Report

Study on Understanding the Social Impact of Climate Change on Young Persons with Disabilities and their Engagement in Climate Action in Nepal

Submitted to:

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Dr. Sunit Adhikari
Team Leader

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Blind Youth Association Nepal (BYAN) is implementing the 'Climate Change Resilience and Inclusive Futures: Empowering Persons with Disabilities for Dealing with the Social Impact of Climate Change' project in Nepal under the UNESCO Youth Grant Scheme. This project aims to bridge the gap between disability inclusion and climate resilience by gathering data, building the capacity of youth with disabilities, and amplifying their voices in advocacy. When centered in research and action, their real-life experiences can significantly contribute to developing inclusive climate policies and community-based adaptation strategies. To this end, a research study was conducted to explore the social impact of climate change on young persons with disabilities in Nepal. Adopting a mixed methods approach ensuring participation of diverse young persons with disabilities across country, this study explored their perception and understanding of climate change, examined their experiences coping with extreme weather, and assessed their inclusion and participation in climate-related advocacy, campaigns, and decision-making to generate actionable recommendations for increasing their participation in climate action. Both secondary and primary information were collected: Secondary data came from a desk review of relevant literature and reports, while primary data was gathered from young persons with disabilities and relevant stakeholder through individual surveys, key informant interviews and focus group discussions. A total of 92 young persons with disabilities (with 47 females) participated in the survey.

According to the Nepal Census 2078 (2021), 2.2% of the total population (2.5% males and 2.0% females) - approximately 647,744 people- has some form of disability. In Nepal, the perception of persons with disabilities is largely negative, often rooted in traditional religious and cultural beliefs. They are not seen as valuable contributors to public life or agents of positive change, and they face major challenges like stigma and discrimination. Women and girls with disabilities, in particular, face "double discrimination" on the basis of both their gender and their disability. Persons with disabilities are among the most vulnerable groups in their communities, and this vulnerability is especially evident during emergencies and disasters, where they encounter barriers at every stage of disaster management. Moreover, many lack adequate knowledge about climate change and how to prepare for climate-induced disasters, the frequency, duration and intensity of which have been increasing in recent years, posing them at high risk.

Nepal's climate change policies have recently begun to acknowledge the heightened vulnerability of marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities. The country's strategy for disability-inclusive climate action is fundamentally linked to its broader commitment to gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI). Although these policy commitments are a welcome development, their implementation faces significant challenges. Despite the framework's inclusive intent, there is little evidence of strong, consistent inclusion of persons with disabilities in local-level planning and action. Mainstreaming disability inclusion into climate adaptation and mitigation efforts remains a hurdle. Additionally, government institutions and other stakeholders lack the capacity to fully grasp the effects of climate change on persons with disabilities and to implement inclusive climate action at the federal, provincial, and local levels.

In Nepal, young persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected by climate change, yet this study reveals that they have very low or limited awareness of it. Over three-fourth of the surveyed young persons with disabilities reported having heard a little about climate change, while 17% reported no understanding at all. Many key informants also expressed their limited awareness, ranking their overall understanding of the topic as below average. This "awareness gap" is not due to a lack of interest, but rather to a lack of accessible and inclusive systems. Key contributing factors include inaccessible information and communication, discrimination and stigma, focus on survival over understanding of climate change, media and outreach gaps, exclusion from mainstream education and decision making, and systematic and policy failures.

The social impact of climate change on persons with disabilities is a complex interplay of physical barriers, social stigma, and institutional neglect. Persons with disabilities are 2 to 4 times more likely to die or be injured in disasters than those without. The most commonly reported impacts were on health (57%) and mobility (39%). Notable 25% female respondents reported safety concerns or experienced violence during extreme weather and/or climate-induced disasters. Although climate change poses risks to all persons with disabilities, certain types of disabilities, particularly those with mobility, sensory, intellectual, and psychosocial disabilities, are more at risk than others due to their specific impairments and the barriers they face.

Climate change heightens health risks, posing specific threats such as heat-related illnesses, waterborne diseases, and mental health issues. The direct health impacts of extreme weather events also include injuries and fatalities from events like floods and landslides. Disruption of essential health services and medication was reported as another key impact of climate extremes, which can have life-threatening consequences. Climate change-related events have also affected the sexual and reproductive health of persons with disabilities. The study found that unpredictable weather events contributed to behavior changes and depression, especially in persons with intellectual disabilities. The mental health impacts also include increased stress and anxiety, social isolation and loss of independence.

The study found that climate change and extreme weather events also create complex mobility challenges, which, often magnifies existing barriers and directly impact safety, access to aid, and ability to participate in community life. The study found several instances where respondents missed important events, classes, and trainings due to unexpected weather events, which not only hampered their learning but also affected their credibility. Extreme weather events also have a devastating and disproportionate impact on the education, creating and exacerbating barriers to learning, as reported by 39% respondents. Key impacts on education include the loss of learning materials and assistive devices, and impossible journeys to school due to damage to infrastructure. This affected their ability to concentrate, learn, and engage with their peers, potentially leading to a decline in their academic performance and, eventually, dropping out of the school.

Many persons with disabilities already face higher rates of poverty and unemployment. Climate change and associated disasters often trap them in a vicious cycle of poverty, making it difficult to cope and adapt. Key impacts on livelihoods reported by 29% respondents include loss of income and livelihood sources, destruction of assets, reduced agricultural productivity, and loss of markets. Climate change also creates barriers to economic opportunities through the loss of assistive devices and the additional cost required for adaptation and recovery. Due to low adaptive capacity, it takes a long time for persons with disabilities to recover from the loss of livelihood assets caused by climate-induced disasters.

Climate change impacts act as a "threat multiplier" for violence and safety challenges, especially for women and girls. Twenty-seven percent respondents highlighted that women and girls with disabilities, at the intersection of two marginalized identities, are exceptionally vulnerable to gender-based violence (GBV) during and after climate disasters. They were concerned that in crowded and insecure emergency shelters or displacement camps, women and girls with disabilities face a heightened risk of sexual assault and other forms of physical violence and neglect.

Twenty-four percentage respondents reported communication barriers as a potential impact of climate change. These challenges stem from a lack of accessible formats, the destruction of communication infrastructure, and a failure to include persons with disabilities in communication planning. Emergency alerts and public service announcements are often delivered through channels that are not accessible to all types of disabilities. For instance, warnings without audio descriptions or screen-reader compatibility are useless for people who are blind or have low vision.

Despite these challenges persons with disabilities in Nepal are actively working to build their resilience through individual and community-led initiatives, often supported by their OPDs. Rather than abstract concepts, they are more likely to be aware of its effects through daily observations and the disruptions it causes in their lives. However, there are few existing coping strategies reported for building the long-term resilience against such climate impacts. Only 8% of respondents were prepared for the effects of climate change, while 55% were either not prepared or didn’t understand the meaning of “preparedness”. A primary barrier to this is the inaccessibility of information. The study also highlights a critical disconnect between the availability of climate information and its accessibility for persons with disabilities. About 65% respondents were aware that climate information exists, but they lack the means to access it, as it is seldom available in accessible formats. Similarly, a large majority (66%) were unaware of livelihood support for persons with disabilities affected by climate change.

Recognizing that persons with disabilities are not just passive victims, but have a vital role to play in building climate and disaster resilience, OPDs are focusing on their active inclusion in climate-induced disaster planning. Their lived experiences offer unique and valuable insights that can lead to more effective, inclusive, and tailored climate policies and programs. However, a significant majority (81%) reported no participation in climate change policymaking and program planning at the national or local levels, while another 16% reported their participation largely as tokenistic.

The study found that discrimination faced by persons with disabilities in the process is a profound and systemic issue; they are rarely invited to, or informed about, national and local level climate policy meetings, workshops, and consultations. Policymakers often operate under the misguided assumption that persons with disabilities are not relevant stakeholders, viewing them as passive aid recipients rather than active contributors.

Empowering young persons with disabilities in climate action requires a multifaceted approach. This includes ensuring accessible communication (such as sign language, Braille, and audio) in all climate-related programs/meetings, and increasing their participation in policymaking and leadership roles. It is also crucial to provide targeted training and capacity-building opportunities. The fundamental principal of disability rights, "Nothing about us without us" must be applied to all climate discussions.

The study also found that accessible communication and information are also key to bringing forward the voices and experiences of young persons with disabilities in climate action. It involves creating accessible information in various accessible formats, designing inclusive climate education and public awareness campaigns with universal accessibility in mind, and harnessing lived experiences through personal narratives. It is also essential to train climate professionals and policymakers on disability inclusion. The respondents also recommended developing inclusive climate and disaster policies that specifically address the needs of persons with disabilities, and making climate change education and awareness programs accessible through inclusion in school and college curriculum.

The study also highlights the need for a comprehensive and intersectional approach, centered on policies and programs that prioritize the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities. They focused on mainstreaming disability rights into all climate policies rather than simply allocating some budget or program for persons with disabilities or OPDs. It also highlights the distinct yet complementary roles of the government and OPDs. Young persons with disabilities see the governments as having the primary responsibility to create an enabling environment for their meaningful participation, including embedding disability inclusion into all climate-related policies and collecting disaggregated data on disability that is crucial for evidence-based policymaking. They believe that the government must actively create and maintain formal, accessible, and safe spaces for their participation. On the other hand, they see OPDs as their most trusted advocates and essential partners, who can empower them through training and mentorship, act as watchdogs of government actions, and foster partnerships with mainstream climate organizations.

Ultimately, strengthening collaboration between persons with disabilities and stakeholders (OPDs, government and development partners) is a critical step for developing and implementing disability-inclusive climate programs. Key strategies for this include co-designing policies and programs, ensuring active and meaningful participation, building trust, and enhancing the capacity of all stakeholders. Capacity building for OPDs should focus on technical knowledge and organizational development, while training for governments and development partners should focus on disability rights, inclusion, and the principles of accessibility and universal design for climate infrastructure, early warning systems, and information dissemination. The guiding principle for all collaboration should be the culture of "Nothing about us without us," ensuring that persons with disabilities are involved as equal partners at every stage of climate action.

