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### **Empowering Girls for a Future Without Barriers**

*By Sangeeta Shrestha, Founder and Program Director, WAWCAS Nepal.*

On August 21, 2024, and under the WAWCAS Program, our movement took a pivotal step towards empowering girls to envision a future free of limitations. Envisioning a world where young girls can dream of further education, career success, and timely marriages free from dowry, we aim to tackle gender discrimination and child marriage head-on. Through long-term, community-wide change, we seek to build a brighter, more inclusive future.

Starting with an initial gathering of 11 interested organizations, the path was not without its challenges. However, as the dialogue continued, enthusiasm grew, culminating in a follow-up meeting where seven organizations, alongside the local ward office and media representatives,

committed to a focused plan. Together, we outlined a Training of Trainers (TOT) program scheduled for October 23–25, 2024, to amplify the impact. Each organization contributed two to three representatives, totaling 33 dedicated participants, who will now extend this movement across local communities by conducting workshops with youngsters four groups each.



The TOT training, infused with energy and collaboration, began with an interactive exercise that symbolized the interconnectedness of our efforts. As participants tossed a thread to one another, they introduced themselves and shared where they were from, creating a networked web that illustrated the power of unified action. By conducting daily reviews using innovative methods like the ORID (Objective, Reflective, Interpretive and Decision) approach and review sheets, we stayed focused on our goals while encouraging open and creative dialogue.

Our movement's objectives are clear and essential:

- Reduce gender discrimination within communities.
- Raise awareness of children's rights and equality.
- Prepare girls for academic and career success, alongside a future free from dowry practices.
- Build a network of committed stakeholders to drive forward the Program.

Throughout the training, discussions centered on critical issues: child marriage, dowry practices, and high school dropout rates, especially prevalent in Rautahat. Participants engaged in creative brainstorming, exploring “wild ideas” before narrowing down practical solutions to drive change. The resulting atmosphere was energetic, as participants shared innovative strategies.



To sustain momentum, each organization developed a six-month action plan, mapping out workshop locations and target communities. Practical tools were introduced, including a shared Google sheet, to ensure all organizations stay informed of progress and are united in their efforts.

We discussed what materials are needed to conduct workshops with youngsters. We talked about slogans, play cards, stories, songs, street drama, and declarations. Participants were divided into groups to prepare the materials and presented their work accordingly.

#### **Finalized Actions to Engage and Educate**

1. **Bi-monthly rallies** featuring slogans and banners to raise awareness.
2. **Declarations** handed to local authorities and shared on social media, crafted by young participants during workshops.
3. **Teacher meetings** to foster a non-discriminatory learning environment.
4. **Parental gatherings** to encourage gender equality within homes.

5. **Media and social media campaigns** amplifying our message and goals.
6. **Street dramas and gender equality concerts** to capture public attention and spark conversations.



### Concluding remarks by the participants

Reflecting on the training’s effectiveness, participants shared heartfelt thanks for this impactful experience. Journalist Pawan Karki remarked that this session was unlike any he had attended, praising the use of games to enrich the learning experience. Bijaya Shaha, an executive committee member from Gujara Municipality, expressed deep gratitude and pledged full support, offering access to municipal resources like printers to facilitate our work.

### A Sustainable Future with Clear Goals

With a six-month timeline in place, the movement will undergo a thorough review before its next phase, ensuring every step is informed by the needs and progress of the communities we serve. As like-minded organizations, government offices, media representatives, and volunteers work together, we stand united for a future where every girl can learn, achieve, and dream without limitations.

This training reflects our shared dedication to gender equality, children's rights, and a future where barriers for young girls are dismantled. We eagerly anticipate ongoing collaborations, positive implementations, and lasting impact as we advance this movement. Together, we're creating a more equitable tomorrow.



### More Stories from the WAWCAS Women and Their Children

Every month, three WAWCAS women add a new blog to their story on the WAWCAS website. And also, one of our many Child Groups upload a monthly story. You can get insight into the daily struggles and happy moments in the lives of these women and children by clicking the link below.

[Meet the Women and Their Children • Wawcas International](#)