

children in a changing climate research



Research Report



Child Voices: **Children of Nepal Speak Out on Climate Change Adaptation**

Dhruba Gautam and Katy Oswald

November 2008

**children in
a changing
climate**



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ActionAid Partners:

- ActionAid Nepal (AAN), Kathmandu and Nepalgunj offices
- Bheri Environmental Excellence Group (BEE Group), Banke district
- Manekor Society Nepal (MSN), Rasuwa district
- Lumanti, Kathmandu

Main contributors: Bhawana Regmi, Ambika Amatya, Shyam Jnavaly, Nahakul Thapa, and Tamara Plush

Film producer: Tamara Plush

The film was directed and edited by Hari Thapa and Bai Kuntha from Contemporary Vision, Pvt., in Kathmandu. We are grateful to Smriti Kattel from Balaju for her narration talent, and to Lumanti and Balaju community members for filming support beyond the participatory video study.

Main commentators: Marion Khamis, Tom Mitchell, Lucy Stone, Lydia Baker and Janani Vivekananda

Edited by Judy Hartley

Photographers: Dhruva Gautam, Bhawana Regmi and Tamara Plush, and from the participatory video interviews and films produced by the AAN partners and community members.

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Children from Bageshwari, Banke, Nepal

Executive Summary



Children learn about the participatory video climate change project in Matehiya, Banke, Nepal

“We cannot escape climate change, but we need to reduce its effect on people, livestock and crops.”

Santosh B.K., age 17, Bageshwari, Banke, Nepal.

The impacts of climate change are already being felt – most acutely by millions of the world’s poorest people.¹ They are already facing hunger, disease and conflict linked to climate change. It is children like Santosh, who live in the world’s poorest communities, who are particularly vulnerable.²

In 2008 Children in a Changing Climate’s research programme worked with ActionAid Nepal, and its partner organisations, to help poor children in the plains, hills and urban areas of Nepal make short films about how climate change is being experienced by their communities. Making these films allowed the children to explore how the changing climate

is impacting them and their families, how they are coping and what they need in order to adapt to a changing climate. This report is based on the findings of the participatory video project and additional research with children in the project communities.

This report aims to provide an opportunity for children from three geographically diverse areas of Nepal to speak for themselves on their climate change adaptation needs. We do not claim that the children interviewed represent all the children of Nepal, but this report offers an opportunity for an international audience to hear their perspectives on their climate change adaptation needs.

The research found that poor children and their families in Nepal are being impacted by a changing climate. The children identified impacts to their families' livelihoods, their health, their education, their emotional wellbeing, and their access to water, as a result of floods, droughts and landslides, all caused by increasingly erratic and unpredictable weather patterns.

However, these children are not passive victims of climate change, and the research found that they and their families are already making changes to their lives in order to cope, but they face severe constraints. They know what additional support they need to adapt their lives to a changing climate: they need reforestation programmes, access to improved agricultural technologies, improved infrastructure, increased knowledge on climate change impacts, and good disaster prevention programmes.

Action is needed now to help these children and their communities adapt to the impacts of a changing climate. For every child who has spoken out through this study, there are millions more around the world attempting to cope with the results of extreme weather such as cyclones, floods, landslides and droughts. This will only increase as climate change continues. It is time for governments to listen to those who are amongst those worst affected by climate change: children in the world's poorest communities.

This report makes a number of recommendations for upholding children's rights in the context of climate change:

- **Children's right to be heard:** This report and the children's participatory videos (*showcased in the film accompanying this report*) demonstrate that children understand the impacts of climate change on their lives and that they need help to adapt and find solutions. Children have a right to be heard at all levels, in their communities, and in climate change debates at national and international levels.
- **Children's rights to adaptation:** Life, safety, participation and development are the basic rights of children. From a rights-based perspective, working with children on climate change adaptation is not optional; it is protecting their rights.
- **Children's rights to education:** The changing climate is impacting families' livelihoods and their ability to afford to send their children to school. Governments need to ensure, through scholarships, stipends or fee waivers, that families do not take their children out of school as a coping strategy.
- **Adaptation plans should include the needs of children:** Many developing countries, including Nepal, have or are preparing National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs). In order for NAPAs to be both effective and equitable, consultation, dialogues and discussions in various policy spaces must include the views and needs of children.

1 Introduction

Why do children's voices matter on climate change?



Box 1: Metehiya case study

"Floods and increased rainfall stop me going to school"

"My name is Raj Kumari and I am 16 years old. I study in grade 10 at school. I have to cross the Dondra River every day to get to school. When there is heavy rainfall the water level rises and this makes it difficult to cross. I remember it used to be at knee level a few years ago, but now it rises to my waist. I don't like crossing it and do not like attending school with wet clothes; it makes it hard to concentrate in class. I often miss my exams in July and August because of the floods. I wish my exams could be in September when there are fewer floods. We need good roads and bridges to make it easier for children like me to get to school during the heavy rains."

Raj Kumari Harijan, Matehiya, Banke, Nepal.

