

**EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF PEACEBUILDING
WORKS: PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY OF NAGARIK AAWAZ**

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By

SIKHA BHATTARAI

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**PROJECT REPORT
APPROVAL FORM**

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a Thesis written by Sikha Bhattarai entitled "*Effective Implementation of Peacebuilding Works: Partnership Strategy of Nagarik Aawaz.*" I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted for final defense in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Master of Arts with a major in Applied Conflict Transformation Studies (ACTS).

Dr. Desmond Molloy
Director, PUC Institute for Peace

We have read this Thesis Study
And recommend it for acceptance for Final Oral
Examination and Defense:

Dr. Desmond Molloy
Major Professor

Dr. Gabrielle Grant
Technical Advisor

Dr. Raymond Leos
Member

Accepted for the Council Final Defense

Dr. Sin Meng Srun
Chairperson



PAÑÑĀSĀSTRA UNIVERSITY OF CAMBODIA
Graduate Studies Program

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| | Name | Degree |
|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Masteral Candidate | Sikha Bhattarai | MB <u>MA</u> |

| Graduate Program | Graduate Department | Dept. Mail Code |
|---|--|------------------------|
| Applied Conflict Transformation Studies | Social Science and International Relations | SSIR |
| Thesis Title | Effective Implementation of Peacebuilding Works: Partnership Strategy of Nagarik Aawaz | |
| Time, Date, and Place of Examination | | |
| Chairperson of the Examination Committee | Dr. Sin Meng Srun | |

Name and Signature of M.A. Candidate:

Sikha Bhattarai

THESIS EXAMINATION COMMITTEE

| | Name | Signature | Date Signed |
|--------------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Chairperson | DR. SIN MENG SRUN | | |
| Major Professor | DR. DESMOND MOLLOY | | |
| Technical Advisor | DR. GABRIELLE GRANT | | |
| Member | DR. RAYMOND LEOS | | |
| Member | | | |

APPROVAL FOR PROJECT REPORT FINAL ORAL EXAMINATION

| | Name | Signature | Date Signed |
|---|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Program Chair and PUC Academic Coordinator | | | |
| Director, PUC Institute for Peace | DR. DESMOND MOLLOY | | |

ABSTRACT

Nepal's peacebuilding efforts began after the decade long armed conflict that started in 1996. The Peace Accord was signed in November 2006 but even after almost 16 years of signing of the peace accord, the conflict-affected community is still waiting for its dividends. Though Nepal has politically reconciled, the people are still waiting for justice, reparations, and reconciliation with their past. Nagarik Aawaz is working for the reconciliation and reparation of conflict-affected women. Nagarik Aawaz, a non-governmental organization was established and began working on peacebuilding in 2001. Realizing that the peace practices cannot be done in isolation it created a network called 'Joint Initiative for Peace' with the membership of 14 local organizations. To ensure sustainability and ownership of its project, it works in partnership with local organizations. A local organization's elicited knowledge and relationship is essential for the lasting impact of peace work. The purpose of this participatory action research was to identify the knowledge of value-based peacebuilding and peace practices that Nagarik Aawaz can effectively transfer to its local partners. The purpose was also to evaluate and improve the impact of a program called Building Leadership for Women, Peace, Security, and Equity implemented by Nepal Women Community Service Center in Dang, Nepal. This research involved senior and new staff members of Nagarik Aawaz, program team, board members, and project beneficiaries of the partner organization. A partnership strategy has been developed after this research that focuses on knowledge transfer, elicited/value-based peace practices, and monitoring and evaluation that will help to practice shared leadership, transformative leadership and also contribute to the organizational development of the partners.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AR – Action Research

BLW – Building Leadership for Women, Peace, Security, and Equity

CEO – Chief Executive Officer

CPA – Comprehensive Peace Accord

FGD – Focus Group Discussion

M&E – Monitoring & Evaluation

NA – Nagarik Aawaz

NGO – Non Governmental Organization

NWCSC – Nepal Women Community Service Center

ToT – Training of Trainers

TRC – Truth and Reconciliation Commission

TWUC – Tharu Women Upliftment Center

WPF – Women Peace Facilitator

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1 Conflict Analysis

21 November 2021 has marked the 15th anniversary of signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) which concluded the decade long armed conflict from 1996 - 2006 between the Maoist rebels and the government. The conflict led to the transformation of Nepal from a monarchy to a federal democratic republic as well as the co-optation of the Maoist rebels into mainstream Nepali politics. Nepal's nationally led peace process that avoided a relapse into large scale violence and their adoption of a democratic constitution led to many deeming it a success.

During the insurgency in Nepal, 17,625 people were killed, 78,675 people were displaced, 1,302 people were disappeared and 4,305 became disabled (Risal, 2020). The grievances of the victims of Nepal's decade-long brutal civil war continue to remain unaddressed even after 15 years of signing of CPA. The transitional justice bodies were formed after eight years of the signing of the CPA and it has done nothing besides registering over 60,000 complaints from the victims and survivors. The transitional justice process that was supposed to be dealt with in the 2 years of the peace process has been largely ignored in Nepal. Because of that, the victims and survivors fear that they might not get justice in their lifetime. In fact, there is no sincere political will to address these issues. The victim community has not accepted the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) Act that was formulated in 2014. They have demanded for the amendment of the Act which specifies forced reconciliation and the provision of granting amnesty for gross human rights violation and crimes under international law. The Supreme Court of Nepal also ruled in 2015 that the Act needs

to be amended, including regarding provisions on amnesty which the court said were unconstitutional and against contrary to Nepal's international obligations (Crawford, 2021). However, the government has not yet done anything regarding that.

Despite adopting a federal governance framework and setting up different commissions, the agenda of conflict victim has remained unaddressed for a long period of time. Situation of women who faced sexual violence and whose family members were disappeared during the time of decade long armed conflict was totally ignored by the government as well as Maoists rebels. As a result, thousands of them are compelled to live in a deep psychological trauma, as they lacked adequate space to share their pain and suffering and heal the trauma through psychosocial and physical treatments.

Nagarik Aawaz (NA) is a peacebuilding organization in Nepal which was established in 2001 when the armed conflict was at its peak. It was established as a loose network and after a year registered as an organization, understanding the needs of peacebuilding work required at that time. NA has been working in the area of peacebuilding for the last twenty years. Some projects and initiatives are done by NA itself and the projects outside Kathmandu valley are done in partnership with the local organization in that area. NA believes in transferring the knowledge of peacebuilding to the local organization so that the peace work can be sustained even after the completion of the project period. NA realized that the peacebuilding work cannot be done in isolation so it started a network called "Joint Initiative for Peace" in 2004. Altogether 14 local NGOs from all over Nepal were brought together in a network to teach them the essence of peacebuilding and implement the peace work in local communities.

NA has worked with twenty partner organizations till date through different projects. Currently, NA is working with five partner organizations through different projects in districts outside Kathmandu valley. All the organizations are women led and are locally established in their community. Most of the organizations are working on a right based approach and peacebuilding is a new concept for them. NA believes in trusting the approach of the organizations in the local level because they know the local context better. However, we also have a certain goal that has to be achieved through project implementation. Therefore, this creates a gap at times and we are not able to achieve exactly what we are trying to through the project.

The work of NA is mostly focused on personal and social transformation of conflict affected women. We have been working on this from the establishment of the organization. The project 'Building Leadership for Women Peace Security & Equity' (BLW) was designed on the basis of the PhD research done by Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Dr. Susan Risal. The research showed how the women who faced sexual violence and torture during the armed conflict in Nepal were not considered as conflict victims by the government and didn't get any reparation or recognition. They were completely excluded from the peace process and till date it is impacting their daily lives. Similarly, other conflict affected women who lost their husbands or family members, who were ex-combatants and directly involved in the conflict or whose family members were disappeared also feel that their voices are not heard and they haven't got justice for what they suffered.

In this project we work with the women who were sexually tortured, who lost their husbands and whose family members disappeared during the period of armed conflict in Nepal. Through this project we are aiming to bring personal transformation in women by providing counseling services and capacity building trainings. We

provide them with medical support and livelihood training because the women who suffered violence during the period of conflict are still suffering from physical and mental health issues. We are also trying to bring a social change by reducing the stigma attached to sexual torture victim and acknowledging their contribution during the armed conflict to bring the political change.

