

INTERNATIONAL POLICY APPROACHES TO “CHILD SOLDIERS” IN NEPAL, 2007–2008

James Sharrock

This paper deals with the basis of rehabilitation and reintegration policies formulated by international agencies in Nepal during 2007–2008 for underage Maoist recruits and other conflict-affected children. One perspective stressed vulnerability above all other factors while another denied or downplayed them. In the first perspective a set of child protection agencies and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) based their assumptions on a victim-centred model of “classic” child soldiering. This stemmed, in part, from the use of pre-existing definitions, an overly protectionist’ interpretation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and West African-generated policy guidelines. In the second perspective many in United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) and others perceived the child soldiers issue only as a security and political issue concerning 16, 17 year olds. The paper will stress that this perspective downplayed the lack of consent of many conflict-affected children in Nepal. In both perspectives, many actors in the Nepali peace process were uncomfortable with the idea of children’s agency.

These questions may help shed light on the performance of the “humanitarian international” in Nepal as well as on global and Nepali policy approaches towards child soldiers and child protection. I will discuss the approaches along with examples of conflict-affected children which I came across in my work. I will make wider arguments concerning the need for programs which target conflict-affected children to adapt to local realities and to incorporate the Convention on the Rights of the Child’s (CRC 1989) often unheeded emphasis on children’s agency (children exercising their own rights and choices) alongside the CRC’s normally heeded protective concerns.¹

My information comes from my experience as a Child Protection Officer with UNMIN in Eastern Nepal for approximately 1 year (mid-2007 to mid-2008). This time included meeting conflict-affected children and former Maoist soldiers, visiting cantonment sites, working with the

¹ Yet I agree with (Alston 1994: 3) that the CRC is “complex and multi-dimensional.” See Pupavac (2001) for a harsh critique of the CRC and child rights regime.

Children Associated with Armed Forces and Groups Working Group (CAAFAG WG) including UNICEF and their partner organizations.

UNMIN was a political UN Mission set up in January 2007 to support implementation of the 2006 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), mainly through limited monitoring of Maoist Army cantonments as well as in providing support to preparations for Constituent Assembly (CA) elections. UNMIN Child Protection Section was a small unit within the Mission which consisted of teams of two staff in each region (one national and one international) plus staff in Kathmandu HQ level. Child Protection Officers inside the Section travelled extensively and were mandated to monitor, report and advocate on the cantonment release, reintegration and possible re-recruitment of former Maoist Movement CAAFAG minors.

The mandate resulted in looking at topics such as the re-recruitment of children into Tarai armed groups, the Young Communist League (YCL) as a default reintegration program and broad questions around children's political participation, especially around election time. Child Protection Section staff sent weekly reports to UNMIN Child Protection Section HQ who then produced national level documents for circulation with UNMIN, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and, as appropriate, CAAFAG WG members. The Section had virtually no programmatic responsibilities or any protection mandate. Although some of the boundaries between UN bodies were not clear, in general UNICEF and the CAAFAG WG took the lead in coordinating the national programmatic response on behalf of former child soldiers while Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) took the lead in investigating cases of abuses of children's rights.

My criticisms of UNMIN, UNICEF and other child protection actors concern areas where international law was not clear and they chose the most inflexible and "protectionist" stance on rehabilitation and reintegration which, I argue, came at a cost to other child rights.² I focused on the UNICEF-led CAAFAG WG,³ particularly as they were actually running reintegration and rehabilitation programs and had a greater impact than UNMIN on children's lives in Nepal.

This article is in debt to and also expands on Thomas (2010), which focuses on approaches to monitoring carried out by UNMIN Child

² All the views expressed here as well as any mistakes are my own.

³ Obviously not all CAAFAG WG members shared the same views on every policy but their policy decisions, not internal debates, are my focus here.

Protection Section using a set of innovative guidelines. The latter helped uncover nuances within CAAFAG recruitment in the Nepali context and are discussed below. However, while Thomas focuses on methods used by UNMIN Child Protection in order to capture social, political and economic nuance impacting on recruitment, my article explores the original approaches adopted towards Nepali CAAFAG by UNICEF and the CAAFAG WG, as well as the impact of those decisions. My article also follows Baker and Hinton’s 2001 study of child carpet factory workers in Nepal, according to which “decisions about children’s lives continue to be based on a set of norms surrounding children’s competencies and vulnerabilities, without adequate questioning of the appropriateness of these norms to children’s realities” (Baker and Hinton 2001: 179). This conclusion, appears equally applicable to international approaches to programming for CAAFAG in Nepal during 2007–2008.⁴

I will use the term “CAAFAG WG” to describe Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), International Non-governmental Organizations (INGOs) and UN agencies working on the child soldier issue in Nepal. For ease of understanding and to reflect humanitarians’ own usage I will use the broad Cape Town Principles (1997)⁵ description when I talk of child soldiers (i.e. under 18s recruited, for multiple roles in an army and not just for direct combat). I will use this definition despite policy use of the Principles being highly problematic in Nepal’s context. The term vulnerability in my usage refers to exposition to risks and lack of agency of children. The views of children affected by the conflict whom I personally met are presented throughout in case studies with little identifying features. This is deliberate and for obvious reasons.

I will first explain the Maoist and child soldier context in Nepal before exploring the ideas around child soldiering in global humanitarian policy and practice, and the plans for the rehabilitation and reintegration of Maoist CAAFAG in Nepal.

⁴ An interesting presentation by Yohei Takata on “Urban street as life space: lives of street children in Kathmandu, Nepal” on 19 August, 2011 at the conference “Changing Dynamics of Nepali Society and Politics” also critiqued overly protectionist NGO approaches towards Nepali street children by illustrating their own agency.

⁵ To find out more about cape town principles and its practices of recruitment of children into the armed forces, etc., see UNICEF (1997).

The Nepali Context – Child Soldiers in the Maoist Movement

Children and young people were undoubtedly abducted from villages and forced to join the Maoist Movement. Many also joined voluntarily through a range of different organizations.⁶ This complexity was present in recruitment stories which were rarely described to UNMIN Child Protection Section as one-off events. Often the initial contact point for children and young people was through involvement in political campaigns, through schools or cultural performance groups. The children may have then taken part in other versions of political activism, such as mobilizing donations (often coercively) or policing villages in areas of Maoist control. Some children may also have taken part in village defence forces, and others graduated from that to the Maoist Army, although linear progressions to direct combat roles were very rare.

