

2012 THE PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVE: BASELINE SURVEY IN NEPAL

As with many conflict situations, a key group affected is youth. In post-conflict peacebuilding this particular population can have significant influence as well. Nepal is currently undergoing a difficult transition to peace and democracy, leaving the future role of youth uncertain. A study was conducted to **‘understand the importance of youth in peacebuilding, transformation of conflict and building a culture of peace.’** Specific emphasis was placed on the kinds of programs and approaches taken toward youth and peacebuilding.

Following a broad analysis of the current situation of youth in Nepal, the report proceeds to **gather information on peacebuilding programs and work with youth through unscripted individual field interviews.** Open-ended questioning remained flexible to adapt to the direction of the conversation. While the data collection was strictly qualitative, the information gathered is not absolute in its truth, but rather allowing for an understanding of the individuals and programs to be the focus. Results from these interviews demonstrate a generally positive trend focusing on the needs of youth and how initiatives can make them part of the transformational process

NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY

Complementing the increasing level of awareness and involvement of youth in political issues, the **National Youth Policy created a link between youth and government that was previously unclear.** At the community level ‘the government of Nepal carries programs aim at addressing youth issues under the Ministry of Youth & Sports for 2½ years.’ Focal points of information on youth and their issues are being designed through ‘youth information centres’. Additionally, the Ministry has involved youth political groups, collaborating with over 600 youth organizations, and job training for 1000 youth. However, meaningful implementation efforts are lacking due to what interviewees called ‘the Nepali “planning culture” – where plans are often made but less often followed through with.’

SFCG COMMUNITY PEACEBUILDING, MEDIA, AND SPORTS

Many innovative SFCG programs focus on youth and peacebuilding through the media. **Radio soap operas (Naya Bato Naya Payla) and talk shows (Farakilo Dharti) promote dialogue and social cohesion.** Workshops for radio professionals about conflict sensitivity are developed through Radio for Peacebuilding. Television is another valuable outlet, promoting good leadership and governance in the

TV series 'Hamro Team'. SFCG organizes multiple sports activities in communities linking youth development and peacebuilding, such as the Games and Sports for Peace games between disputing parties.

SFCG DEVELOPS EDUCATION AND PEACEBUILDING

The relevance of education in peacebuilding is significant and there is a major deficit in well-rounded, knowledgeable youth in Nepal. Given the educational system's disproportionate focus on technical skills teaching, SFCG has been active to improve equally important soft skills. **"The graduates of the education system emerge educated but not skilled."** The development of Peacebuilding Education Course for Teacher Education in Higher Education Institutions as well as publishing academic research papers helped produce 'course materials which adhere to conflict sensitivity and respects diversity and inclusiveness.' Pedagogical transformation has been advanced through opportunities that SFCG has identified for teacher education and educational reconstruction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are key recommendations for follow-ups:

Focus in the areas of youth education and providing knowledge, abilities, and skills.

1. Provide youth with increased soft skills, such as leadership, communication, and confidence through training and education.

Working with politically involved youth and politically aware youth.

2. Work with 2nd and 3rd level political youth leaders who may be cooperative and will eventually have large influence.

How youth relate to their communities.

3. Promote cultural exchange programs between youth to create mutual understanding and highlight the commonalities between them, helping to forge a common Nepali identity.

Successful government involvement with youth.

4. Train youth in good governance and set a positive example of how government can work.

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Understanding Differences; Acting on Commonalities (www.sfcg.org)

Youth and Peacebuilding in Nepal: The current context and recommendations

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Acronyms

AED	- Academy for Educational Development
AISC	- Army Integration Special Committee
CA	- Constituent Assembly
CAAFAG	- Children Associated with Armed Groups and Armed Forces
CCO	- Canadian Cooperation Office
CMM	- USAID Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation
CPA	- Comprehensive Peace Accord
CPN-UML	- Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist)
DFID	- Department for International Development
EIG	- Education for Income Generation
FGD	- Focus Group Discussion
GDP	- Gross Domestic Product
GTZ	- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
INGO	- International Non-Governmental Organization
LRP	- Livelihoods Recovery for Peace
NC	- Nepali Congress
NGO	- Non-Governmental Organization
NLLS	- Nepal Living Standard Survey
OHCHR	- United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PHRCE	- Peace, Human Rights and Civic Education
SACC	- Social Awareness Concern
SFCG	- Search for Common Ground
SRC	- State Restructuring Commission
UCPN (Maoist)	- Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)
UN	- United Nations
UNDP	- United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	- United Nations Children's Fund
UNIRP	- UN Interagency Rehabilitation Programme
UNMIN	- United Nations Mission in Nepal
USAID	- United States Agency for International Development
USIP	- United States Institute for Peace
VDC	- Village Development Committee
VMLR	- Verified Minors and Late Recruits
YAATra	- Youth Advocacy for Accountability and Transparency
YIPR	- Youth Initiatives for Peace and Reconciliation

Introduction

In any post-conflict situation, the likelihood of going back to violence is extremely high. One of the key groups that influence such a situation is youth. Armed conflicts throughout the world have displaced approximately 6.6 million young people (Abayomi 2004). These youths are dislocated from their communities and homes, exposed to violence and face extreme hardship to survive. It is said that young people face the most burdens of war and violence. “These young people often face the additional barriers of a lack of sufficient education, health care, protection, livelihood opportunities, recreational activities, friendship, and family support” (Youth and Peacebuilding, USIP). The conflicts and wars of the world are unavoidable if we do not engage the youth constructively. However, there is a wider consensus in the field and among organizations that children have to be protected. Article 38 of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child obliges signatories to prevent children under 15 years of age from directly participating in hostilities, and the Optional Protocol to the Convention increases this age to those under 18 (Convention on the Rights of the Child, OHCHR). When children are involved in a conflict, it raises widespread political condemnation. In addition, the recent focus of children can be seen through heavy encouragement and acknowledgement of peace education throughout the sector. However, when children pass the age of the societies’ conception of childhood and become youth, there are less policies and programs that protect them from wars and violence. It is an undeniable fact that youth are the “prime life-blood feeding the machinery of war, and continue to play that role today” (Danesh 2008).

If we look at the current context, youth are taking a central role in bringing changes throughout the world. The ongoing Arab Spring is a good example of how youth are becoming advocates of change. Youth are normally seen as soldiers and rebels due to their involvement in violent campaigns throughout the world. However, traditional images of youth in war and violence have to be changed. Youth are and can be agents of peace and advocates of change. Youth however are considered just one of the factors among many in post-conflict reconstruction. Youth can be mobilized both for peace and violence – especially in post-war contexts where the situation is highly fragile and a dynamic demographic such as youth can

determine the success and failure of the peace process. For this reason, the topic of youth and peacebuilding has to be studied through various lenses and contexts, and more research is required in this area.

Currently Nepal is going through an extremely volatile and long peace process. A Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) was signed in 2006 but, as Stedman (1997) argues, the signing of an agreement, while in the best case scenarios prevents a return to the macro war, does not eliminate all overt violence, for example so-called 'spoiler' or dissident violence. In many parts of the country, the effect of the decade long armed conflict can still be seen. It is in a crucial stage of post-conflict reconstruction. According to a current census, approximately 59 percent of Nepal's population is believed to be below 25 years of age (Central Bureau of Statistics 2001). Not engaging and consulting youth could mean a failure of the peace process and the country once again could go through violence. There have been some positive steps toward mainstreaming youth in the recent past – the formation of the Ministry of Youth and Sports and a National Youth policy drafted by the same ministry to address issues concerning the youth in Nepal, as well as a strong youth representation in the Constituent Assembly (CA) – but there is no clear evidence that they will in fact have a meaningful leadership role or impact in policy-making (Adhikari 2010). Additionally, youth in Nepal have to face a lack of economic opportunities and resources. They are underemployed and do not have proper access to education. A recent DFID report suggested that there is direct relationship between low levels of education, participation and employment and the risk of violent conflict (DFID/CSO 2010). This can be seen in Nepal through recruitment of youth by political, criminal and religious organizations. However, the government and many international and national non-government organizations are working with youth and promoting peace through them.

Organizations have slowly started to see potential of the youth in the peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. Government and non-governmental organizations have now recognized youth as important component needed to complete the peace process. Most of the organizations are focused on a rights-based approach in regards to the youth issue. Youth engagement in decision-making has considerably increased in recent years. In addition,

constructive engagement by youth has also increased. These initiatives have been effective in many parts of the country and have been providing valuable knowledge to various youth. However, there are few innovative activities and projects, more youth-specific projects are necessary to incorporate all youth groups and activities have not reached far flung parts of Nepal. To understand the importance of youth in peacebuilding, transformation of conflict and building a culture of peace, this research was designed to explore three main questions: (1) what is the current situation of youth in Nepal?; (2) what kinds of programs are being conducted under youth and peacebuilding?; and (3) what other youth and peacebuilding approaches and interventions can be considered in the future?

This report starts with a brief review of the field of youth and peacebuilding as well as the current broad context of the situation in Nepal, so the reader has an understanding of the larger context surrounding the findings and recommendations the reports presents. This is followed by a description of the methodology and limitations of the report. Next comes the findings about youth and peacebuilding in Nepal. Finally, we present our recommendations for those working in the field of youth and peacebuilding in Nepal.

Understanding Youth and Peacebuilding

Definition of Youth

The core challenge for youth and peacebuilding programming is that the concept of youth is itself debated and it is difficult to define the term “youth.” “Some favor biological markers, in which youth is the period between puberty and parenthood, while others define youth in terms of cultural markers—a distinct social status with specific roles, rituals, and relationships” (USAID/CMM 2005). Definitions of youth by age vary drastically across different institutions; the UN has defined youth as person from 15 to 24 years of age, whereas the National Youth Policy of Nepal defines youth as persons from 16 to 40 years of age. Donors and INGOs often bring in their own definitions of youth which are not always adapted to the country they work in. It is argued that the age based definition of the youth is a Western product and writers such as Durham state that youth is a social construct and has more to do with status and behavior and less to do with age (2000). There is a lot of cross cultural variation on when an individual becomes youth and a generally accepted concept is that youth is a transitional phase from childhood to adulthood. It is even more difficult to define female youth. In developing countries such as Nepal, where societies are influenced predominantly by patriarchal values, female generally have to accept more responsibilities at an early age. Motherhood tends to change the social status of female youth far more than fatherhood alters male youth lives. Sommers states that female youth as a category in many cultures scarcely exists (2006). With such broad definitions and lack of consensus on a definition of youth, it is difficult for them to be addressed as one cohesive group.

