



REPORT ON

LAUNCH OF PROJECT CUM ORIENTATION WORKSHOP

**EMPOWERING WOMEN FOR PEACE AND
DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH ASIA: FOCUS ON NORTHEAST
INDIA**



Time: 10am - 4pm
Date: 23 February 2014
Venue: Siroy Conference Hall, The Imphal Hotel, Imphal, Manipur

Report on
Launch of Project cum Orientation Workshop

Empowering Women for Peace and Development of South Asia: Focus on Northeast India

Date: 23 Feb 2014, Time: 10 am to 4 pm, Venue: Siroy Conference Hall, The Imphal Hotel, Imphal, Manipur

Northeast India, comprising the eight states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura is facing the onslaught of multiple armed conflicts since the late 1940s. A level of militarization has engulfed India's Northeast under the garb of insurgency and counter-insurgency. More than 50,000 people have lost their lives in the violence. As a region that is home to 272 ethnic groups and over 32 insurgent groups operating with heavy militarization along with the imposition of the Armed Forces (Special) Powers Act (1958), six decades of armed violence has had huge humanitarian impact. The six decade long violence affected women and children in Northeast India in varied ways. In Manipur due to the ongoing violence and conflict, around 300 widows are made every year.



Pic: Ms

Nepram speaking at the event

Binalakshmi

On 23 Feb 2014, Control Arms Foundation of India in collaboration with Welt Hunger Hilfe (WHH) and support from European Union (EU) successfully organised the launch and orientation event of the project “**Empowering Women for Peace and Development of South Asia: Focus on Northeast India**”. The event was held from 10 am to 4 pm at the Siroy Conference Hall, The Imphal Hotel, Imphal, Manipur. The objective of the event was to orient CAFI's team, volunteers and well wishers relating to the aims, objectives and activities to be done under the project.

The session commenced with an introductory speech by **Ms. Binalakshmi Nepram, Secretary General of Control Arms Foundation and Founder of Manipur Women Gun Survivor Network welcoming all the participants**. She gave the clear background of the organisation, brief introduction of the project and facts regarding the current conflict status of Northeast India and Manipur. She said, “Manipur is conflict affected area for more than 54 years, consistent movements have conducted for such ongoing conflict, Manipur is one of



the most militarized zone in India but unfortunately India Government did not agree to recognize Manipur as a conflict state by terming the situation as only a law and order problem.” During her speech she also mentioned the heart breaking figure of the increasing number of young widows due to the ongoing conflict. She said that many of the victims were killed by arms conflicts. She also pointed that arms should not be misused, the arm personnel should be responsible for the arms that are given them, they should not violate the rules. She further added that most of the people killed in Manipur are young men between 19 and 42 years of age and as a result, an average of 300 widows is created every year in Manipur.

She added, “The project we launch today is to work on empowering the vulnerable and marginalized women in the state of Manipur. We will work to help the poorest women, widow, children to fill their hungry stomach and work at advocacy level to help make the women participation on decision making. The aim of the project is to increase in three years women participation in peace talk and 50% political participation. We will also involve the honest and sincerity people working in different parts of Manipur in project. Honesty and sincerity will be our principle of work to achieve our goal.”

Ms Sasmita Jena, Programme Coordinator, Welthungerhilfe, gave a brief presentation on the overall project and activities. She said the project was based on three countries namely India by Control Arms Foundation of India (CAFI), Bangladesh by Anando and Myanmar by Welthungerhilfe Myanmar. She said that the project is framework in alignment of UNSCR 1325, to formulate and activate National Action Plan of India and Bangladesh. She said that WHH Project Coordinator would support partner organizations in quality and norms of the activities of the project, project review, event workshops and monitoring. They would also be in constant consultation with WHH for any publications, citizen report cards, etc. There would also be an annual review of work in progress and the monitoring of such work.

