



# HATEYMALO ACCOMPANIMENT PROGRAMME

ICRC'S COMPREHENSIVE PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT  
PROGRAMME TO THE FAMILIES OF MISSING PERSONS IN NEPAL

2010-2016

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS  
KATHMANDU, NEPAL



ICRC



**ICRC**

International Committee of the Red Cross  
GPO Box: 21225, Meen Bhawan, Naya Baneshwor  
Kathmandu, Nepal  
**T** +977 1 4107285 / 4107279  
**F** +977 1 4107137  
**E-mail** [kathmandu@icrc.org](mailto:kathmandu@icrc.org) **www** [www.icrc.org](http://www.icrc.org)  
© ICRC, August 2016

# FOREWORD

Countless families of missing persons, having already endured years of constant anguish and despair, still wait for news about their loved ones. Without such news, the fates of their relatives hang in the balance and the lack of closure remains a harsh daily reality. Even decades after the disappearances, the distress of these families continues to hinder their ability, as individuals, families, and communities, to move on to rehabilitation and reconciliation. The uncertainty in which they live is the source of much suffering, suffering so extreme it leads to emotional exhaustion and creates lasting emotional scars. Not knowing what happened to a parent, spouse, or child and not being able to give him or her a dignified last rite or mourn his or her passing at a gravesite places an intolerable burden on these families.

In accordance with the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has a mandate to assist and protect victims of conflict and other situations of violence. In Nepal, over 1,300 people disappeared during the nation's ten years of armed conflict (1996-2006). The ICRC continues to help families of the missing that have not yet received a conclusive answer about the fate of their missing loved ones to fulfil their right to know. In 2010, the ICRC initiated a community-based Programme called "Accompanying the Families of Missing Persons" to assist them in mitigating the multifaceted difficulties they face. Since July 2010, this programme, known as Hateymalo Accompaniment Programme (hereafter as Hateymalo - a Nepali term that stands for joining the hands together), has assisted 7,965 individuals from the families of 1,295 missing persons (over 90% of the total missing cases) in 46 districts by providing them with psychological, sociocultural, economic, informational, and legal support. The Programme was implemented in partnership with local non-government organizations and the Nepal Red Cross Society district chapters and national headquarters. The Heifer International and the National Network of Families of the Missing and Disappeared (NEFAD) played important roles as collaborative partners: they provided resources and solidarity throughout the Hateymalo.

The Hateymalo covered the families in five consecutive phases, beginning with a pilot phase in Bardiya District and ending with a fourth expansion into remote districts. Two external evaluations were conducted to better understand the process and outcomes of the Programme as well as to adjust its implementation strategy in successive phases. This report provides a comprehensive description of the Hateymalo. It includes discussions of the needs of the families of the missing, the original design of the programme and later adaptations made to its strategy of implementation, mobilization of resources, various partnerships, outcomes, and key lessons learnt. While the Hateymalo did require a considerable outlay of financial and human resources, it undoubtedly brought about a consistent and sustainable improvement in the quality of life and wellbeing of families of missing persons. There is no question that Hateymalo's family-driven community-based approach was effective. It enhanced families' capacity to cope with the anguish and uncertainty induced by disappearances; helped restore functionality at the individual, family and community levels; and significantly reduced levels of distress.

The courage, persistence, and dignity of the families of the missing as they struggle to ascertain the fates of their loved ones and ease their own suffering command our admiration and respect. As their right to know has not yet been fulfilled, the ICRC continues to advocate for and provide the best possible support to them as they seek answers.

The ICRC mission in Nepal is grateful to all the implementing and collaborating partners for their invaluable support in executing this Programme. It appreciates the devotedness and dedication of the Hateymalo and the ICRC team in implementing the Hateymalo. It also thanks the headquarters-based ICRC team for its constant support for this meaningful intervention in Nepal.

**Andre Paquet**  
**Head of Mission**  
**Nepal**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ten-year armed conflict in Nepal (1996-2006) brought tragedy to over 1300 families of disappeared persons. Out of the 3,237 individuals recorded by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) as having disappeared during the conflict, the fate and whereabouts of 1,902 (58.75%) persons have been established so far. Over 1,300 families are still uncertain about the fates of their loved ones, but the ICRC continues to help them find the information they have a right to have and to mitigate the multifaceted difficulties they face.

In 2008, the ICRC carried out a study on the situation and problems of the families of missing persons (FoM). The results revealed that 64% of FoM wanted to know the whereabouts of their missing family member. About 62% sought economic support and 29% demanded justice. Many FoM wished to be recognized by society, and some, mainly women, reported that they experienced difficulties in their families and communities. Most of the families interviewed stated that they had suffered adverse mental, social, and physical impacts due to the disappearances.

In response to the results, the ICRC provided interim relief and vocational support to FoM and acted as a neutral and independent body to bring answers to them. Over the years, it built a consolidated list of all the missing persons nationwide and maintained regular contact with and proximity to FoM. The lack of adequate services for FoM to meet their needs motivated the ICRC to initiate a comprehensive and multidisciplinary response. In line with the accompaniment framework of its global strategy, which aims to provide comprehensive and multidisciplinary support to FoM, in 2010 the Nepal delegation launched a pilot phase of its own accompaniment Programme, the Hateymalo, in Bardiya District. This programme addressed the needs of 267 FoM. After six years (July 2010 to March 2016), the Hateymalo had reached and supported 1,295 FoM from 46 districts of Nepal, making contact with 7,965 individuals living in 1,350 households (some FoM lived in more than one household).

To promote the mental health of FoM, the Hateymalo arranged for support groups for the wives, mothers, fathers, brothers, and/or sisters of missing persons. This arrangement constituted the core of its multi-faceted interventions and was supplemented by individual consultations and referrals for severe cases. Theoretical and practical training in life skills, stress management and coping strategies were also integral to the mental health aspect of the Hateymalo's response. The ICRC used support groups and individual consultations to interact and communicate with FoM about its follow-up efforts on securing their right to know the fate and whereabouts of their missing relatives. Twenty individuals with severe mental health problems received support and medication at hospitals. Sixty-five families (4.86% of 1,335 cases) received first-hand information about the deaths and burial sites of their loved ones by meeting eyewitnesses of the events. The administrative problems of FoM, such as receiving official papers for birth registration and citizenship, were addressed through accompaniment and the persuasion of government officials.

In order to address FoM's need for closure, Seventy four culturally appropriate commemoration ritual services were held and the same number of monuments were constructed in public spaces at the district level. The fact that more than 13,000 people participated in these commemorative events helped FoM build solidarity with each other, promoted community reunification, and reduced the stigma associated with disappearance.

Activities such as public gatherings, art events, street theatre, and interactions with local leaders on the challenges faced by FoM effectively reduced social stigma and fostered public support for FoM. In partnership with the Heifer International, the Hateymalo provided direct assistance in the form of goats and pigs and training in livestock management and kitchen gardening. Families also received information on the support available to them from various institutions, thereby enabling them to benefit from referrals related to their health, education for children, and economic needs.

The implementation of Hateymalo Programme involved preparation, capacity-building, monitoring, supervision, and evaluation. Every activity was implemented with the intention of securing its sustainability. Preparatory steps included contextualized needs assessment, the development

of partnership guidelines, and an assessment of the resources available at the local level. Partnerships with eight local NGOs and 26 local branches of the Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) were formed. Two hundred and forty staff were recruited and capacitated. While selecting companions, relatives of missing persons were given priority (47 out of the total 124 were themselves from FoM) to ensure close proximity to FoM, enhance ownership of the programme, and empower members of FoM. Two external evaluations, one carried out in 2011 and one 2014, helped Hateymalo managers understand the development and outcomes of the programme and adapt the its implementation strategy.

As a result of the Hateymalo, FoM were able to interact directly with the ICRC about its follow-up on their right to know as well as its efforts in clarifying the fates of their loved ones. A total of 179 FoM received official answers about the whereabouts of their loved ones. About 89% of the total active cases were oriented to the legal and administrative procedures they needed to manage their difficulties either through direct assistance or through the mobilization of other actors through referrals. Out of the total active cases, 47% of FoM resolved their administrative and legal problems. Altogether 1,112 FoM, including 300 economically vulnerable women, received economic assistance and developed skills in micro-economic initiatives. Furthermore, 862 neighbours of FoM who themselves were poor received assistance in the form of Heifer's Passing-on-the-Gift programme. In addition, 301 individual family members received long-term vocational training through referrals which ultimately provided them with employment opportunities.