Conflict and Violence

Conflict is generally defined as a disagreement through which the parties involved perceive a threat to their needs, interests or concerns. The United States Institute for Peace’s (USIP) peace terms glossary defines conflict as an inevitable aspect of human interaction - conflict is present when two or more individuals or groups pursue mutually incompatible goals. Conflicts can be waged violently, as in a war, or nonviolently, as in an election or an adversarial legal process. When channeled constructively into processes of resolution, conflict can be

beneficial (USIP 2011) Conflicts are the expression of opposite interest and they are unavoidable in modern society.

Violence on other hand is the result when dialogues have not been effective to solve the conflict. Violence is a psychological or physical force exerted for the purpose of threatening, injuring, damaging, or abusing people or property. In international relations, violent conflict typically refers to a clash of political interests between organized groups characterized by a sustained and large-scale use of force. Structural violence refers to inequalities built into the social system, for example, inequalities in income distribution (USIP 2011).

What is Peacebuilding?

Peacebuilding is practiced in many conflict-torn nations throughout the world. However, the term peacebuilding does not have a set definition. Peacebuilding is a very widely used term and it differs according to the individuals and contexts. Different writers and organizations have different opinions on what peacebuilding is and what tools it encompasses. According to the United Nations document *An Agenda for Peace*, peacebuilding consists of a wide range of activities associated with capacity building, reconciliation, and societal transformation (Boutros-Ghali 1992).

The United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in 1992, designed the overall UN doctrine concerning peace operations. Boutros-Ghali established preventive diplomacy as action to prevent the emergence of disputes between parties and prevent disputes to escalate into conflict and limit the spread of the conflict; Peacemaking as the action to make hostile parties to find an agreement; Peacekeeping as the implementation of United Nations presence on the ground, with the consent of all parties, usually involving police, military and UN civilian and peacebuilding, as the consolidation of peacemaking and peacekeeping operations to identify and support structures that will consolidate peace and provide an atmosphere of confidence and wellbeing among people. (Boutros-Ghali, 1992)

However, other organizations see peacebuilding as an overarching concept which includes peacemaking, early warning and response efforts, violence prevention, advocacy work, civilian and military peacekeeping, military intervention, humanitarian assistance, ceasefire agreements, conflict transformation and the establishment of peace zones. Peacebuilding is defined as a process that facilitates the establishment of durable peace and tries to prevent the recurrence of violence by addressing root causes and effects of conflict through reconciliation,

institution building, and political as well as economic transformation (Ibid). Alliance for Peace defines peacebuilding as

the set of initiatives by diverse actors in government and civil society to address the root causes of violence and protect civilians before, during, and after violent conflict. Peacebuilders use communication, negotiation, and mediation instead of belligerence and violence to resolve conflicts. Effective peacebuilding is multi-faceted and adapted to each conflict environment. There is no one path to peace, but pathways are available in every conflict environment. Peacebuilders help belligerents find a path that will enable them to resolve their differences without bloodshed. The ultimate objective of peacebuilding is to reduce and eliminate the frequency and severity of violent conflict. (Dambach)

One of the leading scholars in peacebuilding, John Paul Lederach, identifies the moral imagination he sees as the essence of peacebuilding. Peacebuilding is identified with the human capacities to envision new and dynamic patterns of relationships and engagement, as well as with the courage to pursue the concretization of that vision in the world. In pursuit of wide-ranging social change, peacebuilding draws primarily upon human creativity, to transform the largely unfamiliar, entrenched patterns of peace into the norm (Lederach 2005). In simple language, Lisa Schirch defines peacebuilding as a tool to prevent, reduce, transform and help people recover from violence in all forms, even structural violence that has not led to massive civil unrest. At the same time, it empowers people to foster relationships at all levels that sustain them and their environment (Schirch 2004). Despite the various definitions of the term peacebuilding, it is generally agreed that in order to create long lasting peace and to prevent reemergence of violence, peacebuilding is important and it consists of three dimensions. The structural dimension of peacebuilding focuses on analyzing the root cause of conflict. It addresses the social issues that create the conflict and works on building social, political and economic foundations to achieve stable peace. The second dimension of peacebuilding focuses on relationship building where the effects of hostility during war and conflict are reduced. The relationships between the affected parties are renewed and strengthened. "The relational dimension of peacebuilding center on reconciliation, forgiveness, trust building and future imagining. It seeks to minimize poorly functioning communication and maximize mutual understanding." (Lederach 1997) The third dimension of peacebuilding focuses on the individual level. According to this dimension, if individuals are not able to undergo a process of

healing, there will be broader social, political, and economic repercussions (School of Advanced International Studies).

In the post-conflict situation in Nepal, the eminent fear of violence has subsided; however, many of the issues for which the armed conflict was started still have not been addressed. Divisions along the lines of religion, ethnicity, caste, and gender, while previously existing, are now more contentious and proponents for groups across dividing lines are now more vocal. Additionally, new divisions have been created in Nepal after the decimation of the old societal structure; these include many current political issues such as the move to federalism and what it entails. Since the definition of peacebuilding is situation specific, in Nepal peacebuilding should include fostering hope, renewing and strengthening relationships, supporting the security sector and addressing the structural issues.

Are Youth Spoiler Agents or Facilitators of Peace?

Youth are often targeted during periods of conflict. Youth can be victims, witnesses, and perpetrators all at the same time. While some of the literature suggests that youth and child are vulnerable and should be protected rather than be active participants in the society (Machel 2001), youth today are involved in various activities throughout the world. They are on the forefront in any kind of revolution and are the key drivers of change. According to Glinkski, "The young generation is traditionally seen as one of the most dynamic mediums of social change. This is because the young often play an important and even dominant role in social movements which are usually the driving force behind these changes" (1998). One definition of youth states that it is a transitional period, hence youth have impressionable minds so they are the ones first mobilized for a cause. Youth are sensitive to transformation whether political, economical or social. Youth expectations, roles and responsibilities are constantly changing while the other demographics are relatively set in their ways. Due to these uncertainties, it is difficult for them to be nurtured positively in such an unstable environment.

Difference between Youth Crisis and Youth in Crisis

Another distinction that must be made when determining how to address youth and peacebuilding is to distinguish between those conflicts where youth are the cause of problems

and those where their problems are a symptom. The term “youth crisis” is often used while describing the situation of young people in developing countries. However, despite being used so often the term is rarely explained and its meaning seems vague. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the term youth crisis can have two different meanings: (i) a societal crisis impacting on youth, resulting in a feeling of ‘uneasiness’ in the face of societal changes and constraints; or (ii) a crisis originating from youth and impacting on society at large (UNDP 2006). At the surface level, both of them look the same and often the meanings are used interchangeably. However, in order to engage youth in peacebuilding and development activities it is necessary to look deeper at both meanings.

Youth Bulge

Prominent writers such as Samuel Huntington have stated that societies are particularly vulnerable to war when people aged 15-24 (that is, youth) comprise at least 20% of the population (1996). This intimidating description of youth has been further supported by Urdal, who states that a youth bulge with “large cohorts in the ages 15–24 relative to the total adult population may increase the risk of three different forms of internal political violence: armed conflict, terrorism and riots” (2004). According then to the theory, youth – especially male youth – are seen as security threats. Paul Collier a renowned economist has suggested that relatively large youth cohorts may be a factor that reduces recruitment costs through the abundant supply of rebel labor with low opportunity cost, increasing the risk of armed conflict (Collier 2000). This suggests that youth bulges may not only make conflict more desirable to some, but also more feasible (Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler 2004). Though some writers support the youth bulge theory, it is still heavily contested. Even the results of a statistically study done by Collier and Hoeffler have been mixed. The rationale that just a large youth demographic results in an increased likelihood of political violence is incomplete. Writers such as Sommers and Hendrixson suggest that the root cause of the problem lies elsewhere (2006; 2004). The problem is not the population of the male youth but the resources that are being spent on them. Hendrixson further notes that theory “reinforces a view of Southern cities as pathological,” underestimates “their functionality” and over-exaggerates “their violence” (2004). The theory does focus on male youth; however, it also assumes female youth as a

threat. Hendrixson argues that viewing female youth “mainly as potential mothers... reinforces the notion that young Southern women’s fertility is responsible for population growth – and, more specifically, for the rise in numbers of young male terrorists” (Ibid). The presence of a youth bulge does not adequately explain why youth participate in violence or how a conflict turns into armed wars. In developing countries, large number of youth can also mean a larger pool of working and productive citizens.

Why Youth and Peacebuilding?

Young people (and women) tend to be the shock absorbers of social change and are profoundly affected by the different forms of violence - direct, cultural and structural (Galtung 1969). In addition, in post-conflict periods the effects continue to evolve. Like all human beings, youth need the basic human needs of ‘security, identity, recognition’ and space for development (Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse 1999). When young people are not able to obtain these necessities, they are more likely to turn to violence. Since the young people of today will be the leaders, facilitators and stakeholders of the future, it is pertinent to engage them in the peace process, peacebuilding and shaping their political attitudes and skills. According to McEvoy-Levy, a neglect of adolescents and older young people is shortsighted and counterproductive in terms of peacebuilding, particularly in the crucial post-agreement phase with its twin challenges of violence prevention/agreement maintenance and societal reconciliation and reconstruction (2001).

