



*From RC a.i.'s Desk*

**A**s 2020 draws to an end, no doubt all of us, reflect back on an extraordinary year, one with unprecedented challenges. At the same time, we have seen great solidarity and cooperation to meet the needs of those most vulnerable in the current crisis.

2020 also marked the 75th Anniversary of the UN, an opportunity for the UN family to look back at our history, achievements and shortcomings, reimagining how we work to address global challenges of poverty, inequality, discrimination and climate change in the years and decades to come. But we also needed the voices of the future to speak about the world they want. For this, we engaged with youth groups to reach out to diverse populations across Nepal. More than 54 thousand people responded through a quick survey what they would like their future to look like. The UN has spent



**UN75 SURVEY IN NEPAL**  
**MAKING EVERY VOICE AND VOTES COUNT**

**A**s a part of the 75th anniversary celebrations of the United Nations (UN), a global conversation has been ignited through UN75 Online Survey to gather voices across the world on the future we want. UN Nepal joined in these efforts in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic and these unprecedented times.

While UN75 seeks to drive conversation in all segments of society - from classrooms to boardrooms, parliaments to village

halls - it will place special emphasis on hearing particularly those voices that have been marginalized for too long. In this new reality of physical distancing and restricted movement, digital and telecommunications played a vital role in collecting responses for the Survey from people living in the farthest corners of Nepal.

The UN Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO) with the support from the UN Volunteers Nepal mobilized a diverse group of 300

youth volunteers representing all seven provinces of Nepal to undertake the UN75 survey in Nepal. The respondents comprised from different demographic and gender groups the responses of these populations were filled directly in the UN75 Online Survey platform by the volunteers.

With the effort of these incredible volunteers, more than 50 thousand responses to the survey were collected.

The volunteers conducted telephone survey and collected more than 50 thousand response from all seven provinces in Nepal from August and to early September 2020.

Nepal reached the target of 50,000 survey respondents on September 5, 2020 and stood as the second highest country in Asia with 53,300+ survey respondents.

## OBJECTIVES

- To collect 50 thousand survey responses through telephone survey from a diverse group of respondents particularly from those people who do not have access to internet.
- To inform and orient 300 youth volunteers of the UN75 survey campaign
- To mobilize 300 youth volunteers, ensuring diverse demographic and geographic representation (gender, sexual orientation, disability).

## ACTIVITIES

### Enumerators recruitment

The enumerators were selected on the basis of a google form registration. The google form was shared on social media channels of UNV Nepal as well as other volunteer engagement platforms

like V4ACTION and Yuwa In Action Campaign. The 300 volunteers were selected in terms of first come first serve basis and ensuring that 70 percent of them represented historically marginalised groups. Seven focal points were selected from the 300 volunteers to represent each of the provinces of Nepal who would coordinate with the enumerators from their fellow enumerators for smooth coordination and execution of the survey. They were selected based on: CV, Motivation statement and commitment to complete the assignment.

## ORIENTATION

All enumerators were provided an orientation prior to initiating their work. Altogether four orientation sessions were carried out to cover all 300 volunteers between 13-31 August. The fourth orientation was provided to the volunteers representing LGBTQ+ groups. Sign language interpretation was provided in the orientation sessions.

The orientation covered the following sessions and information:

- Insights of UN75 Nepal Campaign.
- UN75 Survey details.
- Mock session on how to collect responses
- Enumerator's roles and responsibilities.
- Timeline and process of the data collection.

## TELEPHONE SURVEY

Between 14 August and 11 September, the 300 enumerators collected 225 responses each (15 surveys per day) and reported back to the UNRCO Nepal.

this year to listen to the voices of people across the world, and this has helped shaped our thinking of the UN of the future.

The challenge and response to COVID-19 has required collaboration and new thinking. There was the support to the Government in the preparedness and response to COVID-19 as was articulated by the Humanitarian Country Team in the COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan. In addition, there has been the UN's Socio-Economic Recovery Framework to support the Government in the recovery of the socio-economic impact of COVID-19. I would like to thank all our partners for their support in the response to COVID-19.

Looking to the future and more specifically 2021, we will – with the support of our partners – continue to support the Government and people of Nepal to Build Back Better and Greener to envision the future that they want.

Season's Greetings to all of you.



Show your support to the UN75 campaign in Nepal by updating your profile picture using this photo frame.

Join the UN75 Survey at <https://un75.online/>

Considering the pandemic, the enumerators used their mobile phones and landline telephones to collect responses. Just to get used to the survey, the enumerators first reached out to their personal contacts. Additional mobile numbers were created through random sampling method and shared with the enumerators. A specific protocol and guideline were followed by all enumerators in order to ensure

uniformity and following UN codes of conduct.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The target of collecting 50,000 responses for the UN75 survey from seven provinces of Nepal by September 5 (45,000 response by 31 August) was successfully achieved.

Currently Nepal is leading in the third position globally with 53,330+

survey responses. (as of 21st September, 2020)

Successfully moved from 31st country (August 14th) to 2nd highest country in the world to undertake the UN75 Survey within a duration of two weeks.

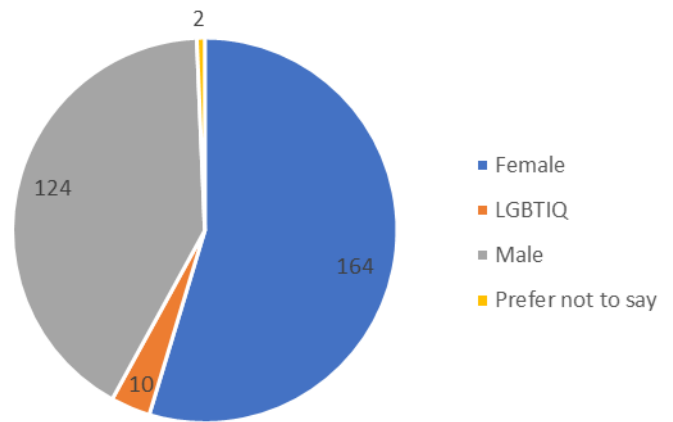
Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) perspective is systematically applied, integrated and documented in all activities throughout the assignment.

