

PROGRESS SUMMARY: Briefly provide details on the progress status of the project within 300 words.

The project undertook several activities aimed at addressing gender-based violence (GBV) and empowering women. One key initiative was an inception workshop titled "Prevention and Response to Gender Violence Society through Economic Empowerment of Women" held at Banepa Municipality. The workshop engaged stakeholders, including local leaders, financial institutions, and community groups, to discuss strengthening legal aid services, organizing awareness campaigns, promoting entrepreneurship, and forming Women Dialogue Groups (WDGs). The program sought to empower women legally and economically while addressing GBV, with a commitment to collaborate on program goals.

Legal support for GBV survivors was emphasized through an orientation program for WDGs. This initiative focused on raising awareness, creating safe spaces, and empowering women economically and socially. The program also addressed challenges such as societal stigma against advocates, resistance in conservative communities, and the reluctance of victims to voice their concerns.

A five-day training program on gender violence, women’s legal rights, and social justice equipped participants with the skills to raise awareness about GBV and provide legal assistance. The training enhanced participants' communication and advocacy skills while highlighting challenges like complex topics, resistance in communities, and societal stigma.

Economic empowerment activities included training on organic incense and leaf plate making, which provided women with practical skills to generate income and promote sustainability. The training focused on production techniques, business management, and market opportunities, enabling participants to reduce their vulnerability to GBV while improving livelihoods.

The advocacy and policy workshop brought together stakeholders, including parliament members, legal experts, and civil society leaders, to address GBV and promote women’s empowerment. The workshop emphasized collective responsibility, grassroots action, and robust legal frameworks as critical strategies. Across all activities, the project demonstrated the importance of community engagement, systemic support, and sustainable economic empowerment in creating a safer and more inclusive society for women.

PROJECT OVERVIEW: Please provide input on the completed & pending activities.

ACTIVITIES	DETAILS	STATUS
Building social capital against GBV- enhancing local women awareness by leveraging the capacity of groups.	<p>The project started with an inception meeting titled “<i>Prevention and Response to Gender Violence in Nepali Society through Economic Empowerment of Women</i>” at Banepa Municipality. The event was attended by 37 participants, including key stakeholders such as the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of Banepa Municipality, the Chairperson of the Banepa Network, news reporters, and representatives from financial organizations and community groups in Banepa.</p> <p>The program's primary goal is to empower women both legally and economically by enhancing access to legal services, developing livelihood support initiatives, and fostering a shift in societal values. Discussions during the meeting covered several critical topics, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening Legal Aid Services: Improving current legal aid mechanisms and fostering collaboration with local legal authorities. • Awareness and Training Initiatives: Organizing workshops on women’s rights, capacity-building training programs, and awareness campaigns against gender-based violence (GBV), leveraging social media influencers. • Economic Empowerment Activities: Promoting entrepreneurship opportunities and creating livelihood support systems. • Community Engagement: Establishing a Women Dialogue Group (WDG) and identifying Local Resource Persons (LRPs) to support and sustain the program's objectives. <p>The chief guest highlighted the pivotal role of education in empowering women economically and socially, emphasizing that women constitute more than half of the population in the community. This program seeks to address gender violence by equipping women with the necessary tools and resources to assert their rights and achieve independence.</p>	Completed

	<p>The meeting concluded with unanimous support from all participants, who expressed their strong commitment to collaborate and contribute to achieving the program's goals. This event marks an essential step toward creating a safer and more inclusive society in Banepa Municipality.</p>	
<p>Legal support to GBV survivors</p>	<p>WACN's Orientation Program for Women Dialogue Group (WDG) WACN conducted an orientation program for the Women Dialogue Group (WDG), aimed at fostering dialogue sessions to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in Nepalese society. The program also served as a platform to introduce upcoming training initiatives.</p> <p>Objectives of the Program The program sought to achieve the following:</p> <p>Addressing Gender Violence: Utilizing social capital to combat gender-based violence.</p> <p>Economic Empowerment: Equipping women with economic independence through livelihood programs.</p> <p>Skill Development: Offering training to enhance women's capabilities and self-reliance.</p> <p>Financial Support: Assisting women in accessing resources to improve their quality of life.</p> <p>Policy Advocacy: Facilitating stakeholder dialogues to influence gender violence-related policies.</p> <p>Awareness Campaigns: Disseminating information via radio jingles, social media platforms, and community workshops.</p> <p>Following roles were identified and agreed for by the members of Women Dialogue Group (WDG)</p> <p>Raising Awareness: Educating members and the community about violence against women, its prevention, and its impacts.</p> <p>Providing Support: Creating safe spaces for women to share experiences, seek emotional support, and access resources.</p> <p>Advocating for Change: Working as agents of change to ensure robust security and support systems for survivors while influencing policy reforms.</p> <p>Empowering Women: Building the knowledge, skills, and confidence of 60 women to help one another.</p> <p>Regular Engagement: Preparing decision books for monthly meetings, encouraging savings, and prioritizing support for members in need.</p> <p>Participants also provided feedback to enhance the program overall effectiveness</p> <p>Community-Centric Approach: Participants emphasized the importance of forming WDGs within the same community to foster familiarity and openness.</p> <p>Challenges faced in advocacy program: Ms. Soni Bajracharya highlighted the stigma faced by advocates, who are often perceived as "provokers," and the reluctance of victims to voice their concerns publicly due to societal pressures. Ms. Sarda Pudasaini stressed the difficulty of implementing strategies in conservative communities resistant to change, suggesting the inclusion of community influencers and awareness campaigns. Ms. Nirmala Shrestha, a social activist since 2053, pointed out the growing vulnerability of children to violence and their inability to express emotions. She advocated for mental health support for children.</p> <p>Recommendations by WDG Members</p> <p>Community-Based Grouping: Foster trust by ensuring group members share common backgrounds with victims.</p> <p>Dynamic Membership: Regularly involve new members to maintain group vitality and inclusiveness.</p> <p>Culturally Sensitive Training: Equip advocates to address resistance in conservative communities.</p> <p>Confidential Advocacy Spaces: Create safe environments for women to share their stories comfortably, with multiple levels of advocacy based on individual comfort.</p>	<p>Completed</p>

