

Youth Action Fund



Progress Report

September 2008-September 2009



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Summary

HimRights in coordination with Open Society Institute initiated youth action fund in Nepal since September 2008 to September 2009 to mobilize and support to youths for social change. The rural, marginalized youth of Nepal face innumerable challenges in the field of education; health, security, employment, and lack of access to resources unless they are from prosperous, socio-politically well linked families. Many have great ideas, intelligent, and smart but their access to resources or connections are poor hence they have difficulties to enhance their growth.

During this project period the one day orientation on proposal writing and financial management were conducted in 22 districts of Nepal. In each orientation more than 35 local youths were benefited. Almost 406 proposals in different theme are received from the 61 districts of Nepal and sent to OSI 187 after translated. Five proposals from different theme are approved by the OSI and the grantees are conducting the projects in their respective districts. The approved projects of Bara, Kapilvastu and Dang are "Safe Foreign Employment", "Strengthening the Institutional and social capacity and status of youths", "Resolution of the society through youth's creativity" and "Reintegration program for specially abled and mentally ill children" were partially concluded in the respective districts accordingly.

We found very difficult to contact with the participants due to poor communication and inaccessible geographical location. Applicants seemed to have a hard time to write a proposal. It is because although they know the problem of their VDC and have creative ideas to solve it, but they are not being able to convey their ideas in a written form. Therefore just a one day orientation seemed less effective and longer period of orientation seems to be required by the youths. Time taken by OSI to review the proposal is also long. Participants are inquiring the reason for the rejection of their proposal by OSI.

Despite all this challenges, limitation and difficulties we have been able to work with the youths. We have received 406 proposals. We didn't only received from the districts oriented we also received from almost all around Nepal. This shows the requirement of such program among youths of Nepal and also effectiveness of our program.

Background and Relevance

Those under the age group of 18 -35 years are termed as "Youths" in Nepal. Feudalism, patriarchy, Hinduism governs every aspect of Nepal. Traditionally elders are respected and pervasive in all decision-making levels. Young and youth are supposed to listen and follow the directions of elders. Usually they do not get many opportunities to have their own ideas and its implementations. The rural, marginalized youth face innumerable challenges in the field of education; health, security, employment, and lack of access to resources unless they are from prosperous, socio-politically well linked families. Many have great ideas, intelligent, and smart but their access to resources or connections are poor hence they have difficulties to enhance their growth.

They have been used as stooge in political parties but being part of leadership is a distant reality. Even young people from Brahmin/Chhettri have not got chance to contribute their ideas to the policy making level. Most of the positions are occupied by elderly men. The major populations of this country are the young people who have the ability to bring a change. If they have opportunity and positive guidance, they could lead this country for sustainable peace and development. In our experiences in HimRights programs which has been conducted in different a parts of Nepal and children from marginalized and rural population we have found them very enthusiastic to learn and very bright and have innovative ideas. However, they do not get space to exhibit their talent. Most of the urban population view them as "hilly billies." What they require is some external support to bring out their ideas and talents.

Based on census of 2001, young population aged between 20-30 is 3,742,242; females - 1,974,670 and males - 1,767,752. Contribution of young people in parliament is almost negligible. Most of the ministers and party leaders are above 40. Young generation with new ideas and energy are not getting opportunity to come at policy level. Furthermore, large population of the country consists youth, their meaningful presence and vision is essential in every sphere of life. However, young people are not given opportunity to be in any leading public posts. Majority of them do not have self-confidence, experience, knowledge and leadership capacity because they are not given the opportunity and to perpetuate the status quo. However, handful of young people are elected and nominated in the Constituent Assembly but it has yet to be seen whether they will be given leadership role; their voices heard in the assembly and political parties they represent.

Youths are viewed as the building blocks of the nation. Their role had been immeasurable in contributing too many landmarks in political history of Nepal such as the historical movement of People's Movement I (1990) and II (2006). Nevertheless, the opportunities youth should have as practical and advanced education system, good health services, social security, and employment opportunity are still not addressed and guaranteed by the government.

