Executive Summary
The Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice (IPJ), along with its in-country partner South Asia Partnerships-Nepal (SAP-Nepal) and specialized international consultants, successfully completed series of programs over the course of 15 months that positively affected a diverse set of constituencies, including political party leadership, women representing a cross-section of society, next-generation leaders and conflict-affected and disenfranchised communities.

Throughout the year, techniques were shared, skills honed and confidence increased among participants which empowered many to become constructive catalysts for change in the democratic transition in Nepal. Cross-sector relationships were established and strengthened, and individuals engaged in a process of consensus-building based on mutual understanding and respect, both key tenants for a stable democratic society. In response to the shifting political landscape in Nepal over the past year, the content and format of the workshops were adjusted to meet the immediate-, short- and long-term needs of the Nepalese people. Each workshop was designed to address the specific issues facing each constituency group and to incorporate common themes consistent across groups.

Quarterly participant feedback and final external evaluators reported that the project achieved each of the proposed strategic objectives: (1) increase the knowledge of and skills and techniques to address conflict resolution, negotiation and peacebuilding; (2) enhance opportunities for building and managing inclusive working relationships with diverse actors; and, (3) strengthen inclusive, democratic constituencies for development and enhance community capacity for peace.

Towards the first strategic objective, the workshops “were effective in providing understanding and practical information and techniques,” stated one participant. “[I have] learned basic techniques in negotiation and increased my knowledge of this subject, while enhancing my confidence and listening skills,” reported Komal Pokhrel at the conclusion of the project.

In advancing the second strategic objective, “networking and coalition building must be one of the priorities today for collective action. [This workshop helped] so that in the future we can work and coordinate together,” shared one of the participants in the January
2006 workshop for women and marginalized groups. Rajendra Mulmi said “he was very excited about the IPJ programs,” and “they provided a good forum to share diverse perspectives.”

The impact of the IPJ project, however, extended beyond the individuals that participated in the quarterly workshops and bi-monthly forums. Participants were encouraged and guided to share the information and skills they acquired in the workshops with their professional colleagues, NGOs coalitions, local communities and broader networks. In the academic, nongovernmental, political and rural spheres, IPJ participants were able to effectively implement new skills and multiply the positive benefits of their interactions in the IPJ programs to accomplish the third strategic objective.

One academic, Savitree Gurung, “incorporated into her political science curriculum at [Tribhuvan] university issues covered in the IPJ Nepal Project: peacebuilding, conflict resolution, negotiation techniques, governance, and cross-sector collaboration.” Vidya Sharma of the Kathmandu School of Law said that “as a result of my participation in the April workshop, I was able to contribute to the development of a new curriculum on conflict resolution for a class at the Kathmandu School of Law.”

Sangita Nirola, founder of SWATI, shared that she “uses these skills on a daily basis through interactions with staff members and with the women enrolled in the training programs.” Anjana Regmi also reported “applying the topics covered in the series of workshops and roundtables in her NGO work” at Gareema, an organization that provides premarital and pre-/post-natal programming for women.

“As a result of the IPJ experience, I will be better equipped to work with other members in my office as well as my constituents,” shared Janu Ghimire, an elected official in her Kathmandu ward (one of four seats reserved for women). Goma Parajuli, a secretary of the Nepali Congress youth wing, believes as a result of her participation “she will be more effective in her role as a political activist.”

DB and Babita Lama of The Himalayan Innovative Society (THIS) reported that they would integrate “the skills learned in their training of leaders and monitoring of the 25 community learning centers in Humla.” Minerva Manandhar, vice president of the Business and Professional Women-Kathmandu said she would “incorporate her new knowledge into the BPW-Kathmandu in the villages.” Indira Ghale, of the Feminist Dalit Organization (FEDO), is “planning to summarize the materials from the Democratic Essentials Summit to bring to the countryside. She is planning to share the information by inviting women to tea and talking to them about the skill she has learned.”

The IPJ and external evaluators also conducted site visits to observe the impact of the IPJ programs in organizations that have been active collaborators over the past year. The NGOs were working for women’s human rights, social support and micro-credit assistance for sexually-abused women and single women (widows), inclusion of Dalit concerns in the constitution, enhancing communication of issues from rural and remote districts to the capital, and fostering youth participation in decision making. As a result of the IPJ programs, participants and their broader networks were better able to better understand and contribute to conflict mitigation, build civil society and engage in peaceful democratic processes.

