

# Women leadership in localisation of climate actions in Nepal

Women's groups taking leadership to curate localised climate solutions



Sahayatra Nepal Ilam advocating with the municipality



Member of Karambot Agriculture Group on Agriculture Field

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## Pragya Sherchan

Women groups in Nepal have succeeded in influencing the local government/municipality to incorporate gender-just climate solutions (GJCS) in the municipality's policy and plan and incorporating in the municipal budget for implementation. The women groups had successfully implemented wetland conservation, small scale irrigation and establishment of public parks with financial partnership with the municipalities. They are now recognised by the municipalities and other stakeholders for their work on tackling climate change. This article sheds light on Prakriti Resources Centre's (PRC) gender and governance approach to climate justice and grassroots women's journey in actively engaging local governments to build greener municipalities.

The country's federal constitution devolved many functions, authorities and resources to the local and provincial governments. Among other functions, the local governments, had the mandate to localize national policy guidelines on climate change, environment and natural resource management, and take actions accordingly. PRC takes this as an opportunity to support community women groups and local government representatives to work collaboratively for establishment of climate-friendly and gender responsive development as one of the priority agendas at municipal level. PRC tailored its support to 20 women groups to increase their knowledge on climate change, climate finance, environmen-

tal justice and the disproportionate impact of climate change on women and girls. The women's knowledge and capacity building support paid off well. Documented evidence shows that the women, with increased knowledge and confidence, started talking about climate change and environmental problems within their communities as well as with the municipal authorities. This created a scope to share their views in other public forums at municipal and federal levels.

PRC implemented a project with 8 selected women's groups amongst the existing 20 to promote mutual trust, and improve working relationships between local government's municipal elects and the women's groups. PRC facilitated interactions between the women's groups and municipal elects and staff on municipal plans and budgets, to making local level development plans and budget climate and gender smart.

Localisation of climate actions is gradually gaining traction among both local governments and women groups. The women's groups took leadership and started approaching the municipality office bearers and inquired confidently about the programmes and budgets on climate change, environment conservation and genders issues, while demanding transparent and inclusive planning and budget preparation processes. They started actively participating in the planning meetings with written proposals based on their collectively identified climate solutions. These groups continue their lobbying with local governments to implement their climate solutions.

After consistent rapport building and lobbying few of the women-led climate initiatives were chosen for implementation by their municipality, which are illustrated below. Some of the women groups have continued to access the palika budget since then.

### Success Stories

Karambot Agriculture Women's Groups from Ramechhap's Manthali Municipality-2 turned desolate soil green. Due to a lack of irrigation facilities, 2.54 hectares of land sat fallow. Then, women's groups fought for a municipal budget for a well functioning irrigation system. They were also able to obtain a municipal budget of Rs. 100,000 (about \$1,000 USD), and PRC and the women group also contributed and acquired a water pumping machine and pipes. As a result, they could cultivate crops and vegetables. This success inspired other women to grow vegetables and get market access. This also became a significant source of income for several families. This accomplishment has now inspired women's groups to demand a municipal budget for the construction of a vegetable collection center and the response is positive..

Srijansheel Mahila Samaj Nepal, Tarakeshwor Municipality-4, Kathmandu, reclaimed the encroached public land and converted the land into a public park. Previously, the land was used as a landfill for waste collection by the locals. The group received Nepali Rupees 1,000,000 (approximately \$10,000 USD) for conservation and beautification of the park from the municipality. The women groups reported that they were threatened by the encroachers. However, they got support from the municipality and police to evacuate the land. In July 2023, the women's group had successfully handed over the park to the municipality..

Since 2020, Sahayatra Nepal, an environmental organization in Ilam Municipality-7, Ilam, has continuously lobbied for the formulation of the climate adaptation plan with the municipality. They organised a series of meetings and dialogues with the municipal officials. Finally they succeeded this year, as the Ilam municipality decided to prepare a Local Adaptation Plan of Action (LAPA), and allocated a budget to Sahayatra Nepal and PRC for co-developing the plan. PRC will support Sahayatra Nepal in developing LAPA of Ilam municipality.

These transformative stories show how the women leaders led local adaptation interventions. The women's groups and the municipality worked collaboratively for climate solutions locally. PRC documented learnings of these initiatives and designed nine principles of gender-just climate solutions in the publication titled 'Gender Just Climate Solutions- a discussion paper.'

### What have the women groups achieved so far?

Women groups have been able to change the gender stereo-

types and tackle the structural inequalities; and gained recognition and respect from the municipality and from their society.

"Sahayatra Nepal, Ilam is now known as a leading environmental organisation in Ilam. The municipality has highly acknowledged our work on wetland conservation. It invites and collaborates with us on environment and climate activities. We are working in a few places, but we are receiving requests from many other municipalities for support and advice. We are happy that our collaboration with PRC and Tewa

“ These transformative stories show how the women leaders led local adaptation interventions ”

has earned us recognition and respect.” - Hem Kumari Siwa, Chairperson, Sahayatra Nepal.

Besides this, the women groups build their institutional capacity and knowledge to identify climate problems and implement the solutions. They know how to access the municipal budget and sustain their climate works even after the project period, by reducing interdependency and taking ownership for making their cities greener and sustainable for all.

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