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Resilience *Rising*

Case Studies *of* Impact *at the* Climate-SRHR Nexus Across South Asia

OCTOBER 2025



Across South Asia, the escalating impacts of climate change are converging with deep-rooted gender inequities to threaten the health, safety, and rights of over a billion women and girls. Floods, droughts, heatwaves, and displacement are not only environmental crises—they are crises of care, autonomy, and justice. Women and girls disproportionately pay the price of climate change with increased risks of gender-based violence, early marriage, maternal complications, disrupted access to sexual and reproductive health services, and mental health distress.

This report documents how organizations across South Asia are pioneering locally grounded, innovative responses that build pathways towards climate resilient sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). From India's tribal regions to Bangladesh's coastal deltas, from Pakistan's floodplains to the mountain communities of Nepal—these fourteen organizations are reimagining what resilience looks like when it places women at the center.

1.	**BADABON SANGHO**	Organizing Women Fisherfolk Groups for Collective Power & Advocacy	*Bangladesh*
2.	**BAITHAK – CHALLENGING TABOOS**	Community-Led Feminist Climate Action	*Pakistan*
3.	**THE CLIMATE INTELLIGENCE NETWORK (CIN)**	Youth-Led Citizen Science to Drive Gender-Responsive Climate Policy	*Sri Lanka*
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9.	**IPAS NEPAL**	Activating Female Frontline Leaders for Local Adaptation Planning	*Nepal*
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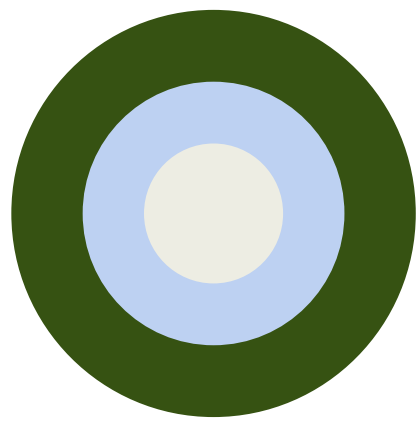
11.	**MARIE STOPES SOCIETY (MSS) PAKISTAN**	SRHR Health System Strengthening for Disaster Preparedness	*Pakistan*
12.	**SWASTI HEALTH CATALYST**	Training Frontline Health Workers to Combat Maternal Heat Risk	*India*
13.	**THE WOMEN'S REHABILITATION CENTER (WOREC)**	Women-Led Climate Disaster Response and Advocacy	*Nepal*
14.	**THE YOUNG CHANGEMAKERS, PAKISTAN**	Using Arts, Theater, and Storytelling to Challenge Gender & Climate Discourse	*Pakistan*





Case studies were collected as a component of formative research for our companion report, "Resilience Rising: A Landscape Assessment of Action & Opportunity at the Climate–SRHR Nexus Across South Asia"

CASE STUDY 1

Badabon Sangho

Organizing Women Fisherfolk Groups for Collective Power & Advocacy

Bangladesh



Organization

Badabon Sangho is a women-led organization based in the southwestern coastal belt of Bangladesh, specifically in Bagerhat and the Mongla sub-district near the Sundarbans mangrove forest. Established to defend women's land rights, the organization soon expanded its scope as climate change impacts increasingly threatened women's livelihoods and health. Badabon Sangho now works at the intersection of climate change, gender justice, and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

Context

Rising sea levels, saline water intrusion, and frequent cyclones disrupt livelihoods, displace families, and erode health systems in coastal Bangladesh. These environmental stresses exacerbate SRHR challenges. Early marriage, unsafe abortion, maternal mortality, gender-based violence, and inadequate menstrual hygiene management are common. Fisher women, who often spend 12–14 hours in saline water, report high rates of uterine infections, infertility, and miscarriages; Yet, they are frequently excluded from government social support programs, intensifying their vulnerability.

Approach

Badabon Sangho takes a multi-layered approach to address these intersecting crises. The organization has established over 25 women's groups in coastal villages, bringing together fisherfolk and farmers to collectively voice their needs. These groups also provide peer support, microloans, and advocacy platforms for addressing issues such as child marriage and menstrual health. Badabon Sangho has pushed for government recognition of women fishers, which would enable them to qualify for state subsidies and social protection during state-imposed fishing bans.

In collaboration with ARROW, Badabon Sangho conducted one of the first scoping studies in Bangladesh on the nexus of climate change and SRHR. The study documented salinity-related reproductive health conditions, increases in child marriage, and the disproportionate burdens women face in climate-disaster-prone areas.

CASE STUDY 1

Badabon Sangho

Bangladesh



RESULTS TO DATE

- Over 25 women's groups and three registered women's fisherfolk associations now operate independently, pooling their savings, offering small loans, and organizing to demand their rights. Government policy has shifted to recognize women fisherfolk, with provisions to include their names in official support systems, although this has been delayed in practice.
- Through more than 20 workshops to date, they train young people and women leaders in climate adaptation, gender equality, and SRHR rights, building grassroots champions for policy advocacy.
- Participating women report improved access to government health facilities, reductions in child marriage, and growing confidence in demanding services.
- Findings from the scoping study on how fisher women face unique and intensified health vulnerabilities due to climate change have been shared with climate-focused and health-focused government officials at the district and national levels.

> "We thought we could not support women one by one, so we formed groups of women living in the coastal belt. Now, fisherfolk women who spend 12 to 14 hours in saline water have organized themselves, despite their livelihoods being destroyed by soil salinity and cyclones.
>
> *Lipi Rahman,*
> Executive Director, Badabon Sangho

CASE STUDY 2

Baithak – Challenging Taboos

Community-Led Feminist Climate Action

Pakistan



Organization

Baithak is a feminist, community-rooted organisation with the mission to create safe spaces and platforms for community-led advocacy and dialogue around issues of bodily autonomy, sexuality, and health—especially in under-resourced and marginalised areas. They focus on dismantling stigma around menstruation, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and gender-based violence while integrating climate justice. During the 2022 floods, they leveraged their model to include SRHR resources during climate crises.

Context

Baithak operates primarily in Sindh, a province facing severe climate-related challenges, including heatwaves, flooding, and water scarcity. These environmental crises amplify existing vulnerabilities—particularly among women, girls, and trans individuals who already face inferior infrastructure in climate-impacted rural areas. The 2022 floods– one of the country's worst-ever climate disasters– deepened these inequalities, affecting 33 million people, including over 8 million women of reproductive age and 650,000 pregnant women.

