



2021

ANNUAL REPORT



Breaking The Silence

Aawaaj- Breaking the Silence
Birendranagar-8, Aawaschhetra, Surkhet
Karnali Province, Nepal
www.aawaaj.org.np

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword from our President	1
1. Who we are	2
1.1 Our Vision	3
1.2 Our Mission	3
2. Services provided by Aawaaj	4
3. Our target beneficiaries	5
4. Our Program focus	6
5. Major achievements of 2021	7
5.1 Summary of reported forms of violence in Aawaaj in 2021	7
5.2 Survivors of violence by ethnicity and gender	8
5.3 Types of services provided in 2021	9
5.4 Services provided through 1098 helpline in 2021	10
5.5 Achievements in curbing Early Child Marriage and Violence against Women and Children	11
6. Summary of projects in 2021	12
6.1 Empowering Stakeholders, Raising Awareness and Protecting Children from Early and Forced Marriage in (mid-west) Nepal (SANKALPA)	12
6.1.1 Brief introduction of the project	12
6.1.2 Expected results of the project	12
6.1.3 Immediate outcomes in 2021	13
6.2 Strengthening the child helpline 1098 and Psychosocial Support (PSS) to Karnali Province	13
6.2.1 Brief introduction of the project	13
6.2.2 Expected results of the project	13
6.2.3 Immediate outcomes in 2021	14
6.3 Alliance Formation and Situational Analysis to Address Early Child Marriage in Karnali province	14
6.3.1 Brief introduction of the project	14
6.3.2 Expected results of the project	14
6.3.3 Immediate outcomes in 2021	15
6.4 Empowering women and children, especially girls to secure their rights and access services in 11 wards Panchapuri municipality of Surkhet of Nepal	15
6.4.1 Brief introduction of the project	15
6.4.2 Expected results of the project	15
6.4.3 Immediate outcomes in 2021	15
6.5 Preventing and Responding to Child Marriage and Early unions in Surkhet, Birendranagar	16
6.5.1 Brief introduction of the project	16
6.5.2 Expected results of the project	16
6.5.3 Immediate outcomes in 2021	16
7. Major challenges and learnings of the year	18
7.1 Challenges	18
7.2 Learnings	18

8. What lies ahead	20
9. Some stories to share	21
9.1 Meena- Story of Homelessness	21
9.2 Yasudha- A school dropput	22
9.3 Hardworking Parbati into goat rearing	23
9.4 Got betrayed by someone she trusted	24
9.5 Early marriage, lifetime regret	25
9.6 Enduring violence for family reputation	25

FOREWORD FROM PRESIDENT

Aawaaj was established in 1999 with joint initiatives of professionals with strong hope to demonstrate capacity against violence and discrimination of women in Karnali Province. Aawaaj has strong presence in Mid-West and registered in district administration office, Surkhet with registration number: 180-056-057 and PAN number is 301819051. We are also affiliated to the Social Welfare Council (SWC) and its number is 13616.



Over the years since developing the Aawaaj which is already 23 years, I have been heartened to see the steady successes of our work toward rights for women and children in holistic way.

We have capacity for a social change. Staffs are very competent to build, maintain networks and to work in collaboration with government authorities, local groups and communities. Aawaaj has always been mainstreaming gender equality and social inclusion in its programs keep gender disaggregated data of our beneficiaries and stakeholders. Our organization team has been led by the representation of women, (90%) and 10 % are men.

Community groups are coming together at local levels to address all forms of gender based violence, social taboos on sexual and reproductive health, STI, discrimination, child sexual abuse and strengthening education system at local level. Aawaaj efforts made a huge difference in the lives of children and women by mobilizing and activating the existing forums, local government, and through effective networking. Social mobilization has been proven an effective vehicle to prompt action and to establish social respect and dignity for the children and women.

Despite Covid -19 challenges; *we did humanitarian support to our beneficiaries in Surkhet, Dailkeh, Bardiya and Kathmandu.* There are other great challenges to meet the increasing demand to respond services with limited resources. We urge all the partners to allocate more resources to access justice at grassroots level in Karnali Province, Lumbini Province and seek commitment of concern authorities to ensure that program results will be sustained for children, youth and women.

It is crucial to acknowledge and be grateful to all international, national and local partners, individuals, volunteers, executive board members, dedicated staff, and general members who supported Aawaaj from the beginning and stand for your solidarity.

Thank you for making a generous year- 2021. Your small support allow us to reach more and for a better and safer future. Hope we learn to grow in strength, resilience, and collectiveness in the year ahead.

With warm wishes and much appreciation.



Irada Gautam
President, Aawaaj

1. WHO WE ARE

Aawaaj was established in 1999 by the Irada Gautam who is the founder chair with joint initiatives of professionals with strong hope to demonstrate capacity against violence and discrimination of women in Midwest, Nepal.

We have strong presence in Mid-West and registered in district administration office, Surkhet with registration number: 180-056-057 (PAN number is 301819051). We are also affiliated to the Social Welfare Council (SWC) and its number is 13616.

It has been addressing all forms of gender based violence through social mobilization, campaigning, establishing community support mechanism, lobbying, advocacy, networking, training, income generation, community mediation, psychosocial counseling services, educational support and operating temporary crisis shelter for severe degree of GBV victims.

We are working with boys and men along with girls and women to prepare better manhood and socialized against such wrong behavior as problems of violence that mostly comes from boys and men at large. It focused on three important aspects of human rights "Safe, Strong and Free." Everyone has these rights and they are indispensable for human life. The basic and the most effective tricky ways of protecting rights are "Say No"; "Go Away" and "Talk to someone". CRC and CEDAW are the guiding principles of Aawaaj for the policies, practices and programs related to fight against the violence.

We are the voices of those women and children who are living with violence, vulnerability and at risk, and who have no access in social and legal justice. We use the concept of resilience to open new paths for the prevention and response against violence and discrimination. Girls and women when faced devastating trauma and adversity how they are able to develop their inner capacity in a harmonious and positive way? This question is at the starting point of work. We facilitate Rural Communities to Combat the Violence and Discrimination of Children and Women. Despite all adversities children and women didn't lose hopes and started fighting with the abuse, violence, discrimination and exploitation. Till date, more than 500 change makers are actively involved in helping others at community.