By providing comprehensive and multidisciplinary support, the Hateymalo helped to reduce the psychological distress of 1,442 family members by 47% as compared to the baseline values. Family members got more social support and their daily functioning increased. Levels of individual distress, recorded in terms of anxiety, depression, and psychosomatic complaints declined greatly over the course of the Programme. Altogether 262 out of 998 women and 44 out of 452 men recovered from a pathological level of anxiety-related symptoms. Likewise, 300 women out of 998 and 47 men out of 452 no longer were clinically depressed. Psychosomatic complaints among 331 of 998 women and 35 men out of 452 also fell below the pathological level due to the programme. A recent follow-up with 180 women beneficiaries from Bardiya four years after the programme had closed in that district found that their mean distress level was close to that recorded at the end of the implementation stage. These results signify that the outcomes of the Hateymalo were impressive and that they were sustained even after the Hateymalo had come to a close.

# LIST OF ACRONYMS

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| FGDs                | Focus group discussions   |
| HAP                 | Hateymalo Accompaniment Programme ( HAP)  |
| HHs                 | Households  |
| IASC                | Inter-Agency Standing Committee   |
| ICRC                | International Committee of the Red Cross  |
| MHPSS               | Mental health and psychosocial support  |
| n                   | Number  |
| NGO                 | Non-governmental organization   |
| NRCS                | Nepal Red Cross Society   |
| Passing-on-the-Gift | Heifer International stipulates that families that receive resources (a gift) must pass on that gift, whether it be in the form of the offspring of livestock, agricultural input, or knowledge and skills, to other families in need in their community. |
| Right-to-know       | Right-to-know about the fate and the whereabouts of missing persons   |
| VDC                 | Village development committee   |

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>   | 2  |
| 1. OVERVIEW: THE ISSUE OF DISAPPEARANCES AND THE NEEDS OF FOM IN NEPAL                                   | 6  |
| 2. RATIONALE BEHIND THE HATEYMALO ACCOMPANIMENT PROGRAMME  | 8  |
| 3. PROGRAMME DESIGN AND COMPONENTS   | 9  |
| 3.1 Programme Design   | 9  |
| 3.2 Components of the Programme  | 9  |
| 4. GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE AND DISTRIBUTION OF BENEFICIARIES   | 11 |
| 5. PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION   | 12 |
| 6. RESULTS OF THE PROGRAMME  | 13 |
| 6.1.0 Results of Programme Activities  | 13 |
| 6.1.1 Mental Health and Psychosocial Support   | 13 |
| 6.1.2 Right-To-Know Support  | 16 |
| 6.1.3 Legal and administrative Support   | 16 |
| 6.1.4 Economic Support   | 17 |
| 6.1.5 Quantitative MHPSS Results   | 18 |
| 6.1.6 Improvements among beneficiaries exhibiting high level of symptoms                                 | 19 |
| 6.1.7 Comparative Analysis of the Beneficiaries of the pilot phase from 2010-2016                        | 20 |
| 7. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNT  | 22 |
| <b>ANNEXES</b>   | 24 |
| <b>Annex 1.</b> Hateymalo Programme Partners   | 24 |
| <b>Annex 2.</b> Key Results  | 25 |
| <b>Annex 3.</b> Progression of the Hateymalo Accompaniment Programme and its Geographical Coverage       | 26 |
| <b>Annex 4.</b> Distribution of Families of Missing Persons in Nepal as of 2016 (based on the enquirers) | 27 |

## List of Tables

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>Table 1:</b> Segregated data on the total beneficiaries | 12 |
|--|----|

## List of Figures

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>Figure 1:</b> Needs of the families of missing persons in Nepal                                | 7  |
| <b>Figure 2:</b> Adapted pyramid for Hateymalo Programme based on the IASC's guidelines for MHPSS | 9  |
| <b>Figure 3:</b> Total number of members in various support groups in each phase                  | 14 |
| <b>Figure 4:</b> Number of families that attended right-to-know meetings facilitated by the ICRC  | 17 |
| <b>Figure 5:</b> Percentage of beneficiaries who benefited from different economic opportunities  | 18 |
| <b>Figure 6:</b> Overall improvement in key variables of psychological distress                   | 19 |
| <b>Figure 7:</b> Improvements among individuals with scores above the cutoffs                     | 19 |
| <b>Figure 8:</b> Trends in psychological distress in Bardiya District 2010-2016                   | 20 |

# 1. OVERVIEW: THE ISSUE OF DISAPPEARANCES AND THE NEEDS OF FOM IN NEPAL

The decade-long internal armed conflict in Nepal (1996-2006) resulted in tragedy for many families. Thousands of people were killed and over 1,300 individuals remain unaccounted for, leaving their families still seeking information about their fates or whereabouts. From the outset of the conflict, the ICRC actively collected information regarding allegations of disappearances and arrests. The families of 3,228 people reported to the ICRC or the NRCS that a relative had gone missing at the hands of one of the parties to the conflict, either the Nepal Army or the People's Army. The fates and whereabouts of only 2,458 (64.77%) of those reported missing have been established so far.

As provided for by international human rights and humanitarian laws, families have the right to know the fates and whereabouts of their missing relatives. If their relatives are dead, families have the right to know the circumstances of their deaths and places of burial, if that information is known. The ICRC continues to help Nepali FoM to get information on the fates of their missing loved ones and to mitigate the multifaceted difficulties they face.

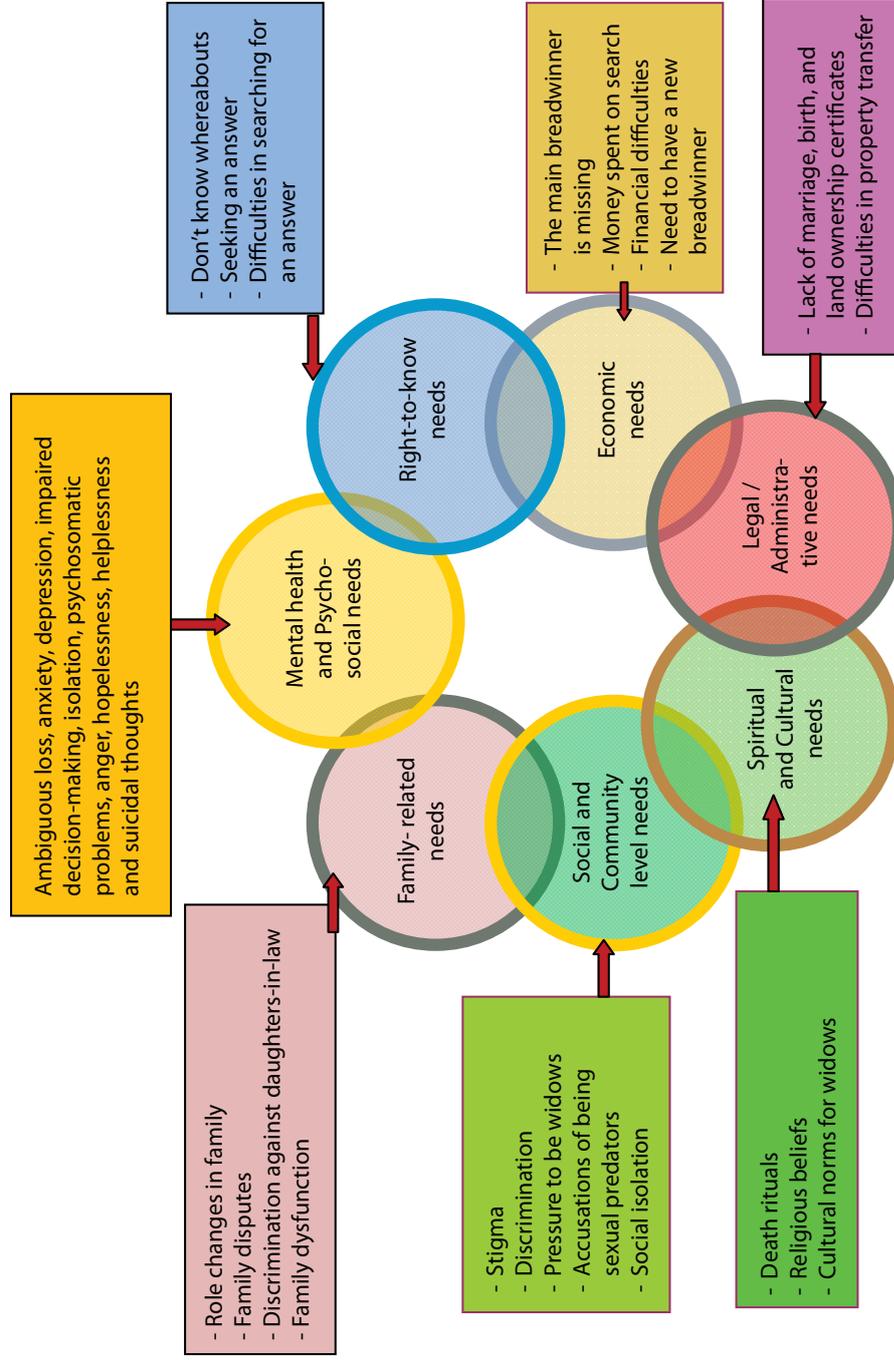
In 2008, the ICRC conducted a study of the situation and problems of FoMs. The study report, published in 2009, revealed that the needs of families differed depending upon family circumstances, education, and economic conditions. The main needs FoM identified were the need for an answer about the fate of their missing loved one (64%), economic support (62%), and justice (29%). Many FoM wished to be recognized, and some, mainly women, reported that they experienced difficulties in their families and communities. Most of the families interviewed stated that they suffered due to the adverse mental, social, and physical impacts of the disappearances.