	<p>Mental Health Services for Children: Provide platforms and support systems for children as indirect victims of gender-based violence. This program underscores the need for grassroots involvement and systemic support to address gender violence effectively while empowering women economically and socially.</p>	
<p>Training program for women on “Gender Violence, Women's Legal Rights, and Social Justice”</p>	<p>Five-Day Training Program on Gender Violence, Women’s Legal Rights, and Social Justice WACN successfully conducted a five-day training program aimed at equipping facilitators with the skills needed to raise awareness about gender-based violence and provide legal assistance to affected individuals. The program aimed to contribute to the long-term goal of promoting social justice and improving women’s livelihoods through enhanced legal knowledge and support mechanisms.</p> <p>Key Training Topics The training covered critical topics designed to deepen participants’ understanding and capacity to address gender violence, legal rights, and social justice. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laws and Policies: Overview of existing laws and policies concerning gender violence and women’s legal rights. • Legal Frameworks: Importance of robust frameworks to support victims and survivors of gender-based violence. • Legal Documentation: Accurate methods for documenting gender violence cases, with a focus on maintaining legal precision. • Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI): Promoting GESI principles as a cornerstone of societal transformation. • Role of Media in GESI Awareness: Leveraging media to advocate for marginalized women and raise awareness about GESI. <p>The sessions were facilitated by advocates Krishna Pyari Nakarmi, Jamuna Pasachein, Tara Devi Shrestha, Ramita Manandhar, and media expert Nagendra Adhikari. Their insights provided a comprehensive understanding of laws, policies, legal documentation formats, and the critical role of media in promoting gender equality.</p> <p>Participant Engagement The training adopted a participatory approach, engaging representatives of the Women Dialogue Group (WDG) in discussions and activities to strengthen their understanding of program objectives. Participants learned about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of WDGs in minimizing gender violence. • The responsibilities of WDG members in advocating for legal rights and promoting social justice. <p>Real-life case scenarios were incorporated to provide practical insights and ensure participants could apply their knowledge effectively in real-world situations.</p> <p>Achievements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants gained practical knowledge about the role and responsibilities of WDGs in addressing gender-based violence. • The training helped participants enhance their communication skills, enabling them to advocate for women’s legal rights and promote social justice. • The interactive format, combined with expert facilitation, ensured high engagement and better retention of key concepts. <p>Challenges Encountered: While the training was successful, a few challenges emerged</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complex Subject Matter: Some participants felt that additional time was needed to explore certain topics and case studies in greater depth. 2. Resistance in Communities: Participants expressed concerns about the difficulty of implementing learnings in conservative communities resistant to change. 3. Need for Continued Support: Without ongoing guidance, the knowledge acquired during the training may not be sustained. 	<p>Completed</p>