Approach

Inspired by traditional baithaks (communal gatherings), they create women-only safe spaces for dialogue, healing, and dismantling stigma around SRHR and GBV. The 2022 flood crisis became a key catalyst for Baithak's shift into intersectional work at the intersection of climate, SRHR, and emergency relief. Previously focused on stigma-breaking education, the flood crisis catalyzed Baithak to shift its focus to direct climate emergency relief and intersectional work. They transformed their pre-existing networks of feminist community gathering spaces into community-powered hubs of frontline response for women's health, including the distribution of emergency menstrual and pregnancy kits.

Baithak has also been actively working on flood response in the recent 2025 floods in Gilgit-Baltistan and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. Besides delivering menstrual and delivery kits, the team has been on the ground in hard-to-access areas, creating safe spaces for girls and women to voice their concerns and needs regarding their SRHR and mental health, providing emotional first aid to affected communities, and conducting in-depth assessments of gender-specific needs in disaster-hit areas. Their work has impacted the lives of over 500,000 young girls and women in 48 districts across Pakistan.

CASE STUDY 2

Baithak – Challenging Taboos

Pakistan



IMPACT TO DATE

- Their work has impacted the lives of 500k+ young girls and women in 48 districts across Pakistan, including AJK and Gilgit Baltistan.
- Facilitated feminist, community-led disaster relief after the 2022 and 2025 floods in Pakistan; delivering menstrual and delivery kits, safe spaces for women and girls, emotional first aid, and assessments on gender specific needs in disaster-hit areas.
- Advocated globally at CSW, AWID, COP28, and UNGA for gender-responsive disaster planning, emphasizing that menstruation, reproductive care, and emotional safety are essential—not optional—in emergency responses.

> “
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> This was a turning point. We couldn’t just talk about stigma—we had to meet people in the crisis with what they needed to survive.
>
> *Ayesha Amin,*
> Founder & CEO, Baithak - Challenging Taboos

CASE STUDY 3

The Climate Intelligence Network (CIN)

Youth-Led Citizen Science to Drive Gender-Responsive Climate Policy

Sri Lanka

Organization

The Climate Intelligence Network (CIN) is a youth-led initiative founded in Sri Lanka in 2023 to engage women and youth in real-time citizen science climate data collection and storytelling, in particularly climate-vulnerable areas of Sri Lanka. CIN works to democratize climate data and center women's and youth's experiences to inform decision-makers better.

Context

Sri Lanka is among the world's most climate-exposed countries, facing sea level rise, urban heat waves, water scarcity, and displacement. These environmental pressures intersect with health and gendered vulnerabilities: reduced fish harvests have been tied to household stress and increased domestic violence. At the same time, adolescent girls and women face heightened risks from inadequate menstrual health infrastructure during urban heat stress and flooding. Despite these realities, national policies often overlook such gendered dimensions, creating a gap CIN seeks to address.

Approach

CIN trains women, girls, and young people to collect real-time data on heat, water, and air quality. They equip grassroots leaders and adolescent girls with digital literacy, environmental monitoring skills, and advocacy tools. For example, young women collect both quantitative and qualitative data during urban heat waves to document their experiences of facing heat stress and inadequate menstrual health infrastructure.
The qualitative data is used to complement heat stress analysis and inform the design of more gender and climate-responsive urban infrastructure. They are also developing a gamified mobile app to enable community data entry and storytelling, scheduled for launch in 2025.



CASE STUDY 3

The Climate Intelligence Network (CIN)

Sri Lanka



RESULTS TO DATE

- Built a nationwide youth-led network of district members for climate and health data collection.
- Trained women and girls as citizen scientists, generating datasets and testimony on heat stress and menstrual health.
- Contributing youth-generated data and lived experiences to influence policy, including support for Sri Lanka's NDC 3.0 goals with UNICEF and the Ministry of Environment.
- They have also used their data in community-level consultations with municipal planners and government climate units, influencing how urban resilience plans and disaster preparedness efforts prioritize cooling infrastructure, women's health, and localized risk mapping.

> "Communities are already innovating and responding creatively to climate-health challenges, but they often go unrecognized and unsupported. In Sri Lanka, we don't often see women and girls in climate science. By training them in technology and advocacy, we open leadership and livelihood opportunities.
>
> *Geilee Skandakumar,*
> CIN Member

CASE STUDY 4

DASTAK Foundation

Feminist Climate Resilience for Ecological Defenders

Pakistan



Organization

DASTAK Foundation is an award-winning feminist grassroots organization based in Pakistan, founded by journalist and activist Hira Amjad. They work at the intersection of climate justice, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and feminist movement building. DASTAK emerged from an online platform for survivor advocacy and evolved into a nationally recognized organization supporting survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, ecojustice defenders, menstruators, and pregnant persons in climate-vulnerable areas across Pakistan.

Context

Pakistan faces recurring extreme climate events, including the devastating 2022 floods, heatwaves, droughts, glacier lake outburst floods (GLOFs), and the most recent 2025 floods. These events severely disrupt access to SRHR services, especially in remote or conflict-affected areas. Communities are often left without access to contraceptives, prenatal care, or safe abortion services. Climate disasters also increase the risks of gender-based violence and reproductive health complications.

Approach

DASTAK Foundation launched the FIERCE program (Feminist Initiative for Environmental Resilience, Collective Care, and Well-being of Ecojustice Defenders) following a national scoping study across ten climate-vulnerable districts. The study highlighted emotional and physical challenges faced by frontline ecojustice defenders, many of whom are women supporting their communities through multiple climate crises. DASTAK employs storytelling, emotion, and participatory narrative methods to inform and guide advocacy. Their REST Manifesto reframes burnout and mental exhaustion that women ecojustice defenders face as systemic challenges requiring policy-level solutions. FIERCE bridges gaps between local defenders and formal policy spaces, showing that feminist care models are essential to effective climate resilience.

The FIERCE initiative includes:

- Distribution of dignity and prenatal kits during floods and heatwaves.
- Mental health support and community healing spaces for ecojustice defenders through the REST Manifesto.
- Convenings for defenders to practice disaster preparedness and collective care using DASTAK Foundation’s ecologies of rest model.
- Policy advocacy with District Disaster Management Authorities to include SRHR in local disaster response.

CASE STUDY 4

DASTAK Foundation

Pakistan



RESULTS TO DATE

- 20,000+ menstruators and 500 pregnant persons reached with emergency dignity and prenatal kits during the 2022 floods.
- Co-creation of Pakistan's first REST Manifesto with ecojustice defenders, spotlighting collective care as a climate resilience strategy.
- Increased visibility of women ecojustice defenders in district-level policy frameworks and global advocacy space, including the recent technical Gender Action Plan workshops by UNFCCC.
- Recognition at the international level, including the Nelson Mandela Award for innovative care-based programming.

