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| Danish organisation | CICED |
| Title of the intervention | The Everest Network -*strengthening our communities* |
| Partner name(s) | Just Nepal Foundation |
| Amount applied for | 99,000 kr. |
| Country(ies) | Nepal |
| Period (# of months) | 8 months |

1. **Objective and relevance**The purpose of this project is to strengthen the capacity, knowledge sharing and cooperation among  
   Nepalese local CSOs and their local governments who work across a range of different sectors but who are all affected by the growing challenges of climate change. This will be done through a series of seminars which will focus on various issues that shed light on the causes of climate change, adaptation possibilities, preparedness, intersectionality, and different experiences within their implementing fields. Thus, the process is linked to significant priorities in the World 2030.

Presently, ten local implementing CBOs, four of which have partners in Denmark and have received CISU support, have established **The Everest Network – *strengthening our communities***. The Just Nepal Foundation, JNF has been chosen to act as the secretariat for the network and as such is the lead organization and thus together with CICED are primary responsible for this application.

**Climate change and Nepal**

“The scientific evidence is unequivocal: climate change is a threat to human wellbeing and the health of the planet,” said Hans-Otto Pörtner, of the UN, IPCC working group.

“Any further delay in concerted global action will miss a brief and rapidly closing window to secure a livable future. The climate crisis has the power to worsen problems such as hunger, ill-health, and poverty. Like taking a wrecking ball to a set of global dominoes, climate change in the 21st century threatens to destroy the foundations of food and water security, smash onwards through the fragile structures of human and ecosystem health, and ultimately shake the very pillars of human civilization”.[[1]](#footnote-1)  Conflicts arising from the climate crisis, fueling “displacement” and “involuntary migration” of people would ensue that “non-climatic factors are the dominant drivers of existing intrastate violent conflicts.

Nepal hosts some of the most spectacular natural areas and biodiversity in the world. Home to the planet’s highest peak, Nepal also boasts 118 ecosystems, 75 categories of vegetation, and 35 types of forest. These resources are increasingly at risk. The people of Nepal, particularly the rural poor, are directly dependent on natural resources for survival, and a significant portion of Nepal’s economy comes from climate-sensitive industries such as agriculture, forestry, and eco-tourism. Nepal is highly vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters. Globally, it ranks fourth, tenth and thirtieth in terms of vulnerability to climate change, earthquakes, and flood risks respectively. Climate-related natural disasters such as floods, landslides, droughts, and extreme weather events have resulted in the loss of life, property, and livelihoods, as well as extensive damage to all climate-sensitive sectors. The 2015 earthquake which left 9,000 dead and massive social and economic loss induced about 20,000 landslides, by enlarging old landslides or triggering new landslides and avalanches causing massive destruction across 14 districts. In the last two years dense rains and flash rainfall is the primary trigger of massive flooding and landslides. Between 2020 -2021, more than 900 deaths related to rainfall-induced landslides were reported.

**Changing Political Landscape**Nepal’s new constitution (2015) envisages a federal governance system with three spheres of government, i.e., federal, state (provincial) and local, with substantial devolution of functions to provincial and local governments. This should enable the local governments to formulate laws that will help them exercise their constitutional powers and engage into development planning and implementation as being accountable to the people. The Local Government Operation Act has provided immense power to the municipalities to plan and manage local-level development, including managing those related to climate change adaptation and risk reduction. The first elections to local bodies were held five years ago, Nepal is presently preparing for new elections to its municipalities. Despite the constitutional and legal provisions, operational systems and mechanisms to run local governments on a day-to-day basis are still very weak. Many local governments currently lack the institutional capacity in terms of human resources and infrastructure to implement projects. Local CBOs play a central role in supporting and strengthening their local governments.

**Role of Local Government in Climate Change**

The Government of Nepal has developed several plans, policies, strategies, guidelines, and frameworks related to climate change, including the National Adaptation Programme of Action and the Guidelines for Local Adaptation Plan of Actions. In addition, sectoral ministries have been engaged in mainstreaming climate change adaptation and risk reduction priorities into various sectoral policies and plans. On the institutional side, the government has set up a high-level mechanism known as the Climate Change Council chaired by the Prime Minister. Likewise, the National Planning Commission supports sectoral coordination and climate responsive planning at the national level and the Ministry of Forests and Environment acts as the focal point. As per the constitutional provisions, the local governments are mandated to develop appropriate policies on climate change and take charge of planning and management of climate change adaptation within their administrative area.

