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CONSOLIDATED REPORT ON ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES BY WOMEN CLIMATE LEADERS ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS (SRHR)

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Prepared by Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) Nepal

BACKGROUND

Climate change has disproportionately affected women and marginalized communities, while the integration of gender equality and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) into climate resilience policies and programmes remains limited. Recognizing these gaps, ICA Nepal, with the support of the Global Panorama Project, implemented the Integrated Advocacy Capacity Building Programme to strengthen women-led advocacy on the intersection of climate change, gender equality, and SRHR. The programme was strategically designed to empower women leaders as catalysts for change by enhancing their knowledge, advocacy skills, and leadership capacities. It aimed to enable women leaders to effectively represent their communities, amplify the voices of women and marginalized groups, and ensure that their priorities are incorporated into climate resilience, adaptation, and disaster preparedness planning and policies.

The programme had the following key objectives:

1. Strengthen women's capacity in advocacy, leadership, and networking.
2. Support the development and implementation of women-led advocacy initiatives on climate resilience, climate adaptation, disaster preparedness, and the intersecting issues of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and family planning.
3. Document best practices, lessons learned, and effective advocacy models.
4. Establish and strengthen a network of women champions advocating for sustainable and gender-responsive development.

To achieve these objectives, ICA Nepal selected ten women leaders from climate-vulnerable communities across Nepal. The participants represented diverse backgrounds, including women's groups, community-based organizations, local non-governmental organizations, elected representatives, and community leaders. Following their selection, the women leaders participated in a comprehensive capacity-building programme focused on advocacy and climate resilience. The training equipped participants with practical skills to identify priority issues, develop evidence-based advocacy strategies, design impactful campaigns, and effectively engage with decision-makers at different levels. The programme also strengthened participants' understanding of the interconnections between climate change, gender equality, SRHR, and family planning, enabling them to translate their knowledge into community-led action.

To ensure the effective implementation of their advocacy initiatives, ICA Nepal provided continuous mentorship and technical support throughout the programme. Individual and group mentoring sessions enhanced the women's leadership, communication, policy analysis, networking, and advocacy skills while supporting them in refining and implementing their action plans. Based on these action plans, each woman leader conducted advocacy activities personalized to the needs and priorities of her respective community. ICA Nepal continued to provide technical guidance and facilitation whenever required to strengthen the quality and effectiveness of these initiatives.

Through this integrated approach of capacity building, mentorship, and technical assistance, the programme successfully empowered women leaders to become advocates for gender-responsive climate resilience and strengthened a growing network of women champions committed to advancing sustainable development, climate justice, and the integration of SRHR into climate action.

PROFILE OF WOMEN CLIMATE LEADERS

1 ANITA GURUNG

Anita Gurung is a development professional from Bardiya District in western Nepal, actively involved with local non-governmental organizations. Under the Panorama Project, she conducted a review of the school curriculum to identify gaps in the inclusion of climate change and SRHR education for young people. Her findings provide evidence to support the integration of these issues into formal education.



2 ANJU KC

Anju KC is a women's rights advocate actively working to promote gender equality and social justice in Nepal. As part of the Panorama Project, she documented the lived experiences of women in informal settlements severely affected by floods and other extreme weather events. Her work highlights the disproportionate impacts of climate change on vulnerable women. It emphasizes the need to integrate Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) into climate adaptation and disaster response strategies.



3 CHAYAN MAGAR GURUNG

Chayan Magar Gurung is an elected Ward Representative from Bara District in Nepal's Terai region and an active advocate for women's rights and community development. She works to raise awareness about issues that affect women and girls in her community and to promote their meaningful participation in local decision-making. She organized a sensitization workshop for female ward representatives to strengthen their understanding of the connection between climate change and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR).



4 DRUPDA SHAHI

Drupda Shahi is a women leader and social worker representing the Far Western region of Nepal, an area that is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. She focuses on bringing attention to the challenges faced by women and marginalized communities and promoting their participation in discussions and decisions that affect their lives.

Through storytelling, Drupda documented the lived experiences of women affected by climate change, highlighting challenges to their livelihoods, health, resources, and well-being. Her work shows how climate impacts are often intensified by cultural norms, gender roles, and existing inequalities, bringing marginalized women's voices into the climate change discussion.



5 MOHAN KUMARI PHUYAL

Mohan Kumari Phuyal is a community leader from Sindhuli District and represents a local non-governmental organization working in community development. Recognizing the district's high vulnerability to climate-induced disasters, she worked with the Hayu community, one of Nepal's indigenous minority groups, to raise awareness about the linkages between climate change and SRHR through community-based sensitization activities.



6 NABINA KHADKA

Nabina Khadka is a community development practitioner from western Nepal working with local non-governmental organizations.

She collaborated with Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs) in Kanchanpur District to document the challenges they encounter while delivering essential SRHR services during climate-induced disasters. Based on these findings, she advocated for the establishment of more climate-resilient health systems



7 PADMA SAKYA

Padma Sakya is a senior training and facilitation expert based in Kathmandu with more than two decades of experience in capacity development.

As part of the project, she developed a comprehensive training manual in the Nepali language on climate change and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), providing a practical resource for awareness-raising and capacity-building initiatives.



8 SHANTA KHADKA

Shanta Khadka is a community leader associated with the Micro Hydropower Development Association and is actively engaged in community-level advocacy and development initiatives. She engaged with local stakeholders and promoted greater awareness of how climate-related risks and disasters can affect women, girls, and other vulnerable groups.

She advocated for the inclusion of SRHR considerations in municipal planning and decision-making related to climate change adaptation and disaster preparedness, which encouraged them to take a more gender-responsive approach when developing plans, policies, and programs.



9 SITA KC

Sita KC is a former leader of the Community Forest User Group in Dolakha District and an experienced community mobilizer with strong experience in working with local communities. Through her community engagement, she has supported initiatives that promote inclusive development, women's participation, and the protection of community interests.

As part of her advocacy, Sita engaged with Bhimeshwar Municipality to raise awareness of climate-related SRHR challenges, particularly their impacts on women and girls. She highlighted how disasters, environmental changes, and disrupted essential services can affect access to SRHR.



10 SRIJANA KAFLE

Srijana Kafle is a political leader and the Chairperson of Purple Foundation, a non-governmental organization working to advance women's rights and promote gender equality in Nepal.

She implemented a three-tier advocacy initiative that engaged communities, local governments, and provincial authorities. The initiative focused on promoting greater understanding of the links between climate change, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), and women's well-being.



MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PROJECTS

- 01 Preparation and Validation of Training Manual on Climate Change, Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health, and Risk Reduction in Nepali Language.
- 02 Strengthened the awareness of the intersection between climate change and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), generated evidence for policy advocacy, and inspired local government action, including budget allocation by Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City for climate and SRHR awareness programmes and the continuation of community outreach by trained Climate Leader.
- 03 Reached the marginalized Hayu community and amplified their voices and lived realities in climate, health, and SRHR policy discussions, generating community-based evidence and actionable recommendations for inclusive and climate-resilient services.
- 04 Conducted a series of consultations with local governments, CSOs, and community leaders, building understanding of the intersectionality between climate change and SRHR, and translated this advocacy into concrete policy outcomes, including the integration of climate change and SRHR priorities into the political manifesto of a major political party for Nepal's 2026 parliamentary election and the allocation of resources to address climate-related SRHR impacts in local government budget planning of Bhimeshwor Municipality, Dolakha for FY 2083/84 (FY 2026/27).
- 05 Successfully documented the lived experiences of women from flood-prone informal settlements, generating evidence to advocate for the integration of gender and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) into climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction policies.