Raj Kumari is one of many children whose lives have been impacted by floods in Nepal. In 2007, almost half a million people were affected by the floods caused by the early onset of strong monsoon rains. More than 23,000 houses were destroyed.³

Children like Raj Kumari have contributed least to the causes of climate change but are often the worst affected by it:

- Children globally are being affected by climate shocks, particularly in drought-, flood- and cyclone-prone rural areas and urban slums.
- The prospects of increasing poverty, hunger, disease and reduced access to education mean that children's futures are more uncertain than ever before.
- Children's experiences of climate change and disasters are different from those of adults, yet this is rarely considered.⁴

Despite the impact climate change is having on their lives, children's participation in climate change debates is limited and children's rights to adaptation assistance are poorly understood. This report demonstrates that children are being impacted by climate change; they understand what they need in order to adapt their lives to a changing climate; and they have a right to be heard in climate change policy debates and participate in adaptation programmes.

The Context

Children in a Changing Climate

Children in a Changing Climate (CCC)⁵ is a collaborative programme spanning research, action, advocacy and learning with the purpose of securing children's influence in tackling climate change at every level. The programme brings together leading research and development organisations, each with a commitment to share knowledge, coordinate their actions and to work with children as protagonists rather than just as victims.

This research programme of CCC is coordinated by the Climate Change and Development Centre at the Institute of Development Studies, United Kingdom. The CCC research programme is dedicated to 'collaborative action research into child-led adaptation' with the purpose of helping to legitimise children's voice on climate change at all levels and in all arenas. It provides the evidence base that enables practitioners, policymakers and children themselves to take action to adapt to and mitigate climate change.

Nepal

This report is based on field research conducted with children living in poor rural and urban communities in Nepal. Nepal is particularly vulnerable to excessive rainfall, longer drought periods, landslides and floods.⁶ Recent research suggests that climate change impacts will affect Nepal in a number of areas: water resources, hydropower, agriculture, forestry and biodiversity, health and education.⁷ The research for this report was carried out with poor children in four communities in the mid-west and central regions of Nepal: Matehiya and Bageshwari in the Banke district; Ramche in the Rasuwa district; and Balaju in Kathmandu Metropolitan City.

Matehiya is one of the most remote locations within the Banke district. A decade-long conflict has disrupted services, and it has very limited transport and electricity. The main livelihoods are agriculture, livestock and seasonal work. The climate is tropical, with the temperature sometimes reaching 44°C. It is dominated by the Teraian caste, followed by hill migrants and Tharu.

Bageshwari in the Banke district has a good road network. The climate is similar to Matehiya. The major caste and ethnic groups are hill migrants and Muslims. The main livelihoods are agriculture, remittances and seasonal work.

Ramche in the Rasuwa district lies in the hills at 1910 metres. The major caste and ethnic groups include Tamang, Sherpa and Dalit.⁸ The main livelihoods are agriculture and remittances.

The Balaju community is located in ward 16 of Kathmandu Metropolitan City. Migration from rural areas to this community is very common. The main livelihoods are self-employment and the service sector. The major ethnic groups living here include Tamang, Magar, Newar, Gurung, Brahmin, Chhetri and Rai.



Source: Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page



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Children see themselves in video for the first time in Matehiya, Banke, Nepal

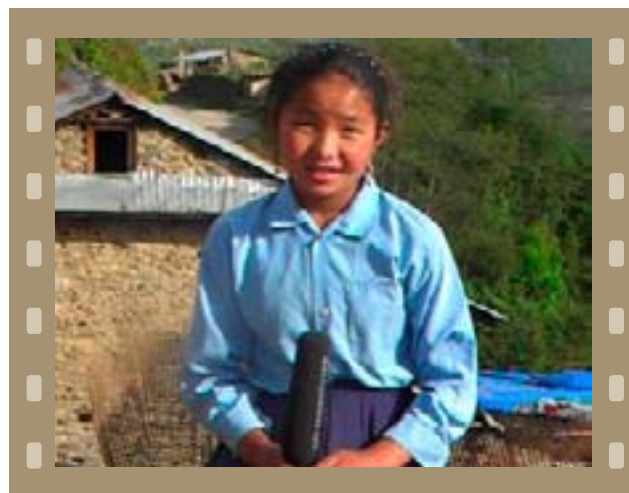
Methodology

The idea for this report grew from one of CCC's partners, ActionAid Nepal, and its Disaster Risk Reduction through Schools project.⁹ In this project, participatory video is being explored as a tool to help the community, including children, identify risks and develop climate change adaptation strategies. The participatory videos are also part of citizen-led education and advocacy efforts that help the community to more easily and effectively engage with decision-makers.

This report builds on the children's participatory video work that encouraged them to examine the changing climate in their communities: the impact of extreme weather-related hazards and changing weather patterns on the livelihoods of their families; their families' existing coping strategies; their constraints to adaptation; and their adaptation needs.

Researchers used participatory techniques, such as focus group discussions, and individual interviews to gather more evidence from the children involved in making the participatory videos. The findings and quotes in this report come from both the participatory videos and the research.