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Project Detail
Women and Marginalized Groups

One-hundred and thirty-nine women participated in the IPJ series for women and marginalized groups, Women, Politics, and Peace: Working for a Just Society. Individuals gained skills in coalition building, political participation, and planning for post-conflict gender inclusion. At close of the first workshop, “Gender-Inclusive Planning & Policies” (December 2005), participants prioritized socioeconomic changes and political participation as the two key spheres to focus efforts for gender-inclusive policies. In both areas, participants concluded that “if you want peace, prepare for peace.”

In January 2006, sixty women joined the workshop “Cooperating to Survive, Collaborating to End Social Injustice.” In addition to the international perspectives shared, this workshop focused on raising awareness about the progress of the Nepali women’s movement. Local Nepali experts and presenters who represented the interests of rural communities, single women, indigenous groups and Dalits were invited to share their organizations efforts to strengthen local, grassroots organizations and promote peacebuilding at all levels in Nepal. At this time, they identified their key areas of concern and priorities: peace process, stable politics, conflict transformation, social inclusion, domestic violence and internally displaced persons. “Peace must start from a micro level,” shared one participant. “We can be united,” stated another.

Following the pro-democracy people’s victory in April 2006, the IPJ convened a roundtable “Strategic Thinking about Gender Mainstreaming during Conflict Transformation and Democratization.” This session focused on exploring the brief windows of opportunity presented during a transition period, specifically to begin to address discriminatory societal norms and to review and redraft constitutions and laws. They recognized in order for the momentum to be sustained, citizens must remain vigilant and informed. Participants in the roundtable discussion thanked the IPJ for creating a space to quickly strengthen and solidify coalitions, and in which to discuss how they might work together on increasing women’s political participation and legal reforms in the new chapter of Nepali politics. “The only solution is for women to get involved in politics,” Budha Bayimaya stated, “and we have to do it now.” Political participation is not only running for office, but “the people must move forward with their own peaceful democracy.” At the close of the discussion, the consensus was: “People power must remain greater than political power.”

Next-Generation Leaders

One hundred and one next-generation leaders were included in the IPJ programs, 40% of whom were women. International experts facilitated sessions on alternative forms of democracy and democratic institutions and strategic negotiation and communication.

In the workshop, “The Culture and Context of Peacebuilding” (December 2005), next-generation leaders explored how the creativity of youth could positively contribute to multi-sector coalitions and alliances. They received training on constructive methods to voice dissent; they prepared and delivered a one-minute public service announcement/sound bite for their cause.

In February 2006, the program focused on core relationship management and communication skills. Participants were trained to analyze, prepare for and conduct at-the-table negotiations. Exercises, case studies, a manual and practical tools – an interest-mapping spreadsheet, seven elements of negotiation laminated cards, and inquiry and advocacy questions – created a dynamic learning environment and gave participants concrete
methods to share with their constituencies. “The information and skills are really practical, so I learned easily. I have learned that with proper preparation I can be a good negotiator!” shared one participant. This sentiment was common; many expressed an increase in personal confidence when entering a negotiation based on the new skills and strategies they had learned. “This has benefited me and my work for Nepal’s future.” A month later we received an email from another participant which confirmed the impact of the seminar: “The negotiation and communication training is really proving beneficial in everyday life.”

Immediately following the cessation of government curfews on April 2006, the IPJ organized a roundtable discussion, “From Rock Throwing to Brick Laying: The Role of Emerging Leaders in Conflict Transformation.” There was a particular interest in the role that the media could play in connecting rural communities to decision makers in the capital. Best practices and challenges from Uganda and other countries that democratized and created new constitutions were shared. Participants reflected on how they could continue a participatory movement, while at the same time manage the people’s expectations for the speed of positive change. “We must make this our victory, we must claim it as our own,” stated Santosh Shah, describing how the people must recognize their own role in bringing about the democratic transition in order to maintain momentum.

Finally, following the Democratic Essentials Summit, the IPJ conducted a dialogue “Inclusion: Where is the People Power in Politics?” which shared basic conflict analysis tools so that participants could examine what lessons could be learned from other post-conflict societies. Issues of post-conflict justice and reconciliation at the local and national level were of particular interest to the youth at the time. The participants struggled with the question of the balance of peace and justice as they planned for Nepal’s future.