To effectively increase the participation of young persons with disabilities in climate action, a multi-faceted approach is needed that addresses systemic barriers and empowers them as agents of change. Empowering young persons with disabilities with the skills and knowledge of climate change is crucial to building their confidence and helping them transition from being consulted to taking on leadership roles. This includes targeted training and skill-building, support for youth-led initiatives and establishing mentorship programs. Similarly, participation of young persons with disabilities should move beyond the present tokenistic presence to achieve genuine influence on policy and planning, and this can be achieved through advocating for government policies that require the inclusion of young persons with disabilities and their representative organizations on all climate-related committees. Climate education and early warning systems must be designed from the very beginning–starting with school curricula-to be accessible for young persons with diverse disabilities. Climate-related information, public awareness campaigns on climate change and DRR, and early warning and emergency alerts should be developed in multiple accessible formats. To sustain the work of young persons with disabilities and genuinely improve their meaningful participation, they (and their OPDs) need direct access to financial resources dedicated for persons with disabilities. Moreover, disaggregated data on persons with disabilities is crucial to inform disability-inclusive policymaking and planning, which also helps to identify and safely evacuate/rescue during disaster. The government agencies and OPDs should

launch campaigns that challenge stereotypes and highlight the contributions of young persons with disabilities in climate action. Young persons with disabilities also have a crucial and multi-faceted role to play in climate action by bringing their unique perspectives, lived experience, expertise, and a powerful sense of urgency that can make climate efforts more effective, inclusive and equitable.

ABBREVIATION

BPS	Blind and Partially Sighted
BYAN	Blind Youth Association Nepal
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CIL	Centre for Independent Living of Persons with Disabilities
COP	Conference of the Parties
CRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DHM	Department of Hydrology and Meteorology
DiDRR	Disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DRRM	Disaster Risk Reduction and Management
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GoN	Government of Nepal
I/NGO	International/Non-Governmental Organization
ID	Identity (Card)
IPCC	Inter-governmental Panel for Climate Change
KII	Key Informant Interview
LAPA	Local Adaptation Plan for Action
LDC	Least Developed Countries
LDCRF	Local Disaster and Climate Resilience Framework
MCCICC	Multi-Stakeholder Climate Change Initiatives Coordination Committee
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NDRRMA	National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority
NDWA	Nepal Disabled Women's Association
NFDN	National Federation of the Disabled-Nepal
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OPD	Organization of Persons with Disabilities
UN	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Blind Youth Association Nepal (BYAN) is a non-political, non-religious, not-for-profit Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) established by Blind and Partially Sighted (BPS) youth in Nepal. It was founded in 2011, registered with the District Administration Office in Kathmandu in 2012, and affiliated with the Social Welfare Council of Nepal. It is the only organization established by BPS youth in Nepal. Currently, BYAN has more than 500 members, organized into 10 district chapters located in Jhapa, Morang, Bara, Kathmandu, Chitwan, Kaski, Rupandehi, Banke, Surkhet, and Kailali districts. Memberships and chapter expansion are ongoing. Blind Youth Association Nepal (BYAN) is a right based organization established to advocate and promote the rights of blind and partially sighted youth that are scattered across the country. As a rights-based organization, BYAN intends to play a proactive role in formulating, amending, and implementing legal provisions related to youths with disabilities. It also focuses on organizing and capacity-building of youths with disabilities across the country. BYAN has strong networking and cooperation with different government and non-government stakeholders working in various domains of disability. Additionally, BYAN is a member of the National Federation of the Disabled-Nepal (NFDN), which serves as the umbrella organization for organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) in the country.

1.2 Context

The Inter-governmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) defines climate change as a change in the state of the climate that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer, and can be identified by changes in the mean and/or variability of its properties, and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer. It refers to any change in climate over time, whether due to natural variability or as a result of human activity[1]. The world is now warming faster than at any point in recorded history. Warmer temperatures over time are changing weather patterns and disrupting the usual balance of nature. This poses many risks to human beings and all other forms of life on Earth[2]. More severe storms, increased drought, a warming, rising ocean, loss of species, not enough food, more health risks and poverty and displacement are major impacts of climate change throughout the world. Climate change is the single biggest health threat facing humanity - already harming health, through air pollution, disease, extreme weather events, forced displacement, pressures on mental health, and increased hunger and poor nutrition in places where people cannot grow or find sufficient food[2]. Thus, Climate change is increasingly being recognized not only as an environmental crisis but also as a deep social justice issue, with disproportionately adverse effects on already marginalized communities, including persons with disabilities.

Because of its mountainous terrain and socioeconomic conditions, Nepal is highly vulnerable to climate change. Nepal is experiencing an increasing number of climate-related disasters, with a global study ranking it as the fourth worst hit country in the world[3]. Although the country's greenhouse gas emissions are minimal, it faces a disproportionate impact from global climate change. This is evident in the rising temperatures, altered precipitation patterns, and more frequent extreme weather events such as floods and droughts that it experiences. In Nepal, communities relying on natural resources are highly susceptible to climate change related risks like floods, landslides, and droughts, exacerbating challenges

[1] UNFCC, 2011. Fact sheet: Climate change science – the status of climate change science today, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Available from: https://unfccc.int/files/press/backgrounders/application/pdf/press_factsh_science.pdf

[2] United Nations, 2025. Climate Action. Available from: https://www.un.org/en/climatechange.

[3] Briefing paper, Global climate risk index 2019, David Eckstein, Marie-Lena Hutfils and Maik Winges, Germanwatch, December 2018.

for persons with disabilities who often face poverty and social isolation. Climate change has posed a serious threat to the country's growth and development, impacting its environment, economy, society and culture.

Climate change poses a significant threat to all communities in Nepal, but it disproportionately affects persons with disabilities due to pre-existing vulnerabilities compounded by social, economic and systemic barriers and inadequate disaster preparedness that often exclude them from climate action. Key challenges faced by persons with disabilities in Nepal include disproportionate vulnerability to climate-induced disasters, the lack of accessible information on climate change and disaster risk reduction, exclusion from the planning, implementation, and monitoring of disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation programs, and socio-economic and systematic barriers amplified by pre-existing inequalities. Emerging studies in Nepal have highlighted that persons with disabilities often experience restricted access to safe water, sanitation, shelter, and public services during emergencies. A survey reveals that 85% of the surveyed individuals with disabilities were either unaware of or unable to access early warning systems[4]. Climate change has also been found to exacerbate barriers to healthcare, education, and participation in disaster preparedness activities. Additionally, social protection mechanisms often fail to respond adequately to the compounding effects of disability and climate vulnerability.

Nepal has made some progress in recognizing the need for disability-inclusive climate action and disaster risk reduction, though significant gaps remain in implementation. Nepal's National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and National Climate Change Policy (2019) have adopted principles of gender-responsiveness, social inclusion, and "Leave-No-one-Behind," which in theory includes persons with disabilities. Similarly, there is a growing focus on disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction (DiDRR), which aims to provide frameworks and strategies to ensure that the needs and capacities of persons with disabilities are considered in all phases of disaster risk reduction and management. Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) are playing a key role in advocating for their inclusion. Collaborative efforts between local governments, development partners, and OPDs are working to build capacity and raise awareness on DiDRR.

Nevertheless, the intersection of climate vulnerability and disability remains underexplored despite growing risks posed by extreme weather events, rising temperatures, irregular rainfall patterns, and disasters such as floods and landslides. These challenges severely affect persons with disabilities, who already face barriers in accessing infrastructure, education, health services, mobility, and livelihood opportunities. Despite such evidences, there is still a lack of comprehensive, disaggregated, and youth-centered data on how climate change is experienced by young persons with disabilities, and to what extent they are included in decision-making processes. Most current studies worldwide have limitations in their geographical and demographic scope[5]. They also rarely explore the leadership potential of young persons with disabilities, a group that's becoming increasingly important in both the climate justice and disability rights movements.

In response to these gaps, the Blind Youth Association Nepal (BYAN) is implementing a project called 'Climate Change Resilience and Inclusive Futures: Empowering Persons with Disabilities for Dealing with the Social Impact of Climate Change' in Nepal. The project is being implemented under the UNESCO Youth Grant Scheme. This grant scheme was launched during the 13th UNESCO Youth Forum held in 2023 and this project was selected among the top five best ideas from around the world. This project aims to bridge the gap between disability inclusion and climate resilience by gathering data, building the capacity of youth with disabilities, and amplifying their voices in advocacy. A core principle of this project is the

[4] HI, 2023. Nepal and climate change: the challenges faced by people with disabilities.

[5] Auerbach, A. M., Abdukhalilov, A., Sacks, A., & Yusupov, D. (2025). Climate Change and Disability-Inclusive Adaptation: Qualitative Evidence from Uzbekistan. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 1–18.

recognition that young persons with disabilities are not only highly vulnerable to climate change but are also crucial agents of change. Their real-life experiences, when centered in research and action, can significantly contribute to developing inclusive climate policies and community-based adaptation strategies.

In this context, this research study has been conducted to explore the social impact of climate change on young persons with disabilities in Nepal. This study explores how young persons with disabilities in Nepal perceive and understand climate change. It examines their experiences coping with extreme weather, and how climate change impacts their health, education, livelihoods, and support systems. The study also assessed their inclusion and participation in climate-related advocacy, campaigns, and decision-making. This study intends to generate evidence that highlights the urgent need for inclusive climate action and demonstrates the critical role youth with disabilities must play in shaping a just and resilient future.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of the research study is to explore the social impact of climate change on young persons with disabilities in Nepal, and examine their understanding, perception, and level of engagement in climate-related advocacy and planning processes. The specific objectives of the research study are:

- To assess how young persons with disabilities understand and perceive climate change and related social impacts.
- To document the lived experiences of young persons with disabilities in coping with climate extremes (floods, heat, air pollution, water scarcity).
- To explore the impact of climate change on their health, education, livelihood, and support systems.
- To examine their current level of engagement in climate-related advocacy, campaigns, and decision-making.
- To generate evidence-based recommendations for increasing the participation of young people with disabilities in climate action.