This project is implemented in four districts of Nepal by two local partner organizations. One of the outcomes of this project is that the partner organizations will be recognized as the organizations working for women, peace, security and equity in their respective communities with the on-going commitment for gender and peacebuilding. According to the UN resolution on peacebuilding, sustaining peace encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict (Office, 2017). Therefore, NA always works towards sustaining peace by working with the partner organizations outside Kathmandu valley. This is because we want to transfer the values of peacebuilding to the community and sustain the efforts made during that period. We want to develop the local infrastructures of peace and continue the peace work even after the end of the project. This is one strategy we adopt for sustainable peacebuilding.

In this project we are working with two local partner organizations, Nepal Women Community Service Center (NWCSC) and Tharu Women Upliftment Center (TWUC) in western part of Nepal. They are well established women led organization in their community who are also a member of our 'Joint Initiative for Peace' network. Before selecting the partners we visited the organization and assessed their admin/finance strength and their work culture. We selected the partners on the basis of their credibility in their community and also their leadership. We chose to work

with women led organizations because this project works on very sensitive issue of conflict affected women.

I concentrated my research on one partner organization, NWCSC based in Dang district of Nepal. This organization is implementing the BLW project in two districts, Dang and Rolpa. NA has a long history of partnership with NWCSC. We first partnered with them in 2006 through an initiative called ‘Sadbhav’ which focused on personal transformation of conflict affected youth. Dang is one of the most conflict affected areas in Nepal. Five incident of mass killing took place – 11 were killed in Ghorahi, 12 in Goltakuri, 9 in Laxmipur, 8 in Duruwa and 6 in Phulbari – and many others were disappeared in Dang during the height of Maoist insurgency (KC, 2017). The cases of sexual violence during the period of armed conflict are also high in Dang but there are no data collected by the government regarding the cases of sexual violence. Currently 24 women from Dang that survived sexual violence and torture during the period of armed conflict are associated with us through BLW project.

Recently, we did an internal evaluation of this project and the evaluation team recommended that we need to transfer the knowledge of peacebuilding to the partner organization and program team members in order to make the project more effective. The values of peacebuilding are different than any other social work done by the NGOs. It is very important for them to understand the values and different terminologies associated with peace work. Even in my personal experience, when the partners send us the project report we can clearly see the personal changes in the women we are working with but we cannot see how the project is contributing to other outcome that we are trying to achieve i.e. establishing the partners as a peacebuilding organization in the community. Hence, they need both technical and

theoretical knowledge to carry out the peacebuilding work in the community. Only then NA will be able to achieve the project outcome as planned when implementing the project through partners.

1.2 Work Context

Currently I work in the capacity of Senior Program Officer at NA. I am directly looking into two projects where I work with four different partner organizations outside Kathmandu. Of these two projects, one is BLW which is implemented in four different districts, Dang, Rolpa, Bardiya and Kailali by two partner organizations, NWCSC and TWUC who are the member of Joint Initiative for Peace network.

This pilot phase of this project was implemented from February 2020 to December 2020. The second phase of the same project was extended for two years from February 2021 to December 2022. I was involved in the redesigning of the second phase of the project based on the learning of the first year. The goal and objective of the project was the same but only the activities were changed to adapt to the local context. The redesigning was done in a participative manner with input from the partner organizations because they were the ones implementing the project in the district.

I supervise the implementation of the project in all areas and track the activities and performance of the program team. Impact mapping is done to see who is benefitted from the project and to check if we are closer to the goal that we are trying to achieve. One of the objectives of the project is the capacity building of partner organization and to establish them as a peacebuilding organization in the community.

For this, I closely supervise and monitor the project to provide feedback where necessary.

While working in the community we face different issues that need to be dealt carefully. At times there is internal conflict among the program team which needs intervention in order to take forward the project smoothly. Similarly, there are times when the stakeholders and the community question the objective of project because they believe that there is no point in scratching the old wounds of conflict-affected people. Also, due to the limitation of the resources, all the conflict-affected women cannot be accommodated by the project which creates dissatisfaction among them. All these issues are dealt carefully in coordination with the key people of partner organizations.

The partner organizations and the key people of the partner organization play a vital role in the successful implementation of the project. NA practices sustainable peacebuilding by implementing the project through local partner organization. Therefore, it is important for them to understand the values and practices of peacebuilding to carry forward the peace work even after the completion of the project.

The values of NA reflect the 21 years of peacebuilding experience of the organization. As NA is solely a peacebuilding organization, its values align with the values of peacebuilding in general. The staff team of NA sat together in May 2019 and reflected its work and practices of peacebuilding to finalize the value of NA. It was a collective process and the team could own the values because it came from within and not influenced by external parties. Also, the board members endorsed these values finalized by the team. The board member trusted the decision of the staff team because in NA the team members have been working from a very long period of

time. During the time of finalizing the values of NA, 70% of the team members were working in NA for more than 5 years. The staff turnover is low so the team clearly understands and adopts the value of peacebuilding through its work. The values of Nagarik Aawaz are as follows:

Care

We care for human dignity and manage conflict through nonviolence. Component of care lives in our daily life operations and initiatives. This value guides us to practice empathy in our actions. Care helps us share each other's strengths. We care among the team or in the communities we work in.

Everyday Peace

Peace exists on all levels. It is up to each individual to define peace in their way. Within us lies the power to define peace as we see fit. To help people live with dignity and justice, we strive to promote peace in their everyday experiences.

Safe Space

We make space where people can feel safe and secure to express, engage, and strive for a better future. Here we can say what we want without being afraid. Learn new ideas. Think about a better future. We can solve problems with love and care. We don't judge here. We help heal each other here.

Human Relationship

Harmony and peace are built on good relationships. Trust is enhanced among individuals and groups as a result of it. It is through human relationships that we can

work together, understand each other's differences, and become closer.

Listening to Unheard Voices

Everybody has a voice so we listen to that to respond according to time and context.

We plan our responses by keeping people in our hearts and listening to their voices.

We do this through dialogues and conversation.

1.3 Research problem

The peacebuilding work of NA is value based with 20 years of practice. Even though NA has always worked with different partners, we don't have a concrete strategy that is adopted while working with them. The project is designed on the basis of the research and experience of NA but when we implement the project through partner organizations in districts outside Kathmandu, our time and energy is directed towards making them understand the practices and values of peacebuilding. This delays the outcome we are trying to achieve.

1.4 Research Questions

- What are the values based peacebuilding practices used by Nagarik Aawaz with its partner organizations?
- What strategies are used by Nagarik Aawaz to strengthen peace practices and theoretical knowledge with its partner organizations?
- How does Nagarik Aawaz evaluate this knowledge transfer?

1.5 Research Objectives

Following are my research objectives:

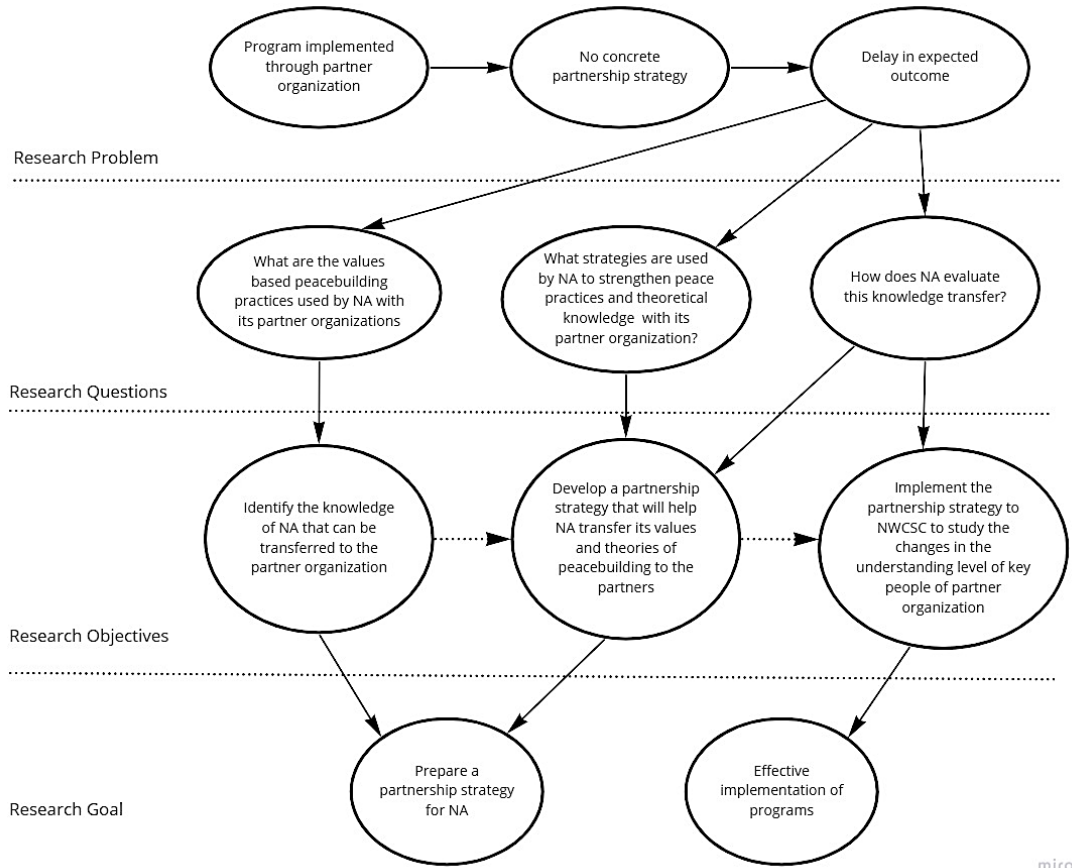
- Identify the knowledge of NA that can be transferred to the partner organization.

