



ZURICH FLOOD RESILIENCE ALLIANCE

Impact Brief - Mercy Corps in Nepal (2020-2023)

This brief summarizes Mercy Corps' work and impact in Nepal as part of the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance, during the period 2020 to 2023. During this period, the Mercy Corps program aimed to secure increased funding for flood resilience, strengthen disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate policies, and enhance resilience practices to protect communities and livelihoods in Sudurpaschim Province.



As the lead for advocacy under the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance (the Alliance), in Nepal Mercy Corps contributed to increasing and targeted funding to strengthen flood resilience in vulnerable communities. Using a systems and landscape approach, it involved communities and local governments in decision-making. Through evidence generation and partnerships, Mercy Corps influenced policy and investment at national and sub-national levels, while increasing community action, enhancing local government investment, and improving DRR and resilience planning in Sudurpaschim province of Nepal.

2020 - 2023 SNAPSHOT:

Stronger governance, resilient communities, lasting impact



Government officials (34% female) from four local governments and one provincial government strengthened their expertise in climate resilience and disaster risk management.



Through community-led advocacy, 2,055 people successfully accessed 2055 resources to enhance their resilience to floods and climate-related hazards.



Community members (54% female) across 14 communities in 1696 Sudurpaschim Province participated in capacity-building initiatives



510503

The provincial DRR and climate change adaptation (CCA) budget allocation tripled, increasing from 1.4% to 4.2% from financial year (FY) 2020/21 to FY2022/23, with an additional 2.65% rise in FY2023/24, benefiting 510,503 people in Sudurpaschim Province.



Individuals across 14 communities increased their awareness of 7252 resilience strategies in the face of floods and climate-related hazards.





IMPACT OF OUR WORK

Highlights of the results we achieved in the period 2020 to 2023 include the following:

- ◆ More local communities are aware of climate challenges and disaster risks: 7,252 people were reached through the program's activities.
- ◆ The advocacy efforts led by community champions achieved early success by influencing local governments to allocate funds to DRR resilience, with a total amount of 3,500,000 Nepalese rupees (US\$ 26,000) allocated for small-scale interventions, including drainage works, gravelling, setting up electricity transformers and community planting initiatives.
- ◆ Following successful advocacy efforts, a clause mandating 5% of municipal budgets for DRR and CCA activities was incorporated in Sudurpaschim Province. In FY2020–2021, approximately US\$ 4.4 million was spent under this allocation, which increased to US\$ 7.2 million in 2021–2022.
- Our advocacy, working alongside our partners, also helped influence the formulation and endorsement of key policies, including Local Disaster and Climate Resilient Plans, Disaster Preparedness and Response Plans, and operational guidelines for Community Disaster Management Committees (CDMCs) across four municipalities.
- Our flood resilience solutions, including bioengineering, bio dikes, and flood-adaptive crops such as sugarcane, helped conserve agricultural land, protect vulnerable households, restore barren land, and support livelihoods.
- We led the establishment of the Doda Watershed Multistakeholder Forum, bringing together 10 municipalities in Sudurpaschim Province to collaboratively strengthen resilience in the watershed.



Thanks to Mercy Corps, our community now understands disaster risks and takes proactive measures to prepare and stay safe. When flood alerts are issued, most residents gather essentials and relocate to safe shelters independently, only 10–15% need extra convincing. The Mercy Corps program has empowered us to save lives and protect homes." – Basanti Sunar, Secretary of the Kutiyakabar CDMC



Our community is now more proactively preparing for disasters, raising awareness, guiding children to avoid rivers during floods and ensuring pregnant women and individuals with disabilities are safely relocated." – Maina Kumari Rawal, Deputy Mayor, Alitaal, Chiran





FROM STRATEGY TO SUCCESS: **ENSURING IMPACT AND EFFECTIVENESS**



Collaborating to increase influence

We worked with communities, governments at all levels, and key stakeholders to build trust, foster consensus and create enabling policies through dialogue, capacity building and evidence-based advocacy. By strengthening multistakeholder engagement, we facilitated partnerships between local governments, civil society, and communities to co-develop risk reduction strategies. The Doda Watershed Multistakeholder Platform brought together 10 municipalities in Sudurpaschim Province to develop an integrated watershed management plan, enabling shared responsibilities in relation to assessments, data sharing and decisionmaking, and strengthening multi-hazard early warning systems.



Promoting local government ownership for lasting impact

We strengthened the integration of DRR policies by fostering local government ownership of DRR and climate resilience initiatives. Through targeted advocacy and capacity-building efforts, we equipped local governments with the essential knowledge and tools to implement risk-informed policies, integrate climate resilience into governmental frameworks, and take full responsibility for maintaining these efforts beyond the project lifecycle.





Leveraging Evidencebased advocacy

We used research and data to influence policies. Risk assessments like the Alliance's Flood Resilience Measurement for Communities (FRMC) data, climate budget analysis, and climate impact studies guided policy decisions, increased provincial funding for DRR activities, and informed evacuation planning and shelter site selection in at-risk communities in Kutiyakabar municipality.



