

**Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice
University of San Diego**

**“Building Constituencies for Peace and Democratic Development in Nepal”
Nepal Project**

Executive Summary

The Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice (IPJ) and its local partners have been working to resolve the nine-year internal conflict in Nepal since December 2001 by preparing constituencies to participate in peace processes that foster democratic institutions. Responding to requests from civil society and political parties, the IPJ carried out an extensive on-the-ground assessment in January 2003. Following this, the IPJ conducted a series of trainings and workshops in 2003-2004. These focused on increasing the capacity of Nepal’s civil society and political parties to negotiate and develop democratic policies, and to be more effective in their respective sectors to mitigate conflict and address causes and contributors to the conflict.

The IPJ plans to continue these workshops for political party leadership and women representing a cross-section of society. The project will be expanded by building two additional constituencies: young adults entering the human rights sector of civil society and the political arena; and a radio audience of Nepalese citizens that includes rural, conflict-affected, and disenfranchised communities. With its partners, the IPJ will provide training to young adults in basic human rights, conflict resolution principles, and leadership. The weekly, one-hour peace radio program will increase citizens’ understanding of rights, peacebuilding, and encourage democratic participation.*

Throughout the year these four, targeted constituencies will develop skills and knowledge so they can become catalyst groups for change, increasing participation in democratic processes. The year’s program will culminate in a multi-constituency summit. This cross-sector dialogue will foster a greater capacity to understand and address the causes and consequences of Nepal’s conflict as each constituency broadens its participation in conflict mitigation, building civil society, and the democratic process.

** Six months after submitting this grant, on February 1, 2005, the King of Nepal assumed all power, ended the free press, and placed some leaders of the political, human rights, and journalism communities under detention. The situation remains tense with restrictions on democratic institutions. Following the King’s lifting of the state of emergency, the IPJ went to Nepal in May to do a new assessment to determine how this project should be adjusted in this political climate. While the King’s actions must be taken into account, the overall goal of the project has not changed: prepare more to people to participate in the Nepali democracy so they may be able to work together for peace with justice and deal with the issues which have played into the national conflict.*