



A Need for Recognition and Protection: Women Human Rights Defenders in Nepal



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Gendering Protection - Putting the 'W' in WHRDs

Working on human rights issues in Nepal is no easy task. Human rights defenders are frequently caught between opposing interest groups, be they government, army, political party or criminal. Political parties regularly pressurize police to release criminals affiliated to their party. In standing on the side of human rights, HRDs are often a target for those who would wish to see them silenced – either by threat, physical attack, non-cooperation or social stigmatization.

Nepal's current political instability continues to catalyze impunity throughout the country, leaving human rights defenders (HRDs), and especially women human rights defenders (WHRDs), facing grave challenges and vulnerable to intimidation and physical harm. Whilst at first glance it may appear peculiar to differentiate between HRDs and WHRDs, the distinction is important, as women are confronted by specific challenges and gendered consequences as a direct result of working on human rights issues. These challenges must first be recognized in order to be able to tailor appropriate and effective support and protection.

Who is a WHRD?

A 'WHRD' is simply any woman working for human rights. In Nepal, she could be a lawyer working on conflict-related cases, a journalist reporting on rights issues (Manika Jha on page 6), a lawyer (Rekha Jha on page 11), an anti-trafficking campaigner or someone supporting victims of domestic abuses (see all on page 7).

WHRDs and gender inequality

Across the world, WHRDs face specific challenges and risks as a result of their gender. The nature of the threats, their ability to be carried out, the risk of sexual and domestic violence and slander as consequence of their work – all of these have a gender element which can be magnified depending on the perception of women with a particular social context.

In Nepal, there is still a long way to go in the struggle for gender equality. Most communities follow strict patriarchal codes which marginalize the role of women in society. Child marriage, accusations of witchcraft and *chaupadi* (the exclusion of women from the house during menstruation) are widely practiced. Incidences of trafficking, rape and domestic abuse are almost commonplace. In this context, being a WHRD means having to defy social norms by speaking out and thereby disrupting traditionally male spaces of decision-making and power. This is not without consequence. WHRDs are routinely threatened, attacked, and undermined. Those WHRDs who work specifically on women's rights challenge both physically and through their work, the foundations of patriarchy. These WHRDs are often accused of being 'crazy' and of attempting to 'destroy families'. Further layers of vulnerability are added when a WHRD is also from a low caste background, such as Dalit, or a religious minority group, such as Muslim (see page 8).

Forms of gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities include, but are by no means limited to sexual abuse, attacks and intimidation of family members and public slander. WHRDs are prone to abuse from both state and non-state actors; the latter actions are rarely recognized as human rights violations. Violations from husbands, male and female family members and/or male colleagues abound with impunity.



Peace Brigades International does not take any responsibility for statements made by third parties in this publication.

For this publication we thank:

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Recognition and Protection

Recognition is key in lending credibility to the cause. WHRDs are all too often ignored or ridiculed by police and local authority officers, many of whom hold conservative views. Domestic abuse is often perceived as 'normal'. These dismissive attitudes cause WHRDs to lose respect within their communities, and become more vulnerable as a result. WHRDs need to be publicly recognized so that they have affirmation of their capabilities and can demonstrate that they have the protective backing and support of the state security forces.



Members of the WHRD network in Dhanusha with PBI team members

Many WHRDs working in women's rights are from remote rural areas and have a low education background. They request human rights training to enable them to work more confidently and with more credibility.

In the absence of effective state security provisions, WHRDs have actively used local networks as a strategy to coordinate efforts and put pressure on authorities when filing a case, to support each other when facing threats or obstacles, for solidarity and for communication and information dissemination. But this is not enough.

The Government of Nepal must develop and implement a gender-sensitive protection mechanism for all HRDs. An important element of this would be instructions to state security forces to promptly investigate and prosecute threats or attacks of WHRDs, as deterrence for further such attacks.

It would also be beneficial for WHRDs to learn how to analyze their own level of risk, methods to mitigate this risk and about existing protection mechanisms and how to integrate them into their own work. This knowledge could be passed on through risk assessment trainings that are tailored to WHRDs' needs and experiences. The result of a risk assessment should provide WHRDs with knowledge about which protection tools they can best use, taking their own local context into account. Possible protection tools include advocacy work on behalf of the WHRDs conducted on the central, district and grassroots level, support of WHRD networks by provision of office facilities, awareness raising campaigns and programs designed to boost WHRDs' credibility and lend their work more legitimacy, distribution of official identity cards for WHRDs to increase their credibility when facing state and non-state actors.