To accompany this report we have produced a film that showcases clips from participatory video interviews and final films made by the children. The report and film combined provide a platform for the children of Nepal to 'speak out' on climate change adaptation.



Shanti Maya Tamang shares her experience of food shortages this year due to climate change in Ramche, Rasuwa, Nepal

2 Child Voices: the impact of a changing climate on our lives

The research and participatory videos gathered evidence from the children and adult community members about how the changing climate is impacting their lives.

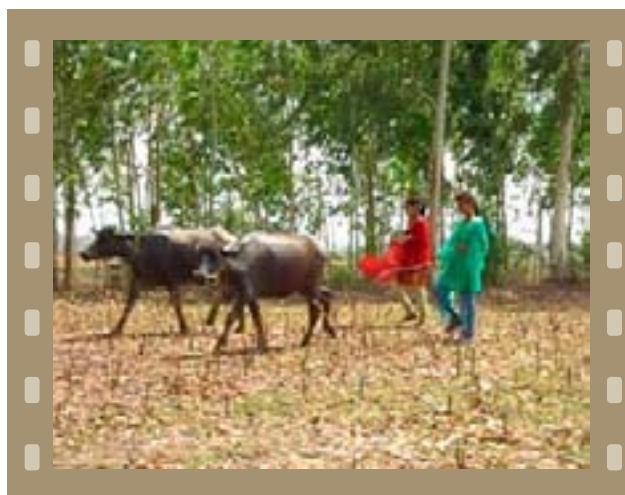
Climate models indicate that the annual rainfall in Nepal will increase significantly if CO2 emissions increase.¹⁰ It is likely to become drier during the dry season, with a significantly wetter monsoon season (as much as three times the current rainfall).¹¹ The distribution of rainfall throughout the year is a reliable factor in determining the risk of floods. This pattern of rainfall is likely to cause droughts during the winter months and floods during the monsoon.¹² The children of Nepal are already feeling this impact. In the plains, children fear floods and drought; in the hills, landslides are a major concern; and in Kathmandu, children complain of the weather getting colder due to thick fog in the winter and that the extreme rain, wind and heat are disrupting their studies.

Livelihoods

Over the last few years, the crops have failed for many reasons: flood, drought, hailstones, landslides and infestations of insects. During the focus groups discussions, the children explained that this year the lentil crop completely failed in Banke, and in Rasuwa the potato crop is down by approximately 30 per cent.

“The weather change has affected our lives. We have not been able to plant crops on time and the soil has been swept away due to heavy rainfall.”

Nebtesh Tamang, age 15, Ramche, Rasuwa, Nepal.



Girls take their cattle to fodder before school (image from the children’s participatory video drama in Bageshwari, Banke, Nepal,)

“Last year, because it rained a lot, there were many landslides and the crops were destroyed. This year because we didn’t have much rain, the plants have not been able to grow properly, so we have little to feed ourselves.”

Kalpana Tamang, age 13, Ramche, Rasuwa, Nepal.



Box 2: Ramche case study

“Our lives have been disrupted by landslides over the last few years”

“My name is Menuka Tamang and I am 13 years old. I am studying in grade 5 at school. Over the past few years me and my family have moved three times, from Haadifor to Sishneri and finally to Ramche because of the landslides. Our family’s livelihood has been devastated by them. We live from farming. Five years ago we produced 4 muri of rice but now we produce only 1 muri [1 muri equals 80 kg] because landslides have destroyed our farmland. My father is now working abroad and sends money home when he can, and my elder brother works as a porter during his school holidays. We are now living in a temporary home on rented land which we cultivate with other farmers. We cannot return to our own farmland because of the risk of landslides.”

Menuka Tamang, Ramche, Rasuwa, Nepal.



Children in the fields in Bageshwari, Banke, Nepal

Health

The children noted an increase in waterborne diseases during the floods.

“Over the last few years we have been suffering from eye infections. In the past, we only used to have these infections during the monsoon but these days we are also suffering from it during longer droughts. We are surprised; why is this happening? This infection makes it difficult for us to read and write, so it is harder for us to study. Because it is an infectious disease we have to stay at home to prevent it from spreading among our friends at school. We also have to spend money for medicine.”

Sudan Rajbanshi, age 17, Bageshwari, Banke, Nepal.

In the rural areas in Nepal, very few houses have toilets and open-air defecation is common. Water contamination is a constant problem that is exacerbated during flooding.

“Every year many people die of diarrhoea and cholera in Matehiya. It is all because we don’t have toilets or latrines so most of the water sources are contaminated. We don’t even have a health post nearby. We have to rely on Jhole doctors without much experience (who always keep some medicine in their bags) from Indian cities who cannot tell us what we have.”

Madan Lamichhane, age 14, Matehiya, Banke, Nepal.