### 16 Volunteers with Disability



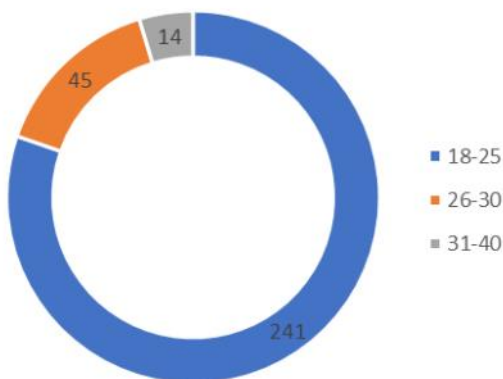
16 young persons with disabilities volunteered as enumerators. Two volunteers were visually impaired, four hearing impaired, one had a physical disability and nine did not mention their disability.

### GENDER



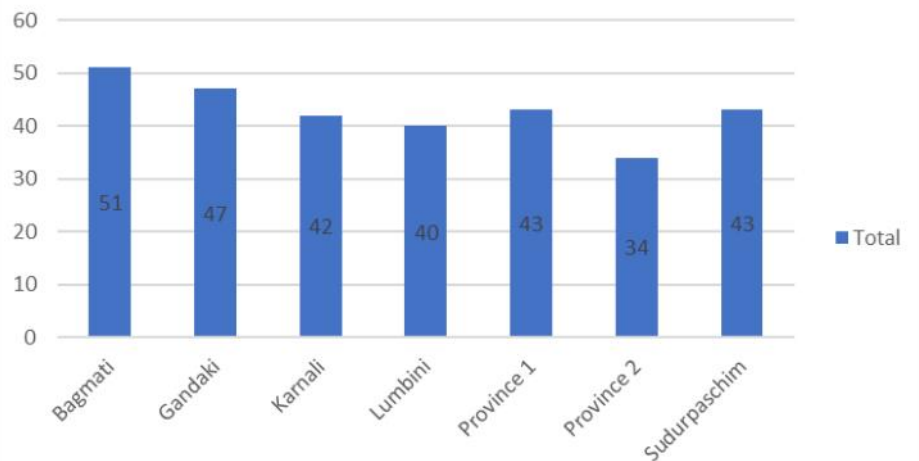
Among 300 youth volunteers, 55% were female, 41% were male, 3% represented LGBTIQ+ community, 1% preferred not to mention their gender.

### AGE GROUP



Among 300 youth volunteers, 80% of the volunteers were 18-25 years, 15% 26-30 years and 5% 31-40 years

### Geographical Representation



Among 300 youth volunteers, 14% were from Province 1 and Sudurpaschim each, 11% from Province 2, 17% from Bagmati Province, 16% from Gandaki Province, 28% from Lumbini Province and 14% from Karnali Province respectively




**UN75**
  
 2020 AND BEYOND

I HAD MY SAY... #UN75


 I HAD MY SAY  
 #UN75

I HAD MY SAY

I HAD MY SAY... #UN75

I HAD MY SAY #UN75

I HAD MY SAY #UN75

I HAD MY SAY #UN75

I HAD MY SAY #UN75

I HAD MY SAY... #UN75

Help Stop the Spread and stay Healthy

I HAD MY SAY #UN75

I HAD MY SAY... #UN75

I had MY SAY... #UN75

I HAD MY SAY #UN75

I HAD MY SAY #UN75


 I HAD MY SAY #UN75


 I HAD MY SAY #UN75

I HAD MY SAY #UN75

😊 We Can BEAT It Together... #COVID-19... 1 Minute, 1 SURVIVE I Had My Say... #UN75

OUR VOICES COUNT.

I HAD MY SAY

I HAD MY SAY... #UN75

I HAD MY SAY! #UN75


 I HAD MY SAY #UN75

I HAD MY SAY... #UN75

I HAD MY SAY... #UN75

I HAD MY SAY... #UN75

'Voices Can Make a Difference' I HAD MY SAY #UN75  
 Shaping Our Future Together

मैले गरे तपाईं नै? #UN75

I HAD MY SAY #UN75

I HAD MY SAY... #UN75 #UN75Nepal #UN75ForYouthByYouth

I HAD MY SAY #UN75

I HAD MY SAY #UN75

I HAD MY SAY... #UN75

I HAD MY SAY #UN75

I HAD MY SAY #UN75  
 THE ONLY WAY TO OUR FUTURE IS TOGETHER  
 Let's be the change we want to see

I HAD MY SAY


 I HAD MY SAY

I HAD MY SAY #UN75

I HAD MY SAY #UN75

I HAD MY SAY



[Watch in YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oMpHTnCn6Uc)

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10 December 2020 —

**H**uman Rights Day was observed by the UN in Nepal by releasing a short video on Human Rights in line of the theme “Build Back Better” followed by a virtual dialogue session on 14 December 2020 comprised by distinguished speakers.

The video contains an address by Hon’ble Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali accompanied by UN Resident Coordinator a.i. Mr. Richard Howard followed by comments from civil societies’ members.

The virtual dialogue on 14 December explored the situation analysis of Human Rights in connection with discrimination, inequalities, participation and solidarity in the face of COVID-19 pandemic.

The dialogue session was addressed by UN Resident Coordinator a.i. Richard Howard followed by

Associate Professor of Tribhuvan University Dr. Janak Rai who portrayed a wider landscape of discrimination and inequality faced by the marginalized communities during COVID-19 pandemic in Nepal

A youth from the Muslim community and young entrepreneur – Faija Parween –spoke about the youth movement in the pandemic followed by President of Center for Dalit Women Gaura Nepali speaking from the social-economic perspective of Dalits during the pandemic.

