

*Annual Report:*

*Main Narrative*

## **Reintegration of Children/Youth Formerly Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups and Children Affected by Armed Conflict in Nepal – Phase IV**

**April 2011 – March 2012**

**Submitted To:**

Australian Agency for International Development

**Submitted By:**

Save the Children

PO Box 3394, Sundhara

Kathmandu, Nepal

Telephone: +977(1) 4222271

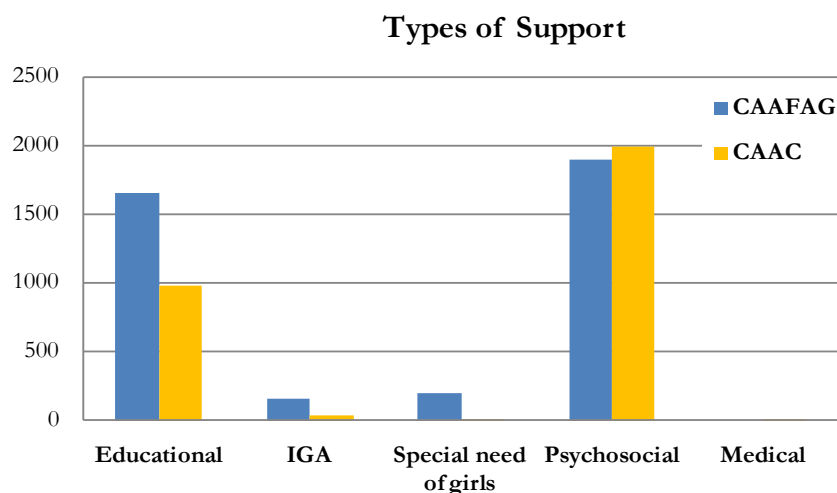
Fax: +977(1) 4227389

## I. Progress/Achievement against the set objectives and activities

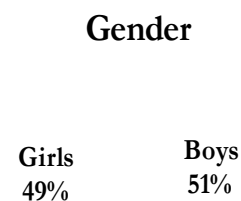
**Overall Objective:** Support the overall peace process through the promotion of the rights of children and youth within an integrated child protection system.

**Objective 1:** Facilitate durable socio-economic reintegration of informally/self released and verified minors and late-recruits (VMLR) through an integrated and holistic approach that will provide peace dividends to the community as a whole, with special focus on gender and social inclusion.

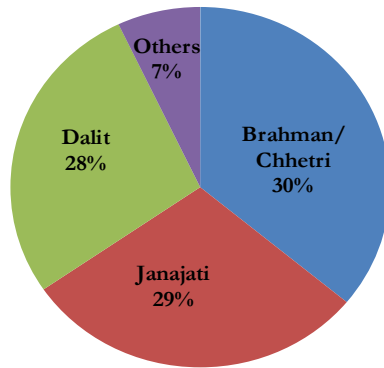
The first year of the project commenced with orientation and planning workshop with the partner NGO (PNGO) staffs from seven districts, where the target for each district was set based on the number of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups (CAAFAG) registered in the earlier phases of the project and those who are in need of reintegration support. One of the biggest assets of this project is the trained and experienced human resource of PNGOs, who have had several rounds of trainings and refreshers in the past years and who have several years of experience working on the issue of CAAFAG and child protection. Hence, the intensive training was not necessary to the PNGO staff; however regular technical support was provided to them by both country and regional levels of Save the Children. The PNGOs followed up CAAFAG and CAAC who were supported in the earlier phases of the project and were in need of further support for their reintegration. Also, some new CAAFAG and CAAC were identified and registered, who were in need of reintegration support.