Box 3: Balaju case study

“The growing population and number of cars has increased the pollution in Kathmandu”

“My name is Amon Rana Magar. I am 17 years old and in grade 7 at school. The number of vehicles in Balaju, Kathmandu, is increasing day by day. The population of Balaju has been increasing in the last few years due to rural migrants. The consequences have been more vehicles, more waste, lack of drinking water, destruction of fertile land and more air pollution due to many factories being built. The thick polluting fog has also got worse in recent years and I think this is due to the population growth. As the fog gets thicker, the temperature gets colder. In the winter it is difficult to attend school as it is so cold and I get ill frequently. Coughs, colds and the swelling of hands and feet are common during these days. It would be great if the school could have heating in the winter. The government needs to manage the migration of rural workers to the city to ensure there are enough services for everyone.”

Amon Rana Magar, Balaju, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Access to toilets becomes even harder during floods when latrines and open defecation areas are inaccessible. During the floods, the women and girls drink less water and take less food so that they will urinate and defecate less frequently.¹³

Education

Many families have lost their homes, crops, animals and livelihoods due to flooding and landslides. In the videos and focus groups, the children spoke of their fathers having to migrate for seasonal work to supplement their incomes. This has increased the children's household workload and seriously impacted their education. The children have to work for longer hours in the house and on the farm. Their families are often unable to pay school fees or for stationery. As a consequence, children are often forced to abandon their studies.

In Matehiya and Bageshwari, during the extreme floods, it is almost impossible for the children to travel to school. Many of the temporary wooden bridges are swept away. The floods are exacerbated by inappropriate infrastructures upstream; the extraction of sand and boulders; the lack of irrigation canals and good drainage systems, and densely populated settlements.¹⁴

"Most of the time during flooding period I have to return home half way to school because of the flood at the Dondra River. I feel my life is more precious than my education, so I do not want to take the risk of crossing the river. Our first exam falls in July-August, during the high time of the floods. I can never do well at school because of the problems caused by flood. When the Dondra River bridge collapsed during last year's flood, I had to stay for several days at my friend's house since I couldn't return home because the rains were so strong. It is very common to lose our books and notebooks during flood."

Bima Kumari B.K., age 16, Matehiya, Banke, Nepal.

The children of Ramche have to walk for up to two hours to go school because the direct routes have been blocked by landslides.

"I walk three hours a day in total: one-and-a-half hours to come to school and one-and-a-half hours for going home. This is because the shorter route has been damaged by the landslide and I have to take a longer route which is safer. I am surprised that landslides are occurring more frequently."

Domalazi Tamang, age 13, Ramche, Rasuwa, Nepal.

"The government needs to help stop these landslides, and the communities affected by them need to know how to prevent them, as we are the victims of them."

Menuka Tamang, Ramche, Rasuwa, Nepal.

"Our school has been transferred five times from one place to another in our village because of the fear of landslides. We still have inadequate classrooms. We are unable to have classes when it rains. We don't even have a place to hide our heads during rainfall, hailstone fall, snowfall and thundering."

Alina Tamang, age 14, Ramche, Rasuwa, Nepal.

In the participatory video made in Ramche, the children dramatise how one family is affected by the landslides: Their crops have been destroyed by the landslides and they have no money for food, so they send their eldest children abroad to work and their younger children to work locally as domestic workers and porters. The scene ends with the parents lamenting in old age that they are all alone because they have been forced to send their children away to help support the family.

In Balaju, Kathmandu, the rainfall, wind and heat disrupt study in the classroom due to the school having a galvanised tin roof.

"When it rains on our classroom's rooftop, it makes a lot of noise which disturbs us. The windstorms blow our roofs away and a lot of dust comes in the room. We have to lie on the ground at times like this. During the summer, the roof heats up and we get headaches. Some feel dizzy."

Pasang Sherpa, age 11, Balaju, Kathmandu, Nepal.



Children show the challenges of going to school during flooding (image from the children's participatory video drama in Bageshwari, Banke, Nepal)

Emotional wellbeing

Understandably, the impacts have not just affected the livelihoods, education and physical lives of the children; it has also affected their emotional wellbeing. The research found that temporary or permanent relocation made necessary by floods and/or landslides caused fear and trauma amongst the children and their community. Neighbourhoods are destroyed, friendships are severed, support networks are broken and domestic relationships come under greater stress.¹⁵ In addition, the children spoke of their fear of further floods or landslides.



Children show how they have to cross large landslides to reach school (image from the children's participatory video drama in Ramche, Rasuwa, Nepal)

"Those who are unable to swim are fearful of being washed away during the floods. A girl of 11 years died when the Dondra River swept her away in last year's flood. It is also difficult to come to school with wet clothes as the boys tease us. We are also prone to get coughs and colds because we have to sit in wet clothes all day."

Uma Budhathoki, age 14, Matehiya, Banke, Nepal.

The children shared their worries about their belongings, houses, cattle and families during landslides.

“When it rains heavily during school time it is very hard to concentrate on study because we worry about our families and fear there will be landslides.”

Keshang Tamang, age 13, Ramche, Rasuwa, Nepal.

In addition to the physical hardship caused by the landslides in the Rasuwa district, the girls also mentioned they were increasingly worried about not being able to find a husband as boys are migrating to other areas to find work.

In Banke district, the children talked about their family members suffering from sleep disturbances, stress, irritability and a lack of concentration after floods. It is common to find anxiety and depression in elderly people and children more than six months after a flood due to multiple associated problems.¹⁶ The emotional impact of extreme weather-related hazards, including dealing with the loss of loved ones, was one theme explored in several of the participatory videos made by the children.