Youths have been greatly affected by the 11 years long armed conflict. They were amongst the most vulnerable groups that borne the impacts of the armed conflict. They have been victimized from both sides of the warring parties. During armed conflict, youth faced problems regardless of the geographical locations. During research in Surkhet, youth/students who had come to study in Birendra Nagar were suspected as spies of the State by the Maoist and the State suspected them as Maoist. The security force unnecessarily repeatedly searched their rooms. The Maoist similarly, questioned them when they returned home. Due to this kind of physical and mental torture, they said, youth got frustrated and depressed to get away from difficult reality of State and Maoist torture and suspicion, they seem to have started taking drugs and alcohol. Furthermore, there is an increase of male suicides in this district unlike what is found in the rest of the country. The armed conflict, threats and terror from both sides forced youth to remain within the four walls of their homes. They were deprived from sports, entertainment and other activities that are essential for their development.

Due to armed conflict and persecution from both sides many youths were forced to flee and migrate to urban parts of the country and abroad including India. In many villages, there are hardly any youth. The situation was so serious that there were no men and youth to take corpses, which traditionally was their job. The migrated youths did not want to identify themselves as 'displaced', fearing aggravation of their vulnerability. Many of them have migrated to India and abroad in haste without proper information and preparation that further put them 'from frying pan to fire'. Many have been trafficked or smuggled to foreign countries and cheated by agents. Many youths said that they had to quit schooling and migrate to cities and India for survival. They have no alternative than to migrate as laborers. Earlier trafficking was viewed as girls and women being trafficked to brothels in India. However, this has changed, at present people are paying to agents to get jobs abroad but they do not realize they are being trafficked as they land up in very exploitative and life threatening situations. This situation was created by both armed conflict situation and lack of economic opportunities.

The internationally accepted definition of Trafficking is: The term "trafficking", as used in the present Principles and Guidelines, refers to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. (*Source: Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (article 3. a)*)

Objective:

- To inform youth about Youth Action Fund (YAF)
- To facilitate access to YAF
- To create support system for YAF grantees

Target groups:

- Age group 15-29 years
- Eligible ex/present participants in HimRights programs
- Youth and child clubs including dalits, indigenous, ethnic minorities and other marginalized groups from both rural and urban area; gender balance would be sought
- Government technical schools where they have special scholarships and quotas for minority and remote areas
- Youth who are not in any formal system.

Geographical coverage:

Achham, Kailali, Rolpa, Dang, Myagdi, Kapilvastu, Kavre, Rautahat, Parsa , Sarlahi ,Saptari, Bara, Bardiya, Makwanpur, Banke, Chitwan, Sindhupalchowk, Kavre, Surkhet, Doti, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur.

Districts selected and completed are given in annex-1

District level Orientation

District level orientation has been conducted to make the youth accessible to the information about the Youth Action Fund by conducting the following listed activities:

- One-day youth orientation program was conducted in 22 districts
- 35 participants in average have participated in each orientation.
- Orientation included sessions on introduction on YAF, Interests, Group work on issues and proposal writing, budget, and financial management.
- Youths are enthusiastically participating during the proposal writing session.
- Youths of rural areas of the district have also shown their active participation in proposal writing session.
- HimRights have utilized every opportunity to disseminate information about Youth Action Fund in its entire program.
- A Toll free phone number (1660-01-55111) have been established to increase the accessibility of the youth for YAF.

Methodology of orientation

1. Interaction
2. Group work
3. Presentation
4. Information Sharing
(For detail see annex -3)

Some creative ideas seen in the orientation

- Justice for the conflict victims: awareness on legal aids and legal rights.
- Reconciliation between political parties, and youths for social change.
- Women education on self dignity.
- Providing awareness on pre-preparation or the prevention techniques form the natural disasters like flood, landslide, etc.
- Discussion and sharing program on women issues by forming a network of women for reducing the women violence.
- Work for safe abortion
- Work against cyber violence
- Alternate energy source like – Tuki (This is like a lantern used in the villages); Candle.
- Systematic development of culture. (removal of the violence that take place in the name of culture)
- Social respect and dignity; and civic duty.
- Work for the problems of youths like depression; sexual abuse.
- Work for the rights of third gender.
- Communication or generation gap between parents and children; teachers and students; etc.
- Gap between teachers and students regarding religious belief and its implementation.
- Awareness and sensitization on education of poor marginalized children.
- Computer literacy program for the unskilled labors going abroad.
- Creation of blog in Nepali language for the children of rural areas.
- Awareness on population control (Birth control).
- Awareness against Deforestation
- Management of the garbage i.e. separation of biodegradable and non-biodegradable the one that can be recycled and one that cannot be recycled.
- Awareness on the long-term effects of organic farming.
- Encourage people on the use of CFL bulb for the energy saving.
- Pressure group formation for the monitoring and controlling the irregular market price of the products.