End Discrimination of Any Kind |  
Address Inequalities |  
Encourage Participation and Solidarity |  
Promote Sustainable Development |

Monday, 14 December 2020  
at 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

Zoom ID: 879 3328 3339



**UNITED NATIONS  
NEPAL**

Dialogue Series on UN@75

## Build Back Better: Putting Human Rights at the Core of the Recovery



**Richard Howard**  
UN Resident Coordinator a.i.



**Gaura Nepali**  
President at Center for Dalit Women



**Janak Rai**  
Associate Professor, Central Department of Anthropology, TU



**Faija Parween**  
Founder at Open Space Network

# Stories of Peace Builders from Nepal's

## Armed Conflict

**Subeksha Poudel—**

**T**his year marks the 20th anniversary of implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. To honor the occasion, we present stories from the leaders of Nepal's National Women Conflict Victim Network. Nepal's decade long conflict from 1996 to 2006 ended with the then Maoists cadre and the Government of Nepal signing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Though precise figures are unknown, Nepal's Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction has stated in Nepal News that there were more than 17,800 deaths and at least 1,300 disappearances during the conflict. Study from Nepal Voices Report shows the conflict also displaced an estimated 150,000 to 200,000 people throughout Nepal. The period was also characterized by torture, sexual violence, unlawful detention and the use of child soldiers. Both the then Maoist forces and Government of Nepal's Security Forces have acknowledged their responsibility for grave human rights violation that happened in all but two of Nepal's 75 districts (under the former geographical structure).

The UNSCR 1325 and its subsequent resolutions focuses on women, peace and security. The resolution urges the government to immediately address the impact of conflict on women and acknowledge their contribution in conflict settlement and ensuring lasting peace. Nepal developed National Action Plans (NAP), Phase I and II on UNSCR 1325

and 1820 to prioritize focus on conflict affected women, girls and their families. In February 2020, the Ministry of Home Affairs endorsed NAP Phase II to the Cabinet and is currently pending approval.

In efforts to advance women's leadership in securing sustainable peace, UN Women Nepal has been partnering with the leaders of Nepal's Women Conflict Victims. Through the partnership, we champion women as powerful agents for building peace and security.

### **The upcoming generations must learn about the tortures people faced**

As a child, I always got good grades. I would dream of becoming a nurse when I got older. I was still in school during the armed conflict when Buwa (father) went missing. When I went to school after that, my friends started avoiding me. They would say I was 'the daughter of Maoists' (the opposing group in the armed conflict). Without Buwa there to support us, it was difficult to remain in school. I know if Buwa was still around my dream of becoming a Nurse would have come true.

Nepal must document the atrocities that happened in the decade-long armed conflict. It should document the stories of people who went missing, of people murdered, of people sexually assaulted. The upcoming generations must learn about the tortures people faced.

Thapa lost her father on 9th August, 1998 in the armed conflict of Nepal.



**— Sarita Thapa, Bardiya, Nepal**

A writer documenting stories of people from Armed Conflict

### **Now we are not just helpless 'victims' but are active agents driving justice forward**

When we heard that the Nepali army murdered Dai (brother) our relatives told us not to cry. "What if people found out? What if the police found out? Don't cry," they said. The army killed Dai assuming he was a Maoist (the then opposing group) in the armed conflict. If the villagers found out about Dai's death, they would also assume that all of us were Maoists and start ostracizing us.

So, none of us could cry and Aama (mother) kept fainting. When we felt like crying, we went inside the house, cried for a bit and came out as if everything was normal. It still haunts me, how we could not even mourn when they murdered Dai.

Earlier we participated as 'victims' in events that sought justice for the people lost in armed conflict. We would share our stories of torture, re-live our grief and return home. Now we are not just helpless 'victims' but

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Now we are not just helpless 'victims' but are active agents driving justice forward.

- GITA RASAILI  
Activist for Victims of  
Armed Conflict in Nepal



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The government must acknowledge our role as the 'Peace Builders' ensuring justice for the victims of armed conflict

- SUSHILA CHAUDHARY  
Activist for Victims of  
Armed Conflict in Nepal



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My only hope is that Nepal will never see a war again. No matter what, nothing is worth a war.

- MAINA KARKI  
Chairperson of Sajha Chautari,  
An Organization for Conflict Victims in Nepal



are active agents driving justice forward. The UN in Nepal supported the Government of Nepal to engage victims of armed conflict in the government's National Action Plan drafting committee. Our role in this drafting committee was critical. We prepared the National Action Plan Phase II prioritizing the need for investigation of the perpetrators, availing access to justice and reparation for victim's families. Such efforts keep us going. But the sad part is that we are still waiting for the cabinet to approve the action plan for more almost a year.

Rasaili lost her brother on 4th February 2001 and her sister after she was gang raped at home by the Nepal army on 13th February 2004 in the armed conflict of Nepal.

— Gita Rasaili, Kavre, Nepal

An activist for the victims of the Armed Conflict

**The government must acknowledge our role as the 'Peace Builders' ensuring justice for the victims of armed conflict**

The Nepal army accused us of making explosives. They barged inside our home, pinned Buwa (father) on the floor with his face down. They furiously hit him on his back and dragged him outside the house. When I heard gun shots, I

thought they had killed Buwa, but thank god they had only fired in the air.

For three months, Buwa could not stand on his feet. Aama (mother) feared going to the market to buy medication, what if they captured us? So, she heated oil and massaged his back until he was better. Even now, Buwa has severe back pain.

The Nepali government has signed many international human rights treaties including Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the international women's rights treaty. It is very important for to prioritize implementation of the treaties and completing its commitments on time.

In December of 2001, Chaudhary's father was brutally injured in the armed conflict of Nepal. The next year on 16th April, 2002 Chaudhary's sister was taken away by the Nepal Army. Her sister has not returned home since. Three years after that on 7th April, 2005 Chaudhary's brother was killed by the Nepal Army.

— Sushila Chaudhary

An activist for the victims of the Armed Conflict

**My only hope is that Nepal will never see a war again. No**

**matter what, nothing is worth a war**

My Sriman (husband) was a primary school teacher. During the armed conflict, the Maoist (the opposing group in the armed conflict) kidnapped him. I had given birth to our son at that point and was very hopeful they would set him free. But they murdered him.