> "This is not an opportunity. This is a need. We have to support pregnant persons, we have to support menstruators—there's no other way around it... They can be mothers, teachers—anyone responding to catastrophes in their communities. They deserve to be recognized as environmental human rights defenders.
>
> *Hira Amjad,*
> Founder & Executive Director, DASTAK Foundation

CASE STUDY 5

Environmental Protection Training and Development Organization (EPTDO)

Volunteer-Driven Community Organizing and Climate-Health Assessments

Afghanistan

Organization

The Environmental Protection Training and Development Organization (EPTDO) is a climate-focused NGO operating across Afghanistan. Founded in 2019 by a group of male and female experts, EPTDO is guided by a mission to build community resilience and protect the environment through climate adaptation, mitigation, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity conservation, and women's inclusion.

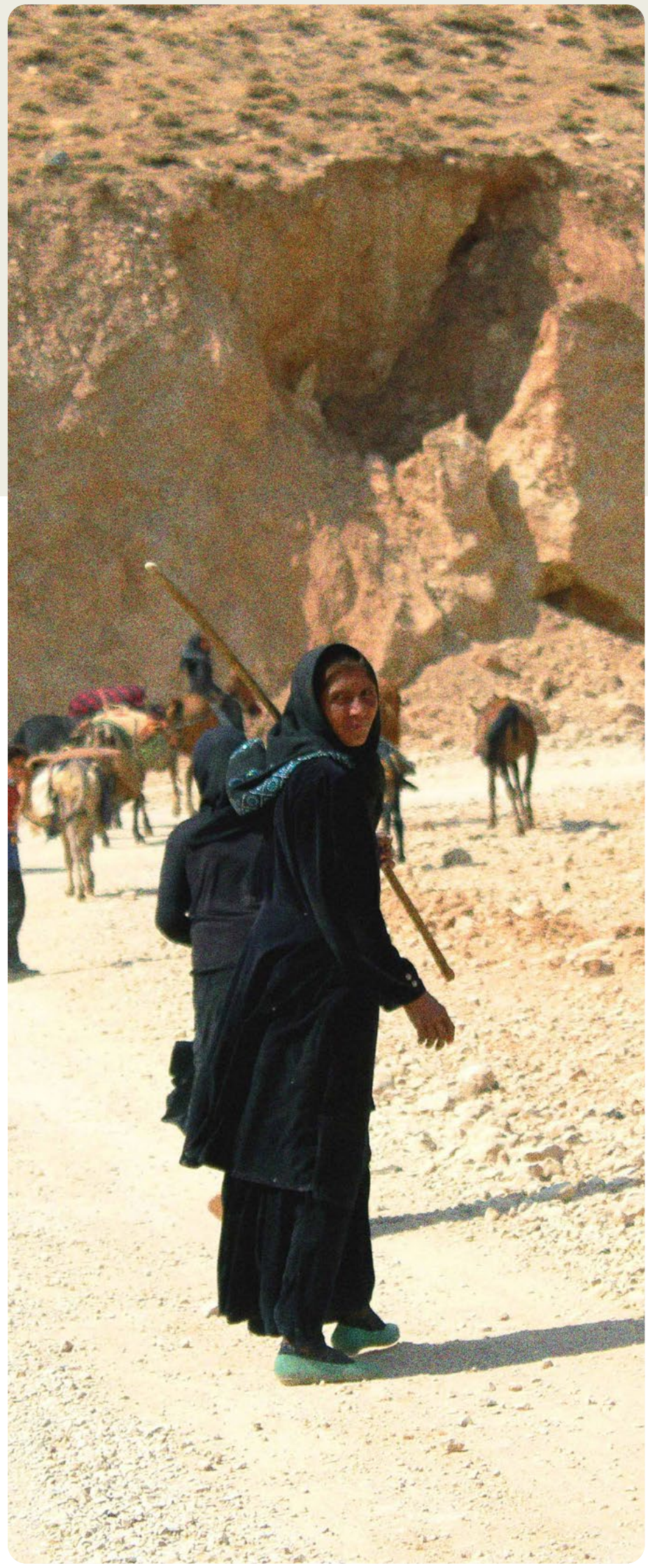
Context

Afghanistan is among the world's most climate-vulnerable countries, facing recurring droughts, floods, heatwaves, and extreme weather events that have devastating effects on agriculture, food security, and health systems. Women, in particular, shoulder disproportionate burdens, such as experiencing reduced access to reproductive health services when infrastructure collapses.

Approach

EPTDO operates a network of 1,500 local volunteers (680 of whom are women), who lead climate resilience and women's health awareness workshops across the country, including in remote provinces. These women serve as educators, community mobilizers, and frontline responders in climate resilience efforts. In a context where formal employment for women is highly restricted, EPTDO leverages existing community structures and relational models to enable women to continue leading on the ground without risking their safety.

They also use their vast volunteer network and climate change specialists to conduct localized climate-health assessments that deepen understanding of how climate change affects healthcare access (including SRH) for rural women.
The results were used to identify barriers and propose targeted interventions to improve reproductive health services in vulnerable communities as part of a case study called "Climate Change Impacts on Rural Women's Healthcare Access: A Case Study from Badakhshan Province, Afghanistan."
In Badakhshan Province, EPTDO facilitated a provincial consultation with government departments, the UN, and NGOs. They presented evidence of women's suffering in districts like



Yawan and Kohistan, where a lack of clinics forced pregnant women to travel long distances during floods and other disasters. Through these dissemination sessions, authorities acknowledged the urgency and committed to opening community clinics in those areas. In this way, EPTDO's role was catalytic—elevating local voices and influencing decision-makers to address reproductive health access.

CASE STUDY 5

Environmental Protection Training and Development Organization (EPTDO)

Afghanistan



RESULTS TO DATE

- EPTDO is the only organization in Afghanistan accredited by the UNFCCC, UNEP, and UNCCD, which has created linkages to participate in international conferences and advocate for climate action, notably at COPs since 2022. They have used their global platform to warn of the harms that will occur if climate-resilient health infrastructure is not addressed, especially for women's health issues, which are most at risk in the current humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.
- In Badakhshan, EPTDO's case study and dissemination sessions led to government authorities committing to open community clinics in districts where women's health access was most at risk. They provided an example of a successful local solution in Kohistan District, where the findings from the assessment led to the establishment of a clinic with a female doctor, significantly improving access to healthcare for pregnant women and reducing fatalities during travel for treatment.
- Built a nationwide network of 1,500 trained volunteers, who have reached over 50,000 beneficiaries with climate-health awareness programs.