Implementation of laws and policies

Provision of legal rights for women and WHRDs are linked. An improvement in the situation for women in Nepal would obviously enable all WHRDs to work more effectively and safely. Whilst the struggle for this improvement continues, WHRDs need gender-sensitive laws and protection mechanisms to be implemented by the Government of Nepal. Indeed, many already exist.

In 2009, the Supreme Court of Nepal ruled that the government must make better protection provisions for WHRDs. During Nepal's recent Universal Periodic Review (UPR) before the UN Human Rights Council, the Government of Nepal received and accepted for implementation several recommendations related to both the rights of WHRDs and women. In 2010, a new Domestic Violence Act was implemented, designed to make it easier to lodge complaints. Despite such legislative gains on women's rights, and vocal support from the judiciary and politicians in Nepal regarding the work of WHRDs, the implementation of these falls short.

At the state level it is crucial that the police, judiciary, parliament and executive work in unison to address problems confronting the WHRD community, effectively utilizing tools already available while developing better protection and security mechanisms in recognition of the gender-specific challenges faced by WHRDs. Approaches must also target interaction programmes and awareness campaigns held at the grassroots level in order to influence community perception of the contributions of women and their place within Nepali society.

In an environment of high hopes and strong efforts toward democratization, the systematic and enduring exclusion of women – be it on political, social, religious or traditional grounds – dramatically hinders the process. For this reason, a strong movement has developed united by the belief that the encouragement of WHRDs will bring Nepal one step closer to inclusive democracy. PBI shares this belief, demonstrating our resolve through close working relationships with WHRD individuals and organizations at the central, district and village levels.

Recommendations for the international community

- Following the commitments made by the Government of Nepal during the Universal Periodic Review to 'adopt special protection mechanisms', and the 2010 Supreme Court of Nepal directives on protection mechanisms for WHRDs, support and encourage the government and police to implement gender-sensitive HRD protection mechanisms in consultation with WHRDs.
- Create opportunities to publicly recognise and celebrate the work of WHRDs and women journalists. Encourage the Government of Nepal to do the same.
- Ask that state authorities cooperate fully with WHRDs and women journalists by fair, impartial and timely investigation of cases raised by WHRDs, implementing gender-appropriate security measures aimed at preventing abuses and, if prevention fails, swiftly investigating and prosecuting abusers of WHRDs and women journalists.
- Make material resources for WHRDs available, including for human rights and protection trainings and increased safe-house provisions.
- Make material resources for trainings and support available to encourage women journalists working outside Kathmandu.
- Lobby to include a session on the roles of HRDs and women journalists and the need for gender-sensitivity when working with these groups within police training packages, which would include taking action to make them more credible, cooperating with them and swift investigation and prosecution of cases of abuse against them.

Watch out! Women writing!

Journalist Uma Singh, 22, was brutally stabbed to death by a group of 15 men in her home in Dhanusha district in January 2009. In late 2009, Tika Bista, also a journalist, was badly beaten by Maoist cadres and left for dead in a forest. Back in Dhanusha in 2010, Manika Jha, 20, was attacked at home by an armed intruder who fled when she managed to raise the alarm. These incidents highlight the very real physical dangers of being a journalist in Nepal, but the gender dimension to reporting is often overlooked. In order to support a safe environment in which women journalists can work, their specific challenges and risks need to be recognised, understood and addressed.

Journalism in Nepal

Journalism in Nepal is a dangerous profession, particularly for all who work outside the nation's capital. Those men and women who choose to investigate stories take great personal risks to bring their findings to light. Most often, this process does not get so far. Where political party cadres, armed group members and state security forces vie for clout in the districts, journalists are increasingly pressured by different actors to either report or censor information. Those who choose to stand against the pressure often have to deal with harsh consequences. In June 2011, journalist Khilanath Dhakal was severely beaten by cadres of a political party, which he had written about in a recent article. Despite the fact that the accused culprits belong to the same party as the then Prime Minister, who had been vocal on acting against impunity, they remain unpunished.



PBI Team monitoring with WHRDs from WOREC

It is no shock then that Nepal is at number 7 on the Committee to Protect Journalists' impunity index, which ranks countries according to their failure to prosecute for murder of journalists. In looking at ways to address this environment of risk in which journalists in Nepal find themselves, it must be recognised that women journalists have specific vulnerabilities and needs. Being a journalist alone is dangerous. Being a woman and a journalist, in a conservative and patriarchal social context, sees the risks increase significantly.

