

GLOBAL GRANTS COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT RESULTS

GLOBAL GRANT NUMBER GG2098538

Violence Against Women Advocates in Nepal - A Training Initiative

Beneficiary Community or Institution

Civil society organizations working for the rights of women in Nepal

Groups in the community that would receive a clear, direct and immediate benefit from the project

Civil society organizations working for the rights of women in Nepal, including: Fedo, Sankalpa, Shantimalika, Women for Human Rights, Save the Saptari, Working Women Journalists (WWJ), Vision Nepal for Media Advocacy, Saathi, Tewa, Mitini Nepal for LBTQI, Nepal Disabled Women's Association, Beyond Beijing Committee, Ipas Nepal, Empowering Youth Strengthening Involvement (YUWA), Center for Research on Environment Health and Population Activities (CREHPA)

Ultimately these groups desire to work together with the Nepal Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens (MoCWS), the United Nations (UN) and the Nepal Women's Rehabilitation Centre who have together come out with the position that the Nepal Government is committed to tackling gender-based violence at the national, provincial and municipal levels with the creation of the right policies. ([See article.](#)) The civil society leaders and organizations identified in this survey need to be at the table working with the government offices for these policies to be successful.

Beneficiaries demographic information if relevant to the project

The survey assessed the views of a wide range of women drawing in diverse perspectives by age group, location (urban, provincial, rural), family size, religion, caste, marital and educational status.

The survey respondents are women's rights and gender champions either nationally, regionally, or in their communities. Some work as community mediators who resolve conflict related to violence against women, and many of them work specifically on particular issues related to violence against women and gender such as Dalits rights, conflict affected women, single women, LBTQI, and other marginalized groups such as the Madhesis people, an ethnic group living mainly in the southern plains of Nepal close to the border with India.

The premise of the Community Needs Assessment survey in Nepal was to establish that training and capacity building for women's rights leaders, as proposed in the global grant, is necessary to do the following:

- advance the women's rights movement in Nepal;
- form a national coalition that will work together to end violence against women in Nepal;

The proposed global grant is not to create community based programs related to violence against women in Nepal. Instead, we are looking to address the root cause of the violence - unequal gender-power relationships. Research that looks at 70 countries over four decades shows that feminist mobilization in civil society—much more so than factors such as women in government or economic factors like national wealth—accounts for the biggest changes in policy development and implementation for women’s safety.

The results of this survey of women's rights leaders show that many of the women’s rights organizations in Nepal came into being with the peace accord in 2006, and since that time, many of the organizations have come together collectively and are working together for common issues facing women in Nepal. These networks are mostly focusing on the meaningful participation of women at all levels of society, and already have experience working together to advocate for a more gender friendly constitution. This level of organizing demonstrates that women’s rights advocates in Nepal are ripe for further investment and with that investment, primed to take societal change to the next level.

The survey verified that resources and funding are definitely needed to mobilize all these individual leaders and organizations together for more effective advocacy for women’s safety. Many of these leaders and organizations feel the need to form an umbrella group, or in their words, a federation of women’s organizations which could then create strong pressure for governmental action. They do not have the resources to do this on their own.

As a part of the capacity building training proposed in this Rotary global grant, we are looking to build skills and abilities for the women’s rights advocates and civil society leaders in Nepal. The training will include concrete objective setting, political mapping, advocacy training, and formulating a strategic plan to activate a broader coalition and carry the work forward. The training will also provide planning resources for meetings with government officials, and media and public speaking coaching to allow the members of the coalition to break the system of silence keeping violence against women in the shadows. The outcome of this training will be Nepali advocates who have:

- new skills and abilities;
- shifted their own national conversations towards the norm of women’s safety;
- are ready to hold their own government accountable for failures to protect women and girls from abuse.

The kinds of policies that can reduce violence against women are well known – but not all countries adopt them, and even fewer implement them. Research shows that while international agreements can be important tools to advance women’s rights, their effectiveness depends on actions by autonomous women’s groups operating within each nation and local context. The program we propose in this Rotary global grant will support the women’s rights advocates in Nepal—building their capacity to end violence against women and girls in their community and nation.