In the context of youth and peacebuilding, there is a general consensus among writers in the field. McEvoy perfectly describes why youth have to engage and participate in peacebuilding work. Firstly, in many cases youth have been active agents during armed conflict and their agency creates special and diverse needs in the post-war period. Secondly, youth support and participation is needed for the success of new law and order in post-war settings because they are often the primary producers of violence in the post-agreement period – from political dissident violence to crime. Thirdly, youth are also the victims of much post-agreement violence – direct assaults and displacement as well as structural violence – which, while it may not fatally impact the peace process, will shape attitudes and behavior over the long run.

Finally, youth are the primary actors in grassroots community development/relations work – they are at the frontlines of peace building (Ibid).

According to the most recent, completed census, 27-39% percent of Nepal’s population is youth, depending on the definition of youth used¹ (Central Bureau of Statistics 2001). This means almost one third of the Nepal population consists of youth, which is significant number considering the fact that they are the drivers of social change. Youth have always played an important role in Nepal’s history. As with all the other societal changes, youth have occupied the center stage in the recent armed conflict. “Political parties, armed forces and armed groups all compete for the loyalty of young people so that they participate in rallies, strikes and violence. Many young people have been victimized, suffered direct violence, lost their educational and vocational opportunities, and displaced” (SFCG 2008). Since the country currently is going through a transitional period, it is important that the youth are actively engaged in the peacebuilding process which could have a multiplier effect even in the development sector. “The promotion and protection of young people is crucial for poverty reduction, for attaining MDGs and for sustainable development corporation as a whole” (GTZ, 2008).

Factors for why youth choose peace over violence

Little research is done on the root cause of why youth choose violence over peace. Economic incentives, lack of opportunities for political engagement and inadequate public services could be the reasons behind young people opting for violence. Youth are more likely to avoid violence and engage in peacebuilding behavior if they are granted a specific set of opportunities, interrelated and mutually reinforcing, called the threshold condition for peacebuilding (AED 2005). According to these conditions, firstly youth have to be actively engaged and participate in the political process. “All too often, political parties and other social movements have used youths to intimidate rivals, destabilize opponents and collect money for political campaigns” (USAID/CMM 2004). When a political process alienates youth, they feel

¹ Using the UN definition of youth as being age 15-24, the percentage of the population that is youth is approximately 27%; using the Nepal Government definition of youth as being 16-40, the percentage of the population that is youth is approximately 39%.

disenchanted and resort to alternative methods to make their voices heard. In developing countries and post-war settings, due to the fragile state of the nation, youth might find violence as the only way to participate in politics.

However, if youth are given ownership in the process and they feel that they have influence in defining their future, they can avoid violence. In addition, violence can be avoided if they are involved in the decision-making process and given responsibility for constructive action. The second condition is that relationships between the youth and their communities have to be reformed and strengthened. Youth who have social ties to the community are less likely to participate in violence (AED 2005, USAID/CMM 2004). A stringent community gives youth a stricter sense of their identity and necessary life skills. In addition, improving inter-generational relationships helps to create a community where conflict can be handled peacefully. Communities help youth to identify themselves as a member of a larger society. Youth are less likely to pick up arms if constituencies of peace are built. When ethnic, political and religious groups feel secluded from the general social, political and economic institutions, they are more likely to form stereotypes and negative perceptions of the other groups. When school, community and family adopt these ideologies, youth intrinsically start demonizing people who are different than them. However, building constituencies of peace helps youth not only understand trust and goodwill but will also expand their horizons as they build relationships with people outside of their immediate community. Training youth for the workplace and building confidence and self-esteem are the remaining two conditions of the threshold.

Often poor economic conditions provide strong incentives for youth to participate in violence. They can be easily manipulated through economic incentives. However, youth who are working and engaged are less likely to support violence. Armed groups and organizations provide youth with specific roles and responsibilities. They get a sense of power holding a weapon, which can be a motivating factor to join these groups for youth who have poor self-esteem and confidence. If youth are employed and have confidence, they are more likely to find peaceful solutions (AED 2005).

Kemper's Model of Youth Programming in Post-conflict settings

In recent years, organizations have started to increase the number of programs that target youth. However, Boyden & de Berry argue that these programs are often driven by “adults' perception of the impact of war on young people”. Therefore, they suggest to consider the perspectives of children and young people so that the “policies and programmes are based upon a lived rather than theorised reality” (Boyden & de Berry 2004, xix).

According to Yvonne Kemper, organizations generally follow one of three programmatic approaches targeting youth in post-conflict settings (2005). Despite the overarching theme of targeting youth, these approaches vary in ideologies, target group and instruments as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Three approaches towards youth in war-to-peace transitions

	Rights-Based Approach	Economic Approach	Socio-Political Approach
Optimal Period	Prevention	Short-term	Long-term
Objective	Human security	Stability	Reconciliation
Target Group	Children (under 18 years old)	Youth (15-24 years old)	Flexible, responsive to self-perception and socio-cultural concept
Roles of Youth (Characteristics)	Victim (vulnerable, innocent) ↓ Social actor (adaptable, resilient)	Exploitable resource (aggressive, greedy) ↓ Economic actor (resourceful, rational)	Spoiler (frustrated, excluded) ↓ Peacebuilder (transformable, active)
Instruments	Legal norms and conventions	Economic policies on micro/ macro level	Participatory approaches
Typical Programs (Selection)	Reintegration into families; human rights advocacy; psychosocial work; basic education	Socio-economic reintegration; vocational training; income-generating activities; catch-up education	Participatory surveys; support of youth activities, organisations and networks; peace education

Source: Kemper (2005)

The rights-based approach is generally used for individuals under the 18 years of age. However, the age is not a determining factor when organizations use this approach despite a strict line between children and adult as defined by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF). The underlying principle behind the approach is that children are the ones that

suffer the most in conflict situations so they must be provided with human needs and human security (Bajpai 2000). In addition, children have individual rights which should be upheld even during periods of crisis.

The economic approach specifically works on investing on youth so they can they sustain their livelihoods by themselves. During the conflict period, money and employment is a strong incentive for youth to be involved in violence. The economic approach works with the youth to develop their capacity and provide them with income generational skills. “Rather than asking how war affects youth, the economic approach seeks to find out how the existence of youth affects war” (Kemper 2005, 25).

The socio-political approach is focused long-term compared to other approaches and it works on transforming youth from spoiler agents to facilitators of peace. It regards youth’s self-perception and their relationship with the society as important to peacebuilding. “Rather than defining youth according to norms or assessing their ‘value’ in war economies, this approach thus demands from international organizations to listen to youth’s voices and support youth in implementing their ideas (Newman 2005).

Despite all three approaches being different from one another, it is pertinent to use all three while accessing the youth situation in post-conflict conditions. Kemper argues that a more integrated and holistic approach is needed for youth (2005). Many organizations have a youth program but they are not structured. “All approaches should thus converge in their common objective to create an enabling environment for youth in post-conflict situations” (Kemper 2005, 48).

Country Context

With the establishment of democracy, absolute monarchy ended in Nepal in 1990. However, dissatisfied with the democratic system, the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (UCPN (Maoist)) declared a 'People's War' in February 1996. The conflict, which lasted a decade, took almost 13,000 lives. The conflict severely affected civilians and rural parts of the country. The conflict also led to extensive human rights violations and abuses by both the State and the Maoist party. During the conflict period, murder, rape and torture of civilians was rampant and Nepal had the highest rate of disappearances in the world. But after the CPA in 2006, the CPN (Maoist) joined mainstream politics and an interim constitution was introduced on January 2007. During this period, ex-combatants in cantonments were released and donor and development communities focused on integration packages.

The decade long conflict had diverse effects on socio-cultural aspects of the country. It also brought out the issues of ethnic division and religious clashes, which have increased migration and internal displacement in the country. The state still is unable to address the voices of the various groups which focus on identity issues. The numbers of armed groups have considerably increased due to the unstable situation. In addition, the crime rate and involvement in criminal activities has also significantly increased in this transitional period. The Ministry of Home Affairs has reported that there are at least 109 armed groups operating in the Terai region which has encouraged a culture of violence among youth (2009). In addition, youth are being manipulated into violence by different ethnicity-based interest groups and armed groups. So far the demand of an ethnicity-based federal state and of reclaiming different ethnicities has been successful in mobilizing youth.

The constitution writing process is taking longer than expected but members of traditionally marginalized communities have high expectations for the new constitution. The recent 'Seven Point Agreement' on 1st November 2011 has brought new hopes to the nation. This has brought political parties to a consensus and made them more committed to a new constitution. A new cabinet of ministers, with the highest number of members up to now, has recently formed and the country is looking with new hope and aspiration. The government has

brought forward a bill for the 11th amendment to the Interim Constitution proposing a six-month extension after the CA expiry on 30 November. This process was followed with a meeting of the major three political parties – UCPN (Maoist), Nepali Congress (NC) and Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist) (CPN-UML) – and have decided to pass the 11th constitution amendment bill. Another major activity under government initiation was bringing the three major parties - UCPN (Maoist), NC and the CPN-UML - and the Madhesi Front to a consensus to form a State Restructuring Commission (SRC). The ongoing meeting of the Army Integration Special Committee (AISC) formulated detail packages for combatants which includes integration within the Nepalese Army, voluntary retirement and rehabilitation of Maoist combatants. So far, a majority of the combatants have chosen the integration in the Army package.

The conflict transformation process is taking a long time in Nepal. The political instability and weak security sector has made the transition more difficult. The current institutions are unable to handle the new problems and the tangible results of the peace process are yet to be seen.

Methodology and Limitations

The primary inspiration for the methodology of this report was the collaborative learning methodology the Collaborative Learning Projects used for their Listening Project (Collaborative Learning Projects 2007), with some adaptations given the differences in subject matter and final outputs. This project involved unscripted field interviews that were intended to gather a broad range of information on the subject of youth and peacebuilding. Interviews were prepared for by establishing certain topics that the research team would pursue in the conversation and having a few questions that would allow for a start to the conversations. As the interviews progressed, further questions were asked based on the direction conversations were going. All questions asked were open-ended and intended to solicit as much detail as possible without being leading. These conversations were recorded and analyzed for key facts, opinions, and insights. The core of this report is therefore founded in the analysis of information provided during the interviews, particularly key issues and themes that were present through many conversations. The report is intended to provide detailed feedback based on the experiences of individuals for all those that work with youth in Nepal.