Political Parties
Thirty-eight representatives from nine political parties and student wings participated in the IPJ workshops and Democratic Essentials Summit. In the wake of the signing of the twelve-point agreement, political leaders joined the IPJ and international consultants for a two-day workshop, “Promoting Civil Society Amid and After Civil Strife: Dialogues on Inclusion and Engagement of All Stakeholders in a Democracy” (December 2005). They agreed that a common identity is lacking in Nepal, and that finding a common ground is in the best interest of the people. Participants also examined how to address issues of internal democratization, such as gender and caste inclusion within the parties themselves. “Voice is what counts. Voice rests on number. If the number is little, voice is not heard. That is what I feel intensely—that women are not heard,” shared one of the women participants recently elected to the Central Committee of her party. Democracy planning must also include “cultural changes in social conditioning” with respect to ethnic and Dalit rights and treatment, concluded another participant.

In late April 2006, the IPJ conducted a number of individual consultations and conversations with leading Nepali political leaders, both on the phone and in person, once the shoot-to-kill curfew was lifted. Urmila Aryal said, “The rural people have expectations of us. We, the political parties, have a lot to do.” Aryal asked the IPJ to assist in organizing a specific workshop with the inter-party women’s alliance to help them devise a strategy. Aryal shared the priorities to be addressed by her party, United Marxist Lenin, and the alliance: one-third women’s participation, property rights and citizenship rights. Inclusion was also the priority of Anil Kumar Jha, who explained that his “primary hope is that someone will bring greater attention to the dramatic lack of representation in the Terai.”
Peace Forums
Bi-monthly Peace Forums, beginning in the third quarter, provided a platform to share and learn how participants have applied the knowledge and skills that they gained from previous IPJ programs and to strengthen and build cross-sector relationships. Local experts were invited to share their views and expertise. Themes were selected based on feedback from the previous forums. One participant remarked, “[The forum] not only provides an opportunity to learn from each other but also to build linkages and networks which ultimately help us to put forward our collective voice to influence policy.” Another shared that the forum provided the “opportunity to not only document thoughts, but analyze those thoughts so that we can bring our young dynamic youth leaders, our young women, and marginalized groups as future leaders of Nepal.” The four forums provided the opportunity for 60 participants to engage directly with the issues facing Nepal, as well as to reflect on IPJ programs and how to implement new skills into daily life and foster communication among diverse constituency groups.

Peace Summit
On July 25-27, 2006, the IPJ team convened a three-day final session, “Democratic Essentials Summit: Cross-sector Communication, Negotiation and Collaboration.” The summit provided an opportunity for 46 participants to advance personal negotiation skills and explore ideas that can prepare diverse constituencies for democratic participation. In the exit evaluation, 100% of respondents reported that their interactions and exchanges with individuals they had not known before will benefit their work for Nepal.

The session was held in a relaxing and stimulating retreat environment to facilitate dialogue and creative thinking on those important topics addressed by participants in their daily work. The format included skills development, panels and special breakout sessions to: 1) advance negotiations skills, 2) strengthen engagement of marginalized groups in decision making, and 3) prepare participants’ constituencies for informed voting for constituent assembly representatives.

Participants also engaged with experts who have experience in building informed constituencies in support of democratic participation for constituent assemblies, and to learn techniques that can prepare local constituents for greater participation. The summit hosted the Nepal debut of the documentary film of the 2004 IPJ Women PeaceMakers, “Leading the Way to Peace,” with Nepali voice-over.

Interwoven with the skills and international experiences, participants worked together to identify, prioritize and address shared concerns for the future of Nepal. During the summit, voices and experience of women during times of conflict were highlighted. Two participants in the IPJ Nepal Project also shared their personal testimonies of the direct effect of war and of state, Maoist and public sector abuse. To bridge the urban-rural divide, Equal Access was invited to share two half-hour segments of “Voices from the Countryside,” developed especially for the Democratic Essentials Summit, which focused on key concerns of the rural communities in Nepal.