Being a female journalist

It is still unclear exactly why Uma Singh was killed but what is certain is the fact that she was a female journalist working in a conservative society rendered her far more vulnerable than if she had chosen to follow a more traditional role for a woman, such as a teacher or a housewife. Women who take up the journalism profession immediately transgress social norms regarding the role of women in society. They must go out and report on stories – sometimes to remote areas, or at any hour. They make public their opinions. For this, they are viewed with suspicion and are often branded as 'loose' women with low morals. This loss of respect in society can translate into a lack of support in hard times from family, neighbours, and even the police and judicial system.

Manika Jha, a female journalist who often faces threats and attacks, explains that due to these misconceptions, many young women working in the media in Dhanusha are not reporters. They do a desk job but are not furthering the space for female journalists. Manika is one of the few who has made and remains committed to the difficult choice to report. She operates in a heavily male-dominated environment, working and writing in traditionally male spaces. Her parents support her, but many in her community view her with suspicion and derision. This perception weakens her position even further when she needs support against the intimidation and attacks she receives as a result of her writing on corruption and women's rights.

Manika's experience

On the night that her friend and colleague female journalist Uma was murdered, unknown men drew a cross on Manika's door shouting that she "would be next". During the past two years since then, Manika has received numerous phone threats, has endured vicious rumour after public rumour about her character and has been physically attacked three times – once a serious attempt on her life. She has very few people to turn to in these instances and those who target her know this. Her community eyes her with suspicion, she is not affiliated to any political party and even her own journalist colleagues possess conservative views and cannot be relied upon for support.

The response of the police has been sporadic. At times helpful – they have upped the policing around her neighbourhood after attacks, but at other times she can't shake the feeling that they too believe she brings it upon herself, as a young women doing the 'wrong' thing.



Manika Jha

What to do?

It is this core belief - that women should not step out from socially acceptable roles – that needs to be addressed. Social attitudes will take time to change but the implementation of well-thought out laws and policies would support women journalists in the meantime. Police must be made aware of the specific needs of female journalists as part of their professional training. They must take the protection concerns of female journalists seriously and investigate and prosecute threats and attacks as deterrence against further incidents.

There is a role for the international community to play too. In an interaction program with the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in November 2010, Manika asked - "How can you, all the way in Europe, really help me?" This question is one we need to find urgent answers to before more female journalists are abused.

Beyond this, it is about creating the conditions so that women can actively work in the media. An open and democratic Nepal must have gender equality at the heart of its media institutions and a safe space for both men and women journalists alike to work in. *A first step towards this would be encouraging the Nepal government to implement recommendations made within this publication.*

UN Special Rapporteur on HRDs' take on WHRDs

In March 2011, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of HRDs, Margaret Sekaggya, released a report on the situation for women human rights defenders (WHRDs). She expressed her 'dismay' at the extraordinary risks faced by WHRDs and those working on women's rights or gender issues and noted that over a third of her communications to governments over the previous year had been in relation to these HRDs. The Special Rapporteur called for official public recognition of WHRDs, swift police response, gender sensitive protection mechanisms and increased resources.

For the complete report, please visit:

<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G101178/70/PDF/G10117870.pdf?OpenElement>

OpenElement



In March 2008, the UN Human Rights Council appointed Mrs. Margaret Sekaggya as Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders.

Women working on women's rights - Interviews with WHRD minorities

The Hindu caste system in Nepal has caused social and economic inequalities and discrimination that remain entrenched even today. Women from marginalized backgrounds – be that due to ethnicity, religion or caste - suffer multiple layers of discrimination beyond gender discrimination. Those HRDs and WHRDs who support them must also surmount these walls of prejudice.

Dalit WHRDs

Dilisha Gautam on working for Dalit women

Program Coordinator, Feminist Dalit Organization (FEDO) and Assistant Secretary WHRD Network Nepalgunj

The Feminist Dalit Organization was established in 1994 by a group of concerned Dalit women with the vision to "fight against caste and gender discrimination and to construct a just and equitable society".

I started out as an accountant for FEDO. It wasn't until I had an opportunity to join a field visit to a Dalit village that I saw the dramatic conditions the villagers were living in - everyone wore torn clothes and many young men had had to leave to find work in India. My shock made me more open to people from the village when they came to us with their problems. I started to refer cases of abuse on to WHRDs. Slowly, I started getting more and more involved in women's issues and representing their needs, as I built up strong links and started to work with them as a WHRD myself.