When I am walking down the street, sometimes I see people who look like my Sriman. The brown hat, the striped sweater, exactly like my Sriman's. Sometimes I also see him in my dreams. In these fleeting moments it feels like he never left us. But I miss him the most during festivals and my heart pines for him when I see other families, complete and happy.

My only hope is that Nepal will never see a war again. No matter what, nothing is worth a war.

On 2nd January 2005 Karki lost her husband in the armed conflict of Nepal.

— Maina Karki

Chairperson of Sajha Chautari, an Organization for conflict victims in Nepal

**Without implementation of the policies we created for the justice of victims from armed**

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Without implementation of policies we created for justice of victims from armed conflict, our efforts to ensure justice are futile.

- CHANDRAKALA UPRETY  
Activist for Victims of  
Armed Conflict in Nepal



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I heard the Maoists saying, “We killed someone who should not have been killed.”

- SHRIJANA SHRESTHA  
Activist for Victims of  
Armed Conflict in Nepal



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All victims from the armed conflict must get justice.

- SABITRI KHADKA  
Activist for Victims of  
Armed Conflict in Nepal



## conflict, our efforts to ensure justice are futile

My Sriman (husband) was taken away by Nepal Army on the evening of 9th December 2003. But we found out only the next morning. For days we frantically searched for him everywhere, but he was nowhere to be found.

Even after all these years since I lost him, I still hear his voice. Inside my house or while walking in the streets, I hear him. Sometimes when someone knocks on the door, I feel like he has come. It is painful every day.

When my Sriman went missing in the armed conflict, I was alone, and I could not speak up in public about what happened. We were so scared; we could not even call ourselves the victims of the conflict. It was only later, when I saw there were many victims like us that I gained courage to speak up for justice. As peace builders, we are not only fighting for our own justice but are also fighting for the justice of many other victims.

But without implementation of the policies we created for the justice of victims of armed conflict, our efforts to ensure justice are futile. The Government of Nepal must bring into practice what is already in policies.

At six in the evening of 9th December 2003, Uprety’s husband

was taken away by the Nepal army. He has not returned home since.

### —Chandrakala Uprety

An activist for victims of the Armed Conflict in Nepal

### I heard the Maoists saying, “We killed someone who should not have been killed”

On 31st October 2002, the Maoists (the opposing group in the armed conflict) murdered my Sriman (husband). He was a well-known person in our community. No matter who you were, my Sriman was kind and treated everyone equally. After my Sriman died, I found out that they killed him out of a misunderstanding. I heard the Maoists saying, “We killed someone who should not have been killed.” I was a person who loved sleeping. But for four days straight, after I lost my Sriman, I could not sleep.

It has been more than 10 years since I started advocating for the justice of victims of armed conflict. But there has not been any significant result yet. Since there is inadequate representation of women in decision-making bodies, gender sensitivity and equality in practice is still a far-fetched goal. The government of Nepal needs to ensure equal number of women in all decision-making forums and ensure their meaningful contribution in policies for

consolidation of peace and strengthening security.

Shrijana lost her husband on 31st October 2002 in the armed conflict of Nepal.

### —Shrijana Shrestha

An activist for victims of the Armed Conflict in Nepal

### All victims from the armed conflict must get justice

Buwa (father) was murdered right in front of my eyes by the Maoist group. We waited for two days in the cowshed with Buwa’s body. No one could come in to support us with cremation, because if they came inside, their life would also be at risk. I still see his murderers walking free today and it is agonizingly painful for me.

It has already been 14 years since the armed conflict has ended, but even now justice for the victims is pending. All victims from the armed conflict must get justice.

Khadka’s father was killed by the Maoists in 2005 during the armed conflict of Nepal.

### —Sabitri Khadka

An activist for victims of the Armed Conflict in Nepal

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# A pandemic-hit returnee migrant and family strive to recover better with support from IOM



**29 November 2020, Jhapa—**

Sabita Bishwokarma, a 9-year-old child, is resident of Arjun dhara Municipality in Jhapa District of Province 1. She studies in 5th Grade. She misses her school days and friends as her school is closed due to COVID-19 pandemic. In her leisure time, she likes to learn new things and support her parents in their self-employment initiative of “Muda-making (a kind of handmade chair)”.

Sabita’s father, Bhupal Bishwokarma, is a returnee migrant worker who returned during the lockdown after working in Dubai for about 2 years. He was working as a cleaner at School where children like his daughter, studied. He used to earn NPR 20,000 per month and send back a majority of income as remittances. This helped with household expenditures and buying books.

*Sabita Bishwokarma, 9, Arjun dhara Municipality in Jhapa District of Province 1, 5th Grade, supporting her parent’s initiative of “Muda-making (a kind of handmade chair)” in her leisure time.*

*Photo: IOM*

However, with the spread of virus in Dubai, all school were closed, and he became unemployed for four months. He stayed at a shelter provided by the company for four months and had to buy his return ticket himself for NPR 70,000 even when it was during contract period. All his savings were spent in purchasing ticket for which he also had to take loan.

When her father returned from Dubai, and spent 14 days in quarantine, he heard about the support International Organization for Migration (IOM) had been providing to start self-employment

initiatives. He then planned to utilize his skills of making handmade stool (a kind of chair - Muda) and reached to field coordinator of a civil society organization working for migrants – a designated organization for IOM’s aforementioned initiative.

From the first installment of the support, her father bought raw materials for Muda such as bamboo sticks, cloths, rope and recycled bicycle tires. For every sale of Muda, her father earns NPR 60 per piece. He has also bought two pigs from the remaining fund. He is now planning to expand this opportunity once he receives additional support.

Sabita is happy that her first batch of the Muda will be ready to go to market by early December 2020 onwards. Sabita is a bright child. IOM Nepal wishes her all the best for her future studies and success to her father’s initiative.