> "Women should be given a chance to learn how they can stand against climate change and how they can protect themselves from natural disasters and the risks that come from climate change.
>
> *Abdulhadi Achakzai,*
> Founder & CEO, Environmental Protection Trainings and Development Organization (EPTDO)

CASE STUDY 6

Femfuture Collective Foundation

Community-Led SRHR Education in Tribal Regions in India

India



Organization

Femfuture Collective Foundation is a grassroots feminist organization in India working at the intersection of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), gender equity, and climate justice. Founded in 2022 by Nitisha Pandey, a former software engineer turned social sector leader, the Collective emerged from years of volunteer work in menstrual health, gender rights, and climate advocacy. Nitisha's early initiatives—crowdfunded campaigns on menstrual health and life skills—grew into a formal institution dedicated to transforming health ecosystems through innovation, education, and action. Femfuture's mission is to create a cadre of 100 future health champions by 2030, equipping young people—especially girls and women in underserved regions—with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make informed choices about their bodies, careers, and futures.

Context

India is home to over 500 million women and girls who often face poor health outcomes due to limited autonomy in health choices, high rates of child marriage, unmet contraceptive needs among adolescents, and widespread school dropouts linked to menstrual stigma. Vulnerabilities are compounded in tribal regions, such as Jharkhand, Odisha, and Uttar Pradesh, where Femfuture operates. These areas are marked by high rates of anemia, teenage pregnancy, climate shocks (cyclones, droughts, heatwaves), and extractive industries that disproportionately affect women and girls. Escalating climate displacement in these regions worsens access to SRHR, reflecting the urgent need to integrate SRHR into climate resilience planning.

Approach

Femfuture Collective advances SRHR and climate justice through an intersectional feminist, community-led model that combines structured fellowships with grassroots action. Its flagship program, the Red Action Lab (RAL), is a nine-month fellowship for young women aged 18–25, many from the same tribal and rural communities they serve. Fellows receive training in SRHR, climate justice, and leadership, then deliver a 45-hour curriculum on life skills, menstrual health, and reproductive health to adolescent girls, school dropouts, and young women. The curriculum is highly contextualized, using experiential learning tools like theater, games, and WhatsApp-based tools to overcome literacy and language barriers.

Through the Green Period Project, Femfuture also promotes sustainable menstruation by pairing menstrual health education with access to affordable, eco-friendly products. Fellows design localized action projects, conduct needs assessments, and adapt materials into regional languages, while engaging mothers to build intergenerational support systems.

Femfuture also pursues policy and systems engagement, embedding its work within existing community structures. The organization deliberately partners with local nonprofits that share feminist values, placing fellows within these organizations to ensure cultural resonance and sustainability. It also collaborates with schools and public healthcare workers—such as ASHA and ANM staff—to leverage state infrastructure, while simultaneously building their capacity. At the policy level, FemFuture advocates for the integration of SRHR into climate frameworks and funding streams, positioning itself as both a grassroots implementer and a systemic change agent.

CASE STUDY 6

Femfuture Collective Foundation

India



RESULTS TO DATE

- In January 2025, Femfuture launched its first cohort of 9 fellows, drawn from 7 districts across Jharkhand, Odisha, and Uttar Pradesh. The fellowship model has demonstrated a stronger uptake of SRHR topics in tribal areas compared to urban regions (e.g., Delhi), particularly regarding menstrual product use and understanding of contraception.
- The organisation has embraced community-centered design, whereby fellows are empowered to conduct needs assessments and adapt the curriculum in local languages (Sadri, Santali, Hindi). Mothersand caregivers are engaged through workshopsto create intergenerational support systemsfor adolescent girls.
- Femfuture works alongside public healthcare workers (ASHA, ANM) to strengthen existing state-level menstrual and reproductive health commitments.

> “
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> If there is climate-related displacement, it’s the safety and security of the women and girls that is the first threat. You’re leaving your home, your education is already in jeopardy. You’re not in the school anymore, but also having challenges managing your periods, managing access to contraception, and managing forced pregnancies. Access to abortion and contraception is going to be a big challenge, because how do you go and ask, right? Who do you go and ask?
>
> *Nitisha Pandey,*
> Founder, Femfuture Collective Foundation, India

CASE STUDY 7

The Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) Nepal

Women's Leadership for Climate-Resilient Menstrual Health

Nepal



Organization

The Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) Nepal is an NGO established over two decades ago, dedicated to building human capacity and promoting participatory development. As part of a global ICA network, the Nepal chapter has evolved from a focus on literacy and women's empowerment to leading innovative programming at the intersection of climate resilience and SRHR.

Context

Nepal's geography and socio-cultural fabric make women's health and rights highly vulnerable to climate change. Extreme weather events such as flash floods, droughts, and heatwaves compound existing inequities, while entrenched patriarchal norms perpetuate harmful practices like Chhaupadi (banishing menstruating women to sheds). Girls and women face severe barriers in accessing menstrual hygiene products, safe sanitation, and reproductive health services, leading to school absenteeism, poor health outcomes, and systemic exclusion. ICA Nepal recognized that these challenges cannot be addressed in isolation but must be confronted at the intersection of climate justice and SRHR.

Approach

ICA Nepal has pioneered integrated approaches that bridge climate resilience with SRHR, particularly menstrual health. Its Let's Talk Periods campaign addresses taboos, raises awareness in schools and communities, and mobilizes women's groups to challenge stigma. ICA has also established low-cost sanitary napkin production units run by women's cooperatives, simultaneously improving menstrual health access and generating livelihoods.

Beyond menstrual health, ICA Nepal collaborated with USAID and Panorama Global to develop curricula and training that connect climate change and SRHR. Through mentoring and capacity development, the organization supports women leaders across provinces in creating and implementing local action plans that address family planning, reproductive rights, and climate resilience.

ICA also works with informal women sanitation and waste workers—among the most marginalized populations—to highlight how climate shocks and unsafe working conditions intersect with health vulnerabilities. By using personal narratives and participatory workshops, ICA brings these invisible challenges into policy and advocacy spaces.