- Develop a partnership strategy that will help NA transfer its values and theories of peacebuilding to the partners which will make the implementation of the project more effective.
- Implement the partnership strategy to NWCSC to study the changes in the understanding level of key people of partner organization.

1.6 Research Goal

My research goal is to prepare a partnership strategy for NA to improve the efficiency of peace practices for projects implemented by the partner organizations. The strategy will focus on improving skills on context analysis and creative work practices. Also, they will be able to connect their activities and intervention to peace writ large.

1.7 Systems Thinking



Nagarik Aawaz implements its projects through local partner organizations in the districts outside Kathmandu. Most of the women led organizations in Nepal are working on right based approach for project implementation. Due to the limitations in understanding of peacebuilding works by the partners, the outcome of the project is not as effective as planned.

We first need to find out the level of understanding of NWCSC in peacebuilding. Then we will be able to decide what knowledge we can transfer to them. The key people of NA will sit together and discuss on the theories, values and practices that are necessary to be transferred to the key people of NWCSC. Then we will decide on the ways to transfer the skills. It may be through trainings, discussions

and interventions. A strategy will be developed on this and practiced on the existing partner NWCSC, that we are working with. We can then see how effective is the strategy to bring the expected change in the level of understanding and the outcome of the project. The strategy can be further refined with the feedback from the partner and also from our learning.

After the successful development and implementation of the strategy on working with the partners, NA will be able to improve the level of understanding on peacebuilding of the partner organizations. This will eventually help in the effective implementation of the project in the respective working areas. We will be able to get the expected outcome that was imagined while designing the project.

1.8 Operational Definition

Loose network – A social impact network is a highly-connected, tightly-aligned set of individuals and/or organizations that works together, adapts over time, and generates a sustained flow of activities and outputs to solve a defined social problem (Derr, 2021). In the context of NA, a loose network is a group of organizations that works as a think tank and works for peacebuilding but it is not legally registered.

Conflict affected women – While there is no widely accepted global definition, fragile, conflict affected and vulnerable settings are generally seen to include those experiencing humanitarian crises, protracted emergencies, prolonged disruption to critical public services or governance (e.g. due to political or economic challenges, conflict or natural disaster), or armed conflict (World Health Organization, 2020). For the purpose of this research, conflict affected women are the women who were physically, psychologically, economically and socially affected during the armed conflict in Nepal from 1996 – 2006.

Local partner organizations – According to the dictionary of Law Insider, partner organization is defined as an external third party business entity that provides value added services in marketing and selling your products (Law Insider). However, in the context of this research, local partner organizations are the local NGOs from different districts of Nepal that are in partnership with NA to implement strategic peacebuilding projects in their respective communities.

Values of peacebuilding of NA – According to the definition of Cambridge Dictionary, values are the principles that help you to decide what is right and wrong, and how to act in various situations (Cambridge Dictionary). The 5 values of peacebuilding adopted by Nagarik Aawaz to carry out the peacebuilding works are Care, Everyday Peace, Safe Space, Human Relationship and Listening to Unheard Voice. These values and principles are developed from 21 years of peace practices done by NA.

Key People – Key people are key to the conflict dynamics, able to decide strongly or influence decisions for or against peace, and/or able to spoil or undermine peace (CDA Collaborative Learning Projects , 2016). For the purpose of this research, key people are the people who are in the management position and have the decision making power in the organization. They are the organization leader, long term senior staffs, involved board members and life members of the organization.

CHAPTER TWO THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Theoretical Background

In this chapter I have discussed some relevant theories for my action research. I have looked into different theories of strategy development, knowledge transfer and organization development such as Shared Leadership, Transformational Leadership Theory and Organizational Development Theory. These theories will back my Action Research and explore the dimensions of transferring knowledge of peacebuilding and organization development.

2.1.1 Shared Leadership

Shared leadership occurs when two or more members engage in the leadership of the team in an effort to influence and direct fellow members to maximize team effectiveness (Bergman, Rentsch, Small, Davenport, & Bergman, 2012).

The peacebuilding work of Nagarik Aawaz cannot be done in isolation so we need to trust the leadership of local partner organization to carry out the peace work in the community. They know the local context better. This research will help to build the strategy to transfer the values and knowledge of peacebuilding to the key members of partner organizations. They will adapt the peacebuilding approach in their projects to carry out the project in the community level. It is the shared leadership of NA and the partner organization that will make the project effective in the areas we are working. It is necessary to share the knowledge and resources between the organizations to take the ownership of the project.

2.1.2 Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership is a leadership style in which leaders encourage, inspire and motivate to innovate and create change that will help grow and shape the future success of the organization (CIO, 2018).

Nagarik Aawaz through its partnership with the local organization is trying to transfer the peacebuilding values to the local level and sustain the peacebuilding works. This research will develop a partnership strategy for NA which will be used to transfer the knowledge and values of peacebuilding to the partner organizations. The expertise of NA will be transferred to the organizations that will carry out the peace work at local level. This will help in sustainable peacebuilding and the local organizations will be recognized as an organization working for peace.

2.1.3 Organizational Development Theory

Organization development theory is dedicated to expanding the working knowledge of individuals to enhance and to make more effective organizational performance and change (Best Colleges, 2022). Organization development is a process of continuous diagnosis, action planning, implementation and evaluation, with the goal of transferring knowledge and skills to organizations to improve their capacity for solving problems and managing future change (Glanz, Rimer, & Vishwanath, 2002).

As this research focuses on the development of partnership strategy to work effectively with the partner organizations, it will contribute to the organizational development of the partners. The partner organization of Nagarik Aawaz will enhance their theoretical and practical knowledge on peacebuilding through the implementation of the partnership strategy developed by this research. The partner

organizations will adopt the peacebuilding practices in their other projects and will be recognized as a peacebuilding organization in their community.

CHAPTER THREE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Methodology

During Action Research, the researcher identifies a problem, tests out a strategy, gathers data and determines if it works. The end result is something dynamic, innovative and tied directly to our work. It is a method of building our theory about what works in our field. In my Action Research my goal is to make a strategy for NA to work with the partner organizations. We want to transfer the values and theories of peacebuilding to the partners which will make the implementation of project more effective. There are underlying tenets that are specific to Participatory Action Research: a) collective commitment to investigate an issue or problem, b) a desire to engage in self- and collective reflection to gain clarity about the issue under investigation, c) a joint decision to engage in individual and/or collective action that leads to a useful solution that benefits the people involved, and d) the building of alliances between researchers and participants in the planning, implementation, and dissemination of the research process (McIntyre, 2008).

3.2 Research design

As it is a Participatory Action Research, the key members of partner organization, program team members, team of Nagarik Aawaz, and the conflict affected women associated in the project were involved during the research.

Participatory approach theory was adopted while carrying out the research. A participative approach means that the person in charge of solving a problem or designing an innovation involves people who are directly concerned by the result of his or her work (Hazard, Laurent; Audouin, Elsie, 2016). Participatory research

prioritizes co-constructing research through partnerships between researchers and stakeholders, community members, or others with insider knowledge and lived expertise (Journal of Participatory Research Methods, 2020).

