

RESULTS SUMMARY

Climate Champions: Transforming Communities with Impactful Advocacy

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PROJECT	Title: <i>Building Resilient Communities in Himalayan Region of Karnali Province</i>
	Partner: <i>Karnali Integrated Rural Development and Research Center (KIRDARC)</i>
	Country: Nepal
	Period: 2023

CHANGE

Youth in Karnali province are leading the fight against climate change, driving significant community and governmental action through advocacy and innovative solutions. The project has brought about heightened engagement of young people within their community, significantly altering their attitudes toward fighting climate change and positioning them as leaders in compelling local authorities to act. Resulting from the youth advocacy work, vulnerable communities experience reduced erosion, improved irrigation and access to fruits.

CONTEXT

The communities in Karnali face hazards due to climate change, which jeopardize infrastructure, the economy, and livelihoods, casting doubt on a sustainable future. Initially, both the communities and youth in Karnali province were skeptical about the effectiveness of advocacy and awareness efforts in addressing climate change, leading to low engagement. Similarly, government accountability was weakened by a lack of knowledge and commitment, including insufficient budget allocation for climate action.

CONTRIBUTION

MEED and KIRDARC empowered the younger generation by creating a network of 20 youth climate champions, one from each village, provided training and facilitated activities to prepare for influential roles. These champions influence policymakers and contribute to local climate change plans. Their active engagement in lobbying and rural municipality-level planning ensures integration of climate considerations into development strategies. They also participate in community awareness raising on climate change adaptation.



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ACTIVITIES

The activities led by project partners, include forming climate champions while enhancing their understanding of climate and environmental crises. These champions undergo training to engage in advocacy and organize awareness events on climate change, disaster risk reduction, and emergency preparedness. The climate champions conduct educational sessions for youth on climate crisis and adaptation and lead social dialogues within communities. Collaboratively with MEED and KIRDARC, they develop local climate adaptation plans and establish monitoring systems at the rural municipality level. Additionally, they review and develop Local Adaptation Plans of Action in three local units, create advocacy plans, and monitor community actions such as planting non-timber forest products, fodder, forages, and fruit trees. They also collect and disseminate vital information to inform decision-making, drive action, and advocate for climate change and disaster risk reduction. The network monitors the implementation of climate policies.

LESSONS

Key lessons learned include recognizing the importance of grassroots advocacy by youth climate champions in driving community-level climate action and effectively mobilizing community members. Strengthening connections with networks at various levels boosts the confidence of climate champions. Exposure visits enhance their advocacy skills and enable effective community representation on broader platforms. Active involvement of climate champions in project interventions ensures their contribution and ownership of grassroots outcomes. Engaging youth and farmers is essential to enhance climate resilience, particularly for the most vulnerable, addressing unique challenges in adapting to climate change and securing livelihoods. Although the climate champions are starting to be respected by the communities, it has not been an easy progression, necessitating persistent close accompaniment by the project partners and continued technical support to ensure credibility.

EVIDENCE

As a result of the Climate Champions' advocacy and lobbying efforts, significant changes have been implemented by local governments and recorded in the rural municipality records. These include planting 4,285 fruit saplings—500 apples, 200 walnuts, 1,135 oranges, and 2,450 lemons—to mitigate soil erosion and provide resilient livelihoods for farmers. Their continuous advocacy efforts also led to the construction of an irrigation canal in Sarkegad, benefiting approximately 60 households, funded by the rural municipality. The Climate Champions network's continuous advocacy action can be evidenced in plans made by them on adaptation and mitigation at ward and rural municipality levels, presented to the rural municipality who are considering them to prioritise action by budget allocation for the upcoming fiscal year 2024- 2025 . Photographs of these processes are available at request.

DOMAINS

<i>Development strategy priorities:</i>	Climate, nature and environment
<i>Changes in the lives of people facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability</i>	X
<i>Changes in laws, policies and practices that affect people's rights</i>	-
<i>Changes in the capacity of organisations and communities to support rights</i>	-
<i>Changes in partnerships and collaborations that support people's rights</i>	-
<i>Changes in participation of groups facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability</i>	X
<i>Changes in local leadership of development and humanitarian work</i>	-