**The role of the people who experience climate change and disasters**

*‘To effectively adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change, those with lived experiences must be heard’.[[2]](#footnote-2)*

Much research suggests one of the greatest assets following a disaster is the people who experience them, this asset is hugely underutilized. People often perceive an increase in community cohesion after disaster, peaking dramatically in the immediate aftermath. The ten members of the network as local implementing CBOs are an integrated part of this phenomena. However, they and their people are often underutilized in shaping plans for their community’s long-term resilience and preparedness. Disaster-affected communities form the backbone of mitigating the impacts of climate change any disaster response.

**Some learnings from Nepal**

Natural hazards are indiscriminate: earthquakes, floods have no regard for social hierarchy, gender, age, disability, religion, ethnicity, or caste.  But the *impacts* of natural hazards—and the humanitarian response to them—tend to discriminate against the very people who are most in need.  When a disaster hits, vulnerable and marginalized groups have fewer and more fragile livelihoods options, less access to social and economic resources, less ability to influence the relief effort, and face more barriers accessing assistance—often without the political voice that would enable them to advocate for those barriers to be addressed. There is now comprehensive research on the aftermath of the 2015 earthquake. While blanket approaches are commonly—and appropriately—used in the immediate aftermath of rapid-onset emergencies. What is less common is for this approach not to later be replaced by a targeted approach based on assessed needs and vulnerabilities. This did not happen in Nepal and indicates a deficiency in a system which lacks contact, knowledge of and involvement of its local communities. Research shows that many of the most vulnerable groups missed out.

“While Nepal has made substantial efforts—and progress—in recent years towards gender equality and social inclusion. The context remains one of deeply entrenched social hierarchy and extreme and often multifaceted vulnerabilities—a context in which there was always going to be a risk that vulnerable and marginalized groups would face difficulties accessing assistance.” Against this background, the earthquake response highlighted the critical importance of identifying and assessing climate vulnerability, preparedness. The same narrative is now emerging regarding the 2021 flooding. Supporting, capacity building of local communities and their local governments is an urgent need. Unless these challenges are purposefully addressed, interventions tend to exacerbate and entrench social disadvantage, leaving already marginalized people even further behind.

**The birth of the network**

Following the years after 2015 earthquake many CBOs who had implemented a large amount of relief on behalf of national and international organizations found their organizations drained of capacity. As the bigger NGOs had little knowledge of the area local CBOs were often saturated with funds and unrealistic demands while often losing their key staff to better paid jobs to the temporary NGOs / INGOs working in their area.

Therefore, CWISH[[3]](#footnote-3) with its partner Alternatives to Separation with support from CISU conducted two workshops, collecting experiences from a wide sector of CBOs. The workshops were attended by 20 organizations. Discussions were opened on how small organizations in the future can best utilize and at times protect their capacity. Many reported of a form of post institutional stress. They identified a need for capacity building of own organizations and the necessity of cross sectorial collaboration. Their experience was that as integrated parts of the local society they were on the spot when any calamity occurred whether it be an earthquake or covid -19. One of the results of these consultations was the establishment of The Everest Network.

**Objectives of The Everest Network-***strengthening our communities*

* To inspire and utilize each other’s resources so to better cope with the challenges presented by climate change.
* To better understand how to support our communities adapt to the growing insecurities of climate change, to secure preparedness so to decrease consequences of natural and climate related disasters.
* To advocate for local communities so they are key in the designing, planning and implementation of adaptation, preparedness interventions.
* Transforming of disaster interventions and financing from a reactive to a proactive model.

