

Profile of Irada Gautam

With her passion to work for girls' and women's rights in rural Midwest area, she founded Aawaaj at province 6. She has a long history of affiliation (more than 27 years) with girls' and women's rights issues in Nepal. Irada was amazed to see the girl's skills and commitment to analyse their own situation critically and to seek support from the parents and community to reform the societal attitude towards girls in 2000. At later point the girls were able to develop their solidarity with parents and community as a whole to protect their safety and to gain the respect and dignity in society. In addition, with her support; the girls were engaged in advocating on security issues highlighting on the state role for establishing peace and security at national level.

Aawaaj means voice, Aawaaj organize and mobilize communities to give a voice to those affected by different kind of gender based violence. Aawaaj runs programs for creating knowledge and awareness to prevent violent acts and also for integrating the victims of gender based violence in the society.

Community support groups are established who act as a community based monitoring system against all kinds of gender and conflict based violence and promote peace in the families and communities. Aawaaj seeks gender and social inclusion approach in programming at institutional level to make sure that marginalized women, men, boys and girls have been equally benefitted.

Aawaaj facilitates peace building activities and promote culture of solidarity for social justice. More than 2000 women and girls have got safe shelter in Aawaaj shelters who are affected by severe forms of violence and needed immediate support for the protection and safety. She has been engaged in different occasions to promote women's and advocating on Aawaaj ground breaking work in local and national media in girls' rights, peace and security.

In the International Women's day honourable Peace Minister Ms. Satya Pahadi honoured Aawaaj for its outstanding work on gender and peace in rural

Midwestern Nepal. As a founder of Aawaaj Irada was also winner of Women deliver 50s for best ideas / solutions for girls and women in March 2012 (International award). Irada is honoured as 75 women leaders in country and her voice is broadcasted in national television in 2017. Also she was N-peace network nominee and role model for peace in 2012. As a president, she engaged on establishing joint solidarity for national level networking, and Aawaaj is a member organization for various women's network. One of the oldest networks on women's rights issues is National Women Security Pressure Group, in which 60 organizations are affiliated with in order to build advocacy, campaigning to amend the laws for protecting the rights of women and girls.

As a general secretary of Women Security Pressure Group (WSPG) for last 4 years, she cordially appeal to all institutions, organizations and individuals to join this common forum in order to organize the women's movement for the benefit of all and to fight for equality and justice for women in Nepal. Just before local election in Nepal in 2017; with her initiation number of political parties were engaged in dialogue to have 40 % women's candidature as per the constitution and accordingly women are elected in municipality and village committees that increased women in the decision making process. With her leadership; WSPG organized series of dialogue and delegation with top political parties, prime minister, country president, policy makers, parliamentarians, media people, hold press release, press conference and did continue lobbying, advocacy & campaigns to have gender friendly constitution. Through persistent advocating and lobbying for women's rights in Nepal, WSPG was successful in legalizing equal property rights of daughters to inherit parental property, as well as achieved citizenship rights in the mothers' name. A Women's Commission was also established as constitution body. WSPG also advocated for 50% participation of women in all level of decision making and achieved 33% in Constituent Assembly. WSPG also successfully pressurized the government body to make laws on Domestic Violence against Women (DVAW) Act.