

National Indigenous Women Forum



Annual Report
2021 - 2022

About NIWF

National Indigenous Women Forum (NIWF) works with indigenous women and girls across Nepal to empower and support them in securing indigenous women's rights.

We focus on solving the root causes of vulnerability and exclusion of indigenous women and girls. From the grassroots to policy level, we come together to intensify advocacy for securing rights of indigenous women and indigenous girls, and run programmes with focus on advocacy, training, discussion, interaction, research and publication as needed.

www.niwnepal.org.np

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Cover image: Sanila Lama, NIWF

WE ARE INDIGENOUS WOMEN FORUM

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NIWF MISSION

Advocate ensuring the rights of highly marginalised and endangered indigenous peoples, particularly women and girls.

NIWF VISION

Promoting the social, cultural, political and economic rights of Indigenous Women.

Our Constituencies

NIWF works with Indigenous women and girls across Nepal. In doing so, NIWF emphasises on the intersectionality of Indigenous women and girls. Indigenous men are not direct beneficiaries of our interventions, however, their engagement is valued as and when required. NIWF is led by Indigenous women where all the Board members are cis-women.

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A Message from the NIWF Team

As we write this, we are striving to cope with economic recession caused partly by the conflict between Ukraine and Russia at such times. The living costs have risen unprecedentedly, and the government is entangled by corruption and party politics. Moreover, human rights violation in neighbouring country Myanmar has alarmingly escalated. Last year was not an easy one either. We were all recovering from the loss of our beloved ones and socio-economic adversity caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the early phase of the last year, our colleagues were bedridden due to the COVID infection, and we were not able to meet each other physically. The complete ease on mobility started sometime around September, but again followed by some restriction during the end of January and early February. This forced us to postpone some activities at grassroots level.

Despite the crisis caused by the Pandemic, NIWF's engagement during this period was remarkable both at grassroots level and lobbying the government. We are happy to empower young Indigenous girls, and expand the network of FIG. The most exciting part for us would be that we were able to offer ten Bankariya girls and boys a three-month basic computer course of which the last month is running. Very soon, we will set up one desktop computer in the community. We believe that the computer skills will be an asset for the young members from this endangered indigenous group to compete the tough contest of grabbing an opportunity.

As per our strategic planning 2022 – 2025, we have started emphasising on the issues of climate change and biodiversity. We reviewed the national level policies and programmes regarding biodiversity in relation to Indigenous women, which we are expanding to provincial and local level in coming years.

We are always overwhelmed by the community members that we work with. From reading *Struggle from Recognition: Experiential Stories of Indigenous Women* that we published last year, we are further motivated to advance Indigenous feminist movement.

In solidarity,



Suni Lama
Chairperson



Bina Devi Rai
Executive Director

Key Strategic Areas

During more than 2-decade-long journey, NIWF has reached more than 27 districts, and more than 15 Indigenous communities across the nation. NIWF has supported especially highly marginalised Indigenous women and men by strengthening their leadership, empowering them economically, and lobbying and advocating for their rights. Our work this year was focused on four broad areas: Climate Smart Farming, Empowerment, Youth Initiatives and Research and Documentation.



1. Climate Smart Farming

To mitigate the challenges in the context of climate change, pressure of neo-liberal policies and globalisation, and strengthen their agency through improved economic status, we expanded our endeavours on climate smart farming especially through Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

3. Youth Initiatives

Acknowledging the role of youth for the preservation of Indigenous knowledge and cultures, achieving sustainable development goals, and meaningful participation and negotiation in federal structures, we prioritised Indigenous young men last year too.

5. Lobbying

We submitted the memorandum to concerned ministries for the effective implementation of CEDAW recommendation relating to the rights of IW, and coordinated for the delegation of endangered Bankariya peoples to submit a memorandum to Hon. Ministry Sashi Shrestha at Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation. We also launched a digital signature campaign to amend the Constitution of Nepal, 2015 to address the issues of IW.