It's no easy task. We are often accused of interfering in family affairs. We deal with domestic violence cases and because of that we constantly get threats from

the community. But we need to carry on, it is all about changing the idea that women are inferior to men.

Bimala B.K. on the need for recognition

Chairperson, Dalit Feminist Uplift Organization (DAFUO)

The Dalit Feminist Uplift Organization was established in Bardiya, Mid-western region, in 1997. DAFUO works on Human Rights of marginalized communities, particularly focusing on Dalit women's rights.

Bimala began working on human rights when she was a student, after experiencing caste discrimination first-hand. "Dalit students were not allowed to participate in any special school programs or events", Bimala explains, "so to tackle this discrimination against us, we Dalit students formed a club to discuss issues of discrimination and also to assist other Dalit students". When Bimala left school, she began volunteering for DAFUO.

In the early days, she and fellow WHRDs faced multiple challenges from their communities, and even from their own families. "Sometimes people from the community accused us of having a bad character. They said we should not go out of our houses and that we shouldn't interfere with the personal matters of other families." Bimala knows this was for two reasons – that she was a woman and a Dalit.

"Being a Dalit woman, society's view of me is different. My family did not want me to go outside, as the environment in which we do our human rights work is not safe".

Bimala has noticed in recent years that her security situation has dramatically changed. This has

much to do with recognition. Bimala believes she now has her "own status in society". As a result she is "able to talk with internationals and able to bring up cases in national and international forums" without fear of the consequences. By continuing with their work, Bimala and other activists like her have helped change society's views.

But there is still much room for improvement. Bimala sees a clear link between "the mentality and mindset of people in our society and also in government policies and programs".

The key now, Bimala thinks, is to change the attitude of government's officials towards WHRDs by formulating human rights friendly policies and programs which have a gender-sensitive element.



Bimala B.K.

After twelve years of professional work as a WHRD, Bimala

"cannot think of doing any other work than human rights work".

1. Dalit is a designation for a group of people traditionally regarded as untouchable in the caste system as their status has often been historically associated with occupations regarded as ritually impure.

Muslim WHRDs

Maimoona Siddiqui on changing attitudes within **the Muslim community**

Vice President, Fatima Foundation Nepal (FFN)

Fatima Foundation Nepal is an organization working for the promotion of Nepali Muslim women's rights. Established in 2004, they have branch offices in 7 districts.

I am from India, and have a master's degree in development but got married in Nepalgunj and after that was meant to stay at home, as a traditional housewife. Mohammadi Siddiqi, president of Fatima Foundation, came to my house and said that being an educated woman I should work for the community. She said "you can help bring the message of WHRDs to our community". Mohammadi inspired me. I was the first woman in my community to come out of my home like that. I started to work for Fatima Foundation, learning the Nepali language from scratch.

I was lucky, my mother-in-law and husband supported me in following this idea. The challenges came from others within our Muslim community. Islamic intellectuals and leaders had a negative impression of our work, perceiving us to be working against Islamic values and norms. For example, we published a book on *Women's Rights in Islam* taking the Quran as reference. Following the publication, some Muslim leaders and intellectuals were really negative towards us. Some Muslim journalists even wrote negative articles about our organization.

In response, we held interaction meetings with *Moulavis* (Muslim priests), community leaders and journalists and explained our work

to them. After that, the *Moulavis* gave us written permission to carry on with our work. Now *Moulavis* and Muslim intellectuals come to us for help. We invite them to participate in our programs.

I think that this has been possible because we continue to follow the beliefs and duties of Islam. As we also provide empowerment and skill development trainings to women and have formed 'savings groups', many men are now gaining a positive attitude towards us. In a recent skill development training for women some men even turned up to participate as their partners could not attend. These are the changes that we have been able to bring to our society.

Becoming a WHRD

Sandhya Sharma on what it takes to **become a WHRD**
Aawaaj member

Aawaaj was created in 1999 and works mainly in three districts: Dailekh, Surkhet, and Bardiya. They focus on domestic abuses, gender bias issues, child abuse and trafficking cases.

Sandhya Sharma was born in 1981 in Gulariya, Bardiya District, in the Midwest region of Nepal. As the youngest child in her family she was encouraged by her parents from an early age to pursue her interests and a good education. At Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu she earned a Master's Degree in Rural Development, getting involved in project work for local organizations during her time as a student.