Altogether 83% of the families reported that they need a dead body or evidence of death to perform the missing person's final rites. Ninety percent of the missing are men, meaning that elderly parents, wives and children have lost their main bread winner and been rendered economically vulnerable. Many of the families reported that they had faced economic hardship before their losses and that the disappearances of their relatives had exacerbated that hardship. Many families reported that they had either no land at all or a very small area of land. They lived in small houses—if they had one at all—and their sources of income were limited and unsustainable. Children who had lost their fathers reported that they were often discriminated against by other children and lacked guardianship during crucial periods in their lives.

Uncertainty about the fate of a relative can, if not treated properly, result in the development of many symptoms of distress, including feelings of guilt, self-blame, and anger; loss of interest in important areas of life; intra-family disputes; and even suicidal thoughts. Such distress may eventually manifest itself as depression, anxiety disorder, or psychosomatic problems, which can severely affect the wellbeing of the families.

Almost all members of FoM are stigmatized, but wives are particularly so. Society expects them to behave and dress as widows, but they are unwilling to do so. Since the wives of missing persons cannot inherit their husband's property and going back to their parents' homes is not culturally or economically acceptable, wives often lose their position within the family and are perceived merely as an extra mouth to feed. The needs assessment found that the psychosocial needs of such women were extreme. The children of missing parents also had problems, including poor concentration at school and on work; intrusive thoughts about the missing person; and feelings of guilt, and self-blame. Children lost their guardians and family support. Intensive questions and comments regarding the disappearances; discrimination by peers, teachers and community members; and teasing by and isolation from peers contributed to these children's emotional distress.

The needs of families are summarized in the following diagram.



**Figure 1:** Needs of the families of missing persons in Nepal

## 2. RATIONALE BEHIND THE HATEYMALO ACCOMPANIMENT PROGRAMME

After it had assessed the needs of Nepali FoM, the ICRC advocated for the need for answers, interim relief, and vocational support for FoM and lobbied for establishing a neutral and independent mechanism to find answers. Because the ICRC had, over the ten years of conflict, made a nation wide consolidated list of missing persons and established regular contact with and proximity to families and because there was a lack of services exclusively targeted to meet the needs of FoM, the ICRC initiated a comprehensive and multidisciplinary response in line with the accompaniment framework of its global strategy to provide holistic support to FoM. Its response was in line with the Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC) guideline on mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) in emergency settings, which recommends a multidisciplinary, multilayered approach.

Hateymalo programme reflected the ICRC's philosophy of accompaniment and was built upon long standing approaches to MHPSS that use both peer support and para-professionals from families and the wider community. The programme mobilized Nepali psychologists, counselors, and para-professionals, an approach which, instead of directly replicating Western MHPSS approaches, respected and nurtured community-driven, bottom-up, and culturally relevant approaches. Networking with local actors, both governmental and non-governmental; sensitizing them to the needs of families; and using referrals to link families to available resources were appropriate approaches. The resource mobilization process was especially successful in helping families meet their needs.

In 2010, the ICRC launched a pilot phase of Hateymalo programme in Bardiya District, which had more missing persons (276 Missing Persons) than any other of Nepal's 75 districts. The selection and capacity-building of grassroots organizations and local chapters of the NRCS were appropriate and relevant, and these local bodies were able to provide families with strong support and sustain the learning of programme.

# 3. PROGRAMME DESIGN AND COMPONENTS

## 3.1 Programme Design

Hateymalo aimed to mitigate the debilitating consequences of having a loved one missing by providing families with psychological, familial, socio-cultural, economic, legal, and administrative support as well as by restoring the dignity, wellbeing, and functionality of family members at the individual, family, community, and district levels. An in-depth, specific, socio-cultural, and structural assessment was conducted after the initial assessment. During the pilot phase of the programme, focus group discussions were held with beneficiary groups (the wives, fathers and mothers of missing persons) as well as with representatives from the political, social, ethnic, and spiritual leaders of Bardiya District to determine the contextual and culture-specific needs of FoM.

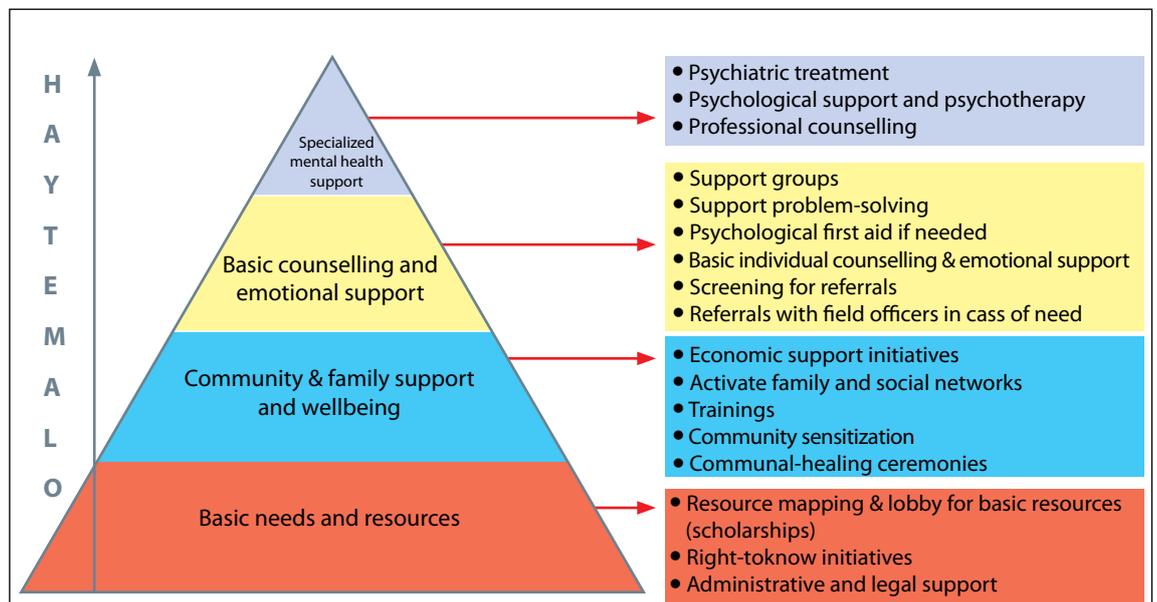


Figure 2: Adapted pyramid for Hateymalo programme based on the IASC's guidelines for MHPSS

## 3.2 Components of the Programme

By establishing support groups as the core component of its multi-faceted interventions, Hateymalo programme helped families cope with the mental, physical and social challenges of having a loved one missing. It also aimed to identify new connections and resources which would enable families to move ahead in life. In addition, the programme emphasized building solidarity networks which included other local service providers and mobilizing these networks to provide families with various types of assistance, primarily economic, legal, and administrative.

