

**United Nations Peace Fund for Nepal (UNPFN)  
Project Status Update  
For the period of January - March 2011**

**1. Project Overview**

<b>Participating UN Organization:</b>	UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, ILO	<b>Cluster area:</b>	Cantonments/ Reintegration
<b>Project number:</b>	UNPFN/A-7	<b>Funding round Strategic Outcome:</b>	
<b>Project Title:</b>	<b>United Nations Interagency Rehabilitation Programme (UNIRP)</b>		
<b>Total approved project budget:</b>	US\$ 9,349,660		
<b>Funds committed and disbursed to-date:</b>	US\$ 9,349,660	<b>% of approved budget:</b>	100%
<b>Funds disbursed to-date:</b>	3,852,623	<b>% of approved budget:</b>	41.20%
<b>Project start date:</b>	01 June, 2010	<b>Original end date:</b>	31 May, 2012
<b>Revised end date (if applicable):</b>	NA	<b>Anticipated total project duration:</b>	24 Months

**2. Overview of progress to-date against project outcomes**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Progress: achievements / results / outputs delivered to-date</b>	<b>% of planned</b>
<b>Verified Minors and Late Recruits (VMRLs) participants are supported in their socio-economic rehabilitation</b>	<p><b>Individual Rehabilitation Option Packages are prepared and made available to participants:</b> Principal Service Providers (PSPs) and Implementation Partners for four sectoral packages have been delivering services. Rehabilitation option packages have been reviewed in view of the latest market demand and participants interest. The programme has enhanced Vocational Skills Training (VST) and Micro-Enterprises (ME) options. Further, micro-enterprise package implementation has been taken over by UNIRP from MEDEP and new arrangements for service delivery have been set and UNICEF, in consultation with Ministry of Education, re-introduced open education, within the rehabilitation packages for VMLRs.</p> <p><b>Access to employment and livelihood opportunities promoted:</b> As a result of continuous efforts undertaken by the socio-economic team of UNIRP, the employment rate has increased by 7% in this reporting period. As of March 2011, the employment rate is 31% for a total of 598 graduates. Four orientation workshops for employers and other key stakeholders were conducted and they showed commitment to provide employment business mentoring to the graduates of the rehabilitation programme. Key participants of these workshops were local level business communities, local authorities, service providers, programme beneficiaries and civil society to establish networks and to maximize support for the programme and its beneficiaries and to develop and implement community-owned mechanism for socio-economic support. Further, for the sustainability of micro-enterprises package, an MoU was signed between UNDP and the Paschimanchal Gramin Bikas Bank.</p> <p><b>Participants received career and psychosocial counseling:</b> So far, 2182 of the 4,008 VMLRs are provided with detailed career counseling and referral in one of the five UNIRP Regional Offices. Psychosocial support and counseling is being provided through psychosocial support mechanism including regional referral system. As of March 2011, more than 800 VMLRs have been assessed for psychosocial support. Altogether 13 severe cases, requiring clinical psychosocial support, have been referred to partners for longer-term clinical support. In addition, eight new cases that have recently been referred are expected to visit for clinical support. Further, in the reporting period, two incidences of attempted suicidal cases were recorded (1 male and 1 female) among the VMLRs. Both of them are currently receiving extensive follow-up and psychosocial counseling from regional psychosocial workers.</p> <p><b>Specific Gender needs of VMLRS are met:</b> To ensure smooth participation of female VMLRs particularly vulnerable women i.e. pregnant women and lactating mothers and women caring for young children under five years old, better protection and well-being of their children and at the same time encourage more participation of female VMLRs in the rehabilitation programme, UNIRP has made available gender specific support to female VMLRs through a robust matrix of gender support. The matrix includes gender specific support such as Nutritional Support to Pregnant and Lactating</p>	<b>54%</b>

Mothers, Child Care facility in training centers and within community, Childcare Grant, Maternity Allowance, support to victims of Sexual and Gender Based Violence, Special Reproductive Health support and many other broad ranges of provisions.

