



# CWISH NEWS

April 2010

Children-Women In Social Service and Human Rights

Issue 7

## RECENT ACTIVITIES

National Child Labor Conference  
(6-9 of April)

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Standardization of FIR and Medico-legal format on CSA case -Workshop

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Information boards/paintings on Child Help Line Services

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Lobby Meeting with central agencies

## FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Child Club Reviewing and Planning Workshop

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One Day Follow up and Refresher Meeting for Counseling Trained Teachers

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Training of trainers on Child Rights Protection and Promotion through Educational Settings

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School based counselling training for teachers

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Formal School support for working child labour

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12 days movement on 12th June

## News about Women

The 100<sup>th</sup> International Women's Day was celebrated on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March 2010 in many countries all over the world including Nepal. The day is celebrated to acknowledge the contribution made by women in a society. The economic, social and political disparities against women are also highlighted in this day.

Many Nepalese newspapers remembered women by writing articles which

reflected this years theme "Equal Rights, Equal opportunity - Progress for all". To increase equality and equal opportunities CWISH has take women one of its major focused groups. Goal is to empower women trough business education. Another subject in DIC classes is to educate women in reproductive health.

In this Newsletter you can read about the work has been done for women's rights and equality and how CWISH celebrated International Women's Day.

## Ending Slavery of Invisible Workers

When we are having a standard labor practices and system that protects rights and dignity of the workers, a large number of workers are often forgotten. And most of the suffering one will be the women.

Due to the globalization and cross country trade and production system, formal settings of production and labor system is moving towards informalization. The increasing informal economy could be found among the home based workers, who are ultimately contributing significantly for the production of goods and services. The growing informal setting of labor system has on the one hand made the corporate skip from the obligations towards their workers and on the other side the workers become more scattered, unorganized and invisible for the state, consumers and the whole society.

Nepal is increasingly suffering of such informalization of labor force and skipping of state and corporate from their accountability and responsibility towards the workers. On the one hand there are increasing informal sector workers and on the other hand there are continued informal sector labor which has never been recognized and owned by the state and employers. One of such invisible workers is Domestic Workers.

Study by some labor agency has identified 200 thousand plus Domestic Workers in Nepal and 90 percent of them are women and girls, another irony is 60 percent of them are children. A study by CWISH in 2009 among the domestic workers in Kathmandu has revealed that they are denied of their labor rights. Domestic Workers works more than 10 hours a day, receives less than one third of standard salary and wages prescribed by government, They are denied of weekly and annual leave, The accommodation and food facilities provided to them are not satisfactory, They do not have any appointment and contract, they are denied to join trade unions and organizations etc.

Very few trade unions have started to intervene on Domestic Workers sector and state agencies are still ignorant on these issues.

Several studies on the domestic workers issues have concluded that this could be a very good youth employment sector and could strongly contribute for the national economy. But the Decent Work should be established and promoted in this sector.

Recent 8th March has a slogan "Equal Rights, Equal Opportunities: progress for All". This also implies to the women workers suffering inside the closed households. We the civil society and Trade unions need to have hand in hand together with the domestic workers for making them visible, recognized, dignified, ending slavery and promoting decent work.

*Milan Dharel, Executive Director*

### Thought of the month:

“...there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women”  
(Kofi Annan)

## International Women's Day

The International Women's Day has become a major day of global celebration of women. For some people the day has lost its political purpose and has become simply an occasion for men to express their love for women same as Mother's Day or St Valentine's Day. However the original political and human rights theme, designated by the UN, runs strong and political and social awareness of the struggles of women worldwide are brought out and examined in a hopeful manner. To remember the political meaning of the day it's good to know some of its history.

The idea of having an IWD came at the turn of the 20th century, which in the industrialized world was a period of expansion and turbulence, booming population growth and radical ideologies. Changing world got women to protest against inhumane working conditions and low wages which eventually lead women to form labour unions and to gain some basic rights in their workplace.