The study design has been guided by the following research questions:

- How do young persons with disabilities understand and perceive climate change and related social impacts?
- What are the lived experiences of young persons with disabilities in coping with climate extremes (floods, heat, air pollution, water scarcity)?
- What are the adverse impacts of climate change on young persons with disabilities' health, education, livelihood, and support systems?
- What is the current level of engagement of young persons with disabilities in climate-related advocacy, campaigns, and decision-making?
- What evidence-based and actionable recommendations can be generated for increasing the participation of young persons with disabilities in climate action?

1.4 Thematic Areas of Inquiry

The research study focused on the following thematic areas:

- Social impact of climate change on health, education, livelihoods, and support systems of persons with disabilities.
- Knowledge and awareness of climate change among young persons with disabilities
- Participation of young persons with disabilities in climate-related advocacy, campaigns, and planning: Existing condition as well as future opportunities

- Barriers and enablers to engagement of young persons with disabilities in climate action.
- Leadership roles and aspirations of youth with disabilities in climate action.

1.5 Structure of the Report

This report is organized in five Chapters. Chapter 1 provides the background, context, objective and thematic areas of the research study. Chapter 2 presents the summary of the desk and literature review. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology used for the research study. Chapter 4 describes the study findings. The final chapter, Chapter 5, provides the study conclusion and recommendations for increasing the participation of young persons with disabilities in climate action.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

This study has some limitations in terms of its geographic focus for data collection. Although the study included respondents from all seven provinces of Nepal, the key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted mainly with the organizations and key informants within the Kathmandu valley due to resource constraints. Furthermore, the online survey was only accessible to young persons with disabilities who are literate and have digital access and literacy. Consequently, not all types, categories and age group of disabilities were represented in the survey. However, the organizations representing these disability types were specifically included during the KIIs.

2. CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY FRAMEWORK AND DISABILITY IN NEPAL

2.1 Global Context of Climate Change and Disability

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) defines climate change as "a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods"[6]. Global and unprecedented in scale, the impacts of climate change—from threats to the world's food supply caused by shifting weather to catastrophic flooding from rising seas—require urgent action. Delaying will only make adapting to these changes more difficult and expensive.

Climate change impacts an estimated 1.3 billion (16% of the global population[7]) people with disabilities more than others, making them one of the most vulnerable groups. This is because they face a combination of social, economic, and environmental challenges that are often ignored in climate policies and disaster planning. Climate change threatens to exacerbate pre-existing inequalities and undermine efforts to tackle the climate crisis. Women with disabilities are at highest risk of climate change including due to intersection of gender and disability as well as enhanced risk of gender-based violence. Across the globe, persons with disabilities experience mortality rates up to four times higher in natural disasters than people without disabilities[8]. Resilience to climate change impact on persons with disabilities is hindered by the barriers that they face in accessing mitigation and adaptation efforts and services.

The 2015 Paris Agreement acknowledges that people with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by climate change, and all Parties to the Paris Agreement have international human rights obligations towards persons with disabilities and have reaffirmed in the Paris Agreement to respect, promote, and consider those in the context of climate action. Despite this, a study by the International Disability Alliance (IDA) and McGill University in 2023 revealed that only 39 of the 195 parties to the Paris Agreement mentioned people with disabilities in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). This means 80% of these countries yet to include a single mention of them in their climate plans[9]. The climate change discourse still does not pay adequate attention to persons with disabilities, either at the national level or in international negotiations, despite obligations under Article 11 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) to protect persons with disabilities in all situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies[10].

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030 is another global policy framework that has recognized persons with disabilities as contributing stakeholders to disaster risk reduction (DRR) and resilience building. The framework mandates inclusion as a core principle, requiring all policies and practices to adopt a people-centered approach that considers gender, age, disability and cultural perspective. The midterm review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework for DRR reveals that although efforts towards disability-inclusive DRR have been reported, the establishment and

[6] UNFCC Article 1, Definitions. Available from: https://unfccc.int/resource/ccsites/zimbab/conven/text/art01.htm
[7] WHO, 2023. Available from: https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health
[8] https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/climatechange/climate-change-highlights-need-disability-inclusive-adaptation
[9] IDA, 2022. Persons with Disabilities and Climate Action. Available from: https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/cop_28_-_final_version_-_nov_16th_-_02.pdf
[10] Promoting Disability-Inclusive Climate Change Action, Global Action on Disability (GLAD) Network. Available from: https://gladnetwork.net/sites/default/files/DICAGW_Accessible_06162021.pdf

implementation of inclusive disaster risk reduction systems is still limited, and persons with disabilities are among the groups that are most often excluded from early warning and post disaster recovery[11]. Without targeted actions, climate investments may inadvertently contribute to structural inequalities that reinforce the exclusion of persons with disabilities. The exclusion of people with disabilities from climate-related decisions will further deepen the barriers to their equal participation and limit their ability to contribute to the fight against climate change. Therefore, climate policies and investments must identify differential impacts of climate change for persons with disabilities and incorporate targeted actions to ensure inclusion and accessibility for all.

2.2 Climate Change Policy Frameworks in Nepal

Nepal's climate change policy frameworks have increasingly recognized the disproportionate vulnerability of marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities. While past frameworks may have not been considered or acknowledged disability," recent policies and plans have made progress in incorporating disability inclusion, though significant implementation gaps remain. The core of Nepal's approach to disability-inclusive climate action is rooted in its broader commitment to gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI). This section gives an overview of how disability is addressed within Nepal's climate change policy frameworks.

Nepal is a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) since 1994, and it is currently within the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) Coordination Group within UNFCCC. The Government of Nepal (GoN) ratified the Paris Agreement in 2016 and recently prepared its third Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) – NDC 3.0, which has focused on transitioning on green energy and adapting to climate change, with the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The NDC 3.0 includes a dedicated section on GEDSI, which is a major step forward. This policy articulates commitments to strengthening the government's institutional capacity for GEDSI and ensuring the involvement of marginalized and vulnerable groups in climate initiatives. Nepal's updated NDC explicitly states that climate change disproportionately affects women, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, youth, children, and other socio-economically disadvantaged groups, and that it exacerbates existing inequalities. This is a crucial recognition of the unique challenges faced by persons with disabilities in the context of climate change. It has highlighted that persons with disabilities are not only victims of climate disasters but also vital contributors to policy and implementation for a more equitable and sustainable future. The core focus of the disability-related aspects in NDC 3.0 is on policy integration, participatory approach, targeted actions to address the unique climate-related vulnerabilities and needs of persons with disabilities, and disaggregated data collection data to inform and measure the effectiveness of inclusive climate policies.

Nepal officially adopted the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) in 2015. The Sendai Framework has firmly established that persons with disabilities and their advocacy organizations are legitimate partners in designing and implementing disaster risk reduction policies and practices. The Nepal government has subsequently translated its principles into its national policies and actions, including the Disaster Risk Reduction National Strategic Plan of Action (2018-2030), National Policy on Disaster Risk Reduction (2018) and Disaster risk Reduction and management Act (2017).

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA) has formulated a strategic action plan for GEDSI in DRRM in 2024, which has embraced the principle of "nothing about us without

[11] UNGA, 2023. Main findings and recommendations of the midterm review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. Available at: https://sendaiframework-mtr.undrr.org/publication/main-findings-andrecommendations-midterm-review-implementation-sendai-framework.

us" to address the issues and concerns of persons with disabilities. The action plan has also embraced the principles of identification of vulnerable groups and implementation of measures for DRR and ensuring access to information, services and meaningful participation of vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities as provisioned in the DRRM Act, 2017. The plan has outlines eight strategic pillars aligned with the Sendai Framework to ensure inclusive risk assessments, responsible governance, and equitable access to relief and rehabilitation for vulnerable groups during disasters.

National Climate Change Policy (2019) is a landmark document that explicitly mentions persons with disabilities. This policy has identified GESI as a cross-cutting theme and outlined specific strategies to address the vulnerabilities of marginalized communities. This policy provides the overarching framework for mainstreaming disability inclusion into climate action.

National Adaptation Plan (NAP), 2021-2050, is another comprehensive strategy to address climate vulnerabilities, with a "gender responsive, socially inclusive, and Leave-No-one-Behind" approach. While the NAP aims to integrate climate change adaptation into existing policies, studies have highlighted that persons with disabilities and their representative organizations (OPDs) have often been consulted from the perspective of their vulnerability, rather than being fully involved in the co-creation of the plan.

Given that climate change-induced disasters disproportionately affect persons with disabilities, disaster risk reduction (DRR) policies are closely linked to climate action. Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act (2017) and related policies and frameworks are designed to be inclusive, but implementation challenges exist, particularly concerning accessible early warning systems, evacuation procedures, and shelters. Building on this Act, Gandaki Province in Nepal has taken a significant step in establishing disability law, formulating an Act regarding the rights of persons with disabilities, becoming the first of the seven provinces to enact legislation on the rights of persons with disabilities. Although the Act aims to eliminate inequality and oppression faced by persons with disabilities, there is no specific mention of climate change as a distinct provision within the law.

Local Adaptation Plans for Action (LAPA) Framework (2011) decentralizes climate action as a crucial part for disability inclusion. The LAPA framework promotes a bottom-up, participatory approach. However, there is limited evidence to date of strong, consistent inclusion of persons with disabilities in local-level planning and implementation, despite the framework's inclusive design. This requires empowering local governments to effectively integrate disability-inclusive climate and DRR actions into their annual development plans and budgets.

Nepal ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities (CRPD), in 2010. This move highlights Nepal's dedication to protecting the human rights of people with disabilities and building a more inclusive society. The Act relating to Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2017 was enacted to align national law with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Act has recognized persons with disabilities as rights-holders, not just recipients of aid. t explicitly prohibits all forms of discrimination on the basis of disability, with provisions for legal action and punishment against those who discriminate. The Act guarantees equal access to basic services and opportunities for persons with disabilities, including education, health, employment and accessibility. The Act amended the classification of disability, recognizing 10 types of disability based on impairment and four categories based on the degree of severity (total, severe, moderate, and mild).