The presentation by WHH basically underscores the following points:

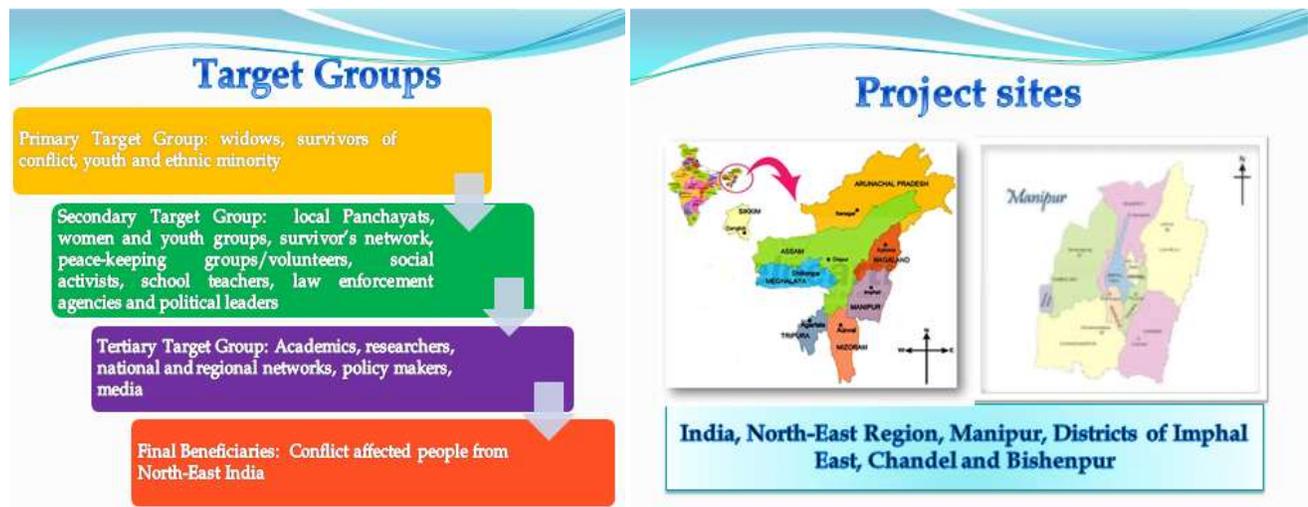
- Overall project coordination
- Coordination of South Asia level advocacy process,
- Procedures/reporting structures,
- Role clarity,
- Communication channels
- And other related issues

She also stated that WHH would work as a bridge between EU and partner organizations by facilitating and supporting national level networking and advocacy initiatives and link them to the regional peace building advocacy process.

Key activities to be carried out in consultation with WHH:

- Two thematic workshops to be carried out on women in difficult circumstances: *Conflict Transformation and Peace Building Process* and *Women Peace and Security*
- Develop citizen report cards on women representation in local governance
- Multi stakeholder dialogues at national and regional level
- Development of training module on women, peace and security and rights education
- Linking local level networks to national level peace-building organizations
- Development of IEC materials
- Research studies in India, Bangladesh and Myanmar
- National level consultations: India, Bangladesh and Myanmar
- Two South Asia Regional Conventions
- Two Annual Review Processes

Ms Binalakshmi Nepram, Secretary General, Control arms Foundation of India and Founder, Manipur Women Gun Survivors Network and Ms RK Sujata, Project Officer, Media and Communications, Control Arms Foundation of India gave a detailed presentation of the project with specific focus to the project activities that to be carried out by Control Arms Foundation of India in Northeast India in alignment with the project goals, objectives and implementation of the UNSCR 1325. An over view of the project with specific roles and activities of CAFI to be undertaken with respect to the prevailing conflict situation in the Northeast India based on operational plans, strategies, timeline for the first year, etc was elaborated. Focus was given on the negligible amount of women participants in the region involved in peace building and resolution. The risks in relation to the operations and region were also highlighted and mitigation measures discussed.



It was discussed and highlighted at length about the vacuum created at local, national, regional/international level for women's participation in peace and peace building initiatives and need for capacity building, training for taking leadership roles to address women's issue; concerned Government departments to participate, civil organization, professional like academicians, students, research scholars, media and security personnel to engage women in direct decision making process at all levels for gender equality and peaceful environment.

The detailed one year plan and activities to be done during 2014 was also presented which is elaborated henceforth.

CAFI's 2014 Action Plans

- Preparatory phase and recruitment during Jan-Feb, Project Launching and strategy planning meeting 20 and 21 Jan 2014.
- Form and strengthen existing women's groups / community peace groups by doing a series of advocacy and community meetings. To start identifying 60 key women leaders and groups for imparting two 3 day training
- Establish two women support centers in Manipur by March-April and start support information campaign
- Women's representation in the Regional/National forums by linking local level networks to the national level peace-building processes through district and state conventions and meetings, awareness events, exposure and exchange visits, youth meetings, and media engagement
- CAFI woman representative to participate at the UN Commission on Status of Women during March 2014

Victim of the Gun Killing in Manipur



Goals of the Project

GENERAL

To contribute towards promoting civil society and strengthening women-led peace building initiatives for sustainable peace in South Asia

SPECIFIC 1

Active role of women of North East in decision-making processes in local governance and engagement with civil society promoted for prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in Manipur, India.