The IOM assistance is under the “Immediate UN Response for coherent safeguarding the livelihoods of people made most vulnerable by COVID-19 in Nepal” project supported by the United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund (UN Secretary General’s Fund). The recovery support activities of the project are being implemented in Dhankuta Municipality, Dharan Sub-Metropolitan and Arjun dhara Municipality of Province 1.

# 16 Days of Activism in Damak



**J**hapa - As part of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) campaign, Damak Municipality in collaboration with UNHCR and partner agencies, organized on 25 November 2020 a virtual inaugural programme calling for the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls.

The programme was attended by the Honorable Minister for Women, Children and Senior Citizens, Lilanath Shrestha, Honorable Parliamentarians, Damak Municipality Mayor and Deputy Mayor, refugee representatives, NGO partners, government officials, police officers and civil society members.

Chief Guest of the programme, Minister for Women, Children and Senior Citizens, Lilanath Shrestha, said that the Government was taking a strong stand against gender-based violence and had been adopting zero tolerance against gender-based

illumination of Damak Chowk in orange in Jhapa district in the first day of 16 Days of Activism, organized by Damak Municipality in collaboration with UNHCR and partner agencies. Damak Chowk was illuminated in orange for 16 days from 25 November to 10 December 2020 signifying “Zero tolerance against gender-based violence”

*Photo: UNHCR*

violence. He emphasized on the coordinated efforts of the federal, provincial and local governments in addressing the issues of gender-based violence.

“It is important that every individual, family, and the society play a positive role in raising awareness and preventing violence against women and girls,” the Minister highlighted.

The UNHCR Representative Carolin Spannuth Verma emphasized during the opening programme that protection of refugee women and

girls and sexual and gender minorities has always been a priority for UNHCR.

“Violence based on gender is despicable. To protect women, girls and sexual minorities from violence is our common responsibility. We have to ensure that men and boys do not even dare to harm them.”

In Nepal, UNHCR has put mechanisms in place to prevent and respond to gender-based violence against refugees and host community women and girls. In collaboration with local authorities, NGOs, refugees and host communities, UNHCR Nepal has strengthened the capacity of the refugee community, NGOs, municipality and hospital staff, police officers and established referral mechanisms so that GBV survivors receive immediate help. UNHCR has financed the construction of a One-Stop Crisis Management Center (OCMC) in Damak which will provide as of 2021 to survivors of violence physical and mental health responses, legal and social counselling and police reporting - all under one roof”, said UNHCR Nepal Representative.

The theme for this year’s 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence (25 November to 10 December 2020) is “Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!”

Damak Chowk was illuminated in orange for 16 days from 25 November to 10 December 2020 signifying “Zero tolerance against gender-based violence”.



## GLOBAL MIGRATION FILM FESTIVAL

### Pari of Pokhara

Babar Ali

23minutes - Nepali, English

30 Nov

available at Chalachitra app  
from 11am

Virtual panel discussion: 2 - 3pm

Pari is a young Nepalese woman, an aspiring actress and gifted dancer. She lives in a claustrophobic run-down shack in Pokhara, exiled there before the earthquake that killed her mother and destroyed the family home. She is a virtual servant to her aunt and gets no comfort or understanding from Asha, her older sister. The two continually feud over Pari's choice of career and new friend - the handsome and seductive Abhinash from India. Abhinash coaches Pari in her acting, but more importantly supports her dreams and gives her a sense of freedom as they experience the beauty of Pokhara's lakes and mountains. Abhi is a human trafficker, adept at multi-tasking. He romances Pari while sending pictures of her to his Indian handlers, negotiating her price. But then Abhinash starts developing true feelings for Pari and becomes conflicted between his job and those feelings. Pari begins to trust him - unaware of her possible peril.



## Fifth Edition of Global Migration Film Festival Launched in Nepal

**Kathmandu, 30 November 2020—**

The fifth edition of the Global Migration Film Festival (GMFF) in Nepal was launched virtually on 30 November at the 8th Nepal Human Rights International Film Festival (NHRIFF) with the screening of a short film on human trafficking and migration.

"Films are one of best media to communicate with both public and policy makers, which eventually become a tool to raise awareness, advocate and trigger discussions on topics that require wider attention," said Lorena Lando, Chief of Mission for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Nepal, speaking at the inaugural session.

"With over 2.4 million Nepalese working in over 100 countries, according to Nepal Migration Profile 2019, and prevailing reports of Nepalese falling victims to human traffickers in the course of migration, we believe that the film we have selected to screen this year targeting youth as well as the decision makers will be helpful to contribute towards addressing the issue," Lando added. The GMFF is taking place across the world from 30 November to 18

December 2020 despite the challenges of COVID-19 pandemic. This year's GMFF also coincides with the ongoing celebrations to mark the 75th Anniversary of the UN.

Similarly, addressing the inaugural session National Human Rights Commission Secretary Bed Prasad Bhattarai opined that such film festivals such as GMFF and NHRIFF help raise human rights issues while noting that Nepal's national policies are in accordance to the international human rights instruments.

A post-screening panel discussion was followed by the Nepal-based short film 'Pari of Pokhara' - which depicts a story of a young woman who has lost her mother and family home to an earthquake and falls into trap of human traffickers while she seeks employment and freedom in life.

Goma Dhakal, Head of Anti-human Trafficking and Control Section at the Ministry Women, Children and Senior Citizens, a representative from civil society organization, the film's director Babar Ali along with Reena Pathak representing the UN Nepal, discussed on various aspect of the film and the issues it raises.

"I only tell a story through the film and leave it to the audiences to interpret it," said Babar Ali, the film's director.

"Some might find the film only as love story while other might see it a tool that to discuss on issues like human trafficking and migration, prevalent in societies", he added.

The GMFF was launched in 2016 and by its fourth edition in 2019, it had been run in 108 countries, with over 58,000 people attending the over 700 screenings worldwide.

The goal of the Festival is to pave the way for greater discussion around one of the greatest phenomena of our time: migration. Furthermore, it is an innovative avenue for normalizing and destigmatizing discussions on migration through storytelling, and an advocacy tool that can draw attention to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), thus helping all nations as they work to meet them.