We have developed a very good relationship with the local stakeholders since last 23 years. The active participation and networking of local groups, stakeholders, and communities are consulted and take consensus before doing any program. These groups are strengthened and their interest are respected and ensured the smooth running of program. We are sensitive with vulnerable group and seek the values of their participation throughout the process while at the same time explain the benefit for them.

The focus will be brought back to the main issue of violence free society where children, girls and women feel peace through positive dialogue with province and local government, police authorities, National child welfare council, health personnel, legal authorities, municipal body, , political leaders and teachers in non-violent way.

We have the capacity for a social change. Staffs are competent to build, maintain networks and to work in collaboration with government authorities, local groups and communities. We have always been mainstreaming gender equality and social inclusion in its programs keep gender disaggregated data of our beneficiaries and stakeholders. Our organization team has been led by the representation of women, (90%) and 10 % is men.

At Karnali Province; we are coordinating women human rights defenders, also played secretarial role for 2nd election of constitutional assembly in Surkhet, and we are members of various human rights alliances. At national level, we are member of national child protection alliance, AATWIN, Women security pressure group.

At regional level; we are member of we can campaign of south Asia and globally, Aawaaj is also member of global alliance against trafficking and network member of child sexual abuse.

The decision around strategy and program development is the product of beneficiaries, stakeholders and actually reflected by social audit, general assembly, monitoring visit and program evaluation. Aawaaj acts merely as a facilitator in the process of project implementation and developing the capacity in the management of violence at all levels to effectively monitor and manage the violence (not only identifying cases). We believe that every member of community can be an active change agent in process and encourage them to fulfill their responsibilities on social issues.

We have been focused on education, health, child rights, women rights, child protection, and livelihoods through community empowerment programs. Aawaaj mobilize communities to ensure access justice, and quality of services in package i.e. health, education, and livelihoods. Likewise, Aawaaj ensure that children and women are protected against all forms of discrimination, violence, abuse and harmful practices by creating awareness, strengthening systems and mechanisms at the community level, district level and do advocacy for better policies to protect child rights and women rights.

1.1 Our Vision

Our Vision is a world of hope, resilience and social justice where all people live in dignity and security.

We seek an end to all forms of violence against women and children caused by unjust social, political and economic conditions. The work of Aawaaj and its partners will lead to gender equity and sustainable development, fulfilling the rights and improving the lives of poor, vulnerable and socially excluded groups.

1.2 Our Mission

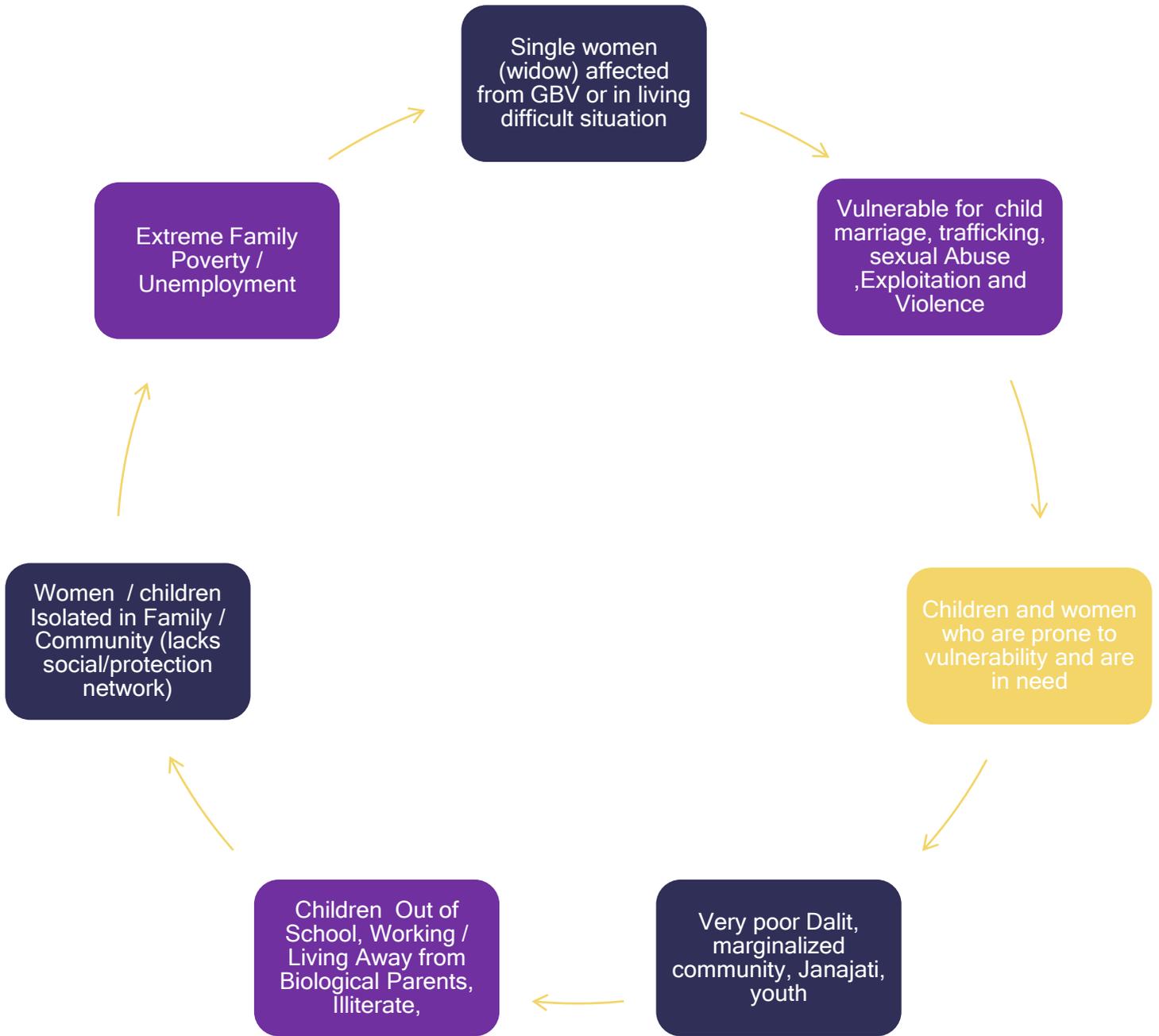
Our Mission is to eradicate all forms sexual, domestic and conflict-based violence through the process of empowerment.

