



# Women for Peace and Democracy – Nepal

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Phultoria Mahara (left) and Kalasiya Mahara (right) of Bindhi village in their vegetable farm

## International Women's Day

On March 8, 2014, WPD-Nepal and the Care & Development Organization (CDO) Nepal celebrated International Women's Day in Bindhi Village, Janakpur. CDO Nepal and WPD-Nepal conducted general health camp to raise awareness for women's health. The camp included a general health screening, as well as information to raise awareness on practices for safe motherhood.



## Author E. Hughes Award at the University of San Diego

On April 26, 2014, Shobha Pradhan Shrestha, founder and Executive Chair of WPD-Nepal, was awarded the Author E. Hughes Career Achievement Award by her alma mater, the University of San Diego. An alumna of USD's Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies, Shrestha was chosen for the award for her work building the capacity of marginalized women in rural Nepal, and her efforts for small arms control. Shrestha has over a decade of experience in peacebuilding and conflict resolution, and her organization currently partners with World Accord, Control Arms Coalition, Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice, and



noted included her involvement with the Arms Trade Treaty signing ceremony at the United Nations, her research for the Nepal chapter of Small

## Canada Cross – Country Tour with World Accord



From April 28 through May 9, Shobha Pradhan Shrestha visited Canada in the invitation of World Accord, sharing her experiences and her work with WPD-Nepal on a Canada Cross – Country Tour. Beginning in Kitchener, Shrestha travelled through Toronto, Saskatoon, Lethbridge, Calgary, and ended her tour in Vancouver. She met with many like-minded individuals and organizations (Community of Christ, Ontario Council for International Cooperation, Nepalese Cultural Association of Edmonton, Women in Society college, and Hope International).



**Socio-economic Empowerment Program for Women and Marginalized (SEWAM) 2013-2014**

The SEWAM Program, supported by World Accord, Canada, began its fourth year this spring. The program continues WPD-Nepal’s work in seven villages in the districts of Chitwan, Makwanpur, Sarlahi, and Dhanusha in the Central Development Region (CDR). It works in two groups each of Bachhauri and Kumroj, Basamadi and Hadikhola, and Hariyon and Haripur in Chitwan, Makwanpur, and Sarlahi, respectively, and in Bindhi within Dhanusha. This past year, the SEWAM program was able to reach 393 women within these communities. It provided

them with informal education, trainings, micro-credit loans, and awareness programs on health, sanitation, and laws concerning women and gender-based violence. Scholarships were provided to motivate women to participate in tailoring and basket weaving trainings, and women in Bindhi were provided with goat raising trainings and exposure visits. These women were then able to take out loans and livestock insurance from the Trust Fund for collaborative or individual businesses. These women participated in activities such as goat raising, vegetable

farming, tailoring shops, or grocery shops, to name a few. Furthermore, educational opportunities were provided to teach the women basic literacy skills, as well as to give them information on gender-based violence, discrimination and laws for women. These raised awareness of opportunities for justice and empowered women to act for themselves. The mission of the SEWAM Program is to build a peaceful and harmonious society where women and marginalized groups can enjoy economic opportunities, respect, and peace.



WPD - Nepal meeting with SEWAM women of Handikhola



SEWAM women of Bachhauri taking basket weaving training



SEWAM women deposit savings at a monthly meeting in Bindhi

**SEWAM Hero 2014**

**“Maya Chepang”**

Maya Chepang is a resident of Basamadi VDC in the Makwanpur district. She is a member of the Newarpani women group within the SEWAM Program, supported by World Accord. There are six members in her family, including her husband, her son, her daughter, and her two parents-in-law. Before joining the group, Maya had very low self-esteem, and she even used to hesitate to share her opinions in small groups of less than four people. She could barely afford a meal a day, and her son and daughter were not able to go to school because she could not afford school uniforms, stationary materials, or food for them. Maya was unaware of the benefits of being a member, such as the trainings in which she could participate, or the loans she could receive through