In May 1908, the Socialist Party of America designated the last Sunday in February for the observance of National Women's Day. Following that declaration the first ever National Woman's Day was celebrated in the United States on 28 February 1909. Women continued to celebrate the Day on the last Sunday of February until 1913.

The first International Women's Conference was held in Copenhagen in 1910 and as a result of the initiative the International Women's Day was marked for the first time in 19th March in 1911. More than one million people took to the streets in a series of rallies in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland. By this time women had noticed their strength on demanding their rights.

On the eve of World War I, women all over the Europe held peace rallies on the 8th of March 1913 and as part of the peace movement Russian women observed their first International Women's Day. With two million Russian soldiers dead in the war, Russian women again chose the last Sunday in February 1917 to strike. Four days later the Czar of Russia was forced to abdicate and the provisional Government granted women the right to vote. That day fell on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March and it became the official day to celebrate women's rights all over the world as well as in Nepal.

In Soviet Union the Bolshevik Alexandra Kollontai persuaded Lenin to make International Women's Day an official holiday which was established. On May 8<sup>th</sup> 1965 IWD was declared as a non working day by the decree of the USSR Presidium on the Supreme Soviet to be celebrated as other holidays. Also in Nepal the IWD has declared by the government a half day holiday for women. International Women's Day has assumed a new global dimension for women in developed and developing countries

alike. The growing international women's movement has helped make the commemoration a rallying point to build support for women's rights and participation in the political and economic arenas. Increasingly, International Women's Day is a time to reflect on progress made, to call for change and to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who have played an extraordinary role in the history of their countries and communities.

### Stall operation by CWISH

To celebrate the March 8th 2010 ANWA organized a three day program. One of their programs was a Stall Operation where NGO Federation Nepal and other Non Governmental Organisations had put up their organization's stall. Other kinds of stalls were also operated such as food, handicraft and cloth with respective organization's banners being out in the open.

CWISH operated a stall with posters displayed in Bhrikuti Mandap for 3 days. At the event the participants could take brochures and publications from CWISH's stall. The Stall



Operation succeeded because many people got to know about CWISH, its target area and target groups. Through the publication people got information on Child rights, Child labour, Domestic Child Labour and its number and status.



### Rally by Balkot CPC

The International Women's Day was also marked by many rallies and interactions. CWISH participated in one rally which was organized by the Balkot CPC with the collaboration of nine community based organizations. The Rally was about the Role of mother to stop CSA and was held to point out what has been done in the issue.

There were about 400 to 500 participants in the rally. People carried play cards which had information on CSA and banners. Chief guest of this program was the DSP Radhika Khadka. In her speech she appreciated all the effort and commitment of mothers who had initiated and put effort to stop CSA.

To raise concern of the Day's theme members of Balkot CPC sang a song about CSA and importance of Child Protection. At last there was Interaction Program among 115 participants who interacted on the Role of mother to stop CSA. Participants discussed about what CSA is and what could be the role of committees in this matter. They agreed that the role of mother is very important in stopping CSA.

### FGD of Unionization

On 8th March CWISH jointly with NIDWU and Domestic Workers Forum organized a Focus Group Discussion and Orientation Class on women's rights and importance to be organized for working women in informal sector.

The FGD was carried out in five different 'Drop in Centers' of CWISH with in Kathmandu and Lalitpur districts. Respondent groups of 5-15 people were formed of women attending CWISH DIC center.

Nepal is in a transitional phase where a new constitution is under the process and every sector wants to be recognized by the constitution. However a huge group of population, mainly female domestic workers, is left out because they are not organized and hence their voice has not reached the concerned party. For that reason the organized FGD was in importance for the women involved in informal sector work.

The purpose of the program wasn't only to find out the perception of the domestic workers regarding organization but also to educate them about Women's and Labor Rights. Participants had basic knowledge about their rights but they didn't feel themselves empowered enough to demand for it.

It was concluded that lack of an organized body is the main reason for domestic workers to be deprived of their rights. Nevertheless the participants were in favour of unionization and starting to demand their rights. All the participants believed that being organized they can bring out necessary change in their work settings.