Audiences were from government agencies, youths, civil society organizations, academia, researchers, and media for advocacy for safe and well governed migration.



## In Nepal, a refugee changemaker drives forward the inclusion of refugees with disabilities

*Older refugees with disabilities learn to make handicrafts in Beldangi settlement, eastern Nepal.*

*Photo: UNHCR*

**B**reaking the stereotypes of persons with disabilities, Devi Maya Gurung has empowered fellow refugees with disabilities to become self-reliant and contribute to community life.

Standing inside the bamboo hut in the Beldangi refugee camp in Jhapa, eastern Nepal, Devi Maya Gurung smiles as a group of older refugees with disabilities from Bhutan busy themselves with making traditional stools using bamboo sticks, colourful nylon threads and used bicycle tires.

The stools, popularly known as “Mudaa” in Nepali language, fetch around NPR 300 to NPR 550 (equivalent to USD 2.6 to USD 5) per piece depending on their quality. They are in high demand, providing a steady income for the community’s refugees with disabilities.

These livelihoods projects, offered by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and supported by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, are now widely appreciated among the older refugee men and women in the community. However, this wasn’t originally the case.

“It was tough to convince them that it would lead to a better future. I worked hard to motivate them,” said Devi Maya, President of the Bhutanese Refugee Association of the Disabled (BRAD). Established in 2013, BRAD focuses on developing leadership among persons with disabilities as well as networking and advocating for them with the government and non-government agencies and other community-based organizations.

When the Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) training was

introduced in 2017 to help refugees to become self-reliant while promoting entrepreneurship and dignified livelihoods, many were reluctant to participate.

“When I stood for the training, many didn’t like me. Some even threatened me to leave the camp,” she recalled. “But I was determined. I used to say that if you have skills, your self-confidence will grow and once you have some income source, you don’t have to depend on others.”

Devi Maya considers engaging refugees with disabilities in livelihoods projects to be one of the biggest successes of her life. Thanks to her, refugee women and men with disabilities also work in mushroom farming, pickle making, doll making and handicraft production.

“The same people who used to scold me now thank me for bringing opportunity for them. They say, ‘we are sorry about the past,’” said Devi Maya, who fled Bhutan and arrived



*Hard at work, older refugees with disabilities make bamboo chairs using local materials in Beldangi settlement, eastern Nepal.*

*Photo: UNHCR*

in Nepal at the age of 20 in 1992. She was still a student in Grade 10 when she left her home.

In the early 1990s, over 100,000 refugees from Bhutan entered Nepal and were accommodated in seven camps in Jhapa and Morang districts. Following the resettlement of over 113,500 Bhutanese refugees to third countries, the remaining two Bhutanese refugee camps of Beldangi and Pathari Sanischare, with a population of 6,365, have now been transformed into self-sufficient, sustainable settlements.

When she arrived in Nepal, Devi Maya couldn't continue her studies due to her family's lack of finances. During her initial days in the refugee camp, she stayed alone inside her family's hut and never talked to other people.

"I was disabled. On top of that, I cursed myself for being a refugee," she recalled. As time passed, Devi Maya felt that rather than spending time complaining about life, she should try to find solutions.

With support from her family, Devi Maya was soon able to break people's stereotypes of what a person with disabilities could and couldn't do. A few months after her

arrival, she became a volunteer teacher for an adult literacy programme for refugees. Later, she worked as a primary school teacher at a childcare centre.

When she joined BRAD, there were few opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate in and contribute to life in the camps. Gradually, Devi Maya started working on empowering them and mitigating the social stigma towards persons with disabilities within families and the wider camp community.

She also started receiving training on SGBV, psycho-social issues and self-defence. The trainings boosted her confidence and increased her knowledge on how to handle disability and gender-based violence issues.

Today, in her current role with BRAD, Devi Maya trains refugees on SGBV sensitization, prevention and response. She also coordinates with other community-based organizations working on SGBV and child protection, as well as with local government authorities on the protection issues facing vulnerable persons.

"During early days, refugees with disabilities faced domestic and sexual violence. They were neglected by their own family members, so you can imagine how hard it would be

for them in a community," said the mother of two.

"If you continue to do hard work, you get dividends in different forms. It is not just about earning money."

Because of her active approach and her dedication to serving the community, BRAD has become an established name among local authorities and partner agencies. Recently, she also had the opportunity to participate in the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection, organized by UNHCR. She described it as one of the best moments of her life.

"If you continue to do hard work, you get dividends in different forms. It is not just about earning money," the 48-year-old explained. "It makes you happy when you are acknowledged. It feels so good that I have been able to contribute something to the community."

In her community, she is leaving no stones unturned in her campaign for increased opportunities for refugees with disabilities, as well as their inclusion in community programmes. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this has been more important than ever.

Under her leadership, BRAD has been conducting activities to ensure that refugees with disabilities are not forgotten in the response to COVID-19. This has included advocating and coordinating with the camp management committees and agencies for disability-friendly spaces, repairing huts of persons with disabilities, and coordinating with medical officers to prioritize persons with disabilities in the hospitals.

"COVID-19 has shown us how important it is to work together and to be a part of an inclusive society," she said.



## Raising the call for allyship

Through a series of virtual events, UNICEF has been calling on everyone to reimagine better future for every child – one where mental health support is available to young people and the rights and aspirations of children with disabilities are accounted for

At a time when schools are closed and mobility restricted because of the COVID-19 pandemic, children around the country are not only missing out on education but also other key moments and milestones in their lives. Indeed, many studies have shown that the crisis is already leaving deep and lasting scars on young people and could cause a huge mental health crisis among children.

Keeping in mind these serious challenges and recognizing the importance of talking about and tackling the stigma surrounding mental health, UNICEF Nepal launched a new campaign titled #MaChhuNi or “I’m here for you” as part of the World Children’s Day virtual celebrations on 20 November 2020. The campaign seeks to shed a light on the need for more conversations and allyship on the subject of mental health by harnessing young people’s voices and creativity, as well as the pull of influencers.