SPECIFIC 2

Capacities of North East civil society organizations built for increased engagement in policy dialogue for the effective implementation of SCR 1325.

- Awarding Fellowships for Women Peace Leaders from April 2014 to undertake researches, fact finding in the field, publish articles/reports or engage in social action for one year
- National Level Multi stakeholders Dialogue in July 2014, Women Peace Congregation in November 2014
- Develop Citizen Report Cards from 3 districts of Manipur
- Training of State Security Agencies
- IEC materials

Mr Vipin Kumar, Finance Officer and Manager, Control Arms Foundation of India gave a clear description of financial management as the accounting policies, systems and procedures to be used by the organization in alignment with the financial rules and regulations of the project. He said, "The policy covers the input, processing, output, control and distribution of financial data stating that is developed to set out the accounting policies and procedures that ensure that the organization's books of accounts are prepared to conform to sound accounting principles and practices, enable the management to obtain accurate and timely financial reports on monthly basis, thereby promoting sound financial management and ensure correct and accountable use of funds and other resources". The main purpose of the policy is: to assist in the maintenance of controls, to provide training and monitoring resource and to be used as a reference document by the staff, management, auditors and other stakeholders.

He said, "Documents should be maintained for accounting management such as cash payment/receipt vouchers & book, bank payment/receipt vouchers & book, summary/daily cash and petty cash book, journal vouchers and journal, general ledger, fixed assets register, contract/registration documents, attendance register, analytical reports – finance (budget vs actual, variance statements), utilization reports for donors, statutory reports and statements, cheque issue register etc. vouchers and supporting documents and its validation are very much required to be maintained as NGOs manage expenditures through staff members hence it is important to adopt a process to ensure that all expenses are valid and strict accounting procedures are adopted to check them." He added, "The essential of a voucher are: project name, voucher number, date and the serial number of the voucher used, classification, narration, amount, supporting documents, signature of the person preparing the voucher, signature of the person authorizing payment (to verify with the delegation of powers of each member authorized within the organization to approve payments), signature of the person receiving payment, defacing of vouchers and supporting documents by a 'paid' stamp, subsequent to payment to avoid duplication of payments, and providing reference numbers of vouchers and check number if relevant." He also emphasized on the types of cheques to be adopted and added to maintain supporting documents - bills/ invoices, payment receipts, expense report/summary sheet, ToRs, contracts, minutes, agenda, reports, attendance sheet, photographs, news clipping etc.

Interaction, feedback and suggestions from the participants

Mrs Lourembam Nganbi, Meira Paibi Leader from Bishnupur District of Manipur gave a short speech emphasizing on the improvement of the status of women in Manipuri society. She said, “Manipuri women have their own strength but since most of them are illiterate that are unable to use the strength at required times. We need to give proper education to all women and increase the status of women in the society and at the same time men should understand and respect the status of women. Our society is male dominated society so we need to equalize the status between man and women. Women are not able to do what they want to do, we all depend on the male’s decision, in every respect men dominated women. We can develop the status of women with mass movement from the grass root level by empowering women economically, socially and psychologically.”

Mr Wahengbam Joykumar, Executive director, Human Rights Initiative, Manipur gave suggestions on how to bring forward the status of women. He added that the situation of Manipur is very critical so he suggested not to directly attempt for the peace process rather there should be cooperation between certain NGOs and organizations to work together for this project. He also mentioned that AFSPA is discriminatory Law which creates lots of disturbance in Manipur’s Law and order. We should also include village panchayats to work together from the grass root level.

During the discussion **Mr Goldflag Oinam, a volunteer** added the reasons that fuels the fear in people. He suggested, “To resolve the fear we need to make a platform for the protection for women where they can share their problems and feel secured for their life”. He also mentioned about the awareness programme of evaluation of people.

