

Resilience for Peace in Gandaki Province of Nepal

Increasing sense of belonging and peaceful coexistence through psychosocial support for Victims of Torture

Social Relations

Connectedness/Focus on the common good

Positive Living Conditions

Social Cohesion in the Project Context

Context:

- Civil war (1996 – 2006)
- Commission formed to reconcile and offer reparations
- Not all missing and tortured people were identified
- Minimum reparations – no provision of mental health and psycho-social support (MHPSS)
- Child soldiers and families of the missing were ignored
- Civilians who supported the two opposing parties still have some conflict

Social Cohesion needs:

- Social Relations
- Connectedness/Focus on the common good
- Positive living conditions

Approach to Strengthening Social Cohesion

Focus on organising Victims of Torture (VoT) into registered Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) for interaction and exchange, providing psychosocial support, and lobbying for reparations and resolution of conflict within the community through:

- Monthly meetings of SHG at the district level
- MHPSS from peers and practitioners
- Facilitation of the process of registering CBOs
- Province-level meetings of CBOs with the participation of government representatives
- Province-level interaction programme focused on prevention and repairing of conflict factors and psycho-social issues
- Survey to identify psychosocial problems of VoT and sharing of the results with the government to advocate for the need of mental health services

Implemented by	Civil Peace Service (CPS) of GIZ
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project area	Nine out of eleven districts of Gandaki Province of Nepal (excluding Mustang and Manang)
Most relevant partners	Kopila Nepal
Target group	Victims of Torture during the civil war – Women affected by violence – Organised into Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) – Yatana Pidit Samaaj (YPS) – Victims of Torture (VoT) Society; Self-Help Groups (SHG) of VoT; KIDS (Kopila Independent Development Societies)
Overall term	08/2019 – 12/2019
Total budget	NPR 3,308,541 (ca. 24,000 EUR)
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Achievements and Impacts

- Participation of 180 people in SHG (61 Female, 119 Male) and 129 (88 Female, 41 Male) in province-level exchange programmes
- Exchange programmes allowed space for expression and mutual support and members who support opposing parties found ground for common work

YPS chairperson was sharing his experience with the members of VoT in an exposure and exchange visit activity at Nawalpur District



- New CBOs of VoT were registered in two districts (5 CBOs of VoT before the project)
- Earned the trust of CBO members. (Initially, there was the worry that this project would end abruptly like previous ones.)
- Survey to identify the psychosocial impact of the experience of torture gave a clearer understanding of the aspects to focus on when providing MHPSS
- Results of the survey were shared with the government for sensitisation on MHPSS
- Involvement of government representatives on province-level meeting was a good opportunity for lobbying on the issue

Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

- Involve government in meetings for effective coordination. Coordination with the government proved to be challenging due to their unwillingness for paying reparations and not taking the problems seriously.
- Focus on issues raised by the victims. The survey helped in focusing the attention on the compelling needs as perceived by VoT, instead of perceptions of professionals.
- Facilitate interaction and exchange on psychosocial challenges. This helped in resolving psychosocial difficulties on one hand and building more understanding among civilians who support opposing parties on the other hand.

How we measure

- The success of SHGs in which people discuss their psycho-social issues and offer mutual support is measured by monitoring the participation of people. It is difficult for people to come to the meetings due to the topography of the hill areas. Despite that, the big participation shows success.
- The impact of lobbying efforts is measured by monitoring the government's responses to the needs of CBOs.
- Perception of psycho-social issues among the VoT of SHG was measured by conducting a quantitative survey.

- The progress and benefit of the professional psycho-social support are measured by monitoring progress notes, but for the future, standardised tests will also be used.
- Qualitative data collection: the feedback of members is collected and analysed, and there is a great appreciation for the work of Kopila Nepal and the activities of this project.

Recommendations:

- Don't assume what the psychosocial needs of people are, as they can be very diverse. It is always better to ask them.
- Survey is an effective tool to determine the psychosocial needs of victims.
- Focus group discussions (FGD) is a good qualitative tool, as it uses an open space for participants to express their main concerns and their stand on their needs for resolution. It does not limit the focus to the pre-perceived ideas (even if informed).
- These tools help in tailoring interventions based on the main needs of people.

Available Documents

- A baseline survey of victims' perceptions on psycho-social needs among the VoT of the SHG in Gandaki Province (in Nepali and English language).

Tirtha B. Thapa was facilitating coordination & interaction activity among members of VoT & Government officers at Gorkha District



Junu Shrestha attended VoT-SHG meeting at Myagdi District