In 2006 the parties to Nepal's CPA committed themselves to a prohibition on the recruitment or use of under-18s.⁷ The CPA confined the Nepal Army mostly to barracks and the Maoist Army entirely to cantonments and imposed restrictions on the weapons use of both sides. The 2006 peace agreements also stated that all under 18 year olds in the Maoist Army should be immediately discharged and "necessary and suitable assistance would be provided for their rehabilitation." Teams of UN monitors were invited to enumerate the Maoist Army in cantonments and disqualify Maoist Army personnel who were under 18 at the time of the May 2006 ceasefire, as well as adult Maoist Army personnel who were deemed to have joined after the ceasefire.

UN monitors enumerated 31,318 Maoist Army combatants in January and February 2007. 2,973 were disqualified because UN monitors found them to be under-18 at the time of the ceasefire (UNSC 2008). Another 1,035, mostly younger people, were assessed to have been recruited after May 2006. According to the CPA and AMMAA discharge of the minors

⁶ The use of children and young people in Government armed forces during the conflict is not my focus here, although they have been a blind spot for international agencies too. This paper does not discuss other armed groups who used children in Nepal, such as armed gangs in the Eastern Tarai.

⁷ CPA 2006: Article 7.6.1 This is also an important point to remember in the context of recent debates and blame around apparent disqualification of Maoist minors by the UN. In 2007 the Government of Nepal also ratified the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflicts (2000), with a binding declaration that stated that "The minimum age for recruitment in the Nepal Army and the Armed Police Force shall be 18 years." Nonetheless, the existence of lawful child recruitment continues in Nepal by the British Army (Harvey 2002).

should have taken place immediately and without any conditions.⁸ Although this was technically a Government responsibility, in reality preparation for discharge was a task led by UNICEF and other international agencies working through the CAAFAG WG.

The long process (delayed by political-wrangling) of verification and age-determination in Maoist Army cantonments did not lead immediately to the formal discharge and release of children. Instead the release of disqualified personnel, including under-18s, became enmeshed in a stalled Government-Maoist dialogue on wider security sector reform. Releasing the young soldiers was a politically unaffordable concession for the CPN-M, although informal release of around 9,000 Maoist Army personnel from the cantonments⁹ took place throughout 2007 and an estimated 5,000 to 7,000 of those who left were thought by UNMIN Child Protection to be children. Formal discharge of the 2,973 underage recruits took until early 2010, by which time only 1,843 presented themselves for discharge. Evidence UNMIN Child Protection Section collection suggested many informally released former CAAFAG joined the YCL as a *de facto*, albeit unstable, reintegration program back into the civilian world.

Early perceptions on the child soldiers issue in Nepal were shaped by an influential February 2007 Human Rights Watch (HRW) report on Maoist child soldiers. It contained an estimate, “that at least 3,500 to 4,500 Nepali children are part of the Maoist fighting forces” (HRW 2007). The estimate came from “local groups,” presumably partner NGOs. The report was primarily based on interviews with just 21 children, all of whom had, at some stage in the conflict, been detained by Government forces. Despite an overwhelming emphasis on the victimhood of the children, the HRW report did at least engage with the idea of voluntary recruitment, talked of the importance of effective rehabilitation and reintegration schemes and provided a detailed account of some children’s involvement in the Maoist movement. Readings of this report helped to inspire subsequent greater “protectionist” approaches towards former MM CAAFAG by UNICEF and others, although influences and motivations in policy planning are difficult to determine retrospectively.

⁸ CPA 2006: Article 7.6.1 and in AMMAA 2006: 1.1.

⁹ The figures come from differences in verification exercises. 8,640 people left the cantonments between first-phase registration in January–February 2007 and second-phase verification in June–December 2007.

Amongst CAAFAG who were outside cantonments, the following rough estimates were made about their characteristics from a sample of around 250 CAAFAG in 8 districts during 2007–2008.¹⁰ A surprisingly large 38 percent were female. 62 percent of all CAAFAG had received some level of secondary education. 24 percent were Dalits, 26 percent were Brahmin/Chhetri and 50 percent were from Janjati groups. Inside the cantonments figures were restricted following verification. By 2007 the vast majority of cantonment-based CAAFAG were aged between 15 and 20 years old. A reportedly very low percentage of cantonment-based CAAFAG were aged 12 or under.

Child Soldiering – The Development of a Policy

It is necessary at the outset of this paper to be clear about child soldiering. There is no doubt that child soldier recruitment or any involvement of children in armed conflict is generally harmful to children and their rights. Children have died, suffered sexual violence, loss of education, suffered health problems, huge psychological trauma, been injured and denied access to food as a result of being involved in armed conflict, a situation in which children are always disproportionately more affected than others. However, the fact that there is a need to indicate this disclaimer illustrates some of the sensitivities around discussing child soldiers and child soldiering in anything other than a condemnatory tone. To say, for example, that some children benefitted from joining the Maoist movement (non-armed wings) in Nepal is one taboo. But to highlight findings from former child soldiers and children affected by the conflict is not to offer a defence of child soldiering or to justify a violation of rights just because children have rationalized the recruitment to themselves. Rather it is to acknowledge the difficulties around discussing child rights when children and adults do not necessarily share the same viewpoint or experiences (Montgomery 2001: 93).

Recent humanitarian policy towards child soldiers has been, “that children have no place in war under any circumstance and that child soldiering is an unambiguous violation of universal children’s rights” (Lee 2009: 3). The contemporary child soldiers rhetoric amongst humanitarians, disregards the complex local understandings of children and youth’s involvement in political forces. Ah-Jung Lee identifies the “development of the contemporary humanitarian discourse on child soldiers” through several key events (Lee 2009: 6). Firstly, child soldiers

¹⁰ Figures from UNMIN Child Protection Section documents.

became a prominent issue in UN policy making with the release of Graça Machel’s UN Study on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children in 1996. This led to the creation of the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers amongst other developments and, inside the UN, numerous UN Security Council resolutions were adopted on the issue stating—essentially—that the Security Council considered the use of child soldiers as a threat to peace and security.¹¹ Machel’s study also led to the establishment of a Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) for Children and Armed Conflict at the Under-Secretary-General level along with the placement of Child Protection Officers in DPKO and DPA-run UN field Missions (Coomaraswamy 2010), including UNMIN.

