

TARANGINI QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

2025

Issue II, April-June

“When women stop,
the world stops”



 **farangini**
foundation



Dear Readers,

Warm greetings from all of us at Tarangini Foundation! This issue of our 2025 Newsletter is a reflection of our unwavering commitment to uplift the dignity, rights, and well-being of women in informal work sectors.

Tarangini Foundation, now in its ninth year, stands as a powerful reaffirmation of its commitment to feminist advocacy and the rights of women workers in Nepal. Over the years, Tarangini has grown not just in reach but in impact; rooted in the lived realities of domestic workers, agricultural workers, returnee migrant workers, and countless others whose voices often go unheard. This milestone year reflects our deepened resolve to challenge systems of inequality, advocate for policy reforms, and build solidarity among grassroots movements. Through community engagement, capacity building, and policy-level advocacy, we continue to envision a society where women's labor is recognized, valued, and protected in both formal and informal spheres.

Tarangini strives toward a society where women and girls can live free from all forms of violence and coercion, fully able to exercise their rights and bodily autonomy, while actively challenging harmful traditional practices in regions where they remain deeply rooted.

Additionally, a powerful feature in this edition is Laxmi's story; a deeply personal fight for citizenship that echoes the systemic barriers many Nepali women still face.

As always, we are grateful for your continued support and solidarity. We hope this newsletter not only informs but also inspires collective action toward a more just and inclusive society.

In Solidarity,
Tarangini Foundation

In this newsletter you can expect:

8th Anniversary Celebration Demanding Respect For Women's Work

Self Care Training & GBV Orientation

International Domestic Workers Day

Empowering Environment for Agricultural Workers

Roundtable Consultative Workshop on Informal Work

Province-level Advocacy Campaigns

'RUPANTARAN', a transformation

Organizational Activities

Laxmi's Fight For Citizenship



CELEBRATION DEMANDING RESPECT FOR WOMEN'S WORK

To commemorate eight years of impact while simultaneously bringing to attention ground realities of the lives and struggles of women workers, Tarangini successfully organized its 8th Anniversary on 11 April 2025 at the National Women Commission.

The event was graced by Dr. Lily Thapa, Hon'ble Member of the National Human Rights Commission as the chief guest along with Savitra Kumari Sharma, Hon'ble Member of the National Women Commission, Rupa Thapa Chhetri, Ward Member of Kathmandu Metropolitan City-7, Shanti Shrestha, Chairperson of the Women Workers' Forum, Kavre, and Rajib Gautam, Coordinator at the Budhanilkantha Municipality Employment Service Center as the distinguished guests. Overall, the event saw the participation of 50

attendees including women workers who are engaged in the domestic and agricultural sectors. Representing women workers, Maina Danuwar, from the Women Agricultural Workers Forum, Kavre questioned the systemic exclusion of women engaged in agricultural work around the country. She emphasized the significance of her profession and contrasted it with the lack of the most basic legal protections such as identity cards and social security. Ms. Danuwar further



highlighted the government's inactions during the aftermath of last year's flood that left many such workers lives in shambles. She demanded that there should at least be a conducive environment to initiate the fight for their rights and thanked Tarangini for empowering them. Kopila Prasai, on behalf of the District Network of Domestic Workers was the second speaker who expressed the lack of recognition of domestic work despite it being an essential form of work. She continued that due to this denial, the government refuses to extend support to the community. Similar to the demands of agricultural workers, she laid out issues that are pertinent to her area of work such as leave facility, equal standards of remuneration, and overtime pay. Ms. Prasai reiterated that unless there is formal recognition for domestic work, there will be no respect for the profession, and subsequently, no legal protection.

Tarangini Foundation's 8th Anniversary was not only a moment of celebration but also a powerful reaffirmation of its commitment to feminist advocacy and the rights of women workers in Nepal. The event brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, from grassroots women workers to government representatives, in order to collectively recognize the often-invisible labor of women in the unorganized sector and push for systemic change.

SELF CARE TRAINING AND GBV ORIENTATION

Tarangini Foundation has long recognized the importance of self-care, consistently promoting mental well-being and psychosocial support through approaches such as trauma-informed care, psychosocial counseling, and integrated security.