In the small groups, participants used the strategic negotiation skills to develop a list of five consensus points that decision makers in Nepal must address. On the final day, representative voices from the diverse and influential groups of Nepal’s political and community leaders presented their recommendations on the key directions and next steps that leaders can take collaboratively, modeling cross-sector cooperation and inclusion needed to assure human rights and essential, democratic peace.
Peace Radio Project
The IPJ initiated a partnership with SAP-Nepal and Equal Access to develop, produce and broadcast six, half-hour radio segments in April 2006. The organizations collaborated to expand the impact of each of their own programs due to shared and complementary goals and methodologies. Coordination occurred in two areas: content and community outreach. The IPJ and SAP-Nepal provided content for Equal Access’ Sundar Shanta Bishal (Peacebuilding) program, including interviews with international experts and narratives from the IPJ Women PeaceMakers Program. In June 2006, 22 community facilitators were trained through the SAP-Nepal District Development Forums to convene listening groups for the IPJ Peace Radio Project (PRP) and Sundar Shanta Bishal. This network provided a reporting mechanism on the impact of the IPJ PRP and Sundar Shanta Bishal through the SAP-Nepal Eastern Development Region (EDR) and Western Development Region (WDR) regional coordinators.

The programs were designed to offer new information to conflict-affected, disenfranchised and geographically-isolated communities. They combined interviews with international and Nepali experts in conflict resolution, democracy, human rights and negotiation, with entertainment segments which dramatized and reinforced the lessons learned and best practices shared by the experts. The radio programming and listening groups with trained facilitators engaged community members and marginalized groups by exploring issues that they are faced with, through programming that captures their interest. In response to the PRP, the communities discussed the conflict and its roots and gained information and skills that can assist them in taking action for peace, democratic participation and human rights advocacy.

The radio program had an important impact in the community – from building knowledge and fostering dialogue, to motivating and mobilizing listeners to make positive social change. This can also be seen as the participation increased steadily during the course of the PRP (See Listening Group Statistics below). The monitoring report summarized: “The community people feel that the program has been able to contribute much for social change and awareness building. They found the program had started to create a system of discussion on social issues. The facilitators of the program said that they are happy to facilitate the program as they feel that in some way they were able to act as change agents for the development of their communities.”

When asked to describe the radio programming and listening groups, participants reported that the programming was “effective,” “relevant” and “useful.” During the monitoring visit, the groups reported, “the programs not only enhanced their knowledge on rights, peace and conflict but also built their capacity to discuss social issues.” They had some concrete recommendations to enhance programming, e.g., avoid repetition of previously aired episodes, vary the actors in the drama, and broadcast programs in local languages, all of which have been shared with Equal Access.

Participants shared a number of examples of how participating in the PRP has affected their lives. In Dhikurpokhari, Kaski district, a woman presented her widowed daughter-in-law with red clothes (challenging the existing prejudice against single women and the societal perspective that widows cannot wear red). In Babiya, Sunsari district, participants from different castes have started eating in the same place after the discussion of caste discriminations. This community has also organized to work together on community clean up and beautification. An inter-caste married couple (Dalit and high-caste) in Yangsila had been keeping their marriage a secret from the community. During post-program discussions they decided to share their marriage and they have been accepted in the community.
Women in Hasposa, Sunsari district, reported that “they now feel like they can do something,” and have decided to propose a woman candidate from their group to the local political leaders. In another community, the PRP was successful as it mobilized women ages 65 to 70 to participate (again challenging the prejudice against widows). The women expressed that “they can do something as old women and can show their energy for the democratic movement.” Despite initial hesitation to allow their girl children to participate in the listening groups, parents in Dhikur Pokhari began to ask the facilitators if their girl children could join the listening groups. Although society in Nepal has been gradually changing, becoming more open to questioning caste distinctions and historic discrimination that threatens the likelihood of local-level democratic development, the radio programming provided a forum in which participants could directly address these subjects and be empowered to engage in greater democratic participation.

While these concrete examples demonstrate that the PRP has encouraged participants to take direct steps to change their society, particularly their daily practices at the local level, reports also indicate that attitudes and beliefs are changing and that the communities will be better prepared for national-level peace and democratic development. Listeners said the PRP has helped them understand peace through non-violence and constructive conflict transformation. Understanding the root causes of conflict has also increased. They reported that “the program helped them realize that caste discrimination and conservative practices that have existed in the society is [one of the] reasons [the community] is under-developed.” They realized that “Dalit and ethnic women in the constituent assembly and decision-making positions could bring positive change in their society.” As Nepal moves along the path towards greater democracy, rural and isolated communities must be included. The IPJ PRP is one mechanism contributing to this endeavor.

