

Community Reintegration and Rehabilitation of migrant and displaced single women (widows)



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A. Introduction and belief overview

Displacement due to conflict has in fluxed and the immediate place where the sufferers flee is the headquarter of rural areas or the cities. Kathmandu, as the capital city of the nation is the place where these sufferers think to get better opportunities, security, and good education for the children. As many government bodies for the legal and administrative purposes are here in Kathmandu they come to the city for the legal cases of getting back the seized property, fight against the sexual violation. Here in the city they either tend to live in their relatives house which is always not friendly in matter. They are usually pushed into informal and exploitative jobs such as cabin restaurants, massage centers, sex workers, factories where they are victimized of harassment and also hazardous to their health. In some cases these women have left their infant children back home, teenagers are left to the relatives' house for safety and they reside in one different place as breadwinner for all her dependents. These all condition makes these women and their dependents vulnerable and marginalize out of marginalized ones.

The vulnerability of displaced single women (widows) is such that firstly as single women (widows) they face lot of discrimination from the family and society due to orthodox religious practice and beliefs. The agony increases as the displaced person due to conflict with no access to property, legal rights, no livelihood opportunities for the fulfillment of the basic needs, difficulty in survival due to insecurity . They find difficulty to settle in the different community as they need to explore each and every component for their living leaving the community they are used to. Beside that the sentiments and emotions related with social, cultural and economic structure of their original community tend to make them dishearten in the new community with lacking the quick adaptability to the new periphery.

The project “**Community Reintegration and Rehabilitation of migrant and displaced single women (widows)**” aimed to rehabilitate and reintegrate conflict affected migrant and displaced single women (widows) with dignity through various livelihood opportunities. The principal beneficiaries of the project activity were the displaced and migrant single women (widows) from different districts of the country belonging to different development regions of the country. The direct beneficiaries of the project are CAW and their children while the indirect beneficiaries are single women (widows), conflict victims, their family and the whole nation.

The project had major pillars:

1. Maintenance of proper data base of the beneficiaries for the statistics
2. Economic empowerment of the beneficiaries through various livelihood skills identifying local resources and market and also job placement or setting up entrepreneur through Aadhar saving and credit program
3. Legal and social empowerment through legal, psychosocial and other counseling services with partnership of local partners and Regional Network
4. Creation of conducive environment for reintegration and rehabilitation of the beneficiaries by linking them with local district single women (widows) group for back support , various opportunities to implement the learnt skill back through training, counseling, scholarship and other different techniques

B. The activities carried out in the following ways to meet the objective of the project:

1. Set up of Conflict Affected Women Cell at central office WHR and link with Regional Network

After the signing of MOU between the PAF and WHR, the first activity conducted in line with the project was set up of Conflict Affected Women Cell (CAWC) at Central Office WHR. The set up of the cell included recruitment of the staffs, set up of all the stationeries, computers and the other requirements for the conduction of the project activities.

Further, there was also development of resource center with the necessary and the relevant journals, books, articles related to conflict and the conflict victims. The project team sent the request letters for the providing books and the related documents to different organizations. The team received some books and the documents from the organizations. Besides that, the project team also collected articles from the local newspaper in the daily basis as per the relevancy.

2. Identification of 200 among 800 neediest and most vulnerable single women (widows) based on set criteria

From the survey of WHR, it was found that there are approximately 800 neediest and vulnerable single women (widows) in Kathmandu only. Due to the limitation of the resource and the time, it was decided that 200 vulnerable and neediest conflict affected women will be identified out of the 800 single women (widows). In the project, we tried to include those 200 conflict affected women along with other conflict affected women who came in some support and relief in the CAWC of WHR.

3. Update profile with background

There was regular influx of vulnerable and needy conflict affected displaced women and regular contact with the Conflict Affected Women Cell (CAWC) at WHR. The staffs of the cell kept the proper update of these women through friendly conversation and the proper profiling format. In order to maintain the profile, gender sensitive questionnaire was developed which was used for the documentation. Updating of the profile with background continued throughout the project period which gave better insight about the situation of these women. Around 50 conflicts affected women's (CAW's) profile has been incorporated in the cases studies book.