Participants were selected based on their ability to speak to the subject matter. They came from across sectors and levels of society, including from the Government of Nepal, the international donor community, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local business leaders, and youth closely affected by conflict in Nepal. Confidentiality was assured to all individuals interviewed in order that the most frank discussions could take place; as such, facts and quotations are cited with reference to individuals' general background and the date and general location interviews took place. Individuals came from all regions of Nepal (East, Central, West, etc.) and from key areas across those regions, in particular a few major cities and the Terai.

The major limitation of this report comes from the primary method of data collection. Statistical significance was not a goal and therefore the findings cannot be said to be absolute in their truth. The aim was instead to speak as many people as possible as in-depth as they could address sub-topics of the subject (as will be seen in the body of the report). This allowed

for the understandings of the individuals interviewed to be the focus of the report, rather than what is true or not. Additional data is intended to be complementary and provide more substance to any findings. However, as with the collaborative learning methodology, the final report is not entirely conclusive in its findings – “the ‘proof’ of whether the lessons learned are valid rests with the community of... practitioners who recognize them and then apply them” (Collaborative Learning Projects 2007). Differing from the collaborative learning methodology, we provide recommendations for future efforts on the subject of youth and peacebuilding. These are suggested based on those issues and patterns which were most commonly, and similarly, spoken about in interviews.

Findings - Current Situation for Youth in Nepal²

Meaning of Youth in Nepal

The Nepalese National Youth Policy defines youth as persons from 16-40 years of age. However, individuals having a “youth mindset” are also considered youth in Nepal. In these situations, individuals even aged 60 were sometimes considered “youth”. This is particularly evident in the field of politics where there is a lack of opportunity for those in the second generation of leaders who are waiting for their turn in the political leadership, and who remain 'youth leaders' until that happens (Mulmi 2009). The quota system in the CA encourages the inclusion of youth. However, the youth who are included generally fall near the maximum age which causes underrepresentation of youth who are under the maximum age. Among the donor community and international organizations, there is no conformity about the age of youth. They select their age group often according to the definitions they have from their home countries. Many of these definitions, such as the UN definition of youth as those between the ages of 15-24 years, may not be appropriate for Nepal’s context. Within the country, and especially rural areas, many are still most reliant on the cultural definition although a growing trend is that youth in urban settings are defined more often due to their age. Nepali culture often understands youth to be those individuals who are not yet married and, more often than not, are irresponsible. There is confusion and a lack of knowledge about who youth are, why they are important, and how to address them.

Gender and Youth

While the term ‘youth’ at times seems to refer to a large portion of the population in Nepal, it is not as all encompassing as it would seem at first glance. When referring to youth, the majority of people are typically speaking of only male youth. This bias comes from both a cultural understanding of the roles of each gender as well as from the practical realities of which part of youth are active in the country. As males make up the majority of those termed

² The findings presented both in this section and the following section are all based on the research conducted for this report. As stated in the Methodology and Limitations section, what is presented is not exhaustive but is based on the insights and information gleaned from the interviews conducted.

‘youth’ and the youth clubs that seek the participation of youth, this has far reaching affects for who is actually reached by programs and policies focusing on ‘youth’.

The culturally traditional roles of women are very limited within Nepal. They face a patriarchal society where men are favored. Access to education is extremely limited for women, as seen in the large disparity between the literacy rates of men and women, 52% and 24% respectively. These limitations on women are manifested for female youth as restrictions in what they are able to do. In many communities, female youth are not allowed to go to school or to apply for jobs outside the home. In many ways, they are seen as a liability. This is at odds with the empowerment of ‘youth’ that is happening throughout the country. Those female youth who do wish to work, despite these restrictions by their family or community, are often shunned. This creates personal level conflicts that often result in these youth leaving their communities for work in cities, such as Kathmandu, in foreign countries. Without proper training or education, these female youth are highly likely to end up in the sex trade (Interview with Donor Agency, 5 Sep 2011).

The limitations placed on female youth also affect their ability to voice their needs and opinions at the district and national level. This is best illustrated by the pervasive lack of female participation in youth politics. It is difficult for female youth to rise to a position that allows them to have influence and be heard. One individual who works closely with youth politics noted that “when [the female youth] reach a certain level, they get the respect that they deserve but when they are still at the lower level, I don’t think they get enough respect from their counterparts or colleagues within the parties” (Interview with NGO worker, 9 Sep 2011). So while it is possible for female youth to move up within the structure, it takes them more effort to reach the same positions as male youth.

Generational Issues

Youth are often seen as immature and irresponsible; this corresponds with the general culture definition of youth as those that are prone to causing trouble. While this is in some cases warranted, more often than not it is a misconception held by older generations. This treatment of youth based on a traditional understanding of what it means to be a youth has

two significant implications for youth as they relate to conflict. First, youth are assumed by older generations to be troublemakers and are not given the space to prove otherwise with positive contributions. Even those youth who manage to find a way to show otherwise are at times still dismissed outright without further consideration. This limited space prevents many youth from being positive examples. The second impact of the generational gap is that youth must make an effort to break their image, whether deserved or not, and many are not willing to do so. This is even truer when the youth are not given the space. Youth become frustrated because of the lack of recognition simply because they are youth. Especially in the last 8 to 10 years, they are also starting to question the idea that just being old makes a person right (Interview with NGO worker, 9 Sep 2011). This seems to correspond with the increased recognition of youth as a group to be addressed as well as the effects of globalization.

While the generational gap has decreased in some urban areas due to positive youth actions (although not all youth actions in urban areas are positive), it has primarily increased across the country. Improvements with information technology have led to a more aware generation of youth with increased exposure to the outside world. This globalization is providing them with alternate understanding of how youth can exist within their societies, often at odds with the traditional cultural view of youth in Nepal. Any further increase in the generational gaps has a chance to exacerbate the conflicts, and their effects, between youth and older generations.

Livelihood

Many respondents believed that livelihood was a key issue that needs to be addressed in order to bring stability in the country and a majority of the youth believe that the root cause of the conflict is poverty. However, resources are not equally divided in the country. Even the educated youth are not being able to get jobs to sustain their livelihood. This has led to a lot of frustration among youth and, due to this frustration, they seek alternative methods to gain income – many of which are illegal. Despite still being an agricultural country, there is a social stigma relating to agriculture work. Due to lack of profit, market and resources, youth are not attracted to agriculture. There is a shortage of technically skilled people in the field. However,

educated people do not want to be involved in this sector. In addition, because of the lack of resources and livelihood opportunities, youth are migrating towards the cities and to foreign countries. Increased activities of the INGOs have created a “culture of dependency of foreign aid”. This has created a situation where youth are spectators rather than participants in much of what happens in the country. Lack of livelihood opportunity is one of the key reasons behind youth manipulation. The education system is also to be blamed for the current situation because youth are not taught many job skills, they are only taught to deal with the education system. “Many people are going abroad are mostly for jobs. We are not creating jobs that these people want. There is a mismatch between human resource and individual’s qualification” (Interview with Youth Entrepreneur, 2 Sep 2011). However, there are some youth who are in better position due to hierarchy class and caste. This has increased bitterness among youth and has created division among themselves. However, not everyone believes there are no jobs. According to a successful young entrepreneur, despite the country going through transitional phase, he believes that there are ample of jobs and all Nepal needs is stability (Interview with Youth Entrepreneur, 2 Sep 2011).

Education

With unemployment cited by many as the key issue youth face and as a leading cause of conflict by youth, one important place to turn to for further investigation is the education system in Nepal. A frequent problem for youth arises from their lack of many soft skills, including leadership, communication, confidence, and other interpersonal skills. The education system focuses on teaching technical skills and does not provide soft skills to youth, preparing them in most cases only for clerical work (Interview with Donor Agency, 5 Sep 2011). Additionally, the quality of education differs drastically across youth, with only a small percentage getting high quality education. The weak education system in Nepal causes the general public to reach out to the private sector when they are able to afford it; only a select few youth, primarily those from major cities, are able to afford good private educations. Without a well-rounded set of skills, many youth find it hard to make voices heard, to start their own businesses, or to translate their technical skills into jobs. There is a mismatch between the needs of employers and individuals’ qualifications after completing their education. The

graduates of the education system emerge educated but not skilled (Interview with Youth Entrepreneur, 2 Sep 2011). A lack of career counseling compounds the inability of youth to understand how to find jobs. Employers want to hire youth but they also want experience. “There is a contradiction between the want to include youth and the want for experienced workers” (Interview with INGO worker, 29 Sep 2011). Without the broader range of options that those with strong soft skills can take advantage of, many youth turn to more available options such as politics and crime. Additionally, those without strong interpersonal skills find it harder to resolve conflicts with others.

Another conflict that is related to education arises out the expectations that education place on youth. After a youth becomes “educated” – a definition that varies between communities, with meanings ranging from the completion of 10+2 to graduate school – their families place an increased expectation on them to earn more. They are expected to get higher paying jobs, rather than those that would have been available to them prior to their education, such as many jobs working in agriculture. However, as seen with the high unemployment rate, many youth cannot find jobs after graduating. In order to avoid returning to their families and the social disgrace that would accompany it, many turn to other sources of income such as crime or politics.

Government and Youth

As the government is engaged with the political process of writing a constitution and the underlying conflicts across the country, it is for the most part ignoring youth who need to be included in the process. This is true even though 37% of respondents in a recent survey (Search for Common Ground 2011) view the role of the government agency as important for the success of the youth. Without addressing youth properly, the government will not be able to resolve all of the problems it faces and may give rise to new issues as youth continue to slowly assert themselves more. In terms of information, communication, and resources provided, there are few linkages between the government and youth. There is a slight increase in the participation of youth than previously but there is still significant work to be done on this issue.