Listening Group Statistics
Over the course of the IPJ PRP, participation in the listening groups increased as community interest in the topics discussed in the facilitated sessions grew.
**Eastern Development Region – Listening Group Statistics**

In the Eastern Development Region (EDR), the SAP-Nepal regional coordinator reported that the group size for listening groups ranged from 15 to 25 participants in the 10 communities (five groups in Morang, four in Sunsari, and one in Jhapa). Over the course of the PRP, 3,975 listeners joined the sessions: 1,749 women, 2,226 men; 670 Dalits, 2,377 ethnic and 928 other castes.

![Listeners by Gender - EDR](image1)

![Listeners by Caste - EDR](image2)
Western Development Region – Listening Group Statistics
In the Western Development Region (WDR), five listening groups were organized in Kaski, one in Tanahun, one in Rupandehi, one in Palpa, one is Parbat, and one in Baglung. The SAP-Nepal regional coordinators reported that of the 3,092 listeners, 1,991 were women and 1,101 men; 469 were from an ethnic group, 544 were Dalit, 2,017 from Upper caste and 62 from a lower caste.

![Listeners by Gender - WDR](image)

![Listeners by Caste - WDR](image)
External Project Evaluation
The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the effectiveness of the IPJ Nepal Project “Building Constituencies for Peace and Democratic Development in Nepal” in achieving its stated objectives of increasing the knowledge of and skills needed to promote conflict resolution, negotiations, peacebuilding and democratic development. Specifically, through the use of questionnaires and interviews, participants evaluated the effectiveness of the IPJ Nepal Project in providing information on building coalitions, enhancing cross-sector dialogue and cooperation, engendering political processes and increasing skills in human rights advocacy and conflict resolution.

The external evaluators, two international and one Nepali, with knowledge of conflict resolution, human rights, democracy and participatory methodology, conducted a five-day evaluation in July 2006. The evaluators applied the following tools and methodology to assess the impact of the project, recommendations for continuity, and suggestions for improvement of future projects: review of previous evaluations, observations of the summit, structured questionnaire for the summit, cumulative evaluation, individual interviews and site visits.

The external evaluators concluded: “The findings of this evaluation are based on results compiled from questionnaires and interviews conducted with participants attending the Democratic Essentials Summit, 25-27 July 2006, held at the Park Village Resort near Kathmandu. Results of this evaluation indicated that the IPJ Nepal Project was rated by participants as effective in achieving its stated objectives of increasing the knowledge and skills needed to promote conflict resolution, negotiations, peacebuilding and democratic development. Of the skills acquired and outcomes achieved, participants rank ordered the following as their top six: better problem-solving skills, new contacts, better negotiation skills, better communication skills, new facilitation techniques or skills, and better understanding of peace with justice.

Several participants noted that they have been using the tools and skills of peacebuilding in their daily life as well as in their place of work. Participants noted the new skills and tools have been “tremendously useful and effective” in their work settings. First time participants expressed a firm commitment to use the skills and tools when the opportunity arises to do so.

The participants are of the view that the skills and tools of peacebuilding have equipped them with the required knowledge to work for peace, democracy and conflict resolution in the country. The opportunity that they have had to participate in the series of programs has been valuable in looking at the conflict through different perspectives. In other words, participants’ perspectives and attitudes have changed because of their attendance in the IPJ programs.

The participants in the IPJ programs are speaking the language of peace, democracy and inclusion. Certainly, these concepts are the primary concerns for creating change in Nepal. However, the problem lies in existing structures, be they the structures of the political parties or the state mechanisms, which are discriminatory and unjust. Therefore, the changes and transformation also are required for existing structures, and the efforts to achieve peace and democracy should focus on these needs.

An important limitation of the IPJ Nepal Project centers on the short term of the project: one year. The impact of peace work cannot be measured through verifiable indicators, because it is a process. The impact of the peace process has to be assessed and evaluated in the long term. Even so, there is value and merit in assessing the impact of the programs on participants in order to understand the changes in attitudes and thinking patterns that occurred as a result of the training sessions. The impact of the training on participants was reflected in their questionnaire responses and interview comments.”

For more information on the IPJ Nepal Project visit http://peace.sandiego.edu