Once we have successfully applied for this grant in Nepal, we will seek to replicate it in other potential “lead nation” countries. In each country where we apply for a Rotary global grant, the host Rotary club and civil society leaders will have considerable voice in developing what types of capacity building training they need.

Who conducted the assessment?

(Check Box) A cooperating organization

Assessment Dates

August 5-16, 2019

What methods did you use?

Survey - data collected in a one on one interview format

Who from the community participated in the assessment?

Respondent selection for interview: Total – 30 Respondents

Widows - 3

Conflict affected women- 3

Youth activists – 3

Madhesi Women -3

Female Politician – 3

Female Journalist-3

LGBTQI – 3

Elected Women -3

Dalit Women- 3

Indigenous Women - 3

List the community needs you identified that your project would address.

The biggest concerns for women and girls as mentioned by the survey respondents are: domestic violence, sexual abuse and torture, rape, sexual harassment, trafficking, dowry, mental torture, verbal abuse, gender discrimination, child marriage, polygamy and various discriminatory cultural and traditional practices. Many of the survey respondents indicated that due to gender roles in Nepal, there is lower participation by women at all levels of society.

Many survey respondents specifically brought up that more than 13 years after the historic peace deal that ended the decade-long armed conflict in Nepal, the nation has failed to address the sufferings and needs of women affected by the war, or conflict affected women. Dowry related violence and alcohol fueled violence also came up repeatedly as a big issue in the villages. Some of the survey respondents mentioned that in the case of women whose husbands have migrated, they often are vulnerable to sexual abuse by other male members of the family. Some respondents indicate that unemployment of men is one of the causes of the violence against women in Nepal. Many survey respondents said that the women survivors are reluctant to confront this violence due to fear and insecurity, and stated that

there is a huge culture of silence in Nepal. According to the survey respondents, women in Nepal are frequently insulted, molested, threatened, beaten and raped; yet they remain silent because of the combined barrier of social stigma and family pressure.

Based on these results, the community need identified in the survey is the need for increased safety for women in Nepal. Study after study has shown that strong, organized and autonomous women's movements are the key to increasing women's rights (please see short list of studies below).

To increase women's safety, women need to mobilize, build their awareness of their strength and the possibility of change, and marshal their collective power to lead and act together. The training program we are proposing in this Rotary global grant goes right to the heart of this need.

Some of the relevant articles used to form this conclusion:

[WHY AUTONOMOUS SOCIAL MOVEMENTS HOLD THE KEY TO REDUCING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN](#)

[Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls: Lessons From Practice](#)

[The Civic Origins of Progressive Policy Change: Combating Violence against Women in Global Perspective, 1975–2005](#)

[The Status of Financing for Women's Rights Organizing and Gender Equality](#)

List any needs the project identified that you would not address.

While violence prevention education, survivor services and training for responders such as police, judges, nurses and doctors is very needed, this grant is seeking to address violence against women at the roots, not the leaves. According to one of the studies shared above, the 'leaves'—programs for individual women and girls—are receiving growing attention without support for 'the roots' - the sustained, collective action by women's rights advocates and organizations that has been at the center of human rights advances throughout history. Based on evidence, we believe that given resources and training, women's groups will be able to address needs within their communities on their own.

Considering the needs and assets listed, explain how you determined the project's primary goal.

The Cooperating Organization, Every Woman Treaty, works with frontline women's rights advocates from 128 nations. Nepal was selected for this global grant application because it is very ripe for change. There is already an incredibly cohesive and motivated women's rights network, and government policies, if not practices, are on a clear trajectory towards women's safety and empowerment.

To create these training programs, the [Every Woman Treaty](#) campaign is partnering with [Global Health Advocacy Incubator](#), who oversaw national campaigns to ratify the tobacco treaty in more than 50 nations. The trainings we are proposing are a proven part of their policy-advocacy campaigns to influence key government officials around policy. The skills gained in this training will carry a strong, sustainable autonomous women's movement forward. Key reasons for creating a strong, sustainable autonomous women's movements include:

- Autonomous women's movements are much more important in policy development for women's rights than women in government or economic factors like national wealth.
- Violence against women and girls in low-income and middle-income countries can be prevented through interventions that target the key driver of violence in these settings—unequal gender-power relations.

