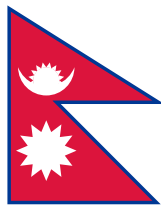




APFSD Youth Call to Action 2021: Nepal¹



INTRODUCTION

In Nepal, the impact of COVID-19 and the lockdowns on infrastructure such as health services, education, technology, and mobility has been extremely detrimental. This has exacerbated the issues of gender inequality, discrimination of LGBTIQ+ communities, and people with disabilities, which in turn has caused a rise in cases of domestic violence, sexual harassment, physical assaults, mental illness, suicide (especially amongst youth), child marriage, and stigma. Due to the lockdown, the workload for women and girls has doubled now that they have to work from home and take care of both household work as well as office work. People with disabilities did not receive proper guidance and education about COVID-19 which created more chaos and discrimination towards them. LGBTIQ+ people were more discriminated against as they did not receive proper access to health or any protection services. Furthermore, health services and products such as access to abortion, sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, child vaccines, contraceptives, sanitary pads, etc. were not made available which caused more problems, mainly to women and girls.

Lastly, 2020 had been announced as the year for tourism in Nepal. Due to this, many youths had started new entrepreneurships and businesses. Migrated workers had also returned to the country for better opportunities. However, due to lockdown and COVID-19, the tourism year was cut off, many youth lost their businesses and are seeking work abroad for better opportunities and to sustain their livelihood. Due

to this, many youth are unemployed and don't have access to decent work for their livelihood. COVID-19 has added more challenges to the labor force and work as youth were already not given equal participation and opportunities even before the pandemic.

Climate change is a real discussion that needs to be had, but many youth and people in Nepal are not aware of its direct and indirect effects on various sectors of life. The gaps in planning, implementation, research, and monitoring regarding climate justice have led to a further decline in climate actions being carried out. In the name of development, many natural resources, and heritage sites have been destroyed due to improper planning and implementation. Despite being an agricultural country, urbanisation has been affecting the environment and causing various natural disasters. Due to this, climate change is affecting physical, mental, and social aspects of our health. Many innovative ideas, start-ups and eco-friendly products are being launched by the youth, but there is difficulty in sustaining them due to the lack of support, opportunities, and security. The lack of education and political influence is also highly impacting climate justice. The topic of climate change has always been ignored and COVID-19 has created even more issues regarding climate change.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- Government:** The government should work with the Ministry of Education and other related sectoral partners to bring in the topics of CSE, SRHR, and SDGs into school-level curriculum. The interventions should also be focused on providing psychosocial support and counseling for the well-being of students. For climate action, the political involvement and interests should be guided more towards the policy and acts concerned with the conservation of natural resources including eco-friendly policies, EIA (environmental impact assessment) initiatives, and Environment Protection Acts. Renewable innovations such as improved cooking stoves by CEN in Nepal, agriculture farms, carbon trading, green mechanism, bio-gas plants and promote electric vehicles, should be encouraged and implemented
- Youth Inclusiveness:** There should be involvement of youth in all levels of policy making and decision making. There needs to be a focus on SRH services prioritising access to abortion services, contraceptives, and sanitary pads, especially for youths, during disasters, prioritising the safety of women, LGBTIQ+ persons, people with disabilities, and other marginalised communities. Youth-centered interventions, increased youth entrepreneurship, and innovations should be promoted. Information, opportunities, security, and protection regarding decent work and labor targeting youth should be initiated by the government. Young people's entrepreneurship and innovations that can sustain their livelihood in various sectors like water and farming, should be encouraged. In the long run, this will help increase the economy of the country.
- Local government:** The local government should improve its Public-Private Partnerships and promote SRHR, prioritising youth engagement and inclusiveness in all aspects of policy and decision-making at the local levels. Local entrepreneurs and youth innovations like carbon trading, and electric vehicles, must be encouraged and recycle, reuse and reduce initiatives must be practiced, focusing more on subsidising the green economy.
- COVID-19 and other Disaster Pre-planning:** Proper disaster preparedness plans focusing on mental, physical and social aspects should be in all policy at national and local levels. The focus on youth issues during disasters should also be initiated.
- Health Services:** Provision of quality adolescent health, gender, and disability-friendly services should be included at all health facilities. The provision of the information and services should be made accessible to all.

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1. The APFSD country and sub-regional briefs were developed through collective discussions and engagements between youth advocates at the APFSD Youth Forum on March 14-16, 2021. The Nepal drafting team consists of Harish Lama, Lirisha Tuladhar, and Situ Shrestha. Overall supervision was provided by the ARROW team.