The government has released a National Youth Policy, a much needed step that should be commended. However, the policies are not specific to adequately address all of the youth of Nepal, especially with the broad definition the government uses to define them. Additionally, the government does not implement the policies in any meaningful manner and youth are predominantly unaware of their rights and responsibilities under the policies (with the notable exception of politically involved youth). A few interviewees noted that this falls in line with what they called the Nepali “planning culture” – where plans are often made but less often followed through with. The government needs to improve its accountability for the policies it creates (Interview with INGO Worker, 30 Sep 2011). For the majority of youth in Nepal, there is no difference between before and after the creation of these policies. In order for efforts to improve how youth deal with conflict, whether by government officials, international donors, or grassroots efforts, the government as a whole needs to create more specific, actionable policies that are followed through with.

The one circumstance where youth should particularly be affected is by government funding that is itemized for use by youth. However, this money is rarely spent in the most productive way possible, often due to the inability of the government to properly distribute it. The Ministry of Youth and Sports and local village development committees (VDCs) all have funding that is either supposed to be spent to help youth or is to be available for use by youth. Unfortunately, the ministry spends the majority of its money on sports and VDC money usually doesn’t reach youth at all. Money put into sports does affect some youth but only a small section of it. This money also doesn’t affect most female youth as sports in Nepal are dominated by male youth. The youth budgets allocated by VDCs are not known by the majority of youth (primarily only politically connected youth are aware) and VDCs do not try to communicate that it is available. As found in Search for Common Ground’s (SFCG) survey (2011), over 80% of respondents (coming from all age groups) said the youth do not receive support from VDCs or did not know whether they did. Additionally, 44% of the respondents said they were not aware of the budget allocation provided to youth by VDCs and 40% said that a budget is not allocated for youth. Only 1% of respondents said that youth receive a budget as per planned. On one side, the government officials in charge of distributing this money do not

have guidelines on how to distribute it and do not want to create additional conflict between youth groups because of which groups got money, and how much. However, the problem is just as often that some government officials intentionally disregard youth. When the money is not distributed to youth, it often gets spent elsewhere but still is marked in records as being spent on youth (Interview with President, Local Youth Committee, 6 Sep 2011). Finally, even when the government does properly advertise its programs to help youth, the interest from youth overwhelms the capability of the government officials running the programs. For example, when the government started a program to start funding entrepreneurial enterprises by youth, they received so many applicants that they were not able to handle the requests and the program was eventually cancelled with no successful outcomes. The upside to this is that youth have demonstrated they are enthusiastic for any support the government can provide.

Politics and Youth

Youth and politics are almost synonymous in the country, specifically in government, college and campuses. However, most youth do not want to associate with mainstream politics as youth are and have been manipulated by political parties. The majority of youth are critical, skeptical and angry at the political process because of their increased levels of information about political activities happening in the country. There is miscommunication and confusion between general youth and political parties. In general, there is lot of mistrust of parties among the youth.

Youth join political wings for different reasons. Some join because of the political ideology, some for power and fame while for others it is seen as an income source. "The political parties use these youth as they like. They are one group of youth who have aspiration and see politics as the future while the other groups are involved in such activities but they do not know why and for what they are involved. People are paid to come to processions but they don't know the reason behind processions" (Interview with Youth Entrepreneur, 2 Sep 2011). Student youth are reliant on political parties to meet their basic necessities. Youth are involved in politics because they provide with basic needs. "Youth are being mobilized by various political parties and criminal organization because we are not being able to engage them" (Focus group

discussion, 26 Aug 2011). Youth wings of the political parties have the potential to play a positive role. However, youth forces remain targeted towards financial gains and youth wing activity continues to have negative impact on security in many districts (Carter Center, 2011).

The internal structures of political parties are more hierarchical and not democratic. Due to the lack of environment where youth voices can be implemented, youth do not have meaningful participation. “They are youth in the CA currently but they are limited to which political party they belong to and the vision of the party. They have to follow the party line and ideologies. We have not been able to see real and significant participation of the youth. They are allowed to participate when political parties need them, when they don’t need them they are discarded” (Interview with President, Youth Organization, 14 Sep 2011). Youth have to strictly follow party lines and ideologies. Once youth are involved in politics the likelihood of leaving the party and politics is very slim and, in addition, student youth wings include older people and not just youth. Political parties have a huge say about happens in student and youth political organizations. Student and youth organizations are centralized and personality oriented. Senior youth leaders who are highly influential are incentivized to follow party guidelines in the hopes of eventually becoming leaders within the mainstream party. They strictly follow what they are told and bring in line the rest of the youth in their groups.

The recent past of Nepal has taught many political parties and youth that violence can bring power. “You know powerful force in the country so that showed the youth that showed some of the groups that if you have some of the force, you can do things forcefully, then you are powerful... So that kind of mentality is so are there in the society now. And that mentality is taken up by many of the parties other than Maoists... They all think that ok we should have some kind of force, so that force is with the youth” (Interview with Donor Agency, 5 Sep 2011). Young people are used to intimidate rivals with force and they are the ones who are involved in disruptive activities and *bandhs* (strikes). Political youth wings are involved in youth fundraising issues and instilling fear and make provocative statements. Political corruption and violence is directed by party leaders but is executed by youth. In addition, youth are mobilized in the recent ethnic movements all over Nepal; this has greatly increased violence among youth.

Despite the largely negative role youth play in relation to politics, there are some key youth leader who have been recognized and respected for their roles and work with in parties. “When you look at Nepali Congress people like Gagan Thapa is very respected, he actually won the highest number of seats when they had the central level committee. When you look at the Maoists, you have a youth leaders who is in his 30s, now heading the finance ministry for them. So there are a lot of good young people. But there are good young people who are coming up through the ranks and who are being respected within the parties itself. And I think that’s the slow changing dynamics of relationships which over period of time might actually, but you need more people like that to actually be able to change it” (Interview with NGO worker, 9 Sep 2011). Participation by youth in parties does not have to be a challenge but can be an opportunity to show their strength and voice. There have been some positive changes in the country. Youth political leaders have become more willing to communicate across party lines due to trainings. However, this line of communication breaks down when top political leaders are at odds. Youth political leaders also form lose political network across party lines. At the district level, youth leaders are more willing to talk beyond party lines in Kathmandu. One of the interviewees stated that youth have been able to express their feelings more freely. “In the past youth were caught in the middle. Now there are political parties mobilizing youth but it’s not that you fear of losing your life. You can freely make your decisions where at that time you had to follow certain party’s belief, objectives or ideologies” (Interview with INGO Worker, 9 Sep 2011). Youth and politics are both an opportunity and challenge. Despite some positive changes, there is lot to be done in this area.

Criminal/Illegal Activities

An unemployment rate of 46% (CIA Factbook) is leading many youth to turn to illegal activities for earning a living and survival. In the Maoist struggle, mass-movements, *bandhs*, youth played a major role and “if we fail to satisfy their needs then it is sure that there will be rise of many new armed groups and parties in upcoming days” (Focus group discussion, 7 Sep 2011). There is a mushrooming of criminal and armed militant groups throughout the country; the majority of members in these groups are youth. According to Alert 2010, they are 110 active military organizations just in Terai region of Nepal. Among these only 12 are of an

exclusively political nature, compared to 70 which are completely criminal (Escola de Cultura de Pau 2010). However, it is often difficult to differentiate between organized criminal organizations and youth political wings. Drug usage has also increased considerably in the country and primarily affecting male youth over female youth. One of the main problems that allows for youth involvement in crime is a situation of weak law and order. Criminal groups, consisting mostly of youth, are increasingly being armed and militarized. According to the President of a regional Bar Association, most of the people brought to courts and jails are youth (Interview with President, Local Bar Association, 6 Sep 2011). Public faith in the government and the peace process is decreasing due to deteriorating law and order and rising civil unrest in the country. The police force, who are the first line of defense, lack in resources and the capacity to deal with the unrest and do not have the full trust of the public. "The provision of security and justice is one of the main requirements for a peaceful, democratic society and sustained social and economic development." (Watson and Crozier, 2009). For sustainable peace and equitable development, security sector reform programs need to be a component of peace process and must necessarily target youth.

The increase in youth involvement in illegal and criminal activities has included a substantial number of literate and educated youth, often due to their increased expectations. "Youth expectations have increased and in order to fulfill such expectation they have to be involved in criminal activities. Nepal's economy cannot create the opportunities that youth need which can lead to a dangerous situation" (Interview with President, Local Bar Association, 6 Sep 2011). Due to a lack of long term vision and a complete disregard for their actions and consequences, youth can be easily manipulated with a small amount of money. "If youth are offered by 5000 rupees then they are easily manipulated but youth never think on the consequences that this can bring." (Focus group discussion, 26 Aug 2011).

"Tender and Contracts" by youth are often seen to be the largest problem created by youth. To obtain tender and contracts people with influence, sometime political, use youth to intimidate rivals and government officials. Another major problem created by youth is fundraising through threats and intimidation. "Since they are getting income easily from

criminal and political affiliation they do not see the importance of working productively to earn income” (FGD, 26 Aug 2011). Youth are also often involved in *bandhs*, however, rather than campaigning for a cause, participating in strikes has become fashionable. Many interviewees agreed that the main reason behind youth insolent in crime is that the state is not being able to effectively engage them. “If we talk about youth who are involved in criminal activities we just look at them as a criminal but we don’t try to understand why they are involved in these criminal activities. We are not thinking about creating alternatives for youth. In order to solve this problem we have to understand why they are involved in such negative activities and what we can do so that they stop being involved in such activities” (Interview with President, Local Bar Association, Sep 6, 2011). Young people are reluctant to speak out against the rising crime and violence committed by their peers for fear of becoming a target themselves (International Alert 2008).