Through support groups and individual counselling, families received MHPSS; economic, legal, and administrative advice about their right to know; and therapeutic support. The economic support component of the programme was designed and implemented together with Heifer International<sup>1</sup>. Accompaniers, under the supervision of trained psychosocial counsellors, functioned as key persons in providing emotional support to and connecting families with local resources through community mobilization. A summary of the activities conducted under each component of the programme follows.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.heifernepal.org/> provides the names of the districts and dates of its collaboration with Hateymalo programme as per their memorandum of understanding as well as details on the technical and financial support Heifer provided.

| Component                              | Activities   |
|--|--|
| Mental health and Psychosocial support | Focus groups for the mothers, wives, and fathers of missing persons  |
|  | Individual counselling for selected persons  |
|  | Psycho-education on stress and coping  |
|  | Life skills training for adolescents   |
|  | Consultation, referral, and support for mental health  |
| Family support                         | Information sessions   |
|  | Referral to organizations specializing in mediation  |
| Spiritual and Cultural support         | Construction of commemorative public spaces, community buildings, and water supply systems   |
|  | Commemorative rituals (activities of worship and family solidarity picnics).   |
| Social and Community support           | Community-sensitization activities (street theater, art exhibitions)   |
|  | Community gatherings and interactions  |
|  | Mobilization of community leaders and local organizations  |
|  | District-level workshops and interactions  |
| Economic support                       | Distribution of livestock, seeds, and/or financial support for income generation   |
|  | Training in the cornerstone principles of Heifer International; effective livelihoods, both on- and off-farm; and kitchen gardening  |
|  | Group sustainability training (cooperative management) and exposure visits   |
|  | Passing-on-the-gift (formation of groups, training, and ceremonies).   |
| Legal and Administrative support       | Information about and orientation to legal provisions and administrative processes   |
|  | Accompaniment through the processes of accessing administrative and legal rights (obtaining legal documents, certificates, interim relief, scholarships, social security funds, citizenship etc.)                              |
|  | Support for access to free health check-ups medication.  |
|  | Study and dissemination of civil legal issues related to Nepali FoM and other stake holders, including authorities   |
| Right to Know                          | Dissemination of information to families about their rights and procedures regarding the whereabouts of their missing loved ones through the International Day of the Disappeared and publication of a list of missing persons |
|  | Follow up on individual cases of missing persons through family visits and follow-up group meetings  |
|  | Support to family associations at the local and national levels  |

The evaluation of the Hateymalo intervention during the pilot phase confirmed that the concept of “ambiguity of loss”<sup>2</sup> developed by psychologist Pauline Boss<sup>3</sup>, worked as a therapeutic intervention to address the uncertainty induced in Nepali FoM by the disappearances of their loved ones. The ambiguous loss model of intervention uses the following six guidelines:

- a) Finding meaning in the loss,
- b) Developing a sense of control over life,
- c) Constructing a new identity,
- d) Normalizing ambivalence,
- e) Revising attachments, and
- f) Discovering hope.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.ambiguousloss.com/about\\_ambiguous\\_loss.php](http://www.ambiguousloss.com/about_ambiguous_loss.php)

<sup>3</sup> Boss, P. (2006). Loss, trauma, and resilience: Therapeutic work with ambiguous loss. WW Norton & Company.

A second evaluation in 2014 covered all the phases of the programme and concluded that its global effect on the beneficiaries was significant and positive. It found that the group members of two-thirds of all support groups were still meeting on monthly basis, that the savings-and-credit initiatives introduced by the programme were still functioning well, and that members of women's support groups were represented in their social institutions. These are remarkable results, ones that demonstrate that the support to the families was sustainable.

## 4. GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE AND DISTRIBUTION OF BENEFICIARIES

The over 1,300 families listed in the ICRC's list of missing persons are spread across 69 of Nepal's 75 districts. In the last six years, the Programme reached and supported 7,965 individuals (2,265 males, 2,770 females, and 2,972 children) living in 1,350 households. Altogether, the Hateymalo programme served 1,295 families from 46 out of 69 districts with FoM in Nepal. A detailed distribution of families and coverage is found in annexes 3 and 4.

| Expansion phase | No. of districts | No. of families | No. of HHs  | Total population |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------|
| Pilot           | 1                | 267             | 267         | 1777             |
| First           | 9                | 326             | 349         | 1969             |
| Second          | 6                | 121             | 125         | 653              |
| Third           | 11               | 256             | 282         | 1770             |
| Fourth          | 19               | 325             | 327         | 1796             |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>46</b>        | <b>1295</b>     | <b>1350</b> | <b>7965</b>      |

*Table 1: Segregated data on the total beneficiaries*

## 5. PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The assessment report on the needs of the families indicated that there were neither enough human resources nor enough technical capacity to respond to the comprehensive needs of the families at the district level. To ensure that support would be sustained after the completion of the Programme, the ICRC partnered with grassroots NGO sand district chapters of the NRCs (for a detailed list of partners, see Annex1). The ICRC also built the capacities of the accompaniers and staff members of its partners in programmatic and technical aspects of the MHPSS. Capacity-building training focused on conducting assessments (psychological assessments of individuals and a household survey); providing basic emotional support to women, children and older persons; teaching the skills required to implement community-based psychosocial interventions; resource identification and mobilization; the establishment and facilitation of groups; and the delivery of the skills FoM need to sustain their support groups. Heifer International delivered training in value-based development concepts and livelihood intervention.

In each aspect of the programme's implementation, the ICRC provided supervision, mentoring, and coaching to Hateymalo staff and implementing partners. Supervision focused on the application of skills learnt during training and comprised record keeping in various formats, attending support groups, and observing other activities in the field. Monthly meetings were the platform through which the benchmarks of planned activities were reviewed, methods of implementation discussed, gaps and challenges identified, and solutions sought. Challenging individual cases and difficulties in providing support were discussed separately during peer supervision of counsellors. The ICRC facilitated and supported the MHPSS team in formulating monthly plans of activities, a process which helped the team to set priorities and achieve outcomes in each stage of the programme.

Two external evaluations were carried out by evaluators deployed by ICRC Headquarters. In 2011, the evaluation of the pilot phase programme in Bardiya outlined the positive and significant impact of Hateymalo programme on the lives of individual beneficiaries. It found that Hateymalo programme had reduced the distress resulting from the ambiguous loss and enhanced functionality at the individual, family, and social levels.



Training for the staff at Nagarkot.

# 6. RESULTS OF THE PROGRAMME

## 6.1.0 Results of Programme Activities

### 6.1.1 *Mental Health and Psychosocial Support*

Support groups were the primary instrument for addressing emotional and psychological issues. These groups also sought to empower women and men to counter the challenges they faced in their families and communities. The support groups were intended to end isolation, create a forum for emotional sharing, and permit women to universalize their experiences. The themes covered by support groups were as follows:



Introduction and ground rules



The roles and functions of women and men in a family



Living with ambiguity: how ambiguity affects our minds, bodies, behaviours, and relationships, and how we cope



Remembering missing persons in a positive way, as they were when they were alive



Personal tributes to the missing shared in groups



Group tribute to the missing (commemorating loved ones)



Support systems and resources in the community



Closing of Support Group



Support Group Meeting in Ramechhap.



Women Support Group from Banke.

Each support group consisted of 8-12 members of the wives, mothers, or fathers of the missing. Support groups met every 7-10 days to cover the eight primary sessions listed above. These sessions aimed to build connections among family members and create a safe space in which they could use structured discussions to construct positive meanings from their experiences. Wherever possible, groups were organized for wives, mothers, and fathers separately; however, mixed support groups were also conducted in districts with few FoM.

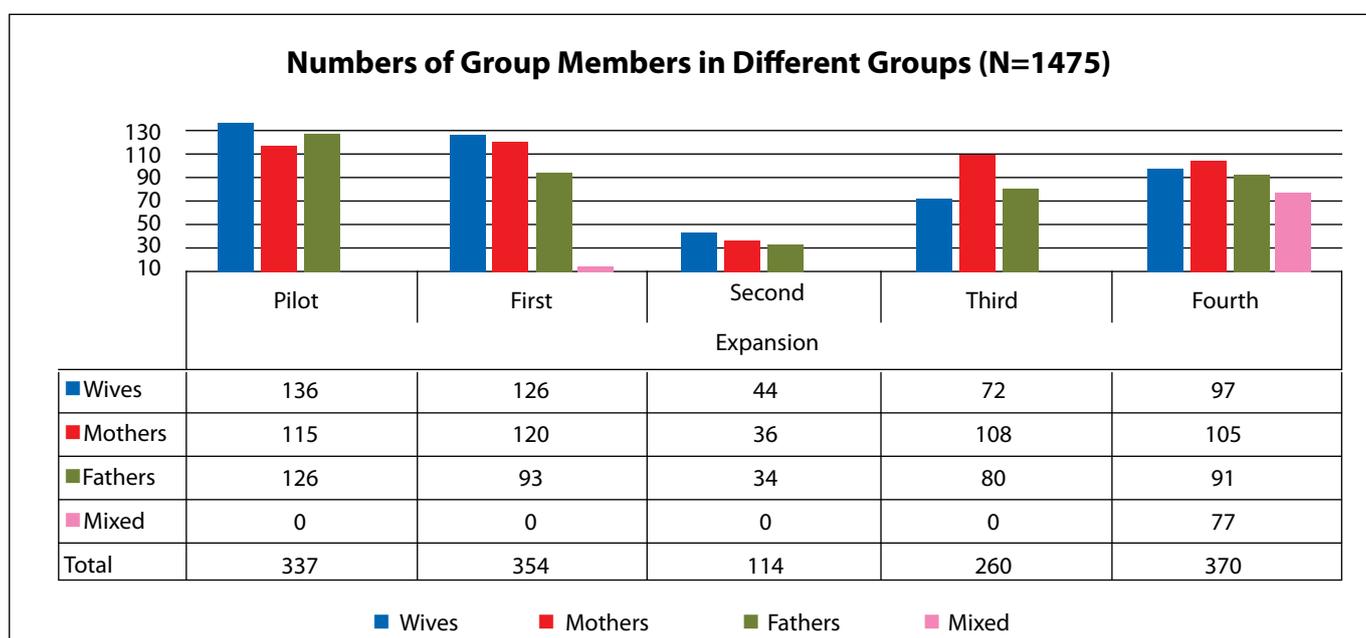
Altogether, 477 spouses, 477 fathers, and 484 mothers of missing persons participated in 182 support groups. Psychosocial counsellors provided individual counselling support and problem-solving counselling to 316 individuals who were distressed variously by the disappearances of loved ones, family conflict, social pressure, stigmatization, and/or discrimination.