This research was carried out in the span of 3 months and in three cycles, from July to September 2022. The research involved the NA team members, NWCSC board and team, and WPFs of Dang district of Nepal from BLW project, and I engaged with all my research participants through focus group discussions and also personal interactions.

In the first cycle I did the desk review. I read the project reports sent by the partners, field visit reports that I have prepared, and the internal and external evaluation report submitted by the evaluators. The objective of this desk review was to find the gap between the expected outcome and actual outcome of the project. Also, I wanted to see if there are gaps in any partnership strategy adopted by NA and what the evaluators have recommended in relation to the partnership. I also interacted with new staff members of NA who are working for less than a year in the organization. The objective of this interaction was to understand how the new staff members learn the values of peacebuilding in NA.

In second cycle I conducted FGD with the team members and board members of the partner organization (NWCSC) and with WPFs of Dang district. The review and reflection workshop was carried out with the project team of all four working districts to understand the strengths and areas of improvement of the project.

In the third cycle I interacted one-to-one with the senior team of NA who have been working in NA for more than seven years to understand the values and practices of peacebuilding adopted by NA while carrying out its activities through partner organizations and also within the organization. Gathering the information and

knowledge from the processes in cycle 1, 2 and 3 I prepared a partnership strategy for NA. The final strategy will be handed over to Nagarik Aawaz after the completion of AR.

The research was done by incorporating my observation and reflection of the previous reports, learning from my colleagues, and also engaging with NWCSC team, board and Women Peace Facilitators. I went back to programmatic reports, evaluation reports to further understand and analyze, and consolidate my findings and conclusions.

3.3 Research site selection

This research was done in Dang with the existing partner of Nagarik Aawaz. We are working in partnership with Nepal Women Community Service Center (NWCSC) in Dang since 2006.

I chose to cover one area because the project, 'Building Leadership for Women Peace Security and Equity' is implemented in two districts by NWCSC which is registered in Dang. We have been in partnership with them from a very long time and they are the members of the network "Joint Initiative for Peace" that was started by Nagarik Aawaz in 2004. The organization is women led and trusted by the local community and stakeholders.

3.4 Research Sample Selection

The research included board and staff of partner organization who are in the leadership and execution role. I did FGD and workshop to understand their level of understanding on values of peacebuilding.

The Women Peace Facilitators were also involved in the research. FGD was done with them to find out about the gap between our expectation and reality in project implementation done by the partner organizations. Also, I wanted to know how the values of peacebuilding are being transferred by the partner organization through implementation of the project.

The new staffs of NA who are working for less than a year were also a part of this AR. I wanted to understand how NA itself transfers its values to its new members within the organization. Also, senior and experienced team of Nagarik Aawaz were also be involved in the research. I discussed with the team to understand our current working strategy and what we should do further to make the partnership effective.

| Sample | Female | Male | Total |
|------------------------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| Nagarik Aawaz team | 5 | 2 | 7 |
| NWCSC Board and program team | 7 | 2 | 9 |
| Women Peace Facilitators | 9 | - | 9 |
| Total | 21 | 4 | 25 |

3.5 Nature and Sources of the data

All the data in this research was collected from the primary sources. Questionnaire, FGD, interaction and workshop were used to collect the data from the key people of partner organizations. Similarly, FGD was done with the Women Peace Facilitators involved in the project. The FGD was recorded after taking the permission and then transcribed. The internal reports sent by the partners, field visit reports, the report submitted by the evaluation team of NA and external evaluation report were the

sources of data. Throughout the data collection process, I maintained a research journal to record my reflections.

3.6 Tools of Data collection

The tools that were used for data collection are as follows:

Questionnaire – I prepared the open ended questionnaire to conduct the FGD with the key people of partner organizations and Women Peace Facilitators.

FGD – the FGD was done with the women associated in this project, and program team including the board members of NWCSC.

Report – The internal report submitted by the partner organizations, field visit reports, the report submitted by the evaluation team of Nagarik Aawz and external evaluation report was used to collect the data.

Workshop – The review reflection workshop was done with the program team of BLW.

Interaction – The one-to-one interaction was done with the new and senior staffs of NA.

3.7 Data analysis process

The data from the desk study and focus group discussion was analyzed through my own observation, understanding and reflections. I consolidated the reflections and sat with my colleagues to discuss the preliminary findings and reflections. According to the context, the findings were further discussed with selected team members who were dedicated in the BLW program. The final strategy was prepared after collecting the data and considering the suggestion from the team of NA.

3.1 Action Research Cycles

3.8.1 Research Cycle 1

Purpose: To understand the gap between expected outcome and actual outcome of the project.

Planning: Collect all the internal and external reports related to BLW project and block the time of staff of NA

Action: Studying and analyzing all the reports sent by the partner organization, field visit reports, internal reports and external evaluation reports of BLW. Also, interacting with the new staffs of Nagarik Aawaz who have been working for less than a year to understand what values of peacebuilding mean to them and what they have understood from NA.

Reflection: Study of reports and interaction helped me understand the gaps and strengths of NA in value based peacebuilding practices. It also helped me plan for cycle 2 and draft the questionnaires for FGD.

Date: July – August 2022

3.8.2 Research Cycle 2

Purpose: To understand the peacebuilding practices of NA.

Planning: Identify the knowledge of partner organization in peacebuilding practices and what NA has transferred.

Action: FGD with the Board and program team members of NWCSC, and Women Peace Facilitators of Dang. Also, the review reflection workshop with the team members of partner organizations in order to find out the areas of improvement

in the project and also take suggestions on what NA can do better for the project to be more effective.

Reflection: The FGDs and workshop helped to understand the strengths and good practices of NA and where we need to put in extra effort to support the partner organization.

Date: August - September 2022

3.8.3 Research Cycle 3

Purpose: Preparation of partnership strategy for NA

Planning: Analyze the learning from cycle 1 and 2 and talk to the senior team of NA to finalize the strategy.

Action: Interaction was done with the senior team of NA and it gave lots of insights on preparing the partnership strategy for NA. I prepared a partnership strategy based on the experience of NA and feedbacks from the partner organization and partner team.

Reflection: The preparation of partnership strategy and discussion with NA team helped to understand the value based peacebuilding practices of NA. The strategy will help NA in current and future partnership.

Date: September 2022

3.2 Significance of the Study

I prepared a partnership strategy for NA that will be adopted while working with the partners. This will help to disseminate the knowledge that Nagarik Aawaz has in the field of peacebuilding. The partner organizations will understand the values

of peacebuilding and adopt it while carrying out their work. They will be capable of incorporating the ideas and activities adopting the peacebuilding practices in their community. This will contribute to the organizational development of the partner organizations. Nagarik Aawaz will be able to achieve the outcomes of the projects as planned while carrying out the project through partner organizations.

One of the building blocks towards peace is that the effort contributes to a momentum for peace by causing participants and communities to develop their own peace initiatives in relation to critical elements of context analysis¹. Hence, if Nagarik Aawaz can implement the strategy while working with partners then it can transfer the values of peacebuilding at the community level and sustain peace. It will make a meaningful contribution to Peace Writ Large.

3.3 Limitation of the Study

I have prepared a strategy for Nagarik Aawaz to work with the partners and it is important that we incorporate the aspects beyond project such as admin/finance and psychosocial component for holistic partnership.

The research was carried out in a limited time and because of it the scope of this research is small and only limited to one partner organization.

3.4 Ethical Consideration

There was a voluntary participation of all the people involved in the research. This includes key members of partner organizations, conflict affected women associated with the project, and team of Nagarik Aawaz.

The interviews and FGDs were recorded with the consent of the participants.

¹ Module six of Resource Manual on Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) Basics published by CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (CDA) explains five building blocks of peace that can support progress towards Peace Writ Large.

As my sample size also included conflict affected women who were sexually tortured during the period of armed conflict in Nepal, full confidentiality was maintained during the research. The Psychosocial Counselor was present and available during the FGD with the women.

CHAPTER FOUR

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH

In this chapter I have provided a description on how I carried out my Action Research through each cycles and what I have learnt through the interaction with the team of partner organization, women I am working with and the team of Nagarik Aawaz.