A young girl cries at the loss of her brother due to flooding (image from the children's participatory video drama in Balaju, Kathmandu)



Landslides destroy homes, roads and cropland near Ramche, Rasuwa, Nepal

Access to water

The water sources in the hills have become more erratic because of extreme soil erosion and landslides. The drought in the plains has caused many water sources to dry up. This has caused additional workloads for the children, as they have to walk for hours each day to fetch water. The children from Kathmandu also observed a lack of adequate drinking water in the valley.

“We have had problems in finding food and water. The soil and rocks were swept away by the landslides. The animals did not get enough food. And the plants have not been able to grow well.”

Sarita Tamang, age 14, Ramche, Rasuwa, Nepal.



Box 4: Bageshwari case study

“Droughts are getting longer and more unexpected”

“My name is Santosh and I am 17 years old. I am in grade 10 at school. My family earns our living growing corn, lentils and vegetables. My mother works as a labourer and I sometimes join her in my school holidays. Because of the unexpected drought this year, our crops have failed. This has forced my father to go to India to find work. Over the last five years I have been shocked by the weather changing rapidly around us. We have suffered droughts, erratic rainfall and floods. These have not only affected our crops but also our health so we are more likely to get ill. Eye infections that once only occurred during the monsoon now seem to occur in the longer droughts too. This adds to the burden of the family as we lose income and have to pay for medicines. During the floods, I cannot attend school as it is impossible to get there. We need training for alternative livelihoods to agriculture, such as carpentry or textiles. For those of us who continue to work in agriculture, we need help to afford drought-resistant crops.”

Santosh B.K., Bageshwari, Banke, Nepal.

3 Existing adaptation strategies and constraints

The children, their families and the wider community have to cope with the changing climate and the impacts it has on their lives now. The research found that they have already developed their own adaptation strategies. But they face severe constraints.

How they cope now...

Crop diversification

In Bageshwari, some women's groups have started cultivating improved varieties of grass like Napier and NB-21.



A father and wife labour on their farm hoping for good weather (image from the children's participatory video drama in Sybru Besi, Rasuwa, Nepal)

Irrigation technologies

In the plains, the installation of treadle pumps for alternative irrigation is one way communities are attempting to reduce the effects of longer droughts.

Improved drainage systems

Poor drainage exacerbates the effects of flooding. The practice of building culverts and the installation of pipes in several strategic locations is now increasing in Matehiya to ease the water flow.

Food reserves

Floods and droughts are annual occurrences, but their frequency and magnitude are increasing. In order to cope, families prepare food and dried vegetables for the monsoon and dry seasons. The practice of storing dry foods like beaten rice, sugar, noodles, dried vegetables, dried meats, dried radish, cauliflower and mushroom is common.

Microloans

Women's groups have initiated saving and credit activities through microloans in Matehiya and Bageshwari. The loans are often used to cover lost income created by crop failure due to floods or drought. The loans are also used to cover the cost of children's education and healthcare.

Farming cooperatives

In Matehiya, a women's group has leased land for two years to set up a farming cooperative. This small initiative has helped them to offset the crop failure.

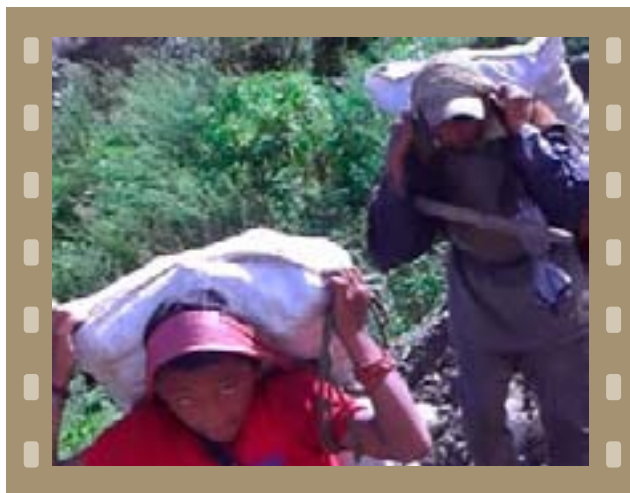
“Looking at how our situation has changed, we recognise the need to work together to make a living. This is why our mothers have joined the group [farming cooperative]. We could not survive otherwise. Farming has become tough and it is sometimes difficult to harvest enough to make a profit.”

Gopal Rokaya, age 15, Matehiya, Banke, Nepal.

Alternative livelihoods

Some of the children’s families are starting to sell firewood, run small shops and find seasonal work when their crops fail. Planting bamboo near riverbanks has started in Bageshwari, this provides additional income to families, as bamboo is easily sold locally.

Seasonal migration to urban areas and abroad for work is an increasingly common livelihood diversification strategy. Remittances have become an important source of income in the rural areas, especially when crops fail and agricultural incomes fall.