2. Empowerment

Economic empowerment of highly marginalised Indigenous women remained a significant intervention last year as well that brought positive changes among the beneficiaries, helping to meet SDG 5 gender equality.

4. Research & Documentation

Last year, we reviewed the policies and programmes related to bio-diversity, gathered cases of violation of human rights of IW, published a profile of elected Indigenous women representatives, a collection of experiential stories of Indigenous women, and produced a documentary about the struggle of 5 IW.



Key Strategic Areas

Climate Smart Farming

We started climate smart farming in the name of pest management training in 2018 with the support of Madre. The success with the Pahari Indigenous women has led us to replicate the project with other Indigenous women. Most of the Pahari women have been applying integrated pest management (IPM) techniques in their farming.

Last year, we implemented advanced level IPM trainings with Chhantyal from Baglung, Sunuwar from Ramechhap, Hayu from Sindhuli and Thami from Dolakha. Similarly, we started fundamental IPM training with freed bonded labourers belonging to Tharu community, and Raji Indigenous Women. So far, we have introduced IPM to at least 9 Indigenous communities including Chepangs from Dhading and Tamang from Kathamndu in addition to the list listed above.



Empowerment

Last year, we implemented leadership development trainings to Indigenous women and girls. However, there were no programmes that directly engaged our Indigenous women and girls in income-generation activities. Yet users groups formed in earlier periods were continuing small-scale savings and credit cooperation initiated by NIWF.

Youth Initiatives

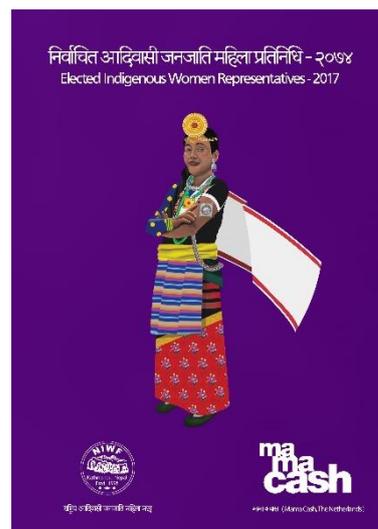


A total of 8 Leadership and Advocacy Trainings were successfully conducted for the Indigenous adolescent girls and women from Pahari, Tamang, Hayu, Sunuwar, Thami, Chhantyal, Chepang, and Bankariya in 8 districts. During the trainings, the participants learnt about international instruments such as UNDRIP, ILO 169, CEDAW including discussion on Climate Change, its impact, and the role of Indigenous Youth in climate change mitigation. The training also provided space for them to discuss and identify the key issues and challenges as a community, as Indigenous women, and youth.

Under a separate project, young Indigenous girls from Tamang, Hyolmo, Karmarong, Uraon, Dhimal, Baram, Sherpa, Tharu, Newar and Limbu participated in a 2-day training that included topics such as intersectionality of gender, gender-based violence, climate change, biodiversity and Indigenous concerns. These trainings were aimed to develop leadership capacity by equipping skills and knowledge on their rights as an Indigenous Woman and Peoples.

Research and Documentation

During this fiscal year, we were able to carry out a policy review related to biodiversity policies and programmes that our governments have launched so far. We also prepared a profile of elected indigenous women representatives in the General Elections, and elections to the provincial assemblies and federal parliament held in 2017 and 2018 respectively. Another notable publication was *Struggle for Recognition: Experiential Stories of Indigenous Women*. This publication captures the stories of struggle, success of Indigenous women leaders who had been working in their community for the protection and promotion of the rights as Indigenous Women and Indigenous Communities. We were also able to document the life stories of 5 IW in the form of documentary video. The documentary features 5 indigenous Women from different spheres including bureaucracy, Indigenous movement, LGBTQ movement, and business.



They include Pinky Gurung, LGBTIQ activist; Stela Tamang, Indigenous Rights Activist/Educationist, Radhika Tamang, Vice-speaker, Bagmati Province; Saraswoti Rai, Entrepreneur; and Parbati Thapa Magar, Former Deputy Inspector General of *Police*.

