



# Case Study Series 3:

## Addressing Citizens' Concerns: Inspiration from Proactive Civil Servants

### Case 8 - Community-Based Network to Identify and Aid the Victims of Domestic Violence

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The case studies for this series are collected from real-life cases of civil servants working in different South Asian countries. This collection initiative is an attempt to document different proactive approaches taken by civil servants and, in the process, encourage other civil servants to become more proactive in their workplaces. If you know of other such proactive acts, please email us ([parvez.yousuf@northsouth.edu](mailto:parvez.yousuf@northsouth.edu)), and we will get back to you to collect more information.

# Case 8-Community-Based Network to Identify and Aid the Victims of Domestic Violence

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## Challenges in identifying the victims of domestic violence

Domestic violence remains a prevalent issue, often hidden, due to cultural stigmas and lack of access to help in Nepal. To mitigate this problem, the government of Nepal has set up a national helpline titled “Khabar Garaun 1145” (Give information 1145). This helpline has been practical for urban women who have access to mobile phones and know their rights. However, women from rural and marginalized communities often do not benefit from this service, as Ms. X, an Under-Secretary of Nepal’s Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens (MOWCSC), observed. There have been many complaints from urban educated women about domestic violence, but comparatively fewer cases and complaints have been filed from the rural part of the country.

Ms. X realized that there are some challenges on the part of rural women to share their experiences as it is less likely that most of the domestic violence happens in the urban part of the country. She identified three primary reasons for the few reports of domestic violence: lack of access to technology, fear of retribution, and social stigma. She also realized that rural women may not be aware of their legal and social rights

## Building a community-based network

To address these challenges, Ms. X has taken the initiative to build a community-based network aiming to support and identify the victims of domestic violence in rural Nepal. At the initial stage, Ms. X collaborated with local NGOs, youth organizations, and religious groups, as these organizations and groups can work directly in the community and have social acceptance. The program was designed to use casual, everyday interactions to identify and assist victims discreetly and effectively. For example, one of the female members of this program will go to different households casually and make casual social interactions. Volunteers in the program would regularly visit local community events, religious gatherings, and other cultural events to meet women and casually bring up the issue of domestic violence.

### Problem

Identification of the victims of domestic violence in rural Nepal

### Solution

Development of a community-based network of volunteers

### Outcome

An increase in the identification of the victims of domestic violence who would not otherwise seek help

These casual interactions were catered to build trust and gather information without direct questioning about domestic abuse, thus minimizing the risk of abuse escalation due to indirect questioning. If and when the members of the program suspected that someone might be a potential victim of violence, they followed discreet protocol to offer support. They often provided mental encouragement and made the victims aware of their rights. Usually, the volunteers discreetly reported the case to Khabar Garaun 1145, explaining the situation.

The experts have trained these groups in the MOWCSC to identify signs of domestic violence and engage in supportive conversations without putting victims at further risk. They have been trained on the legal, psychological, and social aspects of domestic violence. Enough emphasis was given to the importance of confidentiality and cultural sensitivity, as avoidance of it may lead to further escalations. Besides, role-playing exercises were used to prepare them for any unexpected situations.

### **The outcome of the network**

The community-based network has helped in the identification of the victims of domestic violence in rural Nepal, particularly women who had previously been unable to seek help due to social and logistical barriers. Most of the victims reported feeling safer seeking support from the program members. It has helped them resolve many issues without making a social scene or causing direct confrontation. Most importantly, the volunteers have been able to raise awareness about domestic violence and the legal and social rights of women. The program empowered victims by respecting their choice and timing in seeking help. This initiative ensured that help was provided in a manner that aligned with their circumstances and readiness.

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