P.S. Please find the attached profile in the Annex

4. Orientation on Project Activities to team members

The project team members were given orientation about each and every activity to be conducted as a part of the project. The roles and responsibilities of each of the staff in the team were thoroughly discussed. After the orientation of the project activities, the team also came into consensus to develop tri-monthly action plan and work accordingly. The team contained team leader, project coordinator, finance officer, legal counselor, para counselor, service in charge, documentation officer and regional coordinators.

5. *Hold one-to-one discussion with these women to allow them to voice their issues, concerns, needs and aspirations and organize need identification training*

Different CAW had their specific problems and they had different aspirations. It was very necessary to hold one to one discussion with these women to allow them to voice their issues, concerns, needs and aspirations. The discussion was mainly on finding the barriers that are stopping them from going back to their community, to identify areas of skill or income generation that would help them sustain a livelihood once back in their communities. In the discussion, all the opportunities available to support the livelihood along with the challenges and ways to overcome them were discussed. During the project period altogether 4 need identification workshops was conducted dated, 31st July 2008, 12th Jan 2009, 30th Jan 2009 and 20th April 2009.

From the need identification workshops, the different problems of these women were known.

- Some women get compensation or pension from governmental side or company, but these are far from enough amount to feed their children and other family members.
- Some of them could not get full compensation since their in laws took them all, or their husband sometimes had two wives without informing her and had to split between two wives.
- Some could not get any money at all as the marriage was totally secret from their both family and community and their was no proof.
- Some women had no certificate or important document to proof their marriage or even citizenship, both of which are compulsory to be certified as conflict victims to get reparation.
- Sometimes they did not know they had to make post-mortem report after the death of the husband, which is also a compulsory document for getting compensation. They were unaware of the fact due to their illiteracy.
- Most of these women have not received any compensation from the government
- Most of these women have not got their property back from Maoist which was seized during the armed conflict
- Since most of them are illiterate and the legal process for getting compensation was found to be very complicated for them
- Similarly in the remote areas the old government offices are damaged and new office building are not setup so conflict affected people are getting problem about where to go and what to do.
- Housing was also seen as one of the crucial problem of these women
- Job opportunity, income generating skills, scholarship for their children were the immediate demand of these women.
- Most of these women were still under the traumatic phase and still struggling for the gaining their lost confidence and the self esteem.

6. *Provide counseling and legal services as per required in partnership with various local partners such as CVICT, LAAC, Pro—Public etc. These women need a boost in their self esteem and confidence, counseling will allow them to regain their lost spirit and prepare them for reintegration back into their communities*

Most of the conflict affected women often seek the legal justice due to lawlessness during the conflict situation. The legal terminologies and the services are often difficult but yet very important to provide a part of justice to the CAW. These CAW also seek legal services and counseling services from CAWC but the difficult cases are referred to the local partners working in terms of the legal services.

Out of 185 CAW, 40 were provided legal counseling and services. 145 were provided psycho social counseling. 23 legal cases were solved. The CAW were time and again counseled and also let to meet the other women like them to share their pain and feel the ease to some extent and also to motivate them to organize in the groups.

Some of the cases under the process are as follows:

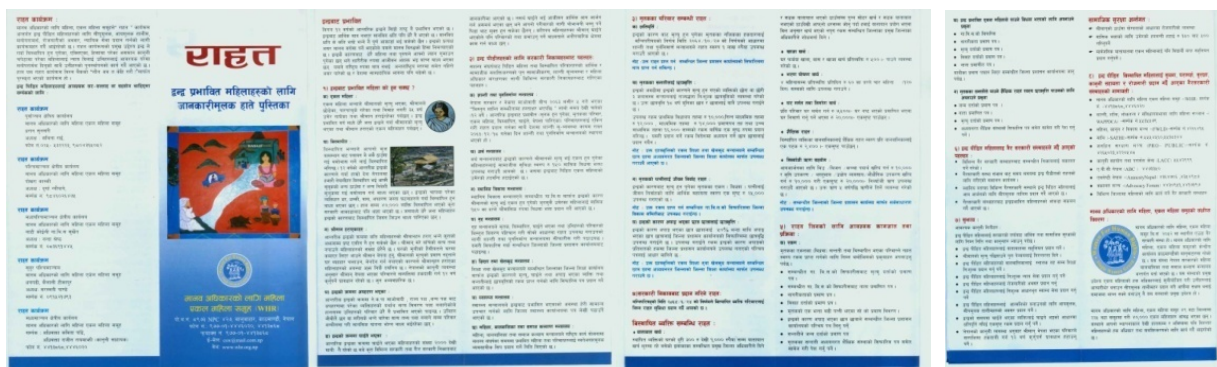
- i. Two of the conflict affected women were found to have been facing sexual harassment problem from their own family member. So these women were provided legal counseling and these cases are still under process. We are working to provide justice to these women.
- ii. Three of the conflict affected women didn't have their citizenship and marriage certificate. Their cases are also under process.
- iii. Six displaced single women's case came up to "CAWC" so far. Each case is still on the process. Here are the names of six women, age and their issues;