All three segments of the virtual event were led and facilitated by young people – including UN Trainees – starting with a Children’s Parliamentarian session/interaction

with policymakers, which allowed children to put forth their concerns and demand commitment on issues that matter to them. This was followed by a showcasing of films made by young people centred on mental health, as well as readalouds and poetry. The final session brought in several influencers – including Miss Nepal 2013 Ishani Shrestha, singer-songwriter Trishala Gurung and the Vagina Monologues Alumni team – together with young musicians to officially launch the #MaChhuNi campaign and push for more support around mental health needs.

Then, marking the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December, UNICEF made another call for allyship and support, this time for children of disabilities, who have been among those hit hardest by the pandemic. The virtual event began with an appearance by Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who shared his family’s journey and his own experiences and insights as a father of a child with cerebral palsy.

“What else can be more satisfying than the happiness, expressed or unexpressed, of the children as a result of our love and protection for them?” Mr Gyawali said while providing tips to the parents of children with disabilities.

This was followed by a lively discussion between activist Sarita Lamichhane, local government representative Rupa Thapa and journalist Tikaram Ghimire on the urgency of prioritizing accessible communication and infrastructure for persons with disabilities. The event ended with a talent showcase, featuring musical performances by children with disabilities from different parts of the country.

# A rural farmer's inspirational journey to becoming a respected leader



*Roshani at her village.*

*Photo courtesy Roshani Kumari Chaudhary*



*Roshani lights a candle at a local community function with local community leaders*

*Photo courtesy Nikesh Tripathi*

— Sumiran Shrestha

**R**oshani Kumari Chaudhary is an inspiration to many in her village. For someone who made ends meet by working as a farmer and cooking meals for passersby sitting on a mud coated floor of a bamboo hut, she has certainly come a long way. She is now a community leader who commands respect and influence in her Municipality. She proudly shares, “I am now the Chairperson of a Jaldevi Women Farmer Group, a social activist and a member of the health community in my Municipality. I have even contested the local ward elections.”

35-year-old Roshani is married to a primary school teacher. She is also a mother of four children currently residing in Pipravita village, Barahathawa Municipality of Sarlahi district in Province 2. A farmer by profession, Roshani wanted to move ahead in life and help her family access a more comfortable life.

She was delighted when she heard that leadership trainings would soon be made available by Equal Access International, a partner of UN Women under the Joint Programme “Accelerating Progress Toward the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Nepal: A Joint Pilot Contributing to Implementation of the Agriculture Development Strategy (ADS) in Nepal” (JP RWEE). Along with like-minded women farmers, she participated in the training to increase knowledge on life and leadership skills. Delivered through six weekly sessions, the training covered topics such as meaningful citizen engagement, coalition building, women’s rights, negotiation skills and local level advocacy, issues including women’s economic empowerment, and women’s leadership roles. Roshani says that these weekly sessions have played a significant role in improving the lives of women farmers who attended the training including herself. She adds, “The knowledge and skills that I have gained from these training sessions have helped me overcome challenges in public speaking and negotiations. Most importantly, it has helped me

raise my voice, speak up for my rights and do so for others as well.”

An earlier training on production of off-season vegetable cultivation was conducted to improve the economic status of women farmers under the same JP RWEE programme had introduced Roshani with women from the farming community. With newfound skills from the comprehensive leadership training, Roshani led these women farmers to successfully register themselves as the Jaldevi Women Farmer Group. She remarks, “We had to have several meetings with the ward office and Municipality to get ourselves registered. To add to my happiness, I was even appointed as the Chairperson.” Roshani did not have to wait too long to continue utilizing her training for good causes such as helping mediate concerns in community, including around domestic violence at the request of fellow community members. “The JP RWEE programme has enabled four UN agencies to come together and provide timely and relevant



solutions in a holistic manner to rural women like Roshani. This has proved to be a boon for them,” says Rachana Bhattarai, Programme Officer at UN Women Nepal.

In early March, when Roshani heard of the COVID-19 outbreak in Nepal, she wondered if she should stay home or help the community. Having joined the health committee prior to the nationwide lockdown imposed by the Government, Roshani says, “Had it not been for the leaderships training, I would not have become a member of the health committee. I really didn’t have the leadership skills nor the confidence.” She adds, “I responded by informing community members about the preventive measures established by the Municipality to contain COVID-19. I helped by placing soaps at public handwashing stations and contributed to relief efforts by

distributing masks and food items on behalf of the Municipality.”

Roshani shares that she has never felt prouder in her life. When asked about her plans for the future, she does not think twice and quickly quips, “I had contested the local elections earlier based on my learnings from the leadership training, but I wasn’t successful. I now plan to contend the elections again with proper planning so that I can serve my community.”

The Joint Programme “Accelerating Progress toward the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Nepal: A Joint Pilot Contributing to Implementation of the Agriculture Development Strategy (ADS) in Nepal” (JP RWEE) aims to secure rural women’s livelihoods and rights. The programme is a collaborative effort of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for

*Roshani cooked and sold food and farmed to make a living prior to gaining leadership skills*

*Photo courtesy Roshani Kumari Chaudhary*

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Agriculture Development (IFAD), United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). Funded by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund with support of the Kingdom of Norway and the Kingdom of Sweden, the joint programme is currently being implemented in Sarlahi and Rautahat districts of Province 2 under the leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD), Government of Nepal.

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# Post-Earthquake Recovery of Nepal's Cultural Heritage: Restoration of the Radha Krishna Temple in Kathmandu



*Caption: Radha Krishna temple after rebuilding.*

*Photo: UNESCO*

**U**NESCO, in collaboration with Nepal's Department of Archaeology, has completed the rebuilding of the shikhara-style Radha Krishna Temple located at the confluence of the holy Bagmati and Vishnumati rivers at Teku in Kathmandu.

To mark the completion, a Jeev Nyas Puja, a ritual to restore the divinity was organized on Thursday, 22 October 2020, in the presence of a minimum number of concerned stakeholders due to the current COVID-19 crisis.