Cycle 1: Desk Review and interaction with NA team (July-August 2022)

When the research began, Nagarik Aawaz was already in the third year of implementation of the BLW project through its partner organizations. The general observation was that in two districts where NWCSC carried out the project, the project was carried out really effectively and we could see the expected outcome of the project. At the same time, the same project implemented through TWUC in the other two districts was not as expected and we could not get the expected outcome. To understand this gap I took out all the reports that I had with me regarding the project. I went through the reports sent by the partner organizations, field visit reports prepared by me, internal evaluation report prepared by the team of NA and also the external evaluation report submitted by the external evaluator of this project. In this cycle I reflected back on the BLW project and how the project is carried out by two partner organizations. I wanted to find the reason for the gap between the expected outcome and actual outcome for which I studied the reports.

I also talked to the three new staff members of NA who are working for less than a year. The objective of talking to them was to understand how NA transfers its values to its own staff. I wanted to know that being a value based peacebuilding

organization how successful was NA in transferring the values to its staff and also to the partner organizations.

Internal evaluation report

The internal evaluation report of the project was submitted in September 2021 by Ms. Prasansa Karki who is the Program Development Coordinator at Nagarik Aawaz. The mid-term evaluation of the project was done to observe the overall relevance of the project as per the need and context of its target group. The evaluation was carried out using a qualitative approach through virtual platforms because it was done during the time of pandemic when there were travel restrictions and physical distance had to be maintained. Group meetings were carried out with women peace facilitators and program teams of all four districts. The evaluation explored the overall relevance of the project, studied the initiatives that responded to the needs of the project and recommended actions to improve the relevance of the project.

The report appreciated the effort made by the program team to carry out the project during the time of COVID-19 and the restrictions that came with it. The psychosocial counseling aspect and the survivor-to-survivor approach adopted by this project was the most important factor which helped in working with this group of women.

Some of the suggestions given to NA relating to partnership were as follows:

- Module course for the local partner organizations to transfer the value based peace practices.
- Mentorship and backstopping on a quarterly basis for the partner organization to infuse the value of peacebuilding in their work.

- Guide local partner organization for more analytical reporting and not only limited to activity based.
- There should be institutional arrangements for monitoring and evaluation within the organization as the volume of projects has been increasing in NA. A good Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) system needs to be established in NA.

External evaluation report

The external evaluation of the project was carried out in December 2021 by Dr. Prakash Bhattarai (PhD). It was the requirement of the donor that we carry out the mid-term external evaluation of the project. One of the concentration areas of this evaluation was to study the role of NA and its partner organizations in the conflict context and how it influences the work, strategies and effectiveness. He visited all four working districts and met with the program team and board members of both the partner organizations, NWCSC & TWUC.

Some of the key recommendations of the report regarding the partnership were as follows:

- Both the partner organizations are happy with NA regarding its inclusive and transparent process and bring both partners on board from the project design phase till its implementation and evaluation. They also seemed happy with NA, as there is no dictation from NA's side in the course of implementing project at the local level.
- Better coordination was observed with local stakeholders in places where locally based and/or experienced staff are working and less coordination where staffs are not recruited from particular districts and/or locations.

Project reports and field visit reports

The partners send the project report every six weeks highlighting the activities carried out in the districts and connecting it with the impacts of the project. Initially the reports were not written precisely and lots of information was missing in it. I had to call them and ask them about the missing information and compile the report to send it to the donor. After repeated feedback there has been improvement in the quality of the report.

Field visits were carried out time and again to monitor the impact of the project and also to document the case stories of WPFs. These field visits gave the information about the partners and the project which could not have been obtained by reading the partner's report. Physically visiting the working areas and meeting the women we are working with helped to understand how the partner is implementing the project in the community and what values of peacebuilding are adopted by them.

It could be seen from the reports and observation that the partner organizations have gained the trust of the conflict affected women because they are willing to share their stories and be a part of this project. The psychosocial counseling helped the women to open up and trust the project because the conflict-affected community is skeptical towards the organizations due to their past experiences. They believed that the organizations used them and their stories to earn money and they got nothing in return.

The partner organizations have adapted the project to the contextual need. They came up with the idea of providing medical insurance to all the women associated in our project. The project had the provision of providing medical support to women but the idea of insurance worked really well because it not only covered the medical cost of women but also of their family members. This reduced the financial

burden of conflict-affected families. This shows that the partner organizations have owned the project and are trying the best from their side to come up the ideas that will help conflict affected women.

The credibility and leadership of the partner organizations were visible during the period of lockdown due to the global pandemic of covid-19. The project started in early 2020 where the covid was at its peak and Nepal was under lockdown. NA could not monitor the project directly in the initial phase but the partner organizations effectively carried on the project in such difficult time.

The effectiveness of the project is not the same in all the districts though. The project has been outstanding in the districts where the program staff are based locally and from that community. This is because the women and the stakeholders trust the people from their own community. Similarly, the project is not very effective in the district where the program team is not based locally.

Interaction with new staffs of NA

I reached out to three new staff members of NA to ask them what they understand about the values of NA and how they are adopting it. While working with them we can see that they have adopted the values of peacebuilding in their work and behavior but I wanted to know how they adopted it and what exactly worked in transferring the values by NA.

Senior Program Officer shared “There is no explicit way of learning values and practices of peacebuilding. It is there in the website and written in the paper but that is not where we learned the values from. We learned the values from the attitude and behaviors shown by the older staff of NA.” The way of dealing with one another, the tone of voice, and approaches to different problems and situations were all learnt

from the interaction with the other team members of NA who have been working here for more than 3 years.

Psychosocial Counselor shared that NA team easily accepted and welcomed the new staff in the team which was really appreciated. She felt like a part of this organization from the very beginning because of the way the team behaved with them and accommodated them.

Program Associate shared, “Every individual has a space to grow and given a learning opportunity. NA gives priority to every member and adopts a non-hierarchical approach which makes the bond closer between the team members.”

The desk review done in cycle 1 helped to understand the gaps in implementing the project through partner organizations and how the impact of the project differed from partner to partner depending on their level of understanding and ownership of the work. Also, the interaction with the new team members of NA gave an insight on the soft approaches adopted by NA within the organization that helped to transfer the values of peacebuilding.

Cycle 2: Discussion with the partner organization & Women Peace Facilitators

After finding out the good practices and gaps through reviewing the reports and the firsthand experience of field visits I planned for the FGD with the team of partner organization and conflict-affected women that we work with through this project. To conduct the FGD I first prepared the questionnaire which was not just limited to direct questions but it also adopted an appreciative inquiry lens.

FGD with the program team of NWCSC

The first FGD was conducted with the program team and board members of NWCSC in August. There were a total of nine participants including three board members and six program team members. The FGD was really interactive and helped me understand the partnership and the project. The objective of this FGD was to know and understand what they have learnt from the partnership with NA. Also, it was a reflection session on the best practices and areas of improvement for the project design and implementation.

The board members of NWCSC gave great insights on partnership with NA because we have been working together since 2006. The board members reflected on the starting of partnership back in time when the conflict was ongoing in the country. They thanked NA for connecting them with UNDP during the organization's initial phase which helped the organization to broaden its scope of work.

The team members appreciated the partnership with NA and shared how they find it different than working with other organizations. The team expressed that their attitude and behaviors have changed after being associated in this project and they have adopted the values of peacebuilding not just in their work but in their personal lives too.

FGD with Women Peace Facilitators (WPFs)

The FGD was carried out with WPFs of Dang district in August. There were a total of 9 participants. The objective of this FGD was to understand how the project is being implemented by the partner organization through the women. We wanted to know how the women have understood peacebuilding and the work they are doing.

We wanted to know how the partner organization is practicing and how it has transferred the values of peacebuilding to the women we are working with.

This FGD helped to understand how the project is being implemented in the community by the partner organization. The WPFs are the conflict-affected women who have faced sexual violence, torture and who have lost their husbands during the time of conflict in Nepal. As they are our primary target group and also the most vulnerable group, the FGD gave an insight on how the partners are carrying out the project through them. It helped us understand whether the values of peacebuilding were limited to the program team or had it been transferred to the beneficiaries as well. It also clearly told us how effective the project design is and what improvements we need to make in the design to make the peacebuilding work even more effective and relevant for them.