Lobbying

We submitted the memorandum to concerned ministries for the effective implementation of CEDAW recommendation relating to the rights of IW, and coordinated for the delegation of endangered Bankariya peoples to submit a memorandum to Hon. Ministry Sashi Shrestha at Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation. We also launched a digital signature campaign to amend the Constitution of Nepal, 2015 to address the issues of IW.



Brief Overview of Projects

1.

Title:	Building the leadership skills and networking of the highly marginalised women and girls by providing capacity building, exposure visits, interactions and awareness building in Bagmati and Gandaki Provinces, Nepal
Objective:	Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls
Donor:	CFLI
Duration:	September 2021 – April 2021
Project Location:	Makwanpur, Sindhuli, Dolakha, Dhading, Lalitpur, Ramechhap, Kathmandu, Baglung
Beneficiaries:	Bankariya, Hayu, Thami, Chepang, Pahari, Sunuwar, Tamang, Channtyal women and girls
Total Budget:	CAD 53,924
Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total 161 (114 women and 47 girls) representing 8 Indigenous Communities directly benefited from the Leadership and Advocacy skills training held in 8 districts. About 95 percent of the total participants had attended the training for the first time. - Total 42 FIG members (31 women and 11 girls) from 8 communities attended the National Level exchange which included a representation of 1 Indigenous Women with Disability. - 1 documentary video “Struggle for Recognition/Pahichan ko Shangrasha” is produced in Nepali with English subtitles which captures the stories of struggles and success of Indigenous Women Leaders working and contributing in various spectrums. - A publication of stories of 15 Indigenous Women leaders from the community to national level which includes their stories of struggles, success and lessons learnt. - Total 28 members representing national and local Government authorities (3), National commissions and Foundations (8), Parliamentarians (3) and Indigenous Peoples Organizations (11) and political leaders (3) were not only aware of issues and problems of endangered, disadvantaged, marginalised, highly marginalized Indigenous Communities but also made commitment to support the communities to address their issues.

2.

Title:	Capacity Development Support Programme for women MPs from Seven Provincial Assemblies
Objective:	Help women MPs to be more resourceful, informative, and oriented on thematic concerns in their respective thematic committees and in the parliament.
Donor:	UNDP Nepal
Duration:	25 October – 30 November 2021
Project Location:	Virtually
Beneficiaries:	Women MPs from 7 provincial assemblies
Total Budget:	NPR 385,200
Outcome:	<p>The women MPs gained added knowledge of both theoretical and empirical aspects on the four themes mentioned above. This has boosted their extant skills and provided them necessary skills for the well-functioning in the parliament. The interaction with the MPs also provided a space to know about the latest political situation of their political career.</p> <p>The responses of participant MPs show that the sessions to a great extent achieved its purposes. For instance, some participants of Interpersonal Communication and Negotiation remarked that the interaction was very effective in a situation where women MPs' voices are not well heard of in the male-dominated political sphere. They said they would implement the learnings from the training for effective negotiation.</p> <p>Similarly, some MPs who participated in Intersectionality of Gender session remarked that the issue is of immense importance, but the time allocated was less. Their wish that it would have been provided as soon as they were elected as MPs indicate that the learnings on this issue could have come in use since they took up the position of an MP.</p>

3.

Title:	Preparation of Women (Including Adolescent Girls) in empowering Resilience
Objective:	Support local grassroots women and girls through financial, technical or other organizational strengthening support to enable and strengthen their work for peace, human rights and gender equality, and ensure access to urgently needed services for women and communities.
Donor:	Madre
Duration:	10 Nov 2021 – 30 Sep 2022
Project Location:	IPM: Kailali, Baglung, Sindhuli, Ramechhap, Dolakha, Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Dhading; Training for young girls in Kathmandu
Beneficiaries:	Indigenous girls and women
Total Budget:	USD \$50,000
Outcome:	Indigenous women have increased economic independence via sustainable and cost-effective agriculture, especially vegetable farming by preventing the damage caused by pests, diseases and weeds through IPM methods. Young Indigenous Girls are more capable of dealing with the issues of gender, social inclusion, VAW, climate crisis and biodiversity from Indigenous women's perspectives.