There were two types of reintegration support provided to CAAFAG and CAAC: economic and social reintegration support. Education, income generation, vocational, special need of girls support were provided under economic reintegration support and psychosocial counseling and peace building activities were conducted under social reintegration support. In the first year of the project implementation; a total of 2984 children were supported, 1521 boys (51 per cent) and 1463 girls (49 per cent). Among these supported children; 1975 are CAAFAG, 1027 boys and 948 girls, and 1009 are CAAC, 494 boys and 515 girls, received economic reintegration support. Among the supported CAAFAG; 1625 received educational support, 130 received income generation support, 190 received special need of girls support and 30 received both educational and income generation support. Among the supported CAAC; 970 received education support, 25 received income generation support, 11 received special need of girls support and three received both educational and income generation support. The educational support comprised of school admission fee, school fee, school uniform, bag, stationery, etc. Girls' specific support was provided after thorough assessment and it includes stationery, school uniform, food, casual dress, hygiene kit, etc. Support for establishing retail shop, goat rearing, pig rearing, duck rearing, poultry farming, hair dressing, etc were the most common income generation support provided to the program children. Out of 1975 CAAFAG supported, 718 are *Brahman/Chhetri*, 603 are *Janajati*, 544 are *Dalit* and 110 are from other ethnicities. Among 1009 CAAC supported, 357 are *Brahmin/Chhetri*, 273 are *Janajati*, 279 are *Dalit* and 100 are from other ethnicities.



### Ethnicity - CAAFAG&CAAC



During this period, 1895 CAAFAG and 1989 CAAC received psychosocial support. This has helped in identifying the psychosocial problems of CAAFAG and CAAC and treating them effectively. These children have been traumatized in several ways during their association in armed forces and armed groups and because of conflict which affected them in different ways. Also, they have been stigmatized in their community because of their past. So, psychosocial counseling has been instrumental in reducing this adverse impact of conflict and it has facilitated the social reintegration of CAAFAG and CAAC in their family and community.

The new cases of 653 CAAFAG and 504 CAAC were identified, registered and supported by the implementing partners. The remaining 1322 CAAFAG and 505 CAAC were continuation of support in the

earlier phases. As a crucial element of the project supported CAAFAG and CAAC were regularly followed up to assess their well-being and if they have further protection concerns. The frequency of follow up visits depended on the situation of the children; more frequent visits were made for the ones with serious protection concerns and comparatively less frequent visits were made for those with protection concerns of less severity. Also, during follow up it was found that some of the supported CAAFAG have reintegrated well in their families and communities so they were considered to be successfully reintegrated and those cases were closed in accordance to the guidelines developed for case closure. This year, the cases of 267 CAAFAG have been closed after successful reintegration. Although it was not planned, a CAAC received emergency medical support this year.

### Challenges/Lessons learnt:

- Some CAAFAG do not see the importance of higher education after Grade 10, rather they wish to go for vocational training and income generation activities; such as skills training, farming and going to urban areas and out of country to seek work. In the coming period, the social workers and psychosocial counselors will have discussions with CAAFAG and their families on the importance of education in life.
- The quantity of support provided under economic reintegration support has been inadequate in some of the cases where the family is under extreme poverty. In the coming period, the PNGOs will try to link the children and their families to other service providers in the area through referral mechanism.

**Objective 2:** Strengthen the capacity of the government, community organizations (child/youth clubs, women groups, CPC) to prevent and respond to the core rights violations of children especially those affected by the conflict and support their participation in peace building activities.

This objective of the project has played a crucial role in strengthening the child protection system in the district and VDC level. This has been seen as a very important aspect because if the government structures, working on children issues, and civil societies are strong and can ensure the prevention from and response of child right violations; the vulnerability of children will decline significantly. In the first year of project implementation, different activities were organized in the seven program districts to strengthen the capacity of government and other community structures.

Village Child Protection Committees (VCPCs) in the program districts were provided with several types of support which helped them in performing more actively and efficiently. Some new VCPCs were formed in the Village Development Committees (VDCs) where there were no VCPCs and some VCPCs were reformed by changing the members to make VCPCs more active. Since VCPCs lack resources to run their even basic activities, they were provided with materials support which has assisted them to operate their day to day activities. The materials support included furniture, meeting register, ring files, record files, carbon paper, punching machine, stapler, letter pad, etc. VCPCs were provided with trainings and orientations on child rights and child protection. They were also provided with technical support on mapping of resources available and resource generation at the local level. For this purpose, fund tracking workshop was provided to VDC secretary and VCPC members to make them skilled in tracking the local resources available to work for the welfare of children in the community. Then, the resources available in the districts and VDCs were mapped out and it was also discussed that the activities of different organizations should be carried out with one door policy so that it

can be ensured that there is no duplication in the support and the support reaches as many children as possible. After regular lobbying, three VDCs in Rukum allocated 10 per cent of their budget for VCPCs. The VCPCs have developed their annual action plan. The VCPC members organize regular meetings to discuss about different issues of children in their respective area. After meetings and need assessments several child clubs and adolescent girls' clubs also received materials support to assist in their day to day activities.