In addition to these dedicated policies and plans, climate resilience has also been integrated into sectoral planning processes including, but not limited to, disaster risk reduction and management, agriculture, energy, and forest sector plans. Nepal has also established various leadership, coordination and

stakeholder engagement institutions and mechanisms to guide climate change policymaking and programs, ensure dialogue and consultations. The Multi-Stakeholder Climate Change Initiatives Coordination Committee (MCCICC), established through the NAPA process, serves as a national platform to engage an array of stakeholders on climate change, including civil society actors.

These policy commitments are a positive development, but challenges remain in their implementation. Persons with disabilities have historically been excluded from decision-making processes at both the national and local levels. The effective mainstreaming of disability inclusion into climate adaptation and mitigation measures is still a challenge due to the following factors:

- There is still a lack of concrete action plans for translating policy commitments into concrete, time-bound, and funded action plans.
- Lack of recognition and representation of persons with disabilities and their OPDs in climate change and disaster risk reduction and management related committees at all levels of government, such as Local Disaster Risk Management Committee (LDRMC), District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC) has excluded them from decision making. When they are not at the table, their unique needs and their expertise/lived experience are often overlooked.
- There is a need to build the capacity of government institutions and other stakeholders to understand the impact of climate change on persons with disabilities, and implement inclusive climate action at all levels (federal, provincial, and local).
- There is still a lack of data on climate change impact on different types of disabilities at different geographic regions. Robust systems for collecting disaggregated data on climate change impact on persons with disabilities and monitoring progress are necessary to ensure that the needs of persons with disabilities are being met.
- There is a weak coordination and partnership between OPDs and government/non-government and development partners. Ongoing partnership and consultation with OPDs are crucial for the successful implementation of inclusive climate policies.

2.3 An Overview of Disability in Nepal

According to the Nepal Census 2078 (2021), 2.2% of the total population (2.5% males and 2.0% females) has some form of disability, which amounts to approximately 647,744 people[12]. This figure is considered low compared to international averages, suggesting underreporting. The world disability report estimates 16% populations of developing countries have some form of disabilities[13]. The main types of disabilities include Physical disabilities (36.75%), Low vision (16.88%), Blindness (5.37%), Hearing impairment/Hard of hearing (15.72%), Speech impairment (6.36%), Psychosocial disability (4.2%), Deaf-Blind (1.56%), Hemophilia (0.75%), Autism-related disabilities (0.75%), Intellectual disabilities (1.73%), Multiple disabilities (8.78%), and Not Stated (1.07%)[14].

In promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, Nepal ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2010, while Nepal's 2015 constitution ensures all citizens shall be equal before the law, and there shall be no discrimination in applying general laws on the grounds of disability (Article 18.2). The Disability Rights Act, 2017 provides a comprehensive framework setting out a disability classification, as well as the services, facilities, and opportunities available for persons with disabilities to live with dignity. This Act classifies disability into ten types as below.

[12] CBS, 2021. National Population and Housing Census 2021. Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), Kathmandu, Nepal.

[13] WHO, 2023. Available from: https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health

[14] NFDN, 2023. Disability data from Nepal Census 2022. National Federation of the Disabled – Nepal (NFDN). Kathmandu, Nepal.

1. Physical Disability	2. Visual Impairment	3. Hearing Impairment	4. Hearing-visual Impairment	5. Voice and Speech
6. Psychosocial Disability	7. Intellectual Disability	8. Homophilia	9. Autism-related Disabilities	10. Multiple Disabilities

Figure 1: Ten different types of disabilities in Nepal (as per the Disability Rights Act, 2017)

In terms of severity, the government of Nepal has categorized disability into four categories and Disability Identity Card is distributed accordingly as Red (Complete disability), Blue (Severe disability), Yellow (Moderate disability), and White (Mild disability). The disability ID Card is the main route to access disability-specific services.

Despite the legal framework and provisions for providing disability ID cards to persons with disabilities, still some eligible individuals have not received their cards, hindering their access to benefits. The challenges include delays in distribution, inconsistent implementation across local levels, and difficulties in identifying and assessing disabilities. Moreover, persons with disabilities, particularly those with severe disabilities, may face physical and logistical barriers in reaching the local level offices to apply for the cards. There's a need to raise awareness among local government officials and the public about the importance of disability ID cards and the procedures for obtaining them.

2.4 Stigma and Discrimination to Persons with Disabilities

In Nepal, the perception of persons with disabilities is largely negative, often rooted in traditional religious and cultural beliefs. The persons with disabilities are not seen as valuable contributors to public life or agents of positive change. Stigma and discrimination are major challenges for persons with disabilities[7,15]. Misconceptions, such as the belief that disability is a punishment for past sins, have led families to hide disabled members to avoid social shame[16]. This societal stigma often results in discrimination from birth, with many persons with disabilities perceived as incapable of independent living. In some communities, a lack of understanding is leading to the isolation or restraint of children with disabilities. Research consistently shows pervasive societal prejudices against persons with disabilities, underscoring the critical need for anti-stigma campaigns to promote their acceptance and equal participation in society[17].

Historically, educational accessibility for children with disabilities remains a significant challenge in Nepal, especially in rural areas[18]. The long distances to schools and a lack of accessible transportation create substantial environmental barriers that prevent many children from attending classes[10]. Additionally, schools often lack the necessary resources, such as trained teachers, accessible learning materials, and inclusive infrastructure, further limiting educational opportunities for students with disabilities[19],[20]. Moreover, social stigma has significantly influenced educational decisions for children with disabilities, with many parents believing that an education would be of no benefit to their child[10]. While there is a clear link between educational attainment and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities,

[15] Subedi, T.N., 2025. Stigmatization of people with disability in Nepal, SMC Journal of Sociology, 2(1):24-47.
[16] UNICEF, 2016. Study on Stigmatization of Children with Disabilities, Analytical Report.
[17] Devkota, H.R., 2024. Examining the association between perceived stigma, its correlates, and restrictions in participation among persons with disabilities in Nepal: a cross-sectional study, BMC Public Health, 24, Article number 1176
[18] Grimes, P., et al., 2021. Disability-Inclusive Education Practices in Nepal, UN Children's Fund Regional Office for South Asia, Kathmandu
[19] Singh, A. 2023. Barriers to Education for Individuals with Disabilities in Nepal: Exploring Challenges and Assessing Inclusive Education Strategies, University College Stockholm.
[20] Human Rights Watch, 2018. Nepal: Barriers to Inclusive Education. Segregation, Lack of Accessibility for Children with Disabilities

even those with higher levels of education continue to face substantial barriers in the job market[21]. Despite their qualifications, they often encounter discrimination and a lack of accessible workplaces[22].

Women and girls with disabilities in Nepal face "double discrimination" on the basis of both their gender and their disability[23]. This often leads to heightened stigma, violence and abuse, limited access to reproductive health, denied health care or treated with negative attitudes by health workers, and reduced opportunities[24]. The historical and persistent caste system in Nepal creates another layer of marginalization for persons with disabilities, particularly for those from the Dalit community. They suffer from caste-based discrimination, barriers to access public services, and economic vulnerability due to poor/denied access to resources and opportunities to income and employment[25]. Ethnicity is another important intersectionality factor. Indigenous and ethnic minority groups with disabilities face distinct challenges. Indigenous persons with disabilities in Nepal are disproportionately affected by issues like climate change due to the intersecting impacts of ableism, colonialism, and patriarchy[26]. Development programs and policies (including climate change) often fail to consider the specific needs of indigenous persons with disabilities, excluding them from meaningful participation and decision-making processes[27].

The challenges faced by persons with disabilities in Nepal are exacerbated by their geographic location, particularly in remote, rural areas[28]. The lack of accessible infrastructure, such as roads and schools, is a major barrier in rural Nepal. This makes it difficult for children with disabilities to get an education and for adults to access employment or health services. Rural areas often lack specialized services, trained professionals, and assistive devices. The deeply rooted stigma surrounding disability is often more pronounced in isolated rural communities, where traditional beliefs are stronger and there is less exposure to modern human rights perspectives[29]. Therefore, understanding disability in Nepal requires an intersectional approach that recognizes how various identities combine to create unique and intensified forms of discrimination[30]. Although legal reforms and policy frameworks are a positive step, effective implementation requires a nuanced approach that addresses the multiple and overlapping barriers faced by the most marginalized members of society – persons with disabilities[31].

2.5 Barriers of Persons with Disabilities to Climate-Induced Disasters

Persons with disabilities are among the most vulnerable groups in their communities. They face significant challenges and barriers in accessing essential services like healthcare, livelihoods, and transportation. This vulnerability is particularly evident during emergencies and disasters, where they encounter barriers at every stage of disaster management[32]. Persons with disabilities are often excluded from emergency preparedness and response. They may be unable to access early warning signals, and evacuation routes,

[21] Adhikari, S.R. and Pradhananga, N. 2024. Socio-cultural barriers for people with disabilities in the public employment sector of Nepal, Wisdon of Worthy Research Journal, 3(2): 75-82

[22] ILO, 2018. Labour market inclusion of people with disabilities, International Labour Organization (ILO)

[23] Devkota, D.R., 2019. Societal attitude and behaviours towards women with disabilities in rural Nepal: pregnancy, childbirth and motherhood, BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth, 19, Article number 20.

[24] UN Women, 2024. Policy Paper: Addressing Stigma And Discrimination To Eliminate Violence against Women with Disabilities.

[25] Aryal, R.P. and Aryal, B. 2021. Disability Stigma and Discrimination in Nepal: A Study of Pokhara Metropolitan City, Asian Journal of Population Sciences, Vol. 1, pp 23-31.

[26] NIDWAN, 2022. Indigenous Women and Girls in Nepal: A Brief Overview. Available from: https://nidwan.org.np/2022/01/14/indigenous-women-and-girls-in-nepal-a-brief-overview/

[27] NIDWAN, 2022. Research Findings on Impact of Climate Change on Indigenous Women and Girls with Disabilities in Nepal

[28] Adhikari, A, Aryal, B. and Khatiwada, K., 2024. Addressing Disability Inclusion in Nepal: Barriers and Actions, Quest Journal of Management and Social Sciences, 6(3):540-549.