- 06 Successfully generated evidence highlighting the gaps in integrating climate change and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) into school education, providing recommendations to strengthen climate-responsive and adolescent-friendly education policies and practices
- 07 Documented eight lived experiences from climate-vulnerable communities in Far Western Nepal, generating qualitative evidence that highlights the intersection of climate change, gender inequality, harmful socio-cultural practices, and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR).
- 08 Documented the experiences of frontline health workers and women, generating local evidence on climate change impacts on SRHR service access and delivery to support climate-responsive health planning.
- 09 Successfully sensitized nearly one hundred community members on the intersection of climate change, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), and women's health of Bara District of Nepal while securing the commitment of the local government to strengthen documentation of emerging reproductive health cases for future evidence generation.
- 10 Identification and documentation of policy gaps related to climate change, gender and SRHR, followed by the development of practical policy recommendations for political manifestos



Picture taken during the discussion on climate change and sexual and reproductive health rights within the working area of Bhimeshwar Municipality Mayor Mr. Ishwar Manandhar, January 9, 2026.

ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

1. STUDY ON THE INTEGRATION OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND SRHR IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM OF MADHUWAN MUNICIPALITY, BARDIYA

Women Climate Leader Ms. Anita Gurung conducted a qualitative study in five public schools of Madhuwan Municipality, Bardiya, to understand how climate change and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) are addressed in school education. The study recognized that climate change is increasingly affecting the health, education, safety, and wellbeing of children and adolescents, while its connection with SRHR remains largely overlooked in school learning. The study aimed to identify existing gaps and generate evidence to support more climate-responsive and adolescent-friendly education.

The study engaged 406 participants, including students, teachers, health workers, school administrators, local representatives, and community members. Through classroom observations, curriculum review, interviews, and group discussions, the study explored both what is currently taught and how students and teachers understand the relationship between climate change and health. The findings showed that climate change receives limited attention in the existing curriculum, particularly regarding its health impacts, adaptation, and connection with SRHR. Students generally had basic knowledge of climate change but limited understanding of how climate-related changes can affect adolescent health and SRHR. Teachers also reported limited exposure to and training on these interconnected issues, making it difficult to facilitate meaningful classroom discussions.



Picture of sanitary pads being handed over to the school management team

The study also highlighted practical challenges affecting students' health and dignity at school. Although most schools had basic WASH facilities and some menstrual hygiene support, participants reported concerns related to the regular availability and quality of sanitary pads, water supply, and toilet maintenance. Participants also emphasized the need for stronger climate awareness and disaster preparedness education within schools so that students are better prepared to understand and respond to climate-related risks.

The findings provided important local evidence for advocacy with schools and local stakeholders. The study recommended integrating age-appropriate climate change and SRHR content into school education, strengthening teachers' capacity through regular training, improving WASH and menstrual hygiene facilities, and promoting stronger collaboration between schools, local governments, and development partners.

Overall, the study helped bring attention to an important but often overlooked link between climate change, education, and adolescent SRHR, providing a basis for evidence-based policy dialogue and climate-responsive education planning.



2. LIVED EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN AFFECTED BY CLIMATE-INDUCED FLOODING IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS OF KATHMANDU



Kathmandu Metropolitan City Ward No. 32 is home to an informal settlement located along the riverbank, where families have been residing since approximately 2005. Over the years, the settlement has expanded significantly and is now home to a large number of socially and economically marginalized households. Most residents belong to Dalit and Indigenous communities and depend on informal daily wage labour for their livelihoods. Due to their informal settlement status, many households have limited access to government social protection schemes and basic public services. The settlement is highly vulnerable to flooding during the monsoon season because of its location along the riverbank. In recent years, the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme rainfall events associated with climate change have significantly heightened the community's exposure to flood-related disasters. Unpredictable weather patterns often leave residents with little time to prepare, resulting in the loss of homes, household assets, livelihoods, and essential belongings.

Although floods affect the entire community, women experience disproportionate impacts due to existing gender inequalities, traditional social norms, and caregiving responsibilities. During disasters, women face additional challenges related to safety, privacy, access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services, menstrual hygiene management, maternal health, and increased risks of gender-based violence. These intersecting vulnerabilities often remain undocumented and are insufficiently reflected in disaster response and climate adaptation planning. Recognizing this gap, Women Climate Leader Ms. Anju KC documented the lived experiences of women affected by recurrent flooding in the informal settlement. The initiative aimed to capture first-hand accounts of the social, economic, health, and SRHR-related impacts of climate-induced disasters on women, generating evidence to strengthen advocacy for gender-responsive and climate-resilient policies and programmes that address the needs of vulnerable urban communities.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH WOMEN FROM THE INFORMAL SETTLEMENT

As part of the documentation process, Women Climate Leader Ms. Anju KC conducted a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with 29 women aged between 19 and 70 years residing in the flood-prone informal settlement of Kathmandu Metropolitan City-32. The discussion aimed to understand community perceptions of climate change, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), and the gender-specific impacts of recurring floods.

The discussion revealed that most women had limited knowledge of climate change and its relationship with SRHR. While some participants had heard about these issues through awareness programmes, they reported that they lacked sufficient understanding to explain or discuss them confidently. Adolescent girls who attended school demonstrated relatively better knowledge of climate change and its impacts; however, they had limited understanding of SRHR. It was also observed that although adolescent girls actively participated and shared their views during separate youth discussions, they were less likely to express themselves openly in the presence of older women, reflecting existing social and cultural norms around discussing reproductive health.

When participants shared their experiences of floods and landslides caused by increasingly unpredictable and intense rainfall, it became evident that although the community had experienced the same disaster, the impacts varied significantly among individuals. Some women had experienced multiple climate-induced disasters throughout their lives, while others vividly recalled the devastating floods that affected the settlement. Although participants shared common challenges such as the loss of homes, livelihoods, and household belongings, their personal experiences differed depending on factors such as age, gender roles, economic status, social position, family responsibilities, and access to resources. The discussion highlighted that while climate-induced disasters affect entire communities, the degree of vulnerability and recovery is shaped by existing social and economic inequalities.

The findings from the focus group discussion helped identify women with diverse experiences for further documentation. Subsequently, Ms. Anju KC conducted in-depth individual interviews with selected women and adolescent girls through repeated one-on-one interactions. These interviews provided a deeper understanding of the hidden and often overlooked impacts of climate-induced disasters on women's daily lives, including their caregiving responsibilities, health, safety, dignity, livelihoods, and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). The documented narratives generated valuable evidence to support gender-responsive climate adaptation, disaster preparedness, and advocacy for more inclusive public policies.

Case Study:1

"When the Flood Came at Midnight": The Story of Swastika Thapa

Twenty-eight-year-old Swastika Thapa has lived with her extended family in an informal settlement along the banks of the Manohara River in Kathmandu Metropolitan City-32 for several years. Like many families in the settlement, they rely on limited resources and live with the constant threat of flooding during the monsoon season.

On the night of 24 October 2021, Swastika's life changed forever. **"Before that night, I had never experienced such a flood. We were all asleep when our neighbours started shouting and knocking on doors, telling everyone to wake up. It was around midnight. By then, floodwater had already entered our house, and heavy rain was still pouring outside."**

Their house was among the first to be hit because it was located on the northern side of the settlement, where floodwaters entered first. Within minutes, the water rose from the floor to the carpets, then to the furniture and beds. There was no time to think about saving household belongings.

Swastika's only priority was protecting her family. **"My daughter was asleep. I quickly collected the cash, jewellery, and important documents that I could find, put them into a small bag, carried my daughter in my arms, and we all ran to safety."**

The family sought shelter at Koteswor Campus along with many other residents. Overnight, almost the entire settlement was submerged. The flood destroyed furniture, clothing, bedding, food supplies, household utensils, and other essential belongings. Thick mud covered every room, leaving the house uninhabitable.

Cleaning and restoring the home took nearly ten days. Although family members initially helped move damaged belongings, the responsibility for cleaning the house fell mainly on Swastika, her mother-in-law, and the other women in the household.

