

Empowering Women for Peace and Development in South Asia

Focus on North East India



"If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other"
- Mother Teresa

Empowering Women for Peace and Development in South Asia

Focus on North East India



(Source: www.globaltravelerusa.com)

Map of South Asia

South Asia or Southern Asia is the southern region of the Asian continent, which comprises the sub-Himalayan countries and, for some authorities, also includes the adjoining countries to the west and the east. South Asia is bounded on the south by the Indian Ocean and on land by West Asia, Central Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asia. according to the United Nations geographical region classification, Southern Asia comprises the countries of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, southeastern Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. South Asia is home to well over one fifth of the world's population, making it both the most populous and the most densely populated geographical region in the world. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation is an economic cooperation organization in the region which was established in 1985.

Status of Women in Peace and Conflict in South Asia

Over 20 years, only 16 peace agreements exist where gender is mentioned. Nepal is the only country that has adopted a National

Action Plan to improve the participation of women in peace reconstruction. During conflict and post conflict countless women are humiliated, assaulted, raped and murdered by state and non-state actors. The sexual and physical violence faced by women has not been recognized properly. Thousands of women combatants have not come forward, and therefore cannot avail of services. Women affected by conflict still continue to suffer silently.

It has been over a decade since the passage of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, the landmark document reaffirming the importance of women's participation and involvement at all levels of the peace and security agenda. However, formal peace building and conflict resolution initiatives continue to ignore or marginalize issues of gender and the involvement of women in formal missions and talks remains low. The gender debate overwhelmingly fails to address structural inequalities and power dynamics, which are the core of gender discrimination.

"The full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields." -Preamble, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Adopted at United Nations 1979.

Northeast India is the eastern-most region of India. It comprises the contiguous *Eight Sister States*—Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. The states are officially recognized under the North Eastern Council (NEC), constituted in 1971 as the acting agency for the development of the eight states. The North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd (NEDFi) was incorporated on 9 August 1995 and the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) was set up in September 2001.

Project Site



Map of India highlighting North East Region



Map of Manipur

Violence in Northeast India

North-East India has been facing the onslaught of multiple armed conflicts for many decades. The issues aggravated after the introduction of the Armed Forces Special Power Act. More than 50,000 lives have been lost in the violence. The total population of North Eastern Region of India is 38,857,769, of which 19.1% are living below the poverty line (the Indian average is 27.5%). North East India deals with complex social political issues such as struggle over natural resources, ethnic conflicts, illegal migration, displacement and social exclusion.

Manipur: Manipur is a state in India's North East with just over two million inhabitants. It is a state that has been witnessing armed conflict & over 20,000 people have been killed in the last five decades. According to official statistics, in 2008 alone more than 400 people have lost their lives. Today, more than 30 armed groups operate in Manipur ranging from small outfits to organizations with several thousand members. Besides them dozens of battalions of the Indian army and several units of Indian Paramilitary forces are stationed throughout the state at Indo- Burma border. The Armed Forces Special Powers Act is also clamped on the state since 1980. Not a day passes in Manipur without a gun killing.



A relative of Budhi, 27 years, shot by un-identified gun men in WahgaiLamkha, 24 Dec ,04

Victim of a gun killing in Manipur

Most of people killed in Manipur are young men between the age of 19 to about 42 years of age. As a result, an average of 300 widows is created every year in Manipur due to ongoing conflict.

Northeast Women in Peace Process and need for women peace negotiators

Women's participation breaks the vicious cycle of women's marginalization and subordination at all levels. Women's civil society organizations play a key role in peace and security development through their participation in conflict resolution and peace building processes. Women Peace negotiators understand and articulate the implications of peace processes for women better than male negotiators. But still, there is no participation of Northeast Women in any decision-making processes, even in local panchayats. Even when women participate or are included in formal peace negotiations, their role is limited to a formal presence without having the capacity, or mandate to contribute to setting or shaping the agenda of such negotiations.



There is no way to peace, peace is the way.
-Emily Greene Balch

Goals of the Project

General

To contribute towards promoting civil society and strengthening women-led peace building initiatives for sustainable peace in South Asia focus on North East India.

Specific

- 1.) Active role of women of North East in decision-making processes in local governance and engagement with civil society promoted for prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in Manipur, India.
- 2.) Capacities of North East civil society organizations built for increased engagement in policy dialogue for the effective implementation of UNSCR 1325.

United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, adopted unanimously on 31 October 2000 was the first formal and legal document from the United Nations Security Council that required parties in a conflict to respect women's rights and to support their participation in peace negotiations and in post-conflict reconstruction.