A short film titled, “**We Shall Find Our Peace**” was screened at the event that depicts the hardships and sufferings happening due to the ongoing conflict situation in the state and eagerness of the population to promote peaceful environment in the region.

The event was ended successfully with valuable inputs and suggestions from esteemed participants. Around 25 persons participated at the event that includes project staff, volunteers, women leader, some key stakeholders and prospective resource persons. All the participants agreed to work together in future for bringing peace and development in the region.



Closure and group photo

Agenda: Launch of Project cum Orientation Workshop

Date: 23rd Feb 2014

Venue: Siroi Conference Hall, The Imphal Hotel, North AOC, Imphal, Manipur

Date	Time	Agenda	Responsible person
23 Feb 2014	10 am	Welcome Address and brief Introduction of the project	Ms Binalakshmi Nepram
	10:30 am	Briefing of the overall project, project partners, stakeholders, aim and goals	Ms Sasmita Jena,
	10.45 am	Screening of the film "We Shall Find Our Peace"	CAFI team
	11 am	Tea Break	
	11.30pm	Presentation on CAFI's role and responsibility, aim, goals, plans, procedures, stakeholders, risks and mitigation measures	Ms Binalakshmi Nepram and Ms RK Sujata
	12.30pm	Clarifications and discussion	Ms Binalakshmi Nepram and Ms RK Sujata
	1.00 pm	Lunch	
	1.30 pm	Financial orientation- Financial guidelines, reporting/ general terms and conditions, policies, financial formats and documentation	Mr Vipin Kumar
	2.30 pm	Clarifications and discussion	Mr Vipin Kumar
	3.00pm	Detailed presentation for the first year for CAFI and work ahead	RK Sujata
	3.40-4.00 pm	Clarifications and discussion	RK Sujata, Mr Vipin Kumar and Ms Sasmita Jena

BRIEFING PAPER

South Asia or **Southern Asia** is the southern region of the Asian continent, which comprises the sub-Himalayan countries and, for some authorities, also includes the adjoining countries to the west and the east. South Asia is bounded on the south by the Indian Ocean and on land by West Asia, Central Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asia. According to the United Nations geographical region classification, Southern Asia comprises the countries of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, southeastern Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. South Asia is home to well over one fifth of the world's population, making it both the most populous and the most densely populated geographical region in the world. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation is an economic cooperation organization in the region which was established in 1985.

Status of Women in Peace and Conflict in South Asia: Over 20 years, only 16 peace agreements exist where gender is mentioned. Nepal is the only country that has adopted a National Action Plan to improve the participation of women in peace reconstruction. During conflict and post conflict countless women are humiliated, assaulted, raped and murdered by state and non state actors. The sexual and physical violence faced by women has not been recognized properly. Thousands of women combatants have not come forward and therefore cannot avail themselves of services. Women affected by conflict still continue to suffer silently.

It has been over a decade since the passage of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, the landmark document reaffirming the importance of women's participation and involvement at all levels of the peace and security agenda. However, formal peace building and conflict resolution initiatives continue to ignore or marginalize issues of gender and the involvement of women in formal missions and talks remains low. The gender debate overwhelmingly fails to address structural inequalities and power dynamics, which are the core of gender.

Northeast India is the eastern-most region of India. It comprises the contiguous Eight Sister States—Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. The states are officially recognized under the North Eastern Council (NEC), constituted in 1971 as the acting agency for the development of the eight states.

Violence in Northeast India: North-East India has been facing the onslaught of multiple armed conflicts for many decades. The issues aggravated after the introduction of the Armed Forces Special Power Act. More than 50,000 lives have been lost in the violence. The total population of North Eastern Region of India is 38,857,769, of which 19.1% are living below the poverty line (the Indian average is 27.5%). North East India deals with complex social political issues such as struggle over natural resources, ethnic conflicts, illegal migration, displacement and social exclusion.

Manipur: Manipur is a state in India's North East With just over two million inhabitants. It is a state that has been witnessing armed conflict & over 20,000 people have been killed in the last five decades. According to official statistics, in 2008 alone, more than 400 people have lost their lives. Today, more than 30 armed groups operate in Manipur ranging from small outfits to organizations with several thousand members. Besides them dozens of battalions of the Indian army and several units of Indian Paramilitary forces are stationed throughout the state at Indo- Burma border. The Armed Forces Special Powers Act is also clamped on the state since 1980. Not a day passes in Manipur without a gun killing.