Our work will contribute towards creating an enabling environment through establishing community support mechanisms addressing violence against children and women. We bring about lasting change through a participatory process involving the active contributions of men and women, children, families, teachers, local leaders, existing community groups, the government and local NGOs, and especially survivors of sexual exploitation in all phases of our work.

2. SERVICES PROVIDED BY AAWAAJ



3. OUR TARGET BENEFICIARIES



4. OUR PROGRAM FOCUS

Aawaaj Focused Program

Breaking the silence on sexual abuse and exploitation through social mobilization (working with children, youth and women network)

Establish community support mechanism (CSM) against gender based violence of children and women, working with community groups

Vocational Training, economic empowerment and Micro enterpreneureship program for marginalised community

Child Protection- Child help line, Child friendly space (Interim Care, fostering, Social Integration of Children, Play acitvities with children, access health and education)

Temporary emergency shelter support and social integration for women and children that faced violence, abuse and exploitation

Community and family mediation for the minor degree of violence

Counseling, Care and Emergency shelter support (psychosocial, legal, medical, education and economic support)

Advocacy and Campaigning against gender based violence, corporal punishment, child marriage and trafficking

Facilitation of local governence

5. MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS OF 2021

5.1 Summary of reported forms of violence in Aawaaj in 2021

SN	Forms of Violence	Number of cases
1	Rape	18
2	Domestic Violence/Evicted	122
3	Sexual assault/ Attempt to Rape	9
4	Stranded/missing	49
5	Denial of resources/opportunity	14
6	Psychological/emotional abuse	114
7	Beating	51
8	Divorce/Divorce with property rights	17
9	Early child marriage	39
10	Human trafficking	6
11	Cyber Crime	2
12	Polygamy	23
13	Poor financial condition including GBV	58
14	Separated From Mother	7
15	Suicide Attempt	2
16	Without Guardian	34
17	Without Father	14
18	Without Mother	5
19	Blamed for Witchcraft	3
20	Suffering by Covid	9
21	Accident/Drug abuse Including GBV	3
Total		599

5.2 Survivors of violence by ethnicity and gender

Dalit	Women	84
	Boys	57
	Girls	108
	Total	249
Janjati	Women	49
	Boys	20
	Girls	24
	Total	93
Others	Women	133
	Boys	47
	Girls	77
	Total	257
Total	Women	266
	Boys	124
	Girls	209
	Grand Total	599

5.3 Types of services provided in 2021

SN	Support	Women	Boys	Girls	Total
1	Psychosocial counseling Face to face	266	28	65	359
2	Family Counseling	70	17	32	119
3	Mediation	59	1	3	63
4	Medical support	13	7	14	34
5	Transportation support	17	9	15	41
6	Legal Support	46		9	55
7	Shelter Support	138	66	117	321
8	Case preparation (Application writing)	90		9	99
9	Referral to Aawaaj	53	29	50	132
10	Referred by Aawaaj	66	14	38	118
11	Reintegration	138	63	114	315
12	Scholarship		18	33	51
13	Economic Support	29		4	33
14	Relief Package support	12	14	21	47
15	Health kit support	36	11	17	64

5.4 Services provided through 1098 helpline in 2021

SN	Services	Boys	Girls	Total
1	Personal Profile prepared	124	209	333
2	Call by children and parents for service	328	691	1019
3	Telephone counseling	189	292	481
4	Family consultation	155	216	371
5	Primary Health service	11	19	30
6	Rescue and re-habitation using ambulance or other modes of transportation	9	15	24
7	Emergency of children hazardous situation	53	97	150
8	Aid provided for emergency rescue during hazardous situation	53	97	150
9	family reunion, reintegration and re-habitation after emergency rescue from hazardous situation	63	114	177
10	Family reunion, reintegration and re-habitation of lost	15	18	33
11	family reunion, reintegration and re-habitation of children found unaided	1	2	3
12	Conservation of emergency shelter home	33	69	102
13	Field visit and follow-up	19	54	73
14	legal services	0	9	9
15	Education support	18	33	51
16	Rescue and restoration of street children	0	1	1
17	Rescue and restoration of child labors	0	0	0
18	rescue and restoration of trafficked children	0	2	2
Grand Total		3009		

5.5 Achievements in curbing Early Child Marriage and Violence against Women and Children

- Birth certificates are checked and verified before conducting marriage ceremony in Surkhet and Bardiya districts.
- Reporting of ECM and other forms of violence against women and children have increased in Surkhet and Bardiya
- 45 episodes of Radio program *Sankalpa* broadcasted through 11 different FM station of Karnali province and *Lumbini* province with the collaboration of ministry of social development, Karnali province.
- Situational analysis of Early Child Marriages conducted in 10 districts of Karnali Province
- In Karnali province, a province level “Campaign against Child Marriage” alliance formed, Aawaaj is coordinator of the alliance.
- There has been an increase in case reporting rates at local police stations as Social Mobilizer in the community discuss GBV incidents such as Child Marriage, Chhaupadi Practices, and Domestic Violence. The local police have been informing the Social Mobilizers and network representatives to facilitate the GBV incidents from the community.