Young boys often work as porters during school breaks to support their families (image from the children’s participatory video drama in Ramche, Rasuwa, Nepal)

Relocating their homes

Some families have moved home (such as Menuka and her family on p.9) to escape the effects of floods and landslides. A similar situation caused by flood is also found in Matehiya. This is often an extra burden for families because it requires additional investment and often means a loss of social capital when families leave their communities behind.

“The cattle and belongings have to be transferred to safer places when there is the possibility of flood and landslides.”

Bima Kumari B.K. age 16, Matehiya, Banke, Nepal.

“In our village, some of the newly built houses have plinth level raised structures. This is a new practice.”

Gurubachan Yadav, age 11, Matehiya, Banke, Nepal.

The constraints they face...

Poverty

Poverty makes it all the harder to cope with a changing climate. The children stated that their families are often unable to afford improved tools and technologies, drought-resistant crops or training in new farming techniques that could help improve their crop production.

Infrastructure

Poor road networks and limited transportation facilities make transporting goods to market or reaching schools and hospitals extremely difficult, especially during floods and landslides.



Children take muddy roads to school in Bageshwari, Banke, Nepal

Market access

Lack of access to markets makes developing alternative livelihoods difficult, especially for families with little access to credit.

Poor irrigation

Lack of irrigation facilities is one of the main reasons for crop failure. Due to landslides and longer droughts, the water sources for irrigation are in decline.

4

Children speak out: what we need to adapt

The research found that children clearly feel the impacts that the changing climate is having on their lives and on the livelihoods of their families. It also found that they clearly know what they need in order to adapt their lives to a changing climate.

Stop deforestation

Planting trees is one of the most important long-term priorities identified by the children. They want environment conservation programmes to be developed and implemented at the local level.

"I think that the way we have depleted the forest in recent years is the main reason for flooding. In five years, we lost many ropanies [unit of land equal to 5476 sq. feet] of forest near our village. If this continues, we'll have to prepare for more floods and landslides. That is why collectively planting trees is the only solution to replenish the forest."

Soma Kumari Rokaya, age 14, Matehiya, Banke, Nepal.

“We need to be prepared and conduct a tree planting campaign, and people need to learn about climate change.”

Bhim Maya Tamang, age 15, Ramche, Rawuwa, Nepal.



Girls gather fodder for cattle to show how far they have to walk before school due to deforestation (image from the children's participatory video drama in Bageshwari, Banke, Nepal)

Access to improved agricultural technologies

The children and their communities need improved irrigation to increase agricultural productivity.

"Without growing more crops we cannot survive in the future and the existing agriculture system may not be sufficient to grow more crops. We need help to learn about how to use new agriculture approaches and systems. Otherwise we cannot survive."

Suman Budhathoki, age 14, Matehiya, Banke, Nepal.

Improvement of basic infrastructure

Many children of Matehiya are not able to attend school during the monsoon because of the increasing number of rivers that flood. They expressed a need for durable bridges to enable them to get to school. The children of Ramche want the immediate construction of embankments and gabion walls, and training for community members to reduce the effects of large landslides.

“In the monsoon, it is difficult to travel. Roads are muddy and bridges are usually broken and we have to cross many dangerous places when going to and returning from the school. If the roads and bridges are not improved, how can we continue our schooling? The most important priority for me is to improve the roads and bridges in the village.”

Dikisangbo Tamang, age 13, Ramche, Rasuwa, Nepal.



Laxmi Tamang talks about how lack of rain reduced crop production this year in Ramache, Rasuwa, Nepal

Improved awareness

The children felt that there is a need to increase awareness and skills in their communities so they can understand the risks and impacts of a changing climate on people, livestock and crops. They want awareness raised through peer education and training.

“ As the new risks are increasing because of the changing climate, there is a need to make more people aware of this. I think people still do not know the reasons and causes of climate change, including me. More access to information and raising awareness is necessary. We should start it at school. If children are aware, they can at least teach their families. ”

Gopal Rokaya, age 15, Matehiya, Banke, Nepal.

Good disaster risk reduction

The children want the local authorities to plan ahead and design appropriate plans and programmes to reduce the risks from disasters caused by extreme weather.

“ We know where the problems are and what is needed to overcome the problems. But we have not pressured the government to reduce the risks from disasters. I think we should work in advance, before the monsoon comes. ”

Ranju Dahal, age 15, Balaju, Kathmandu, Nepal.