"Until the house became liveable again, the daily cleaning was mostly done by the women in the family."

To ensure her daughter's safety, Swastika temporarily sent her to stay with her parents until their home could be restored.

Although every member of the family faced the flood, Swastika's experience illustrates how disasters affect women differently. During the emergency, she was expected to protect the family's valuables, carry her child to safety, and later shoulder the responsibility of cleaning and restoring the home—roles largely shaped by traditional gender norms. While shelter was available, privacy and comfort remained major concerns, particularly when using shared sanitation facilities.

Fortunately, Swastika was using a three-month injectable contraceptive, so she did not have to worry about interrupted access to family planning services during the disaster. However, she reflected that many women facing pregnancy or reproductive health needs during such emergencies would be at far greater risk.

Case Study:2

Recurrent Floods and the Hidden Burden on Women – The Story of Dhan Kumari Damai

Dhan Kumari Damai (52), a resident of Namuna Settlement in Jadibuti, Kathmandu Metropolitan City-32, has experienced the devastating impacts of floods throughout her life. Originally from Okhaldhunga and later displaced to Sindhuli before settling in Kathmandu in 2005, her experiences illustrate how women from marginalized communities continue to face repeated climate-related disasters. Living in an informal riverside settlement, she has survived multiple floods that caused severe damage to her family, livelihood, health, and dignity. As a child, she witnessed floods submerging her family home in Sindhuli, forcing her family to remain on the upper floor of their house for four days with very limited food, drinking water, and sanitation facilities. The experience exposed the hardships women and children face during prolonged disasters when access to basic necessities becomes impossible.

Years later, while returning home after agricultural work, Dhan Kumari was swept nearly two kilometres downstream by a flash flood. She suffered multiple injuries, lost consciousness, and required emergency hospitalization. At the time, she was the mother of a nine-month-old infant. The physical injuries from that incident remain visible on her body even today, serving as a lasting reminder of the long-term impacts of climate-induced disasters.

After moving to Kathmandu, she continued to experience repeated flooding in the informal settlement along the Manohara River. During the devastating flood of 2021, she escaped with only her young grandson and a few important documents. Like hundreds of other families, she spent the night outdoors while floodwaters submerged homes, destroyed food supplies, and damaged sanitation facilities. Cleaning mud-filled homes and restoring basic living conditions took more than a week. Similar flooding again threatened the settlement in 2024, reinforcing the constant fear and uncertainty experienced by families living in climate-vulnerable informal settlements.

Case Study:3

Living with Recurrent Flood Risks – The Story of Pushpa Devi Damai

Pushpa Devi Damai (53), a resident of Namuna Settlement, Kathmandu Metropolitan City-32, has experienced the impacts of flooding throughout her life. Before settling in Kathmandu, she and her husband operated a small brick and roofing tile business in Sindhuli. In 2003, a major flood washed away their entire business, including machinery, raw materials, and finished products, resulting in a significant financial loss and forcing the family to rebuild their livelihood.

After relocating to Kathmandu, Pushpa continued to face recurring floods due to her residence along the Manohara River. During the devastating flood of 2021, she escaped safely with her cash and important documents as floodwaters entered the settlement at midnight. Having experienced previous disasters, she had proactively raised the foundation of her house, which reduced the extent of damage compared to neighboring homes. Although her house still flooded and required two days of cleaning, her preparedness helped protect many household belongings.

Case Study:4

Women's Responsibilities and Decision-Making During Disasters, The Story of Kamala Damai

Kamala Damai (25), a resident of Namuna Settlement, Kathmandu Metropolitan City-32, experienced her first major flood during the 2021 Manohara River flood. Awakened at midnight by rising floodwaters, she and her family narrowly escaped with their young child. After reaching safety, Kamala realized that important documents, cash, and the gold necklace she had purchased through a loan were still inside the flooded house. Despite the danger, she returned with her brother to retrieve these essential belongings, believing they would be critical for her family's recovery after the disaster.

Following the flood, the family spent the night outdoors before returning the next morning to clean their mud-filled home. Although many household items were damaged, some belongings were saved because they had been placed on higher shelves before the floodwaters rose.

Kamala's experience highlights the often-overlooked responsibilities of women during disasters. Beyond ensuring the safety of children and family members, women frequently bear the responsibility of protecting household assets, legal documents, and financial resources that are essential for recovery, often placing themselves at additional risk. Her story underscores the need for gender-responsive disaster preparedness that recognizes women's roles and supports their safety during emergencies.

Case Study:5

Building Resilience Through Experience – The Story of Srijita Syangtang

Srijita Syangtang (30), one of the first residents of Namuna Settlement in Kathmandu Metropolitan City-32, has witnessed the gradual increase in flood risks along the Manohara River since settling there in 2005.

Although she had observed rising river levels over the years, the devastating flood of 2021 was the first to inundate her home. Awakened at midnight, she evacuated with her husband and eight-year-old son, carrying only essential documents, cash, and valuables.

The flood caused extensive damage to household furniture and belongings, requiring several days of cleaning and recovery. Drawing on previous experiences of living near the river, her family had adopted simple preparedness measures, such as storing food and important items in elevated and protected locations, which helped reduce some losses.

However, because nearly every household in the settlement was affected, families had to recover largely on their own with limited immediate support from neighbours.

Key Findings

- Most participants had limited awareness of the relationship between climate change and SRHR, highlighting the need for continued community education and awareness programmes.
- Climate-induced floods had profound impacts on women's livelihoods, health, safety, and household responsibilities, with women bearing a disproportionate burden during disaster response and recovery.
- The experiences of women varied according to their socio-economic status, caregiving roles, age, and access to resources, demonstrating that climate change affects vulnerable groups differently even within the same community.
- Adolescent girls were more comfortable discussing SRHR issues in youth-only settings than in mixed-age groups, emphasizing the importance of creating safe and age-appropriate spaces for dialogue.
- Community-led documentation of lived experiences proved to be an effective approach for generating local evidence to support gender-responsive climate policies and programmes.



3. COMMUNITY AWARENESS ON CLIMATE CHANGE, SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS (SRHR), AND WOMEN'S HEALTH

Women Climate Leader Ms. Chayan Magar Gurung, Ward Chairperson of Jitpur Simara Sub-Metropolitan City Ward No. 14, conducted a series of community awareness programmes to strengthen understanding of the connection between climate change, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), and women's health. Three sessions were held in Jorhali, Rajghatta, and at the Ward Office, engaging a total of 97 community members.

The sessions combined practical information on climate change and adaptation with discussions on SRHR and women's reproductive health. Environmental and public health experts highlighted emerging climate-related health concerns, while Dr. Preeti Yadav provided specific information on cervical cancer, breast cancer, infertility, preventive care, early screening, and timely access to health services. Women participants actively shared their own observations and concerns about reproductive health conditions within their communities, making the sessions an open space for learning, discussion, and sharing lived experiences. An important issue raised during the discussions was the community's perception that cases of cervical cancer, breast cancer, and infertility may be increasing. While there is currently no validated scientific evidence establishing a direct causal link between climate change and these conditions, the concerns expressed by community members highlighted the need for systematic documentation and further research. Recognizing this evidence gap, the Ward Office expressed its commitment to documenting emerging reproductive health cases to support future analysis, research, and evidence-based planning.

Overall, the awareness programme strengthened community understanding of climate change, SRHR, and women's health while creating stronger links between communities, health professionals, environmental experts, and local government. The activity also helped bring community health concerns into local discussion and encouraged continued documentation and evidence generation for more informed and climate-responsive health planning.