CASE STUDY 7

The Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) Nepal

Nepal



RESULTS TO DATE

- ICA Nepal has conducted menstrual hygiene management workshops in schools and communities, reaching more than 2,000 girls directly and mobilizing women's groups across rural districts.
- Low-cost sanitary napkin units established with women's cooperatives have enhanced local access to affordable products while generating income for women entrepreneurs.
- ICA has implemented a curriculum on SRHR and climate intersectionality, strengthening women's networks and leadership in provincial planning processes. ICA has fostered ten locally driven action plans created by women leaders that integrate family planning, reproductive rights, and climate adaptation strategies.

> "Our work evolved from literacy and income generation to addressing climate change directly. We realized women's health cannot be separated from the climate challenges they face every day. We are mentoring women leaders to design their own action plans. This way, communities themselves decide how to link reproductive health with climate resilience.
>
> *Ishu Subba,*
> Executive Chair, ICA Nepal

CASE STUDY 8

The Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) at Aga Khan University

Using Science to Drive Gender-Responsive Climate Adaptation & Policy

Pakistan



Organization

The Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) at Aga Khan University is a leading research institute in Pakistan that generates actionable, localized evidence at the intersection of climate change, environment, and public health. IGHD's work focuses on how extreme weather events—particularly heat—affect health among vulnerable groups such as women and children. Its research explores maternal and child health, mental health, and community resilience, while identifying strategies to strengthen adaptation. IGHD's findings directly inform national and global policy, ensuring that women's and children's health priorities are integrated into climate responses.

Context

Pakistan is one of the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world, with women and girls facing disproportionate health burdens from heatwaves, flooding, and air pollution. Yet national policy and planning often lack the rigorous, localized data needed to guide gender-sensitive interventions. IGHD fills this gap by producing high-quality evidence on climate-related health impacts—particularly for women and children—and advocating for policies that translate these insights into action.

Approach

IGHD employs a multidisciplinary, evidence-based approach to advancing gender-responsive climate and health resilience in Pakistan. A flagship initiative is a cohort study of over 6,000 pregnant women across different ecological zones, designed to assess how extreme heat affects maternal health outcomes—including preterm birth, low birth weight, and pregnancy complications—and to investigate the underlying biophysiological pathways.

In parallel, IGHD is evaluating a combination of structural and behavioral adaptation strategies to support the health of pregnant and lactating women, adolescent girls, and elderly women—groups most vulnerable to heat stress and health system breakdowns. Structural measures include reflective paints, roof shading, improved ventilation, and tree coverage. Behavioral strategies focus on hydration, adjusted work-rest cycles, and early warning systems to reduce heat stress in vulnerable communities. Their work integrates indigenous knowledge and community practices to ensure cultural relevance and local ownership. This integration is deeply rooted in women's experiences.

IGHD also documents the psychological toll of climate stress—capturing trauma, anxiety, depression, and chronic stress, particularly among women and adolescents—and assesses how primary health systems can respond to these needs. IGHD also incorporates psychosocial rituals such as storytelling and community-based healing, often led by women, to strengthen emotional resilience in the face of climate trauma.

CASE STUDY 8

The Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) at Aga Khan University

Pakistan



RESULTS TO DATE

- IGHD's findings are not confined to academic publications. They actively collaborate with key national and international partners—such as UNFPA, UNICEF, ADB, WHO, and Pakistan's Ministry of Climate Change—to ensure that gender-disaggregated data and locally grounded evidence inform national health adaptation planning processes.
- IGHD is conducting a flagship cohort study of over 6,000 pregnant women across various ecological zones in Pakistan, designed to assess the impact of extreme heat on maternal health outcomes.
- IGHD is conducting a large-scale evaluation of structural and behavioral adaptation strategies to combat heat stress for pregnant and lactating women, adolescent girls, and elderly women. Their work integrates adaptation strategies that are based on indigenous knowledge and community practices to ensure cultural relevance, cost-effectiveness, and local ownership.

> "Pakistan is a diverse country, from glaciers to deserts to sea, to lands of extreme heat. People have lived in these areas for centuries, surviving environmental extremes with indigenous knowledge. We are tapping into that knowledge, linking it with science, to understand how these practices work.
>
> *Dr. Jai K. Das,*
> Associate Director, IGHD

CASE STUDY 9

Ipas Nepal

Activating Female Frontline Leaders for Local Adaptation Planning

Nepal



Organization

Ipas Nepal is a country program of Ipas Global, which has over 50 years of global work in abortion rights and 23 years in Nepal. They work to ensure access to safe abortion and contraception, while promoting gender equity and reproductive justice. Around 2020, Ipas globally recognized the urgent links between climate change and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), leading to the launch of new country-level climate resilience initiatives. Ipas Nepal became one of the pioneers in integrating SRHR into climate adaptation frameworks, creating tools and programs that align reproductive health with disaster preparedness, resilience, and climate policy.

Context

Nepal is one of the world's most climate-vulnerable countries, facing recurring floods, landslides, droughts, and extreme weather events. These hazards disproportionately affect women and adolescent girls, particularly regarding access to SRHR services during crises. Traditional climate and disaster responses have often overlooked reproductive health needs. Ipas Nepal recognized this gap and began embedding SRHR into Nepal's Local Adaptation Plans of Action (LAPAs) and the broader climate resilience agenda.

Approach

Ipas Nepal's strategy combines grassroots leadership with systemic policy change. Through its "natural leader" model, the organization trains women and adolescent girls in disaster-prone areas to advocate for their reproductive health needs and to work with municipal governments on Local Adaptation Plans of Action (LAPAs). This ensures that services such as contraception, safe abortion, menstrual health, and gender-based violence response are recognized as essential during crises.

To strengthen health systems, Ipas Nepal developed a climate-resilient SRHR framework, merging its global safe abortion ecosystem model with the WHO's low-carbon climate-resilient framework. This tool allows the organization to measure resilience in health facilities and local governments, while also building evidence for broader investment.

At the same time, Ipas Nepal has pushed for policy reforms, successfully advocating for SRHR's inclusion in Nepal's second Health National Adaptation Plan {HNAP} and the country's position paper for COP29.

CASE STUDY 9

Ipas Nepal

Nepal



RESULTS TO DATE

- Because of Ipas Nepal's advocacy work, 3 provinces, 17 municipal governments, and 18 Local Adaptation Plans of Action (LAPAs) now include sexual and reproductive health in their disaster response and resilience planning, ensuring that services such as contraception, safe abortion, and menstrual health are prioritized during climate crises.
- Ipas Nepal has piloted new measurement tools—including a climate-resilient health facility scoring system that allows health providers and facilities to assess their preparedness and make targeted improvements, ensuring that SRHR services remain available and accessible during climate shocks. They have established a baseline value for climate resilience in health systems across 14 municipalities, so far.
- Ipas Nepal has successfully influenced national and global platforms. Their advocacy contributed to the inclusion of SRHR in Nepal's second Health National Adaptation Plan (HNAP), and more recently, in the country's official position paper for COP29 under the gender theme.