Secondly, child soldiering became conceptualized in terms of a rights-based approach by humanitarian agencies—meaning it was seen in terms of a violation of universal children’s rights and a breach of International Humanitarian Law—after the near universal ratification of the UN CRC (1989). This was followed by the development of an overly “protectionist” rights-based approach towards the issue by UNICEF and child protection NGOs, which built on previous “welfare-based” approaches of the past.¹² Thirdly, non-binding principles on children involved in armed conflict as well as extra-legal definitions of “child soldiers,” were developed on the back of this momentum and humanitarian concern. These documents included the 1997 Cape Town Principles and the 2007 Paris Commitments. Both documents were largely UNICEF-led, were not legal instruments and were publicly endorsed by interested countries. They did “reflect an evolving and important normative framework supported by a sizeable group of like-minded states” (2007: 2). They also contained guidelines for program design and implementation for children affected by armed conflict, which will be discussed later.

Also, as others have noted, the focus on child soldiers came at a time during the 1990s when the international humanitarian community

¹¹ Most notably through UN Security Council. 2005. Resolution 1612. UN Document S/RES/1612.

¹² Despite the rhetoric of rights talk “welfare-based” approaches have not completely disappeared in Nepal, as seen in approaches to anti-trafficking and child labor. By “welfare-based” I refer to approaches which do not see children as rights-holders, rather as victims deserving of state or NGO relief, charity or the provision of basic needs.

suffered a series of failures across the globe.¹³ Child rights and protection became a useful moral rallying cry and instrument for addressing this crisis. The rise and rise of child protection activity inside humanitarian organizations has also been linked to the increasing use of legal instruments as “the best instrument for securing liberty and empowerment and bringing about social change” (Lee 2009: 7). Alongside this has been an advocacy process that aims to influence the development of international law towards the adoption of a universal under-18 rule, possibly because of the problems of existing international law in this area.¹⁴ The pictorial equivalent of this rising humanitarian concern on child soldiers was seen in the well-known emotive image of an African boy child soldier with an AK-47. Life stories of former child soldiers, such as Ishmael Beah’s bestselling memoirs, also contributed to this image (Beah 2008).

Contradictions in this approach and humanitarian rhetoric are not hard to find, including in the actions of the UK Government who still, legally, recruit 17½ year olds from Nepal (Harvey 2002).¹⁵ Historically child soldiers who served in both World Wars from the UK and other countries have been lionized as “brave young men” and “heroes.” In Africa itself the Day of the African Child on June 16th, now widely celebrated by UNICEF and child protection actors, commemorates a Soweto uprising which involved children and young people participating in a sometimes violent anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. Were the same uprising to take place today, all of those involved would be classified as child soldiers in the widely used 1997 definition formulated in Cape Town.

The Basis of CAAFAG Policy

I will now look at some debatable aspects in planning for the rehabilitation and reintegration of former CAAFAG in Nepal.

¹³ See Lee (2009: 7) for further references. For the failures see Rieff (2003) amongst many books on the topic.

¹⁴ The shift from 15 to 18 as an age of majority for soldiers (as opposed to voters, for example) only entered international law in 1999, with the adoption of a convention of the International Labor Organization on the worst forms of child labor.

¹⁵ See also, http://www.army.mod.uk/documents/general/BGN_RI12_9Criteria_for_Attendance_pdf.pdf. Accessed on 6 September, 2011.

Legal Definitions and the CAAFAG Working Group

A CAAFAG WG was established in Nepal in 2006 in order to coordinate a comprehensive national response on behalf of children associated with armed forces and groups. It comprised two UN agencies (UNICEF, OHCHR), six INGOs (Save the Children Alliance, International Rescue Committee, Search for Common Ground (SFCG), PLAN, CARE, and Transcultural Psychosocial Organization), three NGOs (CWIN, UCEP and Sahara) and the Children as Zones of Peace (CZOP) coalition. ICRC, OXFAM and GTZ participated in meetings as observers, as did UNMIN Child Protection Section. The stated goal of the CAAFAG WG was “To promote durable community reintegration of children associated with armed groups of force, enabling them to resume an active and constructive role in their families, communities and country development.”¹⁶

The WG defined Nepali Children Associated with Armed Forces and Groups in an extraordinarily wide definition. It stated that CAAFAG in Nepal were “all children associated with national Security Forces such as the Police Force (PF), the Armed Force Police (APF) and the National Army (NA), and the CPN-M, and also those arrested or detained because of their association with the CPN-M. It also concerns all children associated with the CPN-M armed movement that comprises different groups and cells such as the Maoist Army, the different Militias, the Student Unions and Cultural Groups, as well as children who have been part of political indoctrination for a while [and] considered at risk of further association.”¹⁷

Problems in International Law

The CAAFAG WG definition of Nepali child soldiers, which was subsequently used by different agencies across the UN Country Team, drew heavily on a set of extra-legal policy guidelines developed by UNICEF and other agencies in 1997 known as the Cape Town Principles. The guidelines are known in full as the *Cape Town Principles and Best Practice of Recruitment of Children into the Armed Forces and the*

¹⁶ From a 2007 power point presentation on “CAAFAG WG, RRR project presentation, nd.”

¹⁷ CAAFAG WG, RRR project presentation, nd. CAAFAG objectives can be summarized in their keywords : advocacy, release, return and reintegration of CAAFAG, sensitization of communities, psychosocial care, reunification, reintegration opportunities either through education, formal or non-formal, or vocational training/livelihood opportunities and reconciliation initiatives.

Demobilization and Social Reintegration of Child Soldiers in Africa. They define a “child soldier” as “any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers, and those accompanying such groups, other than purely as family members. It includes girls recruited for sexual purposes and forced marriage. It does not, therefore, only refer to a child who is carrying or has carried arms” (Cape Town Principles 1997: Preamble).

The Principles are heavily influenced by a reading of the situation of child soldiers in Africa, particularly West African conflicts which had little relevance to the child soldier situation in Nepal.¹⁸ After the Cold War, conflicts in Africa were transformed into resource wars in weak states that used youth and ethnicity as recruiting tools. The extreme violence of the Cold War and its aftermath on the continent caused huge suffering to many young people and children, and international actors often approached the problems of these youth as rescuers, which divorced the problems faced by the youths from their material realities.¹⁹ Those same international actors transposed the problems of African youth on to a very different war in Nepal, through maximalist definitions of child soldiering and overly “protectionist” readings of the CRC (which also drew on existing local “welfare-based” forms of doing child protection) and in subsequent program planning.