6. SUMMARY OF PROJECTS IN 2021

SN	Project's Name	Funding Partner
1	Empowering Stakeholders, Raising Awareness and Protecting Children from Early and Forced Marriage in (mid-west) Nepal (SANKALPA)	ECPAT Luxembourg
2	Strengthening the child helpline 1098 and Psychosocial Support to Karnali Province	UNICEF
3	Alliance Formation and Situational Analysis to Address Early Child Marriage in Karnali province	Fasten Action
4	Empowering women and children, especially girls to secure their rights and access services in 11 wards of Surkhet of Nepal	TDH- Germany
5	Preventing and Responding to Child Marriage and Early unions in Surkhet, Birendranagar	Girls First Fund

6.1 Empowering Stakeholders, Raising Awareness and Protecting Children from Early and Forced Marriage in (mid-west) Nepal (SANKALPA)

6.1.1 Brief introduction of the project

SANKALPA project aims to reduce incidences of early and forced child marriages in rural and marginalized communities of Mid- Western Nepal. The project is funded by Ecpat Luxemburg. Project is being implemented in Dullu municipality and Badhaiyataal Rural municipality of Karnali province as well as Bardiya of Lumbini province.

Key beneficiaries of this project are:

- Students and Parents
- Brother, Youth and Survivor groups of child marriage
- VCPC/ WCPC (Child Protection Committees at different levels)
- Children and parents of Child Friendly Space (CFS)
- Children out of school
- Vulnerable children from Child Labor, Child marriage, trafficking and sexual abuse.

6.1.2 Expected results of the project

1. Key stakeholders and target groups demonstrate positive knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding prevention, rescue, reporting and social reintegration of married children/girls
2. Local duty-bearers sensitized and responsive to the rights of survivors of abuse and exploitation and mobilized to strengthen existing structures, systems and activities to reduce child marriage, sexual abuse and exploitation
3. Capacity of stakeholders, target group and duty bearers strengthened

4. Vulnerability to early and forced marriage and sexual abuse among married girls and at-risk children reduced through social, educational, economic and emergency support
5. Evidence-based knowledge generated on early and forced marriage contributes to address Agenda 2030

6.1.3 Immediate outcomes in 2021

1. Priests (religious person) are conducting awareness campaign, program in community.
2. Children quality education has enhanced through running 11 CFS in Dailekh and Bardiya
3. Verifying birth certificate before conducting the marriage ceremony at both districts.
4. The survivors of Early Marriages are starting to speak out against perpetrators.
5. Reporting of ECM and other forms of violence against women and children have increased
6. 45 episodes of Radio program *Sankalpa* broadcasted through 11 different FM station of Karnali province and *Lumbini* province with the collaboration of ministry of social development, Karnali province.
7. Established community support mechanism, CSM working against child marriage in community.
8. In Karnali province a province level “Campaign against Child Marriage” alliance formed, Aawaaj is coordinator of the alliance.

6.2 Strengthening the child helpline 1098 and Psychosocial Support (PSS) to Karnali Province

6.2.1 Brief introduction of the project

Aawaaj is working on the project entitled “Strengthening Child Helpline 1098 and Psychosocial Support (PSS)” in Humla, Mugu, Rukum and Surkhet districts supported by UNICEF since December 2020. This project also aims to provide PSS to community people who are suffering from GBV including fear, stress, and anxiety by COVID-19 pandemic. The project mainly focuses on child protection and GBV services for the victim and vulnerable children and women such as rescue, reintegration, medical care, psychosocial counseling, school material support, emergency relief, family economic support both in development and humanitarian situation.

Aawaaj provides 24 child helpline (1098) services for those children who are vulnerable and those who need emergency support, counseling and coordinate with police and service providers.

6.2.2 Expected results of the project

1. Vulnerable children are protected from abuse, exploitation and trafficking as well as their rights are ensured
2. GBV is reduced in the target through increased reporting and survivors’ access to justice
3. Psychosocial, economic, legal, rescue and reintegration support is accessible to all children in need from the target area

6.2.3 Immediate outcomes in 2021

1. 1028 calls were received in Child Helpline from September 2021 to January 2022. Out of total 776 calls were done by women, 161 calls were done by men, 60 calls were done by girls and 31 calls were done by boys.
2. Total 860 personal profiles prepared of vulnerable, orphan, PWD and Dalit children among them 77 boys, 122 girls profile prepared by Surkhet district and remaining 351 boys and 310 girls profile prepared by Rukum, Kanchanpur and Jumla district.
3. 171 women and children received shelter service among them 75 women received shelter and counseling support. 37 boys and 59 girls received shelter service from September to Jan 2022.
4. 661 most vulnerable children identified for the case management process.
5. 120 children were referred to health support. 90 most vulnerable children got support NRs; 5000.00 (five thousand only) cash. Similarly, 571 of the most vulnerable children supported stationeries, cloths medical and food support. Furthermore, 365 orphans, separated and disabled and other vulnerable Dalit children received emergency support to reduce their immediate risk.
6. Aawaaj provided family counseling and meditation service to 20 families (cases of domestic violence).
7. Psychosocial counseling and first aid services provided 163 (153 female and 13 males including 32 children) women and children in Surkhet district from Sept 2021 to Jan 2022.
8. Carried out joint planning with Province and local govermet during the project period

6.3 Alliance Formation and Situational Analysis to Address Early Child Marriage in Karnali province

6.3.1 Brief introduction of the project

The “Situational Analysis and Alliance Formation to Address Early Child Marriage in Karnali Province” project was started from 15th April 2021 in Karnali Province by Aawaaj with the economic support of Fastentaken with the aim of to analyse the situation of early child marriage in Karnali province, and build alliance among concerned NGO/CBO stakeholders to work against child marriage. Due to report of situation analysis not completed, project period is extended for two more months till February, 2022.

Target groups/respondents of FGD, KII and IDI were accordingly

1. ECM survivor women and adolescence girls
2. Mother of ECM survivors
3. Adolescence and ECM survivor men, and
4. Civil society.

The report is in progress. The research team will start working on finale report after remarks of Aawaaj and Fastentaken

6.3.2 Expected results of the project

1. Understanding of Early Child Marriage in Karnali Province is enhanced
2. A Province level “Campaign against Child Marriage” alliance is formed.

6.3.3 Immediate outcomes in 2021

Outcome 1: The Situation analysis report of child marriage in Karnali is in final draft, and the document/information is used as key advocacy document.

