



# Women for Peace and Democracy - Nepal

Issue II, 2013

WPD - NEPAL

Uniting passion for building Peaceful and Democratic Nepal

The living condition of women and marginalized is vulnerable in Nepal. These women remain marginalized from health, economic, social services and political opportunities. Also, gender discrimination and exploitation is prevalent as a scourge to the Nepalese society. Despite the fact that the state has declared Nepal as a country for gender equality in development and legal activities, there is no change visible, yet, in the attitude of majority of the people in Nepal. Inequality between men and women and gender discrimination prevails in the society. Women remain marginalized and poverty-stricken, especially in the rural areas, where economical, social and political opportunities remain stagnant. Therefore, Women for Peace and Democracy – Nepal (WPD – Nepal) an independent, non-governmental and women led organization has been established to empower women and marginalized through holistic approaches of 1) Capacity Building, 2) Economic Empowerment and 3) Education and Awareness. WPD –Nepal strives to unite their passion for building a peaceful and democratic Nepal.

WPD –Nepal campaigns to end gender based violence, discrimination and injustice. In addition to this, building the capacities of local organizations and community activists, reviving voluntary work and community participation to liberate the rural communities from occupation and marginalization, respect for human rights, tolerance, participation,



*Bindi Women Group*

learning by doing experiences and a reputation for hard work at the community level. There is no doubt that WPD- Nepal is committed in working together with like minded groups / organizations to build peace and make Nepal a better place to live where people have respect for their dignity and human rights.

## **Objectives**

- To enhance the capacity of women and marginalized and facilitate their role in the process 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 skills and competencies for women to reach decision-making levels at all spheres.
- To involve women, fully, in peacemaking, peace building and disarmament.

## **Vision**

- To create a peaceful and a democratic Nepal

## **Approach**

WPD –Nepal works in partnership with various local organizations resided in rural communities. We include several small women groups who work on the very large task of building peace in Nepal. WPD-Nepal believes in women empowerment and this can take place by creating a favorable environment where women can learn, understand and discuss about various issues, for instance: how their needs can be fulfilled by using locally available resources, services and other opportunities. One of the approaches that the WPD- Nepal uses to help these marginalized women is by working with various women groups in the rural areas, formed by the WPD- Nepal itself. It works by binding them in a group and support their institutionalization process through different trainings and inputs. WPD –Nepal facilitates to create an environment where these women groups

## **Mission**

- Society with gender equity and equality based development

## **Goal**

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

## **Strategies**

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

coordinate, collaborate and build synergy with the likeminded organizations, local governance and other development partners. A right based approach has been adopted for the meaningful development of women and socially excluded groups that not only secures their rights, but ensures their participation in decision making on multifaceted issues from local to national level. These women groups are the building blocks of WPD-Nepal's development model and these women from rural areas and socially excluded groups are treated as partners rather than the subjects and/or objects of development.

**Socioeconomic Empowerment Program for Women and Marginalized (SEWAM) 2011-2014**

SEWAM Year 3 program, supported by World Accord, Canada, is one of major programs of WPD Nepal. SEWAM Year 3 Program continues socioeconomic empowerment program for women and marginalized in 14 communities of Bachhauli, Kumroj, Handikhola, Basamadi, Hariyon, Haripur and Bindi villages of Chitwan, Makwanpur, Sarlahi and Dhanusha districts respectively of Central Development Region (CDR) Nepal. Mushahar and Chamar the most back warded communities of Bindi village are the two new identified working communities initiated this year 2013. The SEWAM program has been designed for 386 women of the target communities. SEWAM Program major activities are providing education, technical trainings, and scholarships to the target women followed by seed money through Trust Fund to initiate collaborative / individual small scale

business. The livestock insurance scheme has also been introduced to encourage goat raising in the target communities. Likewise, awareness programs on gender based violence and laws for women, women rights, health and sanitation have been designed under the program to educate and raise awareness in the target communities .The main objective of the program is to establish a peaceful and harmonious society in target villages where women and marginalized can enjoy economic opportunities, respect and peace through holistic approaches of capacity building, economic empowerment and education and awareness.



*Adult education in Bindi*



*Mushroom farming, Bachhauli*



*Women sharing & learning, Bindi*

**Political Empowerment of Women leaders (Political, civil society and Media) at National & Local Level**

WPD-Nepal strategizes on to mobilize women for their rights and social justice. It empowers women to bring various positive changes in the society through leadership and peace building process. WPD-Nepal has been organizing capacity building programs (Communication and Negotiation Skills, 1325 & 1820, Mediation, Advocacy) for political women leaders, rural women groups, civil society organizations, security personnel and the media in collaboration with Institute for Peace and Justice (IPJ), University of San Diego, CA.