Altogether 312 children of missing persons from 30 districts participated in a four-day long residential life skills training Programme to enhance their social and interpersonal skills,

communication skills, assertiveness, and empathy. The training also enabled them to build their cognitive skills in areas like problem-solving, decision-making, and critical thinking as well as their emotional coping and self-reflection skills.

Twenty individuals (0.26% of the total beneficiaries) were referred to advanced levels of psychiatric care and treatment provided at the hospital at the B.P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences in Dharan, Kohalpur Medical College in Nepalgunj, the Western Regional Hospital in Pokhara, and the Mental Hospital in Lalitpur. The programme covered the costs of the initial assessment, medical examination, and psychiatric consultation and reimbursed the two-way costs of travel, accommodation, and food incurred by both the patient and his or her caretaker.

A total of 150 family-level psycho-education sessions were held in families showing certain dysfunctional patterns. These gave 876 family members the chance to engage in open communication and to better understand and support each other. Thirty-five exposure visits were organized for 1,321 family members so they could interact, learn, and



**Figure 3:** Total number of members in various support groups in each phase



Life skills training for Adolescents in Dhading.

understand the concepts of self-help and family support from families in other districts. Hateymalo also organized sessions to provide information on the resources available at the local and district levels to address various family needs.

“Family” was introduced as a theme in the fathers’ support groups. Fathers’ support groups organized 58 family unity picnics for 4,095 participants. Forty-five Passing-on-the-Gift events were attended by over 2,000 participants. These enhanced family care and communications. Families also received vocational training and physical health facilities arranged through locally managed referrals. Altogether 188 individuals received health care free of cost and 301 individuals benefited from three-to-six-month-long vocational training in various occupations.

In order to reduce the stigmatization and marginalization that FoM faced, three different types of activities targeting different groups were conducted. First, street theatre focused on generating awareness at large. Second, in some locations, exhibitions of school children’s art work were combined with street theatre to sensitize entire communities. Third, meetings were held with stake holders and authorities to secure their support at the VDC level. Similar activities were organized at the district level to sensitize and increase support from district-level government and non-government offices. Over the course of the Programme, 269 village-level events sensitized more than 20,000 people from 46 districts. Forty-three district-level Programme orientation events were also held. At the end of the programme, 42 events were organized at the district level to express gratitude to stakeholders and share the outcomes of the programme.

Support group members carried out activities of worship in 15 places. The majority of mothers wished to conduct rituals in the memory of their sons. Fifty-nine public structures, including water wells, pillars, gates, waiting areas and temples were constructed in the name of missing persons in 39 districts. These spaces were inaugurated in the presence of governmental, non-governmental, political and social leaders. Altogether 74 commemorations and events of worship were organized and 13,820 people attended them. In addition to keeping the memory of missing persons alive, such initiatives also provided recognition to FoM and brought them one step closer to being reintegrated and supported by their communities.



The families participating in the family unity picnic in Bardiya District

**6.1.2 RIGHT-TO-KNOW SUPPORT**

The most pressing need of FoM is to receive an answer regarding the fate of their missing relatives. The right of a family to know what has happened to a relative is enshrined in international humanitarian and human rights laws which must be respected by all countries. To address the right-to-know need of FoM, the ICRC and the NRCS published lists of missing persons in Nepal for eight consecutive years (2007-2015). These are available on the ICRC’s website: [www.familylinks.icrc.org](http://www.familylinks.icrc.org). The aim of these publications is to bring public recognition to the families of missing persons in Nepal. The list also constitutes an appeal to the government of Nepal and all former parties to the conflict to clarify the fate (and, when possible, the whereabouts) of those who went missing and to ensure that all families of missing persons are included in whatever government programmes are put in place to support the victims of conflict.

The ICRC organized meetings with families to clarify its approach, which comprised collecting data, analyzing it, and following up on behalf of FoM with the parties to the conflict. In total, 1,080 families attended 75 right-to-know meetings held in the 46 Hateymalo programme districts. The following graph indicates the numbers of families that attended these events during the project’s five phases.



A family receiving information as a part of their ‘Right-to-Know’ in Banke.

**6.1.3 LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT**

The legal and administrative support by Hateymalo was limited to conducting information sessions on the legal provisions and administrative procedures for obtaining various types of documentation from local authorities. Families requested that Hateymalo programme staff facilitate dialogues and accompany them to government offices to obtain birth certificates, citizenship papers,



Families of the Missing in Saptari after the completion of construction of resting place as commemoration for their loved ones.



Women support group performing puja in Dang.

and related documents so that they could apply for governmental interim relief. Accompaniers asked families about their legal and administrative difficulties during the household survey and at support group meetings and gave this list to lawyers of district bar associations. Representatives of the bar then conducted orientation and interaction sessions on those needs for groups of accompaniers and families. In total, 98 legal and administrative orientations were organized for 1,204 families across the Programme area and 636 families were accompanied to various offices to take care of various legal and administrative needs.

#### 6.1.4 ECONOMIC SUPPORT

The second highest priority need of the families in 2008 was economic support. The economic support component of the Hateymalo programme was jointly designed and implemented by Heifer International. With mobilization support and co-funding from the ICRC, Heifer International and the ICRC's other partners were able to provide economic support to families. As part of economic support of the Programme, they distributed livestock, vegetable seeds, livestock insurance, fodder and provided support for micro-economic activities.



Street drama for community sensitization in Bardiya.