> "Climate change is now embedded into all our programming—it is not a separate stream but an intrinsic part of SRHR work. Funders are still catching up; many want more evidence before investing. But this newness is also an opportunity for us to lead and shape the field.
>
> *Khusbu Poudel,*
> Program Specialist, Ipas Nepal

CASE STUDY 10

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF)

Advancing Gender-Responsive Local Adaptation through Women's Leadership in Bangladesh

Bangladesh



Organization

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) was established in 2002 as a project of CARE Bangladesh with initial funding from the UK government. The project's mandate was to strengthen human rights and governance by funding and building the capacity of small civil society organizations across Bangladesh. Within three years, MJF transitioned into an independent national grant-making organization, registered with its own board in 2006. Since then, it has supported over 400 CSOs throughout the country, focusing on human rights, governance, gender equality, prevention of violence against women, and climate change.

Context

Bangladesh faces mounting climate-related risks, including salinity intrusion, cyclones, and sea level rise.
These crises affect women disproportionately, undermining their reproductive health, safety, and autonomy. Research and lived experience show direct linkages between environmental stressors and SRHR outcomes: miscarriages linked to saline water, malnutrition due to crop failures, heightened gender-based violence in disaster contexts, and child marriage as a coping mechanism when families lose livelihoods.

Approach

Over two decades, MJF has become one of Bangladesh's leading grant-making and advocacy organizations, playing a pivotal role in shaping progressive laws. MJF's approach to climate and gender resilience combines grassroots empowerment, evidence-based advocacy, and institutional reform. They work through a network of over 400 grassroots CSOs in remote, climate-vulnerable areas across the country. MJF gathers evidence from its grassroots partners to drive national and local-level policy advocacy. They organize policy roundtables where CSOs engage with national and local policymakers to share how climate change is impacting women and push for increased investment in climate-vulnerable areas, so that public institutions—including hospitals, schools, and law enforcement—become more responsive to women's health needs during and after climate shocks. The foundation also works in direct climate-resilient SRHR programming through grassroots civil society partners in the most climate-vulnerable areas of Bangladesh, enabling them to deliver reproductive health services, prevent child marriage, and provide safe spaces during crises. MJF also promotes climate-resilient solutions, such as installing safe water pumps in saline-affected areas and supporting the cultivation of saline-resistant crops and alternative livelihoods that reduce the pressures leading to adverse SRHR outcomes.

CASE STUDY 10

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF)

Bangladesh



RESULTS TO DATE

- The organization is currently implementing climate-resilient SRHR interventions in 14 districts through 13 partner organizations in some of the most climate-affected areas of Bangladesh by enabling small CSOs to deliver SRHR-sensitive services, respond to emergencies, and advocate for women's needs.
- MJF and its partners promote climate-resilient livelihoods and SRHR among 23,000 households through measures such as safe water access, saline-tolerant crops, and alternative livelihoods for women, thereby reducing economic stress that fuels early marriage and unsafe migration. By addressing economic insecurity through alternative livelihoods and climate-resilient agriculture, MJF has created pathways that reduce the pressure of early marriage in times of climate stress. These interventions have been critical in flood- and cyclone-prone regions where child marriage spikes as a coping strategy.
- At the national level, MJF has leveraged evidence from its grassroots partners to push for recognition of SRHR in climate adaptation policy. Its advocacy has ensured that women's health and reproductive rights are discussed alongside infrastructure and disaster risk reduction in government planning. By activating female frontline leaders, MJF is redefining adaptation planning in Bangladesh — transforming it from a top-down technical exercise into a people-centered, feminist process.

> "Bangladesh is at risk of not meeting its SDG targets unless climate resilience and women's health are adequately funded. Donors must understand how dire the situation is. A large section of the population will fall so far behind that they will not be able to be pulled back, and that will impact the overall development and sustainability of the country.
>
> *Shaheen Anam,*
> Executive Director, Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), Bangladesh

CASE STUDY 11

Marie Stopes Society (MSS) Pakistan

SRHR Health System Strengthening for Disaster Preparedness

Pakistan



Organization

MSI Reproductive Choices is a global leader in sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), with active programs in over 36 countries, including South Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan). Its in-country partner, Marie Stopes Society (MSS) Pakistan, has been operating for over 30 years, focusing on ensuring reproductive health rights and services for women across Pakistan, particularly in underserved and hard-to-reach areas. Based in Australia, MSI Asia Pacific is a part of the global MSI Reproductive Choices partnership. It supports MSS and other country programs through advocacy, policy engagement, regional grant management, and income generation. The organisation has been working on integrating SRHR and climate resilience, including disaster preparedness, into programming. Their work is grounded in community and stakeholder engagement, evidence generation, and a growing focus on climate-vulnerable regions.

Context

During the 2022 floods in Pakistan, many reproductive health services became inaccessible. SRHR was not a priority in emergency responses, often overshadowed by more pressing needs, such as shelter and food. Women experienced restricted access to contraceptives, antenatal care, menstrual hygiene, and safe delivery services. These gaps highlighted the urgent need to integrate SRHR into disaster preparedness and response. MSS and MSI found that both government departments and humanitarian actors often overlook or deprioritise SRHR in times of climate crisis. Ministries working on health, population, and climate frequently operate in silos, lacking coordination. Stigma around abortion and contraception, especially in conservative communities, makes SRHR advocacy even more complex in emergency settings.

Approach

MSS, supported by MSI Asia Pacific, works on both service delivery and systemic change. On the ground, their health outreach teams provide contraceptives, maternal health care, and other SRHR services to climate-affected and marginalised populations. They also deliver awareness-raising and community education, often in areas with limited access to SRHR services and low literacy rates.

At a strategic level, they engage with ministries and humanitarian partners to advocate for the inclusion of SRHR in climate adaptation plans and emergency response frameworks. This includes integrating SRHR in preparedness toolkits, standard operating procedures, and local-level interventions. Their focus is not only on direct health services, but also on influencing policy and funding priorities, and ensuring that the SRHR-climate link is recognised institutionally.