*Capacity Building Program for women leaders, Chitwan, Central Development Region*

**Leaders Within, Leaders for Our Communities:**

A special interaction program with women leaders from Chitwan, Makwanpur and Sarlahi was conducted on May 17, 2013 in Chitwan. The program was jointly organized by Women for Peace and Democracy Nepal and Institute for Peace and Justice (IPJ). The main objective of the program was to improve communication skills, translate personal and community concerns into actionable plans by women so that they can know how and where to continue their leadership journey. This program was also designed to teach women on how to be instrumental in modeling a path to peace, rights, inclusion and justice. The program was facilitated by Shobha Pradhan Shrestha, Dee Aker, Lilia Velasquez and Christopher Groth.

**Working together, Making a Difference:**

A participatory program with women political leaders was organized on May 13, 2013. The program was organized by Women for Peace and Democracy Nepal in collaboration with Institute for Peace and Justice (IPJ). The aim of the program was to bring women leaders, together, from different political parties to identify priority issues that cross party affiliations, as well as to discuss women’s intra- party influence in the lead- up to Constituent Assembly elections. The program was facilitated by Shobha Pradhan Shrestha, Dee Aker, Lilia Velasquez and Christopher Groth.



*Strategic planning training*



*World Accord field visit*



*Buffalo rearing, Bindi*



*Basket weaving, Bachhauli*

## Education, Awareness and Campaigns

WPD Nepal has been working on control arms campaign to educate and create awareness on illegal possession and trade of small arms and other portable lethal weapons in Nepal and its impact of proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons on women and girls. WPD-Nepal has been creating awareness programs at local, national and international level, where intellectuals, researchers and media play important roles for advocacy and policy reformulation for gender equality.

### Arms Trade Treaty, the Signing Ceremony:

History was made on June 3, 2013. 79 states signed the Arms Trade Treaty and 2 states ratified, the first ever treaty to regulate the global arms trade in conventional arms and ammunition. Messages have been sent to gunrunners and dictators that easy access to weapons is up. Nearly every statement - by states and UN members, not least the UN Secretary General himself - celebrated and praised the role of civil society in bringing about this Treaty. Ms. Shobha Pradhan Shrestha, executive chair of WPD- Nepal, was one of the representatives from Nepal for Arms Trade Treaty during the signing ceremony at the United Nations, New York, USA.

### Arms Trade Treaty; Information Sharing and Dissemination:

A round table meeting was organized on May 23, 2013 by Women for Peace and Democracy Nepal (WPD Nepal) in collaboration with Control Arms Campaign. The objective of the meeting was to share about Arms Trade Treaty and to jointly urge the Nepal government to be present in the Signing ceremony on June 3, 2013 at the UN and sign the treaty. The program which was facilitated by Ms. Shobha Pradhan Shrestha, executive chair of WPD- Nepal, was attended by 59 distinguished participants from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense, Nepal Army, Armed Police Force, Nepal Police and Nepal Investigation Department, Civil Society politicians, academicians, and lawyers. Media was also called to cover the program. The meeting had a rich discussion on Arms Trade Treaty. Various genuine and contemporary issues regarding small arms and ATT were raised and discussed during the program.



ATT round table meeting



ATT round table meeting



ATT Signing Ceremony, June 3

### Blood Donation Campaign Calling for Robust Arms Trade Treaty (ATT):

Marking the Global Week of Action, WPD-Nepal, Shaashakteekaran Foundation for Women Empowerment (SHAAF- Nepal), World Accord, Control Arms Coalition (CAC), Milan Bindhu and ODHDAT Trade Pvt. Limited jointly organized a blood donation program in Kathmandu on March 15, 2013. The campaigners along with other volunteers donated blood to save the lives of many people who are in need of it. The campaign was also done to call the government to save lives of millions by agreeing on Robust Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The campaign had more than 65 blood donors.

### Occupy Baluwatar Movement:

WPD-Nepal joined the non- violent movement "Occupy Baluwatar" which started on December 28, 2012. It was a peaceful protest calling on the Nepali government to act against the widespread problem of gender based violence and end impunity. Protesters were gathered outside the prime minister's official residence in Baluwatar from 9:00 -11:00 a.m. till the protest ended.

### 16 days of Activism against Gender Based Violence:

WPD-Nepal in collaboration with National Women Commission, together, marked the 22nd "16 days of Activism against Gender based Violence" by organizing a rally on November 25, 2012.