The temple suffered massive structural damage during the 2015 earthquakes. The entire ground floor's brick walls collapsed, revealing the damaged structural

timber. Multiple peepal (*ficus religiosa*) plants growing in the temple also threatened the integrity of the structure. The daily puja of the temple had since stopped due to safety reasons.

Within the framework of the UNESCO-Hainan Province Cihang Foundation project for the 'Recovery and rehabilitation of cultural heritage in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal', the temple was successfully

shored up and braced, thus saved from the verge of collapse.

Once secured, UNESCO conducted an in-depth study of the temple, including detailed architectural documentation and damage assessment. The study revealed serious deterioration of the supporting timber frame in the super structure and cracks in the brick plinth walls. A detailed study of the previous restoration process and archaeological excavations helped in better understanding past interventions and the condition of its foundations. Based on the findings, a restoration plan was prepared.

The temple was carefully dismantled and systematically documented and rebuilt from the plinth. Each layer of exterior bricks of the tower structure were numbered and measured and were later replaced in their original positions. Artifacts, statues of the deities and the pinnacle were safely stored under the priest's care, and have now been re-installed, following rituals.

UNESCO prioritized the use of traditional materials in the rebuilding. A special traditional sealant called silay was used in the outer layer of the exposed brickwork, and wood and brick joints were recreated through consultations with local experts and sample testing. In addition, to ensure quality construction, an on-the-job training workshop was conducted at the site with the masons and contractor on the proper preparation, handling and caring of the lime surkhi (brick-dust) mortar mix.



*A group snapshot of the participants and the organization after the completion of the interactive session on KoboToolbox*

*Photo: UNV*

## Orientation on KoboToolbox to inform youths of Gandaki Province on humanitarian crises survey

October 22, 2020 —

**A**n interactive orientation on KoboToolbox was conducted in collaboration with United Nations Volunteers (UNV) Nepal and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Accelerator Lab Nepal.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been fatal to humans and in addition to the human toll of COVID-19, the pandemic has accelerated a global economic crisis. It has impacted both supply and demand sides of the economy, resulting in devastating impacts on jobs and livelihoods in the country, which needs an inclusive and innovative green economic recovery.

In addition to this, the strict lockdown measures that were vital to the health response resulted in immediate loss of revenue and jobs

in some sectors, namely, tourism and arts, entertainment, and recreation, and the pandemic has affected our lives at all levels.

It's necessary to identify the grass-root issues and come up with innovative solutions to intervene in the identified issues. To do so, UNDP Nepal's Accelerator Lab and UNDP HQ have come together to conduct a Digital Socio-Economic Impact Assessment in Gandaki Province of Nepal.

The collaboration has introduced the KoBoToolbox. It is a suite of tools for field data collection for use in challenging environments. The software works as an open-source. This mobile application is used mostly in humanitarian crises, as well as aid professionals and researchers working in developing countries.

Given Nepal's abundant youth force comprising 41% of the population, a strategy to mobilize and engage youths was put on the table to conduct a survey on Socio-Economic Impact Assessment in Gandaki Province. UNDP Nepal and UNV Nepal collaborated to enroll youths of Gandaki Province to participate in an orientation to familiarize them with KoBoToolbox. A total of 92 youths participated in this orientation which was led by the UNDP HQ team. The 92 participants came from diverse backgrounds and 11 districts of Gandaki Province. The organizers ensure inclusivity and 4 of the participants were youths living with disabilities. Although the orientation was targeted at young people, we had participants from beyond 30 years of age.

The session conveyed the information on the general objective of the survey, the principles of humanitarian data collection, and



*Happy faces of youth participants on their last training of cluster 1 of the UNlocking Skills*

*Photo: UNV*

the practical aspects of humanitarian data collection. The second part of the orientation stepped into the technical aspect and was more in-depth learning sharing on KoBo Toolbox. An overview of the mobile application was informed to the participants and a practical demonstration was showcased on data collection through the application.

For the way forward, UNDP Nepal is corresponding with the provincial government of Gandaki Province to conduct the Digital Socio-Economic Impact Assessment in Gandaki Province of Nepal.

#### The launch of Unlocking Skills

The COVID-19 is a unique, severe, and unprecedented health and economic crisis that is affecting life around the globe. The outbreak has disproportionately impacted the members of those social groups in the most vulnerable situations, including people living in poverty, persons with disabilities, youth, women and marginalised groups. Youth are also hampered because of this pandemic, because the universities and colleges are shut down, with limited movement and economic crisis, fewer employment

opportunities are available in the job market. Many young people need platforms to learn and acquire the skills required for remote working modality under the new normal.

In this context, providing young people with a package of necessary skills training will not only help them spend their time productively but also help them acquire competitive skills in the job market. Considering this situation, the UN agencies in Nepal have come up with 'UNlocking Skills'- the capacity strengthening training initiative for youth. This initiative provides a series of virtual training based on the needs assessment of the youth. The programme has been divided into 3 clusters and targets to deliver the training to around 50 youths (for each cluster) who are willing to pursue their career as a development practitioner.

On the month of November, the UN Youth Group (Lead agencies- UNDP, WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNV and UN Women) conducted launching event of UNlocking Skills programme. The program launch held on November 3, 2020 was a webinar that convened Mr. Richard Howard, UN Resident Coordinator a.i., representative from

National Youth Council, Ms. Chanda Thapa, Under Secretary and from youth organization, Ms. Riju Dhakal, President YUWA. Along with these guests, we had 70 participants that witness the launching program.

These 70 participants had undergone a selection procedure and comprises from diverse community. The UN Youth Group ensured inclusivity, providing opportunity to youths living with disability and LGBTIQ+ community. The participants over the month of November participated on 4 trainings namely- Concept Note/ Proposal Writing, Result-based Management, Monitoring and evaluation and Report/Success story writing.

The first cluster has been completed and the second cluster training is underway. With this initiative, total of 210 youths who aspire to be development practitioners will gain skills and tips required for this career.

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## I had My Say, Did you say? #UN75

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