	<p>4. Societal Stigma: Many women, including participants, experience gender-based violence but feel unable to speak up due to fear of societal judgment and economic dependence.</p> <p>5. Fear of Repercussions: Victims often hesitate to seek help openly, fearing for their children’s well-being and financial security.</p> <p>Expectations from the Training Participants highlighted several key areas of interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth knowledge of gender-based violence and relevant laws. • Skills to raise their voices and advocate publicly. • Strategies for supporting and counseling victims of gender and domestic violence. • Practical methods to minimize violence in society. • Capacity-building to spread awareness about gender violence and social inclusion. • Clarity on property rights, citizenship rights, and divorce laws within the GESI framework. <p>Participants’ Questions and Concerns The training encouraged open dialogue, where participants raised pertinent concerns, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to increase awareness of government facilities like the "One Step Crisis Management Center" (OSMC) among communities. • Clarifying distinctions between domestic violence, gender-based violence, and economic violence. • Strategies for addressing issues such as child marriage, societal preference for sons, and extra marriages driven by gender bias. • Supporting rape victims in rural areas, gathering evidence, and providing legal assistance. • Promoting gender equality within families and communities to address systemic discrimination. <p>Lessons Learned</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge is Power: Frontline advocates must have a deep understanding of rights, policies, and laws to support victims effectively. 2. Role of WDGs: Women Dialogue Groups are instrumental in addressing gender-based violence at the grassroots level. Open communication and knowledge-sharing enable these groups to drive meaningful change. 3. Participatory Approach: Interactive methods, combined with expert insights, strengthen collective efforts toward gender equality and social justice. <p>The training highlighted the importance of continuous engagement, community-specific strategies, and the empowerment of grassroots groups like WDGs to create lasting change in the fight against gender-based violence.</p>	
Economic empowerment of women	<p>WACN successfully organized a training program on organic incense making and leaf plate making for members of the Women’s Dialogue Group (WDG), a grassroots collective actively working against Violence Against Women (VAW). The training aimed to provide participants with practical skills to enhance their economic independence and support their ongoing advocacy efforts. The program was attended by 20 women, representing diverse communities engaged in combating gender-based violence.</p> <p>The training covered the entire process of making organic incense and eco-friendly leaf plates, focusing on locally available materials and sustainable practices. Participants were given hands-on experience, enabling them to understand both the technical and entrepreneurial aspects of these crafts. Expert trainers facilitated the sessions, providing guidance on production techniques, quality control, and market opportunities. Additionally, participants were introduced to basic business management concepts, such</p>	Completed

	<p>as pricing, packaging, and marketing strategies, to ensure they could effectively commercialize their products.</p> <p>Feedback from participants highlighted the training's relevance and impact. Many expressed enthusiasms about using these skills as a means of generating income while promoting environmentally sustainable practices. The training also reinforced the importance of economic empowerment as a critical strategy for reducing vulnerability to gender-based violence.</p>	
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KEY RISKS/ISSUES: Please provide input on the risks/issues faced during the implementation of the project & the measures taken to mitigate these risks/issues.

DESCRIPTION OF RISK/ISSUE	STATUS	REMARKS
Engaging women from all sections of society and all income groups.	Engaging community members, particularly women and girls from diverse backgrounds, is a vital first step in successful project implementation. WACN actively engaged with women from various socio-economic strata within Banepa Municipality, fostering inclusivity and ensuring that the program addressed the unique needs and challenges faced by different groups.	WACN leveraged its over three decades of strong relationships with communities to effectively connect with local populations. Instead of focusing on individual households, the organization strategically engaged with community groups representing diverse women, ensuring broader participation and collective impact.
Deep-seated social norms that influence and further limit the questioning of ongoing practices.	Deep-seated social norms significantly contribute to the prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV), making it essential to address attitudes, beliefs, and norms to achieve long-term and sustained reductions. Recognizing this, WACN has consistently worked to challenge these entrenched social barriers through a series of programs implemented over the years, promoting positive change and fostering gender equality within communities.	Ongoing engagement and sustained efforts are essential to achieving the desired change. Consistent commitment and long-term action are key to ensuring lasting impact and meaningful transformation.
Achieving policy influence	Policy change is crucial to achieving long-term and sustained reductions in gender-based violence (GBV). While the national workshop organized by WACN garnered significant attention from a wide range of stakeholders, ongoing efforts are necessary to ensure tangible, lasting outcomes.	Continuous engagement and follow-up are essential to translating the discussions into concrete policy actions and lasting societal change.

ANY OTHER COMMENTS: Briefly explain within 200 words.

<p>In the conservative society of Nepal this kind of program faces several implementation challenges, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Societal Stigma: Fear of judgment, economic dependence, and potential repercussions hindered open discussions about GBV. • Resistance in Conservative Communities: The need to involve community influencers and conduct culturally sensitive awareness campaigns was critical to overcoming this resistance.

- **Lack of Awareness:** Limited knowledge about available legal resources and support services, such as government facilities like the "One Step Crisis Management Center," prevented victims from seeking help.
- **Economic Constraints:** Women's financial dependence on their abusers often made it difficult for them to take action or leave abusive situations, emphasizing the importance of economic empowerment initiatives.
- **Sustainability of Knowledge:** Without ongoing guidance and follow-ups, there was a risk of losing the momentum and impact of training programs and workshops.
- **Legal and Structural Barriers:** Women faced persistent challenges in asserting property rights and accessing justice, with societal criticism and weak legal enforcement often compounding the issue.
- **Resource Constraints:** The program required continuous funding, expertise, and logistical support to ensure its sustainability and long-term effectiveness.

Overcoming these challenges required sustained advocacy, and collaboration among stakeholders to create a supportive ecosystem for change.