

CASE STUDY | NEPAL

Sahayatra

Sahayatra Nepal is a community-based organization [CBO] founded and led by local women in Ilam District, in eastern Nepal.

Sahayatra Nepal aims to improve the lives of women in Ilam by addressing the various challenges they face, including the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation. A collaboration between partners of the Global Alliance of Gender and Green Action (GAGGA) - namely, the Tewa-Women's Fund of Nepal (Nepal's first women's fund) and Prakriti Resources Centre (an environmental justice organization) - helped strengthen the group's work on environmental conservation, particularly water resource management, wetland conservation and climate action.



GLOBAL ALLIANCE
FOR GREEN AND
GENDER ACTION

1.1

Context of risks, vulnerabilities and impacts related to climate variability and climate change

In Ilam District, located in the Mahabharata hilly range of eastern Nepal, climate change is increasingly affecting water resources and the women and communities who rely on them.

Water scarcity and wetland degradation are forcing women to travel longer distances to collect water, with adverse impacts on their health and daily lives. The decline of wetlands has endangered local wildlife and bird populations, disrupting the ecosystem and biodiversity.



1.2

Activities to address the context- and location- specific climate change vulnerabilities

[Sahayatra Nepal](#) aims to improve the lives of women in Ilam by addressing the various challenges they face, including the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation. A collaboration between partners of the [Global Alliance of Gender and Green Action \(GAGGA\)](#) - namely, the Tewa-Women's Fund of Nepal (Nepal's first women's fund) and [Prakriti Resources Centre](#) (an environmental justice organization) - helped strengthen the group's work on environmental conservation, particularly water resource management, wetland conservation and climate action.



Since 2018, Sahayatra Nepal has engaged in advocacy with the local government for rehabilitation and preservation of wetlands in the Ilam area, which were drying up and negatively impacting water levels in a key pond. Sahayatra Nepal's successful work related to the wetlands was soon followed by work focused on access to drinking water for workers on the tea estates in Ilam, where women had to walk up to two hours in each direction to bring back drinking water for their families.

Sahayatra Nepal took the women's case to the municipality, where they successfully advocated for the installation of seven water taps, which have significantly improved women's access to water.

Since then, the women of Sahayatra Nepal have organized the construction of water tanks and pipelines in their communities.



Sahayatra Nepal's work is based on the needs and priorities of the local community, and are implemented by people rooted in the community. Other activities have focused on water conservation alongside conservation of water plants to reduce the risk of landslides.

In 2024, for example, Sahayatra Nepal initiated conservation of drinking water resources in five places of Ilam Municipality, Mangsebung Rural Municipality and Fakfokthum Rural Municipality, where water resources are drying up and are increasingly vulnerable to landslides.

Sahayatra Nepal built up the reservoir tank and set up pipelines for water distribution. **Through these efforts, 154 households from marginalized communities who are suffering from water scarcity are now benefiting.** Women's opportunities for leadership were enhanced through their role in the water users' committee groups.

Through training and technical support from Tewa–Women's Fund of Nepal and Prakriti Resources Centre, the women of Sahayatra Nepal strengthened their advocacy skills and knowledge about the local budget allocation process, particularly the environmental component of local infrastructure budgets. **Sahayatra Nepal subsequently organized a series of meetings and dialogues with the local municipality and other stakeholders, resulting in an allocation from the local climate budget to Sahayatra Nepal for their activities to conserve wetlands and water springs.**

Sahayatra Nepal has also advocated for the municipal government to develop a Local Adaptation Plan of Action, which **resulted in the municipality allocating funds to Sahayatra Nepal and Prakriti Resources Centre to jointly formulate the adaptation plan of Ilam Municipality.** After this success, Fakfokthum Rural Municipality of Ilam district also approached Sahayatra Nepal to formulate a Local Adaptation Plan of Action and allocate funds for it in 2025.

Sahayatra Nepal is training and capacitating other women's groups in the area on environmental justice issues and livelihoods. For example, two capacity strengthening workshops in 2024 covered the topics of sustainable agriculture and the impact of climate change, as well as climate adaptation. Eighty participants from 13 women's groups participated in the workshops. Sahayatra Nepal is supporting women's groups in officially registering and deepening their knowledge and understanding about climate change, its impacts and ways forward for adaptation. They have helped strengthen 14 women's groups in Ilam, which have since received grants from Tewa.



1.3

Impact of activities

Sahayatra Nepal's work has **significantly improved women's rights and access to water, and strengthened women's leadership and participation in local climate adaptation efforts**. Sahayatra Nepal's advocacy has resulted in **significant policy changes at the municipal level**, including resources for local women-led climate adaptation and mitigation. The group's many interactions with the local government mean that its visibility has now increased to the point that **the local government reaches out to Sahayatra Nepal when environmental issues come up**.

Sahayatra Nepal and the women of Ilam continue to face the devastating impacts of climate change, including extreme and unpredictable weather. In October 2025, devastating landslides occurred in Ilam, resulting in the loss of lives, homes, livestock and severe damage to the land, the environment and local infrastructure, including several bridges. The Nepal government has declared Ilam district a crisis zone for three months. Sahayatra Nepal, along with other grantee partners of Tewa, have provided humanitarian crisis support.



The strengthening of women's leadership in Ilam, a key part of the GAGGA programme, has helped contribute to their collective capacities and their efforts to build resilience in this crisis period.

Flexible funding from GAGGA and linkages between GAGGA partners Tewa–Women's Fund of Nepal and Prakriti Resources Centre were crucial for strengthening Sahayatra Nepal's work on environmental conservation, particularly water resource management, wetland conservation and climate action.





Let's connect:

Noemi Grütter, Head of Advocacy and Partnerships, GAGGA,
n.grutter@fcamfoundation.org

María Florencia Tinnirello, Donor Engagement Officer, GAGGA,
f.tinnirello@fcamfoundation.org