**“Earlier, my husband did not support me in any activities. But now, we work together in the field, help each other and make a living by earning money from the vegetables grown in the field.”**

the Trust Fund. She did not realize how much her life could be improved, socially and economically. After joining, she was gradually able to introduce herself to others without feeling shy and share her problems in the group. She was also able to learn enough to do a bit of business and earn some

money. Maya took a loan of Rs. 10,000 (\$100) from the Trust Fund. With Rs. 5,000 (\$50) she bought two goats and earned a profit of Rs. 10,000. With the remaining Rs. 5,000, she began a vegetable business and earned a profit of Rs. 15,000. She was able to pay back her loan on time with

interest. Since joining, Maya has become one of the most active members in the Newarpani women group. She attends all of the meetings, arrives on time, and enjoys helping other members. Her family has moved into a concrete and brick house, and her relationship with her husband has improved. She said, “Earlier, my husband did not support me in any activities. But now, we work together in the field, help each other and make a living by earning money from the vegetables grown in the field.” Not only can she now afford to send her children to school, but she is also able to save some of her income, saying the more she can save the better. Maya has expressed how happy she is with all of the positive changes in her life, and she would like to thank WPD-Nepal and World Accord for making this possible with their help and support.

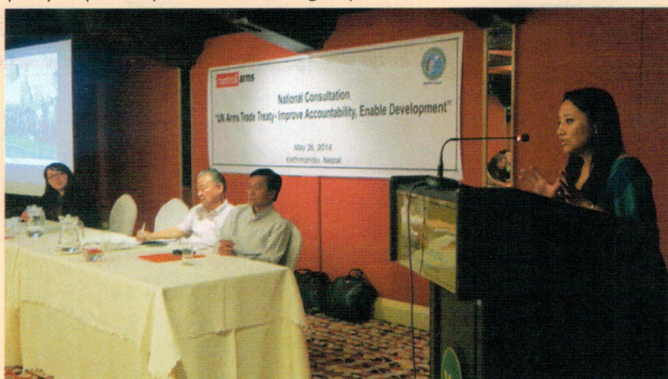




## Control Arms Campaign

Last year on June 3, 2013, WPD–Nepal’s Shobha Pradhan Shrestha attended the United Nations Signing Ceremony for the Arms Trade Treaty. History was made that day when 62 states signed the ATT, the first treaty designed to regulate global arms trade in conventional arms and ammunition. One year later, history continues to be made as we come closer to 50 ratifications, the number needed before the treaty will enter into force. On the anniversary of the signing, eight more states ratified the treaty, bringing the total numbers that day to 118 signatories and 40 ratifications. Control Arms Coalition continues to work towards further ratification and the successful implementation of the ATT.

On May 26, 2014, Control Arms Coalition and WPD–Nepal held a National Consultation entitled “UN Arms Trade Treaty – Improve Accountability, Enable Development”. More than 60 people participated, including representatives from the



Shobha Pradhan Shrestha speaking at the “Nepal National Consultation on ATT”

Constituent Assembly, parliamentarian and government departments, security forces, media organizations, and civil society. The consultation resulted in the formation of an ad-hoc committee, Control Arms Coalition Nepal Chapter. This committee will create a national network and advocate for increased awareness for the ATT.

On May 31, 2014, Control Arms Coalition and ChangeMaker in Dhaka, Bangladesh held a consultation, attended by Shrestha, which included 25 participants from parliament, Foreign Ministry–UN Desk, security sectors, academia, civil society and the media. The decision was made to form an ad-hoc Control Arms Coalition Bangladesh Chapter.

On June 3, 2014, WPD–Nepal organized a campaign calling for the state to sign and ratify the ATT which was joined by students and youth groups. WPD–Nepal is the South Asia Regional Coordinator for Control Arms Coalition.



Youth groups join “Race to 50”

## Campaign Involvement

Throughout the year, WPD–Nepal has advocated for women around the world, for issues concerning health, safety, and gender-based violence.

In September of 2013, WPD–Nepal organized the Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence – “Disarming Domestic Violence”. Highlights of the week included a play performed on the subject of women violence and girl



Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence 2013

trafficking, as well as an interactive discussion.

