

7. Aid to displaced children – victims of the armed conflict in Nepal

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Trying to escape violence and lawlessness people have fled – and continue to flee - to the urban centers and across the border to India, resulting in extensive population displacement. In their report of February 9th 2005, the *International Crisis Group* noted with concern the depopulation of rural areas across the country. Already in 2002-2003, INSEC recorded 31,635 cases of displaced people within Nepal. The NGO *Community Study and Welfare Centre* (CSWC) estimates however that over the last nine years between 350,000 and 400,000 Nepalese have been displaced from their villages, whereas the Global IDP Project, run by the Norwegian Refugee Council, reports in September 2004, that among 200,000 displaced people 100,000 are found in Kathmandu alone.



The children of Nepal are particularly vulnerable. Since the end of the cease-fire agreement in 2003, violations against Nepali children have been steadily increasing by both parties to the conflict. The armed conflict has eroded fragile and tenuous gains in literacy, child mortality and other key indicator areas, as the general standard of living and quality of life for all Nepali children continues to deteriorate. According to *Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict* "many children in Nepal are growing up in an environment shaped by guns, bombs, bandhs (strikes), killings, the sight of dead bodies and the fear of war, leading them to be preoccupied with thoughts and fear about violence and other psychosocial consequences. They worry about losing their homes, their families and their education.

Due to the on-going conflict, whole generations of Nepali children are losing their rights and opportunities to education. Ironically, it is the poorest and most discriminated children, who are being most severely affected by the closure of schools. They have been encouraged to attend school and are often the first ones in their families to have been admitted. Now many of them are forced to leave their homes, to escape being recruited by the Maoists or to migrate for work. In contrast, wealthier families have been able to transfer their children to private schools in the safe urban areas



The project is financially supported by Swiss Solidarity.

Aim: The project aims at restoration of basic social services in the field of advocacy, care and protection.

Objective: Providing immediate assistance to IDP children and their families in the field of education, psychosocial support (mainly in the field of recreation & play) and nutrition for small children.

There will be an organized effort to identify and document these displaced children, and to enlist the support of government ministries to provide for their basic needs.

Map: Project location