Referral mechanism has been established in the program districts to ensure that the children are not deprived of the services available because of the lack of information and coordination between the service providers in that particular geographical area. A coordination meeting was organized in the beginning where organizations working on children's issues were invited and the importance of establishing referral mechanism was oriented to them. Then, mapping of services available was developed which has helped the organizations to refer identified vulnerable children to appropriate organizations for support. Since then, the participating organizations have been meeting regularly and when the need arises. For the sustainability of this mechanism, Women and Children Officer (WCO) and Child Rights Officer (CRO) have taken lead on this. Computers were provided to District Child Welfare Boards (DCWBs) in Saptari, Banke, Dang, Rukum and Rolpa so that a database of vulnerable children can be established and maintained in DCWB. Technical support has been provided to DCWBs in Kailali and Achham in establishing database in spreadsheet.

With the aim of strengthening emergency fund for children in the district, emergency fund has been established after a coordination meeting between the district stakeholders working for children in Saptari, Rukum, Rolpa, Achham, Kailali and Banke. Several agencies have made contributions in this fund, which is being used to provide support to the identified vulnerable children in need of immediate intervention. For example, in Kailali, already NRs. 70000 has been collected as emergency fund from the contributions of different organizations.

An event to celebrate International Labor Day was organized. Also, a day workshop was organized by the implementing partners in Banke district with the district level stakeholders such as political parties, WCO, CRO and National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to discuss each other's role on ensuring child rights. Interactions were held to formulate code of conduct and establish complaint handling mechanism in schools with the active participation of School Management Committee (SMC), teachers and students.

#### **Challenges/Lessons learnt:**

- Many VCPCs still need further capacity building and regular refreshing trainings on child protection and overall child rights since the lack of knowledge limits their skills in monitoring and documenting the children's issues in their VDCs. In the coming days, this will be planned within this project and will be mainstreamed in other child protection projects.
- Since VCPCs consist of the volunteers, who are the employees of other organizations, some of the VCPCs are passive because of the lack of self-motivation in the members. PNGOs will advocate for the reformation of those VCPCs in the coming days.
- Establishing and functioning of referral mechanism in the district level and taking its lead by WCOs depends upon how necessary they think and how motivated they are to strengthen child protection system, though it is in their work mandate. In the coming days, the PNGOs and Save the Children will continuously lobby with WCO and CRO.

**Objective 3:** Support and mobilize children and young people for their involvement and contribution to peace building initiatives.

A decade long armed conflict in Nepal has had a long lasting impact in people's lives. There is resentment in the community towards the people who have created suffering in their lives. They have a similar kind of feeling towards CAAAFAG also since they might have been involved in giving trouble to the community during the conflict; e.g. torturing, killing, using abusive/offensive languages, etc in the name of action taken by the armed groups and armed forces. This hard feeling creates difficulties in the successful reintegration of CAAAFAG in their community. To erase the resentment, peace building activities have played instrumental role in the community. It creates communication, builds trust, creates feeling of working together for a common goal and establishes them as contributing members of the community. This gradually helps in bringing cohesiveness between each other.

A four days Training of Trainers (ToT) on Youth Leadership for Peace Building was organized from August 2 to 5 2011, where 25 youth leaders from our program districts participated. This ToT was focused on the conceptual clarity of peace building, its importance and the ways of conducting peace building activities. After the ToT, the participants went back to their communities and oriented other members of their youth and child clubs. Then they together conducted peace building activities in their communities, involving our program children and other children and youths of the communities.

On the basis of contextual assessment, different types of peace building activities were conducted in the program districts. These activities were expected to create communication, build trust, create feeling of working together for a common goal and establish them as contributing members of the community. CAAFAG/ CAAC and other youths of the community participated in the peace building activities. The major types of activities were quiz competition, street dramas, cultural programs, interactions on roles of different community stakeholders, celebration of National Children's Day, etc. It has been observed that CAAFAG/ CAAC and other community members have started feeling more comfortable with each other after their participation in the peace building activities.