The open border with India has also been one of the key causes of rising insecurity and criminal activities, especially in Terai region of Nepal. The border posts with India are unregulated for travel and or activity across the border. Weapon smuggling, drugs and other consumer items are often brought into Nepal and the majority of the people involved in the smuggling are youth. Smuggling is normally called “carrying” in the district where this research was conducted. Youth in Banke and Bardiya district in Nepal are getting more involved in carrying because it provides a good source of income. However, many illegal items such as weapons and drugs are brought in to the country by these youth and in many instances they are unaware of the goods that they are smuggling. This has also lead to increase in small arms proliferation on both sides of the border. Due to this reason lot of hatred and mistrust is guided to the communities living in the border areas. This has also negatively impacted relationships and community cohesion in border communities. In addition, youth from the Nepali side of border have difficulties proving to themselves that they are Nepali citizens. This is a substantial identity issue obstructing the creation of a cohesive Nepali identity.

Reintegration

Reintegration of ex-combatants has been a key factor in the ongoing peace process in Nepal. However, reintegration in Nepal is happening in three different levels. The first process started with Children Associated with Armed Groups and Armed Forces (CAAFAG). These children were somehow involved directly and indirectly in violence and were not able to exercise their rights as children. The second level of reintegration was targeted at verified minor and late recruits (VMLR). In 2007, the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) verified around 19,602 Maoist combatants in 7 main cantonments and 21 satellite cantonments. Beside them 4,008 were identified as 'disqualified' by UNMIN as either they were enrolled after the CPA, or for being under the age 18 years at the date of the CPA. After a long two year process and agreements between Maoists, Nepal Government and UNMIN, they were released from their camps. Finally the third level of reintegration is being targeted at the combatants who are still in cantonments. On 1 November 2011, a seven point agreement was reached between the major political parties. This is considered to be the first major breakthrough with regards to reintegration of PLA and the ongoing peace process. The Nepalese Army agreed to integrate 6500 Maoist combatants while the rest will receive alternative rehabilitation packages of training, education and vocational opportunity. Many of the interviewees believe that the reintegration of CAAFAG, VMLR, and combatants in cantonments is happening at a slow rate or not at all. However, the peace process cannot be completed without addressing the reintegration issues through the political process. There are various lessons to learn with the reintegration effort of VMLR. According to one of the interviewees "Youth who have been disqualified and returned are not managed or properly supported by the government and other institutions working with the issue. These youth are at the risk of joining other armed groups or start their own" (Interview with Human Rights Worker, 6 Sep 2011). The reintegration issues associated with communities not fully accepting the ex-combatants continues, despite being a current priority of donors, INGOs and the government. In addition, government packages for reintegration have not been effective, contributing to the frustration of these youth. In some areas, government offices do not want to work with CAAFAG and VMLR. Due to the political

awareness of communities, societies have a difficult time accepting the reintegration and there is a social stigma from being labeled an ex-Maoist.

Internal/External Migration

Youth are migrating from their villages and communities for employment and opportunities. Rural villages are being emptied due to youth leaving for cities and foreign countries. According to one senior INGO staff, limited opportunities in terms of economy are one of the major driving factors when you talk about youth from the rural communities. “These youth are seen as the people who bring food at your people. When you don’t have opportunities and you rely on doing something for your household, family and community that’s when a lot of forced migration happens and it’s driven more by lack of economic opportunities” (Interview with INGO Worker, 9 Sep 2011). Among other issues, this causes communities to become more homogeneous. There is not much interaction and cooperation between different ethnicities living in the same community; there is a lack of social cohesion. In urban areas, youth migration is creating many social problems such as increased crime, prostitution and drug abuse. Approximately 1200-1500 youth leave the country everyday (Interview with INGO worker, 21 Sep 2011; Interview with President, Youth Organization, 14 Sep 2011); this causes both labor drain and some brain drain. The majority of youth who go abroad are unskilled and uneducated and Gulf countries are one of the leading destinations for youth going abroad. However, due to their low skill level and education they are given mostly manual jobs which can be tough. Many of the youth have to face poor working and living conditions abroad and, due to this, 2-3 dead bodies are sent back every day (Interview with President, Youth Organization, 14 Sep 2011). “In addition to this, work-related accidents and injury, headache, suicide attempts, cardiac arrests, mental illness and high death rates are further evidence of health risks among migrant workers (Adhikary, Keen and Teijlingen 2011). However, young people are willing to face hardships abroad rather than in Nepal. Foreign youth employment has been one of the current hot topics in Nepal. Interviewees were divided on this issue. According to the Nepal Living Standard Survey (NLLS), despite receiving remittance as high as Rs 259 billion in the fiscal year 2010-11, the money is not being used in the productive sector. A significant portion (78.9 percent) of the remittance is being used in daily consumption,

followed by loan repayment. Only 2.4 percent of the total remittance is used for capital formation (Kathmandu Post, 9 Nov 2011). Some argue that it can be counterproductive to be reliant on remittances without economic growth.

However, some people believe that foreign employment cannot be just looked negatively and it does teach skills to the youth and gives them money to send home. Youth coming back from abroad have brought various experiences and skills and one running successful enterprise in their community. They also experience political systems that function and stable societies. According to a youth entrepreneur “Majority people who go abroad are undereducated and not skilled. I think despite them going aboard it is a very good learning opportunities. In the long run I think this will definitely help the country. It is not that people should not go aboard at all. They are sending money and remittance back to the country. The only thing right now is our industries are not booming” (Interview with Youth Entrepreneur, 2 Sep 2011). Also, remittance has become a primary contribution to reducing poverty. The World Bank’s report ‘Migration and Remittance Factbook 2011’ says Nepal is among the top five countries with remittance, amounting to 23 percent of its GDP (2011). Remittance has contributed significantly to the reduction of poverty in the last 15 years. The NLLS had sighted remittance as the major contributor behind the decline in people living below the poverty line from 42 percent to 31 percent (Kathmandu Post, 9 Nov 2011). Many argue that, while youth migrating abroad cause many issues in Nepal, the opposite situation could just as easily cause problems; what if all the youth who went aboard came back? This would cause more frustrated and angry youth in the country and could cause more conflict.

Visions for Youth

In SFCG’s recent survey, 33% of respondents believe youth have very important role in the peacebuilding process and 24% stated that youths have role. However, only 1% said that youth are a leading group in creating peacebuilding initiatives (SFCG 2011). Although the inclusion of youth in the peace process of Nepal is an aimed for goal, it will be hard to achieve when the majority of youth do not fully understand the full context surrounding conflict or have visions for what they want Nepal to look like in the present and future (Interview with NGO

worker, 30 Aug 2011). The first barrier to youth bringing about their vision is that most are currently narrowly focused on providing for themselves. With concerns about their own livelihoods, youth are much less willing to look to the future of the whole country. Stark divisions within the country have divided the youth and make it difficult for a single vision to come out of their opinions. However, there is a growing trend of creating youth networks, formed from multiple youth groups coming together, with a focus on creating changes they want to see in the country.

While youth as a group may be slowly forming their own visions for the country, many practitioners noted that the government needs to take a leading role in creating a vision for the country and for how youth can include themselves in the process. While there is some vision from the government on how to work with and include youth (seen in the government policies that have been made), it is not comprehensive and is not implemented. There exists substantial confusion about the peace process and national agenda which directly affects the ability for institutions to create cohesive plans for how to address youth, particularly those who are having a negative impact. Many donors and NGOs find the current environment, with uncertain political realities, difficult to

Other Topics

While there are a lot of sources of conflict that affect youth and provide causes for negative activities by youth, there does seem to be overall improvement in the levels of conflict that youth are engaged in. Youth were first recognized by some as potential “change-makers” during the conflict and as time has passed, this seems to become more and more accepted by the country. With the end of the conflict and the lessening of threats that has come with it, youth have become more vocal about their opinions. The number of youth engaged in positive activities for their communities, such as helping drug users, engaging in clean up campaigns, and mediating small local conflicts, was seen as having increased. Although the situation varies immensely between districts and VDCs, on the whole youth seem to be having more positive effects on the conflicts around them.

Findings - Current Work with Youth and Peacebuilding

After massive mobilization of youth for political interest and in destructive works in Nepal, the donor communities have started to treat youth as one of the major components that can influence peace in communities as well as at the national level. Different organizations working in Nepal have introduced projects focused on addressing youth issues, which has a direct link with peace building. Most organizations do not have youth and peacebuilding as thematic priorities but consider them both as cross-cutting themes.

Training & capacity building

Many organizations working on youth and peace building have focused on capacity building. The capacity of youth has been empowered by focusing on skill-based trainings and soft skills. For skill-based trainings, youth are given technical skill according to their needs. The vocation-oriented skill-based trainings being conducted help youth enhance their skills while engaging in income-generating activities. Soft skill trainings are focused on fostering leadership, positive roles of youth and increasing their engagement in societal activities and social issues. Some programs are aimed to help youth by building capacity while getting them involved in meaningful participation in decision-making processes and conflict mitigation. The majority of youth and peacebuilding programming is focused in trainings and capacity development.

