

Training Of Trainers (TOT) On Minimum Standards In Child Protection For The Better Quality Of Care And Support For Vulnerable And At-Risk Children And Adolescents

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Child protection training is a set of educational programs designed to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to safeguard children from abuse, exploitation, and other forms of harm. The training typically covers various topics, including types of child abuse, indicators of abuse, legal obligations and reporting procedures, risk assessment, communication strategies, and support services available for victims. The training was facilitated by Ms. Manju Singh Rana, the General Secretary of WVAF, for three days at Hotel Landmark Pokhara.

The three-day training titled “Training of Trainers” on Minimum Standards in Child Protection for the better quality of care and support for vulnerable and at-risk children and adolescents. Child Protection Training Enhancing the Capacity of Staff and Board members of WVAF, JHF, ACSG, and representatives of concerned stakeholders with an objective to build the capacity of Master Trainers from implementing partners and concerned stakeholders was held at Hotel Landmark – Pokhara from 06th – 08th October 2023. A total of 27 participants from WVAF two other implementing partners and 8 stakeholder organizations for participated in this training.

Purpose: Minimum Standards in Child Protection for the systematic, timely, and better quality of care and support for vulnerable and at-risk children and adolescents



Photo: Trainer and Participants of Child Protection Training

Objectives

- To make stakeholders aware about the better quality of care and support for vulnerable and at-risk children and adolescents
- To strengthen/capacitate Child Care Centre and other Residential Institutions to ensure a timely, appropriate and cost-effective response to the needs of vulnerable and at-risk children and adolescents
- Improve quality, professionalism, and accountability of care and support.

Participants in the training

- Representatives from Women, children, and senior citizen sections, Pokhara Metropolitan City
- Representative from National Child Rights Council, Gandaki Province
- Representative from the district court
- Representative from INSEC
- Representative from NFDN
- Representatives from Autism Care Society, Gandaki
- Representatives from Jana Hitaishi Foundation
- Representatives from WVAF as contributors/ facilitators

Methodology

A mixed training methodology was followed, comprising brainstorming, powerpoint presentations interactive discussions, experience sharing, role-playing, sharing of case studies, group work, and group and individual presentations by the participants. Participants were provided with theoretical knowledge on conducting training. All the sessions were made interactive to ensure the interest and active participation of the participants.



Photo: Participants of Child Protection Training

Day 1

Day 1 of the training began with an introductory session where the objectives of the training were outlined, and participants were welcomed by key members of WVAF. The session included introductions where participants shared their understanding of child protection-related terminology. The participants' expectations were gathered, focusing on enhancing their knowledge of child protection, case management, child rights, and related policies. The norms for the training were established with the participants' agreement.

The second session covered the fundamentals of child protection, emphasizing the importance of prevention and timely response to child protection concerns. The third session delved into the child protection system, highlighting the need for a multi-disciplinary and multisectoral approach, and the importance of community-based mechanisms. Participants engaged in group work to identify their roles and key actors within the child protection system.

The final session of the day focused on case management in child protection, explaining the process, principles, and roles of various stakeholders in ensuring the best interests of the child are prioritized.

Photo: Representatives from Women, children, and senior citizen sections, Pokhara Metropolitan City doing a presentation on child protection, case management, child rights, laws, and policies



Key Outcomes of Day 1

- **Clarification of Training Objectives and Norms:** The training objectives and norms were clearly communicated, setting the tone for active and respectful participation. Participants agreed on key norms, including respecting each other's views and ensuring confidentiality.
- **Enhanced Understanding of Child Protection Concepts:** Participants gained a common understanding of child protection, including its goals, the importance of prevention, and the definition of children and adolescents.
- **Insight into the Child Protection System:** The training provided a comprehensive overview of the child protection system, emphasizing a systematic, multi-sectoral approach and the role of a national nodal agency in coordination and monitoring.
- **Recognition of Roles and Responsibilities:** Through group work, participants identified their roles in various elements of the child protection system and recognized the importance of coordination among different stakeholders.
- **Detailed Case Management Process:** Participants learned about the case management process in child protection, including the steps involved, the principles to be adhered to, and the roles of different actors, with a focus on ensuring the best interest of the child.

Day 2

On the second day of the training, participants engaged in a dynamic review and recap session where they shared their key takeaways from the previous day's discussions. This interactive session, held outdoors in a large circle, encouraged participants to express what they found most valuable, with many highlighting the importance of understanding child protection terminology, the elements of child protection systems, and the concept of the best interests of the child.

The day featured a series of presentations by government officials and representatives from various organizations. These presentations covered a range of topics, including the current state of the child protection system in Nepal, care for autistic children, the shift from institutional care to family-based care for vulnerable children, and the role of child helplines and police services in protecting children.