Of the 52% women participants under microenterprise package, 30% are women with special needs (pregnant women and lactating mothers) and have been receiving the aforementioned support. The programme has also made arrangement to provide similar support to women with special needs (2.5% of the total) under vocational skills training and health related trainings. Further, the programme has maintained one to one counseling of female participants by female counselors to identify protection issues and gender specific needs. Under education package, female participants who have protection concerns or cannot join community based schools have been supported with extra financial support (NRs. 2,200 /month) on top of NRs. 1,800 monthly stipend for two years to facilitate their participation in education. Out of a total of 128 females enrolled in the education program, 52 VMLR who are studying away from home, have received additional stipend to enable them to continue their education.

**Individual rehabilitation packages are implemented:**

The rehabilitation support services including four sectoral packages (Vocational Skills Training, Micro-Enterprises, Education and Health Training) have been offered to all 4,008 VMLRs.

- As of March 2011, of the 4008 VMLRs originally identified and discharged from the Maoist army, 2,489 or 62% have made initial contact with the UN Interagency Rehabilitation Programme through its toll-free phone number.
- Of those VMLRs, 2,182 or 54% have already received individual career counseling in one of the five regional offices and have been referred to specific Service Providers to undertake training/education programme.
- Of these VMLRs, 841 or 21% are participating in one of the four rehabilitation packages while 153 (4%) participants in microenterprises are waiting to receive the start-up support (in-kind) after completing their business plans.
- To date, 598 participants or 15 % have completed training programme in VST and ME packages. Of these, 185 (or 31% of participants who have completed training) are employed or have established businesses.



Female participants in Tailoring training

Monitoring of programme implementation and rehabilitation packages have been regularly conducted including monitoring of service providers performance and implementation of training curriculum as well as distribution of materials and toolkits i.e. theoretical and practical, in house and On-the-Job training.

**Communities were engaged in supporting the rehabilitation of VMLR participants**

**Public Sensitization and Information Campaign designed and implemented:**

The communications and reporting action plan has been further developed and re-drafted to accommodate communication needs of the programme and scale-up communication initiatives of the rehabilitation programme. As a result, various local media organizations were facilitated and provided with information regarding UNIRP as an aspect of developing media relations and disseminating the programme messages.



VMLRs with local community

Two exclusive radio programmes on the rehabilitation programme with an objective to disseminate updated information on the rehabilitation programme have been developed and broadcasted in collaboration with UN Radio Chautari and SSMK of Equal Access. Also, two radio Public Service Announcements (PSAs) were produced and broadcasted throughout Nepal to inform VMLRs including those who have not been registered for rehabilitation with UNIRP, about the deadline to access rehabilitation packages, inform them of the individual options enhancements and the re-launch of the Open-Education option. Additionally, appropriate SMS text messages were developed for different groups of VMLRs and circulated via mobile phones. This resulted in a spike of calls to the toll free number making further enquiries.

A Press Meet chaired by UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Mr. Robert Piper and Country Representative of UNICEF, Ms. Gillian Millsap was conducted to highlight on the achievements of the interagency rehabilitation programme and the approaching deadline of 22 March. Almost all Print and Audio Visual Media covered the event. The CAAFAG network has been actively engaged to trace discharged VMLRs at the community level and to share information about the rehabilitation support and how to access the support packages.