Comprehensive and quality study report on situation analysis on ECM is finale. Which would me much fruitful to conduct advocacy activities to alliance. Guideline documents for I/NGOS/CBOs, local and province governments to plan, budget and proper implement.

Outcome 2: Formulation of a province level alliance to advocate against early child marriage in Karnali.

A “Campaign Against Child Marriage Alliance” alliance formed by NGOs of Karnali province who were working on child marriage and domestic violence issue to address child marriage. Panchtareyuba Sanrakshan Manch, SAC Nepal, FEDO-Surkhet, DDS, KRIDIRC, SOSEC, HURENDEC, Public Service Center, Himal Bikas Samaj, FEDO-Dolpa, Dalit Development Society, HURPLEX Nepal, INSEC, CAED and Aawaaj are the board member of the alliance. Alliance secretary is in Aawaaj Surkhet office. The alliance will be province level/district level. The alliance will conduct regular dialogue, discussion, interaction and advocacy with the state and local governments to ensure policy, plan and budget and its proper implementation. Also, it-self alliance organization will conduct mass awareness program on ECM.

6.4 Empowering women and children, especially girls to secure their rights and access services in 11 wards Panchapuri municipality of Surkhet of Nepal

6.4.1 Brief introduction of the project

The project is being implemented in 11 wards of Surkhet and is supported by TDH Germany.

6.4.2 Expected results of the project

1. Strengthened capacities of community effectively break away from gender barriers and cultural taboos
2. Survivors of Gender Based Violence develop resilience and confidence to seek services at the service providers in the community
3. Women, girls and survivors of GBV are economically and socially empowered.

6.4.3 Immediate outcomes in 2021

1. The target group, networks have said that at the ward level, they have got opportunities to organize youth days, Teej special programs, children's days, participate in competitions and share ideas.
2. The participant adolescents said that before the training they were unknown about this kind of valuable knowledge about life. But as they received 'life skills and self-defence training' they really realised that life can be made easier by choosing the best option by examining the problems as there are alternatives to the problems that come in life.
3. Adolescents and children in the group will have four stages of happy life; (i) education and skill development, (ii) employment and self-employment, (iii) love and (iv) marriage. So now the teenagers have realised that marriage comes only in the fourth stage where as there are three more stages to cover before the marriage stge.
4. Children's groups have been active on the radio in My Story (Juneli's story) on domestic violence, chhaupadi practices, child marriage, writing stories on reducing sexual violence,

recording plays, taking children's responses and rewarding good responses. After listening to the stories on the radio, the children of the children's groups have been discussing the issue with their school friends.

5. There has been an increase in case reporting rates at local police stations as Social Mobilizer in the community discuss GBV incidents such as Child Marriage, Chhaupadi Practices, and Domestic Violence. The local police have been informing the Social Mobilizers and network representatives to facilitate the GBV incidents from the community.
6. After the formation of the Gender Based Violence Management Committee at the municipal level, the committee will take initiative to run safe houses for the women affected by gender based violence with the help of the municipality.
7. The members of the children's group have made commitments such as not to have child marriage, not to be abused and not to be tolerated, and to call the child helpline 1098 if there is any problem. The children inform the social mobilizer and the ward office when they face any kind of problems and seek help.
8. In the month of November, programs like Global Action Month Rally, Graffiti, Corner Meeting, Painting Competition, Rhetoric Competition, Street Drama Performance were organized in all the wards of the municipality. Children said that they have got opportunities to participate in various programs and share their ideas.
9. Fathers, children without mothers, children who have dropped out of school are now going to school regularly after receiving educational assistance.

6.5 Preventing and Responding to Child Marriage and Early unions in Surkhet, Birendranagar

6.5.1 Brief introduction of the project

The project aims to strengthen the capacities of young girls to take leadership and end child marriage via educational, social and economic empowerment to vulnerable girls and their families, peers, survivors of early child marriage and improving their socio-economic situation. The most significant change that project wishes to bring are in individuals, community or institutional behaviors, policies or practices that address and/or prevent early child marriage.

Project is supported by Girls First Fund, USA

6.5.2 Expected results of the project

1. Key stakeholders demonstrate positive knowledge, attitudes and practices related to the prevention, reporting, rescue and reintegration of early child marriage survivors
2. Marginalized populations have reduced vulnerability to child marriage and sexual abuse via increased social, educational and economic resources
3. Rights-holders and their supporters are mobilized to strengthen existing structure, systems and activities to reduce child marriage sexual abuse and exploitation
4. Survivors of ECM have improved emotional, social, economic and family functioning
5. Local duty-bearers are sensitive and responsive to the rights of survivors of abuse and exploitation

6.5.3 Immediate outcomes in 2021

1. Key stakeholders and local government demonstrate positive knowledge, attitude and practices for prevention, rescue, reporting and social reintegration of girls of targeted area
2. Identification of community groups and their structures.
3. Reporting system has been developed at local level for ECM and all the problems related to girls comes under own tolls.
4. Identified vulnerable community and tool for group selection.
5. Stakeholders of ward toll association have demanded budget for the welfare of girls and for their present issues.

6. Religious person have started to ask their age, and even ask them to show citizenship while they are invited. By any chance if they found such age below 20 they are rejecting.
7. Reporting has been started from them as well.

7. MAJOR CHALLENGES AND LEARNINGS OF THE YEAR

7.1 Challenges

1. Political interference over access to justice
2. In relation to access justice there is state's apathy and inability to respond promptly and effectively to implement the laws is major cause
3. Target population's expectations do not match up, especially in a crisis situation - Poverty and unemployment is much higher.
4. Social acceptance of child marriage is still very high and it increased in the context of Covid -19;
5. Access prompt services from government is challenged due to long lockdown and no availability of elected person as most of time they are busy on political job than office
6. If it's reported Rape cases in the Helpline, family doesn't want to take legal action.
7. It's hard to reach the upper Karnali district (Humla ,Mugu,Jumla,Kalikot) for follow-up and monitoring because of geographic and economical aspects.
8. Due to the prohibitory orders issued by the District Administration Office during the pandemic, it was difficult to provide services directly to the recipients.
9. It's difficult to select children for education support due to limited support materials
10. Problem to follow-up of the survivors if they are out of the district client.
11. After certain days of shelter, clients don't even want to return to their homes.
12. There is a problem with providing service to victims and the vulnerable due to the large number of victims come at a time
13. At the COVID-19 pandemic time cases of domestic violence, child marriage, rape was increased.
14. Geographically and technically less developed province.
15. Access to internet and social media has dramatically increased in recent days and its impact on online abuse, violence and early child marriage.

