

WAWCAS Newsletter, November 2025

Introduction

In the WAWCAS November Newsletter, Sangeeta Shrestha tells us two very different stories but both of them provide wonderful input to the work of the organisation and its impact on the women and their families.

First, Sangeeta takes us through key aspects of a series of workshops held from September 2024 to February 2025 in Nepal with WAWCAS women and their mother-in-laws. In Nepal's traditional extended families tension often surface when authority meets different values of the newer generations. Recognising the significant impact of these dynamics, WAWCAS invited mothers-in-laws and daughter-in-laws to meet and discuss approaches to improve empathy and communication with the aim to reduce family conflicts. WAWCAS has a strong commitment to continue such initiatives.

Secondly, Sangeeta tells us the story of Susmita, who came to WAWCAS in 2018. After a few years in India she returned to Katmandu with her very sick husband and was struggling to support her family and pay the medical bills. But once inside the WAWCAS Program she rapidly established a dairy and vegetable business, and recovering from his disease, her husband now works side-by-side with Susmita every day. And their children attend a good private school. A wonderful story of yet another hard-working, resilient Nepali woman coming out of poverty and now redefines the future for her family.

Enjoy your reading of the two wonderful stories coming from the WAWCAS Community.

Per Qvist

Volunteer in WAWCAS

Workshops with Mothers-in-Law and Daughters-in-Law: A Path to Peaceful Families and Empowered Women

September 2024 – February 2025 | Rautahat, Tanahun, Lamjung, Kathmandu

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

In many parts of Nepal, family relationships are at the heart of community life. Yet, one of the most sensitive and complex relationships often remains unexplored — that between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. Slisha, under the WAWCAS Program, recognized this crucial dynamic and conducted transformative workshops in four working districts, reaching 138 participants from 35 groups of representatives.

These workshops were more than sessions — they were a mirror for reflection, a space for healing, and a catalyst for behavior change.



Why These Workshops Matter

In Nepal's traditional extended families, mothers-in-law often hold significant authority, which can create tension when newer generations bring different values. Daughters-in-law, on the other hand, often face barriers to pursuing education, careers, or running businesses due to household restrictions.

The workshops addressed these gaps by:

- Promoting empathy and communication
- Facilitating behavior change through shared commitments
- Reducing family conflicts
- Creating support systems for women's empowerment
- Improving the environment for child development and business growth

Step-by-Step Engagement Process in the Workshops

1. Reflecting on Realities

Each pair was invited to share what they admired and what they found difficult in the other. The room was filled with laughter, emotion, and powerful honesty.

2. Open Group Discussions

Participants, divided into small groups, shared the everyday challenges they face with each other — from communication gaps to unmet expectations.



3. Root Cause Exploration

Groups delved deep, asking:

- Why can't we treat our daughter-in-law like a daughter?
- Why can't we treat our mother-in-law like a mother?

This exercise revealed heartfelt insights, such as:

- Mothers-in-law often focus on faults more than care.
- Daughters-in-law sometimes fail to listen or respond kindly.
- Mutual misunderstandings lead to distance rather than closeness.

4. Defining the Ideal Relationship

Each group outlined the qualities of an ideal mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, and then crafted a shared oath based on those qualities.

5. Taking an Oath, Making a Change

In a moving conclusion, every participant took an oath to improve their behavior and rebuild trust.

Highlights of Commitments

Daughters-in-law pledged to:

- Treat in-laws with **respect and warmth**
- Care for them during illness
- **Avoid gossip** or complaints to their parents
- **Listen actively** and speak politely

Mothers-in-law pledged to:

- Communicate feelings **without harshness**
- **Treat daughters-in-law as equals**
- Avoid unnecessary complaints to outsiders
- Be **understanding and affectionate**

WAWCAS Program remains committed to replicating this successful model in more communities — because peace begins at home, and empowered families lead to empowered societies.

Before leaving, participants marked their level of commitment on a **mood chart** — a beautiful moment of visualizing change.

Participants' Reflections

Many shared how the workshop was the first time they ever **truly listened to each other**. One mother-in-law said, “I never realized how much my daughter-in-law wanted to be heard. Today, I saw her differently — not just as a wife to my son, but as a woman like me.”

