

## **RRG Narrative Report** **Final Narrative Report**

**Title of project:** *Mainstreaming Women's Economic Empowerment and Leadership in Community Forest Management, Bagmati Province, Nepal*

**Organization name:** Women's Rights & Resource Network (WRRN)

**Contract number:** 25 WRRN 02

**Reporting period:** From October 1, 2025 to January 31, 2026

**Date of report submission:**

**Completion check-list:**

- Are all deliverables attached?
  - Photographs and videos (Activities 1, 2, 3)
  - Survey report (Activity 1)
  - Social media posts (Activities 2, 3)
  - Minutes (Activities 2, 3)
  - Event report (Activity 2)
  - Workshop report (Activity 3)
- Is the duly signed financial report attached?  
When is the anticipated submission of the Audit? \_\_\_\_\_

### **1. Overall project objective**

The objective of the project aims to develop a clear roadmap that mainstreams the economic empowerment of Indigenous People and local community women and enables their meaningful participation and leadership in decision-making, positioning these as core principles of forest governance in Bagmati Province, Nepal.

### **2. Outcome summary (max 1/2 page)**

*Insert a short description of how the project influenced key political and policy processes as well as key actors. This can include both potential long-term and short-term contributions to the broader agenda for collective rights recognition.*

The "Mainstreaming Women's Economic Empowerment and Leadership in Community Forest Management, Bagmati Province, Nepal" project transformed policy aspirations into grassroots realities across Bagmati Province, Nepal. Through four interconnected activities, WRRN engaged District Forest Officers, MoITFE Minister Bharat Bahadur KC, Secretary, and parliamentarians alongside 20 frontline women CFUG leaders, generating compelling evidence of stark gender gaps. Despite 105 women-led Community Forests (CFs) existing among 2,709 CFs across eight districts, only 3 have been handed over patch land, revealing a stark gender disparity in resource allocation.

**Short-term Impact:** Direct workshop-built trust networks, with Secretary Baral committed to tie Community Forest operational plan approvals to 50% women's representation, while women leaders, many previously unaware of leasehold rights-witnessed **Amritdhara CF's People's Park** and **Aayearjan Samuha models**, committing to replicate despite monkey damage and invasive species challenges. Hon. Bharati Pathak's

presence amplified demands for monitoring and eco-tourism funding.

Long-term Contribution: The project positions WRRN-trained women as change agents enforcing Forest Act 2019's 50% benefit shares and tenure security, embedding women's economic agency. By bridging indigenous women lived realities with provincial policymakers, it advances collective rights recognition, transforming women from nominal participants to empowered stewards of Nepal's forest governance future.

### 3. Project report (max 1 page)

#### Provide a short overview of the completed project.

##### ➤ What did you achieve through this project?

Through this project, WRRN delivered concrete outcomes that advanced women's economic empowerment in community forestry across Bagmati Province. Continuous dialogue with the Bagmati Province Government committed to secure a budget for patch land within community forests to poor, marginalized, and women beneficiaries from Rs. 3.99 billion (allocated budget of fiscal year 2025/2026 to MoFE). Women across eight districts expressed strong interest during patch land studies and advocated for incorporating these provisions into legal frameworks. We also successfully identified women-led community forests throughout the province. Finally, we prepared a report based on data from community forest that presents the status of women-led forests and the challenges surrounding patch land.

##### ➤ How did you achieve these results?

We achieved these outcomes through sustained engagement across multiple levels. Continuous dialogue with provincial and local governments focused specifically on women-led community forests and patch land management, building policy understanding and support. Field studies, interviews, and close coordination with Division Forest Offices created a conducive environment for data collection and trust-building at the district level. Regular discussions with journalists kept program activities and district realities visible in public discourse. Finally, we engaged Bagmati Province's Industry, Tourism, Forest, and Environment Committee at the policymaking level, advocating for concrete policy actions and budget allocations that directly advanced women's leadership in community forestry governance.

##### ➤ What challenges, if any, did you face and how were they resolved or mitigated?

The project encountered several challenges during implementation. Neighboring districts (Bhaktapur, Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Kavrepalanchok and Dhading) and the CF representative, Ms. Jayanti Mahat from Balkalyan CF of Bhaktapur and Mr. Bhim Kumar Shrestha from Rani Bari CF pressured the team as baseline surveys covered only selected areas, while there was strong demand for comprehensive records of all women-led community forests and leasehold lands province-wide, unfeasible due to limited resources. High expectations arose since no government agencies had supported patch land management, alongside intense demand for institutional backing in income generation and leadership development, which strained WRRN's capacity. These were addressed through proactive measures: open discussions secured coordination commitments from women-led CFUGs and Division Forest Offices; future survey coverage across all districts was formally pledged; and strong agreements were made to collaborate closely with grassroots stakeholders, building sustainable partnerships that eased implementation pressures across Bagmati Province.