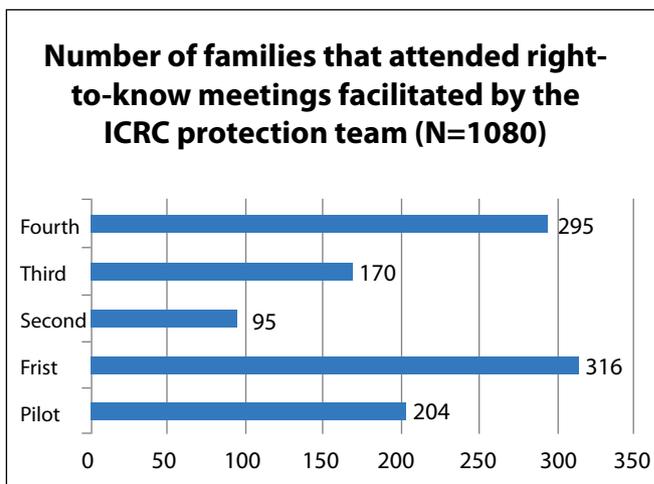


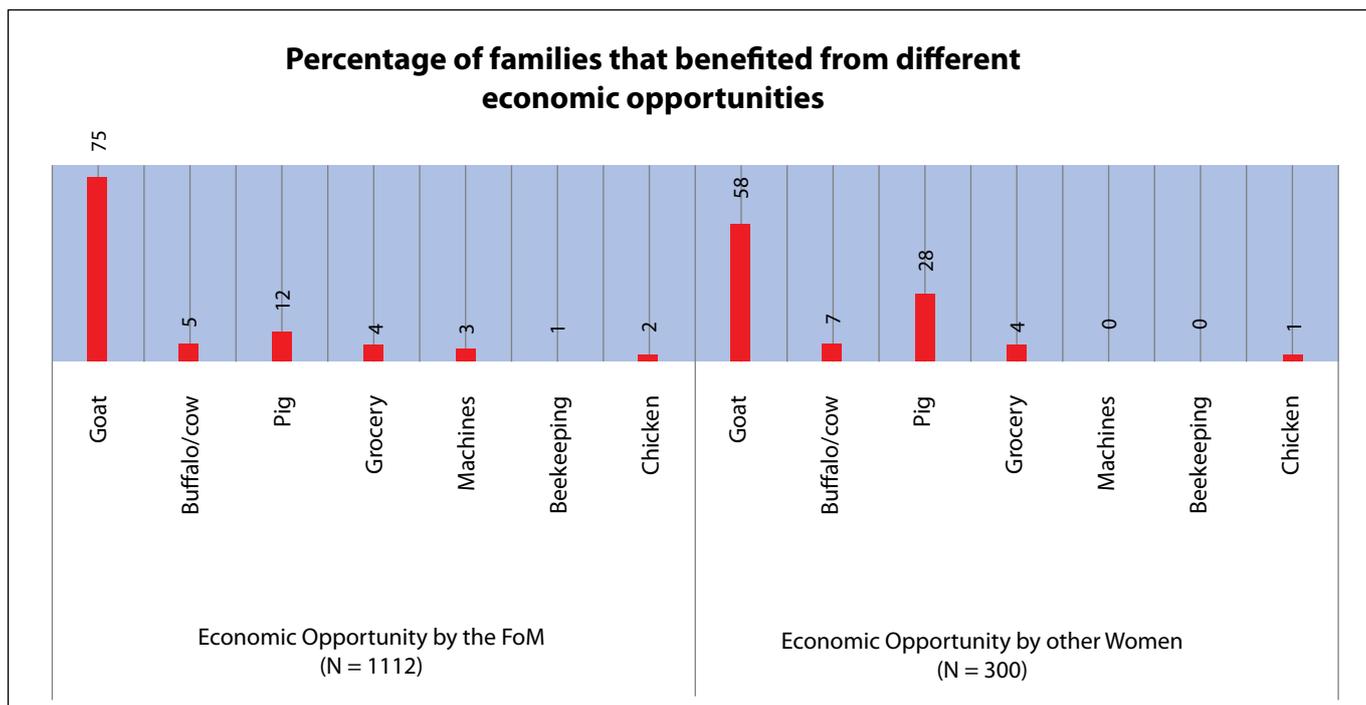
Figure 4: Number of families that attended right-to-know meetings facilitated by the ICRC

By the end of the programme, 1,112 families and 300 economically vulnerable women nominated by families had benefited from Hateymalo programme's economic support. The following graph illustrates the types of economic opportunities chosen by beneficiaries. The majority, 75% of families and 58% of vulnerable women, chose goat-rearing despite the fact that many other opportunities existed. Out of the 1,412 families that received support, 862 (61%) beneficiaries passed the gift of offspring or material support for a business to their Passing-on-the-Gift women friends. The total number of households which benefited from the economic support component was 2,274 families.

The outcome of the Hateymalo programme's economic assistance was measured for the first nine months after the intervention using a monitoring form. It was found that, on average, this support increased household income by 20%. The average family earned an additional NPR 18,000 per annum.



A mother of missing receiving a pair of goats as part of economic support in Ramechhap.



**Figure 5:** Percentage of beneficiaries who benefited from different economic opportunities

### 6.1.5 QUANTITATIVE MHPSS RESULTS

“Psychological Distress is a general term to describe unpleasant feelings or emotions that can eventually impact your level of functionality.” In order to measure psychological distress, the Hateymalo programme decided to access, monitor and evaluate the symptoms of anxiety and depression as well as psychosomatic complaints to determine the degree of psychosocial wellbeing of members of FoM, especially wives, mothers and fathers. A similar assessment also helped Hateymalo programme staff to measure the outcomes of the intervention. A self-reporting format with a Likert-type rating scale in Nepali language was applied and collected by trained accompaniers. The scales were validated and contextualized to suit the Nepali context.

The distress induced by the disappearances of loved ones and family conflict was measured using tailored items, as were the levels of perceived social support and coping. The Hopkins Checklist-25 (HSCL-25)<sup>4</sup> was used to measure the symptoms of anxiety and depression, and

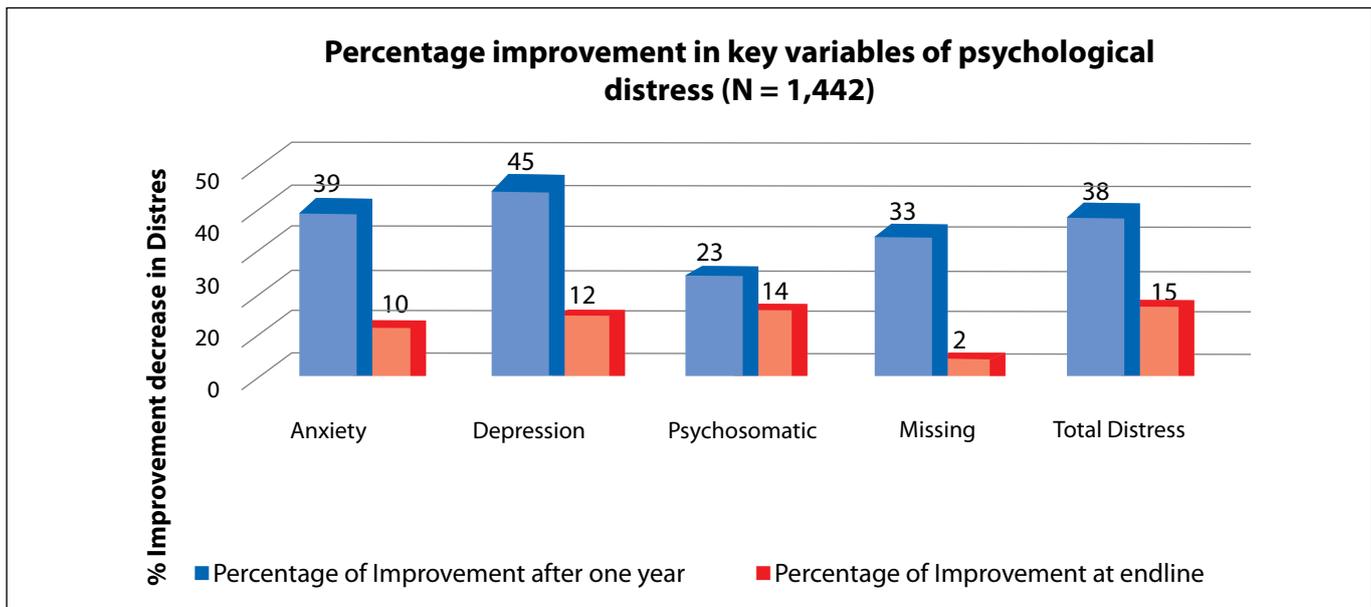
the Bradford Somatic Inventory (BSI)<sup>5</sup> was used to measure the psychosomatic manifestation of psychological distress. Both tools had been contextualized and validated before their use by Hateymalo Programme. In addition, the distress caused by recurrent memories of the missing relatives was measured through three locally constructed questions.

The overall results for the measured variables revealed a significant and consistent decrease in the mean values of distress over time. Anxiety, depression, psychosomatic conditions, and distress related to memories of the missing decreased by 39%, 45%, 23% and 33% respectively during the first year of the intervention. The percentage improvements are summarized in Figure 5 below.

The end line data for the female population indicates that anxiety, depression, psychosomatic conditions, and distress related to memories of the missing declined another 10%, 12%, 14%, and 2% after the first year. The overall improvement in total distress was a 47% reduction from the baseline values.

<sup>4</sup> Hopkins Checklist-25 consists of 25 questions, 10 of which measure symptoms of anxiety and 15 of which measure symptoms of depression. These questions were validated in Nepal by Van Ommeren et al.(1999) and Thapa et al.(2005).