Organization	Project	Activity
Samriddhi Foundation	Entrepreneurs' Club	The club's primary goal is to develop capacity among the students and the club members to be a successful entrepreneur in future. Samriddhi foundation provides technical support and other forms of support to the Clubs in the club activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Documentary related to entrepreneurship and economic freedomii. Rendezvous with an Entrepreneuriii. Increase capacity of Entrepreneurs' clubs³
USAID Nepal	Education for Income	The multifaceted EIG program is targeted to

³ Source: Samriddhi Foundation Website <http://www.samriddhi.org/page.php?id=18>

	Generation (EIG) program	<p>increase access to productive job opportunities and improving incomes of the poor and disadvantaged, while also creating a workforce that is crucial for the country's economic growth. The program's efforts are focused on areas historically prone to conflict and interethnic tensions. It offers a package for disadvantaged youth between the ages of 16 and 30. Its activities include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Literacy training ii. Technical and vocational training iii. Agricultural productivity and enterprise training, and iv. Scholarships⁴
Mercy Corps	Youth Initiatives for Peace and Reconciliation (YIPR)	<p>Mercy Corps designed the Youth Initiatives for Peace and Reconciliation (YIPR) to encourage youth to actively participate in community reconciliation and decision-making processes in five districts of mid and far western Nepal - Dang, Banke, Bardiya, Kailali and Kanchanpur.</p> <p>Activities included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Developing Capacities of Youth ii. Building Stronger Networks between Youth from Different Communities iii. Bridging the Gap between Adults and Youth iv. Mobilizing Youth in Community Services⁵

Formation of youth clubs, youth networks and alliances

Many organizations felt that youth needs to be organized and mobilized in such a way as to prevent them from joining armed conflict and violence. These organizations have designed their programming by forming 'youth clubs,' usually at the VDC level. This has been one of the more successful types of programs on youth mobilization. These organizations also are helping existing youth clubs on their activeness and sustainability by fostering their organizational as

⁴ Source: USAID Nepal's website <http://nepal.usaid.gov/our-work/program-area/economic-growth-education-a-food-security/420-education-for-income-generation-eig-program.html>

⁵ Source: Mercy Corps' website <http://nepal.mercycorps.org/projects/youth/youth-initiatives.php>

well as individual capacities and linking them with VDC offices for accessing the available resources. There are also some organizations which have directly worked with large numbers of youth clubs. In addition, these youth clubs are focused on youth involvement on peace and reconciliation. After 2006, many political parties started to mobilize youth for their political interests. Youth as themselves became aware and started to engage in socio-political activities. During this time period, a large part of donor and non-governmental priorities shifted their programmatic areas and started addressing youth and their issues. Many organizations who focused exclusively on youth issues helped youth to be organized and helped them to form common youth forums and platforms, which are now often called ‘youth networks and alliances’. Some of the old youth clubs were refocused and revamped and brought in with the programming of those organizations. Currently, youth networks and alliances are one of the effective means to address the youth issues. These clubs and alliances mobilize youth as pressure groups for social activities that foster community peacebuilding. Youth peace dialogues centre were established and loose networks at national level focusing on youth and youth issues were also created.

Organization	Project	Activity
UNDP	Livelihoods Recovery for Peace project (LRP)	LRP project based on three Terai districts, Sarlahi, Mahottori and Rautahat objective is to promote peace and social cohesion. Among the various components of the project youth empowerment was also emphasized. LRP formed partnership with 154 youth clubs to promote young people as ambassadors of peace. 84 club members have been trained on peacebuilding, leadership and other skills. ⁶
BASE	Youth Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation Campaign	BASE implemented “Youth Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation” (YIPR) in five districts of mid and far western Nepal i.e. Dang, Banke, Bardia, Kailali and Kanchanpur. Over 30,000 youths belonging to different communities including marginalized communities across five districts through (1 central committee, 5 district committees, 21 area committee and 820

⁶ Source: UNDP Nepal’s website <http://www.undp.org.np/poverty-reduction/program/lrp-114.html>

		village youth committees) were mobilized under this project to enable them to promote peace and reconciliation through various non-violent activities such as holding camps, organizing street dramas, organizing parent-youth interactions, sports competitions and peace promotion competitions. ⁷
SFCG	Youth Participation in the Peace and Democratization Process in Eastern Terai	SFCG implemented a one year project in four districts in the eastern Terai's Siraha, Saptari, Dhanusha and Mahottari, in partnership with a local non-governmental organization. Several of the youth clubs involved with SFCG took initiatives to engage youth who had been involved in armed groups, to instead become involved in peaceful youth club activities. Youth clubs are now positively engaged in community peacebuilding. Local youth clubs are also in the process of developing their youth clubs into a network that becomes a registered institution. 10 youth clubs from Siraha district have come together and formed the Youth Network for Peace and Development, Siraha. ⁸

Reconciliation and reintegration

There are some organizations which work on reconciliation and reintegration of ex-combatant from different cantonments around the country. Donors like the United Nations have focused programs on reintegration issues, particularly in a joint collaboration partnership with other international non-governmental organizations. Apart from UNDP, there are other organizations which also carry out major programs with reintegration components. Many organizations which focus on reconciliation have strong emphases on reconciliation between returning ex-combatants and their communities.

Organization	Project	Activity
UNDP	UN Interagency Rehabilitation Programme (UNIRP)	The main objective of the project is to support the rehabilitation process and to support the transition of the discharged VMLRs from military to civilian life by providing them with training and education for them to access employment and livelihood

⁷ Source: Base Website <http://nepalbase.org/newface/?p=63>

⁸ Source: SFCG Website http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/nepal/community_programming.html

		<p>opportunities.</p> <p>By September 2011, 2,684 (67%) of the 4,008 discharges had contacted the programme's toll free phone to learn about the rehabilitation options. Most of them (2,460) have gone on to receive career counseling and 2,384 of them have opted for one of the four available rehabilitation options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. vocational skills training ii. micro-enterprise development iii. health-related training and education iv. formal or non-formal education⁹
UNICEF	Return and Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed forces and Armed Groups	<p>Since May 2006, fifteen organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Children as Zones of Peace coalition, have participated in the implementation of a national strategy for the release, return and reintegration of CAAFAG, coordinated by UNICEF in close collaboration with UNMIN. The child protection program established 23 district protection systems, as part of which 450 paralegal committees are functional at the community level.¹⁰</p>

Political and policies awareness/government linkages

As youth voices and issues have gained serious attention at the national level, the government of Nepal implemented a National Youth Policy which addressed youth issues and concerns. It has established a linkage between youth and government which previously was not clear. This occurred alongside an increasing level of awareness in youth of political issues. Youth are being to accept their roles and participating in constitution-making process as well. At the community-level, awareness programs are empowering youth albeit slowly. The government of Nepal carries programs aim at addressing youth issues under the Ministry of Youth & Sports for 2½ years. It has plans for creating a national youth council and has opened 'youth information

⁹ Source UNDP Website <http://www.undp.org.np/crisis-prevention-and-recovery/program/unirp-113.html>

¹⁰ Source: UNICEF Website http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/07-PL52-Nepal-revisedversion9_October_to_Rosa.pdf

centers' in each district, which are focal points for information regarding youth and their issues. They have planned to establish well-equipped resource centre in 5 districts.

Apart from this all, they have been involved with young political groups to build their capacity level. The ministry is collaboratively working with 600 youth organization right now. To address unemployment issues, they have started on job training for 1000 youth in collaboration with industrial groups.

Organization	Project	Activity
Alliance for Peace	Internal Democratization of Political Students and Youth Wings	The project assisted in developing and strengthening student and youth wings of the political parties to perform as effective actors of democratization and good governance and trusted by voters. Other issues covered includes <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Representation and responsible to public needs and concerns ii. Contributing to the public debate iii. Playing an important role in ensuring transparency and accountability¹¹
Youth Initiative	Youth Advocacy for Accountability and Transparency (YAATra)	The projects main objective was to create awareness among youth through involvement in civic, political and contemporary issues and to involve young people against corruption & promote transparency and accountability. In addition, its goal was also to increase youth participation in local governance and decision making process. ¹²

Media/Sports/Culture

There are many innovative programs focused on youth and peacebuilding issues through the use media. There are radio programs, dramas shows, soap operas and street dramas that address youth to foster their capacity so that they can take leadership roles in community peacebuilding. The government also has its own radio youth news which airs every week. At the community level, there are many sports activities that have also linked with youth development and peace building. Team sports such as volleyball and football are often used to bring youth

¹¹ Source: AFP Website <http://www.afpnepal.org/activities/actid-31>

¹² Source: Youth Initiative Website http://www.youthinitiative.org.np/contents/page_43.html

from across dividing lines together. There are one-day event-based sport activities, usually football and volleyball tournaments that help to strengthen the relationships between divided individuals. There are friendship tournaments between the People Liberation Army and local youth which play a significant role in building up relationships and are often used to bring youth together. Since music and art as a form of a culture can touch the sentiments of many, organizations also use this as a tool to strengthen the dialogues and communication between generations as well as other dividing lines. ‘Dohari’ was one of the examples of music which have been used to help bridge the generational gap.

Organization	Project	Activity
SFCG	Community Peacebuilding Media and Peacebuilding	SFCG has been using various tools for conflict transformation and peacebuilding. It uses media to spread the message to wider audiences which is deepened by community peacebuilding work at the grassroots level and vice versa. Some of the activities include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Naya Bato Naya Payla (Radio Soap Opera promoting dialogue and social cohesion) ii. Farakilo Dharti (Radio Talk Show promoting dialogue as a solution to conflict) iii. Hamro Team (TV series promoting good leadership and governance) iv. Radio for Peacebuilding (Workshop for radio professionals about conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding) v. Cultural exchange program (Intergenerational Dohori) vi. Games and Sports for peace (Football and Volleyball games played between disputing/conflicting parties)¹³
Equal Access Nepal	Radio Shows	Equal access has been using their radio shows for peacebuilding purposes. The shows support the peace process by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Inspiring and teaching the audiences to participate in the New Nepal’s

¹³ Source: SFCG Website http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/nepal/media_programming.html

		democratic process ii. to hold their elected officials accountable in sustainable and democratic ways, iii. to join together to raise their oft-marginalized voices with empowered and knowledgeable civic participation to affect change ¹⁴
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Education and Peacebuilding

Education is the most influential source to shape young people’s mind. In order to remove the roots of structural violence from the society it is necessary to incorporate peacebuilding in education system from within. To institutionalize and internalize the peacebuilding aspect in education sector some of the organizations in Nepal are working in the field of education. Organizations are working on transforming teaching techniques and making it more conflict sensitive. In addition, they are also working on course materials which adhere to conflict sensitivity and respects diversity and inclusiveness. Materials have been developed and teachers have been trained by both government and non-government institutions. These trainings and materials have incorporated Peace, Human Rights and Civic Education (PHRCE). However, teachers still apply the traditional mode of teaching. Peacebuilding projects working on education sector are trying to bring about pedagogical transformation and correctly incorporate PHRCE.