Sandhya admits that when she first joined Aawaaj her knowledge of human rights work was very limited. However, thanks to trainings and her experiences through her work over the last three years,

she is steadily gaining the skills and confidence needed in facing the daily challenges of a WHRD.

As Aawaaj Bardiya's team leader she has a diverse set of duties including overall management of the office, monitoring of the local human rights situation for women and children, and the strengthening and maintaining of national and international networks.

Sandhya is proud of the progress the movement for women's and children's rights has made in the region and sees the trust local women have in her and Aawaaj as an important achievement. As she recounts: "before our programs, women did not know about their rights and couldn't come to share their problems. The trust in Aawaaj has become stronger. This trust is mostly because we work quickly and give them fast feedback."

The importance that Aawaaj has gained in the community, however, also means that WHRDs often work long days and can feel overwhelmed by the responsibility their work brings. As Sandhya told us, the two consultants employed at Aawaaj's Bardiya office are hardly able to keep up with the demand for meetings. The difficult and often disturbing subjects the office deals with further contribute to already high stress levels.

While Sandhya laments the difficulties women still face in attaining citizenship and the lack of provisions to protect them in case of divorce, she is cautiously optimistic about the constitution writing process and future improvements of women's and children's rights in Nepal.



Sandhya Sharma

Defending the Defenders

Shyam Shah works across eight districts in the central and eastern Terai (Nepal's troubled southern plains) to support members of the WHRD Network – often illiterate and uneducated village women campaigning against domestic abuse and rape. In order to access them she rides a motorbike through areas where even a woman on a bicycle is a rare sight. She assists the WHRDs in raising awareness, dialogue with authorities and advocacy at the national level. By doing this work, Shyam Shah is a WHRD in her own right. Here she shares some insights into her work on the frontline of the fight for women's rights in Nepal.

Motivation for being a WHRD

I am working as a WHRD because in our community people mistreat women and view us as second-class citizens, although we are citizens in our own right and should be considered equal to men. We also take an active part in the human rights movement, and that too should be acknowledged.

Challenges in the districts

I face problems while traveling. When I spend time outside [my community] I stay in hotels. Many men there verbally abuse me and I often feel insecure. When I stage programs in other communities people sometimes have negative reactions, because I have left my community to come to theirs. In

addition to these challenges, a number of armed groups are active in the Terai districts where I work. Due to this, the communities with whom I work face increased security issues, and WHRDs like myself who work there receive threats from these armed groups.

Specific challenges to women HRDs

When we meet authorities with a male HRD the authorities show us less respect, even misbehaving in some cases. Their perception is that the woman doesn't have a legitimate role and is only there to accompany the male HRD. Some high-ranking officials have told us that women are supposed to work at home so any violent incident which occurs in the course of our work is therefore understandable!

Additionally, women face risks related to sexual violence. For instance, we sometimes have to work or travel late at night and in the dark while on a campaign, which increases the risk of rape.

Threats and intimidations

I was once working on a witchcraft case in [the eastern Terai district of] Siraha. I went to the victim's village on a fact-finding mission. Upon my arrival, when I reached the local market, a group of 50 people surrounded me to beat me up. Fortunately, I was rescued by a local HRD. In the wake of the incident I received several threats on my phone.

More generally, I take up cases of domestic vio-

lence and support the victims in accessing justice. But the victim's community may well oppose this move. Therefore, WHRDs like myself are caught between the victims and their communities, a sensitive and risky position. Sometimes matters get worse due to political interference, as with a case of child marriage that led to me receiving threats from political parties. (1)

Root causes

The main root cause is the patriarchal mindset of our society, which is based on religion. This is why men always want to rule and put women in the background. Men always see women as being second class citizens. Politics and greed for power plays a role too. Men indeed want to keep the power in their hands and relegate women to passive roles.

Relationship with authorities

There are difficulties when it comes to dealing with government agencies and the police. We are not automatically listened to. But we faced many more difficulties back when we started our work. Things are slowly improving as we strive to make them understand our work. It's also due to the recognition and pressure from the international community. It's not yet perfect though, some officials still do not accept us as HRDs.

WHRD International Coalition

The WHRD IC is a resource and advocacy network for the protection and support of women human rights defenders worldwide. It currently has 25 member organizations, including Amnesty International, Frontline and PBI.

Visit: <http://www.defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/>



Shyam Shah with the PBI field team

How can different actors improve the situation for WHRDs and women in general?