Continuing this commitment, Tarangini Foundation, in collaboration with Tarakeshwor Municipality, has conducted Self-Care Training on June 2, 9 and 13 in three different wards 11, 3 and 1 respectively in Tarakeshwor Municipality.

The training emphasized the importance of self-care, especially for women who often become so engaged in caring for their families that they tend to neglect their own health and personal needs. The main objective of the training was to encourage women to take care of themselves, prioritize their own well-being, and allocate sufficient time for self-nurturing.



Through continued efforts, Tarangini remains committed to addressing Gender Based Violence by informing, empowering, and standing in solidarity with women across communities.

With the aim of raising awareness among women on gender-based violence (GBV), Tarangini Foundation, in collaboration with Tarakeshwor Municipality, conducted orientation program on May 25 and June 1 in wards 8 and 6 respectively in Tarakeshwor Municipality.

On June 6, Tarangini Foundation organized an experience-sharing session for 22 enumerators involved in data collection related to domestic workers and home-based workers in Tarkeshwor Municipality.



The session provided a space for enumerators to share their experiences, learnings, and challenges faced in the field during data collection process. The gathering also served as an opportunity to discuss about gender-based violence.



INTERNATIONAL DOMESTIC WORKERS DAY

Tarangini Foundation observed the entire week as a commemoration of International Domestic Workers' Day -June 16.

In the following week, on June 16 and June 19 , Tarangini Foundation conducted orientation sessions in ward number 5 of Kageshwori Municipality and ward number 11 of Budhanilkantha Municipality to highlight the significance of International Domestic Workers' Day. Participants were informed about the importance, history, and origins of International Domestic Workers Day, highlighting the historical context of Convention 189, adopted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2011, which ensures the rights, safety, and recognition of domestic workers. Moreover, the session discussed on the often-overlooked importance of self-care for women, who frequently prioritize the needs of their families over their own. Similarly through the 'Storytelling through Art' activity, participants visually expressed their emotions on paper and then transformed their artwork into personal narratives.

On June 18, Tarangini Foundation organized an orientation program at the Drop-In Center. In the session, Tarangini's Legal Officer Ashlesha Joshi shared with the women domestic workers the significance, history, and origin of the International Domestic Workers' Day, aiming to raise awareness about rights and recognition of their labor. On the same occasion, a short play performed by the domestic workers was showcased and following this, the activity "Storytelling through Art" was facilitated by Rupa Bhattarai and Aditi Bhatta, during which the participants expressed their daily lives through drawings on paper.



CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR AGRICULTURE WORKERS

Tarangini Foundation is working at the grassroots level to create a dignified and enabling environment for agriculture workers in Kavre through the Right to Work Campaign. Centered on Banepa, Panauti, and Panchkhal municipalities, our work prioritizes the recognition, rights, and well-being of women farmers, many of whom are engaged in commercial vegetable farming on leased land without formal labor recognition or protection.

Our women farmers' networks were expanded in multiple wards, including Panchkhal (Aapghari and Baluwa), Panauti (Ward 8), and Banepa (Ward 1 and 3).

In collaboration with local governments, efforts to establish a Labor Desk in Panauti Municipality were initiated to institutionalize support and recognition for women's labor. Coordination also continued with ward officials in Banepa and Panchkhal, especially in marginalized and geographically remote communities. From June 2–6, Nirmala Kafle, our Learning Facilitator for Kavre, along with two women agriculture workers, participated in the Dance Movement and Creative Arts Therapy for Women Workers program held in Bangkok, Thailand. This regional gathering, organized by GAATW and Kolkata Sanved, brought together grassroots women leaders and facilitators from Thailand, Indonesia, and Nepal, fostering cross-border solidarity, healing, and learning. Subsequently, Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) sessions were introduced to women's networks as a tool for healing and collective expression. These sessions offered safe, embodied ways to process lived experiences, especially where trauma or social stigma hinder open dialogue.

An impactful interaction was organized with stakeholders in Dhulikhel Municipality in collaboration with the Shramjibi Mahila Manch. Local officials, including the Deputy Mayor, agriculture division heads, and network representatives, engaged in dialogue on improving services and visibility for women workers.