4. DOCUMENTING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN FROM FAR WESTERN NEPAL

The Far Western region of Nepal is among the country's most climate-vulnerable areas, where communities frequently experience the impacts of droughts, erratic rainfall, floods, water scarcity, and other climate-induced disasters. These environmental challenges are further compounded by deep-rooted social norms, gender inequality, poverty, and limited access to essential services, making women and girls disproportionately vulnerable.

Recognizing that the impacts of climate change extend beyond physical and economic losses, Women Climate Leader Ms. Drupada Shahi documented the lived experiences of women from the Far Western region to better understand how climate change intersects with their daily lives, health, dignity, livelihoods, and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). Through personal storytelling, the activity sought to capture the often-overlooked experiences of women, generate qualitative evidence, and amplify the voices of those most affected by climate-induced challenges.

The documented stories highlight the resilience of women while illustrating how climate change, combined with social and cultural inequalities, influences their health, safety, livelihoods, and well-being. These narratives serve as important evidence for promoting gender-responsive climate policies and strengthening climate-resilient health and social protection systems

Story 1

Swept Away by the Unexpected Flood

Ratna, a 17-year-old girl from Far Western Nepal, lost her life after being swept away by a sudden flash flood while walking to a traditional water mill to grind flour for her family. Like many adolescent girls in rural Nepal, Ratna routinely carried out household responsibilities that required her to travel outside the home. However, an unexpected flash flood triggered by intense rainfall left her with no time to escape, turning an ordinary household chore into a tragic loss of life.

Ratna's story illustrates how climate change is increasing the frequency and unpredictability of extreme weather events, exposing women and girls to greater risks during their daily activities. It also highlights how traditional gender roles place adolescent girls in vulnerable situations, where routine domestic responsibilities can become life-threatening during climate-induced disasters.

Her story underscores the need for gender-responsive disaster preparedness, early warning systems, and measures that prioritize the safety of women and girls in climate-vulnerable communities.

Story 2

When Tradition Becomes a Risk – A Mother's Story from Far Western Nepal

In many communities of Far Western Nepal, deeply rooted cultural practices continue to shape women's lives during pregnancy and childbirth. One such tradition requires a mother and her newborn baby to remain isolated for 11 days after delivery, as they are considered "impure" and untouchable during this period. They are often made to stay in a small temporary straw hut, locally known as an "Aati," away from the family home. Although intended as a cultural practice, the lack of warmth, hygiene, sanitation, and family support places both the mother and newborn at serious risk during one of the most vulnerable stages of their lives.

This story recounts the tragic experience of a mother whose newborn baby developed pneumonia after being forced to stay in an Aati during the cold postnatal period. Despite the family's efforts, the infant died just ten days after birth. While this is only one documented case, similar experiences remain common in many parts of Far Western Nepal. The increasing frequency of extreme weather events associated with climate change, including colder winters, heavy rainfall, and harsh weather conditions, has further intensified the health risks associated with this harmful practice. The story highlights how the intersection of cultural norms, gender inequality, and climate change can have devastating consequences for the health and survival of mothers and newborns, underscoring the urgent need for community awareness, behavioural change, and climate-resilient maternal and newborn health services.

Story 3

A Father's Final Embrace – The Story of Tapendra

Tapendra, a young boy studying in Grade 3, accompanied his father one afternoon to their cowshed, located across a river from their village. Like many rural families in Far Western Nepal, crossing the river was part of their daily routine. However, at around 3:00 PM, intense rainfall in the upper watershed triggered a sudden flash flood. As Tapendra became stranded on a small island in the middle of the river, his father saw the rapidly rising water and immediately rushed to save him.

Knowing there was little chance of escape, the father held his son tightly as they clung to the trunk of a nearby tree in a desperate attempt to survive. Tragically, the force of the floodwaters was too powerful, sweeping both father and son away. Their bodies were recovered three days later. They were among several people who lost their lives in the same flash flood event. Their story is a heartbreaking reminder of how increasingly intense and unpredictable rainfall associated with climate change is putting rural communities at greater risk. It also highlights the urgent need for effective early warning systems, climate-resilient infrastructure, and community preparedness to protect lives from sudden climate-induced disasters.

Story 4

Remembering the Great Flood – A Community's Story of Survival and Loss

This story recounts a devastating flood remembered by the people of Barala, now Ward No. 8 of Panchdeval Binayak Municipality, Achham District. The account was shared by Mr. Jakti Bahadur Shahi, a respected former local leader who served as Village Panchayat Chairperson for 23 years and was later elected as Village Development Committee (VDC) Chairperson in 2054 B.S. At the age of 92, he recalled witnessing the disaster as an eight-year-old child. According to his account, the continuous heavy rainfall caused the Karnali River to overflow, triggering a catastrophic flood that swept away the entire village.

At the time, many men had gathered along the riverbank to perform funeral rituals, while most women and children remained at home. The flood struck without warning, washing away homes and claiming the lives of entire families. Many children were among the victims, and only a few people survived by clinging to trees or reaching higher ground. Mr. Shahi further recalled that the tragedy did not end with the flood. The large number of deaths made it impossible to conduct proper funeral rites, and many bodies remained where they had been swept away. The contamination of drinking water subsequently led to a severe cholera outbreak, causing many more deaths in the aftermath of the disaster.

Locally remembered as "Pralaya" (the Great Calamity), this event remains one of the most tragic disasters in the community's history. The story illustrates that climate-induced disasters can have long-term cascading impacts beyond the immediate loss of life, including disease outbreaks, disruption of essential services, and prolonged community suffering. It also highlights the importance of disaster preparedness, safe water and sanitation, emergency health services, and resilient recovery systems in protecting vulnerable communities from the compounded effects of extreme climatic events.

Story 5

A Mother's Irreplaceable Loss – When a Flash Flood Took Her Child

This story recounts the tragic experience of a young mother from Achham District who was married to a remote village in Bajura District. Due to prevailing social norms, her marriage was arranged despite concerns about the difficult living conditions. As part of her daily responsibilities, she regularly crossed a stream carrying her young child to reach the family cowshed. One evening, after completing her work, she attempted to return home with her 18-month-old son tied securely to her back using a traditional shawl.

During the crossing, a sudden flash flood caused by heavy rainfall upstream transformed the normally manageable stream into a dangerous torrent. As she struggled through the rushing water, the shawl loosened, and her child was swept away by the powerful current.

Despite extensive efforts by villagers to search along the stream and the Budhiganga River, the child was never found.

This heartbreaking story reflects the profound human cost of climate-induced disasters, particularly for women in remote rural communities. It highlights how women's daily caregiving and household responsibilities often require them to travel through hazardous terrain, increasing their exposure to climate-related risks. The increasing frequency of sudden and unpredictable flash floods, driven by climate change, has further heightened these dangers. The story underscores the urgent need for climate-resilient rural infrastructure, safe river crossings, effective early warning systems, and gender-responsive disaster risk reduction measures to protect women and children from preventable tragedies.



Story 6

When Harmful Traditions and Climate Change Collide

This story recounts the tragic death of Nima Khanal, a young woman from Achham District, and her young daughter during the monsoon of 2025 (2082 B.S.) in Barala, Ward No. 8 of Panchdeval Binayak Municipality. While visiting her parental home, Nima and another female family member were menstruating.

Although the traditional Chhaupadi huts in the village had previously been demolished following awareness campaigns, no safe alternative accommodation had been arranged for menstruating women. As a result, the women erected a temporary shelter using a plastic tarpaulin in a nearby field, where Nima slept with her five- to six-year-old daughter. During the night, intense monsoon rainfall triggered a landslide from the hillside above, burying the temporary shelter. Nima and her daughter lost their lives, while the other woman survived after receiving prolonged medical treatment. This tragic incident demonstrates that simply eliminating harmful traditional practices is not enough unless safe and culturally acceptable alternatives are provided. It also illustrates how climate change is increasing the intensity of extreme rainfall and landslides, further exposing women and children to life-threatening risks.