<sup>5</sup> Bradford Somatic Inventory measures psychosomatic complaints. An adapted version with seven questions was used to measure the level of distress among Nepali FoM members that was psychosomatic in nature. This tool was used in Nepal by Emmelkamp et al. (2002) and in rural Indonesia by Poudyal et al. (2009)

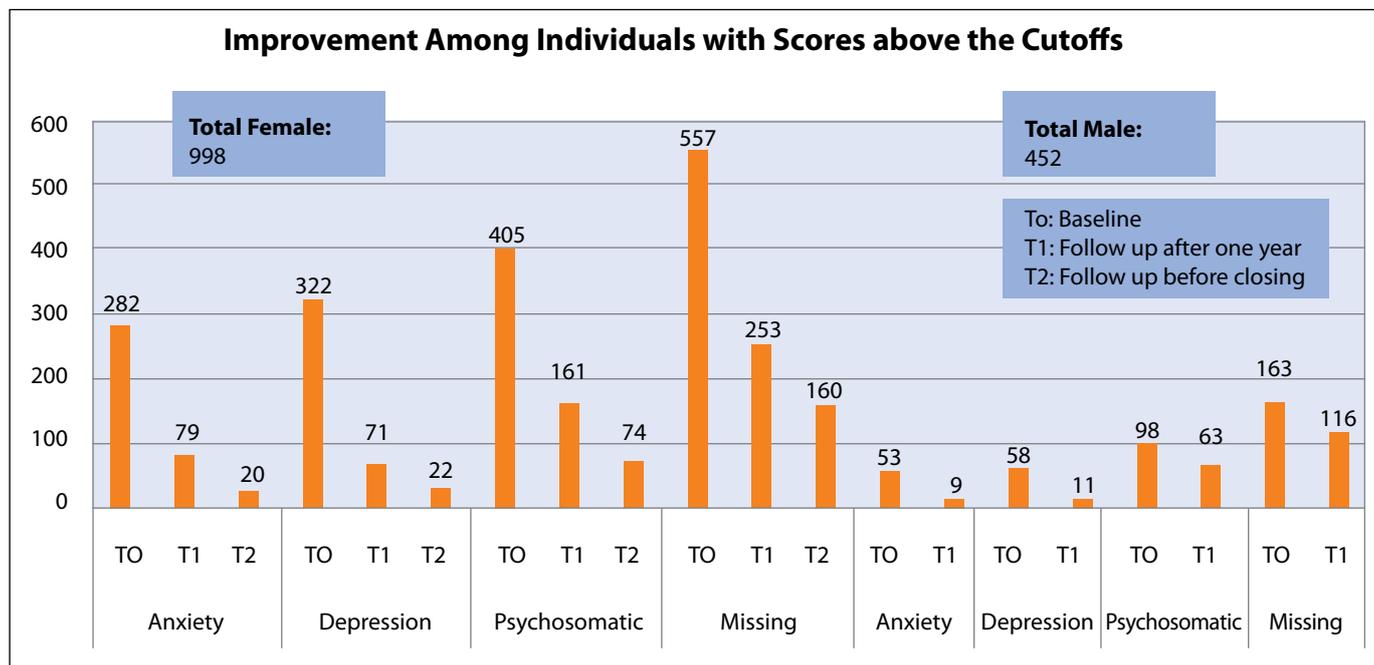


**Figure 6:** Overall improvement in key variables of psychological distress

#### 6.1.6 IMPROVEMENTS AMONG BENEFICIARIES EXHIBITING HIGH LEVEL OF SYMPTOMS

By “high level of symptoms,” we mean that the total distress experienced by a member of an FoM was above the cutoff level of significance. The results showed that, at the time of the baseline survey, women were more affected than men. Altogether 282 women but just 53 fathers exhibited high levels of anxiety initially. Higher than threshold level of depression symptoms were found in 322 females and 58 males. Psychosomatic complaints were the second most prevalent type of distress among both females (405 of 998) and males (98 of 452) after distress related to memories of the missing persons (557 of 998 females and 163 of 452 males).

While at the beginning of the Programme, 282 female out of 998 had anxiety scores at a pathological level, just 20 did 30 months later, at the end of the programme. Similarly, of the 322 women out of 998 who had depression scores at a pathological level initially, just 22 did after 30 months. Fathers of the missing showed similar improvements by the end of their 18-month Hateymalo programme intervention. The number of psychosomatic complaints dropped from 405 to 74 among women and from 98 to 63 among fathers. Especially given how old the population of beneficiaries was (two-thirds were older than sixty years), this reduction is quite an achievement. However, the distress related to memories of the missing was still at worrisome levels. To resolve that distress, the families need to receive long-anticipated answers about the fates of their missing relatives.



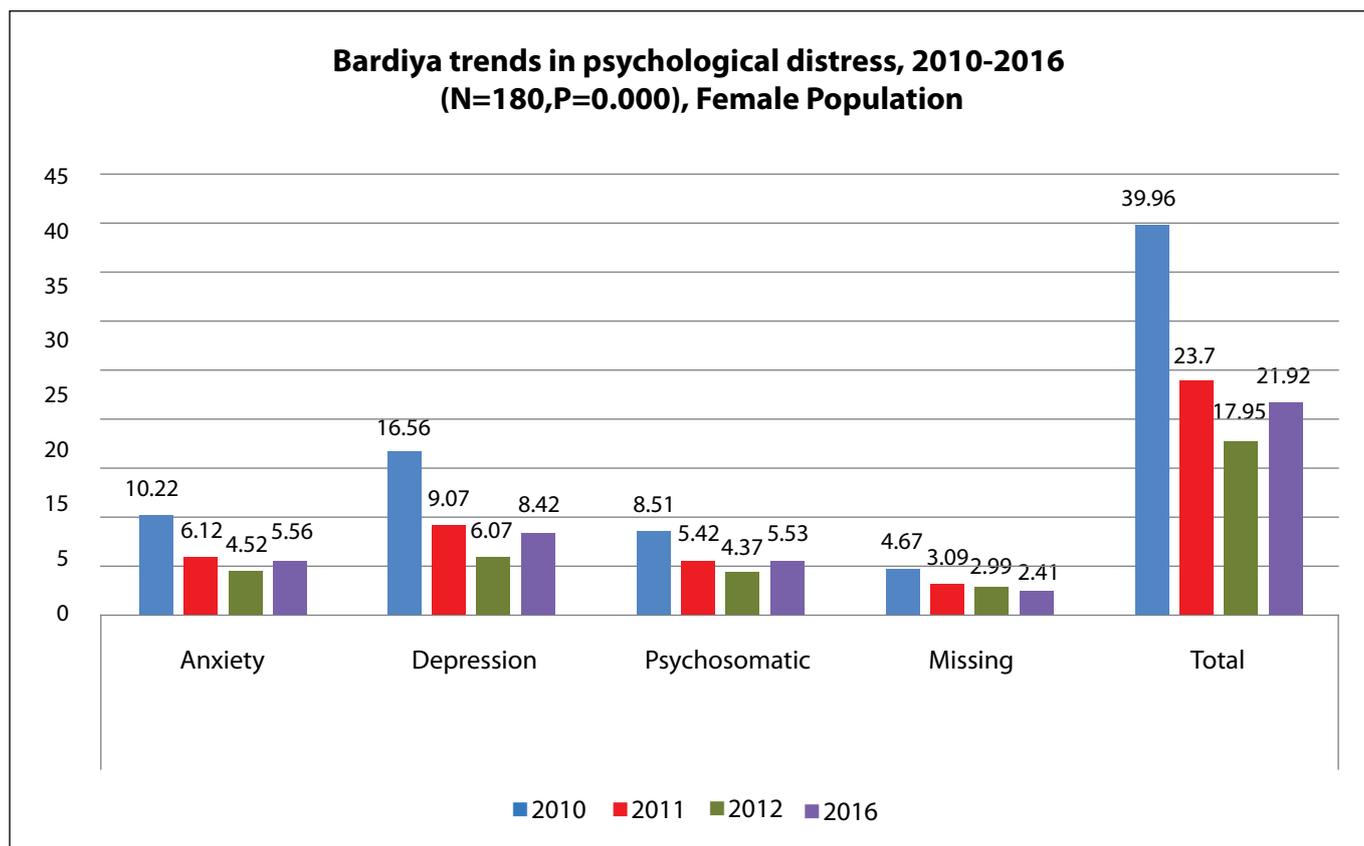
**Figure 7:** Improvements among individuals with scores above the cutoffs

**6.2.2 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE BENEFICIARIES OF THE PILOT PHASE FROM 2010-2016**

The beneficiaries of the pilot phase were supported by the programme until 2012. The first assessment in Bardiya, which was conducted in 2010, collected baseline data on 272 wives and mothers of missing persons. After one year, the number of respondents after one year had declined slightly to 245 respondents. In June 2012, when the end line assessment was carried out, there were 201 respondents, and the follow-up assessment in 2016

comprised 180 respondents. The following graph Figure 8 outlines the mean values of distress reported by the respondents at each assessment point.

In Bardiya, the mean levels of anxiety, depression, psychosomatic conditions and distress due to memories of the missing decreased steadily from the implementation to the phase-out period but increased slightly in the post-phase-out period. The results indicate that the outcomes of the programme were maintained even after four years.