Surprisingly, the prohibition on child recruitment of under-18 year olds in international law is not clear cut. This is mainly as a result of defence ministry lawyers of the USA, UK and others who are at war using volunteer armies and who have ensured that instruments of international law (including international humanitarian law, criminal law, labor law and human rights law) equivocate on the age issue (ICRC 1998). Confusingly, international law even permits child recruitment in certain circumstances, but one condition of lawful child recruitment is that it should be “genuinely voluntary” (Optional Protocol 2000: Article 3). International law has little to say on what children’s consent might mean, and definitions of consent in domestic laws are often spread confusingly across national laws.

¹⁸ The Principles may not even have been relevant for the West African communities that they were based on, although this is not my focus.

¹⁹ This definition of the impact of the Cold War on African youths draws heavily on personal communication from Eddie Thomas.

The 1997 Cape Town Principles were developed in response to this lack of legal clarity on child recruitment in international law and as part of the growing focus on “child soldiers.” They now form the standard UN definition of a child soldier, despite their non-existent legal standing. They have been influential in Nepal, and other peace processes, due to their clear under 18 prohibition and the related fact that armed groups often need legitimacy and respectability. Clear public commitments not to violate children’s rights often seem like a good place to start at the beginning of peace processes. The Principles are also useful for Child Protection monitoring work as they help to set out the social and economic conditions in which recruitment and reintegration take place. They recognize the link between recruitment and labor needs in a military economy (Cape Town Principles 1997).²⁰ However the Principles reject recruitment and use of all under 18 year olds unequivocally; pay no attention to the definition of armed conflict; and skirt over the important issue of consent (Thomas 2010: 94, 100). This influential set of principles and definition was used in Nepal to formulate an equally problematic CAAFAG WG definition and subsequent programming plans.

Nepali CAAFAG Definition

Why was the Nepali CAAFAG WG definition problematic? Primarily because it framed an extraordinarily wide definition of children associated with armed forces and groups. It contained a vague last section defining child soldiers recruited into the Maoist movement as including children who joined “...Student Unions and Cultural Groups, as well as children who have been part of political indoctrination for a while [and] considered at risk of further association.” This definition certainly curtailed the rights of association and freedom of expression that children have as well as not taking into account obvious legal complexities over voluntary recruitment and consent.²¹

Several thousand personnel left the Maoist Army informally in 2007 and evidence collected by UNMIN Child Protection Section suggested

²⁰ See the rest of the preamble and Principles 9 and 34 for more on social and economic dimensions.

²¹ In the CRC children have a right to free expression, free association and free public assembly (CRC 1989: Articles 13–15). Adults, especially those with a legal responsibility for children, have a duty to provide children with direction and guidance so that they can exercise these rights – this includes providing direction and guidance that the rights can be exercised safely (CRC 1989: Article 5).

that many of those were under-18 year olds. Here is one example of informal release amongst many found by Child Protection Section: A boy in a hill district joined the Maoist Army in October 2006 when he was 15, attracted by the promise of a Rs 4,000 salary. He entered a cantonment after the CPA. His days included four hours military training and two additional hours weapons training. He did not enjoy the life and asked to go home, but was refused permission. He ran away after three months, and enrolled in school. The divisional commander immediately asked the CPN-M Area In-charge to send him back but he refused, and his parents supported his refusal. CPN-M members frequently invited him to take part in YCL or ANNISU-R activities, but he did not want to get involved in politics again.

During 2007–2008 the CAAFAG WG concentrated on CAAFAG who were outside cantonments. As Thomas writes “Lack of progress on formal release was a factor in the decision of some international and Nepali organizations working with children to seek the release of children involved in a non-military capacity with CPN-M civil organizations, such as the party, the students’ union and the YCL” and subsequently “the Cape Town Principles were invoked in support of this decision....However, applying the Cape Town Principles to all young members of a mass movement that has an armed wing presents many problems” (2010: 101).

As stated some children were undoubtedly forced into joining the Maoist movement. But could “demobilization” of young party volunteers amount to a violation of their rights to freedom of thought, expression, association or assembly, as well as CRC principles on participation?²² UNMIN Child Protection Section interviewed many young adults—particularly aged from 15 to 17—who were part of the Maoist movement in many different capacities and for whom formal demobilization would have been one quick way of removing their rights whilst also generating additional risk and vulnerability.

UNMIN Child Protection Section found evidence that at least two CAAFAG partner NGOs based in the Mid-West and Western regions required children to disavow Maoism in order to receive the benefits of their demobilization program (which included educational subsidies). These NGOs cited a provision in the 2007 Paris Commitments aimed at ensuring that children formerly associated with the military would not be

²² As Thomas (2010) also suggests. See also, CRC 1989: Articles 13, 14 and 15.

used for political purposes by any party” (Thomas 2010: 102).²³ Therefore a wide definition of child soldiering was further expanded by some CAAFAG partners in order to penalize children for exercising their political and civil rights.

The Best Interests Principle

At the core of international policy and planning on child soldiers is Article 3(1) of the CRC, namely the “best interests” principle. The Article provides that “In all actions concerning children...the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.” The Article has been highly influential in child rights policy.²⁴ Alston argues insightfully that the “best interests” principle is one of the most culturally specific Articles in the CRC (1994). It plays an important mediating role between CRC provisions and is one of the organizing umbrella articles of the CRC. However, in Nepal, as elsewhere, the best interests principle was “interpreted as a power of protective adults to over-ride harmful child opinions” and was used to justify overly protectionist applications of the Cape Town Principles and Paris Commitments, amongst other agreements (Thomas 2010: 102). A more flexible and culturally relevant interpretation of Article 3 would have involved using it to marshal positive rights contained in the CRC. One outcome could have been to consult with children and youth about their own best interests and to avoid denials of, say, the right of children to voluntarily protest or attend political gatherings.

UNMIN Child Protection Section’s Approach on Definitions and the Law

International law and agreements on children and armed conflict clearly could not provide a nuanced set of definitions applicable to children affected by armed conflict in Nepal’s context. Our approach also reflected the fact that we met youths each week (mainly from 14 years and older, by 2007–2008, not young children) who had a vast range of different experiences, which were extremely difficult to capture in black and white legal definitions. Many of them existed somewhere along a wide spectrum of affiliation to the Maoist movement, some of which included a military or a criminal element. Activities ranged from listening to a political talk, to armed participation in acts of violence. Some were

²³ See also Paris Commitments 2007: Commitment 13.