The story highlights the urgent need to address harmful social practices alongside climate adaptation efforts by ensuring safe shelter, promoting gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction, and protecting the health, dignity, and safety of women during menstruation.

Story 7

A Preventable Tragedy – When Climate Change, Pregnancy, and Harmful Practices Intersect

This story recounts the experience of Bimala Shahi (name changed), a woman from Barala Village in Achham District who was six months pregnant. One summer day, she spent several hours at the family's traditional water mill waiting for her turn to grind grain. In the afternoon, an intense cloudburst triggered a sudden flash flood in the Barali Gad River, causing water levels to rise rapidly around the mill. Although Bimala managed to escape safely, the terrifying experience left her severely traumatized. The following day, she suffered a miscarriage. Instead of receiving medical care, emotional support, and adequate nutrition, she was blamed for the pregnancy loss and forced to stay in a separate shed under the practice of Chhaupadi. Despite continuous heavy bleeding, her family did not allow her to remain in the house or seek timely treatment. Community members who advised immediate medical care and proper nutrition were ignored. A few days later, Bimala died from excessive blood loss in the isolation shed.

Bimala's story illustrates the devastating consequences that arise when climate-induced disasters intersect with harmful cultural practices and limited access to maternal healthcare. While the flash flood triggered the initial trauma that resulted in the miscarriage, gender discrimination, social stigma, and the denial of timely healthcare ultimately cost her life. The story highlights the urgent need for climate-responsive maternal health services, increased community awareness, elimination of harmful traditional practices, and accessible emergency healthcare to protect pregnant women during and after climate-related disasters.

Story 8

When a Prosperous Community Was Washed Away Overnight

This story recounts one of the most devastating flash flood disasters in Saini Bazaar of Achham District on 2 September 2019 (2 Bhadra 2076 B.S.). Saini, located along the Kailash River originating from the Ramsar-like Ramsarosan Lake area (Ramaroshan), was once a thriving settlement with fertile agricultural land, flourishing businesses, and growing tourism.

Many families had invested their savings to settle there, believing it to be a safe and prosperous place to live. Among them was the family of Amar Shah and Pavitra Shah, who had returned from foreign employment to establish a hotel business and build a better future with their children. On the night of the disaster, an unexpected flash flood struck without warning while residents were asleep.

The flood swept away entire families, including Amar Shah, his wife Pavitra, their young son, other relatives, and a pregnant family member who was unable to escape.

Many bodies were recovered several days later from different locations downstream, while others were found beyond recognition. The disaster caused enormous loss of lives, homes, livelihoods, and property, transforming the once vibrant marketplace into a barren riverbed.

Beyond the immediate tragedy, this story highlights the growing intensity and unpredictability of climate-induced flash floods in Nepal's mountain regions. It also emphasizes that disaster risk is often compounded by human decisions, including the development of settlements and markets in highly flood-prone river corridors without adequate risk assessment.

The loss of women, children, pregnant mothers, and entire families demonstrates the disproportionate impact of climate disasters on vulnerable populations. The story underscores the importance of integrating climate risk assessments into land-use planning, strengthening early warning systems, enforcing safer settlement planning, and investing in climate-resilient infrastructure to reduce future disaster risks and protect communities from increasingly frequent extreme weather events.



5. CONSULTATION WORKSHOP ON CLIMATE RESILIENCE, SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS (SRHR), AND THE HEALTH STATUS OF THE HAYU COMMUNITY



Women Climate Leader Ms. Mohan Kumari Phuyal organized a consultation workshop with the Hayu community in Kamalamai Municipality, Sindhuli, to understand how climate change and the September 2024 floods have affected their livelihoods, health, and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). The Hayu community, an Indigenous minority community whose livelihoods are closely connected to forests, agriculture, and natural resources, has faced increasing food insecurity, economic hardship, and difficulties accessing essential services following climate-related disasters.



The consultation brought forward the community's lived experiences and highlighted how climate change is directly affecting their health and wellbeing. The September 2024 floods destroyed approximately 857 hectares of paddy fields, severely affecting food security and household livelihoods. Damage to roads, transportation, and health infrastructure made it difficult for pregnant women and other community members to reach health facilities, including institutional delivery and reproductive health services. Participants also shared concerns about the limited access of the Hayu community to government health and social protection services, despite their rights being recognized by the Constitution.

The discussion further highlighted the particular challenges faced by women and children during disasters. Existing disaster safe houses were reported to be difficult for the geographically isolated Hayu community to access, while concerns about privacy, safety, discrimination, and the risk of gender-based violence remained.

The psychosocial impact of disasters was also significant, with a study by Save the Children and Blue Diamond Society reporting symptoms of depression among 42.7% of Hayu children and youth. These experiences showed that climate-related disasters are not only damaging livelihoods and infrastructure but are also affecting mental wellbeing, health, dignity, and access to SRHR.

An important concern raised during the consultation was the lack of reliable, disaggregated data and documented evidence on the specific climate, health, and SRHR challenges of the Hayu community. Participants also identified a gap between existing policies and their implementation, particularly for Indigenous and climate-vulnerable populations. The consultation therefore created an important space for community members to voice their experiences and identify practical solutions based on their own needs and realities.

Based on the consultation, participants called for more inclusive and culturally responsive climate-resilient health services. Key recommendations included establishing a climate-resilient health unit within Kamalamai Municipality, strengthening accessible and safe disaster shelters, providing confidential SRHR information and services for Hayu women, ensuring continuity of maternal and reproductive health services during disasters, and developing a system to document disaggregated data on climate, health, and SRHR. Overall, the consultation demonstrated that for the Hayu community, climate resilience must go beyond infrastructure and include health, SRHR, safety, dignity, and meaningful inclusion of Indigenous communities in local planning and decision-making.



6. COMMUNITY DIALOGUE ON CLIMATE CHANGE, SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS (SRHR), AND SERVICE DELIVERY CHALLENGES

Women Climate Leader Ms. Nabina Khadka conducted a participatory community dialogue and field assessment in Ward No. 3 of Bhimdatta Municipality, Kanchanpur, to understand how changing climatic conditions are affecting the delivery and accessibility of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services. The consultation brought together 30 participants, including Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs), pregnant and postpartum women, youth, community members, and local representatives. Through interviews, group discussions, and field observations, participants shared their experiences of providing and accessing health services during extreme heat, floods, erratic rainfall, and seasonal water shortages.



The discussions revealed that climate change is creating practical barriers for both health workers and women seeking care. FCHVs described travelling long distances through muddy and flooded roads, sometimes struggling to reach communities by bicycle during the monsoon. Extreme heat also made outreach work increasingly difficult, while basic health facilities often lacked adequate ventilation, shaded waiting areas, fans, and safe drinking water. Seasonal drying of local water sources further affected hygiene and made community health work more challenging. Pregnant and postpartum women similarly shared that travelling with young children or reaching health facilities during extreme heat and poor road conditions can be physically difficult and can increase health risks for both mothers and babies.

The dialogue also showed that, although community members are increasingly experiencing changes in weather and water availability, there is still limited awareness of how these changes affect maternal health, reproductive health, hygiene, and SRHR. The lived experiences shared by FCHVs and women provided important local evidence that climate change is affecting not only the environment and livelihoods, but also the ability of communities to access and deliver essential health services.

Based on the findings, participants recommended improving health facility infrastructure with better ventilation, shaded waiting areas, and safe drinking water; integrating climate and SRHR concerns into municipal planning and budgeting; strengthening community awareness; and providing FCHVs with appropriate training, resources, and support to continue services during extreme weather. Overall, the dialogue created an important space for frontline health workers and women to make their experiences heard and generated local evidence to support more climate-responsive, gender-sensitive, and accessible SRHR services.



7. DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF THE TRAINING MANUAL

Ms. Padma Shakya developed a **Training Manual on Climate Change, Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health, and Risk Reduction** in the Nepali language. The manual was designed to provide culturally appropriate and accessible learning materials, enabling communities to better understand the interlinkages between climate change, women's sexual and reproductive health, and disaster risk reduction. Preparing the manual in the local language is expected to facilitate effective knowledge dissemination and enhance community awareness.

To ensure the quality, relevance, and practicality of the manual, a three-day validation workshop was conducted at the ICA Nepal Training Hall. The workshop was led by Ms. Padma Shakya, with technical guidance and facilitation support from resource persons and the ICA Nepal team. A total of 30 participants attended the validation workshop, representing diverse stakeholder groups. Participants included ward representatives from Mahalaxmi Municipality, Lalitpur; local community members; social mobilizers; trainees; young women from various districts of Nepal; and representatives from minority ethnic communities. Their diverse perspectives and constructive feedback contributed significantly to strengthening the content and usability of the manual.

Following the validation process, the finalized training manual was formally handed over to Mahalaxmi Municipality. The municipality expressed its commitment to endorse the manual and utilize it as a resource for conducting community awareness and capacity-building sessions on climate change, women's sexual and reproductive health, and risk reduction.



8. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INCLUSION IN POLITICAL LEADERS' MANIFESTOS

As part of the initiative, ICA Nepal Climate Leader Ms. Shanta Khadka conducted a two-day awareness programme with around 30 political leaders from multiple parties in Lalitpur, highlighting the links between climate change, gender, and SRHR and encouraging their integration into policies and election manifestos. Based on identified policy gaps and initiative recommendations, the following commitments are proposed for inclusion in party manifestos and policy commitments:

1. Smart and Climate-Responsive Health Services

Develop and operate locally led smart/mobile health service systems to ensure continued access to sexual and reproductive health services during climate-related disasters, extreme heat, cold, floods and landslides.

The system should provide telemedicine, counselling and emergency referral services, with particular attention to pregnant women, adolescent girls and communities living in climate- and disaster-prone areas.

2. Zero-Carbon and Dignified Menstrual Health Model

Promote eco-friendly and reusable menstrual hygiene products through municipalities and rural municipalities, making them accessible in schools, health facilities, and public toilets.

Where necessary, establish smart vending machines or alternative distribution systems to ensure timely access to menstrual hygiene products, particularly during emergencies and disasters.

3. Dedicated Local Budget for SRHR During Emergencies

Ensure that local governments allocate a minimum dedicated budget under an appropriate annual budget heading for maintaining SRHR services during climate-related disasters, pandemics, and other emergencies.

The budget should support continuity of essential services, emergency supplies, outreach, referral mechanisms, and services for vulnerable women and girls.

4. Mainstream Intersectionality in Climate and SRHR Policies

Integrate the intersection between climate change and SRHR into local policies, plans, programmes, and monitoring mechanisms. Planning and budgeting should specifically consider the differentiated needs of women, adolescent girls, persons with disabilities, and marginalized and vulnerable communities, ensuring that those facing multiple forms of disadvantage are not left behind.

5. Strengthen Women's Leadership and Political Accountability

Political parties and local governments should recognize women as active policy actors and climate leaders, rather than only as beneficiaries. Women leaders and representatives should be meaningfully involved in climate adaptation, disaster preparedness, health planning and budget decisions, with mechanisms to monitor implementation of manifesto commitments related to climate, gender and SRHR.

9. ADVOCACY FOR THE INTEGRATION OF SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS (SRHR) INTO CLIMATE CHANGE PLANNING IN BHIMESHWOR MUNICIPALITY

Women Climate Leader Ms. Sita KC led an advocacy initiative in Bhimeshwor Municipality, Dolakha, to promote the integration of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) into local climate change adaptation, disaster preparedness, and resilience planning. Although the municipality has made progress in infrastructure development and inclusive local planning, the specific health and protection needs of women and girls during climate-related disasters have received limited attention. The initiative therefore focused on creating greater understanding among local decision-makers about the close connection between climate change, gender, health, and SRHR.

As part of the advocacy process, Ms. Sita KC held regular coordination and consultation meetings with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Ward Chairpersons, ward and municipal officials, political party representatives, human rights activists, community leaders, and local residents. These discussions provided an opportunity to listen to community experiences, particularly the challenges faced by women and vulnerable groups during climate-related events, and to identify areas where local policies and plans could be strengthened. Relevant national and local policies, plans, and legislative provisions on climate change, disaster risk reduction, gender equality, and SRHR were also reviewed to identify gaps and opportunities for better integration. The advocacy process helped bring SRHR into discussions on local climate resilience and disaster preparedness and encouraged stakeholders to consider gender-responsive and inclusive approaches in municipal planning. Advocacy recommendations were also shared with major political parties, highlighting the importance of including climate change, gender equality, and SRHR in their policy priorities and political commitments.



Overall, the initiative created stronger awareness among local stakeholders that climate resilience is not only about infrastructure and the environment, but also about protecting women's health, rights, safety, and dignity, particularly during climate-related emergencies.

Recommendations for Inclusion in Political Manifestos

- *Prioritize gender-responsive climate action by aligning local commitments with Nepal's National Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2021-2050, ensuring that women, children, indigenous peoples, marginalized communities, older persons, and persons with disabilities are protected from the impacts of climate change.*
- *Strengthen climate-resilient health systems (H-NAP) by integrating Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) into climate adaptation, disaster preparedness, and emergency response programmes, with particular attention to women, adolescent girls, pregnant women, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups.*
- *Promote Gender Equality, Equity, and Social Inclusion (GESI) by ensuring that climate change policies, development programmes, and local action plans are inclusive and responsive to the needs of marginalized populations.*
- *Support sustainable natural resource management by recognizing the role of indigenous and local communities in community forest management, biodiversity conservation, and climate change mitigation, while ensuring equitable access to climate finance and benefit-sharing mechanisms such as carbon funds.*
- *Commit to climate-resilient infrastructure and essential public services, including safe drinking water, transportation, disaster preparedness, and age-friendly public services, particularly in climate-vulnerable areas.*
- *Promote sustainable tourism and environmental conservation by protecting ecologically important areas while safeguarding the rights and participation of local communities in conservation and tourism development.*

Climate change is increasingly affecting our planet, and mountainous and mid-hill districts like Dolakha are among the most vulnerable to its impacts. The growing frequency and unpredictability of disasters require us to remain prepared at all times. Women, particularly pregnant and lactating mothers, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected during such events. Recognizing these challenges, Bhimeshwor Municipality is committed to formulating and implementing climate-responsive policies and programmes that strengthen disaster preparedness and protect the health and well-being of vulnerable populations. Recent extreme weather events, including unseasonal heavy rainfall, floods, landslides, snowfall, hailstorms, and strong winds, have caused significant damage to lives, livelihoods, agriculture, and infrastructure across Dolakha and other parts of Nepal. We remain committed to working continuously to minimize these impacts through proactive planning and climate-resilient local governance."

— Ms. Kamala Basnet, Deputy Mayor, Bhimeshwor Municipality

10. LOCAL CONSULTATION WORKSHOPS ON CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS (SRHR), LUMBINI PROVINCE

Ms. Srijana Kafle, Climate leader conducted series of local consultation workshops conducted in Tinau Rural Municipality (Palpa), BanGanga Municipality (Kapilvastu), and Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City Ward No. 19 (Rupandehi) under the Climate Resilience and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Policy Advocacy Initiative with technical support from team of ICA Nepal to strengthen evidence-based advocacy for integrating climate resilience and SRHR into local and provincial planning.



The consultations engaged more than 150 participants representing local governments, Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs), health professionals, teachers, youth, persons with disabilities, women's groups, Dalit and Indigenous communities, LGBTQIA+ representatives, political leaders, and climate-affected community members.