7.2 Learnings

1. Psycho-social counseling at office is effective than counseling at community.
2. Whose issues, their leadership is need to change the human behavior.
3. Men are more interested to take session on legal provision than awareness session.
4. Cases of child marriage/polygamy can reduce if ward office make mandatory rules to take recommendation letter before marriage.
5. In response and campaign program work in coordination would be more fruitful.
6. Mobilized religious/community leaders in their own society to sensitize their community.
7. Communication and reporting should be done quickly and effectively with-in project team and related stakeholders.
8. In legal aid supporting process we have to take support of community people, NGOs, civil society and elected body.

9. At the pandemic/difficult situation project staffs could work from home/safe place but need to frequently monitor, communicate, motivate to project staffs.
10. Video documents are more effective and efficient to aware community people.
11. Need to conduct regular meetings with ward office and *Palika* level stakeholders to share project activities, progress and discussed over way forward.
12. Scholarship is more needed for teenager/ECM survivor.
13. It is easier to work while doing coordination and cooperation with the concerned stakeholder.
14. If women were financially strong, they would not have to be dependent.
15. During Covid-19, violence affected women and children living at home in lockdown felt lonely and they need more psychosocial counseling support. Counseling support to affected children and women had a positive impact even via telephone counselling.
16. Women and children affected by violence during the Covid- 19 pandemic faced financial crisis and Emergency relief fund helped to solve their problem immediately.

8. WHAT LIES AHEAD

- We will continue possible coordination and collaboration with respective local and provincial governments to sustain the sectoral results achieved.
- We will mainstream the key learnings into its regular program and other programs as per the situation and opportunities.
- We will take ideas of NGOs/INGOs, journalist related stakeholders and respect their ideas to formation of alliance working against child marriage, which will support to internalize the issue, will focus on advocacy activities.
- Publication of research books, training manuals and IEC materials.
- Capacity build-up of staff and organization.
- Close coordination with province level and local level governments and mainstreaming stakeholders.
- We will conduct activities as per situation, in pandemic will conduct through virtual and in formal situation will conduct through physical.
- We will use local resources to collect data/information as much as available.
- We will properly use lesson learnt, to accomplish our targets.
- **Child Participation** is key pillar of Aawaaj program. It has found that the participation of children and its mobilization to address the issues at grass root level has taken positively by all stakeholders and will be continued.
- **Community support Mechanism** - Men, women, social leaders, political leaders, school teachers, youths and children are the members of community support groups and they are representative of various groups existed in community and will be engaged at community. Build capacity of existing groups, Establish Support System, linkages with CSM, child group, Creating Conducive Environment through coordination and collaboration with authorities, civil society and various groups.
- **Child Friendly Space (CFS)**- Aawaaj is running Child Friendly Spaces in Surkhet, Dailkeh (Karnali province), province -5 Bardiya for the protection and care of vulnerable children. The CFS is a structured in safe place where children and youth meet their peers to play, learn competencies and skills to deal with the risks they face, be involved in some educational activities and relax in a safe place. It gives the children the sense of safety, structure and continuity that provides support. It gives them a sense of belongingness after having been displaced. It builds cohesion and a sense of community. Children who are from marginalized community used to come for tuition classes to improve the school performance and child friendly activities to build the confident.

Partnership and Sustainability

- Working on what local resources, skills is available at community for long-term emotional and social recovery to promote protection and survival, development rights and to restore dignity of survivors
- Work with authorities for justice, Application Assistance, friends for legal process, birth registration, lobby to compensate Half salary, food and fees for children education
- Support the strength of families, communities and work with survivors as per need

Figure: Child friendly space

9. SOME STORIES TO SHARE

9.1 Meena- Story of Homelessness

16 years Mina was born in Surkhet district, Panchapuri Municipality, Ward no.8. Currently she is living with her younger brother. Whereas her elder sister got married and is living at her own house at Bardiya.

When she was young her father used to go India, work over there and look after his family as well. Suddenly her father died of HIV/AIDS. After the death of father the condition of the house was worst. Her mother struggled hard to look after three children. Later on her mother got married with next person and went. Three children were left homeless as both parents were missing. They didn't have any relatives, so her elder sister tried a lot to find an orphanage organization which would help them for their study. Finally her elder sister was able to find (Mahaayan Monastery) Gumba in Kathmandu.



Mina and her younger brother were kept separately at Gumba. They studied there for 6 years. When they were at Gumba, they heard the news of their mother's death. Her mother also became the victim of HIV. When they heard the sad news they became sorrowful and left the Gumba. They returned back to their own house at Surkhet. Her elder sister used to take care of the house. After the death of their mother, they spent many nights by weeping. Their economic condition was worst, they don't have any relatives, no one was there to help them and even there were no any organization to help them. Their house was quite old so it was in a delicate condition.

Her sister started different works like goat rearing, making alcohol, domestic work, etc. to earn money. Her sister bought books and copies for Meena and her brother and admitted them at Shree Janajakt Adharabhut School. Meena and her brother started to read but the condition of the house was really worst. Later on her elder sister got married and went to Bardiya. They stayed in a hardship condition, they didn't have enough food to eat. They used to spend many nights remembering their mother and father. Afterward, Meena started several works like rearing goats, making alcohol, carrying sand and ballast, etc. from all these works she started to earn money and have enough expenses to read and eat. Her life is full of ups and downs. Sometimes she used to spend her days remembering her mother, father and sister. Society also doesn't care about them.