²⁴ CRC 1989: Article 3(1). Mentioned also in CRC Articles 9, 18, 20, 21, 37 and 40.

coerced to join; some joined for a livelihood; some to escape or address gender or caste discrimination; some joined for adventure and access to modernity; and some joined as they believed in revolutionary change. 113 CAAFAG in one central region district gave different reasons: about one third joined because of poverty, a third joined after encouragement from children in the militia or Maoist leaders, a quarter made their own decisions with peers, and about 10 percent had been abducted.

UNMIN Child Protection Section attempted to approach some of the problems around the lack of workable definitions in international law, regarding child recruitment,²⁵ in order to capture local complexity and nuance by putting economic, social and political motivations, pressures and affiliations into a human rights framework that took into account both the agency of young people, their evolving capacities as well as the special protections afforded to under-18s in an armed conflict.²⁶ The motivations and pressures on children's lives in Nepal needed to be captured and interpreted in order to monitor recruitment, and what "recruitment" itself meant in a post-conflict context. We based our monitoring on three definitional spectrums, rather than relying solely on strict legal definitional thresholds, as detailed below (from Thomas 2010):

- Instead of legally defined armed forces and armed groups, there was a spectrum running from legally regulated groups to politically recognized groups; to groups of armed people involved in armed disturbances; to groups that are not armed at all, but have active links to armed groups.
- Instead of an act of recruitment, defined in international criminal law, there was a spectrum of affiliation to different sorts of groups, ranging from listening to political talk or cultural programs, to armed participation in acts of violence.
- Sometimes child or youth affiliation to these groups may be voluntary, tolerable, or even a positive part of growing up. Sometimes it is forced, and carries many negative consequences. So UNMIN Child Protection monitoring tried to take account of the spectrum between coercion and consent. International law has relatively little to say about consent, so it was also necessary to look at other definitions, including those in Nepali law.

²⁵ For further details, see Thomas (2010).

²⁶ See Lansdown (2005) for more on evolving capacities.

Our monitoring and reporting did not directly answer difficult program questions but was fed back into CAAFAG WG programming, arguably changing some perceptions and planning in the process. It is difficult to judge UNMIN Child Protection Section’s success in influencing CAAFAG WG members’ views. However, data and field reports from UNMIN Child Protection certainly alerted CAAFAG WG members to the need for special measures for female CAAFAG, to the existence and nature of informal release from cantonments and to other issues, such as the existence of recruitment and re-recruitment of young people by Tarai-based armed groups.

There is also some evidence that UNMIN Child Protection warnings to the CAAFAG WG on the generally older than anticipated age of cantonment-based CAAFAG were listened to. In early 2008 CAAFAG WG partners were asked to update their models for Interim Care Centres (ICCs) which were designed to accommodate some of the disqualified once they had left the cantonments. Previously it has been assumed that actually children would be coming out of cantonments and the ICCs were designed on that basis (with soft toys and a nursery atmosphere). Following the change of policy CAAFAG WG partners learnt that—as with many Nepali CAAFAGs—the children were likely to be young people around the 15–20 year old age bracket, and sometimes have held responsible positions in the Maoist Army. Hence plans were adjusted as the “children” would not have been interested in school child activities, as planned in some ICCs.

Rehabilitation and Reintegration for CAAFAG Female Maoists

As mentioned, one of the most obvious failings in the CAAFAG WG planning for rehabilitation and reintegration was in preparations for female CAAFAG. The Cape Town Principles emphasize the importance of family reunification as “the principal factor in effective social reintegration.”²⁷ Programming of CAAFAG in Nepal was based on an idealistic image of the family as the end solution to child recruitment, and the family as “a private and depoliticized emotional site of social reintegration” (Thomas 2010: 100). This was emphasized in SFCG-produced posters urging children formerly associated with the MM to return home (see the example opposite).²⁸

²⁷ Cape Town Principles 1997: Principle 32. See also Principles 10 and 23.

²⁸ Although SFCG produced the posters they were distributed across Nepal by child protection organizations. A copy of one of the posters can be found at:

For female Maoists “reintegration” sometimes resulted in forced or early marriage and community discrimination – certainly not a reintegration outcome envisaged in the Cape Town Principles or by the Maoists. Yet, evidence for this was hard to find—due to the sensitivity of the topics—



although we did find cases. Affected females included members of hill ethnic groups as well as Brahmin and Chetris.

Girls who joined the movement for a variety of reasons, including liberation from traditional gender roles, were initially encouraged back by the program into the same communities from which they had tried to escape.²⁹ Girl returnees were occasionally able to overcome the additional barriers they faced (of having been away from villages with strange men, of fighting, of being blamed for bringing violence on their communities). I met two former female Maoists child members of a cultural group in a remote VDC in an Eastern hill district. On their return home both had impressed the community and their families by being active in a range of leadership tasks, including in positions in the school and youth club. Before the conflict they had reportedly been very timid and too shy to speak out on issues affecting their welfare. In one central region district a 15 year old Brahmin girl former CAAFAG reportedly returned to school a more outgoing and outspoken girl. These, however, were exceptions and also illustrative of children and young people’s skill at tactical agency.

Outside of their communities, where else did those former Maoist girls from the cantonments or the movement who were identified as “at risk” get demobilized to? The Cape Town Principles rightly say that institutionalization should be a last resort (Principle 32c). The privatization and politicization of the Nepali care home sector also made placing anyone in institutions a very unattractive option. The reality, as

http://www.sfcg.org/programs/nepal/nepal_caafag.html. Accessed on 15 October, 2011.

²⁹ See Pettigrew and Shneiderman (2004) for more on the reasons girls joined the MM.

UNMIN Child Protection documented, was that the YCL operated as a de facto reintegration program for many CAAFAG. The YCL also had difficult relations with CAAFAG reintegration programs in several districts, in part as they claimed to take the lead on reintegrating CAAFAG.

Based on this reality and the large numbers of conflict-affected children who were informally released and scattered across urban centres and remote districts (never becoming part of the fewer than 3,000 inside the cantonments) it was clear to many that no CAAFAG rehabilitation and reintegration program could ever hope to meet the needs of all children affected by the conflict.