##### ➤ Do you have any specific plans to follow-up this work?

**Commented [KT1]:** Did wrnn prepare some document to submit to the MOITFE? If please provide in annex

**Commented [G2R1]:** No, WRRN did not prepare any document to submit to the MOITFE.

Looking ahead, WRRN will work directly with women from at least 65 community forests across Bagmati Province's mountains, hills, and Terai, listening to their real needs to shape practical policy solutions that truly serve poor and marginalized sisters. We'll run hands-on training to build leadership and management skills for women already heading community forests, helping them lead with confidence. At the same time, we'll study women-led forests and patch land groups in other provinces to build a national database everyone can use. Finally, we'll kick off income-generating projects on transferred forest lands together with Division Forest Offices and communities, putting real economic power in the hands of marginalized women so they can stand tall and support themselves.

If you specified any strategies to engage women and youth in the Concept Note, please detail their outcomes.

#### 4. Project log frame

Please update the log frame below.

Activity	Targets	Results
<p>1. Conduct a field-based baseline survey in eight districts of Bagmati Province to assess the status of women-led CFUGs, namely Makwanpur, Sindhuli, Chitwan, Ramechhap, Nuwakot, Dolakha, Rasuwa, and Sindhupalchok, which represent all three geographical regions of Nepal.</p>	<p>This baseline survey of women-led CFUGs will focus on eight districts of Bagmati Province, namely: Makwanpur, Sindhuli, Chitwan, Ramechhap, Nuwakot, Dolakha, Rasuwa, and Sindhupalchok which represent all three geographical regions of Nepal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of women-led Community Forest in eight districts. Out of 2,709 Community Forests across eight Bagmati districts, just 105 community forest were led by women having women chairs/executives, highest in Rasuwa and lowest in Sindhuli.</li> <li>• Only 3 patch lands allocated to women-led CFUGs (all Chitwan-registered); most districts report zero, despite Forest Act 2019 eligibility.</li> <li>• CFUG members largely unaware of handover schemes, criteria, and benefits; confirmed via DFO data and field surveys.</li> <li>• Sites like Amritdhara CF's People's Park and Aayearjan show fruit/eco-tourism promise but struggle with monkeys, invasives, maintenance but groups stay dedicated.</li> </ul>
<p>2. Hold a one-day dialogue program with provincial-level parliament officials, where the findings of the baseline survey will be presented, in order to address policy gaps and advocate for better implementation of forest</p>	<p>Around 20 participants including CFUG representatives, government officials, DFOs, right holders and stakeholders will be engaged in discussions on the challenges, gaps, and opportunities for enhancing women's leadership.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseline findings showed data from 8 Bagmati districts (2,709 CFs), highlighting low women-led forests and executives, Presentations on sustainable management, leadership, gender equity by experts and Hon. Bharati Pathak.</li> <li>• Policy gaps identified:</li> </ul>

provisions and gender inclusion in CF governance.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Low awareness of forest laws among women.</li> <li>ii. Poor enforcement of 50% women's seats and fund allocation.</li> <li>i. Financial mismanagement.</li> <li>ii. Numerical participation without real decision-making power</li> <li>iii. Leaders endorsed capacity-building, enterprise investments (eco-tourism, high-value species), compliance-linked CF approvals, better monitoring, and prioritizing women-led groups for livelihoods.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Hold a two-day rigorous training for chairpersons and women representatives of CFUGs across three geographical regions of Bagmati Province with a knowledge-based exposure visit to a nearby group.</p>	<p>The training will bring 20 participants together including women leaders and members from different CFUGs of eight districts to exchange knowledge, understand their rights under forest laws, and build collective strategies for local advocacy and economic empowerment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 women CFUG leaders from 8 districts gained full knowledge of leasehold rights; pre-training, most unaware despite Forest Act provisions.</li> <li>• Only 105/2,709 CFs women-led; stark gaps in patch land (3 total, Chitwan only) highlighted in Ms. Binita Karki's presentation.</li> <li>• Topics included sustainable management (Mr. Pandey), women's leadership (Hon. Bharati Pathak), gender equity (Ms. Aarati Pathak), and leasehold economics (Mr. Hem Pathak).</li> <li>• Amritdhara CF visit to People's Park &amp; Aayearjan sites showed fruit/eco-tourism models; challenges like monkeys/invasives noted, but commitment strong.</li> <li>• Hon. Pathak inspired; participants vowed to replicate initiatives, advocate locally, and support marginalized women in CFUGs.</li> </ul>

**5. Lessons learned (max 1/2 page)**

**Provide a summary of lessons learned, and new insights gained throughout this project. We encourage your candid reflections about what worked and what did not.**

This project provided important learning on the real situation of women’s leadership in community forestry. One key lesson is that **strong policies alone are not enough**. Although Nepal has progressive laws that promote women’s participation and allow forest patch handover to women, most women at the community level are still unaware of these provisions. As a result, many opportunities for economic empowerment remain underutilized.