**Figure 8:** Trends in psychological distress in Bardiya District 2010-2016

# 7. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNT

The comments of the intervention team and external evaluators on the FoM needs assessment, the design of Hateymalo Programme, Hateymalo programme’s partnerships and its referral system, programme implementation processes, and the qualitative and quantitative outcomes of Hateymalo programme suggest that the following conclusions be drawn:

- Hateymalo programme is a showcase model in terms of its ability to respond to the multifaceted needs of FoM. Indeed, the 2014 evaluation concludes that the observed global effect of the programme on the beneficiaries was significant, consistent and positive. Over a period of time, the programme managed to significantly and consistently reduce the distress of individuals. In doing so, it enabled beneficiaries to restore their dignity and wellbeing at the individual, family, and social levels.
- The Hateymalo programme’s comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach to providing support, which included the right to know the fate and whereabouts of missing persons as well as legal, administrative, MHPSS, and economic support, through a single-door system was unique, exemplary, and rewarding. This approach produced the following key outcomes:

| Component                              | Key Outcomes  |
|--|---|
| Right to know                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 13.25% of families ( 179 out of 1350) received official information regarding the whereabouts of their missing loved ones</li> <li>• 1,080 families attended right-to-know meetings</li> </ul>   |
| Legal/Administrative                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 89% of families received orientation to legal/administrative matters related to their missing loved ones</li> <li>• 47% families resolved their legal/administrative difficulties</li> </ul>   |
| Mental Health and Psychosocial support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distress was reduced 47% from the baseline values (n=1442) through support groups and individual counselling</li> <li>• 11% increment in social support</li> <li>• 22% improvement in daily functioning</li> <li>• 20 individuals received care for severe mental health problems</li> </ul> |
| Economic support                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About a 20% increment in the average household income of 1,112 families</li> <li>• 300 vulnerable women benefited from Heifer’s Passing-on-the-Gift programme</li> <li>• 301 individuals benefited from vocational training through referrals</li> </ul>                                     |
| Commemoration                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 alternative rituals were organized and 59 commemorative memorials were built in memory of missing loved ones</li> </ul>   |

- Assessing and understanding the needs of specific target populations (the wives, mothers, fathers, and children of missing persons) in advance and implementing activities in an integrated fashion specific to the needs of individual beneficiaries resulted in good outcomes.
- A community-based approach to intervention which is rooted in family support groups but connected to community structures and support systems was key to making sustainable differences. Hateymalo programme's good results can be attributed in part to the fact that Hateymalo programme analyzed the socio-demographic, ethnic and cultural practices of the beneficiaries in different areas before it intervened and adapted its Hateymalo programme activities and processes in each successive phase to suit the new beneficiaries.
- The Hateymalo programme's integrated approach to economic assistance activities, which enabled economically vulnerable women living in the same community as FoM to receive the gifts passed on under Heifer International's approach, introduced a second perspective and strategy designed to further alleviate the suffering of FoM by building community solidarity.
- By including the victims of both parties to the conflict (both the Nepali Army and the People's Army) and creating an enabling environment in which they could interact and engage in self-help efforts, Hateymalo programme boosted reintegration and reconciliation and reduced segregation, marginalization, and stigmatization. The establishment of inclusive support groups in which people of all backgrounds (castes, religions, political affiliations, etc.) were accepted without prejudice was a central building block of Hateymalo programme. The empowerment opportunities offered within and beyond the programme helped develop new local-level leaders among the beneficiaries.
- Commemorative events and places played a vital role in keeping alive positive memories of the missing. As it was difficult for families to perform final rites without confirming the deaths of their missing loved ones, holding worship activities and building monuments served as alternatives to provide them with peace of mind and enhance their wellbeing in a meaningful way. These culturally appropriate substitutes for final rites were effective in addressing the spiritual and religious needs of families.
- The components of sustainability embedded in the design and implementation of Hateymalo programme helped make FoM self-reliant because they learned to mobilize local resources. By training FoM in group sustainability and providing economic support to non-FoM vulnerable women, Hateymalo programme enlarged the support networks of both groups and enabled them to mobilize their savings. The fact that one-third of support groups still function well and manage their own resources is a reflection of the sustainability of the programme and the high level of self-help achieved.
- The results of the 2016 follow-up on the levels of psychological distress of individuals who were involved in the early stages of intervention indicated that Hateymalo programme had a positive, consistent, and sustainable impact. The 180 respondents to the 2016 survey, all of whom had been involved in the pilot phase, had levels of distress lower than the baseline levels even four years of the completion of Hateymalo programme.

Hateymalo programme was an effective community-based multidisciplinary and comprehensive support intervention developed and implemented locally to address conflict-related trauma. Through a combination of activities, it made an explicit effort to address the multiple impacts of the disappearances of loved ones on families in a sustainable way which at all times respected the values, culture, context, and identities of the beneficiaries.

# ANNEXES

## Annex 1. Hateymalo Programme Partners

### IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

#### **In Dang District**

Gramin Mahila Utthan Kendra, Ghorahi  
Tel: 082-560489, 560837

#### **In Chitwan and Nawalparasidistricts**

Diyalo Pariwar, Narayangadh, Chitwan  
Tel: 056-522797/523031

#### **In Jhapa, Morang, and Sunsaridistricts Women Rehabilitation Center (WOREC),**

Biratnagar, Morang  
Tel: 021-470238

#### **In Bardiya District**

Tharu Women's Upliftment Center, Gulariya  
Tel: 084-420347, 420350

#### **In Rupandehi and Kapilvastu districts**

Namuna Intregated Development Council,  
Bhairahawa, Rupandehi  
Tel: 071-527205, 522905

#### **In Kathmandu Valley**

Antarang Psychosocial Welfare Center, Teku,  
Kathmandu  
Tel: 01- 422117

#### **In Kaski, Tanahu, Lamjung, and Gorkhadistricts**

Kopila Nepal, Pokhara, Kaski  
Tel: 061 466403/463486

#### **In Banke District**

Mahila Upakar Munch, Kohalpur  
Tel: 081-540144

#### **Nepal Red Cross Society National Headquarters**

Red Cross Marg, Kalimati  
Post Box No. 217, Kathmandu, Nepal  
Phone: +977-1-4272761 (hunting line)  
Fax: +977-1-4271915, 4273285

&

The following 26 district chapters of the Nepal Red Cross Society  
Achham, Baglung, Baitadi, Dailekh, Dhading, Dhanusa, Jajarkot, Jumla, Kailali, Kalikot, Kanchanpur,  
Kavrepalanchowk, Mahottari, Makwanpur, Nuwakot, Ramechhap, Rautahat, Rolpa, Rukum, Salyan,  
Saptari, Sindhuli, Sindhupalchowk, Siraha, Surkhet and Syangja

### COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

#### **Heifer International - Nepal**

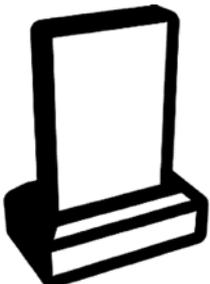
Hattiban, Lalitpur, Nepal P.O. Box - 6043, Kathmandu  
Tel: +977 1 2121112/5250554 Fax: +977 1 5250873  
Email: heifer.nepal@heifer.org

&

#### **National Network of Families of Disappeared and Missing Nepal (NEFAD)**

Email: nefad.nepal@gmail.com

## Annex 2. Key Results

|   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
|    |    |    |    |
| Number of missing persons   | Total districts reached   | Total households reached   | Total population reached  |
| 1,295   | 46  | 1,350  | 7,965   |
|   |   |   |   |
| Number of support groups  | Families who received economic support  | People who received individual counselling   | People who received individual mental health referral                                 |
| 182   | 1,112   | 316  | 20  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Number of commemorative memorials and monuments                                     | Families who attended right-to-know meetings  | Families who received legal and administrative support                               | Families who received official information on the whereabouts of missing persons      |
| 59  | 1080  | 636  | 179   |



**Annex 4. Distribution of Families of Missing Persons in Nepal as of 2016 (based on the enquirers)**



ICRC

**NUMBER OF ENQUIRERS BY DISTRICT IN NEPALI**

## **ICRC MISSION**

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance. The ICRC also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the Geneva Conventions and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It directs and coordinates the international activities conducted by the Movement in armed conflicts and other situations of violence.





**ICRC**

International Committee of the Red Cross  
GPO Box: 21225, Meen Bhawan, Naya Baneshwor  
Kathmandu, Nepal  
**T** +977 1 4107285 / 4107279  
**F** +977 1 4107137  
**E-mail** [kathmandu@icrc.org](mailto:kathmandu@icrc.org) **www** [www.icrc.org](http://www.icrc.org)  
© ICRC, August 2016