A daughter-in-law echoed, “I always assumed my mother-in-law didn't care. But she too feels unappreciated. I will now try to treat her with more kindness.”

Lasting Impact and Next Steps

These workshops have already led to **visible behavior changes** and **stronger family harmony**. They have also helped **women-run businesses function more smoothly**, thanks to newfound cooperation at home.

To all the women who participated with honesty, courage, and an open heart, you are the changemakers. And to our supporters, thank you for believing in this vision of harmony and transformation.

Thank You

A Journey from Struggle to Strength – The Story of Susmita Malla

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

Susmita Malla was born on 14th Poush 2053 B.S. (December 29, 1996) in the remote Mugu district of Nepal. She studied up to Grade 10 and now lives with her husband, two young sons, her mother-in-law, and her brother's daughter.

Life had always been challenging, but her real test began when her husband, Dheeraj, who had been working in Punjab, India, for about 2–3 years, fell seriously ill. Susmita had also spent a year in Punjab with him, but their modest savings vanished in his treatment for jaundice. Miraculously, he recovered after taking Ayurvedic medicine that cost only 20 rupees.

Just when they thought the worst was over, Dheeraj developed a severe cough and fever. His condition worsened, and without a proper diagnosis, he feared he might not live long. Wanting to see his parents one last time, they decided to return to Mugu. On the way, they met some neighbors who told them Dheeraj's parents had gone to Kathmandu to meet his sister. So, instead of going to Mugu, they changed their route and headed to Kathmandu.

Susmita, carrying a two-month-old baby and holding the hand of her 18-month-old son, had to physically support her husband, who could barely stand. It was their first time in Kathmandu, and they had no idea how to reach her sister-in-law's home. She called her brother-in-law, who came to pick them up from the bus stop.

When they arrived, no one recognized Dheeraj. He was painfully thin, coughing, and unable to walk properly. The moment his parents realized it was their son, the room filled with cries. Susmita recalls that she felt overwhelmed, nervous, and helpless that night as everyone wept.

The next morning, they took Dheeraj to the hospital, where he was admitted immediately. After 11 days, doctors diagnosed him with pulmonary tuberculosis. He was not allowed to touch his children, and even his utensils were kept separate. They stayed at Susmita's sister-in-law's home during his treatment. Friends from his old workplace helped him borrow NPR 200,000 (two lakh rupees) to survive, but most of that money was soon gone.

A New Chapter with the WAWCAS

Adjusting to life in Kathmandu was not easy, but in 2018, Susmita heard about the WAWCAS program starting in Dahachok, Chandragiri-2. She joined the meetings and became a member. The seed money of NPR 30,000 gave her a lifeline — she bought a cow and began selling milk. She also started growing vegetables to supplement her income.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, she received another NPR 25,000 as a relief package, which she used to buy a second cow. The pandemic years were tough, but Susmita’s determination did not waver.

After six months of treatment, the doctors declared Dheeraj fully recovered. From that day on, he worked side by side with Susmita. Together, they expanded their dairy and vegetable business. Their children now attend a private school.



The Fruits of Hard Work

Today, they sell about 35 liters of milk daily at NPR 110 per liter, earning NPR 1,405,240 annually from milk alone. After deducting NPR 737,700 for fodder, medicines, and vitamins, their dairy business still brings a substantial profit.

From vegetables, they earn NPR 600,000 a year, spending around NPR 115,000 on seeds, manure, and other inputs.

Their landlord, recognizing their honesty and dedication, leased them 5 ropani (about 2,543.7 square meters) of land for 20 years. With their earnings, they have bought a small plot of land in Nepalgunj where they plan to build a beautiful home. They have also purchased a motorbike and some gold jewelry.

Susmita saves NPR 1,000 daily at a finance institution. Her biggest dream now is to give her children the best education possible. She is also hoping to have a daughter one day.

Giving Back

Grateful for the transformation in her life, Susmita often reflects: “I can’t imagine what my life would be like if I had not joined WAWCAS. I don’t even want to think about it.”

She is now an active member of an LNGO (though not yet formally registered) and has participated in two workshops. Even though she is not a local of the area, she is determined to remain involved and support other women to stand on their own feet — just as she did.

Susmita’s journey is one of courage, resilience, and hope — a testament to how determination, community support, and opportunities can turn despair into a future full of possibilities.

Thank You

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](#)