Proposals

Altogether 406 proposals have been received from 61 districts. 187 proposals have been sent to OSI. Some of the issues and programs that youths are interested to work are:

- Human trafficking
- Awareness creating on different issues like child marriage; HIV/AIDS; dowry system; domestic violence; child labor; birth registration; sanitation program; safe migration; information system; capacity building; corruption; human rights protection.
- Youths, women participation in new constitution.
- Media program
- Infrastructure development
- Income generation program
- Skill development programs

Sent proposals:	182
Approved proposals:	5
Incomplete Application (documents incomplete) :	115
Translated proposals:	27
New proposals:	77
Total proposals received:	406

According to the District we have separated the number of Proposals and the details are given in annex-2

Achievements

1. 22 districts have been oriented.
2. Individual from other districts apart from 22 districts were also oriented whomsoever have approached HimRights.
3. The orientation has helped to reach the larger groups of youths and disseminate the information on YAF.
4. The orientation on drafting proposals has helped them understand and write the concept note.
5. The orientation program has been a good platform for the participants to share their ideas.
6. Their confidence on developing concept note has increased after the orientation.
7. A Toll free has been established.
8. Many participants shared that they did not know how to write proposal before, and after the orientation they can write a proposal.
9. Advertisement was given in the National Newspaper. Because of this also many youths in the country have benefited and have submitted the proposals. They have shared with us that this has given them the opportunity to learn and know the techniques of writing a proposal and how to approach donor organization. This orientation program and the whole process of preparing the proposal have taught them how to start a project, approach different groups and work in a team.

Challenges

1. Communication is difficult with the applicant due to lack of resources in the districts.
2. Applicants are finding it hard to revise their proposals and resend to HimRights.
3. Due to instable condition in the country it is getting difficult to conduct district level orientation.
4. Processing duration of the proposals submitted to OSI is taking time.
5. Many applicants who have submitted their proposals and have been forwarded to OSI are requesting for feedbacks from OSI on rejection of proposal.
6. Though youths have many creative ideas, they cannot jot down their ideas in paper. For example: In Surkhet, one of the interests of the participant was "To work against alcohol and playing cards at local level (People are seen playing cards through out the day and come home in the evening drinking alcohol)". This is the real problem seen in many districts. He shared the idea but when he was asked to write a short concept note on the same issue, he could not write more than two lines. Youths find it very difficult to write a proposal.
7. They know the real problems of their VDC but they can't do anything for it because they can't go beyond the activities done by other organizations previously in their districts or they are not able to get out from the NGO set trend. For example: In case of "Forming alternate energy sources" the participant could not think about the activities that are needed for that particular problem, as he has not seen such programs implemented by any other organization.
8. They are not able to interlink, articulate and write in words their ideas in the proposal. For example: One of the participants in Saptari shared that he had taken training on writing proposal and when he tried to write something on his own, he got lost and was not able to write the proposal. This is the practical problem faced by many youths in the country. This limitation is due to the kind of education and limited exposure they have had.
9. Though it is difficult to work with the youths because of various limitations yet we are confident that we can change and make a difference in the youth community and motivate them to work for social change.

Field Monitoring Visit

HimRights, Youth Action Fund team had monitored the grantees of YAF in three districts namely Bara, Kapilvastu and Dang from 2-September-09 to 9-September-09. The project coordinator and the finance officer jointly monitored the ongoing projects and financial status. The approved projects of Bara, Kapilvastu and Dang are "Safe Foreign Employment", "Strengthening the Institutional and social capacity and status of youths", "Resolution of the society through youth's creativity" and "Reintegration program for specially abled and mentally ill children" were partially concluded in the respective districts accordingly. According to the grantees, the proposed activities of the proposals have been conducted in the community and the target group has been maintained. In the field monitoring visit it seems that grantees got more spirit and confidence to work in community. Youth Action Fund has empowered the grantees and the community after conducting the projects in the respective districts. They also got more opportunity and experiences while implementing the programs for the community in the community. In

our visit we found that even the financial transactions are well maintained. The summary and the grantees versions are given below.