Name	age	issues
1. Nirmala K.C	(29)	about getting compensation
2. Nisha Swar	(28)	about daughter's scholarship
3. Rita Manandhar	(26)	about getting compensation
4. Rakmaya Giri	(48)	about getting compensation
5. Rita Pudasaini	(26)	about disappeared husband and compensation
6. Mithu Basnet	(39)	about her job opportunity and her daughter's education

7. *Preparation of information Tool Kit on processes to get compensation, pensions for dissemination*

Information toolkit was prepared by the Conflict Affected Women Cell (CAWC). This toolkit was prepared in simple Nepali language so that all the information can be understood and can be accessed by almost everyone. The toolkit contained information regarding the things such as the process to get the compensation, the things and the documents required while filing application, the list of different organization working for the conflict victims, compensation scheme of the government for the conflict victim and many useful information.

The toolkit has been distributed in the different working districts of WHR during various events and programs.



(Photo of the toolkit printed in Nepali, August 2008)

8. Need Identification for skill training, skill training and employment

Need identification for skill training was also also done during the orientation and need identification workshop. The income generating skill training and the employment opportunities to CAW were one of the immediate needs to survive in the city as displaced conflict victim.

In the project period, 80 conflict affected displaced women were provided skill training. Some of the skill trainings identified during the need identification workshops can be listed as sewing, beauty parlor, computer, driving, handicraft, knitting, candle-making, incense making, embroidery and solar lantern making.

During the project phase, 37 displaced conflict affected women got the employment opportunity after they received skill trainings.

- 5 single women are employed in knitting business
- 3 single women are engaged in embroidery in hastakala designing centre
- 2 single women are trained as trainer for solar lantern
- 3 single women are working as housekeepers
- 2 single women are working in Nagrik Awaz
- 5 single women are running cafeteria
- 6 single women are engaged in candle and incense making
- 1 single women is engaged in driving and working in DFID
- 4 single women are working in WHR central office
- 1 single women is planning to open beauty parlour in her own community
- 5 single women are involved in momo making business (meals on wheels)

Different forms of skill trainings and jobs were identified and provided to Conflict Affected Women.

Some of the skill oriented trainings received by CAW are as follows:

- i. On 30th January 2009, the project implementation team with the cooperation from Single Women Entrepreneur Group (SWEG) provided candle making training to 10 conflict affected women.
- ii. On 6th February 2009, the project implementation team with the cooperation from SWEG provided Incense making training to 9 conflict affected women.
- iii. 7 conflict affected women were sent to take one month long embroider training at Hastakala designing center. Out of 7 trainees 3 of them have got job after their good performance. The project implementation team has requested Hastakala Designing Center to give additional training to the other 4 trainees to make them professional. Thus, they will be receiving training for one more month.
- iv. These conflict affected women were found very enthusiastic to start candle making as a business. So some of the members have decided to take loan from Aadhar to start this as a business.

WHR's executives, staffs and its board members are always aware of and make effort of looking for the job opportunities for the single women (widow) through own networks as an organization as well as individual connections with business people or friends both in Nepal and abroad.

9. Link up with Aadhar saving credit program for loan to start up and invest in small micro entrepreneur

CAW's who were provided skill trainings have been practicing their learnt skills. These CAW are eager to take loan from Aadhar Saving and credit of WHR to start up and invest in small micro entrepreneurs. These women have planned to take the loan individually or in a group to start up entrepreneur once they are confident in the days to come.

10. Link up with local district single women (widows) group for back support to reintegrate where single women (widows) groups and Regional offices work as Mentor

Unfortunately, none of CAW who came in contact of CAWC wanted to go back to the original community. There were many reasons as stated by them.