UN Programming Approaches

The CAAFAG WG programs of vocational and educational support also benefitted numerous former CAAFAG, particularly when they were adapted to local conditions and sensitive to political realities. IRC programming in hill districts of Eastern Nepal, for example, seemed particularly well-attuned to and well-negotiated with local realities, incorporating a group of local children into educational and vocational training for CAAFAG in one location (as per CAAFAG WG instructions to incorporate other disadvantaged groups) and regularly discussing access issues with the local YCL in another location.

The actual CAAFAG program plans after 2007 became derailed as the Maoist made a policy decision to link child release from the cantonments to long drawn out discussions on security sector reform and other areas of the peace process. At the same time, Nepali Congress Government members, in an incredible misjudgement, attempted to lower Maoist Army morale through delaying payment and other support to the cantonments prior to the 2008 CA elections. By early 2008 our Section estimated that only about 400 CAAFAG who were informally released from the cantonments had joined the UNICEF-led reintegration program, partly as a result of the difficulties CAAFAG WG member organizations had in tracing many former CAAFAG who were, by then, outside the cantonments and often in remote districts or with the YCL.³⁰

³⁰ Internal factsheet on cantonments, payments and discharge for UNMIN Eastern Region. February 2008. Internal UNMIN Child Protection document. The lack of awareness about reintegration programs may also have played a part.

It is my view that in 2007–2008 UNMIN and UNICEF leaderships had very different perspectives on the issue of child soldiers. Neither perspective, in my view, acknowledged the importance of both protection and agency in the CAAFAG. UNICEF and CAAFAG WG partners, were seen as not acknowledging the agency of near-adult soldiers in their reintegration and rehabilitation programming. On the other hand, UNMIN leadership critiqued the CAAFAG program from a perspective which sometimes denied that children in the Maoist Army had any real vulnerability. Many in UNMIN management perceived the child soldiers issue as a political and security concern of unstable near adults who might have joined the YCL and disrupted the peace process and CA election. This perspective sometimes fitted into simplistic thinking regarding violence and demographic youth bulges as well as other fears of young males in post-conflict situations (Boyden 2006). Such perspectives essentially downplayed the real vulnerability and lack of consent of many conflict-affected children, although this viewpoint was not as harmful in terms of policy outcomes as UNICEF or CAAFAG WG programming perspectives.

On the issue of cantonment release UNMIN leadership was seen by other Child Protection organizations as not being adequately committed to formal discharge of minors and late recruits from the cantonments. This was particularly the case after verification numbers had been publicly announced in December 2007. There was arguably no concerted push for release from UNMIN, even in January 2008 when political conditions in Nepal were relatively good. A perfunctory call for release was always made in press statements. More perhaps could have been made of pressure from UN HQ in New York, including in the use of visits by the SRSG for Children and Armed Conflict. Nor was the Joint Monitoring Coordinating Committee (JMCC)³¹ ever used to push for formal discharge despite the fact that the non-release of children was an AMMAA and ceasefire violation. However, to offer a slight defence of UNMIN, the leadership position on cantonment release may have also been because they believed that many of the underage recruits in the

³¹ Set up to assist the parties to implement the 2006 Agreement on the Monitoring of the Management of Arms and Armies.

cantonments were, at least temporarily, safer inside the cantonments than out.³²

I have mentioned some of the problems around reintegration of former CAAFAG and suggested that informal cantonment release was not a wholly positive experience for some. However the principle of the lack of release of the nearly 3,000 verified child recruits (who were mostly adults after long cantonment waits) did matter in law, was also a CPA violation³³ and continual advocacy on it was something UNICEF was mandated to do. Delays in cantonment discharge were mainly a result of Nepal’s stalled political dialogue. However, the differently flawed positions and advocacy adopted by UNICEF and UNMIN also did not assist the process of release. The lack of any real dialogue between the UN, especially the CAAFAG WG, and the Maoists on former CAAFAG issues reduced the possibility of release or other positive child protection outcomes.

Perceptions on the Nature of Child Soldier Recruitment in Nepal

Child Soldiers as Victims/Children without Agency

A key misrepresentation inside the CAAFAG WG and elsewhere was to consider the majority of Maoist recruits, including children and youths, to have been abducted, duped, indoctrinated or otherwise brainwashed into joining.³⁴ From this perspective, which was given a boost by selective interpretations of the 2007 HRW report mentioned earlier, former Maoist children had no agency, were wholly victims and vulnerable. This was a particular representation in some of the Kathmandu media³⁵ and NGOs and was similar—in its denial of agency—to some reactions following the 2008 CA election results (explained well in ICG 2008).³⁶

³² UNMIN policy is not my main focus. UNICEF and the CAAFAG WG had a greater role in rehabilitation and reintegration policy and programming than UNMIN.

³³ CPA 2006: Article 7.6.1 and in AMMAA 2006: 1.1.

³⁴ It seems to have continued, for example in the patronizing, see Dixit (2010). Brainwashing in its literal meaning of taking control over somebody else’s mind is not taken seriously by sociologists studying those most often accused of being brainwashed in New Religious Movements (religious cults). See Barker (1984).

³⁵ It also follows global trends in representations of child soldiers, highlighted above.

³⁶ It is also interesting to contrast these views with perceptions of young people exercising agency to leave Nepal for labor migration, very few of whom are

Several scholars and journalists have provided nuanced analysis and countered simplistic notions around recruitment into the Maoist movement (Kohrt and Maharjan 2009; Evans 2009; Jacquet 2009; Zharkevich 2009a, 2009b). The wider issue of Maoist support and the nature of false consciousness have also begun to be tackled (see, for example, Holmberg, Pettigrew and Tamang 2009 and Shah and Pettigrew 2009).