🙎 Supporting community-led advocacy

We empowered communities to lead DRR efforts through grassroots advocacy, local leadership and inclusive decision-making. By strengthening CDMCs, we enabled them to actively engage in policy discussions and advocate for flood mitigation measures and disaster preparedness. By amplifying marginalized voices, including women's groups and vulnerable communities, we ensured more inclusive and equitable disaster management strategies.



Strengthening resilience through scaling up nature-based solutions

Using FRMC data results, we worked closely with communities to design and implement naturebased solutions tailored to local risks and needs. We advanced these solutions by demonstrating best practices and facilitating their integration into local preparedness plans. This included restoring riverbanks, employing bioengineering techniques to reduce erosion and flood risks, and engaging communities in sustainable land management.







What was it? Through targeted data provision and advocacy, we played a pivotal role in the approval of Sudurpaschim Province's DRRM plan (2020–2025). A key achievement was the inclusion of a clause mandating the allocation of 5% of annual budgets to DRR and CCA. This will ensure consistent financing for resilience efforts over five years.

Why does this matter? This policy guarantees long-term financing for DRR and CCA, addressing a critical gap in preparedness funding. As a result, the provincial budget allocation to DRR and CCA increased from US\$ 4.4 million in 2020–2021 to US\$ 7.2 million in 2021–2022, indirectly benefiting over 2.5 million people who are highly vulnerable to floods, landslides and other climate-induced risks in Sudurpaschim.

What was Mercy Corps' role? In collaboration with our Alliance partner, Practical Action, we provided targeted data, policy analysis and advocacy to drive this achievement. Our efforts included developing a budget tracking tool to monitor DRR and CCA investments, conducting policy and financial gap studies to highlight budget gaps and the need for increased preparedness funding, providing technical training to local governments and stakeholders on effective DRR and CCA budget planning, and organizing policy dialogues to foster collaboration and secure government commitment for resilience investments.

What's the impact on vulnerable communities? With stable funding, municipalities are implementing locally tailored resilience measures, and strengthening early warning systems, flood prevention, and adaptive livelihoods. These investments foster long-term resilience while ensuring equitable benefits for women, low-income communities, and marginalized castes







OUR STRATEGIC
PRIORITIES FOR 2024-2027

Our program entered a transformative **new phase in January 2024**, setting the foundation for the Alliance's **12-year vision**. This ambitious phase is dedicated to strengthening community resilience, particularly among the most vulnerable populations across 21 communities in the seven targeted municipalities of Sudurpaschim and Madhesh Provinces, by addressing the escalating threats of **floods and heatwave**.

- Efforts will focus on improving access to early warning systems, diversifying livelihoods, and reducing climate-induced loss and damage.
- Championing Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), we are committed to ensuring that marginalized and vulnerable groups not only participate but also benefit equitably from resilience-building initiatives.
- We will drive the integration of CCA and DRRM strategies, with strong emphasis on heat and flood preparedness, into local and provincial policies and budgetary framework.
- ◆ Through targeted training and technical support, we aim to empower local institutions and stakeholders to sustain and expand resilience-building programs well beyond the program's timeframe.





From Floods to Resilience: Laxmi's Leadership

Laxmi Kumari Bhatta, a teacher and vice president of the Chiran-Kalakot Disaster Management Committee, has been instrumental in transforming her climate-vulnerable community's disaster preparedness. With support from the Mercy Corps program, she has mobilised communities to anticipate and mitigate risks from recurring floods and droughts. Under Laxmi's leadership, the community conducted risk mapping to identify vulnerable areas and implemented nature-based solutions such as bamboo and fruit plantations, preventing soil erosion while creating sustainable income.

Disaster preparedness training, including evacuation drills and emergency planning, has empowered residents to respond effectively. Safe evacuation areas, emergency contacts, and 'go bags' with supplies have significantly reduced panic during emergencies. "This training has built confidence and self-reliance," Laxmi shares. Today, Chiran-Kalakot stands as a model of resilience, demonstrating how local leadership, community action, and strategic support can drive lasting change.



About the Alliance

The Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance is now the Zurich Climate Resilience Alliance (the "Alliance"). The Alliance is a multi-sectoral partnership, powered by the Z Zurich Foundation, which focuses on enhancing resilience to climate hazards in both rural and urban communities. By implementing solutions, promoting good practice, influencing policy and facilitating systemic change, we aim to ensure that all communities facing climate hazards are able to thrive.

In Nepal, Mercy Corps and Practical Action continue to collaborate to achieve shared program goals, and the objectives of the Alliance. Mercy Corps spearheads the influencing actions in Nepal, and globally.

Members of the Zurich Climate Resilience Alliance are funded by the Z Zurich Foundation, with the exception of Zurich Insurance Group. However, the views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the official position of either the Foundation or the company.