4.

Title:	Fact Finding Mission (Sunkoshi Hydropower II)
Objective:	Plan and organise Study visit to Majhi Community affected by the Sunkoshi Hydro Power II in Ramechhap District
Partner:	APWLD
Duration:	September 2021 – December 2021
Project Location:	Kunauri and Bhatauli, Ramechhap
Beneficiaries:	Majhi women and community
Total Budget:	USD 1,124
Outcome:	The government was put under pressure to not violate the rights of Indigenous Majhi peoples.

5.

Title:	Dialogues for Meaningful Implementation of CEDAW Recommendations related to Indigenous Women made in the Concluding Observations of 2018
Objective:	To pressurise the government implement the CEDAW recommendations
Donor:	IWGIA
Duration:	October 2019 – October 2022
Project Location:	National
Beneficiaries:	Elected Indigenous MPs, locally elected leaders, Ministries, Public
Total Budget:	USD 75,031
Outcome:	MPs from Provincial Assemblies, locally elected representatives, Public Citizens (TV Viewers) were more aware of CEDAW Recommendations, and the government is more obliged for its implementation. Digital signature campaign has drawn attention of the government toward the voice of IW to amend the Constitution.

6.

Title:	Strengthening the capacity and skill of Newar Indigenous Women on resilience and preserve their culture, tradition and language
Objective:	To strengthen the capacity and skill of Newar Indigenous Women on resilience and preserve their culture, tradition and language
Donor:	FIMI
Duration:	June 2021 – October 2021
Project Location:	Kathmandu
Beneficiaries:	Newar Women
Total Budget:	USD 4,800
Outcome:	Newar Indigenous Women has enhanced capacity and skill on resilience, and were more aware of international conventions and mechanism about Indigenous women.

7.

Title:	Organisational Strengthening
Objective:	To strengthen the organisation
Donor:	Mama Cash
Duration:	01 December 2021 – 30 November 2023 ¹
Project Location:	Province Headquarters, Kathmandu
Beneficiaries:	NIWF Provincial Chapters, Rai, Lepchha, Santhal
Total Budget:	Euro 40,000
Outcome:	NIWF provincial chapters were reformed, two provinces marked Women's Day

¹ As the project period covers two fiscal years, half of the total budget was applicable for the last fiscal year.

Financial Narrative

In the fiscal year from 16 July 2021 to 15 June 2022, NIWF received grants totalling NPR 16994349.20. Our expenditure for the period was 19421813.30 which was 33.64 % higher than the previous year. NIWF's income and expenditure in the past few years have been on the constant growth, reflecting the expansion of NIWF's work and our capacity.

During this period, we received multi-year core funding support from Mama Cash and multi-year programmes support from the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA). We were excited to renew the programmes support from Madre. We also appreciate Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) for supporting us in our solidarity with Majhi women and community who are struggling against the Sunkoshi Hydropower-II project. The Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) remained a noble grant partner during this period. And, we had an opportunity to work together with UNDP Nepal again after some years. Programme costs for the year constituted more than 73 percent of the total costs.

Board and Team

Board:

Suni Lama, Chair

Yasso Kanti Bhattachan, Vice Chair

Sushila Maya Gole, Treasurer

Alina Saba, Member

Rashmi Thapa Magar, member

Muna Shakya, member

Staff:

Bina Devi Rai, Executive Director

Amit Tamang, Technical Adviser

Ashok Lama, Admin & Finance Officer

Sanila Lama, Project Associate

Sabin Gurun, Fund Raising Officer

Tak Bahadur Tamang, Advocacy Consultant

Santoshi Bankariya, Field Supervisor

Suntali Bankariya, Asst. Field Supervisor

Nirmaya Ale, Office Support Staff

THANK YOU



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