The baseline survey clearly showed that women-led Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) are very limited and uneven across districts. In many cases, women are included in committees only to meet legal requirements, but they often lack real decision-making power. This highlighted the need to move beyond numerical representation toward meaningful leadership and control over resources. Another important lesson was direct engagement works. Field visits and exposure to women-managed patch lands showed that when women receive land, trust, and minimal support, they manage resources responsibly and creatively. Initiatives such as picnic parks, fruit farming, and grass cultivation demonstrated strong commitment and potential for income generation. However, these groups also face practical challenges such as wildlife conflict, invasive species, lack of infrastructure, and limited technical support.

The two-day training and exposure visit proved that capacity-building makes a real difference. Many participants learned about leasehold and patch land provisions for the first time. After the training, women leaders expressed increased confidence and motivation to claim their rights and support other marginalized women in their CFUGs. Finally, the provincial dialogue reinforced that implementation gaps remain a major challenge. Policymakers acknowledged weak monitoring, low investment in women’s leadership development, and poor compliance with mandatory provisions. The dialogue highlighted the importance of coordination between government, CFUGs, and civil society to translate policies into action. Overall, the project confirmed that awareness, capacity-building, practical support, and accountability mechanisms are essential to strengthen women’s leadership and ensure that community forestry contributes meaningfully to women’s economic and social empowerment.

The table represents the disaggregated summary of the target beneficiaries that were engaged and benefited through this project as mentioned below:

Activities	Bhramin/Chettri/Thakuri/Dasnami	IPs	Dalit	Madhesi
Activity 1: Baseline Survey in eight districts	10	19	-	-
Activity 2: Dialogue with MoITFE, Bagmati Province	14	10	1	1
Activity 3: Two-days training with chairpersons and women representatives of CFUGs	12	12	1	1
Activity 4: Exposure Visit	13	31	-	-

**6. Stakeholder voices (max 1/2 page)**

**What are some quotes or stories that showcase stakeholder or community perspectives about the project?**

**Mr. Bharat Bahadur KC, Minister of MoITFE, Bagmati Province** explained “Nepal’s community forestry has focused mainly on conservation, but now it must move toward sustainable use and enterprise development. Forest laws should be people-centric and based on grassroots realities. Although rights-based policies exist, weak implementation remains a challenge. If effectively utilized, community forestry has strong potential to contribute to the national economy.”

**Ms. Bharati Pathak, Honorable Member, Bagmati Provincial Assembly**, concerned after sharing the findings of baseline data during the province-level dialogue: “This highlights the need for mandatory budget allocation for women-focused programs and sustained investment in capacity-building to ensure meaningful participation of women in community forestry.”

**Mr. Ananda Shrestha, Chairperson, Bagmati Provincial Assembly**, emphasized: “This project highlighted that policy formulation alone is not enough without strong monitoring and visible results. Prioritizing women’s empowerment and building the capacity of disadvantaged groups is essential to ensure that the benefits of existing legal frameworks reach those who need them most.”

**Mr. Anil Regmi, District Forest Officer, Dolakha**, raised voice on province level dialogue: “Insights shared during this project showed that although women’s participation in CFUGs in Dolakha is high, many women still lack clarity on their roles, responsibilities, and financial management. Women are often included to meet legal requirements, but their meaningful involvement in decision-making remains limited.”

## 7. Updated list of key actors and roles

Full name	Acronym	Role (e.g. project lead, collaborator, advisory)
Women Rights & Resource Network	WRRN	Project Lead
Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal	FECOFUN	Collaborator
Green Foundation Nepal	GFN	Collaborator
Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities	NEFIN	Collaborator
National Indigenous Women's Federation	NIWF	Collaborator

## 8. Media demonstrating achievement

As appropriate, please include any additional available details, such as web links, press articles, photos with an identifying caption or file name. Please share it as an annex at the end of the document.

Link:

[https://www.janapatra.com/archives/171248?fbclid=IwY2xjawP9w2lleHRuA2FlbQlxMOBzcnRjBmFwcF9pZBAyMjIwMzcxNzg4MjAwODkyAAEeftsk\\_HvSBWe4YwMnO2qS3z2tnVwUUzgZgv6fIH2dcxbXbPuo2O6WR04z6FA\\_aem\\_4cK1IjoEO-vbiUI-JPzVfQ](https://www.janapatra.com/archives/171248?fbclid=IwY2xjawP9w2lleHRuA2FlbQlxMOBzcnRjBmFwcF9pZBAyMjIwMzcxNzg4MjAwODkyAAEeftsk_HvSBWe4YwMnO2qS3z2tnVwUUzgZgv6fIH2dcxbXbPuo2O6WR04z6FA_aem_4cK1IjoEO-vbiUI-JPzVfQ)

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