**Concept Note for providing education support to former child laborers of Nepal**

***Context***

*Kamlaris* are former child laborers who worked as domestic helpers from early age of six up to their marriage for minimum remuneration. The child laborers used to work hard in return of the very small wage they or their families were receiving under harsh working condition. They were denied basic facilities like health, education, proper food and clothing. Kamlaris were mostly from Tharu communities (Tharus are an indigenous ethnic group residing in southern Tarai (plain) area of Nepal) as they were economically poor and their parents used to work as *Kamaiyas*, agrarian bonded laborers, for minimum wage.

Due to long struggle of CSOs working in child rights together with rescued and freed Kamlaris, who took over the street of Kathmandu in March 2013 in protest, led the government of Nepal to declare the end of Kamlari practice from June 2013. The former *Kamlaris* are being forced to work in the houses of rich people for earning bread and butter to their family even after they were freed. The family members could not send them to schools as they do not have money to cover their expenses. The government failed to bring livelihoods opportunities for former bonded laborers so that they can get some work to earn their livelihoods. As the families were struggling to meet two meals a day for their families, they could not think of educating their children.

The situation of orphaned former Kamlaris is more pathetic as they have to work for managing livelihoods. With long struggle of the communities, the government has been providing monthly payment of NPR 4,000 (approx. USD 40) to Kamlaris, who do not have parents and have to stay in hostels for their education, but the money is not sufficient for food and education. Although the education up to grade 10 is said to be free in public school but schools charge different fees like exam fees, educational development fees to the students to cover the funding gap by the government. Similarly, they do not have proper medical facilities when they are sick as they don’t have money to access medical facilities.

According to Human Rights Watch as many as 37 percent of girls in Nepal are married off before 18 and 10 percent of them are married by the age of 15. The situation of child marriage is high among Tharu communities as they used to get married after they dropped out from school. Youths are getting married at the early age due to influence of social media. They fall in love with outsiders at the early age through social media and got married. They are also experiencing teenage pregnancies. The divorce rate is also high among these groups.

In this context, there is a need of supporting former Kamlaris for their education and also raise awareness about child marriage and early pregnancies. This will support for improving health situation of such girls.

**Objectives of the action**

* To provide educational opportunities including technical education like health and agriculture professionals to former *Kamlaris*.
* To raise awareness about different social issues including child marriage and early pregnancies and engage former Kamlaris to improve the situation.

To establish medical emergency fund for supporting former Kamlaris for meeting health needs.

**Beneficiaries**

With this intervention, 73 former Kamlaaris staying in the *Lawajuni* (New Life) Hostel of western Dang district and 30 former Kamlaris of the same area, who are staying at their home but need educational support, will get education facilities including technical education in the field of health, agriculture and information and technology. This will enable them to continue their education and reduce the drop-out ratio. The intervention will raise awareness on social issues like child marriage and various social taboos like discrimination between boys and girls. This will help to reduce the child marriage. There is common belief among Tharu communities that girls should be married at the early age otherwise they will face problem to find suitable candidate for the marriage. Awareness raising initiatives are essential to reduce such taboos.

Providing technical knowledge will not only benefit them but the whole community will get advantage from their skills as they will be serving the community. If the target groups became successful they will act as a role model in their society thus motivating other youths to follow in their footsteps. This will also establish the precedent that if they are given opportunity they are equally capable for making change in the society.

**Cost Estimation**

The estimated cost of the project is USD 20,000. The cost will cover education material support to the rights groups, their annual cost and support for technical and vocational education to aspiring children. Similarly, the cost will also cover awareness raising initiatives at the community level.

**Activities**

* Provide educational support including technical and vocational education to former Kamlaris.
* Provide educational material like books and necessary stationaries support to the children for continuing their education.
* Formation or reinforcing child clubs to raise awareness at the local level and motivate children to continue their education.
* Raise awareness on social issues including child marriage and early pregnancies.
* Establish medical emergency fund for providing basic health services to former Kamlaris.

**Project Implementation and Reporting**

IM Swedish Development Partner will implement the project through its local Implementing Partner Society Welfare Action Nepal (SWAN) Nepal. IM will do regular monitoring and ensure all compliance related issues like reporting, monitoring and evaluation. As IM has been implementing program in these areas, this project will be implemented in close coordination with other stakeholders including the government authorities as all the interventions of IM are being done in close coordination with them.

**About the Organization**

IM Swedish Development Partner is a development organization fighting poverty and exclusion. The organization was founded in Sweden in 1938 and is currently working in thirteen countries worldwide. IM is the framework partner of Swedish International Development Agency (Sida),. IM work in Nepal focuses on sustainable development approach to contribute towards national priorities of poverty reduction and providing quality education. For this, IM has been working long-term with six development partners in Nawalparasi, Kapilvastu, Dang, Gorkha and Kathmandu.IM has also been working in collaboration with other networks and organizations on thematic issues such as education and empowerment of marginalized communities. Apart from financial support IM has been supporting its partner organizations for organizational capacity development.