

Business Case and Intervention Summary

Intervention Summary

Title: Women's Empowerment and the promotion of rights through capacity building of the Paralegal Committees.

What support will the UK provide?

Since 2010, the UK has been supporting the establishment of para-legal committees across Nepal. These committees were initially developed in response to the trafficking of women but they have now evolved into a community based mechanism for the prevention of and response to a much wider range of rights violations experienced by both women and children. Some of the most common issues that the committee members work on include domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape, trafficking, early marriage, witchcraft, property disputes and polygamy.

Through the programme, 4 major pillars of work are delivered:

1. Awareness raising/legal empowerment: ensuring that women and children know and understand the rights of women and children;
2. Early detection and protection of cases: this work identifies individuals at immediate risk of violence, and supports interventions to protect them.
3. Problem solving and referrals: identifying and supporting cases that need to be referred to informal or formal service providers, such as legal aid providers, the formal legal system and social services.
4. Monitoring, reporting and follow-up: keeping records of violence incidence and providing follow-up support to the survivors.

The programme has been implemented through a £6.51m grant to UNICEF which was due to end in August 2012. However, following an Annual review in 2012, DFID approved a no cost extension until August 2013. This extension period will see the programme scaled up nationally and will see it more closely integrated with the Government of Nepal's own Women's Development Programme. The transition will be led by the Department of Women and Children/Ministry of Women, Child and Social Welfare with technical assistance from UNICEF. The programme will be institutionalised under a new name: The Integrated Women's Development Program to Reduce Gender Based Violence through Women's Groups and Cooperatives.

Why is UK support required?

Women's empowerment and preventing violence against women and girls is a major concern in Nepal and a key priority for the UK. UK support is required to address the following specific issues:

High levels of violence against women and children: Data and evidence suggests that women and children are regularly victims of physical and psychological violence in their homes, schools and communities. For example:

- about 83 percent of children aged 2–14 years of the Mid and Far Western Regions are subjected to violent discipline (*Multi-Indicators Cluster Survey, UNICEF 2010*);
- 11,000 girls are engaged in commercial sexual exploitation in the Kathmandu valley alone (*Terre des Hommes, 2010*);
- and about 34% of women have experienced physical violence at some point since the age of 15 years (*Demographic Health Survey, 2011*).

Despite the number of severe instances of violence against women and children, cases are most probably under-reported.

Underlying causes of violence: The underlying cause of gender based violence towards women and children is gender inequality. This is further exacerbated by poverty, lack of awareness, patriarchal mind-sets and a culture of silence, impunity and a lack of recourse to the law. Harmful traditional practices also put women and girls at risks and expose them to multiple vulnerabilities - such as belief in witchcraft, *chhaupadi* (custom of physical isolation of women around the time of menstruation and childbirth) and *deuki* (buying and offering girls to temples, from where they often end up as sex workers). Difficulty in access to justice, lack of support for victims and lack of adequate social services (legal, health and psychosocial support) makes the situation worse for women and children.

What are the expected results?

The overall goal of the programme is to support para-legal committees to prevent and respond to violence, abuse, exploitation and discrimination against women and children. The programme will make a cross-cutting contribution to Nepal's achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The following are the expected results,:

- 19,500 para-legal committee members (95 per cent women) and 850 district resource group members trained in rights and empowerment will serve as catalyst/activists in all 75 districts of Nepal.
- 39,000 women and their families have cases (approximately 42,000 cases) resolved by para-legal committees.
- 8.5 million people in 1,300 VDCs (32.5 per cent of Nepal's total population), will be reached by PLCs, of whom approximately six million will be women and children.
- The number of districts with functional protection systems will increase from 23 to all 75 districts.
- The percentage of women experiencing gender-based violence will be halved by 2012.
- The PLCs members elected to local or national governance bodies will increase from 23% to 75% by 2012.

After the January 2012 Annual Review, following outputs were agreed upon:

For the output indicators, where expected results were set for August 2013 are:

- 156 (in 75 district) para-legal committees will be fully integrated into the Government Women's Development Programme.
- 250 District Women and Children Offices Staff trained on basic concepts of children and women's protection.
- 800 key service providers (e.g. public prosecutors, police officers, judges, chief district officers) who have received training on child and gender sensitive investigative and court procedures
- District legal aid committees formed and functioning in all districts, with National GBV monitoring systems in place.
- 1246 GBV watch groups formed and able to carry out awareness raising activities; 2340 GBV watch groups and leaders from the women's federation trained in protection issues.
- Comprehensive range of training resources produced for GBV watch groups federations and applied.
- 30 Child rights officers trained on child protection issues.