, circular economy, and youth employment. Anna works with policymakers, NGOs, investors, and corporations. Her work has been featured at the World Economic Forum in Davos, COP27 climate change meetings, and she has contributed to international efforts to promote decent work.

Kaajal Pradhan serves as the Country Manager for Kindernothilfe (KNH) Nepal. With over 20 years of experience in Youth Engagement, she works to strengthen the Sexual Reproductive Health and Education, uphold Youth Rights and Responsibilities, and address harmful Social Norms such as Child Marriage and discrimination. Currently, she focuses on promoting Child Rights by identifying the root causes of the rights violations, assessing duty bearers' capacity to fulfil children's rights, and building the capacity of children and caregivers to claim their rights. Kaajal is passionate about collaborating with and for young people, exemplifying a model of Young People leading the agency.

Organized by:



Follow Us:



SIAS is a Kathmandu-based research institute involved in Nepal and in South Asia in several social science and environmental issues. Its research utilizes recent knowledge in Nepal and globally to understand, unravel and interpret unfolding social, political, economic and environmental dynamics. SIAS also promotes critical dialogues on research, policy and practice interface.