Aawaaj started to collect the name of the children who were suffering from certain kind of problems. It was collecting the names to establish Child Club in a community. They called her as well. She was selected as a secretary of that group. Meena regularly joined the meeting organized by the group where she used to take part in discussion as well. She got teenager self-defense training for five days. She said that she was really happy when she got shoes, socks, t-shirt and tracksuit at the training. The organization provided some relief items for the people who were suffering from problems. She also got some food items from that program. When she was in that club she got inform about child helpline number 1098. She had problem on buying pens and copies so she phoned at child helpline number 1098. Child Helpline provided her bag, pens, copies and a cloth to wear in winter season. Currently she is studying in grade 10 where as her brother is studying in grade 9. Meena said that she is interested in reading. She wanted to complete the level of 11 and 12. After completing 12 grade she wanted to learn some income generating skill and make her as well as her brother's life easier.

9.2 Yasudha- A school dropput

Surkhet District, Panchpuri Municipality, Ward No. 8, Dulalathai resident Yasudha B.K. is 15 years old. Her father Maniram B.K. is now 45 years old. From a very young age, her father was paralyzed and could not walk.

Yasudha's father can't even walk, so he sits in one place and beats the ballast. Yasudha's mother's name is Kalsara B.K. and she is now 40 years old. Even her mother's arms and legs do not move. The mother also sits with the father and beats the ballast. Her family's financial situation is very poor. There is no one to earn money in the house, they don't have land but they only have a small house. Yasudha has a sister and a brother. Her elder sister got married and went to her house, where as her brother is studying in class 5.



Yasudha dropped out the school due to poor financial condition of her house. As both her father and mother are disabled, they have made a disability allowance card. Yasuda's father gets Rs. 6,000 for 3 months and mother gets Rs. 12,000 for 3 months. From this allowance, the expenses of four families have been managed.

Despite of her interest and desire to study, Yasudha had to drop out of school due to her poor financial condition. Kalpana Nepali, the social director of Aawaaj was going from house to house to form a Children's club for the children who were affected by the problems in the community. Kalpana met Yasuda while she was going from house to house. Yasudha is also a member of the community children's club. She also attends club's meetings regularly. While sitting in the group, she got information about child help number 1098. She informed to child help number 1098 that she dropped school because she doesn't have any books and copies. The Child Helpline provided books, bags, copies, pens and the cloth to wear in winter. Now Yasudha has said that she will go to school.

9.3 Hardworking Parbati into goat rearing

Parbati Budhathoki was born in 2038 in Thadagaau. Currently she is living in Kanchanpur Municipality ward no. 1. She is the middle child of Gokul Barai (father) and Gautami Barai (mother). She got married at the age of 15 with Nagendra Budhathok at Kanchanpur Municipality 1. It was very difficult for her to do household activities. Because of early marriage she had to face a lot of problems and was difficult to run her house behavioral activities. The economic condition was very poor. Her husband used to go India in order to earn money instead of going school. After two years of marriage she gave a birth of a baby girl. She has 2 sons and 3 daughters but 2 of her daughter had got married.



She has 2 ropani (a unit of area) uncultivated land. The land is infertile so there is less production. In a same land they have a small hut. The economic condition was very poor, most of the time they didn't have food to eat instead of rice they sometimes eat hot plant (sisnu), githa and khole. Although her husband went to India to earn money but it was difficult for him to send money. Her husband used return back to his home with money from India but they had to pay interest of that money which they got as a loan. Sometimes it was difficult for her to get loan. The money which he earned in India was not enough for paying loan as well as interest. Lenders used to come and ask for money. If they didn't provide money to them then they started to do abuse. She was involved in a women committee named as Lanashil women committee which was established in her community by Aawaaj Organization in 2074.

She regularly attend the meeting held by the committee. In 2075, women committee recommended her name to Aawaaj for an Income Generating Activity (IGA) help in presence of elected ward representatives. The organization provided those 15,000 for goat farming. She bought 3 goats but they had to look after them for the whole day so both of them they did labor work and sold one ox and added two more goats. Each goats gave 2/2 he goat per year. She sold 2 male goat in 18,500 and two kids in 16,000. Presently she has 10 he goats and 10 she goats which are pregnant and total she has 20 goats. Her husband is also busy at doing labor work. She told that she is getting economic support (school fee of her children, health check, basic needs, etc.) by selling her goats. She is saving 300 rupees per month in women committee. According to her goats are very easy to sell at any time. Goat's dungs are good to make fertile land. She thanked to Aawaaj organization because it shows the way towards success.

9.4 Got betrayed by someone she trusted

Lila (pseudonym) was born in Surkhet district. She is the eldest daughter in the family and currently, she is 17 years old. She was studying in grade 11 in her own village. She went to her sister's/ brother in law's house to attend the marriage ceremony of her sister (uncle's daughter).

After the ceremony she went to Bardiya and again returned back to her sister's house. It was quite far to return back to her house so her brother in law planned to take her with him. On the way he told that he loved her a lot and he felt regret by marrying her sister. She was shocked at him and his behaviors. Again he told that he couldn't live without her and he took her in the middle of the jungle. As there were no one in the jungle, he took an advantage of it and raped her. He threaten that if she disclosed the matter he will kill her.



She was afraid of him so she didn't disclose the matter. But after two months later she knew that she was pregnant. She was afraid of it so she planned to go maternal uncle's house so that her family members would be unknown about the case. But her maternal aunt knew everything about it and immediately she informed her family members and her brother in law was inquired but he told that the grown up baby was not of him.

The girl and her father came in Aawaaj to get advice on law related to the case .Lila explained all the problems related to her to Aawaaj Organization. It was impossible for the abortion of 8 months baby which was grown up in her womb so she was forced to give a birth of a baby. After that she was kept in an emergency shelter home in Aawaaj and was given council on psychosocial and given free health services. Currently this issue is being investigated according to the law. She stayed in an emergency shelter home for a month and gave a birth of a baby boy. After that she spent more 10 days in the same home. After the improvement in her health she was resettled with her family. Right now she is living with her father, mother and a baby and waiting for the legal decision. Lila mentioned that she will never forget the help given by Aawaaj.

