



Indo-Nepal Child Protection Forum

1. Background

Nepal and India Share a long boarder area with three sides of Nepal and northern side of India. There are 15 Indian districts bordering with Nepal and 22 districts from Nepal share boarder with India.

Indo-Nepal relation remains in almost all aspects of social-cultural and economic life. Historically since the period of ancient Bharat Bars Nepalese and Indian Families are having matrimonial relations, trade engagement and cultural exchanges.

Even in modern days the relations between people to people are much stronger in Indo-Nepal relations. The deep rooted social cultural engagement, open boarder, intense inclusion of people into both side societies have not only generated ample opportunities but also posed some threats, mainly on cross boarder crimes. Human Trafficking including child trafficking has become a serious concern for India and Nepal as children are being trafficked into both sides. Engaging children from poor families into child labor including hazardous forms of labor in both countries have been recognised as serious challenge. Early marriages have been rampant in both nations' communities and often they are cross boarder child marriage. The territorial jurisdiction limitation of protection authorities and civil society actors has caused number of challenges on addressing cross boarder dynamics of child protection issues. There have been some cross boarder efforts facilitation mainly on referral, repatriation and controlling human trafficking in boarder area between government and civil society. Yet, a wider level engagement on common child protection efforts are realised missing in the current context.

Therefore, DEHAT-India & RUSUF- Nepal together came up with idea to have a common forum to take some common efforts that strengthen the inter-country government and civil society efforts on child protection. Swatantrata Abhiyan Nepal, Save the Children Mid Western and Far Western Regional Office Nepal and CWISH Nepal supported the concept.

Recognizing the high relevancy of the common forum for civil society of both nations to synergise the child protection efforts in both sides "Indo-Nepal Child Protection Forum" has been initiated on 16 December 2015.

Pre exercises and discussions were held in a series of meeting before this mainly during October-December 2015.



2. Introduction

Indo-Nepal Child Protection Forum (here in after called “Forum”) is a loose forum of civil societies active in cross boarder issues of child protection in India-Nepal Boarder.

It functions with secretariat facilitation for communication and coordination by RUSUF Nepal in Nepal Side and DEHAT India in India Side.

3. Goal and Objectives

The Forum aims at ensuring appropriate and adequate child protection response to the victim of cross boarder incidence of violence, abuse, exploitation and trafficking of children in India and Nepal.

Specifically, the forum intentions are as follows:

- ◆ Enhance communication and referral practices among civil society for rescue, repatriation and rehabilitation of victim/survivor children.
- ◆ Strengthen Inter-governmental response on protecting children from cross boarder incidence of trafficking, child labor and early marriages along with delivering justice through legal prosecution of perpetrators.
- ◆ Develop a common position and approach on cross boarder legal policy measures on addressing protection of children.
- ◆ Strengthen solidarity actions among civil societies of both sides on causes of child protection in both sides.

4. Strategies

Following Strategies will be adopted by the forum to achieve its goal and objectives:

- I. Focused on Intergovernmental Response System:** The forum will work to strengthen intergovernmental response by respective authorities of both nations. It does not support or act on creating parallel system from the government. Coordination, Collaboration and Engagement with diplomatic missions, ministry for foreign affairs, state and federal government will be practised by the forum through it’s members.
- II. Encourage CSOs to CSOs Communication and Referral:** The forum will educate and empower NGOs and actors of both sides for communicating cases and practising referral system for rescue, repatriation and rehabilitation of victim/survivor children.
- III. Evidence Based Advocacy:** Based on learning and challenges, experienced complexities on enjoying the existing legal policy provisions, researches and studies the forum will have positive advocacy efforts on enhancing bilateral cooperation and response at local, state and federal government level.
- IV. Solidarity Building:** As strengthening people to people relation and enhancing informal coordination and cooperation and strengthening a common fight against injustice, exploitation and non-response. Members of forum from both sides will show their solidarity through appropriate, democratic and peaceful actions.



5. Action Areas

The forum will be working mainly on the issue of cross-boarder employment of child labor; cross boarder incidences of child marriages and cross boarder child trafficking incidences.

The forum will have mainly following actions:

- I. Receiving communication, taking rescue actions, referring for support services and rehabilitation.
- II. Hosting training/workshops and seminar for exchanges of information on country system and updating on cross boarder interventions;
- III. Hosting forum for discussing and developing common cross boarder referral system.
- IV. Facilitation of inter-governmental cooperation and interventions for protecting children and rehabilitation of victim/survivor children.
- V. Joint efforts/actions for lobbying and influencing international communities, regional mechanisms (SAARC, SAIEVAC, Missing Children Alert, South Asian Child Helplines and other relevant).

6. Membership

The forum will have membership of civil society organizations agreeing to the objectives, strategies and action areas.

The forum may invite government bodies, media and other relevant agencies as required as observer in a specific meeting or on regular basis.

There is no limitation on the number of membership of the forum. Yet, the steering committee need to endorse the membership of the applicant.

7. Funds and Resource Mobilization

The forum shall not handle a specific fund or treasury; neither officially seeks financial support or aid.

The forum will have its members' capacity or available resource or event support by international organizations, donors for hosting events/program.

All financial compliance liability will be of it's members and supporters, thus forum shall respect the financial rules and policies of contributors.

8. Limitation of Forum

- ◆ The forum remains as loose, unregistered network of NGOs working on the field of child protection issues in India and Nepal, mainly on cross boarder concern.
- ◆ The forum does not grant fund or support to it's members.
- ◆ The forum does not run long run/periodic projects; rather host events and campaigns only.
- ◆ The forum remains independent and neutral on cross boarder political issues between India and Nepal.
- ◆ The forum respect national laws and policies on repatriation and referral; however, may advocate for improvement through regional or inter country efforts.



9. Amendments and Clarification

Forum steering committee have freedom to review and revise its current concept and terms of reference at any time to meet the requirements of its interventions.

Forum steering committee shall explain further in case of any confusion on the provisions of this ToR/concept note.

Forum steering committee shall host its meeting virtually (through e-mail, phones, online mode) if unable to host a face-to-face meeting.

Annex I. Founder of Indo-Nepal Child Protection Forum

Jointly Chaired

Rural Society Upliftment Forum (RUSUF), Nepalganj

Developmental Association for Human Advancement (DEHAT-Because every child matters), India

Members

Swatantrata Abhiyan Nepal (SAN), Nepal

Children & Women in Social Service and Human Rights (CWISH), Nepal

Observer/Invitees

Save the Children Mid-West Regional Office, SCI Nepal

UNICEF Mid-West Regional Office

Annex II Proposed Actions for 2016

1. Extending membership to the committed and interested organization both side in Nepal and India (Additional 6 NGOs from each side)
2. Cross Boarder System Education Workshop for Members of Indo Nepal Child Protection Forum-Nepal.
3. Cross Boarder Child Protection Authority Workshop on Addressing Complexities of Child Marriages, Child Labor and Child Trafficking
4. Periodic Quarterly forum meetings on update and next step of action
5. Developing a common position paper on SAARC regional framework for addressing cross boarder child protection issues.