As stated, one way to represent the complexity of different life histories of children associated with the Maoist movement was to portray their engagement along a spectrum of different associations. Recruitment was usually described as a series of events which related to the particular life story of an individual.³⁷ Amongst former CAAFAG that I met was an obvious difference between children who had been associated with the movement prior to the CPA and others who had joined it (in violation of the CPA) after the 2006 signing. The early recruits tended to stress ideological reasons for joining as well as—occasionally—abduction and peer pressure and typically joined via associated youth groups, student unions and cultural groups. Interestingly Child Protection Officers in UNMIN met one older youth among the early recruits who said he had left a Maoist cantonment site after the CPA as he felt that the culture of internal criticism within the Maoist Army had declined dramatically post-2006. On the other hand, most of the post-CPA recruits were recruited in late 2006 to make up cantonment numbers. We found numerous cases of volunteers and abductees, such as the following example: In a hill district eight Chettri and Magar girls and boys aged between 14 and 15 were recruited to join cantonments in November 2006, all attracted by the promise of Rs 7,000 salaries. All but two subsequently escaped. The majority were motivated not by politics but by the promise of money and a job in the security sector after the supposed integration of the armies. Nearly all of these recruits only lasted several months inside the cantonments, often doing very menial tasks, never handling weapons and waiting for stalled cantonment salary payments. Those that were paid were not paid individually, meaning the Maoist Army divisional commanders could appropriate their share.

portrayed as wholly victims in quite the same way. I thank Erisha Suwal for raising this point.

³⁷ This is somewhat supported by Zharkevich (2009b: 70). Zharkevich (2009a: 17) also stresses the idea of “initiatory calling” experiences.

This second group of late recruits were also the most likely to self-release or be informally released from the cantonments. Amongst this group Child Protection Officers met several children who had demonstrated great ingenuity—which could be termed tactical agency—through subverting their commanders and escaping when had become clear that no payment or job would be forthcoming. Late recruits told us stories of helping each other flee, escaping through sewage pipes, using decoys and other methods. Many of these children exercised choices and showed resilience, often in very uncomfortable situations.

One 16 year old boy who escaped through a sewage pipe was interviewed by Child Protection Officers in late 2007. He joined the movement in 2006 and stated to Child Protection Officers that he had been part of the Maoist campaigning process. He eventually ended up being verified by UN monitors as part of the Maoist Army in a cantonment site escaped when he was told that his father was sick. He missed his old life with the Maoists, particularly the social camaraderie with his friends. The boy feared being captured by the Maoists but, at the same time, wished to rejoin his old life. It appeared that the lack of opportunities in the form of work or training contributed—in 2007—to his boredom and a desire to return to his old life.

It should also be pointed out that the popular idea of a linear progression of children inside the Maoist movement (beginning by attending a one-off political program right up to taking part in direct hostilities) was hardly ever the case in practice. Children entered at different points and sometimes never moved up the supposed linear hierarchy, with the vast majority also remaining out of direct combat roles. Discarding any recognition of agency and reading only victimhood into the different histories of child recruits has, as shown above, been to the detriment of other child rights. The small and precarious capacity for choice that children and youth had in the Nepali conflict and how they sought to exercise those choices—tactical agency—which includes internal subversion was and is very important to recognize (Lee 2009: 25).

Denying Vulnerability

As well as those who stress the victimhood and vulnerability of former CAAFAG in Nepal there are those who deny the existence of vulnerability or think only of it in structural terms. There were Maoist sympathizers writing in English who have taken this view well beyond perspectives inside UNMIN. This includes articles by Li Onesto and

Steven Mikesell published in a collection called *People's Power in Nepal* (2006). Mikesell's article is extremely disturbing in its almost total non-recognition of any problems with child soldiering but it is worth reading as a controversial defence of the right of children to fight for the Maoists. Mikesell essentially justifies the right of children to take up arms due to what he terms the colonizing project of education and development in Nepal alongside deep inequality and the exploitation of rural Nepal.

A more subtle internal Maoist critique of the child soldiers issue reframes the vulnerability of child soldiers as something to be addressed through collective, party-led action as opposed to NGO-led development responses or perspectives based on western/individualist versions of children's rights. As part of this agenda the Maoists also repeatedly highlighted to internationals visiting cantonments the deserving status and need for protection for the children born in the cantonments, conflict-related martyrs (underscored by the fact that the Maoists apparent first martyr in the conflict was a child aged 11, Dil Bahadur Ramtel),³⁸ orphans and the differently abled.

Conclusion

It is difficult to argue, as some did, that better programming would have remedied the problems in the reintegration and rehabilitation programs. As suggested, the large number of conflict-affected children spread over Nepal could have never all been accommodated in an effective rehabilitation or reintegration program. Hence there is a need for serious dialogue—which never happened—with political parties and their youth wings on conflict-affected children and their rights. The intense focus on children and youth inside the cantonments was also to the detriment of the vast majority of conflict-affected children who lay beyond cantonments and beyond the tracing capacity of the CAAFAG program. All of this is also not to deny some positive outcomes for some children and young people from the CAAFAG program, especially when implementing partners adapted programs to local communities.

In looking at the role of legal instruments, the CAAFAG WG, the treatment of female former CAAFAG, policy differences and differing views on the nature of child recruitment in Nepal I have tried to suggest that it was actually possible to recognize the need for both protection and rights in Nepal. Not only would this have been “evidence-based” policy it would also have reflected the balanced principles of the CRC. The CRC's

³⁸ Vishwakarma (2006) is dedicated to Dil Bahadur Ramtel as the first martyr.

emphasis on children’s agency—children exercise their own rights, adults have a duty to support them in the exercise of those rights, taking into account their evolving capacities—has been overtaken by an emphasis on protective concerns.³⁹ Inevitably a hierarchy of rights has developed in the CRC. Assessments of the nuanced ways in which children cope and survive through tactical agency in conflicts like Nepal has been disregarded for a victimizing focus on specific violations against children, particularly child soldier recruitment. To emphasize victimhood for all conflict-affected children in Nepal and then to base programming on it is, as I have argued, to—paradoxically—work against some child rights.

Recruitment of child soldiers would also be a redundant violation if rights enshrined in the CRC and other documents—rights that most children I met in Nepal wanted—could reliably be enforced (Montgomery 2001: 98). An emphasis on one violation arguably assisted in reducing universal welfare provision, so indirectly encouraging the Government and internationals to lessen commitments to other rights (education and health being some examples). These other rights may be more useful to conflict-affected children and if originally fulfilled could have reduced the number of motives for joining the Maoist movement.

Acknowledgements

I am particularly indebted to Eddie Thomas for many contributions, discussions and information. Particular thanks for helpful inputs are also due to Andrew MacGregor, Erisha Suwal, Pauline Limbu, Punita Mandal, Sam Frantz, two anonymous SINHAS reviewers and organizers and attendees at the Conflict, Transition and Possibilities for Peace conference in Kathmandu in July 2010 and the Britain-Nepal Academic Council annual Nepal Study Day in Cambridge in April 2011.