### Short Video release:

"A day in the life of Chanda", a short video was released on July 16, 2013. It was a video based on the life of Chanda who belongs to one of the marginalized and deprived women of Bindi village in Dhanusha district. Chanda is one of the members of women group 'Arati' formed under Socioeconomic Empowerment Program for Women and Marginalized (SEWAM) project supported by World Accord, Canada. The video mainly focuses on the hardship of Chanda's life and how SEWAM project aims to help her and many more marginalized women to overcome these problems. This video is a World Accord and WPD Nepal joint production.



Campaigning against gender based violence



Blood Donation Campaign for Robust ATT



Protest against women violence



Story of Chanda Sada

## SEWAM Hero 2013

Darshan Devi Chaudhary, a member of Makhamali Women Group, formed under SEWAM Program supported by World Accord, implemented by WPD Nepal lives in Haripur-3 VDC, Sarlahi. Darshan is survived by her husband, father-in-law, two daughters and a son in the family. She has a very small piece of land to farm and a very small house to live in. Her husband works as a labor and brings a very little amount of money back home. Darshan never went to school, therefore, she used to hesitate to speak in public and could hardly introduce herself.

Earlier, for the first six months of a year, Darshan used to maintain her livelihood by the money earned by her husband and a very little earning generated by farming in a very small land of hers. Remaining six months, she used to either borrow or take loans in high interest from so called upper class / caste people.

But her life changed after Darshan joined the group. She got the opportunities to participate in a literacy training program, technical trainings and awareness programs and gained knowledge and confidence. Now, she can read and write and do small addition and subtractions. With this ability, she became confident to use the knowledge gained to generate some income for the family. She realized not to depend fully on her husband's income in order to survive. She wanted to do a small business by herself and this was made possible when Darshan discussed her ideas of pig farming to other members of Makhamali Women Group. She was provided with Rs. 10,000 from the trust fund supported by World Accord.

Darshan started the business of pig farming by building a shed for the pigs nearby her house. Within six months, she gained double the amount of money she had invested in pig farming. With this money, she paid all her



*"I always wanted to provide education to my children. I did not want them to be an illiterate like me. Thanks to SEWAM Program for making my dream come true."*

loans with interest on time, as well as, took an additional loan of Rs, 5000 (total Rs, 15,000) to start a business of vegetable farming. As her new business prospered, her income level has, now, slowly increased and her financial problems have become more stable.

"I always wanted to provide education to my children. I did not want them to be an illiterate like me. Thanks to SEWAM Program for making my dream come true", says Darshan. At present, Darshan has no problems in funding her children's stationary materials as the cost is covered by the income she gains from vegetable farming. Also, there has been a massive positive change in the way how she speaks and communicates with people around her. After gaining the knowledge and skill required, she doesn't feel nervous or shy to introduce herself in the public anymore.

## Target Area

14 rural communities of the four districts Sarlahi, Makwanpur, Chitwan, Dhanusa of Central Development Region.

## WPD-NEPAL Partners

### Local Partners

- Tharu Sanskritik Sanghralaya, Bachhauli, Chitwan
- Manakamana Aapasi Bikas Kendra, Kumroj, Chitwan
- Narihit Aapasi Bikas Kendra, Handikhola, Makwanpur
- Darpan Aapasi Bikas Kendra, Basamadi, Makwanpur
- Janauthhan Aapasi Bikas Kendra, Haripur, Sarlahi
- Nepal Manav Chahari Sangh, Hariyon, Sarlahi
- Rural Development Foundation, Janakpur

### Regional Partners

- Manabiya Srot Bikas Kendra, Pokhara
- Nariship Srijana Kendra, Makwanpur
- Rural Development Foundation, Janakpur

### National Partners

- Raksha Nepal
- Nariship Srijana Kendra, Makwanpur
- Rural Women Network Nepal

### International Partners

- World Accord, Canada
- Institute for Peace and Justice (IPJ), San Diego, USA
- Control Arms Coalition
- International Action Network for Small Arms Control (IANSA), UK
- Quaker United Nations Office, Geneva

## Networks/Coalitions

WPD- Nepal has been successful in being members of various organizations over past few years. To name a few, it is a member of Women Peacemakers Asia Regional Network, Working Group on Women, Peace and Security and Nepal Working Group on Armed Violence. As a network member, WPD- Nepal is a member of Control Arms Coalition and has been organizing Control Arms campaigns in Nepal. WPD-Nepal has also organized seminars on Armed Violence Reduction and Prevention with Quaker United Nations Office and United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD).

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