Creating Safe Spaces for Victims of GBV in Nepal
Nepal
International House New York
Amay Yadav

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

TITLE: Creating Safe Spaces for Victims of GBV in Nepal PROPOSAL BY:
Amay Yadav

CONTEXT –

Nepal had a Civil War from 1996-2006. This civil war between government forces and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (CPN-M) claimed more than 13,000 lives and left at least 1,300 people missing. Until the 2006 peace agreement both government security forces and the Maoists were responsible for grave human rights abuses, including unlawful killings, torture, and enforced disappearances (Human Rights Watch).

Upon its end, an ethnic battle began between the Madhesis (locals) and Pahadis (hill elite from Kathmandu) in the Terai region. This has caused further disruption in the region and led to more instances of gender-based violence has taken place here since.

PROBLEM STATEMENT –

Gender based violence is ‘an assault on a person’s physical and mental integrity,’ and this ‘violence embodies the power imbalances inherent in a patriarchal setting’ (El Bushra, Piza Lopez 1993) It is rampant all over the world but it takes a vicious form during conflicts due to the impunity with which it can be done and how it used as a weapon to instil fear. Further, most times there is no acknowledgement of its occurrence.

Both security forces and Maoist combatants committed physical, verbal, and sexual violence. Members of the security forces raped and sexually abused female combatants after arrest, and targeted female relatives of Maoist suspects, or those they believed to be Maoist supporters because they provided food and shelter. Maoist combatants raped women who stood up to them and refused to support their party’s activities. (Human Rights Watch)

In Nepal, the official figures counted deaths, displacement but not GBV. The victims not only face these brutal atrocities but also cannot find justice once it has been done. There is official powerlessness foisted upon victims by state and society that shame the victim rather than persecute the perpetrator.

PROPOSAL –

We propose to train local women (trainees) to provide mental support to victims of GBV during the Civil War and the ethnic clashes that followed it. These trainees would provide safe spaces to these victims in their respective villages. The trainees will be trained in providing psychosocial support and providing safe spaces for victims to speak about their traumas. This will be based on the self-help groups model where the groups will function in full autonomy but with regularity based on their availability. This is important since the victims have never had a space to share their traumas for the fear of backlash and social ostracization. Many of them were underage when it happened and now are married with kids, and there is no one they can talk to despite suffering daily, both physically and mentally.

1. A Two-day workshop to-
   a. train 40 trainees in providing psychosocial support
   b. train them how to reach out
   c. provide them with requisite material and list of doctors

   B. Shadow our staff in conducting mock sessions

2. A Two-day sessions by trainees. They find victims, reach out to them and conduct group sessions.

3. Based on these sessions, the trainees will be assessed and provided feedback.
Upon completion, these trainees will run safe spaces in their villages with each group being from 5-20 women. This leads to around 500 direct beneficiaries and about 2000 indirect ones.

This will be conducted by Atoot, an organization Atoot works with over 200 girls and women between ages 5-35 years old in rural villages of Kapilvastu District, Terai Region, Nepal. Their programming works toward providing equal opportunity for girls who are discriminated against and have high chances of becoming a child bride or being trafficked. They use sports, social-emotional learning, and life skills workshops to empower these beneficiaries. They have extensive experience and networks in the local communities.

TEAM –

Amay Yadav
Coordinator of the Project.

Sarah van Vooren
A passionate feminist, Sarah Van Vooren has lived in India, Cambodia, Philippines, Haiti, Jordan, Kenya & Nepal the past seven years, working with & managing grassroots sport for development non-profits which use football & education to empower girls in rural communities of underdeveloped countries.

Mashreeb Aryal
Hailing from Nepal, Mashreeb Aryal has worked with girls and adults using sports, education, and narrative therapy throughout Nepal & India over the past seven years. With deep roots in Nepal, he founded Atoot to work toward his aim of empowering local girls using sports.

G. Sharanya Rao
A psychology and sociology major with Masters in Education. She has been working in rural India and Nepal for over 10 years.

IMPACT -

SHORT TERM – local victims of GBV are positively impacted. Apart from direct beneficiaries, there will be indirect ones, mainly those dealing with domestic violence and their children. Impact -
  a. Provide safe space
  b. Creation of support system
  c. Improvement in mental health

LONG TERM – This programming spreads to other areas and more victims feel empowered to come out. This will put pressure on government to provide required facilities and services for their benefit. With more involvement from men, this will lead to an open dialogue around sexual violence and mental health, eventually benefitting the whole community.
  a. Improvement in mental health
  b. Reduced instances of domestic violence
  c. Positive use of agency by women in household and in public life
  d. Positive outlook
  e. Increased confidence

INDICATORS -
- No. of women trained
- No. of hours of practice under supervision
- Successful conduction of workshops by trainees
- No. of self-help groups started
- No. of safe spaces created