References

- Alston, Philip. 1994. The Best Interests Principle: Towards A Reconciliation of Culture and Human Rights. *International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family* 8(1): 1–25.
- Baker, Rachel and Rachel Hinton. 2001. Approaches to Children’s Work and Right’s in Nepal. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 575(1): 176–193.
- Barker, Eileen. 1984. *The Making of a Moonie: Choice or Brainwashing?* Oxford: Blackwell.

³⁹ Personal communication with Thomas; May 2011.

- Beah, Ishmael. 2007. *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Boyden, Jo. 2006. *Children, War and World Disorder in the 21st Century: A Review of the Theories and the Literature on Children's Contributions to Armed Violence*. Oxford: Department of International Development, University of Oxford.
- Coomaraswamy, Radhika. 2010. The Security Council and Children and Armed Conflict: An Experiment in the Making. Public Lecture, London, 12 April. Available at: <http://www.uel.ac.uk/chrc/documents/12.04.10PublicLecture-HumanRightsCentreLondonUK.pdf>. Accessed on 3 April 2011.
- Dixit, Kanak Mani. 2010. Letter to the Whole-timer. *Himal Southasian* (February). Available at: <http://www.himalmag.com/component/content/article/60.html>. Accessed on 8 August, 2010.
- Evans, Rosalind. 2009. "Innocent Children" or "Frustrated Youth?": The Impact of Political Conflict and Displacement on Bhutanese Refugee Concepts of Childhood and Youth. *Studies in Nepali History and Society* 14(1): 143–178.
- Harvey, Rachel. 2002. Child Soldiers in the UK: Analysis of Recruitment and Deployment Practices of Under-18s and the CRC. Available at: http://www.essex.ac.uk/armedcon/story_id/000029.pdf. Accessed on 8 April, 2011.
- Holmberg, David, Judith Pettigrew and Mukta S. Tamang, eds. 2009. *Views from the Field: Anthropological Perspectives on the Constituent Assembly Elections*. Lalitpur: Social Science Baha.
- Human Rights Watch. 2007. Children in the Ranks: The Maoists' Use of Child Soldiers in Nepal. London: Human Rights Watch. Available at: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2007/02/01/children-ranks-0>. Accessed on 8 August, 2010.
- ICG. 2008. *Nepal's Election: A Peaceful Revolution?* [Asia Report 155(3)]. Kathmandu/Brussels: International Crisis Group.
- ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross). 1998. Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child Concerning Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts: Position of the International Committee of the Red Cross. *International Review of the Red Cross* 322: 107–125.
- Jacquet, Carine. 2009. "One should not Cut the Blossom in the Bud." Voices of Nepalese Child Soldiers. *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research* 33–34: 171–191.
- Kohrt, Brandon A. and Sujen M. Maharjan. 2009. When a Child is No Longer a Child: Nepali Ethnopsychology of Child Development and Violence. *Studies in Nepali History and Society* 14(1): 107–142.
- Lansdown, Gerison. 2005. *The Evolving Capacities of the Child*. New York: UNICEF Innocent Research Centre. Available at: <http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/evolving-eng.pdf>. Accessed on 8 August, 2010.

- Lee, Ah-Jung. 2009. Understanding and Addressing the Phenomenon of “Child Soldiers”: The Gap Between the Global Humanitarian Discourse and the Local Understandings and Experiences of Young People’s Military Recruitment (*RSC Working Paper Series 52*). Oxford: Department of International Development, University of Oxford.
- Machel, Graça. 1996. *UN Study on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*. New York: United Nations.
- Mikesell, Stephen. 2006. Thoughts on Why the Children of Nepal Would Join the Revolution. In *People’s Power in Nepal*. R.K. Vishwakarma, ed., pp. 53–58. Delhi: Manak Publications Pvt. Ltd.
- Montgomery, Heather. 2001. Imposing Rights? A Case Study of Child Prostitution in Thailand. In *Culture and Rights: Anthropological Perspectives*. Jane K. Cowan, Marie-Benedicte Dembour and Richard A. Wilson, eds. pp. 80–101. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Onesto, Li. 2006. Why Revolution is Good for the Children of Nepal. In *People’s Power in Nepal*. R.K. Vishwakarma, ed., pp. 19–29. Delhi: Manak Publications Pvt. Ltd.
- Pettigrew, Judith and Sara Shneiderman. 2004. Women and the Maobaadi: Ideology and Agency in Nepal’s Maoist Movement. *Himal Southasian* (January). Available at: <http://www.himalmag.com/component/content/article/4272-women-in-the-maobaadi-ideology-and-agency-in-nepals-maoist-movement.html>. Accessed on 8 August, 2010.
- Pupavac, Vanessa. 2001. Misanthropy Without Borders: The International Children’s Rights Regime. *Disasters* 25(2): 95–112.
- Rieff, David. 2003. *A Bed for the Night: Humanitarianism in Crisis*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Shah, Alpa and Judith Pettigrew. 2009. Windows into a Revolution: Ethnographies of Maoism in South Asia. *Dialectical Anthropology* 33: 225–251.
- Thomas, Edward. 2010. Between War and Peace: Monitoring Guidelines for Child Soldiers in Nepal’s Peace Process. *Journal of Human Rights Practice* 2(1): 93–121.
- UNICEF. 1997. *Cape Town Principles and Best Practices of Recruitment of Children into the Armed Forces and the Demobilization and Social Reintegration of Child Soldiers in Africa*. New York: United Nations.
- UNICEF. 2007. Paris Commitments and Principles on Ending the Use of Child Soldiers. Instrument on Implementation to Field Missions. Unpublished Ms.
- UNSC (United Nations Security Council). 2008. Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict in Nepal. UN Document S/2008/259 (18 April, 2008).
- Vishwakarma, R.K., ed. 2006. *People’s Power in Nepal*. Delhi: Manak Publications Pvt. Ltd.

- Zharkevich, Ina. 2009a. *Becoming a Maoist in a Time of Insurgency: Youth in Nepal's "People's War."* MPhil diss., University of Oxford.
- Zharkevich, Ina. 2009b. A New Way of Being Young in Nepal: The Idea of Maoist Youth and Dreams of a New Man. *Studies in Nepali History and Society* 14(1): 67–105.