Using participatory approaches based on the ORID methodology and an intersectional feminist lens, participants reflected on their lived experiences and collectively identified the growing impacts of climate change on health, gender equality, and reproductive rights.



The ORID methodology is a participatory reflection and facilitation approach used to guide individuals and groups from observation to action. ORID stands for Objective, Reflective, Interpretive, and Decisional.

The Objective stage focuses on facts and observations about what happened; the Reflective stage explores participants' feelings and personal responses; the Interpretive stage helps participants identify meaning, learning, and key insights; and the Decisional stage supports the group in identifying practical actions and decisions for the future.

Across all consultation sites, participants consistently recognized that climate change is no longer solely an environmental concern but a significant public health and human rights issue. Communities reported that floods, landslides, prolonged droughts, water scarcity, heatwaves, and environmental degradation are increasingly disrupting access to maternal and reproductive health services, affecting menstrual hygiene management, increasing gender-based violence, and disproportionately impacting women, adolescent girls, persons with disabilities, and marginalized populations.

The consultations also highlighted important institutional gaps. Although local governments have made progress in disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation, existing adaptation plans continue to prioritize physical infrastructure while giving limited attention to health resilience, particularly Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). Participants emphasized the need to integrate climate-responsive health services into Local Adaptation Plans of Action (LAPA), disaster preparedness strategies, and annual municipal planning and budgeting processes.

An important outcome of the consultations was the growing recognition among local governments and community stakeholders that climate adaptation requires stronger collaboration across sectors. Participants stressed that environmental experts, health professionals, local governments, and community volunteers should jointly design and implement community-based interventions to ensure effective and inclusive climate responses. Local government representatives also expressed commitment to incorporating the recommendations into future municipal policies and strengthening partnerships for climate-resilient health systems.

The consultations generated several strategic recommendations, including the establishment of climate-resilient health facilities, continuity of SRHR services during disasters, expansion of mobile health services, strengthened emergency preparedness, improved community awareness, integration of climate and SRHR education, dedicated financing, and targeted interventions for vulnerable populations. Participants further called for stronger coordination among government agencies, civil society organizations, and development partners to ensure that climate adaptation policies are gender-responsive, evidence-based, and inclusive.

Overall, the consultation process successfully generated locally grounded evidence demonstrating the interconnected nature of climate change and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. The findings provide a strong foundation for provincial-level policy advocacy and reinforce the need to position SRHR as an essential component of climate resilience planning. By amplifying community voices and documenting lived experiences, this initiative contributes to advancing inclusive, rights-based, and climate-resilient development in Lumbini Province and beyond.

LESSONS LEARNT

1. Climate change and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) are closely interconnected.

The project reinforced that climate change has significant implications for maternal health, reproductive health, menstrual hygiene, mental well-being, gender-based violence, and access to healthcare services. Integrating SRHR into climate adaptation and disaster preparedness is therefore essential for building resilient communities.

2. Women-led, evidence-based advocacy is effective in influencing policy and planning.

Women leaders' experiences showed that documenting community evidence and engaging policymakers through participatory advocacy can raise awareness and encourage local governments to integrate climate change, gender equality, and SRHR into policies, plans, and budgets.

3. Community participation and multi-stakeholder collaboration strengthen programme outcomes.

The active involvement of community members, Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs), local governments, health professionals, civil society organizations, and vulnerable groups generated meaningful evidence and strengthened advocacy efforts. A multidisciplinary approach proved more effective in addressing the complex relationship between climate change and public health.

4. Climate-resilient health systems are critical for protecting vulnerable populations.

Community consultations highlighted that climate-induced disasters frequently disrupt access to essential health services, particularly for pregnant women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, and marginalized communities. Strengthening resilient health infrastructure, emergency preparedness, and continuity of SRHR services is therefore a key priority.

5. Local knowledge complements scientific evidence. The project demonstrated that community observations, particularly those of Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs), provide valuable insights into emerging climate-related health issues. Combining local knowledge with scientific research can improve evidence generation, inform policy decisions, and support the design of more responsive and inclusive climate adaptation programmes.

6. Safe spaces encourage meaningful participation. The activity showed that adolescent girls were more willing to discuss SRHR and climate-related issues in age-specific groups than in mixed groups with older women. This highlights the importance of creating safe and inclusive spaces for different groups to express their experiences openly.

7. Lived experiences strengthen advocacy. Documenting personal stories of women affected by climate-induced disasters provides powerful qualitative evidence that complements quantitative data and helps policymakers better understand the gendered impacts of climate change.

8. Climate change affects women beyond immediate physical losses. The documentation revealed that women bear additional responsibilities during and after disasters, including caregiving, protecting family assets, ensuring children's safety, and restoring households. These gender-specific burdens should be recognized in disaster preparedness and recovery planning.

9. Schools provide an important platform for building climate resilience among young people. Integrating climate change and SRHR into formal education, supported by trained teachers and adequate WASH facilities, can equip adolescents with the knowledge and skills needed to protect their health and respond to climate-related risks.

10. Climate change amplifies existing gender inequalities. Women and girls experience disproportionate impacts because of traditional gender roles, caregiving responsibilities, limited decision-making power, and harmful cultural practices that increase their exposure to climate-related risks.

11. Climate adaptation must address both environmental and social vulnerabilities. Reducing disaster risks requires not only climate-resilient infrastructure and early warning systems but also eliminating harmful social practices, strengthening maternal and reproductive health services, and promoting gender equality.

12. Strengthening climate-resilient health systems requires improving health facility infrastructure, supporting frontline health workers, and increasing community awareness of the relationship between climate change and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR).

EMERGING CHALLENGES:

1. Limited awareness of the intersection between climate change and SRHR. Many community members, local government representatives, and stakeholders had limited understanding of how climate change affects Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). Considerable effort was required to build awareness before advocating for the integration of SRHR into climate policies and programmes.
2. Limited evidence and localized data for evidence-based advocacy. The project identified a significant lack of localized research, disaggregated data, and scientific evidence on the impacts of climate change on women's health and SRHR. This limited the ability of policymakers and service providers to develop evidence-based interventions and informed policy decisions.
3. Inadequate integration of SRHR into climate policies and health systems. Although climate adaptation and disaster management initiatives exist at different levels of government, SRHR and gender-responsive health services remain insufficiently integrated into climate resilience planning. Health systems also lack adequate preparedness to ensure uninterrupted maternal and reproductive health services during climate-related emergencies.
4. Limited coordination and capacity among stakeholders. Coordination between the health, environment, disaster management, and local governance sectors remained limited. In addition, frontline health workers and community volunteers expressed the need for further capacity building on the health impacts of climate change to effectively support communities.
5. Barriers to equitable access for vulnerable communities. Geographical isolation, resource constraints, social exclusion, and inadequate outreach continued to limit access to climate information, health services, and disaster response mechanisms, particularly for women, indigenous communities, persons with disabilities, older persons, and other marginalized groups.
6. Social norms and limited awareness of the relationship between climate change and SRHR made it difficult for women, particularly adolescent girls, to openly discuss their experiences during community consultations.
7. Limited awareness among teachers and students, together with the absence of climate change and SRHR integration in the existing curriculum and limited teacher capacity, posed challenges in promoting comprehensive climate-responsive education.
8. Limited documentation of lived experiences: Many climate-related impacts on women remain undocumented, as communities often perceive these incidents as normal life events rather than evidence of climate vulnerability and gender inequality.

9. Deep-rooted socio-cultural practices: Harmful traditions, gender norms, and social stigma continue to increase the vulnerability of women and girls during climate-induced disasters, making behavioural and policy change difficult.

10. Frontline health workers faced increasing difficulties in delivering Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services due to extreme heat, poor health facility infrastructure, seasonal water scarcity, and limited accessibility, while communities had limited awareness of the link between climate change and reproductive health.