Review reflection workshop with the program team of BLW

The review and reflection workshop was carried out with the team of BLW project from all four districts in September. There were a total of 24 participants including 15 program team members directly working in four districts, 2 board members of partner organizations NWCSC and TWUC who are the focal person for this project, and 7 team members of NA. The objective of this workshop was to find out the effectiveness of the project in two and half years and how it can be made better if we plan to extend the project. This workshop helped a lot in understanding how the partner organizations are working in the district, their ownership and dedication towards the project and also their drawbacks.

The board members and team of NWCSC expressed that they admired the intention of NA and how NA believes in strengthening the partner organization and invests in their growth. The FGDs and workshop made it clear that NA is transferring its values to the partner organization and the partners are also transferring the values to WPFs through BLW project.

Cycle 3: Preparation of partnership strategy

The objective of this cycle was to prepare a partnership strategy for NA that will help in current and future partnerships. For this I sat one-on-one with the senior team of NA because it was not possible to conduct a workshop due to the time constraint of the team as everyone was busy with their work and there was limited time available. The intention of this interaction was to understand the practices adopted by NA in 21 years while working through partners. The senior team gave really important insights on the practices and values of peacebuilding adopted by NA including the partnership based work done from its inception. The team members already had enough experience of working with partners and hearing their reflection and observation was very important to finalize the strategy.

It was clear the NA's strengths are its genuineness, and values which they actually practice among each other and also with the partner organizations. However, it was also clear that the program team of NA has not given a clear thought about formulating strategies to deal with partners.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

During the course of research there were some really interesting insights and findings on the best practices of Nagarik Aawaz and what could be improved in relation to the partnership. Also, a lot was understood about the implemented project and what considerations should be made while designing the projects in the future. The findings are discussed below.

What are the values based peacebuilding practices used by Nagarik Aawaz with its partner organizations?

Nagarik Aawaz team's one of the biggest strengths is its organic ability to practice care among each other and also with the partners. This was reflected in the component of care the older staff showed for the newer staff and also the local partner team. The board member of NWCSC expressed during the FGD, *"The care that NA shows towards us feels like a family. This makes us see NA as a partner rather than a donor. This behavior has brought the organizations closer and has continued to be in touch even when not doing any projects together."*

NA practices shared leadership among the local partners which has been crucial in building ownership of the project with them. Nagarik Aawaz does not impose its ideas on the local partners. It listens to the contextual needs and expertise of local organizations. This has promoted creative approaches of dealing with contextual needs and crisis.

The practices adopted by Nagarik Aawaz are just not limited to the project description. NA supports the partner organization during the time of crisis and emergency by providing relief support through its core funds. NWCSC board and team appreciated the support NA gave during the Covid-19. They shared that it

helped them stay relevant and helped them become more recognized among stakeholders which also contributed to the organizational development. The flexibility of Nagarik Aawaz of going beyond the boundaries has been setting precedence among the partner organizations.

It is definite that the values of peacebuilding are practiced while carrying out the projects but at the same time the values are also practiced on a personal level while dealing with the program staff and members of partner organizations. The non-hierarchical approach adopted by NA while working with the partners is a transformational leadership style which is appreciated by them. Everyone is treated equally and each individual's opinions are given equal importance. Also, everyone is encouraged to share their personal experience on working in the particular project. NA focuses on the inner healing and individual transformation of the team of partner organization too.

Nagarik Aawaz certainly designs its projects to create a safe space for the conflict-affected women where they can come together, share their stories and help one another. This works as a collective healing space for them. However, NA also creates a safe space for its staff and partner team to share their work and personal experience. This space is provided during the meetings, interactions and reflection workshops. The informal talks on family lives, personal experiences and emotional well-being also help to build the relation of trust and comfort with the team members. Maintaining both professional and personal relationships is the core of NA which provides a safe space for everyone to be vulnerable and be their real self.

While NA carries out all its activities adopting the value based approach of peacebuilding, certain issues create restrictions in the effective implementation of peace practices.

NA works with many partner organizations and it is clear that some partners carry out the project effectively while some struggle to do so. This is because of the partner's experience on peace practices. The partner organizations who have been continuously working on the field of peacebuilding understand the essence of the project and carry out effectively adopting the values of peacebuilding. While on the other hand, the partner organizations that are working on the right based approach and livelihood aspect and have not worked in peacebuilding projects for long takes time to understand the value of peacebuilding.

The attitude and perspective of team members also matter a lot when it comes to transferring the values of peacebuilding. Where the team members are open to change and learning, it is easier to make them understand the peace practices and why it is important to be sensitive while working with the conflict-affected community. However, every individual is different and not everyone is open to change. The rigid and orthodox mindset of the individual is the most difficult to influence and takes a lot of time to make them understand the values.

For example the WPF shared during the FGD that her dignity was hurt and she even thought of leaving the project because of the words spoken by one of the team member of NWCSC. The exact words used by one of the program team members while giving out the transportation cost to the WPF was, *"It is easier for you. You don't have to do much and get money for just coming to the meeting."* This was very insensitive from the side of the partner organization because the women we are working with have gone through a lot and have contributed to bring change in the country.

Also, during the FGD the Program Officer of Rolpa who had earlier worked in the Local Peace Committee expressed, *"I didn't understand in the beginning why*

even after 20 years it was still important to work in this sector. When I started working as a Program Officer for BLW project then I realized the importance of working with conflict-affected women. Now I have understood that the peace agreement was signed on paper but there is a lot of internal conflict within the women.”

In this case, the project has been very effective in Rolpa because of the self-realization, reflection and understanding of the program officer. However, in another district the program team is project focused and just carries out the activities without understanding the effects of the activities. In that case the project has not been very effective and we couldn't get the outcome as originally planned. The same practices and strategies are adopted by NA while working with the partners in both the districts but the outcome is different because of the attitude of the program team members carrying out the project in those particular areas.

What strategies are used by Nagarik Aawaz to strengthen peace practices and theoretical knowledge with its partner organizations?

Nagarik Aawaz practices the transformative peace leadership approach while working with the partners. They are considered as a separate entity and also we treat them as partners rather than donors. We believe in their skill, capacity and their institution. They have the decision making power on designing the project and carrying out the activities. We don't dictate the partners on how the activities should be carried out. Also, we don't force our values upon them but we want them to learn through our actions. During the interaction with the senior team of NA the CEO expressed, *“We are a value driven organization but we cannot push the values to our partner organization as they are an independent entity. However, our practices,*

reflective spaces, way of working, modesty and humility will help to transfer our values and they can replicate it in their work voluntarily.”

Nagarik Aawaz designs its projects to allow creativity while implementing it in the local context. We believe the peacebuilding activities should not be rigid and not limited to what is thought in the beginning of the designing of the project. This is because the context is ever changing and the work needs to be adapted to the change. Therefore, we just use the broad term ‘peace initiatives’ in our project plan. Within those peace initiatives, the partner organizations can design the initiatives based on the requirement of the local context but also keeping in mind the overall goal and objective of the project.

Regarding the capacity building of the team members, Nagarik Aawaz provides training to the team on different theories such as Gender and Peacebuilding, Transformative Peace Leadership, Element of Dignity, Peace Circle and Dialogues and many others. We believe that it is important for the team to understand the theories and practices of peacebuilding in order to carry out the project effectively. It not only helps in the effective implementation of the project but also helps in personal development of the staffs which will eventually support in the organizational development of the partners.

While NA does adopt certain strategies to strengthen peace practices and theoretical knowledge of the partner organization, there are still certain areas where NA needs to concentrate its focus on to improve the understanding and development of partner organizations.

We provide the training and orientation about our project and activities to the program team but we forget to include the Board Members of the partner organizations in such orientation. It is equally important for the board and other team

members of the organization to understand the values and practices of peacebuilding in order for the organization to adopt such practices in their other projects. When we look at the sustainability of the efforts made by NA during its project period, the values and practices are most likely to be adopted and carried forward by the board members and other senior team of the organization in the long run.

The training is provided to the team on peace practices but we forget to provide training on technical skills which will support the implementation and outcome of the project. The technical aspect also strengthens the capacity of the organization as a whole. For example, the training needs to be provided on proposal writing, report writing, financial management, data collection, documentation and data security. As we are working with the vulnerable community, the data collection, documentation and security issues are very crucial. Also, these trainings will help to improve the analytical and interpretation skills of the program team members.