“The key point is that we, our rights and our work should be supported and respected. After all, we make up half the country!” The local community should understand that we are working as human rights defenders, not just as women. The police should be supportive by recognizing that we are actually helping them by bringing the accused person into the investigation process so that victims can get justice. The police should consider us as a partner, and doing this would acknowledge our role as HRDs. International agencies could support us more too. Since we are working under international principles, the international community should initiate a positive working environment with the government and other stakeholders.

Goal as a WHRD

I am passionate about my work because I am advocating for the rights of women. I think WHRDs should have their own place and identity. Here in Nepal, when the names of HRDs are praised they are only the names of male HRDs. We WHRDs should have equality. My goal is to have the names of WHRDs become famous too.

1. Political interference in human rights or criminal cases is commonplace in Nepal when community leaders or members of political parties are incriminated. In such situations it is typical for pressure to mount on the police to drop the case and instead criminalize the HRDs.



In June 2011, PBI interviewed WHRDs for a documentary in Dhanusha district., including lawyer Rekha Jha (in picture with PBI team)

Rekha Jha on the dangers of not being taken seriously

Independent lawyer

We WHRDs have more enemies than friends. There isn't any particular security system for us - anything could happen at any time. In one case, a woman was killed due to disagreements over her dowry. This murder was portrayed as a suicide, but all the HRDs and WHRDs raised their voices about it and a murder case was filed. I worked on the case as the only women lawyer in a team of lawyers. It is no coincidence that I was the only one to receive threats.

This type of issue should be taken seriously by the HR community but it isn't. They have to think about our protection but they are not thinking about it or taking us seriously. Especially here in the Terai, everybody has the perception that women can't do anything and that they don't have enough knowledge. If any male lawyer is up against me in a case, then his ego tells him he must win, because he could not lose the case to a female lawyer.

Recently one incident happened - the attempted rape of a 17 year old Dalit woman. A policeman was also involved in the case. I went to file the case, but the District Police Office (DPO) didn't register it, which means that I had to go to the appellate court where the case is currently pending. Now I am perceived as a personal enemy by that policeman. He thinks I am trying to send him to jail. In such a scenario, who has the responsibility to provide me with protection? Other HRDs are avoiding this case, as the police are involved, but I am not. In this kind of situation, the government has responsibilities. I talked with the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), the Chief District Officer (CDO) and the Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) about this case and also sent a copy of the FIR application to the police headquarters, as well as to the office of the DIG, but nobody is taking an interest in this case. The response to this case leads me to ask the question, how much responsibility has the government taken? Similarly, WHRDs are facing difficulties and challenges – who will stand up and support us?

How PBI-Nepal supports the work of WHRDs:

Physical Presence, Training and Advocacy

PBI Nepal has influence on institutional actors who publicly commit to supporting human rights, such as police, local government and political parties. PBI's physical **presence** of International volunteers can help dissuade them from harmful practices and persuade them to take action for WHRDs, including public support for legitimacy. When it comes to threats or violence from armed groups, communities and families, PBI-Nepal follows up with the institutional actors to ensure they take protective

In response to requests from organisations and individuals at risk, PBI-Nepal facilitates **trainings** for WHRDs on human rights and security so that they know the rights they are defending and are better able to protect themselves with knowledge and risk assessments. PBI-Nepal also **raises awareness** and WHRDs' profiles through meetings and interaction programs at local, national and international levels, short films, speaking tours, website and publications such as this one.

PBI Nepal has been working with WHRDs since 2006. In 2010-2011 PBI Nepal conducted a UK-funded pilot program in Dhanusha district to assess the best methods for international support for WHRDs.

PBI distributes attendance certificate to the participants of the WHRD security training in Dhanusha



A workshop during the security training to WHRDs in Dhanusha which was facilitated by PBI



PBI team prepares for the advocacy film on WHRDs



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For more info on who we work with and how

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Peace Brigades International (PBI) is an international grassroots organisation registered with the United Nations that has been working to promote nonviolence and protect human rights since 1981.

Established in 2006, the Nepal Project works according to the philosophy of nonviolence, within the framework of international norms of human rights. It is independent of political and religious agendas, abides by principles of non-interference and works on the request of its partners.

PBI facilitated a security training for WHRDs in Dhanusha district in early 2011 (shown in photo), who were keen to learn practical skills and tools to increase their protection.



If you wish to contribute, you can:

- Support us by donation as an individual or through an organisation
- Join your nearest PBI group and the Nepal Support Network
- Become a PBI volunteer

Contact info@pbi-nepal.org