WOMEN CLIMATE LEADERS' REFLECTION, LEARNING AND WAY FORWARD WORKSHOP

On 27 August 2026, ICA Nepal organized a Final Sharing Program at its office with selected Women Climate Leaders who had implemented their community-based projects. The program allowed the climate leaders to share their project findings, experiences, achievements, and implementation challenges, and to reflect collectively on opportunities to sustain and advance their initiatives.

A total of **seven climate leaders participated in the program in person**, while three additional leaders shared their project findings virtually at a later stage due to the unexpected consequences of a major flood in Nepal on the day of the program. The program was chaired by **Dr. Tattwa Prasad Timsina, Founding Chairperson of ICA Nepal, and Ms. Ishu Subba, Chairperson of ICA Nepal.**

During the program, the climate leaders presented their respective projects and reflected on their experiences, challenges, and key learnings. Some of the important reflections shared by the leaders are presented below in their own words.

My project focused on documenting the lived experiences of flood-affected women in the informal settlement of Jadibuti, Kathmandu. Initially, I was unsure how to encourage the women to share their stories, but I was surprised by how openly and willingly they participated. They were happy that someone was interested not only in providing relief, but also in listening to their experiences.

Although bringing the women together was sometimes challenging due to their daily work and responsibilities, they were very cooperative. One of the most concerning findings was that many women had never even heard the term 'climate change' despite experiencing its impacts. This experience helped me understand the importance of listening to and documenting women's voices. I sincerely thank ICA Nepal and Panorama Global for providing me with this opportunity."

Anju K.c, Climate Leader and community Activist

My project focused on identifying curriculum gaps related to climate change and SRHR in the western part of Bardiya District. I also visited schools and interacted with students and teachers. One of the most touching findings was that, due to inadequate water and sanitation facilities, some girls avoid using the toilets throughout the school day. I also found that climate change has not yet been adequately integrated into school curricula, while girls sometimes feel uncomfortable accessing sanitary pads even when they are available.

The experience made me realize that there is still much work to be done, including providing menstrual health education at an age-appropriate time. This opportunity from ICA Nepal and Panorama Global helped me explore these issues more deeply, and I am committed to continuing this work in the future.”

Anita Gurung, Climate Leader and Development Worker

My project focused on working with service providers, particularly FCHVs, to understand the challenges they and community women face in accessing and providing SRHR-related services. Initially, the FCHVs had limited awareness of the link between climate change, disasters, and SRHR. However, when we connected these issues with the climate-induced disasters they had experienced over the years and the challenges they faced in providing services during such situations, they began sharing valuable experiences and stories. I documented these experiences and developed recommendations for building a more climate-resilient health system.

One of the most encouraging moments was when the FCHVs expressed their interest in further learning and requested to be informed about future training opportunities, even saying they would be willing to participate at their own expense. Their enthusiasm and commitment deeply touched me and became one of the most meaningful outcomes of this project.

Nabina Khadka, Climate Leader and Development Worker

First of all, I would like to thank ICA Nepal and Panorama Global for this wonderful opportunity. I am proud to introduce myself as a Climate Leader. As part of my project, I developed and validated a training manual on climate change and SRHR through a workshop. Although developing the manual was time-consuming, the process helped me gain a deeper understanding of the issues. I am very grateful for this learning opportunity and encourage everyone to use the manual to raise awareness at the local level. I am always happy to support its use and further dissemination.”

Padma Shakya, Climate Leader and community Trainer

I would like to sincerely thank ICA Nepal and Panorama Global for providing me with this opportunity. Without this initiative, I may not have had the opportunity to reach these communities and document the deeply moving stories of women from rural western Nepal. These stories reflect the injustices women continue to face due to both climate-related challenges and harmful cultural practices.

Although the situation has improved significantly, these experiences remind us that there is still a need to address the issues at their root. Given the sensitivity of these issues and the strong political influence in the region, I urge all leaders and stakeholders to keep politics aside and work together to protect women's rights, dignity, and well-being."

Drupata Shahi, Climate Leader and community Leader

I sincerely thank ICA Nepal and Panorama Global for providing me with this opportunity. My project focused on advocating with local governments at different levels for the inclusion of SRHR programs and budgets in climate change planning. Initially, it was challenging, as local leaders were not convinced about the connection between climate change and SRHR. However, through a series of meetings and continued advocacy, Bhimeshwor Municipality incorporated these issues into its annual planning for this year. I was also able to advocate for the inclusion of this agenda in political manifestos during the 2026 elections in Nepal.

My major learning is that with the right approach and at the right time, important issues can be brought into policy and planning. As a community forestry leader, climate change has always been a priority for me, but I will now consistently integrate SRHR into my climate advocacy to amplify the voices of women and vulnerable groups. I am also grateful for the opportunity to participate in an international conference in Zimbabwe, where I shared my project and received strong interest from international participants in the intersection of climate change and SRHR."

Sita K.C, Climate Leader and community Forest Leader, Activist

Photographs taken during the activities carried out by climate leaders



Screenshot of an article covered in Nepali National newspaper by one of the climate leaders, with a summary translated into English



जलवायु नीतिमा छुटेको प्रजनन अधिकार

नेपाल सरकार, कृषि, वन तथा पर्यावरण मन्त्रालयद्वारा हालै सार्वजनिक गरिएको 'राष्ट्रिय जलवायु परिवर्तन नीति, २०८३' को मस्यौदामाथि दस दिनको समय दिएर सुझाव मागिएको छ। यसका लागि सरकारलाई धन्यवाद छ। नागरिक समाजका केही सीमित व्यक्तिसँगको निश्चित समयको ध्यानाकर्षणले मात्र जलवायु र यौ...

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The article argues that Nepal's draft National Climate Change Policy 2083 (2025/2026) has not adequately addressed sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), particularly for women, adolescent girls, and marginalized communities. It highlights that climate-related disasters such as floods, landslides, droughts, and displacement can disrupt maternal health services, family planning, safe delivery, and increase risks of gender-based violence.

The article calls for SRHR to be explicitly integrated into national and local climate policies, disaster preparedness, adaptation plans, and climate-responsive budgets, with meaningful participation of women, health workers, and rights advocates in policymaking.

जलवायु परिवर्तनको मारमा महिला स्वास्थ्य र प्रजनन अधिकार

जबसम्म हामीले जलवायु परिवर्तन प्रजनन स्वास्थ्यको सम्बन्धलाई गहिराइबाट बुझेर काम गर्दैनौं, तबसम्म हाम्रो विकासको यात्रा सधैं अधुरो र अमानवीय नै रहनेछ। अन्तरसम्बन्धित प्रजनन स्वास्थ्य जलवायु अनुकूलन योजना प्रत्येक स्थानीय तहले निर्माण गर्न यसमा अध्ययन जरुरी छ।

भाद्र १६, २०८३ | सिर्जना काफ्ले



विचार | विपद्मा 'इकोफेमिनिज्म' को बहस

नेपालमा हिमपहिरो, हिमताल विस्फोट अनियमित मनसुन र बढ्दो खडेरीले ग्रामीण समुदायको जीविकोपार्जनलाई प्रत्यक्ष असर पारिरहेको छ। तर यसको प्रभाव लैंगिक रूपमा समान छैन। विपद्को समयमा महिला, बालिका र सीमान्तकृत समूहको मृत्युदर र जोखिम अनुपातिक रूपमा उच्च रहने गरेको प्रमाणहरू पाइन्छन्।

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The article highlights the impact of climate change and disasters on women's health and reproductive rights and calls for reproductive health to be integrated into climate adaptation policies, services, and local preparedness plans.

The article highlights how climate and environmental crises disproportionately affect women and promotes an ecofeminist approach that places women's leadership, traditional ecological knowledge, and inclusive participation at the centre of climate and environmental decision-making.