On June 5, 2014, WPD–Nepal, along with Samida Women Development Forum, met up with local entertainers and school children for a “Bring Back Our Girls” campaign. The campaign was done in solidarity with the kidnapped Nigerian girls and their communities. Part of the World Environment Day



“Bring Back Our Girls” Campaign

celebration, the “Bring Back Our Girls” campaign brought together hundreds of people, asking Boko Haram to release over 200 girls they captured in April. On June 15, 2014, WPD–Nepal and Samida Women Development Forum again came together for a blood donation campaign, “Safe Blood for Saving Mothers”. Thirty-five people volunteered to donate and save lives that day.



Blood Drive Campaign

## Political Empowerment of Women Leaders

WPD–Nepal works to politically and socially empower women and to bring women leaders in Nepal together. In February, WPD–Nepal organized two workshops and a visit to the women of Bindhi with its United States partner, the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice. Dr. Dee Aker and Zahra Ismail first visited the Bindhi village in Janakpur, talking to the SEWAM women about their experiences. Here, they had the opportunity to hear the women’s

15, 2014, they held the workshop “Discovering the Leader Within Ourselves” in Chitwan for the SEWAM women. Then on February 20, 2014, they held an interactive discussion program, “A Path to Inclusive and Secure Communities” in Kathmandu. This program included women leaders from various sectors, including the media, academicians, civil society, and the People’s Liberation Army (PLA). These programs were facilitated by Dr. Dee





## About WPD – Nepal

The voices of women and marginalized in Nepal often go unheard. Despite the state's declared commitment to gender equality in law and development, inequality between men and women persists. Especially in rural areas of Nepal, women continue to be marginalized in conditions of poverty. These women are largely excluded from health, economic, and social services and have little access to political

opportunities.

Women for Peace and Democracy – Nepal was established in 2010 to address these lack of opportunities that women face due to discrimination. This independent, non-governmental and women-led organization has a mission to bring gender equality to Nepal. WPD-Nepal campaigns to end gender-based violence, discrimination, and injustice. We believe that change

comes from the grassroots and that tolerance and respect for human rights must emerge at the community level. WPD-Nepal has a reputation for hard work and is committed to working with like-minded organizations and the communities it serves. Together, we can build peace, improve living conditions, and uphold human rights in Nepal.

## Objectives

- To enhance the capacity of women and marginalized and facilitate their role in the processes of socioeconomic and political change.
- To improve coordination and networking between the women organizations/groups.
- To promote social awareness on women's issues and their rights.
- To develop women's skills and competencies so they can reach decision-making levels at all spheres.
- To fully involve women in peacemaking, peacebuilding, and disarmament.

## Vision

- A peaceful and democratic Nepal.

## Mission

- To bring about a society with gender equity and equality-based development.

## Goal

- To enhance the practice of democracy and promote a culture of just and equitable peace.

## Strategies

- Enhancing opportunities for the economic development of women.
- Promoting effective political representation and meaningful participation of women in governance.
- Creating awareness and advocacy.

## Interns

WPD-Nepal welcomed two new interns this year, Samiksha Lamsal and Becca Mathias. Samiksha Lamsal is an undergraduate student at Southwestern State College in Kathmandu. She is studying to get her Bachelor's degree in Social work. She completed her internship to gain experience and was with WPD-Nepal for five months. Lamsal would like to work in the non-profit field once she graduates. Becca Mathias is a

graduate student with the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies at the University of San Diego. She is a candidate for a Master of Arts in Peace and Justice Studies, and her interests mainly concern women's empowerment, women in development, and post-conflict development. She is glad to be in Nepal for her three-month internship. Both interns would like to thank WPD-Nepal for this opportunity.



## Approach

WPD-Nepal believes that women can become empowered through the creation of a supportive environment where they can discuss their issues and needs within their community. As such, WPD-Nepal oversees the creation of women groups in rural areas, and provides them with structure, trainings, education and awareness, and support. We achieve this through partnerships with community organizations located in rural Nepal, as well as through partnerships regionally, nationally, and internationally. We work with several small women groups

that are striving to build peace in their communities and, by extension, throughout the country. Our rights-based approach ensures meaningful development for women and socially excluded groups. This not only increases the realization of their rights, but also empowers them to participate in decision-making on multifaceted issues from the local to the national level. These women groups are the foundation of WPD-Nepal's development model, and as such they are treated as partners in their own development.



Sunita Mahara and her son Babuwa welcome a baby goat in Bindhi

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