Members of the network

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| 1. The Resources Center for Rehabilitation & Development –Inclusion |
| 2. HELP Nepal –Education |
| 3. Just Nepal Foundation -Youth & Education |
| 4. Global Inclusive –Environment |
| 5. Lo Gyalpo Jigme -Conservation & Cultural Foundation |
| 6. ASK Nepal -Agriculture |
| 7. Bikalpa Training Centre -Child Protection & Capacity Building |
| 8. Soiya Mahila Swabhalambi Sanstha –Women’s Rights |
| 9. Community Based Rehabilitation Service (CBRS) -Disability |
| 10. Youth Foundation Nepal |

**How the intervention can contribute to collaboration, public engagement, and civil organising and how this in time will contribute to social justice.**

The network in essence is promoting collaboration and civil organising. All the organisations work from a human rights approach and are thus all seeking social fairness and justice. They serve marginalized communities without a political voice; they seek enable communities so to advocate against the exclusory barriers found within the Nepal itself and within national and international development interventions. While including their local government partners in the seminars they seek to engage, support, and hold accountable those elected bodies who are primary duty bearers.

**What climate- and environmental conditions do the partnership need to respond to?**

Half of the seminars will be conducted via zoom. When in person seminars are held, they will consist of four seminars presentations in two consecutive days in order to reduce multiple journeys and travel costs and travel time as the 30 participants for the in-person seminars come from three different provinces of Nepal.

1. The partnership/collaborators

CICED and JNF have a strong partnership. Presently we are implementing two projects: the first, Youth - Taking Their Place which focuses on youth mobilization and income generating so to prevent migration to urban area and abroad. The second, Better Life – Educating & Keeping Children Safe is prompting local community school ownership and child protection. The focus area of both projects is Helambu Rural Municipality and Sindhupalchowk district. An area which beyond having to cope with the covid -19 pandemic has seen its fair share of disasters / challenges over the past 20 years:

* Under the civil war this area was a “hotspot”, a high-risk area, this has left deep unresolved scars
* Sindhupalchowk has the highest rate of girl trafficking in the country
* Sindhupalchowk, was worst hit by the 2015 earthquake. It had the highest death told, 95% of homes and infrastructure were destroyed. Many families are still living in makeshift houses.
* The Helambu trekking route, once the area’s primary source of income, was shattered by the earthquake 2015
* Sindhupalchowk has also one of the highest rates of migration. Since the earthquake migration has exploded
* Sindhupalchowk particularly Helambu region was the worst hit area during the 2021 flooding

During the implantation of the youth project the project area saw massive flooding and the covid-19.

These challenges were met with much resilience and saw for example the mobilization of local youth who

both rescued and provided basic services to people in need. An impressive informal coordination exercise

was observed. One of the reasons why JNF was chosen to lead the Network is an acknowledgement that

the area they work is experiencing massive consequences of climate change and is recognized as a disaster- prone area.

**Contributions, roles and responsibilities of the partners**

CICED will carry the overall responsibility for project management, monitoring and reporting, including financial management. CICED will provide ongoing support for project implementation, progress assessment and support the development of project concept application to CISUs new Climate Change Grant. CICED will also contact the network’s members partners in Denmark in order to investigate possible strategies for supporting the network.

JNF will carry out the day-to-day responsibility for project implementation, monitoring and reporting including financial management. There is a core steering group of four network members established. As the secretariat JNF will carry out the substantive and administrative work relating to the network. The main functions of the secretariat will include:

* To gather and prepare background information on various climate related issues so that the core group can take decisions regarding project input.
* To help carry out the decisions made by the core group and network
* To organize seminars and seek relevant speakers in collaboration with the core group
* To establish and maintain public informed platforms e.g., Facebook, homepage
* To coordinate the mainstreaming of presentations and collection and compiling of relevant resources

1. **Target groups, objectives, and expected results**

**The primary target group** are the 10 member organisations counting 102 staff. All network members work closely with their local governments who count 230 members.

There will be 2 participants from each of the 10-member organisation from the Everest Network membership and 10 representatives of the local government bodies attending the residential workshops. (30 participants in all). Each individual organisation will select who will participate in this project activities however it is agreed that one person should represent the organisational management and one from field staff. The 10 participants from local bodies are selected from the elected members of local wards. (smallest unit of local government in Nepal) It are also these participants who are presently representing their CBOs and Wards I at network meetings, developments of the network guidelines/ concepts, this particular application etc.

At least 60 participants will join the online seminars. These will include at least 40 participants will be staff from member organisations and 20 local government staff. Additionally, the seminars will be open for other implementing CDOs and interested stakeholders.