[29] UNPRPD, 2022. Situational Analysis of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Nepal: Country Brief. United Nations Nepal

[30] Cote, A. and Banks, L.M., 2025. Global Disability Inclusion Report: Accelerating Disability inclusion in a Changing and Diverse World, A Multi-Stakeholder Report for the Global Disability Summit 2025.

[31] Oli, K. 2025. Disability rights legislation in Nepal: Status, challenges, and way forward, Nepal Public Policy Review, Volume 5.

[32] CBM, nd. Study on Disability Inclusive Climate Change Adaptation (DiCCA). Final Report, Centre for Disability in Development and CBM.

shelters, and humanitarian aid are frequently not designed to accommodate their needs. Literature suggests that many persons with disabilities lack adequate knowledge about climate change and how to prepare for climate-induced disasters[33]. They are often excluded from discussions and initiatives on climate change adaptation. Disasters create significant movement barriers, making it difficult or impossible for persons with disabilities to evacuate safely during disasters[34]. The safe house and evacuation centres are often not disability-friendly. During disasters, the long distances, poor road conditions, and a lack of support can make safe and effective evacuation extremely difficult for persons with disabilities[35]. Moreover, a lack of awareness among local governments and community members about the specific needs and rights of persons with disabilities also acts as a major barrier to creating inclusive climate change adaptation activities[36]. Individually or collectively, these barriers make it more likely that persons with disabilities will face more significant threats and vulnerabilities than others, especially when facing a crisis. The frequency, duration and intensity of climate-induced disasters have been increasing in the recent years, posing persons with disabilities at high risk.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach, ensuring participation of diverse young persons with disabilities across country, with focused field visits to relevant organizations within Kathmandu Valley. The data was collected in August 2025. A pragmatic approach using both qualitative and quantitative methods and covering wide range of young (aged 17-40 years) persons with disabilities was adopted for the purpose of information collection to understand the social impact of climate change on young persons with disabilities and their engagement in climate action in Nepal. The methodological framework of the research study is given in Figure 2.

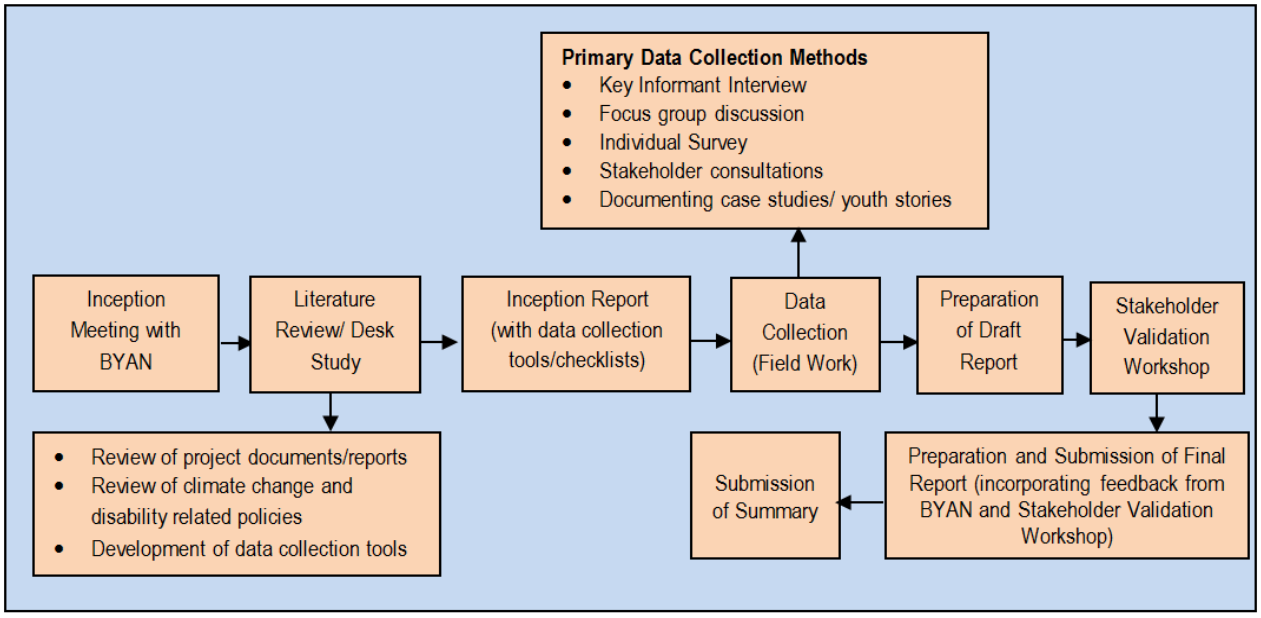

Figure 2: Methodological framework of the research study

The methodology adopted was instrumental in gathering factual information that was the basis for analytical assessment. Both secondary and primary information were collected for the assessment. The

[33] HI, 2022. Persons with disabilities and climate change in Nepal.
[34] NCD, 2023. The Impacts of Extreme Weather Events on People with Disabilities. National Council on Disability.
[35] The World Bank and GFDRR, 2017. Disability Inclusion in Disaster Risk Management: Promising practices and opportunities for enhanced engagement, Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, The World Bank Group, Washington, D.C.
[36] British Council, 2021. South Asia Research on Perceptions of Young People on Climate Change and Action, The British Council.

secondary information was collected from the desk review of project document/reports, relevant research reports, and climate change and disabilities related policies. The primary data was collected from the young persons with disabilities and relevant stakeholders using the following methods:

- Individual surveys of young persons with disabilities (using online platform)
- Focus group discussions (FGDs)
- Key informant interviews (KIIs)

3.1 Desk review/Secondary data collection

At the onset of the study, the study team collected secondary information through desk review of relevant documents including the project document/reports, and relevant policies (e.g., Nepal's NDC 3.0, NDRRMA's Strategic Action Plan for GEDSI in DRRM, 2024; National Climate Change Policy, 2019; NAP (2021-2050), DRRM Act, 2017; LAPA Framework, the Act relating to Rights of persons with Disabilities, 2017; National Policy and Plan of Action on Disability, 2016). In addition, numerous research reports on climate change and disability from organizations such as CBM, the World Bank, the United Nations, and Handicap International (HI), along with articles published in various journals were also reviewed. The information acquired from the desk review served as secondary information for report preparation.

3.2 Primary Data Collection

3.2.1 Individual Survey with Young Persons with Disabilities

Individual survey with young persons with disabilities was conducted as part of the primary data collection to analyze their understanding, perception and level of engagement in climate change related processes. The survey was conducted using an online survey platform (KoBo Toolbox[37]). A set of questionnaire (mostly closed-ended questionnaires) were prepared in simple Nepali language, uploaded in the toolbox, and deployed it for data collection. The survey included 92 young persons with different types of disabilities (physical, intellectual, psychosocial, sensory), of which 47 were females. The survey questionnaire used for the survey is presented in Annex 1, and the characteristics of the respondents are described in Chapter Four.

3.2.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

The methodology adopted for primary data collection through FGDs was mainly focused on perceptions, experience and anticipation of young persons with disabilities. The participants' views were assessed by using checklists easily understood by them. The FGD participants were selected using purposive sampling in consultation with BYAN. A total of two FGDs – one with young persons with disabilities (BYAn Climate Champions), and another with the parents of persons with disabilities - were conducted totaling nine participants. The checklist used to facilitate the FGD is presented in Annex 2.

Figure 2: KII with Chairperson of NDWA

Figure 3: FGD with BYAN Climate Champions

[37] KoboToolbox is an intuitive, reliable software used to collect, analyze, and manage data for surveys (www.kobotoolbox.org).

3.2.3 Key Informant Interview (KII)

A total of 16 KIIs were conducted with relevant organizations working in the sector of disability and climate change. The KIIs were conducted with government agencies (3), OPDs (7), I/NGOs working in climate change (3), and climate and DRR experts/activist (3). The list of organizations for the key informant interviews is presented in Table 1. A checklist was used to guide the interviews (Annex 3).

Table 1: List of organizations for the key informant interviews

SN	Organization	No. of Participants
1	National Federation of the Disabled-Nepal (NFDN)	2
2	CBM-Global, Kathmandu, Nepal (INGO)	1
3	People in Need (PIN) Nepal (INGO)	1
4	Prayatna Nepal	2
5	Nepal Disabled Women's Association (NDWA)	1
6	Down Syndrome Society Nepal	1
7	Center for Independent Living of Persons with Disabilities (CIL Kathmandu)	1
8	GEDSI Expert, Resilience, Adaptation and Inclusion in Nepal (RAIN)	1
9	National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA)	1
10	DRR Focal Person, Ward-9, Lalitpur Metropolitan City	1
11	REDD+ IC, Babarmahal, Kathmandu	1
12	Experts (including climate expert with disability)	3
TOTAL		**16**

3.3 Data Analysis

Soon after the data collection was completed in the 3rd week of August 2025, the study team started analyzing and synthesizing the data using both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data. The qualitative data was analyzed using descriptive and interpretive approaches. The data analysis was guided by the purpose and objectives of the research study. The results were then interpreted to generate the research report.

3.4 Ethics and Risks

The study team ensured that the language used was appropriate and respectful of participants interviewed. It was made sure that the research is conducted in a space that is socially acceptable for participants and where they feel free to speak. Consent was sought from potential participants before interviews and FGDs so that participants are informed on what the research is for, understand it, and are free to decide whether to participate or not (without inducement). The interviews were conducted in private in a non-judgmental manner. Confidentiality of the information given by the informant was ensured. All care was taken to keep their identities confidential and only relevant results were used to support the research.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this chapter, the findings of the data analysis are reported. Firstly, a description of the characteristics of the surveyed young persons with disabilities is provided. Subsequently, the young persons with disabilities' understanding and perception of climate change and related social impacts with their lived experiences. The respondents' current level of engagement of young persons with disabilities in climate related advocacy, campaigns and decision making is also described in this section. Finally, this chapter concludes with evidence- based and actionable recommendations for increasing the participation of young persons with disabilities in climate action.

