Nawalparasi, Nepal: Thirty-five years old and married with three children, I am Phool Kumari Giri, from Nawalparasi, Nepal. My traditional family structure and economic situation allowed me to pursue education only till the age of thirteen. Nevertheless, it did not hinder my confidence and will power to do more.

An active member of local action groups such as the Conflict-Affected Women that is part of the Local Peace Committee (LPC), I am also the vice president of the Time Saving Cooperatives where I train women to help build their capacity and confidence.

For me, the support provided by the LPC has been instrumental in a patriarchal society where caste, creed and obsolete cultural norms are oppressive to marginalized and vulnerable women.

As part of the activities for the UN Peace Fund for Nepal-funded Gender Promotion Initiative project, Empowering Women 4 Women: Access to Land for Sustainable Peace in Nepal, I participated in a training called ‘Negotiation, Advocacy and Leadership Skills’.

Based on my active participation, I was chosen to attend the Regional Interaction and Dialogue Event on Land Issues in Bharatpur in January,
2016. It was the first time I was involved in an event that addressed women’s rights in land issues. I was eager to contribute to the discussion. It provided me with a platform to highlight the obstacles that women face when moving ahead in their life. “If a woman is educated it will trickle down to the family but a man’s education remains to himself.”

I believe the commitment of political leaders and government officials to listen to women’s issues and engage in a dialogue with the community women is key to resolving the issue.

My story portrays the social, financial and cultural struggle of many Nepali women. “Whatever I have been through in my life, I don’t want the same struggle for my children. There is nothing that women cannot do. This is just a prejudice of the society.”

Tripti Bataju, a national UN Volunteer Community Empowerment and Peacebuilding Officer, UN Peacebuilding Fund for Nepal (UNPFN), captured Phool Kumari’s story.

Asia and the Pacific

• Nepal • gender • capacity building

Sustainable Development Goal: SDG 5: Gender equality