Firstly, they were still traumatized because of the atrocities they faced from Maoist or Security force during the insurgency. They do not feel secure enough to go back to their village. Some of the CAW's properties are still confiscated and some of their houses have been bombed.

Secondly, even though they will go back to the community, there would be neither job to feed family nor any property to use for sustaining the livelihood of themselves and their families.

Thirdly there is less opportunity for education of their children back home in comparison to Kathmandu. Life in village is simply much harder after the conflict due to the barren land, no property to start up life and things like security. Therefore even though living in the city is really hard to meet basic needs, most of them prefer to stay in Kathmandu to seek job opportunity while having desire to provide better education for their children.

11. Support scholarship for continuation of education to rehabilitated single women (widows) and their children through the opportunity fund and other local networks

50 children of single women have been identified for education support. They were provided with the stationery materials such as school bags, notebooks and geometry box. The children were given the stationeries on the occasion of 5th International Widow's Day.

12. Meeting with target group for refresher and guidance

After the counseling and the skill training, the target groups were frequently called and guided to enhance their built in confidence and their learnt skill. The target groups were also communicated through phone calls by the project team members along with the meeting as per the need of the target group.

13. Provide guidance through regular monitoring and evaluation

The CAW are frequently communicated and met as per the convenience to give the regular guidance along with to update the activities they are undertaking for the livelihood of themselves and their families in the city. The monitoring and evaluation of CAW have supported to understand their situation after receiving cooperation from CAWC of WHR.

C. Networking with different organizations for the collective approach and to update with their endeavors to support the conflict victims

The project team members participated in the different events conducted in the conflict and the peace building process. The events have helped to get the update in the activities for the transitional justice and the peace building. Some of the events attended by the team members and the conflict affected women are as follows:

1. "Academic Educational Programme AED" workshop titled *"Role of Women in Peace building Process"*
2. *"Gender and Transitional Justice network"* meeting organized by OHCHR and Advocacy Forum, was held at UN conference Room, Pulchowk, Kathamandu
3. *"Documentation on Justice Process: Experiences sharing of the Women's International Tribunal in Tokyo and Human Rights Violation in Nepal"* organized by SANGYA and AJWRC (Asia-Japan Women's Resource Center in Tokyo, Japan)
4. *"Forum on Enforced Disappearances"* organized by OHCHR-Nepal at Hotel Himalaya, Pulchowk, Kathmandu
5. *"Workshop on Women's Role in Peace Building & Leadership"* organized by UNIFEM Programme Office
6. *"Skill Up Training on Report Writing"* by Masako Tanaka (SNV) at WHR training hall.

7. *"Cocap National workshop on Disappeared People"*
8. *Meeting with "Gender and Transitional Justice network" in charge member.*
9. *The project implementation team attended film session organized by UN "Ending Impunity for Human rights Violations" at Russian Culture Center on 5th December 2008.*
10. *Attended the meeting and film session "Sari Soldier" on Gender and Transitional Justice organized by OHCHR on 10th December 2008.*
11. *Attended Gender and Transitional Justice Training organized by OHCHR and ICTJ dated 28-30th December 2008*
12. *Attended and supported to organize Discussion panel on "Advocating for the Needs, Dignity and Rights of Conflict Affected women" on 19th February 2009 jointly organized by WHR and Nagarik Aawaz, at Nepal Tourist Board*

D. IMPACTS:

1. *Conflict affected women are organized in a group*

This program have helped to organized the conflict affected women into group so that they have got platform to share their pain and sorrow they have bared during the conflict period and now after being displaced in Katmandu. They meet often at WHR and have shared a bond between eachother.

2. *Vulnerable conflict affected women are protected from being involved in informal sector*

Due to poor economic condition and no job opportunity in formal sector most of the conflict affected displaced women were compelled to work in the informal sectors such as in massage center, restaurant and bar, low paid menial jobs, labor work etc. The forced involvement in the informal sectors has yet increased the vulnerability of conflict affected women to exploitation. The income generating skills and the formal job opportunity to these conflict affected women has reduced the vulnerability of these women.

3. *Increased number in legal awareness among CAW through RAAHAT toolkit*

The toolkit which was developed in simple Nepali language has helped to raise awareness regarding the compensation and the other provisions for the conflict affected people from governmental and other humanitarian organizations.