4.1 Characteristics of Surveyed Young Persons with Disabilities

4.1.1 Profile of the Respondents

Table 2 shows a summary of the surveyed young persons with disabilities' profile. A total of 92 young persons with disabilities (45 males, 47 females) participated in the survey, which was administered online. In terms of age group of the surveyed participants, 41.3% were under 25 years, 44.6% were between 26 to 35 years and 28.3% were above 35 years.

Geographic location of the respondents shows that majority of them were from Koshi Province (28.3%), followed by Lumbini Province (22.8%) and Karnali Province (18.5%). The respondents from Gandaki, Bagmati, Sudurpaschim and Madhesh Provinces are 9.8%, 7.6%, 7.6% and 5.4%, respectively (Table 2).

Table 2: Provincial representation of the surveyed young persons with disabilities (% of respondents)

Koshi	Madhesh	Bagmati	Gandaki	Lumbini	Karnali	Sudurpaschim
28.3	5.4	7.6	9.8	22.8	18.5	7.6

Source: Online Survey of the Respondents, 2082

4.1.2 Disability Types

This research tried to collect information from all ten types of disabilities; however, responses were received from only five disability types as presented in Figure 3. The majority of the respondents have visual impairment (70%), followed by physical disabilities (21%). A key limitation of this study is the low response rate from five other disability types. This could be due to a few factors, such as: (a) the survey may not have reached these specific groups effectively; (b) some disabilities may have made it difficult to complete the survey independently (e.g., psychological disabilities), (c) a lack of assistive technology, (d) the topic of survey may not have been a high-priority concern, and (e) reluctance to disclose status.

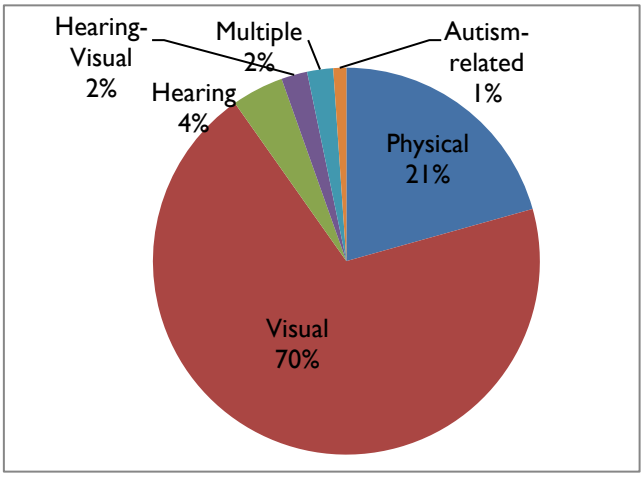

Figure 3: Disability types of the respondents

4.1.3 Education

Figure 4 presents the education level of the respondents. The majority of the surveyed young persons with disabilities (41%) hold a Bachelor's degree, followed by those with a Diploma (24%). A smaller portion of the respondents have a Master's degree (12%), a primary level education (10%), or have passed SLC/SEE (5%). Only about 7% of them are simply literate, while only one person cannot read or write.

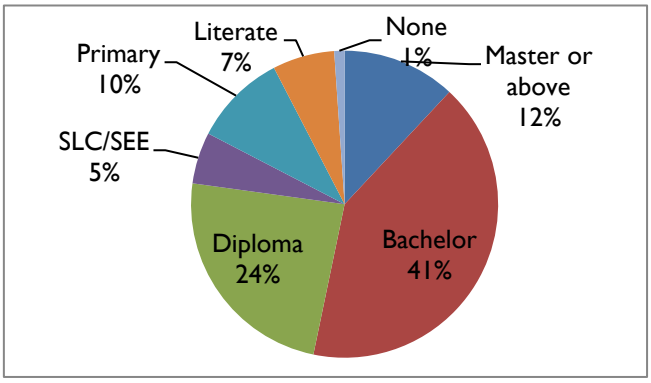

Figure 4: Education level of the respondents

4.1.4 Sources of Livelihoods

Figure 5 presents the livelihood sources of the respondents. Majority of the respondents (44%) still have social security allowance as the main source of income or livelihood (Figure 4). About 20% respondents do not have any sources of income of their own and hence depend on their family for their livelihoods. About sixteen percent of the respondents have income from job/service, while 11% respondents depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. This suggests need for economic empowerment of young persons with disabilities.

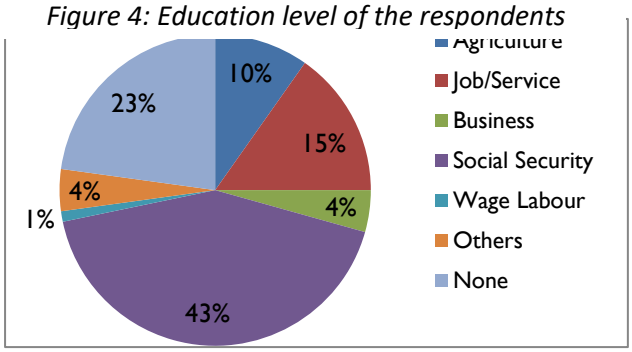

Figure 5: Livelihood sources of the respondents

4.1.5 Awareness/Perception of Young Persons with Disabilities on Climate Change

In Nepal, young persons with disabilities face significant challenges and are disproportionately affected by climate change. However, this study finding reveals that they have very low or limited awareness of climate change. The respondents were asked about how much they know about or are aware of climate change. Over three-fourth (76%) of the surveyed young persons with disabilities reported that they have heard a little about climate change, while 17% reported having no understanding of climate change at all (Figure 6). Many of the key informants interviewed expressed their limited awareness of climate change and its impact, and they ranked their overall understanding of the topic as below average. Most young persons with disabilities who reported a good understanding of climate change are those with climate change project portfolios or those who have been promoted as climate change champions by OPDs like BYAN.

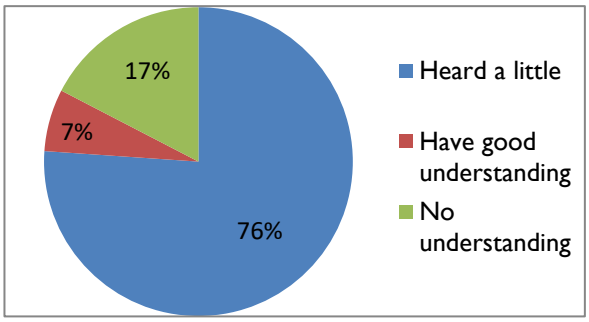

Figure 6: Respondents' understanding of climate change impact

Several of young persons with disabilities generally perceived climate change not just as a global environmental issue, but as a direct and immediate threat that compounds their existing vulnerabilities and exacerbates social inequalities. Their understanding of climate change is often shaped by lived experiences of its impacts, rather than solely through scientific or academic discourse.

In another question, majority of the respondents (79%), however, perceived climate change as a risk to them. Few participants (17%) didn't have any idea if climate change is a risk to them, while only 3% respondents didn't see climate change as a risk and threat to them. This is mainly because they have other risks and vulnerabilities in their lives due to the disabilities and associated barriers.

While many young persons with disabilities are directly affected by climate change and are often highly aware of its impacts on their daily lives, they often lack the scientific or formal understanding of climate change. This "awareness gap" is not due to a lack of interest, but rather to a lack of accessible and inclusive systems. The key factors contributing to this awareness gap include:

- ***Inaccessible information and communication***: Climate change information, including scientific reports, government policies, and emergency warnings, is rarely available in formats accessible to all disabilities, such as sign language interpretation for deaf individuals, Braille or audio versions for the visually impaired and simplified language or visual aids for those with intellectual, autism or psychosocial disabilities.
- ***Media and outreach gaps***: Media campaigns and public awareness initiatives often do not target persons with disabilities. The use of television and radio alerts, for example, may not be effective for those with hearing impairments, while visual-based warnings may be inaccessible to those with visual impairments.
- ***Exclusion from mainstream education*****:** Climate change education in schools often fails to accommodate students with disabilities. Teachers may lack the training and resources to adapt their lessons, and mainstream curricula with disability in mind. This means many young persons with disabilities miss out on foundational knowledge about the causes and effects of climate change. They may get the theoretical knowledge but lacks practical skills due to the lack of trained teachers, resources and materials.
- ***Discrimination and stigma*****:** In Nepal, persons with disabilities face social stigma and are often perceived as vulnerable and less capable or valuable. This had led to their exclusion from local to national level climate discussions, workshops, and decision-making processes. Their unique knowledge and experiences are therefore not considered, and they are left out of the conversation and the specific concerns of this group are not prioritized on the broader climate agenda. Such discrimination and stigma has further weaken the confidence of persons with disabilities to participate in such discussion forums and decision-making processes.
- ***Focus on survival over understanding of climate change:*** For many young persons with disabilities, the impacts of climate change are not an abstract future threat but a very present reality. Their daily lives are already affected by floods, droughts, and extreme weather, which can destroy their homes, livelihoods, and access to essential services. In this context, the immediate struggle for survival and resilience often takes precedence over a deep, scientific understanding of the climate crisis.

  > *For certain disability types, such as those with intellectual and down syndrome disabilities, learning how to eat food is a priority, not engaging with the broader climate discourse.*
  >
  > - *Sila Thapa, President of Down Syndrome Society Nepal*

- ***Intersection of vulnerabilities:*** The challenges faced by young persons with disabilities are often compounded by other factors like poverty, gender and caste. For example, a young person with a physical disability from a low-income family in a flood-prone area faces a triple threat - the immediate struggle to secure basic needs, and safety and climate change. The first two threats always overshadow the ability to engage with the broader climate discourse.

- ***Systemic and policy failures:*** Many national and sub-national climate change policies and disaster risk reduction plans fail to meaningfully include persons with disabilities. This lack of policy-level recognition trickles down to a lack of awareness and action at all levels, from government programs to community initiatives.
- **Lack of disaggregated data:** There is a significant lack of disaggregated data on persons with disabilities. Without this data, the government, policymakers and humanitarian organizations cannot fully understand the specific vulnerabilities and needs of this group, leading to the development of climate plans that are not disability-inclusive.