Organization	Project	Activities
Kathmandu University & SFCG	Education for Peacebuilding	Activities of the project includes i. Analyzing relevance of education’s role in peacebuilding in Nepal ii. Development a Peacebuilding Education Course for Teacher Education in Higher Education Institutions iii. Identifying peacebuilding education opportunities for teacher education iv. relevance and possibilities of peacebuilding education in educational reconstruction v. Publishing Academic Research Papers

¹⁴ Source: SFCG Website <http://www.equalaccess.org.np/programs/peace-building>

Others

There are some organizations like Canadian Cooperation Office (CCO) which directly works with female youth involved in sex trade, by providing them with skills to work in other professions. Some organizations such as CARE –Nepal mobilized youth as ‘peace ambassadors. There is also a committee formed at a district level in Banke such as Shanti Sadhav Committee funded by Social Awareness Concern (SACC) and led by youth which enriches the capacity and leadership of youth to maintain social cohesion in local community. This has also helped youth to engage in constructive activities as well. There are also programs like anti-corruption movements, youth mobilization for good governance, and anti-drug awareness campaigns conducted at the local level which, in addition to their goals, has the indirect benefit of promoting social cohesion and the constructive engagement of youth.

Recommendations

One of the first major areas where additional work with youth needs to be focused is in the areas of their education and providing knowledge, abilities, and skills through trainings. A key gap is the lack of well-rounded, knowledgeable youth in Nepal. This alone is a primary cause of many of the conflicts youth are involved with or related to. In order to address this gap, we suggest that practitioners:

- Provide youth with increased soft skills, such as leadership, communication, and confidence, which can quite easily be incorporated into a variety of trainings on other topics.
- Include entrepreneurial skills, explicitly or not, in a variety of trainings so that youth learn how they can take action to address problems in innovative and self-created ways.
- Provide youth with civic leadership trainings that teach youth the rights and responsibilities of being a citizen in a democracy and how violence should not be a part of that. A part of this should help youth create their own visions of how they want to better Nepal.
- Increase youths' awareness of peacebuilding, conflict, politics, and development so they are aware of how their individual actions have a larger effect across Nepal.
- Work with the whole education system to provide age appropriate peacebuilding programming.
- Provide youth that are going abroad for work and/or education with increased sensitization so they can avoid conflict and dangers while abroad while better their country and communities.

Politics is one of the first places youth turn to when they have problems as they see involvement in it as an easy solution. However, it is also one of the largest sources of conflict. Working with politically involved youth and politically aware youth has the potential to have some of the largest returns on invested time and money if done properly. We suggest that practitioners:

- Work with 2nd and 3rd level political youth leaders who may be cooperative and will eventually have large influence.
- Work with youth leaders on their accountability so that their constituents begin to trust them
- Ensure political youth understand issues beyond just youth issues to increase their ability to provide input in the political process and increase the voice of youth
- Work with youth early, before they are too swayed by politics
- Work to increase independent thinking of youth (separate thinking from political party lines)
- Work to show how student politics can be used as an opportunity for youth and how they can create the impact, positive identification (recognition) through student politics

While economic issues are not the cause of conflict in Nepal, they are definitely a necessary factor for most of it. Addressing the problems of livelihood will remove some reasons for youth to become involved in conflict. In order to address this gap, we suggest that practitioners:

- Find ways to provide loans for youth to start enterprises of their own. This could be particularly transformative in the way it addresses conflict if it provides funding to youth cooperatives that must also work with their communities for the public good.
- Find ways for youth to make more money in agriculture and increase the importance of agriculture through role models and government policy
- Close the communication gap between employers and those providing trainings to youth
- Introduce programming aimed at addressing the reasons for and conflict from youth migration
- Work to establish a sense among youth of dignity in whatever work they are able to find.

An important area where more work is needed is with how youth relate to their communities. Between migration, generally increasing generation gap, and a willingness to resort to violence, are often the causes of conflict in their communities; however, they can also have very positive effects. To further address this subject, we suggest that practitioners:

- Promote and support youth in providing community development services for their community with an aim of also providing reconciliation.
- Support and train those working with track 1.5 and track 2 level dialogues with youth groups. An even more impactful program would be to train youths themselves to be mediators in these circumstances.
- Further sensitize communities about the reintegration of ex-combatants and facilitate a peaceful return of those individuals.
- Involve youth with working with other youth to reduce drug use and crime.
- Promote cultural exchange programs between youth to create mutual understanding and highlight the commonalities between them, helping to forge a common Nepali identity.
- Highlight the successful youth work and projects that current exist.

Successful government involvement with youth has the potential to have wide-reaching effects. Strong policies and implementation would likely reach all youth in Nepal much more quickly than a series of individual trainings and program. We suggest that practitioners work with the government to:

- Create linkages between local government and youth clubs.
- Form plans and policies that target different sub-sections of youth, rather than relying on one catch-all plan
- Expand recognition of youth as a group whose needs must be addressed.
- Resolve the issue of reintegration of those currently in cantonments.
- Train youth in good governance and set a positive example of how government can work.

- Coordinate and disseminate information from the government to youth through media programs, public service announcements, and community dialogues.

Although we present here many recommendations for how to engage youth positively with conflicts throughout Nepal, many of the most important things are already being done. Unfortunately, as we were told by many individuals – whether they be youth, donors, or NGOs – the work that is being done is not enough to create change across the whole country. In order to change that, practitioners working with youth need to expand their work. Projects need to reach a wider range of youth, in terms of geography, ethnicity, and gender, and should be specifically in each case to the context the youth to be worked with face. Reaching a broader number of youth can be done through more effect use of media programming. To increase what types of projects deal with youth, practitioners need to increase the diversity of methods and themes that are addressed when working with youth. Practitioners should determine more specifically when youth should be addressed directly and when they can be included under other work as a cross-cutting issue. Finally, many donors have started shifting their projects away from peacebuilding to economic development as open violence has predominantly ended and there is space for development. While economic development and the creation of jobs is undoubtedly needed, there still remain many underlying conflicts for youth, as we have previously highlighted. These issues still need to be resolved, whether directly through peacebuilding projects or indirectly as part of projects specifically targeting other themes priorities.

Conclusion

The involvement of youth as a positive force for peace in Nepal is increasing, although slowly. Although they are involved in the increase in violence throughout the country, they are also a primary cause in bridging divides they have inherited from the previous generations' conflict. There is a willingness among the general population of youth to become engaged in productive activities, whether they are education, jobs, or even politics, if correctly focused. What is needed now is a larger engagement with youth. A few major steps have been taken, such as the creation of the National Youth Policy, but more needs to be done. Many of the smaller efforts by the government, donors, INGOs, and NGOs, are focusing on the right themes but are event-based and run on a short term basis. The majority of youth are disengaged and mistrusting of most organizations out there due to this. A more coordinated and concerted approach that focuses on the needs of youth and how it can make youth part of the process will be more likely garner their praise and increase their positive involvement. There is a generally positive trend in regards to youth and peacebuilding which, with enough effort, has the potential to improve quickly.

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Annex: Recommendations specifically for Search for Common Ground

Nepal

Design and continue programming on sports culture and community projects

- The research has illuminated that youth have always shown interest on sports, art and cultural activities. This particular age group is very lively and enthusiastic. We can only bring them into constructive activities if we design our programming in such a way which can draw their interest and attention. So we encourage SFCG to design and continue the upcoming youth & peace building programs in youth friendly approaches.
- SFCG can play a role to build linkages in private institutions in district level to sponsor event based activities. These activities can be sports, dance, art competition which can be used as a tool to create social cohesion and reducing generational gap.

Media programs

- Beside media soap and radio dramas, SFCG is highly recommended to produce youth related program that ensures to give information on youth issues and concerns in local level. The media programming could be designed in a way which covers information of MOYS and peace ministry which addresses youth issues.
- SFCG media talk programs can be led by youth to address the issues through dialogue in community and local people.

Create Linkage and coordination

Central level:

- SFCG is highly recommended to link their programs along with government as well as other non government organization at central level. SFCG can make stronger linkages to MOYS and peace ministry and jointly coordinate their upcoming programming that address youth and peace building issues at local level.
- Create linkage between all the existing youth & peace building organization and programs and work collaboratively.

District level:

- One of our finding is that the youth networks and clubs at local level are confused to link their programs to other local existing structure like Village Development Committee, District Development Committee and Local Peace Committee. SFCG can play a role to bring them in one common platform to create a linkage of youth networks & clubs with these local level government structures.
- Advocacy for proper mechanism to ensure youth know about the youth budget and policies

New programmatic options

- Organizations like Alliance for Peace and Samriddhi have programs that focus the area of youth engagement and participation in constitution building process. They also have been coordinating all the youth political leaders at central level. To avoid duplication and waste of resource, SFCG is highly recommended to focus on district level youth political leaders since they will finally ended up joining main stream of politics in the near future.
- Youth ministry has established their youth information centre in 75 districts in Nepal. SFCG can play a major role to strengthen this forum as ‘information sharing platform’ that shares idea and information and government benefit packages for youth. These platforms can be used for disseminating government information on youth budget, employment, provision on foreign employment and other community issues as well.
- Our youth networks could be used as peace dialogue centers where we can hold discussion over youth budget, youth participation, and intergenerational dialogue

Program scope and coverage

- Continue programs that encourage local level youth participation and engagement in community level. But we recommend SFCG to expand their area to district level because youth voices and concerns can be addressed to broader youth.

- Revamp the seed grant activities that can create an opportunities for youth for enhancing their skill and capacity such as soft skills
- Continuation program like 'Civic leadership school' under pathways to peace project.
- SFCG is recommended to use Livelihood as a cross cutting theme and incorporate in our various programming.
- Make it more explicit who falls under the definition of youth leader. Not just age but also define youth leaders and programs choose activities that are most suitable for them.
- Coordinate SFCG's programming with other organizations that use economic approaches to peacebuilding.
- Increase the amount of work with women.
- The major finding from the research is that youth associated with youth and peacebuilding organizations always seek economic opportunities. SFCG can take a leading role to hold national level workshop and conference assembling donor and NGOS collaborating in youth issue