ROUNDTABLE CONSULTATIVE WORKSHOP ON INFORMAL WORK

On May 19, 2025, Tarangini Foundation organized a Roundtable Consultative Workshop on the Recognition and Rights of Women Domestic and Agricultural Workers in Nepal at Alfahouse, moderated by Dr. Renu Adhikari, Founder of Tarangini Foundation. The workshop brought together 41 key stakeholders, including representatives from the National Planning Commission, National Human Rights Commission, Department of Labor and Occupational Safety, Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, ILO, UN Women, legal experts, civil society, media professionals, and women workers themselves. The event was part of a broader commitment to move beyond symbolic recognition on May Day and engage in substantive collective planning for structural change.

The discussions shed light on the persistent exclusion of women's labor, especially in domestic and agricultural sectors, from legal recognition and formal support. Ms. Maina Danuwar, representing women agricultural workers, spoke passionately about the daily labor women invest in farming and the lack of respect and access to government support, resources, and farmer ID cards. She emphasized that women are also farmers and must be formally recognized as such. Similarly, Ms. Kopila Prasai, a domestic worker, shared how they face long hours, unfair wages, no weekly holiday, sick leave, or social security. She stressed that without proper implementation of laws and employment agreements, domestic workers remain vulnerable and invisible.

Throughout the workshop, participants from organizations echoed the need for ratification of ILO Conventions C189, C190, and C184, and the importance of addressing gaps in implementation. It was pointed out that while various plans and Acts exist, they are rarely translated into real change due to weak enforcement and the prevailing patriarchal mindset.

The discussions emphasized that recognition of domestic and agricultural work must go hand in hand with a change in societal attitudes, legal reforms, and meaningful government accountability. Dr. Adhikari concluded the workshop by stating that there is no alternative to a movement and urged for collective and sustained efforts at all levels to ensure the rights, dignity, and protection of informal women workers in Nepal. The workshop ended with a shared commitment to continue advocacy, support law reform, and promote inclusive labor frameworks in collaboration with the government and civil society.



STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP FOR RETURNEE MIGRANT WORKERS

On May 1st and 2nd 2025, Tarangini Foundation successfully conducted a two-day Strategic Planning Workshop at Chetana Kendra, located at Budol, Banepa. The primary objective of the workshop was to develop a comprehensive strategic plan for Shramjibi Mahila Manch-organization led by returnee migrant women workers. The workshop was expertly facilitated by Ms. Parbati Basnet.



The workshop brought together committed members of the organization to shape a stronger, clearer vision for the future of their organization. It kicked off on a warm and welcoming note, with Program Coordinator Ms. Babita Baral setting positive tone for the days ahead. Facilitator Ms. Parbati Basnet led the participants through an engaging journey of reflection, dialogue, and shared learning. With thoughtful discussions, the group revisited and refreshed the organization's vision and goals ensuring that everyone was on the same page and energized for what's ahead. Together, they dove deep into each objectives of the organization, exchanging ideas and strengthening their collective purpose. The room was filled with enthusiasm, clarity, and a strong sense of unity.

Building on insights from a previous session, the facilitator revisited the SWOT analysis, highlighting the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and areas for improvement. This helped participants reflect on where they are now and what strategic direction is needed going forward.

Participants enthusiastically engaged in brainstorming and group discussions, exchanging ideas and perspectives. With energy and coordination, they designed activity plans and later shared their ideas in a lively presentation. What stood out most was their collective commitment; each participant pledged to take the plans forward through teamwork and shared ownership, all with a strong focus on contributing to the organization's broader mission.

SELF CARE TRAINING

Returnee migrant women often face long-term emotional, physical, and psychological challenges following years of labor in difficult and isolating conditions abroad. Many experiences identity loss, emotional suppression, and an absence of self-care due to family, societal, and economic pressure.

Recognizing this, Tarangini Foundation, in collaboration with Shramjibi Mahila Manch, organized a two-day self-care session focused on healing, relaxation, and inner reflection. The session was designed to support returnee women in reconnecting with themselves, gaining emotional clarity, and learning practical tools for daily self-care.