Northeast Women in Peace Process and why we need women peace negotiators

Women's participation breaks the vicious cycle of women's marginalization and subordination at all levels. Women's civil society organizations play a key role in peace and security development through their participation in conflict resolution and peace building processes. Women Peace negotiators understand and articulate the implications of peace processes for women better than male negotiators. But still, there is no participation of Northeast Women in any decision-making processes, even in local panchayats. Even when women participate or are included in formal peace negotiations, their role is limited to a formal presence without having the capacity, or mandate, to contribute to setting or shaping the agenda of such negotiations.

Goals of the Project

General: To contribute towards promoting civil society and strengthening women-led peace building initiatives for sustainable peace in South Asia focus on North East India.

Specific

- 1.) Active role of women of North East in decision-making processes in local governance and engagement with civil society promoted for prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in Manipur, India.
- 2.) Capacities of North East civil society organizations built for increased engagement in policy dialogue for the effective implementation of UNSCR 1325.

Target Actions

Target 1: Community based groups including women's groups in North East India will be empowered to take action in conflict resolution and gender based violence at local levels

- a) Forming and strengthening women's groups/community level peace groups.
- b) Social action to increase women participation in local governance and awareness of UNCSR 1325: The following actions will address the issue:
 - Develop citizen report cards on women representation in local governance will be prepared at the beginning of the action as well as after two years to see changes.
 - Workshops to be organized with representatives from local governance in Northeast India.
 - Training of state security agencies on women, peace and security issues.
- c) Skill enhancement of women and youth through livelihood development programmes.

Target 2: Capacity of Northeast women to participate in decision-making processes in alignment with SCR 1325 will be enhanced through key networks like Manipur Women Gun Survivor's Network (MWGSN)

- a) Training module developed on *Peace and Human Rights Education*, will be introduced in schools/colleges and further advocated at appropriate government forums for incorporation in the mainstream curriculum
- b) Peace volunteers will be educated and linked to national and regional networks.
- c) Women leaders/organization will be identified and fellowship support awarded to women peace leaders, exposed to different models of peace building processes:
 - Organizing a mothers' bazaar
 - Women peace congregations to be organized in Northeast India.

d) Research publication, political/media attention regarding women will be done in conflict and post conflict situations in South Asia particularly Northeast India.

Target 3: Civil society dialogue process will be initiated and strengthened at local, national and regional level for innovative conflict resolution mechanisms

- a) Publication of "best practices" for future peace negotiations and dissemination relevant stakeholders.
- b) Cross-learning on peace building processes in South Asian countries particularly Northeast India.
- c) Multi-stakeholder dialogues initiated, at national and regional level on women, peace and security, UNSCR 1325.

Target groups and final beneficiaries

Primary Target Group: women (widows, survivors of conflict), children and youth, belong to ethnic minority in North-East India. **Secondary Target Group:** local authorities including local Panchayats, civil society groups e.g. women and youth groups, survivor's network, youth networks/alliances, peace-keeping groups/volunteers, social activists, school teachers, law enforcement agencies, political leaders.

Tertiary Target Group: Academics, researchers, national and regional networks, policy makers, media.

Final Beneficiaries: Thousands of people from North-East India will directly or indirectly benefit from the programme.

Project Implemented By:

Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V was founded on 7 November 1973 in Germany. Their vision is a world in which all people can exercise their right to lead a self-determined life in dignity and justice, free from hunger and poverty. Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V fight against global hunger and for sustainable food security. For more details logon to www.welthungerhilfe.de

Control Arms Foundation of India (CAFI) was founded on 10th September 2004 in New Delhi by a group of concerned citizens from all across the country to address humanitarian concerns due to rising armed violence in India. CAFI has been working in the Northeast Region of India for the past 7 years through its sister organization, the Manipur Women Gun Survivors Network, which was set up to help women in Manipur. Also in the year 2009, CAFI set up Northeast India Women Initiative for Peace (NEIWIP) working for peace in Northeast region of India. For more details log on to www.cafi-online.org, www.womensurvivorsnetwork.org and www.neiwip.blogspot.com

Project Supported By: The **European Union (EU)** is an economic and political union of 28 member states that are located primarily in Europe. It was formed by the Inner Six countries in 1951 and 1958, respectively. The EU was the recipient of the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize. For more details log on to www.europa.eu

For more information, please contact:

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