The later sessions focused on the practical aspects of child protection, including identification, rescue, and reporting procedures. Participants also explored the minimum standards required for the operation and management of residential childcare homes. This was followed by a detailed discussion of the guidelines for school hostels, which included an examination of their structure, functioning, and the standards they must follow.

Key Outcomes of Day 2

- **Deepened Understanding of Child Protection Systems:** The presentations and discussions provided participants with a thorough understanding of the child protection system in Nepal. They learned about its achievements, challenges, and the critical role that various stakeholders play in safeguarding children's rights and well-being.
- **Increased Awareness of Vulnerable Groups:** Participants were informed about the unique needs of specific vulnerable groups, such as autistic children and those in institutional care. The sessions emphasized the importance of transitioning from institutional care to family-based care, highlighting how this shift can better serve the needs of vulnerable children.
- **Clear Protocols for Reporting and Rescue:** The training underscored the necessity of having clear protocols for identifying, reporting, and rescuing children at risk. Participants were taught the importance of early detection and community involvement in preventing harm to children. They also learned the proper procedures for reporting incidents to local authorities and ensuring that children receive the necessary protection and care.



Photo: Trainer Ms. Manju Singh Rana, the General Secretary of WVAF, on Day 2.

- **Guidelines and Standards for Child Care Homes:** Through group work and discussions, participants reviewed the minimum standards for operating residential child care homes. They examined areas such as human resource requirements, child protection policies, and procedures for family reunification. This session emphasized the importance of creating safe and supportive environments for children in care.
- **Operational Guidelines for School Hostels:** The session on school hostel guidelines provided a comprehensive overview of the standards required for these facilities. Participants learned about the importance of ensuring child-friendly, gender-friendly, and disability-friendly environments. The guidelines also stressed the prohibition of corporal punishment and the promotion of positive discipline and parenting practices.

Day 3

Day 3 of the training began with a review and recap of the previous day's activities, conducted in an engaging manner where participants shared insights on child care home standards and challenges. Sessions covered topics such as alternative care and social reintegration for children, emphasizing the importance of family-based care, proper documentation, and monitoring. Group work focused on identifying good practices and gaps in child protection, leading to the development of action plans. The day concluded with an evaluation of the training, highlighting areas of success and suggestions for improvement.

Key Outcomes of Day 3

- **Understanding Alternative Care:** Participants learned about alternative care options, emphasizing family-based solutions over institutional care, and the roles of child welfare offices and committees in managing these cases.
- **Focus on Social Reintegration:** The session clarified the importance of a thorough assessment before reintegrating or reuniting children with their families, and the need for a structured follow-up and monitoring system.
- **Development of Action Plans:** Groups created action plans addressing minimum standards in child protection, detailing specific actions, responsibilities, and support needed, with a submission deadline set.

- Enhanced Awareness on Autism: Information shared about autism and its impact on children was considered valuable, contributing to a broader understanding of the topic among participants.
- Feedback and Evaluation: Participants provided positive feedback on the training content and facilitation, with constructive suggestions for better time management, more varied training methods, and improved logistical arrangements.



Photo: Participants on group exercise.

Conclusion

The Executive Director of WVAF addressed the participants and emphasized the upcoming responsibilities of the district teams. He also thanked all the participants for their meaningful participation in the three-day training. Chief of women, children, and senior citizen section, Pokhara Metropolitan City appreciated the efforts of WVAF and ensured that the enthusiasm showed by all teams in TOT shall remain at the same momentum and bring in excellent results. Ms. Rana congratulated the participants on the successful completion of the three-day TOT. The certificates of participation were awarded to the participants by the Section chief and General secretary of WVAF and this training was concluded with closing remarks and a vote of thanks by the General Secretary, Ms. Manju Singh from WVAF.

Lessons Learnt and Best Practices

- The changes in the format of the workshop helped keep it moving smoothly. More interactive sessions and practical exercises were ensured by the trainers, which helped participants underrate the training contents.
- As the TOT was an individual activity, a few of the sessions took more time than allocated. If next time such activity will be planned more time should be allocated to practical sessions.

Outcome

- Participants became better equipped to train others on child protection standards, helping ensure that vulnerable and at-risk children receive the best care and support.
- The TOT helped standardize child protection practices across different organizations, making sure everyone is on the same page when it comes to safeguarding children.
- Attendees left with a deeper understanding of important child protection issues, like alternative care options and support for children with disabilities such as autism.
- Each participant worked on creating detailed action plans to tackle identified gaps in child protection, specifying what needs to be done, by whom, and what support is required.
- The training fostered stronger connections between organizations, encouraging the sharing of best practices and collaboration on child protection initiatives.