CASE STUDY 11

Marie Stopes Society (MSS) Pakistan

Pakistan



RESULTS TO DATE

- During the 2022 floods, MSS was one of the key SRHR responders in many areas. Their experience in providing health services in emergency conditions enabled them to act quickly. They identified clear gaps in menstrual hygiene, maternal care, and access to contraceptives during the flood response and stepped in to fill them. This direct experience strengthened their argument for integrating SRHR in emergency planning at both local and national levels.
- The team has piloted approaches that start with community engagement and subsequently influence formal structures—such as training community workers, holding consultations, and participating in technical working groups. There is now increased interest from government partners and donors in integrating SRHR and climate change.
- While systemic shifts are still ongoing, MSS Pakistan has seen an increase in local and community-level support. Stakeholders now turn to them for tools and guidance. Their documentation of client voices has been instrumental in highlighting lived experiences and promoting community-centred service delivery.

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> Oftentimes, the impact on women and sexual reproductive health and rights gets forgotten in climate debates. On the ground, though, the reality is that access to services, exacerbation of poverty, and gender-based violence are already unfolding.
>
> *Dr. Syed Khurram Azmat*

CASE STUDY 12

Swasti Health Catalyst

Training Frontline Health Workers to Combat Maternal Heat Risk

India

Organization

Swasti Health Catalyst is a global public health organization based in India, with a mission to add 100 million healthy days to the lives of marginalized communities. For over two decades, Swasti has worked across more than 20 countries on HIV, women's health, and social protection. In recent years, Swasti has deepened its work on the climate–health–SRHR nexus, recognizing that climate shocks such as heatwaves, floods, and droughts disrupt access to essential sexual and reproductive health services, intensify maternal and neonatal risks, and exacerbate gendered health inequities.

Context

Extreme heat is now one of the deadliest climate risks worldwide. India, home to 1.4 billion people, is especially vulnerable, with states like Andhra Pradesh frequently experiencing temperatures above 40°C. Pregnant women, children, the elderly, outdoor laborers, and people with chronic illnesses are at disproportionate risk. Yet, frontline health workers—despite being the first point of contact for vulnerable communities—have historically lacked training and tools to address climate-driven health impacts. Swasti identified this critical gap and, in partnership with the Global Consortium on Climate and Health Education (GCCHE) at Columbia University, launched the Climate Care Champions Program (CCCP) to ensure frontline workers can integrate SRHR into climate-health responses.

Approach

The CCCP uses a train-the-trainer model to embed climate-health resilience into local health systems by equipping frontline health workers (FLWs)—many of whom are women themselves and trusted sources for SRHR services—with knowledge and tools to address how climate stressors impact reproductive and maternal health. FLWs already trained in maternal and reproductive health are now trained to recognize how heat stress affects pregnancy, fertility, menstrual health, and newborn care. The Heat x Health curriculum was contextualized through focus groups, ensuring it reflected women's lived experiences—for example, pregnant agricultural workers in Andhra Pradesh facing dehydration and miscarriages under extreme heat.



The Andhra Pradesh government financed training costs (travel, accommodation, logistics), making the program scalable and cost-efficient. Because FLWs are part of the government health system, they are already trusted by communities and salaried by the state. This ensures ongoing delivery of climate-health awareness even after external project funding ends.

CASE STUDY 12

Swasti Health Catalyst

India



RESULTS TO DATE

- In Anantapuramu district, 91 master trainers trained 2,266 frontline workers across 71 Primary Health Centers, reaching an estimated 4.57 million people with life-saving heat-health preparedness messages.
- Training led to a 57% increase in knowledge of infant-specific symptoms and significant gains in recognizing pregnancy-related complications linked to heat stress.
- Women reported adapting daily routines during pregnancy (e.g., resting in shaded spaces, increasing hydration) after FLWs raised awareness. Couples were counseled on contraception use during periods when accessing facilities was disrupted by heat.
- Data generated from FLW training and community work fed into the development of a district-level Heat Action Plan in Anantapuramu. This plan, co-signed by the District Magistrate and multiple line departments (women and child, fire, livelihood mission, panchayati raj, education, health, water, electricity, disaster management), institutionalized climate-health priorities into governance, including provisions to safeguard maternal health services and prioritize pregnant and lactating women as high-risk groups.

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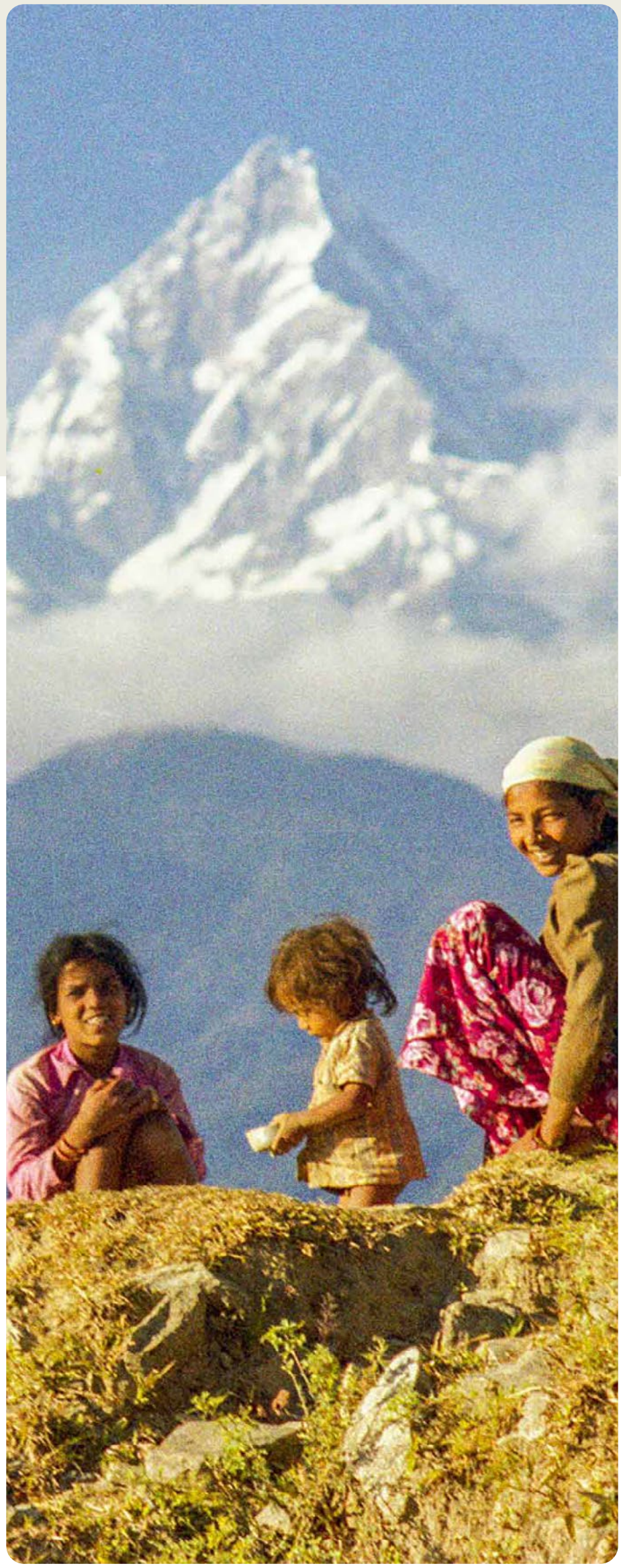
> When extreme heat disrupts immunization or antenatal visits, it is women and newborns who suffer most. Our work ensures these services continue despite climate shocks.
>
> *Beautey Kumarri,*
> Project Lead, Swasti Health Catalyst