4. *CAW have become economically independent*

Conflict affected women have become economically empowered and independent after getting employment opportunity.

5. *Skill enhanced*

Women who were provided skill trainings have enhanced their skill.

6. *Became mentally stable after getting legal and psycho social counseling*

Each of the CAWs had gone through the traumatic and heart throbbing experience of atrocities by the Maoist or the state force. CAW found it very difficult to share their pain and trauma with the counselors. The timely and the strong counseling by the counselors had helped a lot to gain the lost confidence of these women. It was realized that counseling is foremost important is also the foremost thing to provide immediate relief to the victims.

E. Challenges and Conclusion

During this project period CAW were provided with skill training, job placement, stationary support to CAW's children . However we have also provided support by providing grant to some of the conflict affected a woman who wants to opens entrepreneur business in a group. Now those women are running their business successfully.

1. Problem in reintegrating CAW back to their communities

Most of the women have shared that they don't want to return to their community because they don't get any opportunity in the villages. But one of the women, she was provided beauty parlor training. She has decided to go back to her own village Rolpa and open beauty parlor there. During this working period one of the member reintegrated to her own village. She is a conflict affected women who is living in Kathmandu from long times back. Her economic condition was very poor; she has lots of responsibilities towards her family. Similarly due to no skill at all, she was not able to go back to her community. But after taking interview with her she has shared that she is interested on taking parlor training so we have provided her parlor training, after completing her training she has decided to go back to Rolpa and run livelihood by opening parlor shop in her village. Now she is living independent and happy life in her own village with own family. But still we didn't succeed to reintegrate other conflict affected women to their community. According to the women, Kathmandu has lots of opportunity and facilities such as education opportunity, job opportunity, and health facility so nobody wants to go back to their origin.

2. High expectation

Since most of the conflict affected women are living very hard life in Kathmandu but still the organization alone can't fulfill all the needs of the victim and the victims they expect everything from the organization. Most of the women they want to do official table work rather than part time jobs which are very difficult to find out for them due to the level of the education along with the job opportunity available here in the city.

3. Due to time counseling process for legal cases, most of the legal cases are still under process

Since the legal processes are time consuming so most of the legal cases are still under the process. This is one of the major obstacles in providing legal justice to the CAW in the major problem for the legal cases. Since some of the cases which are registered very late in the office, which can't be proceed further due to the beyond boundary of the organization. Thus, getting compensation for them, even they are entitled, is still difficult due to their status in family in laws, lack of education, structural discriminative environment and so on.

4. Difficulties in identifying the conflict affected women initially

As it has been mentioned in the above sections, first four month was focused on identifying the conflict affected displaced single women through WHR's network. Finishing interview of 64 respondents in four month is about 30 percent of our targeted number of 200 women. This can be also explained that work

was disturbed so much due to the festive season of September and October. Due to the necessity of extra time to interview the possible recipients, the long time was consumed to maintain the profile of these women.

We cannot force them to go back to their home village since this is written in the proposal and there are greater number of displaced women who not only from mid western and far-western development region than our assumption, which we were not able to ignore.

5. The flexibility in the service to the target groups

The project has not quite reached conflict affected displaced women who are only from mid western and far-western development region as there are so many conflict affected displaced women living in Kathmandu valley. The entire CAW who approached CAWC is not only from these selected development regions but belong to other conflict affected district of other development region of the country. These CAW are still undergoing trauma due to their sufferings during the conflict situation.

There is a huge gap and misassumption. It should be admitted that the reality might be a quite different from the assumption. We tried to stick focusing on the displaced women who are from far-western region as much as possible, but we still need some alternation or flexibility in our project for the sake of the conflict victims.

ANNEXE



Taking interview and search for the displaced women in Maoist Victim Camp



Orientation meeting and need identification of conflict affected displaced women at WHR central office



Candle making training

Newspaper clippings



Incense making training



Knitting training



Dr. Anthony Harchham, Canadian management consultant in lantern making training



(Right: Counseling room Up: A displaced woman is being interviewed, September 2008)



Counseling to CAW



Need Identification of CAW



Orientation to CAW



Skill training to CAW



Skill training to CAW



Stationery support to children of CAW



Stationery support to children of CAW



Daughter of CAW with her stationery



Children of CAW



Son of CAW with educational support



Panel discussion jointly organized by WHR and Nagarik Awaz