9.5 Early marriage, lifetime regret

Niruta Singh (name changed) is a resident of one of the villages in Surkhet. She shares how her life changed its trajectory after she eloped at the early age of 14.

“I was only 14 when I eloped with him. We lived in the same village and I fell in love when I was in school. I was studying in grade 8. We were of different castes. There was no way that our family would approve of our relationship. I eloped with him wishing for a happy life. I had to quit my studies. When our family came to know of our marriage, they reported to the district police. We were taken to the police quarter when it was agreed that I would be married to the same person after I reach the legal age for marriage. I was taken back to my maternal home”.

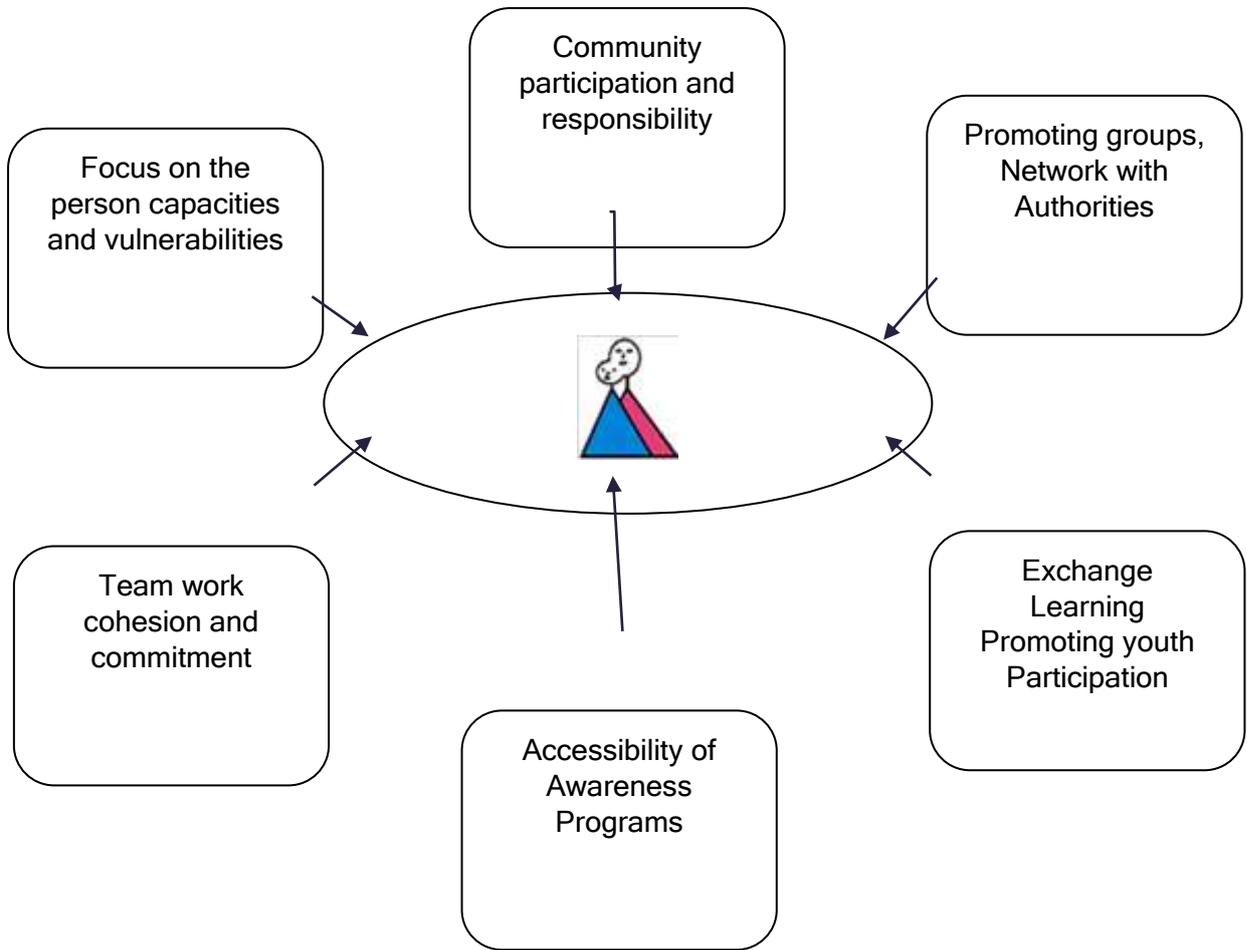
“One month after this, I ran from my home to be with my husband. I couldn’t resist the distance. When I reached his house, he was not there. He went to India in search of employment. His parents did not approve of me, neither did my maternal family after my second run-away. I had no one who would look after me. I did not hear from him for several months. Four months later, I married a soldier from the nearby village. I lost my first husband and love and respect from my family. An immature decision changed my life forever. I would have completed my schooling by now, which is something I regret forever”.

9.6 Enduring violence for family reputation

Sita Devi (name changed) from Jajarkot got married at an age of 18. Her father had to take loan for arranging dowry. For outsiders, it was a happy marriage.

She says, 'my in-laws were supportive of me. I could at least voice my concerns when it came to economic decision of the household. I thought I was blessed to have gotten married into such a family, until one day when my husband beat me when I went to visit my relative. I was totally unaware of his violent behavior until this day. Since then, he has shown erratic behavior. I have not talked to my in-laws about it. In front of my in-laws he is decent and does not curse or beat me, but there are times when he comes home and curses me for no reason. If I say I went out to fetch something from the market he shouts at me. I can smell alcohol when he shows such behavior. My father-in-law and mother-in law are unaware of his drinking behavior too. I don't know what I should do. I have only told my mother about this and she says it's wise not to share it with others; the family's name will be tainted and things like these usually happen between husband and wives.”

KEY ASPECTS FOR GOOD PRACTICES IN PROGRAMMING



Culture of Solidarity

Legal System is working

Community and Social Justice