CASE STUDY 13

The Women's Rehabilitation Center (WOREC)

Women-Led Climate Disaster Response and Advocacy

Nepal



Organization

The Women's Rehabilitation Center (WOREC) is a feminist organization in Nepal focused on gender justice, ecological justice, and community-based support for survivors of violence. WOREC works across multiple domains, including disaster response, health service delivery, policy advocacy, and women's leadership. Their programming explicitly integrates human rights, SRHR, and climate resilience through a feminist lens.

Context

Nepal is highly vulnerable to various climate hazards, including floods, landslides, glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), droughts, and erratic monsoons. These events displace communities, reduce access to healthcare, and heighten risks of gender-based violence. Women and girls from marginalized and indigenous communities—many living near rivers or in the hills—are disproportionately impacted. Displacement leads to breakdowns in health systems, while patriarchal crisis responses often overlook sexual and reproductive health needs.

Approach

WOREC operates Sneha Kendras (Women-Friendly Spaces), which were initiated during the 2008 Koshi floods and scaled up during the 2015 earthquake. These safe spaces offer feminist care for women and girls, including psychosocial counseling and healing, GBV crisis response, legal aid, dignity kits that address SRHR needs, SRHR services, and nutritious meals. Eight such centers were active during the COVID-19 and post-disaster periods in Kathmandu, Morang, Dhanusha, Dang, Rukum, Jagarkot, Kailali, and other disaster-affected areas, and remain operational as needed. They serve as both emergency relief centers and spaces for leadership building and collective healing.

WOREC also conducts feminist scoping studies, such as one with ARROW in the Dang, Udayapur, Koshi, and Mahakali river basin, which documented how disaster displacement disrupts prenatal care and menstrual hygiene management. WOREC advocates for national policies in Nepal that include women in disaster response leadership and local climate adaptation planning. Their integrated feminist disaster response approach has influenced policy dialogues with local authorities, including the adoption of gender-sensitive budgeting and the inclusion of SRHR in disaster planning frameworks.

CASE STUDY 13

The Women's Rehabilitation Center (WOREC)

Nepal



RESULTS TO DATE

- Sneha Kendras (Women-Friendly Safe Spaces) have been institutionalized across multiple crises as standard safe spaces for women. 3 Sneha Kendras remained operational and 5 can be operated immediately after the disaster in support of local government, offering psychosocial counseling, legal support, feminist SRHR care, and integrated women's health camps.
- More than 6,000 emergency relief packages and over 5,000 dignity kits were distributed during pandemics and natural disasters.
- More than 80,000 women (including pregnant and lactating mothers) from affected populations were identified and supported across flood-affected districts.

> "
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> **Women are the first responders in disasters—but they are not seen as humanitarian workers. That needs to change.**
>
> *Sunita Mainali,*
> Executive Director, The Women's Rehabilitation Center (WOREC)

CASE STUDY 14

The Young Changemakers, Pakistan

Using Arts, Theater, and Storytelling to Challenge Gender & Climate Discourse

Pakistan



Organization

The Young Changemakers (YCM) is a youth-led feminist movement founded by young people that works at the intersection of climate justice, gender justice, social inclusion, peacebuilding, and SRHR. At the heart of YCM's identity is the arts as activism. They believe that theatre and storytelling are not only tools for expression but powerful vehicles for awareness, advocacy, and the protection and promotion of human rights in Pakistan. By engaging communities through the arts, YCM creates safe spaces where the voices of marginalized youth are heard, taboos are challenged, and social norms can be transformed.

Context

In the regions where YCM operates, climate impacts, gender inequality, and exclusion intersect in ways that are often overlooked in mainstream discourse. Girls are pulled out of school during floods and forced into early marriages. Without toilets in flood-affected or rural areas, menstruation becomes unsafe and undignified. Minority and marginalized youth, including women, religious minorities, and underrepresented communities, face heightened risks and are often excluded from humanitarian aid and decision-making spaces. SRHR, peacebuilding, and human rights are rarely addressed in climate or development programming in Pakistan. Policies often sideline bodily autonomy and social inclusion, treating climate as purely an environmental or infrastructural problem while neglecting its human and gendered dimensions.

Approach

YCM challenges this narrow framing by insisting that bodily autonomy, peace, social inclusion, and arts are central to true resilience. Interactive and forum theatre is used to connect climate change, gender justice, and SRHR with lived realities like child marriage, abuse, health care barriers, and displacement. Storytelling and the creative arts help young people express their trauma, rehearse alternatives to harmful traditions, and reimagine equitable futures. Community dialogues and school clubs provide safe spaces for learning, leadership, and solidarity, building bridges across divides. Through this arts-based advocacy, YCM ensures that young people are not treated as passive victims but recognized as leaders, creators, and agents of transformation.

CASE STUDY 14

The Young Changemakers, Pakistan

Pakistan



RESULTS TO DATE

- Trained more than 200 theatre groups and collaborated with over 300 organizations across Pakistan.
- Directly reached over 300,000 people through interactive performances, workshops, and storytelling spaces.
- Inspired behavioral and intergenerational change, including parents choosing to educate daughters instead of marrying them early. Advanced peace and social inclusion by bringing marginalized voices of women, youth, and minorities into civic and policy spaces through art.
- Earned recognition in national and international forums for pioneering the use of arts-based feminist and human rights approaches to advocacy.

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> **Floods, heatwaves, child marriage, and displacement in camps - these aren’t separate issues. Climate hits bodies before it hits buildings.**
>
> ***Sobia Ali,***
> Founding Director, The Young Changemakers