Resolution 1325 has four “pillars” that support the goals of the Resolution, which are:

- Participation,
- Protection,
- Prevention and
- Relief & Recovery

Target Actions

Target 1: Community based groups including women's groups in North East India will be empowered to take action in conflict resolution and gender based violence at local levels

- a) Forming and strengthening women's groups/community level peace groups.
- b) Social action to increase women participation in local governance and awareness of UNCSR 1325: The following actions will address the issue:
 - Develop citizen report cards on women representation in local governance will be prepared at the beginning of the action as well as after two years to see changes.
 - Workshops to be organized with representatives from local governance in Northeast India.
 - Training of state security agencies on women, peace and security issues.



Source: Epao.net

- c) Skill enhancement of women and youth through livelihood development programmes

Target 2: Capacity of Northeast women to participate in decision-making processes in alignment with SCR 1325 will be enhanced through key networks like Manipur Women Gun Survivor's Network (MWGSN)

- a) Training module developed on *Peace and Human Rights Education*, will be introduced in schools/colleges and further advocated at appropriate government forums for incorporation in the mainstream curriculum



Source: Epao.net



Source: Epao.net

- b) Peace volunteers will be educated and linked to national and regional networks.
- c) Women leaders/organization will be identified and fellowship support awarded to women peace leaders, exposed to different models of peace building processes:
 - Organizing a *mothers' bazaar*
 - Women peace congregations to be organized in Northeast India.
- d) Research publication, political/media attention regarding women will be done in conflict and post conflict situations in South Asia particularly Northeast India.

The conflict in Manipur turns 300 women into widows annually

Target 3: Civil society dialogue process will be initiated and strengthened at local, national and regional level for innovative conflict resolution mechanisms

- a) Publication of “best practices” for future peace negotiations and dissemination relevant stakeholders.
- b) Cross-learning on peace building processes in South Asian countries particularly Northeast India.
- c) Multi-stakeholder dialogues initiated, at national and regional level on women, peace and security, UNSCR 1325.

Target groups and final beneficiaries

Primary Target Group: women (widows, survivors of conflict), children and youth, belong to ethnic minority in North-East India.



Sinam Ongbi Chandrajini lost two of her sons, 17-year-old Sinam Chandramani and 27-year-old Sinam Robinson, in the Malom massacre that took place on 2 November 2000

Secondary Target Group: local authorities including local Panchayats, civil society groups e.g. women and youth groups, survivor's network, youth networks/alliances, peace-keeping groups/volunteers, social activists, school teachers, law enforcement agencies, political leaders.



Women's Association Meira Paibi, Manipur (Source: www.e-pao.net)

Tertiary Target Group: Academics, researchers, national and regional networks, policy makers, media.

Final Beneficiaries: Thousands of people from North-East India will directly or indirectly benefit from the programme.

The Education and Empowerment of Women throughout the world cannot fail to result in a more caring, tolerant, just and peaceful life for all.

-Aung San Suu Kyi



Project Implemented By:

Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e. V was founded on 7th November 1973 in Germany. Their vision is a world in which all people can exercise their right to lead a self-determined life in dignity and justice, free from hunger and poverty. Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e. V fight against global hunger and for sustainable food security. For more details log on to www.welthungerhilfe.de

Control Arms Foundation of India (CAFI) was founded on 10th September 2004 in New Delhi by a group of concerned citizens from all across the country to address humanitarian concerns due to rising armed violence in India. CAFI has been working in the Northeast Region of India for the past 7 years through its sister organization, the Manipur Women Gun Survivors Network, which was set up to help women in Manipur. Also in the year 2009, CAFI set up Northeast India Women Initiative for Peace (NEIWIP) working for peace in Northeast region of India. For more details log on to www.cafi-online.org, www.womensurvivorsnetwork.org and www.neiwip.blogspot.com

Project Supported By:

The European Union (EU) is an economic and political union of 28 member states that are located primarily in Europe. It was formed by the Inner Six countries in 1951 and 1958, respectively. The EU was the recipient of the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize. For more details log on to www.europa.eu



Control Arms Foundation of India

B 5 / 146, First Floor Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi - 110 029, India

Phone: 91-11- 46018541, Fax: 91-11-26166234

Email: Cafi.communicate@gmail.com www.cafi-online.org

Manipur Office

Langthabal Mantrikhong, Thong Ahanbi, Behind Manipur University Campus,
Imphal West-795003, Manipur, India

Mobile: 91 - 9891210264, Email: binalakshmi@gmail.com
www.womensurvivorsnetwork.org, www.neiwip.blogspot.com