**Broader community assisted in addressing socio-economic rehabilitation of VMLRs:**

	<p>UNICEF with support from UNDP and other UN partners has been engaged in community peacebuilding and sensitization activities. During the reporting period, 82 youth leaders and implementing partners received training on peace-building, peace civic/education and life skills to engage VMLRs with youth from communities. Following this, the youth leaders oriented and worked closely with approximately 200 VMLRs and 280 community youths (youth groups) to organize 14 community-based peacebuilding activities including outdoor games, cultural programmes, interactions and orientation on civic education. As a preliminary stage, these activities were focused at the regional levels to increase the frequency of interaction between VMLRs, psychosocial counselors and community youth groups and will be intensified at the district level in the upcoming months.</p> <p>UNICEF organized refresher trainings to youth leaders and implementing partners to review progress, challenges and provide additional skills to carry out peacebuilding and reconciliation activities at the community level.</p> <p><b>Capacities of service providers for VST enhanced to deliver demand driven training:</b> Several meetings were held with Principal/Service Providers and workshops were conducted at central and regional levels. The workshops and meetings aimed to identify capacity needs of the service providers and orient them on financial management, accountability and public audit procedures. As a result, capacity building workshop for vocational skills training service providers was conducted with the objective to orient vocational skills training service providers to have greater understanding, knowledge and skill in various elements relevant for successful community-based vocational skills training.</p> <p><b>Special gender considerations within the broader community are prioritized:</b> The interagency gender specific support matrix which has been jointly developed is addressing the following gender needs in a broader context of social rehabilitation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainstreaming gender into the programme implementation.</li> <li>• Facilitating full participation of women with special needs in training programmes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensuring gender friendly environment during counselling and referral including childcare support.</li> <li>- Nutritional diet for pregnant women and lactating mothers in training and arrangement of childcare and childcare grant for children under-5 for women in training and single mothers (VMLR) in the community.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Linkages of women to micro-credit groups, cooperatives and employment.</li> <li>• Referral of women to special health and legal support including special support to SGBV cases.</li> <li>• Social reintegration including family and community counseling, mediation and psychosocial support.</li> <li>• Empowerment of the community and VMLRs to participate in social and economic activities, by organizing peace/civic education to youth leaders to replicate the knowledge back to communities/youth groups.</li> </ul>	
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### 3. Overview of project objectives, results and challenges in this quarter

<p><b>Key Achievements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A comprehensive interagency information management system has been finalized and launched. The Rehabilitation Information System (RIS) is a strong web-based application with strong security access control mechanism that can be accessed online from anywhere in the world. It will allow the regional offices and UN partner agencies to access data through intranet. Access has been also provided to IDDRS unit in BCPR. The database is linked to DREAM database and other databases of UNIRP that would operate as an integrated information management system.</li> <li>• A two-week mission from Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) comprising of experts from four agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and ILO) was facilitated to conduct a special review of UNIRP. The special review team has submitted their initial draft report along with recommendations by last week of March 2011.</li> <li>• Micro-Enterprise package direct implementation has been taken over by UNIRP and new arrangements for service delivery under direct implementation have been set. The options under this package has been reviewed and enhanced to improve delivery and increase rate of self employment. Long term contract to provide trainings, startup support and refresher training for the ME package is under process.</li> <li>• UNICEF in consultation with Ministry of Education, open education option has been re-introduced within the rehabilitation packages for VMLRs.</li> <li>• Four socio-economic and employment orientation workshops in various regions were conducted with participation of local business communities, local authorities, service providers, programme beneficiaries and civil society. Employers and other key stakeholders at local level showed commitment to provide employment, and business mentoring to the graduates of the rehabilitation programme.</li> <li>• For the sustainability of micro-enterprises package and possible facilitation of micro-credit linkages, an MoU has been</li> </ul>
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signed off between UNDP and Madhaya Pachimanchal Grameen Bikas Bank, Nepalgunj.

• **Key Updates on the figures:**

- During the first quarter, the programme registered 141 new VMLRs who contacted via the toll-free number bringing up the total to 2,489 of the total 4008 VMLRs registered for rehabilitation via its toll-free number.
- In the reporting period, 326 VMLRs received individual career counseling and were referred for training / education. This brings up the total to 2,182 VMLRs referred for training / education.
- As of end of March, 841 VMLRs are now participating in one of the four training / education packages. This makes a total of 1592 VMLRs enrolled in training / education packages.
- By end of March, of those who were enrolled in training / education, 598 participants have completed training programme in VST and ME packages. Of these, 185 or 31% are employed or have established their own businesses while 153 individuals are awaiting business startup support who will receive upon completion of their business plan.
- A campaign for speeding up the enrollment of VMLRS, who have contacted and/or received counseling from ROs, but still not enrolled in rehabilitation programme is being implemented.
- Programme communication activities have been further strengthened and continued efforts are made to raise awareness about the available rehabilitation support packages.
- Several peacebuilding activities took place in the five regional offices (Biratnagar, Bharatpur, Kathmandu, Nepalgunj, Dhangadhi) focusing on VMLRs in the training centers to engage with youth from communities. Refresher trainings were organized to youth leaders and implementing partners to review progress, challenges and provide additional skills to carry out peacebuilding and reconciliation activities at the community level.
- A contract was signed with International Alert to carry out survey at the local level and conduct workshops with private sector and business community to strengthen the economic dimensions of VMLRs rehabilitation.

