***MEMORY, TRUTH & JUSTICE***

*“Often, our stories are simply lost to the passage of time, to the inevitable loss of those who lived through events that make our communities what they are.”*

***MEMORY, TRUTH & JUSTICE*** is a project to document, archive and share personal stories of survivors and families of the victims of the armed conflict in Nepal from 1996 - 2006. A multimedia project using audio, video and photo as a medium, the project seeks to preserve and dignify their memories by recording testimonies from survivors and families of the victims, and by sharing them with the community at large with a purpose of education and remembrance. By the conclusion of a year of the project, the project will document at least a hundred video testimonies with accompanying text and photo components, create a website to host these stories, and launch a series of events and exhibition for general public. Educational and advocacy materials will also be produced for students, advocates and researchers interested in the issue of transitional justice.

**RATIONALE**

The human toll of the armed conflict in Nepal between 1996 and 2006 was profound; over 17,000 people were killed, 1,400 disappeared and an estimated 20,000 tortured. Hundreds were raped and no Nepali spared from being affected by events. Since the end of the conflict, limited support has been provided to survivors and their families of the disappeared, much less account for the numerous human rights abuses.

Almost eight years passed before any transitional justice mechanism was formalized when the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Commission of Inquiry into Enforced Disappearances were legally mandated with Parliament passing of the TRC Act in April 25, 2014.

Today the long awaited Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Commission of Inquiry into Enforced Disappearances have not started their mandated work midway through their two-year terms. Even the passage of this Act constituted a hollow victory. In the lead up to passage a key opportunity to consult survivors, families of victims and key stakeholders was missed. Now, its truth seeking element is not structured to function pro-actively, for instance, its ‘application for inquiry’ places the burden on survivors and families of victim erecting barriers to participation.

The discourse around transitional justice in Nepal has approached memory, truth and justice in legalistic terms where the experiences of acute loss of individuals are often lost. Missing are the personal accounts of survivors and families of victims.

Local memory is crucial in acknowledging survivors and victim’s experiences in states where access to formal processes is poor. While nothing can be done to bring back those killed, documenting testimonies asserts the dignity of survivors and families of victim; it compels remembrance and prevents denial by providing first hand documentation. It is also a way of beginning to document an accurate account of the conflict and the experiences of those personally affected.

**STRATEGY AND ACTIVITIES**

***MEMORY, TRUTH & JUSTICE*** willrecord individual testimonials to create a rich personal history of the armed conflict, and to share these accounts using multimedia for historical record, education and advocacy. An accurate account must be created and the real cost of this period of conflict for victims, survivors and the society must not be forgotten.

Memory is critical to generating an accurate account of events on the path to achieving truth and justice. While nothing can be done to bring back those killed, documenting testimonies compels remembrance, asserts the dignity of survivors and prevents denial. ***MEMORY, TRUTH & JUSTICE*** will use audio, video and photo medium to record the memory to survivors and families of the victims and to share them with the community at large with a purpose of education and remembrance. Itwill critically engage with the Commissions and other stakeholders and advocate together with and in the interest of survivors. It will also raise the public profile of the issue and mobilize other actors to dedicate resources and advocate for a more victim-centric approach.

By the conclusion of the project, the project will document at least a hundred video testimonies with accompanying text and photo components, create website to host these stories, launch a series of events and exhibition for general public. Educational and advocacy materials will be produced for students, advocates and researchers interested in the issue of transitional justice. An outreach and education element is also envisaged to draw attention and raise awareness through a website with professional multimedia and public events for both short and long term impact.

Project phase 1: Production (June 2016 - June 2017)

Pre-Production (Research, initial interviews, networking, travelling), production (audio-visual documentation, consultations) and post-production (editing and final production)

The production phase of the project will involve video, audio and photo recording of individuals who are survivors or families of the victims of the conflict. The interviews will take place at their home or a location that is comfortable for them to speak about their experiences. The project seeks to capture a diversity of people and their experiences from diverse areas all over Nepal. A major part of the budget includes this travel cost as we proactively seek to include as many voices as possible. Individuals will only be asked to participate if they explicitly consent to being a part of the project and can choose any medium (audio, video, text) in which to record their testimony.

The outputs will be:

* Website with original audio, video, text as well as open source materials concerning TRC issues in Nepal, and where relevant third countries
  + Up to 100 video testimonials
  + Audio - podcast
  + Text pieces to accompany
  + Photographs - collages, portraits
  + Resources

Project phase 2: Outreach and Engagement (February 2017- December 2017)

The second phase of the project will focus on outreach and engagement with the purpose of education and advocacy through:

* Exhibitions and events in Nepal
* Publication of a report/book containing original testimonials in text and photos and stories concerning survivors of the conflict and the families of the victims
* Toolkit - with materials for press, students and NGOs

This is the first project of its kind in Nepal. There has been no record of stories of conflict victims. VOW Media will focus on the stories of women who have been affected by the war. The biggest causalities in war is often women and children in a community and thus recording and advocating the stories of their loss is imperative for a nation to be able to transition to peace and democracy.

We will be collaborating with National Alliance of Families of the Disappeared and Missing (NEFAD) and Conflict Victims Common Platform (CVCP). NEFAD is a network of district based associations of families of the missing and disappeared in Nepal. The national network aims to provide support, advocacy and relief for the families of the disappeared. It is rooted in the families themselves, both in informing the work of the network (what it does) and in who leads it (the representatives).

Conflict Victims’ Common Platform (CVCP), an alliance of 13 organisations representing the victims of the Maoist insurgency, has been working to demand retrospective law applicable to perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, torture and other crimes under international law.

**BUDGET**

We are requesting $ 75,000 to cover part of the costs during the production phase including:

* Research, Travel, interviewing, transcribing, writing, editing and printing
* Post-production and a launch event

See detailed budget attached.

**PEOPLE INVOLVED**

**Ram Kumar Bhandari** has led the struggle to secure justice for victims of Nepal’s conflict for over a decade. His involvement with the victims’ movement began when his own father was disappeared in 2001. He has helped to launch the National network of families of the disappeared (NEFAD), the Committee for Social Justice, the National Victims Alliance, and more recently the Conflict Victims Common Platform and the Hateymalo widows’ groups.

**Pooja Pant** filmmaker, photographer, women’s rights activist and media artist skilled in video and photography. She moved to The Netherlands in 2006 to pursue her passion for filmmaking, photography, media art and women’s rights activism. Currently she has returned home and is now based in Nepal. She founded and heads Voices of Women Media and Final Take Films.

**Dewan Rai** is a Senior Reporter and News Coordinator at The Kathmandu Post who has been covering human rights for the last 10 years, and transitional justice issues more recently.

**Indu Nepal** is a media-maker and technologist, with leadership roles in new media and technology programs in South and Southeast Asia. She was most recently Regional Director at EngageMedia where she designed tools and programs for equitable social change focusing on Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar and the Philippines. Prior to this, she worked with Internews in Afghanistan and Pakistan leading participatory media programs. Working at the intersection of social justice, technology design and media making, she is interested in the demystification and democratization of technology and media.

**Media Partner: Voices of Women Media**

**CONTACT**

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