Nagarik Aawaz believes in sustainable peacebuilding and works with the partners so that the resources and efforts made by NA will be sustained even after the end of the project period. NA focuses highly on personal transformation but it needs to make extra effort in engaging the key stakeholders while designing the project. When we are focusing on the organizational development of the partners and want them to be recognized as the peacebuilding organization then it is very important that they regularly communicate and coordinate with the local government and other key stakeholders in order to show their presence and make them understand why it is still important to work with the conflict-affected community. This will help in sustainability of the efforts made during the project period because eventually the government has to be responsible for the conflict-affected community.

How does Nagarik Aawaz evaluate this knowledge transfer?

Peacebuilding is a process and it is not very easy to show the results of such work because we work on the internal transformation of people. The peace practices of NA need time and dedication to learn. Transferring the knowledge and seeing the change takes time. We have to be very patient and not expect any instant differences. The senior team of NA has observed that it takes 3 years to learn and adapt the values of peacebuilding. However, if we strategically plan the knowledge transfer, the NA team is optimistic of improving the time frame needed for the knowledge transfer. FGD with the program team also showed that eventually they will also adopt the values of peacebuilding with time.

“I have 10 siblings but my father came to live with me in his old age. He didn’t even live with his sons but chose to live with me. I believe this is because I have learnt the peacebuilding work and adopted it in my personal life too.” – Currently working as Admin Associate in Rolpa district but has been involved in the capacity of Peace Volunteer and Peace Ambassador for the projects run by NA in partnership with NWCSC since 2011.

For organizational development of the local partners NA has to have a definite monitoring and evaluation process institutionally built in Nagarik Aawaz. Feedback loop systems are missing in NA for the partner organizations. Although NA has open communications policies it needs to build a more robust feedback loops for better implementation of projects and necessary adjustments. The Program Development Coordinator during the interaction expressed, *“We trust the leadership of the partner organization and invest in creating positive energy while working with them. Our way of dealing with them and meeting with them regularly helps to maintain the*

relationship. However, we lack in these areas when it comes to confronting the issues and giving strong feedback.”

Open communication, transparency and genuineness are the strengths of NA. This practice helps to understand the problem and difficulties that the partners are facing because we encourage them to speak up and share their issues. This is a practice of shared leadership because through this we can help them deal with the challenges they are facing while implementing the project. Also, informal conversations and building healthy relation with the team members will help us know if our practices are working or if there are any areas where we need to improve.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The main goal of my research was to develop a partnership strategy. I have been able to design a partnership strategy adopting my learning and analysis from the 3 cycles of my action research. The strategy shows how NA adopts the transformational leadership style by transferring the knowledge and values of peacebuilding to the partner organization so that the peacebuilding works can be sustained in the local communities. Also, the theoretical and technical knowledge transfer will help in the organizational development of the partner as a whole and will not just be limited to the projects implemented through partnership with NA. The adoption of this strategy will lead to the shared leadership of NA and the partner organization in owning the project and working effectively as a team to achieve the planned outcome of the project.

Following is the newly designed partnership strategy:

Partnership Strategy of NA

The action research was carried out to prepare a strategy for Nagarik Aawaz in order to lessen the gap between expected outcome and actual outcome while implementing the project through partner organizations. I have prepared a strategy that includes the recommendation in three different aspects to work effectively with the partner organizations. The partnership strategy should be adopted in such a way that the values of NA which also includes the values of peacebuilding should be reflected by the partner organizations.

1. Knowledge Transfer

The first aspect of knowledge transfer should be the trainings to be provided to the team of partner organizations on the basics of peacebuilding. The team should clearly understand why it is important to carry out the peacebuilding works and what different theories say about it. This helps in the capacity building of the team members of the partner organization and also helps in the organization development as a whole. The training can be given on different topics and some of which are listed below:

- Conflict and Peacebuilding
- Transformational Peace Leadership
- Element of Dignity
- Gender and Peacebuilding
- Composite Heritage
- Storytelling

The second aspect of knowledge transfer is teaching them the technical skills so that it will help in the organizational development along with the effective implementation of the project. The technical skills can be provided on following topics:

- Proposal writing
- Report writing
- Financial and administrative management
- Writing case stories
- Documentation of photos, videos and case stories
- Digital Security
- Basic Psychosocial Counseling

The third aspect of knowledge transfer should be focused on improving their analytical skills.

- It is important that we sit together and do the conflict analysis with them. It will help them understand the core concept of the project design and where the idea is coming from. They will be able to relate to the different aspects related to conflict and where our focus is.
- The program team should be given orientation on the goal, objective, outcome and impact of the project. It is important for them to understand how we do the outcome mapping and analyze how the activities carried out are contributing to the expected outcome and impact.
- Making program team understand the theory of change would help to improve their analytical skills. Theory of Change is essentially a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context (Change, Center for Theory of).

2. Implementation of peace practices

The research process has identified that there are already some very good practices adopted by NA which helps the partner organizations to learn the values of peacebuilding and adopt it in their project implementation. Also, some finding suggests that there are further more to be done in order to transfer the values of peacebuilding to the partner organization. The following practices should be implemented by NA while working with partner organizations:

- Provide orientation to the board members, program team members and other staff of the partner organization regarding the values of NA and values of

peacebuilding. It is the board members in the long run who will practice the values within the organization.

- The participatory approach should be adopting while designing the projects to be implemented through partner organizations because the partners will be able to take the ownership of the project and they know the local context better. This helps in taking the shared leadership in effective implementation of the project.
- NA should encourage the use of creativity and local practices by allowing the flexible space in implementation of project through budget and activities because rigidity blocks the creativity. Also, the creative practices of NA should be exchanged with the partner organization such as candle lighting and peace songs to set the ground before starting any event.
- NA not only believes in the personal transformation of beneficiaries but also focuses on the interpersonal transformation of their staff. The same should be encouraged in the case of team of partner organization. A project cannot be implemented effectively if the program team does not have the mindset and sensitivity to work with the conflict affected community. The healthier mindset of the staffs of an organization will help in its growth and development.
- Open communication and transparency should be practiced with the partner organization and they should be encouraged to do the same. This will create a healthy working environment and it will be easier to deal with the problems and situations that arise during the course of project implementation. This encourages the transformative leadership approach that NA is already practicing.

3. Monitoring & Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation is one of the most important aspects while working with the partner organizations. We transfer the knowledge and peace practices to the partner organization but the monitoring and evaluation will help us verify if the practices are actually being adopted and if the knowledge is transferred. The following should be done for monitoring and evaluation:

a. Field visits

The field visits should be done at regular intervals because it helps to see the firsthand impact of the project. We will be able to meet the people we are working with and also visit the community we are working in. This will reduce the gap between us and the beneficiaries and they will feel respected. We will also observe the actual scenario and can reflect on how the project is being carried out and if the beneficiaries actually belong to our target group. We want the resources to be properly utilized. The regular field visits will also help to strengthen the relationship with the partner organization.

b. Monthly meetings

The monthly meeting should be done with the program team to see how the project is being implemented. As an approach of transformational leadership, the regular communication will help the team to open up and make them comfortable to ask questions and suggestions for carrying out the project activities. This will help in the effective implementation of the project. Also, the current socio-political context of the working areas will be known.

c. Review reflection workshops

The review reflection workshop of the project should be done quarterly or bi-annually to keep in check if the activities are carried out properly and whether the project is working towards the goal we are trying to achieve or not. Here, we can

assess the analytical and presentation skill of the partner organization. We can give them feedbacks on areas of improvement. Also, it is equally important that we appreciate the efforts and hard work of the team in carrying out the activities as planned in achieving the expected outcomes. The improvement in analytical and presentation skills will help in the organization development.

d. Focus group discussions

The focus group discussions should be carried out with the team members and also separately with the beneficiaries of the project. This will help to have an open and focused discussion on the implemented project. We will actually know which aspects of the project are working well and what needs to be improved. Also, we will have information on how the program team is working in the community and how the community perceives the project. Then it will be easier to give them the feedback and appreciate them for their recognition. The real issues can be discussed and brought forward through FGDs.