4.2 Social Impact of Climate Change on Young Persons with Disabilities

The social impact of climate change on persons with disabilities is a complex interplay of physical barriers, social stigma, and institutional neglect. Moreover, persons with disabilities are confronting deeply entrenched social stigma and discrimination. A study reveals that persons with disabilities are 2 to 4 times more likely to die or be injured in disasters than persons without disabilities[38].

Figure 7 illustrates the impacts of climate-related events on young persons with disabilities. The data reveals that these individuals face significant multiple challenges and barriers across different sectors. The most commonly reported challenges were in health and mobility. Of the total 92 respondents, over half of the respondents (57%) had experienced health problems, while 33% had faced difficulty accessing health facilities. In addition, 36% were unable to attend school, while 39% faced mobility issues stemming from floods, landslides, and infrastructure damage. Notable 25% respondents, who are female, even reported safety concerns or experienced violence. About 22% respondents reported not experiencing any of these impacts. This is likely due to a lack of understanding or awareness of what climate change impacts look like, especially among persons with hearing-visual impairments and autism-related disabilities, These groups may be unknowingly experiencing the effects of climate change without connecting them to a broader climate-related causes.

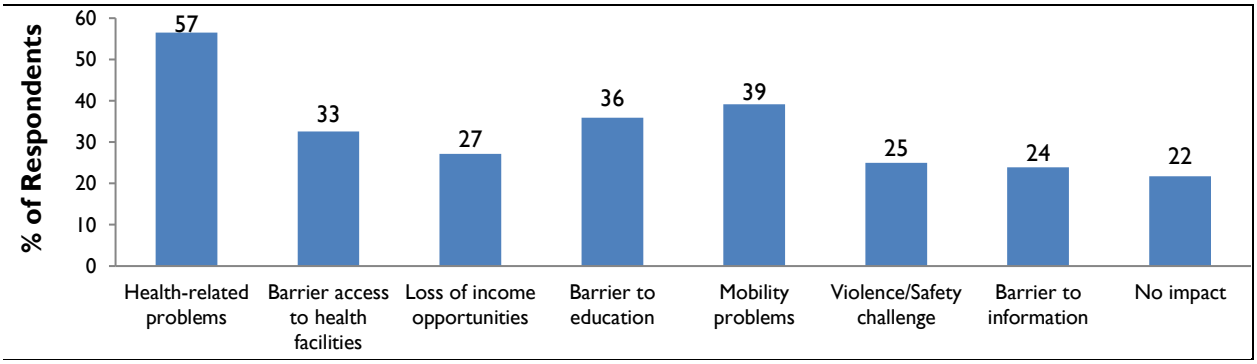

Figure 7: Key areas of climate-change impact on young persons with disabilities

4.2.1 Health related impacts/health problems

"*Climate change heightens health risks, posing specific threats like heat-related illnesses, waterborne diseases, and mental health issues. The direct health impacts of extreme weather events include injuries and fatalities from events like floods and landslides. Additionally, floods can contaminate water sources, leading to an increase in waterborne diseases*", said an official of CBM Global Nepal. Persons with certain

[38] UN, 2022. Disability-inclusive Humanitarian Action. Available from: https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/issues/whs.html

disabilities are often at a higher risk. All the consulted OPDs reported that those with limited mobility are more susceptible to heat-related illnesses such as heatstroke and dehydration, while people with conditions like Down syndrome or intellectual disabilities may have weakened immune systems, increasing their risk of infection from contaminated water.

Like several other key informants, the chairperson of Prayatna Nepal highlighted that climate change-related events have directly affected the sexual and reproductive health (SRH) of persons with disabilities. She said, "*Extreme weather events, for example, can directly threaten their access to SRH services by straining the capacity of health systems. This risk is even greater for pregnant women with disabilities. Heatwaves and heat stress can cause dehydration and trigger early labour, leading to premature births and other complications. Other direct impacts on SRH include climate-sensitive diseases, and increase in gender-based violence*". She stressed that there is a critical need for inclusive and disability-inclusive climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction plans that specifically address the unique SRHR needs of women with disabilities.

A group of women with physical disabilities share how climate change has impacted their menstrual health. They stated "Our hygiene habits have been affected due to the depletion and/or contamination of nearby water sources. We face the problem of having to fetch water from a long distance. We also confront problems during menstruation and develop health complications from using contaminated water. Likewise, we experience a scarcity of pure drinking water, leading to various illnesses."

> *People with certain disabilities, such as spinal cord injuries, may have difficulty regulating their body temperature, making them more susceptible to heatstroke and other heat-related illnesses during prolonged heatwaves. Climate change also contributes to the spread of vector- and water-borne diseases. For someone with a chronic illness or a compromised immune system, these diseases can be particularly life-threatening.*
>
> *- CIL Kathmandu*

The study found that unpredictable weather events, like no rain in July or heavy rain in September, has contributed to behavior changes and depression in persons with disabilities, especially intellectual disabilities. "*When children with intellectual disabilities are taught that we expect rain in July, but instead experience hot, dry weather, it becomes difficult for them to adjust to the unexpected change. This has led to behavioral issues and depression as they struggle to cope with a situation different from what they were taught to expect. This can also cause them to lose trust in their teachers or parents*", said Ms Sila Thapa who also runs a school for children with a Down syndrome. Therefore, learning and adapting are required, but this is very difficult in the case of persons with disabilities due to their vulnerabilities.

> ***Case 1: Understanding behavior associated with disability is crucial***
>
> *A mother of a child with Down syndrome recounted her experience during the 2015 earthquake. Her son has a behavior where he enjoys swinging. When the earthquake started, he liked the feeling of the shocks so much that he wouldn't agree to leave the room and go to the evacuation site. She had to get help from other family members to forcefully take him outside to the safety.*

The mental health impacts of climate change include increased stress and anxiety, social isolation and loss of independence. "*The constant threat of climate-related disasters, combined with the stress of losing livelihoods, can take a severe toll on the mental health of persons with disabilities*", says a Program Coordinator of NFDN. Similarly, disasters can destroy support networks and housing, leading to social isolation. Moreover, the loss of assistive devices (e.g., wheelchairs, hearing aids, white canes) and the

destruction of accessible infrastructure can strip individuals of their independence, leading to feelings of helplessness and distress.

> ***Case 2: Constant state of fear and anxiety on persons with disabilities and their caregivers***
> *The mother of a girl with a disability living in a flood-prone area of Kathmandu described her anxiety, saying, "We live on the ground floor. When it rains heavily, I worry all night. Sometimes I get up and check that it's still okay. My daughter also cannot sleep due to the fear of any disaster like flooding." This reveals the constant state of fear and anxiety that climate instability takes on persons with disabilities and their caregivers.*

Disruption of essential health services and medication was reported as another key impact of climate extremes. Climate-induced disasters can severely disrupt health systems, making it difficult for persons with disabilities to get routine medical care, therapy and specialized services. For a person with a disability who requires daily medication to manage a chronic condition, this disruption can have life-threatening consequences. Similarly, power outages can be life-threatening for those who rely on medical equipment. Understanding needs of persons with disability is crucial for disaster preparedness.

In Nepal, a challenging geographical terrain, persistent social barriers, and a lack of disability-inclusive policies and programs have made persons with disabilities one of the most at-risk groups. While the recent inclusion of disability in policies and strategies is a positive step, effectively and systematically integrating disability concerns into all health and climate-related programs remains a critical challenge.

> ***Case 3: Impact of recent drought in Madhesh Province***
> *During the recent drought in Madhesh Province, the government distributed water to affected families; however, persons with disabilities were not prioritized or even considered. Consequently, their hygiene and sanitation were severely impacted. The NFDN shared stories from the province, including one about a man with limited mobility who used a wheelchair. Due to the water crisis, he had immense difficulty cleaning himself, which prevented him from participating in community life because he believed his body was "smelly." The NFDN also shared stories about adolescent girls and women with physical and intellectual disabilities who found it very difficult to maintain personal hygiene during their menstrual cycles due to the scarcity of water. The lack of water, combined with social stigma, often force them to hide their soiled clothes, which results in poor hygiene and potential health risks. This suggests that persons with disabilities have a very low adaptive capacity, and therefore, they should always be prioritized for support during climate change impacts and weather extremes.*

4.2.2 Impact on Mobility

Climate change and extreme weather events pose complex mobility challenges for persons with disabilities, often magnifying existing barriers and creating new ones. These challenges directly impact their safety, access to aid, and ability to participate in community life. Thirty-six respondents highlighted mobility issues, citing several major problems that they have faced or could potentially face due to climate change and associated disasters. These include:

- Physical barriers that prevent them from evacuating or being rescued from dangerous areas.
- Loss or damage of assistive devices and barriers to replacing them.
- Inaccessible emergency shelters and public spaces that cannot meet their basic needs and have navigational challenges.
- Disrupted access to essential services as a result of physical barriers to travel.

> *The chairperson of NDWA, Ms. Mina Poudel, shared a compelling example of how persons with disabilities are among the first and most severely affected by the climate change events. "A wheelchair user, who usually lives on the ground floor of a house for mobility, is at greater risk during heavy rain.*

The ground floor of the first to flood, and due to mobility barriers, the individual cannot independently move to safety, such as outside the house or to an upper floor".

The respondents shared their difficulty using umbrella in a hot sun or heavy rain. The footpaths, even in Kathmandu, are not wide enough for umbrellas due to tress and crowds. Several persons with disabilities have received negative comments and discriminatory/ humiliating words from the public after their umbrellas they hit someone. Moreover, muddy and slippery roads make mobility even harder.

A visually impaired individual from Gorkha stated:

> "*I am a visually impaired person. I navigate by feeling the texture of the ground, whether it is flat or uneven. I also remember landmarks to know where I am. However, when it rains, the paths are slippery and waterlogged, making it harder for me to walk. Similarly, during a landslide, the usual path I rely on is altered, which disorients me and makes it trickier to reach my destination*."

"I wish it never rains", said a young persons with visual impairment. There are several cases where respondents have missed important events, classes and trainings due to unexpected weather events. This has not only hampered their learning and engagement but also affected their credibility because they failed to attend event they had promised to.