**Secondary target groups**: The CBOs have jointly a catchment population amounting to 87,000 people.

The knowledge gained by the primary group will benefit and improve services for their catchment population. Seminar recordings and materials will be used when relevant at local workshops etc. supporting the understanding amongst beneficiaries of the challenges which need to be confronted.

**How the intervention will be implemented: what activities will be carried out?**

Through seminars both online and in-person, presentations will be given by experts in specific relevant subjects. These presentations will be substantiated by presentations from the field i.e., stories of the concreate challenges faced by the different communities, solutions, and good practices. Discussions in groups will be facilitated encouraging reflections on how practice can be improved. The participants will be seeking to find new methods and approaches.

CBOs, and government bodies together will have the opportunity share knowledge and to reflect on selected climate related themes e.g., the causes / status of climate change, community-based adaptation approaches and disaster preparedness thus capacity building the participant’s and their granitizations and bodies and creating a solid base for future collaboration.

It is planned to hold 8 seminars, four of the seminars will be online while four seminars will, over two consecutive days be held in person (budget line 1.1 & 1.2). All presentations will be recorded and uploaded on the different organisation’s homepage and the networks homepage (budget line 1.5). A divisible pedagogical learning product in the form of a guide based on presentations, reflections of the seminars highlighting innovative adaptation cases will be complied and published online, a limited number will be printed to distribute among local government bodies (budget line 1.3 & 1.4). A part time Network Coordinator will be recruited to deliver these activities including the production of learning products (budget line 3.1).

**Tentative subjects for the seminars**

1. Understanding the concepts of climate change, climate adaptation, mitigation, and resilience
2. Engagement of Community Schools
3. Mobilizing youth as climate activists
4. Child protection in a changing climate

5. Integrated approaches to achieving low-cost, low-carbon development for rural people.

6 Designing local climate policies and action plans when a disaster strike

7. Implementing & financing climate policies in your organization and community.

8. Introduction to weather forecasts, analyzing and taking preventative actions based on forecasts.

Each seminar will consist of two presentations. Experts on climate change and disaster risk management from ICIMOD[[4]](#footnote-4) , CIPRED[[5]](#footnote-5) and the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology and other organizations will make presentations at each of the 8 workshops. These presentations will be followed by presentations from the members of The Everest Network organizations, beneficiaries will be included. They will present the realities and the everyday experience of climate change thus complementing and authenticating the theoretical sessions.

The experts will

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| Project Timeline | |
| Time | Particulars |
| Month 1 | Project set up and recruitment |
| Month 2 | Residential Seminar with 4 workshops - 30 participants |
| Month 3 | Online seminar 5 - at least 60 participants |
| Month 4 | Online seminar 6 - at least 60 participants |
| Month 5 | Online seminar 7 - at least 60 participants |
| Month 6 | Online seminar 8 - at least 60 participants |
| Month 7 | Production of pedagogical learning products e.g., guides, seminar reflections, adaptation cases, webpage. |
| Month 8 | Distribution of resources to local govt. bodies and project closure |

**Outcomes:** The intervention will capacity build the network members and their local government bodies. Their ability to act and jointly map paths of future collaboration will be enhanced. Conclusively, enabling them to engage local citizens and their knowledge improving services for their communities. As seminars will be open to other implementing CBOs it is expected that the network membership will expand. The goal is to have a membership engagement of 20 organizations.

**Systematizing of experiences along the way and at the end of the intervention**

The recordings of seminars and the making of the learning product (book) will contribute to documentation. Beyond these, evaluations of each seminar will be conducted.

1. UN [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/aug/09/what-is-ipcc-why-new-climate-report-different) (IPCC) Report 2022 .

   Dave Reay, the director of Edinburgh Climate Change [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/aug/09/what-is-ipcc-why-new-climate-report-different) (IPCC) Report 2022 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. CWISH, Children & Women in Social Service & Human Rights [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. ICIMOD is an intergovernmental knowledge and learning centre that develops and shares research, information, and innovations to empower people in the eight regional member countries of the HKH – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Center for Indigenous Peoples' Research and Development (CIPRED) is established in 2011 with an objective for policy research, documentation and publications in the field of natural resource governance, climate change, biodiversity, ecosystem, education, traditional health and livelihoods in relation to Indigenous Peoples. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)