"Safe Foreign Employment", Bara

Sunita Kushwaha who got the fund from Youth Action Fund for "Safe Foreign Employment", shared that she has not been able to actively go ahead with the project due to her pregnancy. But she has been taking the project ahead with the help of her friend Obha Ansari. He is a member of her group and from the very beginning has been involved in the project. Under her guidance he has concluded the programs like baseline survey, Ward level orientation and 1 street drama in Dohari VDC of Bara according to the proposal submitted.

"Earlier it was difficult to communicate and approach the project among the community due to lack of education. As we moved on with the project the community people believed in us and they also supported in all the activities. They have realized the importance of education related to safe migration .We feel happy that OSI has supported us to work for the change in the lives of community people."

"Strengthening the institutional and social capacity and status of youths", Kapilvastu

Hansawati Kurmi another grantee of Kapilvastu has only been able to form a group of marginalized youth women with 30 members. In Kapilvastu, youths and women are very far away from the development and basic needs. Due to lack of education and awareness most of the VDCs of this district is back warded. As per Hansawati it was very challenging to collect people to form a group for the project due to very conservative mindset and their economic condition.

"Due to the conservative mindset of the people it has been difficult to convince the community to send their female members to be part of my program. While I started the project in the marginalized community it was difficult to convince the family as well as the youths that this program was for them and for their betterment. I would say that this project gave me an opportunity to get close to them and working with them made me learn about their problems more deeply .So this experience has made my vision more clear to plan out my next phase. If OSI and HimRights support me then the campaign to empower the youth women of marginalized community would be possible".

"Resolution of the society through youth's creativity", Dang

Hemanta Thapa the first grantee of Dang, She is a very young girl eager to learn new things and work for the people but being new to social sector has taken help from friends. With their help she has been conducting the program in her district. In this period the group of Hemanta has conducted educational seminar on "Small Family Happy Family". The major theme of the educational seminar was small family can make society happy. Hemanta says that people are demanding such programs even in the future for the betterment of long term impact in community.

"Before I was a very introvert person but this project has personally helped me to grow a lot and my confidence level has increased. In a very short period of time I have got the opportunity to learn many new things and be a part of the community. Today I strongly feel that this project has made my voice heard among the masses. She even shared that like her even others get such opportunity to prove them."

'Reintegration program for specially abled and mentally ill children',Dang

'Reintegration program for especially able and mentally ill children' project conducting in Dang by our fourth grantee **Durga Prasad Chaudhary**. He is working for the mentally disabled children and shared with us the work that his organization has been doing in the past too and shared that even after the project finishes he will continue to help these children. Being able to work for these children has given him immense satisfaction.

"While preparing the proposals i had no idea about the budget preparation part and now the amount demanded is not being enough to operate the program easily. In a tight budget too i have been working. Just being able to change the lives of these children to some extent through physiotherapy has given me eternal happiness. According to the work plan the project is going ahead. This project has helped me to pursue my dream to help these kids and change their lives and lives of their family. Before the community people would say that this was the curse and now they have understood to some extent how children suffer from this disease. Today parents themselves get their child for physiotherapy. "I feel this is the success of my work."

Note: In Mugu due to Geographical difficulties we were not able to go for field monitoring. Via telephone we have been taking the updates of the project from grantee Bastola Shahi but due to poor communication system in the district that is also difficult. Grantee has to come to the district headquarter to make a call since they do not have that facility in their village.