The emphasis in every aspect of this project is on building the capacity of local women's rights advocates, including the development of sustainable skills, resources, and structures. Beginning as a group of separate civil society organizations each working on an aspect of the problem, and creating a united country-wide coalition to confront violence against women will lead to increased capacity, a better understanding of the evidence-based practices needed for social change in this area, increased discourse between community and government partners, and more -- with the effects multiplied through the network of organizations.

How would your project's activities accomplish this goal?

When women are empowered – individually and collectively – they are equipped to challenge patriarchal norms, tackle the root causes of inequality and prevent and respond to violence. The skills acquired in the proposed training program build each advocate's capacity as a leader, leaving them better equipped to end of violence against women in Nepal.

Through advocacy and media training, this program will:

- increase the visibility and leadership of women's rights advocates at the local, national, and international level, helping to expand the capacity and strength of both the women's rights movement in their nations and their efforts to end violence against women;
- lead to stronger collaboration among women's rights groups, and ultimately the formation of a national federation or coalition;
- increase advocates' credibility and influence as women's rights advocates and leaders in ending violence against women.

The skills acquired will include:

- National, Regional and Community Organizing
- Public speaking
- Leadership
- Diplomacy
- Effective storytelling

Many of the survey respondents felt that there should be more training on these skills for women at every level, and especially in the villages, so that they can develop more advocates and greater mobilization within each community. By training advocates in a national federation, they can in turn form village training programs, replicating the work on many levels. As the survey identified, training at the village level could also address issues such as the need for economic empowerment programs to help women become more independent, the need for violence prevention training to males and other resistant groups, and the need for self-defense training for young women.

This training program, held at the national level for women's rights advocates is very much needed to bring new ideas, skills, resources and long-term change to Nepal, and in turn, each of their communities.

What challenges have prevented the community from accomplishing the project's goals?

The need to form a capable, prepared and activated national federation to confront violence against women in Nepal is coming to a head. There is a new federal structure in Nepal, and under it legal provisions and institutional reform that better protect women have yet to be supported by effective implementation mechanisms. Women's rights advocates need investment and skill building in order to better argue for protections that exist on paper, but are not yet in place to provide actual safety for women. Very limited resources going to women's organizations and the women's rights sector is also a factor that constrains activism and leadership.

How is the community addressing these challenges now?

Nepali women's rights advocates are very aware of the importance of international declarations and resolutions to prevent violence against women, and have been supporting the government in the implementation of the legal provisions that currently exist. A group of civil society advocates has been working on developing and submitting a shadow report and a parallel country report from the civil society perspective to CEDAW (The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women) and BPFA (Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action for Equality, Development and Peace) at the United Nations. These reports collect and share information that goes beyond the official government reports, in order to provide more accounting on violence against women in Nepal.

The Bring Back Our Girls movement, the international #MeToo movement, and the global outcry following the violent gang rape of "India's daughter" on the bus show us the world is ready and eager to end violence against women. The women's rights advocates in Nepal are primed and ready to make more headway. This training program will help us to harness that energy and channel it—through the voices of women's rights advocates in Nepal.

Why are the projects activities the best way to meet this community need?

Many of these organizations began with the peace accord in 2006. Since that time, many women-led organizations have loosely worked together for the common issues facing women in Nepal. These networks are mostly focused on the meaningful participation of women at all levels of society and also have joined together for a more gender friendly constitution. Resources and funding are definitely needed to mobilize all these organizations together for more effective advocacy.

The end result of the survey has shown us that funding, resources, and training programs are very much needed to bring increased safety and bring long-term change to women in Nepal. With further training and funding, we will see better community mobilization, women's

participation in decision-making at all levels will be increased, and government at all levels will be impelled to implement national and international declarations and resolutions in favor of gender equality.