The current research was done taking into consideration one project and only one partner organization of NA with whom we have been working together on and off since 2006 which is a long period of time. However, the experiences of the long term staff of NA who have worked with partners or are working with partners are taken into consideration. Currently NA is working in partnership with 5 partner organizations and it is important that we carry out bigger research taking into account the experience of all these partner organizations. Regular interaction was done with the team of NA during this research and it was a general observation of the senior team of NA that it takes at least three years of investment to build the trust and relationship with the partner organization. Not just with the partner organization but

also the new employees in NA need three years at least to understand the work and reflect the values of NA. We can do further discussions and interaction on this to analyze why it takes time and how can we make this process faster.

Since we are focused on the value based approach it is necessary that we document the change to see the impact of these and how are we actually transferring the values and practices of peacebuilding. It is not just the major changes but even the minor change in one individual also makes a difference. This way we will be able to know what is working and what needs to be improved or made better. Our practices are ever changing with the time and context and it is necessary that we update ourselves to the changing scenario.

Some of my recommendations to NA team, partner organization and NA as an organization are as follows:

Recommendation for NA Team:

As the project is carried out with shared leadership there should be regular reflections on project activities and outcomes because this will help the partner organizations to keep in track the work they are doing. Also, it will give them a space to present and analyze their work which will enhance their capacity and help in organizational development.

It is important to build the relation with the partner team. The relation should not just be formal but the team should be connected at a deeper level for clear communication and building trust.

The team should understand that the partner organizations are the masters in their context and they should be trusted while carrying out the activities. They should be guided and appreciated along with giving the feedbacks but they should not be forced with ideas. It is important from the lens of transformational leadership.

The team members beyond the program team such as admin/finance team and communication team should be equally responsible to transfer that value and knowledge of peacebuilding to partner organizations.

It is important to transfer the technical skills to the partner team because it not only helps in effective implementation of the project but helps in personal growth of the team members which eventually helps in the growth of the organization as a whole.

Recommendation for NWCSC/partner organization:

The Board members are the key people of the partner organization and they have the decision making power. The project carried out in partnership is done through shared leadership so the board members should also be clear about the project and do regular monitoring and evaluation of the project to ensure the activities are being carried out effectively.

The financial team should also reflect the values in their attitude and behavior while dealing with the conflict affected women because they are the vulnerable group of people. Even a word wrongly used or the improper tone will be condescending for them and it will hurt their dignity.

The partner team should take the feedback given by NA very seriously and bring the changes that need to be for the effective implementation of the project. NA has the experience of 20 years in value based peacebuilding work and the suggestions are given based on the experience. The partner team should be very clear about the project goals, outcomes and activities. If there is any confusion or misunderstanding then they should reach out to NA for clarification and not just carry out the activities on the basis of guess and assumption.

The partner team should understand the value and essence of safe spaces that are created and utilize it properly. Also, safe spaces are not just the physical structure but it can be any space where we can share openly without judgments.

The major strength of the partner organizations are their relation with the stakeholders because they are the local organizations and know the local people and government. Even they should adopt transformative leadership style and transfer the knowledge and values to the stakeholders for sustainable peacebuilding.

Recommendation to Nagarik Aawaz as an organization:

NA should invest on providing Training of Trainers (ToT) on different topics to the team members of NA because the internal resources can be mobilized while transferring the theoretical knowledge to the partner organization. Also, it is more effective if the in-house resource person is used because they will not only transfer the theoretical knowledge but will also teach values and make it more relevant to the peacebuilding work.

Being a transformative leader we should not forget that the partner organization is a separate entity. We should respect their leadership and inner circles. We should not be involved in their internal decisions.

While selecting the partner it is important to assess the partner organization based on the organization culture, process and their values and not just limit to admin/finance aspect and their credibility. Also, partnership should not be done on the credibility of one person or one leader of the organization but the entire organizational process should be considered. We aim for a long term partnership so it should be process led rather than person led.

It is important to create spaces for partner organization to reflect on peace practices. We can do this by bringing together the team members and board members of different organizations. Sharing sessions among different partner organizations will help to learn from one another and broaden their perspective.

We can connect the partner organizations to other donors and recommend them on different platforms which will increase their exposure and experience. NA should extend the institutional support beyond project limitation and help in time of need by providing relief support and emergency support. Also, it will be better if we could provide flexible fund for their initiatives and well-being. We believe in the organizational development of our partners and it is important that we contribute to their growth.

As a part of the transformative leadership practice we should believe that the partners are the masters in their context because they have long working experience in their area so they should be included during the planning phase of the project. The participative approach will help to build the trust, ownership and also the designed project will be more relevant.

As NA is adopts a very soft approach while providing feedback the partners do not take it seriously at times. It is important to come with an alternative to that because at times the recommendation is not enough and direct feedbacks are necessary for them to take it seriously. Eventually this feedback will lead to them improving their work and help in their skill development.

I started this research questioning why NA does not have a concrete partnership strategy even though we prefer to work with local partner organizations and believe in transferring the values of peacebuilding. Also, I work directly with four

partner organizations and it was very difficult for me at times to make the partner team understand why our work and approach is different than the regular development work that the NGOs do. This research helped me clearly understand the values of peacebuilding which are adopted by NA and how we can transfer it to our partners. It was a great learning experience for me because I had to dig deeper into 21 years of experience of NA and how it was working with the partners without any concrete strategy and yet somehow the partnership was working well. It was clear that NA adopts the transformative leadership style and it is because of that the partnership was working well even without any concrete strategy.

Reflecting on my role in NA, I have realized that my role is not only to make the partners implement the project, but as a peace practitioner I am also responsible to transfer the values and practices of peacebuilding. We employees at NA are all transformative leaders and we represent the organization to the partners and the community so it is equally important that we adopt the values in our personal life too. Peacebuilding is a process that is not only for people we work with but it is also a process within us.

The peace practices that we do are not just limited to the projects and completing the activities that are designed. It is beyond that. The values should be reflected in our way of thinking, our attitude, and behavior, how we talk, how we present ourselves and we should live the values in our everyday lives. I have become more grounded and humble after the action research and feel blessed to be a part of the organization that has brought tremendous personal transformation in me. Through FGDs and interactions I could reflect on how NA has made an impact on me and I realized that knowingly and unknowingly I have adopted the values of peacebuilding in my personal life too. My responsibility as a peace practitioner is to be the

connector and not just teach peace work. My role as a peace practitioner is to become a reflective mirror because our attitude and behavior is what is most reflected by the people we work with.

This Action Research helped to prepare a partnership strategy for Nagarik Aawaz that can be referred to while beginning a new partnership or beginning a new project with the existing partners. The partners will also benefit from it and it will help in their organization development. The thorough study on the values of peacebuilding and its transfer helped to develop this strategy. This strategy might not just be relevant for Nagarik Aawaz but it can also be adopted by other peacebuilding organizations who work in partnership while implementing the projects. It is evident that one of the objectives of working in partnership with the local organizations is to adopt shared leadership and sustain the efforts of peacebuilding works carried out during the project period. The knowledge and values of peacebuilding will be adopted by the partner organizations in carrying out their works in the communities even after the end of the project and partnership with NA. The partnership strategy will help to strengthen the relation between the organizations and increase the ownership of the project and peace works. According to the RPP Model, the approach that stresses the importance of “ownership” and sustainability of action and efforts to bring about peace, as well as creating momentum for peace, involving more people contributes to Peace Writ Large (CDA Collaborative Learning Projects , 2016). The partnership strategy focuses on the sustainability and ownership of the values of peacebuilding which will contribute to the Peace Writ Large.

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Annex I

Questionnaire for FGD with the team of NWCSC

1. What do you appreciate about the partnership with NA?
2. What are the lessons learnt from the partnership?
3. How do you interpret peacebuilding?
4. What role is NA playing in helping you understand peacebuilding?
5. What more can NA do or what could be done differently for knowledge transfer?
6. What are the values of partner organization?
7. What are your personal values? What guides you?
8. What practices of peacebuilding that you are implementing is exemplary for you?
9. What practices of peacebuilding that you are implementing can be avoided/dropped/changed?
10. Is the knowledge that NA provides practical for your context? Please explain.
11. What role has NA played in institutional development? What could have been better?

Annex II

Questionnaire for FGD with Women Peace Facilitators of Dang

1. What is your understanding of peace?
2. How did it change after being involved with NWCSC?
3. What is the best learning from NWCSC?
4. How did NWCSC connect you to different agencies?
5. What can NWCSC do better?
6. What did you find the most valuable in this project?
7. How have you changed personally being associated in this project?
8. What more do you want to learn from NWCSC regarding peacebuilding?