A series of powerful activities, like the River of Life and Wheel of Life, helped participants visualize joys, struggles and priorities of their life journey, revealing just how much they have carried through the years and the areas of their lives needing more attention. Some found it difficult to open up at first during introductory session, but by the end, they were laughing, playing with balloons, dancing confidently with ribbons, and rediscovering their sense of joy.

The body awareness sessions and relaxation exercises helped participants reconnect with their physical selves, recognize where they hold stress, and learn practical ways to relax. For many, this was a series of “firsts”; first time staying at a hotel, first time stepping out for tea with friends, or first time in years they felt carefree enough to enjoy an ice cream. One of them shared her plan to start saving a small amount and using it just for herself; a quiet yet powerful act of reclaiming self-worth.



RUPANTARAN: OUR EFFORTS FOR TRANSFORMATION

Tarangini's "Rupantaran" (Transformation) project has been conceptualized and designed with the aim of raising awareness about the various dimensions and consequences of gender-based violence targeted particularly in the form of forced marriage (Taani bibaha), child marriage, dowry and other harmful traditional practices that negatively affect the lives of women and adolescent girls. The goal is to create an enabling environment for women and girls to live lives free from violence.

As part of the inception phase of the project, Tarangini's staff conducted field visits to all three working districts: Rukum (East), Udayapur and Dhanusha. We conducted a series of introductory meetings at each district to formally introduce the project, establish working relationships, and engage with both local officials and community members. These sessions included presentations on violence against women and girls (VAWG), open discussions, and joint reflections on existing harmful traditional practices that further VAWG in the area. The presentation session included understandings of the definitions and forms of VAWG cultural myths vs. truths, the manifestation of VAWG in families and society, legal frameworks, including punishments, statute of limitations, and procedures to file complaints. We also facilitated coordination meetings with key actors including the police, health officials, educators, women human rights defenders to identify collaborative opportunities and shared challenges. Further, we also held strategic planning meetings with our partners across the three districts in order to strengthen implementation and plan field-level activities.

These inception meetings and activities have paved the way for a smooth continuation of the project's objectives and we have officially begun our work in the three districts, aiming to slowly integrate community-level awareness.



ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Staff Induction Training



On 26th & 27th May, Tarangini Foundation conducted a staff induction training at WOREC Aadhar - Rajabas, Udayapur. The training brought together team members from Tarangini and its partner organizations- Mahila Bikash Sewa Kendra, Rauta Samudaya Hit Kendra and Holistic Development Council.

Facilitated by Dr. Renu Adhikari - Founding Chairperson of Tarangini Foundation, the training focused on clarifying concepts on human rights, women rights, and transformative leadership. It also emphasized on integrating feminist perspectives into organizational practices and community engagement.

ReFLECT Training

With the objective of enhancing the capacity of staffs to work more effectively with communities, Tarangini Foundation organized a three-day intensive ReFLECT training from 23rd to 25th of May at WOREC Aadhar in Rajabas, Udayapur.

The team members from Tarangini Foundation and its partner organizations Mahila Bikash Sewa Kendra, Rauta Samudaya Hit Kendra, and Holistic Development Council jointly participated in the training session.



This intensive training provided valuable insights into identifying community problems using the SHEEPE method, developing problem tree and prioritizing the problems. Participants also learned practical skills such as forming community groups, understanding the different stages of community discussions, and effectively conducting formal programs. Overall, the training equipped the participants with tools and approaches to better engage with communities in a participatory and impactful way.

PROVINCE LEVEL ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS

Workshops on Right to Work

Access to dignified work, fair wages, and a life free from violence is a fundamental human right of every individual. Transformation is only possible when all citizens feel that they are living safe, dignified, and respectful lives in a just society. On these and related issues, province-level workshops on right to work were successfully held in Biratnagar on 20th June, in Butwal on 23rd June and in Kathmandu on 25th of June. The events were jointly organized by Tarangini Foundation and WOREC Nepal.