**Major Challenges:**

- The scattered and sparse geographical spread of VMLRs throughout the country has seriously affected the capacity of the programme for monitoring and post-graduation follow-up. Many of those graduated are in remote areas. This has implications for their ability to find sustainable livelihood options.
- Artificially high expectation of the VMLRs about the rehabilitation programme often creates obstacles to smooth implementation of the rehabilitation programme.
- Significant levels of stigmatization exist (particularly among inter-cast married couples) for VMLRs returning to their communities, limiting resettlement choices and adversely reducing the potential for reunification of families. This is particularly so for female ex-combatants. Further, reintegration into feudal community structures and traditional cultural roles is complicated by the broadened life experience to which VMLRs have been exposed.

#### **4. Progress against key indicators in the UNPFN Monitoring and Evaluation Framework**

The UN Interagency Rehabilitation Programme has contributed to the achievement of the following key indicators of the UN Peace Fund Monitoring and Evaluation Framework:

**Indicator 2.3: VMLRs and female combatants provided with health care**

To ensure smooth participation of VMLRs in the rehabilitation programme particularly women and to timely address health related concerns of the VMLR participants, UNIRP has been providing health care support to participants throughout the training programme. As of March, approximately 61 individuals and their immediate dependents (children) have been provided health support.

**Indicator 2.6: A timely offer and start of the rehabilitation assistance to discharged combatants**

The four main rehabilitation support packages (vocational skills training, microenterprises, education and health related training) were made available to all VMLRs immediately after their discharge from the Maoist cantonments. In order to offer timely services to these individuals, a toll-free phone system was established to enable participants make calls from any part of Nepal and receive information on rehabilitation and referral to the nearest UNIRP regional offices. Participants upon arrival to their respective UNIRP regional office receive detailed career counseling and psychosocial counseling and are being referred to service providers at the local level for training / education.

**Indicator 2.7: VMLRs participating in the rehabilitation programme offered by the UNIRP**

UNIRP has made continued efforts to inform the discharged Maoist ex-combatants through information campaigns, public service announcements through radios, SMS text messages and various other means. As a result, of the total 4008 VMLRs, 2489 individuals are registered with UNIRP through its toll-free number. Of these, 2182 have visited one of the five regional offices of UNIRP and are referred for training / education. As of March, 1592 of the total VMLRs are in and or completed various training programmes.

**Indicator 2.8: VMLR participants enrolled in the rehabilitation programme received psychological support**

Contrary to the initial assumptions, the discharged Maoist ex-combatants have had greater psychosocial problems. It was found that approximately 30% of the total VMLRs comes with psychosocial problems and require long-term and intensive support. To effectively address this, UNIRP has been providing psychosocial support to VMLRs to ensure their socio-economic rehabilitation. Further, UNIRP continuously strengthened psychosocial support mechanism including establishment of regional referral mechanism for psychosocial and clinical support. Two psychosocial counselors are located in every regional office to provide psychosocial support. By end of March, more than 800 VMLRs have been assessed for psychosocial need. Also, two

incidents of attempted suicidal cases (1 male and 1 female) are currently receiving intensive follow-up and psychosocial counseling from regional counselors.

**Indicator 2.9: VMLRs engaged in constructive livelihood six months after the completion of the rehabilitation training**

Through a comprehensive approach of engaging the business community and private sectors and constant follow up and efforts by socioeconomic team and UNIRP regional offices, 31 % employments has been achieved.

In addition an MoU has been signed with Grameen Bank in Nepalgunj to offer loans without collateral to UNIRP participants in mid-western region. As of March, 598 VMLR participants have completed training programmes in VST and ME packages. Of these, 185 or 31% are employed or have established their own businesses.

**Indicator 2.12: The UN provides and deploys quick and strategic assistance and support to the Government of Nepal**

The UN Country Team with UNDP on the technical team delivered the discharge of 4008 Maoist ex combatants within a very short notice. The UN Country Team along with UNMIN established a team of almost 50 individuals within a period of two weeks which included the recruitment, training and deployment with all required logistics. The discharge process of the disqualified ex-combatants in all seven cantonments and 21 satellite camps was successfully completed in 32 days.