Pemba Dawa Tamang explains that if unpredictable weather continues, it will be harder to plant crops and his family will suffer in Ramache, Rasuwa, Nepal

Table 1:

Children’s long- and short-term priorities for adaptation to climate change and the constraints they face¹⁷

Short-term priorities	Long-term priorities	Potential barriers / constraints
<p>Improved services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Upgrade local services in health and agriculture ■ Ensure health, agriculture and livestock facilities are staffed by qualified personnel <p>Improved infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Install treadle pumps for micro irrigation ■ Construct school buildings in safer places ■ Manage household waste ■ Treat pollution from factories <p>Awareness raising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase awareness about possible impacts of a changing climate ■ Educate people about effects of pollution on human health ■ Create awareness of good sanitation practices 	<p>Reforestation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop stronger management (e.g. Chaukidar – watchman) for the protection of forest resources ■ Promote community forest planting activities ■ Plant trees, plants and grass along the river banks <p>Alternative livelihoods / improved agricultural production</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Promote alternative crops suitable for a changing climate ■ Promote income-generating activities at local level ■ Provide skill-based training for women and children ■ Provide training in new agricultural techniques and alternative crops production. <p>Micro-credit / farming cooperatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Promote saving and credit groups / cooperatives at local level <p>Improved infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Improve irrigation facilities ■ Construct bridges ■ Construct ditches, canals and culverts to improve drainage ■ Provide adequate barrage management ■ Provide regular electricity supply for agricultural tools ■ Prevent landslides, e.g. grazing control ■ Construct large apartments instead of individual houses ■ Provide clean drinking water ■ Replace galvanised tin school roofs <p>Disaster risk reduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Design appropriate Disaster Risk Reduction programmes 	<p>Poverty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Inadequate financial resources <p>Poor local governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Absence of local government ■ Unwillingness of government to serve people <p>Lack of awareness / skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Poor knowledge and skills ■ Strong faith in traditional agricultural practices <p>Poor infrastructure / market access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Poor transportation facilities ■ Increasing and unregulated vehicles ■ Poor policies on housing in peri-urban areas <p>Poor irrigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Declining water sources for irrigation <p>Labour shortages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Shortage of labour force at local level due to seasonal migration

5 Lessons



Children learn about the climate change project and see themselves on the camera for the first time in Matehiya, Banke, Nepal

This report and the film that accompanies it aim to provide a platform for Nepalese children to speak out on climate change and their adaptation needs. The impacts of a changing climate on the children will vary according to the local context, but in many communities extreme and unpredictable weather is on the increase and this is having a negative impact on the lives of the children and their families.

This report makes a number of recommendations for upholding children's rights in the context of climate change:

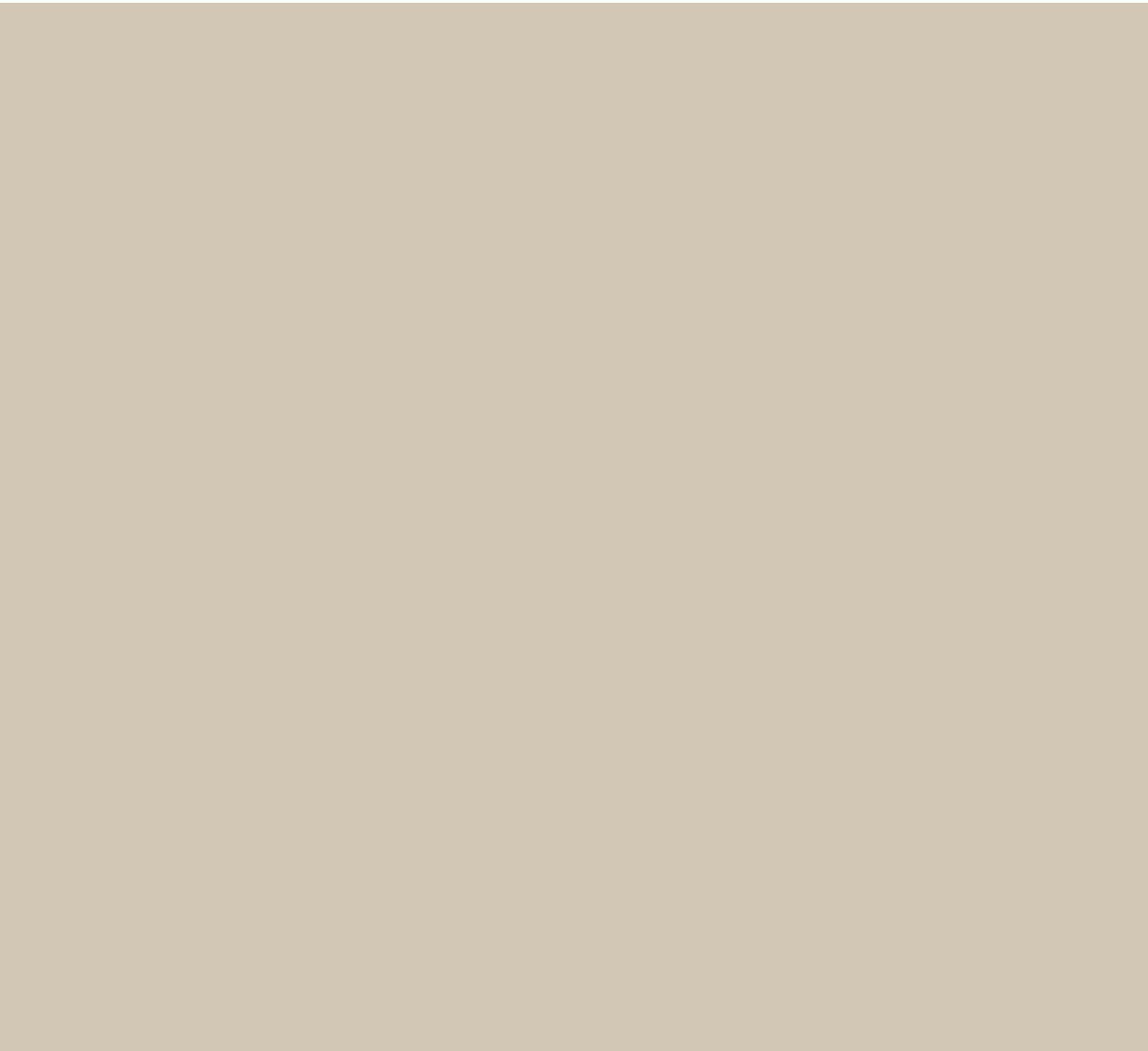
- **Children's right to be heard:** This report and the children's participatory videos (showcased in the film accompanying this report) demonstrate that children understand the impacts of climate change on their lives and that they need help to adapt and find solutions. Children have a right to be heard at all levels, in their communities, and in climate change debates at national and international levels.
- **Children's rights to adaptation:** Life, safety, participation and development are the basic rights of children. From a rights-based perspective, working with children on climate change adaptation is not optional; it is protecting their rights.
- **Children's rights to education:** The changing climate is impacting families' livelihoods and their ability to afford to send their children to school. Governments need to ensure, through scholarships, stipends or fee waivers, that families do not take their children out of school as a coping strategy.
- **Adaptation plans should include the needs of children:** Many developing countries, including Nepal, have or are preparing National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs). It is critical that consultation, dialogues and discussions in various policy spaces include the views and needs of children.