Annex-1

Districts selected for orientation and completed

S.No.	Districts Completed	Districts not completed
1.	Achham	
2.	Kailali	
3.	Rolpa	
4.	Dang	
5.	Rautahat	
6.	Bara	
7.	Makwanpur	
8.	Kavre	
9.	Bhaktapur	
10.	Sindhupalchowk	
11.	Bardiya	
12.	Siraha	
13.	Banke	
14.	Myagdi	
15.	Surkhet	
16.	Lalitpur	
17.	Saptari	
18.	Kapilvastu	
19.	Doti	
20.	Chitwan	
21.	Parsa	
22.	Sarlahi	

Annex-2
Number of proposals: District wise

S.NO.	DISTRICT	NUMBER OF PROPOSALS
1.	Rautahat	2
2.	Saptari	8
3.	Banke	20
4.	Bardiya	7
5.	Surkhet	7
6.	Bara	31
7.	Morang	7
8.	Achham	9
9.	Makwanpur	14
10.	Dolakha	13
11.	Dang	29
12.	Parsa	6
13.	Kathmandu	56
14.	Mahottari	5
15.	Chitwan	9
16.	Gorkha	9
17.	Myagdi	1
18.	Dhanusha	14
19.	Siraha	14
20.	Sindhupalchowk	15
21.	Rukum	1
22.	Doti	1
23.	Baitadi	3
24.	Lalitpur	10
25.	Mugu	9
26.	Kailali	7
27.	Kapilvastu	5
28.	Bhaktapur	5
29.	Kavre	10
30.	Dhading	5
31.	Nuwakot	3
32.	Sarlahi	3
33.	Sankhuwasabha	1
34.	Parvat	2
35.	Udaypur	2
36.	Salyan	1
37.	Dailekh	1
38.	Rupandehi	2
39.	Palpa	1
40.	Tehrathum	1
41.	Jumla	1
42.	Dhankuta	1
43.	Bajura	5
44.	Rasuwa	2
45.	Kaski	5
46.	Sunsari	6

47.	Sindhuli	3
48.	Syangja	6
49.	Jhapa	8
50.	Okhaldhunga	3
51.	Ramechhap	6
52.	Khotang	1
53.	Nawalparasi	1
54.	Kanchanpur	1
55.	Baglung	2
56.	Bhajang	1
57.	Gulmi	1
58.	Tanahu	1
59.	Jajarkot	1
60.	Illam	2
TOTAL		406

Annex -3

WHAT IS YAF ?

- Brainstorming on YAF - by participants for few minutes
- Writing on board about YAF according to the participants
- What is YAF? – Linkage with their views with that of YAF - HimRights

YAF GUIDELINES

- Age criteria
- Fund Limit
- Deadline – Currently there is no deadline, but the sooner the better!
- Projects that can be funded
- Projects that have the least chances of being funded
- Documents that are to be submitted with the proposal, etc.

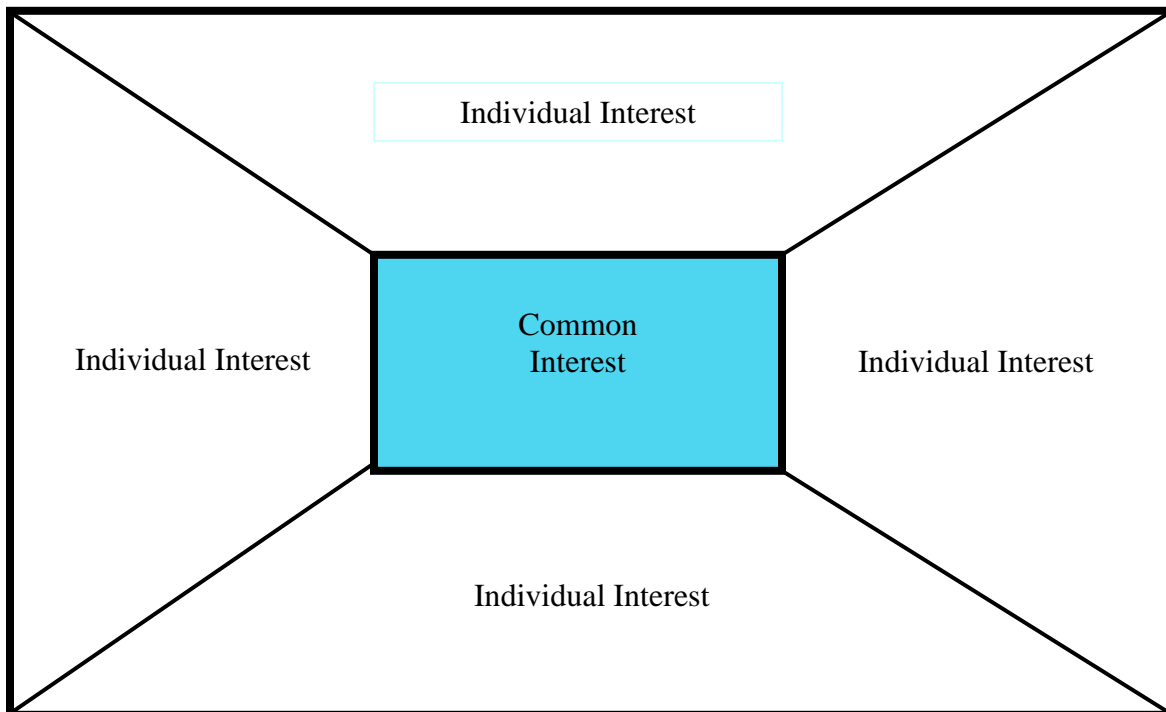
INTERESTS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Brain storming and writing on board about the interests of the participants