The three workshops emphasized that no society can prosper until every individual is ensured an environment where they can engage in dignified labor, and that labor cannot be valued unless the notion that “women’s work is work” is fully embraced. The sessions were facilitated by Dr. Renu Adhikari, Founding Chairperson of both Tarangini Foundation and WOREC Nepal.

Launch of the Campaign for Democracy and Women’s Rights

Tarangini is also part of the "Campaign for Democracy and Women’s Rights", which was formally launched on May 18, 2025 (Jestha 15, 2082), recognizing that strong democracy is the foundation for ensuring women’s rights. It was conceptualized against the growing anti-democratic sentiments and shrinking space for women’s rights in the country.

With participation from over 30 organizations, individuals, and media allies, the campaign began with province-level webinars across all seven provinces, raising critical concerns around growing corruption, impunity, weakening democratic values, and neglect of women’s rights. Based on the voices and issues surfaced in these events, a formal memorandum was submitted to Nepali Congress leaders, including former Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and Gagan Thapa on 16 June. The campaign calls for urgent policy reforms, increased civic participation, and accountability from political actors. In-person meetings have already taken place in Koshi, Madhesh, Lumbini, and Bagmati provinces, and the movement continues to grow as a collective voice committed to protecting inclusive democracy and advancing women’s rights in Nepal.

LAXMI'S FIGHT FOR CITIZENSHIP



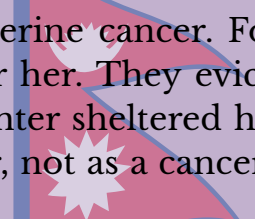
Laxmi Shrestha was born on 25 September 1961 in Bhawarkot, Kavrepalanchok. Her mother died just four months after her birth and she was taken in by her paternal aunt in Banepa, who raised her as her own while her father remarried twice. Laxmi's stepmothers had their own children, and her father slowly faded from her life.

At 21, Laxmi married Gopal Shrestha and moved to Banepa-3. For a while, she was allowed to visit her maternal home, but as years passed, her husband became prone to alcoholism and violence. He stopped her from visiting her family and did not allow her to acquire citizenship. Despite having four children with Gopal, upon her requests to obtain a citizenship, he would always say "Why do you need a citizenship when everyone in the village knows that you are my wife?"

When the time came for her own children to obtain their citizenships, Laxmi got her marriage certificate by using her paternal aunt's son and daughter-in-law's names in the place of her parents and with that, she was able to provide her children with citizenship, even if she did not have one of her own. Years later, after her husband's death, when she went to obtain her own citizenship using the marriage registration document, the process was sabotaged by her paternal aunt's grandson who claimed that she was not his sister.

Her struggle for citizenship spanned over four Chief District Officers, each giving her a new excuse. Even when her case was forwarded to the Department of National ID and Civil Registration with full documentation, it was denied on technical grounds that "The law doesn't allow corrections in false records."

Then came the uterine cancer. For four years, Laxmi battled the disease alone. Her sons refused to care for her. They evicted her, denied her food, and emotionally tortured her. Her married daughter sheltered her and sought donations for treatment. But the state had no support for her, not as a cancer patient, not as a single woman, not as a citizen. Because she wasn't one.



Finally, with the help of Tarangini Foundation and facilitator Nirmala Kafle, her case was coordinated with the ward, municipality, police, and the district administration. A thorough field verification was conducted with local witnesses, and legal relationships were verified. After decades of rejection, abuse, and waiting, on 27 April 2025, Laxmi finally obtained her Nepali citizenship by descent.

Laxmi is relieved to finally have obtained her citizenship and prays that no other Nepali fighting for their citizenship will have to face the same suffering as her.

Watch Laxmi's story here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RD1wYMLxUDs>

ABOUT US

Tarangini Foundation, established in 2017, is a non-profit organization focused on women's rights in Nepal. Named after the Sanskrit word for a woman creating waves, Tarangini is dedicated to documenting feminist movements, enhancing integrated security, and feminist mentoring. We work around three issues: women's identity, body and work and envision creating an enabling environment for feminists and our movements to be strengthened, recognized, and visible. Our goals include empowering women activists and WHRDs, developing a self-care model, documenting Nepali feminist narratives, and strengthening the feminist movement through intergenerational capacity building and mentorship.



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