Children who participated in the participatory video climate change project in Bageshwari, Banke Nepal

Notes

- 1 Smith, D. and Vivekananda, J., 2007, 'A Climate of Conflict: The Links Between Climate Change, Peace and War', International Alert.
<http://www.international-alert.org/publications/322.php> (accessed 29/10/08)
- 2 Stern, N., 2008, 'Forward: Our Climate, Our Children, Our responsibility. The implications of climate change for the world's children', UNICEF UK.
- 3 World Food Programme, UNICEF, Save the Children Alliance: Inter Agency Rapid Flood Assessment – Nepal (August, 07)
<http://www.un.org.np/reportlibrary/reportlibrary.php?bc=r> (accessed 29/10/08)
- 4 Children in a Changing Climate, 2007, The Right to Participate: Securing children's role in climate change adaptation, Children in a Changing Climate
<http://www.childreninachangingclimate.org> (accessed 29/10/08)
- 5 Current core programme partners include the Institute of Development Studies, Plan International, ActionAid, Save the Children, UNICEF, UK National Children's Bureau, RMIT Melbourne and Risk Frontiers, as well as a number of research institutes engaged in individual research projects under CCC-research,
www.childreninachangingclimate.org/partners_ccc.html
- 6 Bimal, R. and Adhikari, A., 2008, 'Country Case Study – Nepal: Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD)' in Human Development 2007/2008 Report: Fighting climate change: Human solidarity in a divided world, New York: UNDP
- 7 International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), 2004, Nepal CLAAC Report, IIED Working Paper No. 3, London: IIED
- 8 The term Dalit refers to a 'Pani Nachalne' (untouchable) group or caste from whom water is not accepted according to Hindu social structure (Source: ActionAid Nepal, CARE Nepal and Save the Children (2002) 'National Dalit Strategy Report')
- 9 The DFID-funded Disaster Risk and Reduction through Schools (DRRS) project has the objective to make schools in high disaster risk areas safer, enabling them to act as a locus for disaster risk reduction, and to engage the education sector in the Hydro Framework for Action through awareness for disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation.
- 10 IIED, 2004, Nepal CLAAC Report, IIED Working Paper No. 3, London: IIED
- 11 It should be noted that the level of certainty for rainfall projections is less than for temperature.
- 12 IIED, 2004, Nepal CLAAC Report, IIED Working Paper No. 3, London: IIED
- 13 Ahmed, S.M., Husain, A.M.M., Sattar, M.G. and Chowdhury, A.M.R., 1999, 'A quick assessment of flood losses and post-flood rehabilitation needs in BRAC's programme areas', in Ahmed, S.M. & Ahmed, H.S. (eds) Experiences of deluge: flood 1998, Research Monograph Series, Dhaka: BRAC
- 14 Gautam, D., Sharma, A., Amatya, A. and Jnavaly, S.S., 2007, 'Climate Change Adaptation on Livelihood of Women Farmers: Case study of Banke and Bardiya Districts of Nepal', ActionAid Nepal
- 15 Gautam, D., 2006, 'Process Documentation of Participatory Vulnerability Analysis (PVA): Disaster Risk reduction through School Project (DRRSP)', ActionAid Nepal
- 16 Gautam, D., Kathayat, R.R. and Yadav R.N., 2008, 'Impact of Climate Change on Students, Schools and Neighbourhoods', BEE-Group Nepal
- 17 Summary of results from focus groups with children and adult community members.



children in a changing climate **research**



Research Report