#### **Challenges/Lessons learnt:**

- Some of the parents still are conservative and do not realize the importance of their children being part of child and youth clubs and their activities. In the coming days, the activities to aware the parents on child rights will be planned.
- Many CAAFAG, CAAC and other youths of the community want to participate in the peace building activities which is sometimes difficult to manage. In the coming period, the interested children will be given opportunity by accommodating them turn by turn if the number is high.

## **II. Expected results and outputs for Year 2**

**Objective 1: Facilitate durable socio-economic reintegration of informally/self released and verified minors and late-recruits (VMLR) through an integrated and holistic approach that will provide peace dividends to the community as a whole, with special focus on gender and social inclusion**

<b>Intended Results</b>	<b>Planned Inputs</b>	<b>Expected Outputs</b>
The socio economic living conditions of CAAFAG, CAAC and other at risk children/ youth are improved through the provision of an integrated and sustainable reintegration support jointly implemented with government and non-government stakeholders in the district	Individual education support for stationery, dress, fee (in kind) to CAAFAG, CAAC and other at risk children. Also, provide counseling on the importance of education	CAAFAG, CAAC and other at risk children are regular in school
	Income generation support; such as seed grant, vocational training, apprenticeship and livelihood support to CAAFAG, CAAC and other at risk children. Link children to other service providers in the district for additional support.	CAAFAG, CAAC and other at risk children are able to make regular income from it
	CAAFAG and CAAC will be provided with special needs of girls support such as stationery, school uniform, food, casual dress, hygiene kit, etc	CAAFAG and CAAC are regular in schools and are maintaining good menstrual hygiene
	CAAFAG, CAAC and other at risk children will be provided with psychosocial support	CAAFAG, CAAC and other at risk children have good psychosocial health
CAAFAG/ CAAC and at risk youths are engaged in economic activities after receiving skill training or through IGA support	Provide CAAFAG, CAAC and other at risk children with skill training and IGA support and support in making a business plan	CAAFAG, CAAC and other at risk children are engaged in economic activities
Successful reintegration cases are identified and	Sample survey and focus group discussion	Beneficiaries have a positive change as a result of the services provided

Intended Results	Planned Inputs	Expected Outputs
support phased-out	Sample survey and focus group discussion	Beneficiaries are engaged in active and peaceful community life
Follow Up/ Case Closure	Regular follow up of CAAFAG and CAAC and ensure individual case management	Additional protection concerns of CAAFAG and CAAC are identified and addressed
		Cases of CAAFAG/ CAAC successfully reintegrated are closed

**Objective 2: Strengthen the capacity of the Government, community organizations (child/youth clubs, women groups, CPC) to prevent and respond to the core rights violations of children especially those affected by the conflict and support their participation in peace building activities.**

Intended Results	Planned Inputs	Expected Outputs
Cases are identified, reported and referred to appropriate service providers and adequate assistance is provided	Orientation to WCO, CRO and other service providers on the importance of referral mechanism and continuous lobby with WCO and CRO to take lead on it	Agencies (government/ non-government) participate in the referral mechanism and mapping of services available is developed
	Hold coordination and review meetings among participating agencies of referral mechanism	Different issues of children are discussed on
	Refer cases through the referral system	Children receive appropriate services
	Establish emergency fund in the district level	Children in need of immediate interventions are benefited from emergency fund

**Objective 3: Support and mobilize children and young people for their involvement and contribution to peace building initiatives.**

Intended Results	Planned Inputs	Expected Outputs
Children and young people from vulnerable community are able to organize and contribute to peace building activities in their community	Children and youth groups conduct peace building activities	Peace and social harmony are promoted in the communities
	CAAFAG, CAAC and VMLRs participate in the peace building activities	Stigmatization towards CAAFAG, CAAC and VMLRs is reduced
	Other children and youths of communities participate in peace building activities	Other children and youths of communities have reduced their resentment towards CAAFAG and VMLRs
	Link CAAFAG and VMLRs to youth clubs/ groups	CAAFAG and VMLRs have the feeling of being accepted by the community people and their voices are heard

### III. Expenditure details against planned budget

Please refer to the attached Excel Sheet.