GROUP WORK (1)

Division of groups of the participants – one group consists of around 4 individuals

All the groups are provided with the newsprint paper and marker. Then they are suggested to make boxes in the paper such that 1 box for 1 group member and 1 common box in the center. They are requested to write about their interests individually on their own box. At the end they discuss on one common interest of the group.



HOW TO WRITE THE CONCEPT NOTE?

Providing them the six questions:

- What are you interested in and why?
- How will you do it?
- What do you need?
- Who will it help? (Your target group and beneficiary group)
- Is there anyone you want to work with?
- What is your budget?

ORIENTATION ON BUDGET PREPARATION

GROUP WORK (2)

The groups are asked to write the concept note on the common issue that they had identified in the previous session and prepare budget on it too.

PRESENTATION

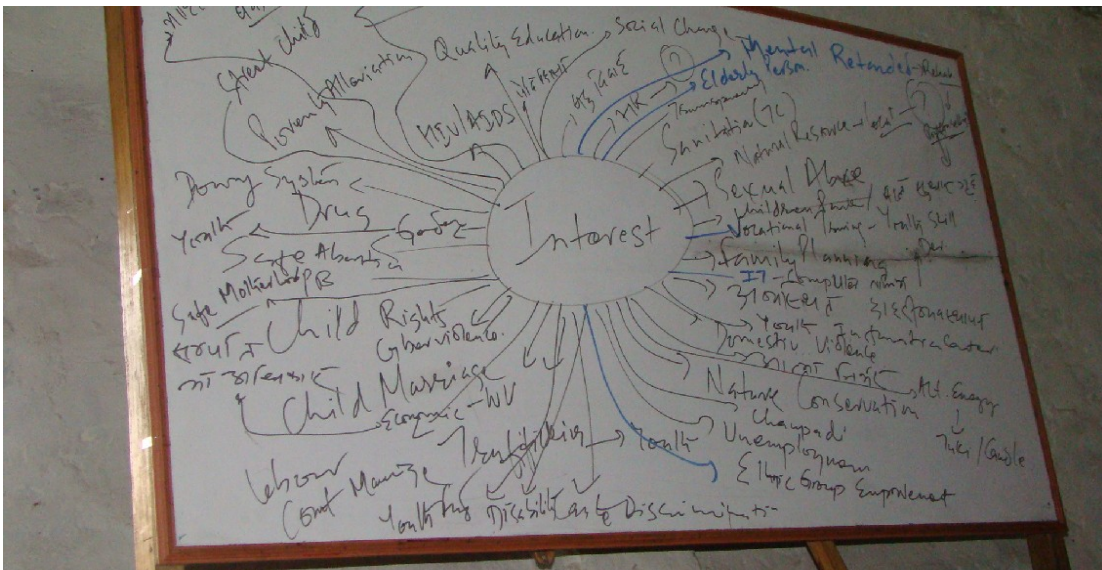
Each group has to give presentation on the concept note that they had prepared in the early session. After presentation, the feedbacks are collected from the other group members and finally feedbacks are given by HimRights members.

Annex-4: Glimpse of the orientation

1. Participants in the program



2. Interests of the participants during the orientation



3. Group work during the orientation



4. Presentation done by the participants