The FGD wasn't only to list problems but also to find out solutions for them. The respondents hardly knew how to read and write yet they could analyze their situation and put forward useful and effective solutions. Therefore, we can conclude that the knowledge of domestic workers can be utilized to develop an effective working policy.

Participants recommended to be made a working policy which would make domestic work systematic. The policy should include facilities like weekly holiday, sick and maternity leave, job security, contract based work, regular work time and fixed salary. Also, union workers could demand their employers to act humane towards the workers.

The wish to the concerned organizations was to support workers in organizing different skill trainings, empowering them through education, educate on the rights and advocate for the rights of DW.

It is important for women domestic workers to raise their voices and demand their rights to be addressed in the new constitution as formal sector workers.

### Reproductive health orientation

In, Nepal where there are many norms, culture values, superstitions, myths, poverty and illiteracy, girls and women suffer from major problems due to lack of knowledge on reproductive health and menstruation.

Reproductive health orientation health was held in five CWISH DIC's with 60 women participants. The main objectives were to give information and suggestions on problems and use of hygienic cloth and napkins during menstruation. Another objective was on orientation on HIV/AIDS.

The 1 ½ hour orientation contained 10 minutes introduction of each subject and then presentation of pamphlets and analysis. In the end there was a 20 minute discussion where women's questions were answered.

Stories of the month:  
Sharmila Bhandari the smiling  
vegetable merchant

Sharmila is a young woman with a beautiful and friendly smile. At first she seems a bit shy to share her feelings and she answers only in few words. But talking about her family and studying makes her relax and to smile which lights up the street where we are having our chat. She's born in Sindupalchok and after marriage she came to Kathmandu with her husband. Now she lives with her husband and with their little son.

One of the CWISH's committee members happens to be Sharmila's house owner who told her about informal classes. Before participating classes in DIC she didn't know how to read or write. Now she proudly tells how she can dial phone and read newspapers. This achievement is a result of her determined studying. She used to study two hours in DIC when classes were held and every day one hour in the morning and one hour in the evening at home.

Besides learning to read Shamira tells that by participating the class she has got more courage to do things. Before she used to be nervous while talking to other people and felt difficulties to express her problems. Now she can communicate with people and can separate what is wrong and right to defend her rights.

Raising courage to try new things got her to sell green vegetables after finishing her studies. She got 1000 rupees as a financial support from her committee for starting her business. She can save daily about 50 to 100 rupees and she has already returned the debt.

Studying raised her self-esteem and for that reason she wants to study more which her husband agree and supports. Shamira warmly recommends studying for everyone and for the others who want to start new business, she suggest for making candles or taking some training for that. That way it would be easier for them to start their businesses.

Stories of the month:  
Sabitri Karki, 47

Sabitri is one of the clothiers in the footpath of Ratnapark. You get an image of a strong characteristic woman when she shares her thoughts frankly and without hesitation.

She lives in Kathmandu with her family which includes a son, two daughters, her husband and herself. When she came to Kathmandu she started a job in Singha Durbar. Unfortunately she had to leave the job because she wasn't educated. Sabitri tells that because of not being educated she also used to be cheated and she couldn't do anything for that. She wanted to start studying to help herself and luckily her friend told about informal classes of CWISH. Without consulting her family first she started studying together with her friend.

Before participating to DIC Sabitri couldn't read or write but after finishing her studies she knew addition, subtraction, multiplication, division and grammar. She used to study in DIC about 2 ½ hours and 2 ½ hours at home as well. Without practice she has forgotten things she learnt and would like to study more for revision. She only knows to count 1, 2, 3 etc. and alphabets which are helpful in her business.

With the financial support from CWISH and from the committee she has been able to run her business and feed her family. She tells her husband is ill so she has the main responsibility to feed her family. Although her business is not going so smoothly she has already returned 3000 rupees to CWISH of the 5000 RS loan.

The change after studying in DIC has been more in her actions and attitude than economical changes. Before she used to ignore all the new things and was naive about the things around her. But now she is eager to know what's happening in her surrounding. When there is a meeting going to be conducted she wants to go there to learn new things.