Case 3: Unexpected rain disoriented to a fall

"It was a hot, sunny day when I left my home in Kirtipur for the BYAN office. The sun was still out when I arrived at Ratnapark, but by the time I reached Chabahil, it was raining heavily. I got off the bus, opened the umbrella I usually carried, and was immediately disoriented. The combination of the rain drumming on my umbrella and the rushing sound of the nearby river was so disorienting that I couldn't adjust to the change, and I fell into the water. Fortunately, some passersby saw me and helped me out. I was unharmed, but my umbrella was lost to the current. Since the day, I have used a raincoat instead".

- A BYAN Climate Champion

4.2.3 Impact on Education

The study found that extreme weather events can have a devastating and disproportionate impact on the education of persons with disabilities, creating and exacerbating barriers to learning. Some of the key impacts on education, as reported by 39% respondents, include: loss of learning materials and replacement costs, loss or damage of assistive devices, difficult or impossible journeys to school due to damage to infrastructure (e.g., roads, bridges, and landslides on the way). The trauma of a climate disaster, combined with the stress of being unable to attend school, can severely impact a student's mental health. This can affect their ability to concentrate, learn, and engage with their peers, potentially leading to a decline in their academic performance and, eventually, dropping out of the school.

A young person with a physical disability (dwarfism) , who is now one of the emerging climate activists with disabilities and pursuing a Master's degree in Environmental Science, shared his story about his struggles to get an education at school due to weather events.

> "*I was born and raised in a hilly district of Nepal. My school was a 20 minute walk from my home. When it rained, the path to the school used to become muddy, slippery, and sometimes flood with small landslides. This made it impossible for me to get to school. I missed several classes because of these conditions. So when it rained, I used to stay at home". He further added, "Fortunately, I came from a middle-class family and was able to continue my education despite these barriers. However, a few other students with disabilities from poorer families quit school because of these same issues and inaccessibility. Students with physical disabilities also faced similar problems due*

to wheelchair-unfriendly roads, and eventually dropped out. For students with visual impairment, using a white cane while holding an umbrella was another nightmare.".

4.2.4 Impact on livelihoods

Many persons with disabilities already faced higher rates of poverty and unemployment. Climate change and associated disasters often lead to the destruction of crops, loss of livestock, and damage to homes, trapping already marginalized persons with disabilities in a vicious cycle of poverty, making it difficult for individuals to cope and adapt. Climate-related disasters lead to economic losses that are particularly difficult for them to recover from, further deepening existing inequalities. They may even be excluded from humanitarian aid, as its distribution is often not designed to be inclusive.

The key impacts of extreme climate events, as reported by 29% respondents, include loss of livelihoods and income, destruction of assets, reduced agricultural productivity, and loss of markets for their produce. Climate change also creates barriers to economic opportunities through the loss of assistive devices needed to go get to work, the additional money required to replace those devices, and increased living expenses for adaptation and recovery. A young person with visual impairment shares his experience of how an unpredicted weather event can limit opportunities for potential income and employment:

"An OPD invited me for a "Blog Writing Skill Training" about an hour away from my town by public transportation. As I was setting out for the training, a sudden, heavy rain stopped me. The rain continued, and I could not attend the training. My absence meant I not only missed the chance to learn a new skill that could help me earn an income, but it also hurt my professional credibility because I had committed to being there".

Because persons with disabilities have a very low adaptive capacity, it takes them a long time to recover from the loss of livelihood assets caused by climate-induced disasters. In general, a middle-class household often gradually falls into poverty after the birth of a child with a disability or when a family member acquires one. The loss becomes unrecoverable when an already poor and vulnerable family is struck by a climate-induced disaster. The distress from losing their homes, livelihoods and assistive devices, combined with the additional costs required for recovery, contributes to heightened anxiety and a feeling of hopelessness.

When speaking about being deprived of vocational training and education, a BYAN youth champion said:

"*The government of Nepal has been conducting various vocational skill development training programs for youths to create a skilled workforce and improve their livelihoods. However, young persons with disabilities have consistently been deprived of such training opportunities, which directly affect their capacity for income and employment*".

The FGD participants (Climate Champions) raised the livelihood issues of persons with disabilities who are found singing along the roadside, particularly in urban centres like Kathmandu. They said, "*This practice is often a result of a complex mix of socio-economic factors, including lack of inclusive employment opportunities, and insufficient livelihood support from the government. Although there is always a discussion about whether this practice is correct or not, it is one of the few avenues available for them to earn a living due to poor access to education and employment. Extreme weather events directly affect the earnings of these individuals.*"

Sharing her experience on how she had to quit her traditional occupation, a woman with physical disability explained the challenges she faced. She said, "*We have traditionally been engaged in agriculture. In recent years, there has been a sudden decline in agricultural products, unusual insect attacks, and wilting plants.*

The discourse and content regarding climate change impacts were not accessible or understandable 'Later, we learned that it was the impact of climate change. Our lack of understanding of how to mitigate or adapt to the impact enforced us to terminate our occupation. In this situation we are obviously more worried about our livelihoods, not participation in climate action".

There are several cases where families of persons with disabilities have migrated from their original places. They usually have a bitter experience with such migration. A person with physical disability shared, "*As we migrated to lower places due to food, water, and land insecurities at hillsides, it was quite challenging for us to adapt to the new atmosphere. We encountered numerous hurdles, such as physical and attitudinal barriers, which demoralize us and affected our psychosocial well-being, as well as limited our participation in the new society*."

4.2.5 Violence, safety and discrimination

Climate change impacts act as a "threat multiplier" for violence and safety challenges faced by persons with disabilities, especially for women and girls. Twenty five respondents (27%) highlighted that women and girls with disabilities are at the intersection of two marginalized identities, making them exceptionally vulnerable to gender-based violence (GBV) during and after climate disasters. Fortunately, none of the respondents (survey, KII or FGD) reported facing such violence or safety issues directly. However, they were very much concerned that in crowded and unsecure emergency shelters or displacement camps, women and girls with disabilities face a heightened risk of sexual assault and other forms of physical violence. The OPDs have concerned that, "*perpetrators may target them, believing they are less likely to be able to resist, escape, or report the abuse. The lack of privacy and gender-segregated spaces in shelters makes them particularly unsafe*".

Exacerbation of social stigma and discrimination is another issue. "*In Nepal, the social stigma surrounding disability is sometimes attributed to supernatural causes or considered a punishment for past sins. This is worsened during climate extremes and disasters. Families may hide disabled members out of shame, and young persons with disabilities may face increased isolation and neglect in overcrowded emergency shelters, which makes them more vulnerable to violence and abuse*", said the President of Down Syndrome Society Nepal.

> ***Case 4: Government Officials' Attitude towards Persons with Disabilities***
> *A young person with a visual impairment shared his experience of being discriminated against when he visited a government office to apply for a National ID Card. "The officers look at my disability and started gossiping among themselves about my vulnerabilities, asking how I get there and why I needed a National ID Card. Their attitude and behavior towards me were very rude, and they spoke to me loudly. I felt terrible at that moment. The attitude and behavior of government officials haven't changed much, although there are slight improvements in the attitudes of non-governmental and private sectors. I wish I would never have to visit and get any service from government offices. Hopefully, greater awareness about disability, disability rights, and the capabilities of persons with disabilities will help officials change their attitudes and behaviors.*

In addition to GBV, the key informants reported that women and girls with disabilities, particularly those who need high support, may also face neglect or exploitation. They are at a high risk of being abandoned during evacuations. They might also be denied or forgotten essential food, water, or medications by stressed and overwhelmed caregivers or family members. In the chaotic aftermath of a disaster, some individuals with disabilities may even be subjected to restrictive practices, such as being locked in a room or an inaccessible shelter to prevent them from escaping into a dangerous situation.

Instead of being given priority and reserved seats in the public transportation, persons with disabilities in Kathmandu are often discriminated against and abused while traveling. A mother of a child with Down syndrome shared her experience, stating," *Public transportation is the only option for me to get my child to the care centre (school for Down syndrome children), but I cannot express the humiliation I receive from some of the passengers. We never get the seat that is reserved for persons with disabilities. Even when I ask the person who is sitting there to move, they don't consider (or understand) Down Syndrome as a disability and do not give up the seat. Most of the bus staffs also have similar views. So traveling by public transportation with my child is like a torture for me*."

Reports and studies from various organizations, including the National Human Rights Commission of Nepal (NHRC), the National Federation of the Disabled-Nepal (NFDN), and UNICEF, highlight the systemic discriminatory attitudes and practices of government staff towards persons with disabilities in Nepal[39]. Although Nepal has made significant legislative progress, the implementation of these laws is often lacking, and discriminatory attitudes persist. According to the NFDN General Secretary, "*Nepal has a strong legal framework on paper, discriminatory attitudes and a lack of enforcement by government staff and public institutions create significant barriers for persons with disabilities in accessing their rights and participating fully in society*".

Local governments usually provide services to persons with disabilities who are registered as residents. A person with disability who rents in Kirtipur Municipality expressed his grief saying, "*Persons with disabilities living temporarily are denied services. Kirtipur Municipality denied me any services, saying I am not a resident of the municipality and I am not registered (getting ID card) in the municipality*". He further asked, "*If this is the policy, then how can persons with disabilities get education, employment and other services and opportunities outside of their homes*?"

4.2.6 Impact on access to communication and information

Climate change and extreme weather events pose significant barriers to communication for persons with disabilities, often isolating them from critical information and putting their safety at risk. These challenges are a result of a lack of accessible formats, the destruction of communication infrastructure, and a failure to include persons with disabilities in communication planning. Twenty-four percentage respondents reported communication barriers as a potential impact of climate change on persons with disabilities. The Chairperson of Prayatna said: *"Emergency alerts and public service announcements are typically delivered through channels that are not accessible to all types of persons with disabilities. For instance, warnings delivered via text, websites, or television without audio descriptions or screen-reader compatibility is useless for people who are blind or have low vision. Audible sirens, radio broadcasts, or public address systems are ineffective for deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals, and even televised warnings often lack sign language interpretation or real-time closed captions. Additionally, persons with intellectual or cognitive disabilities may struggle to understand complex, jargon-heavy language used in official warnings, as these messages are not presented in a clear, easy-to-read format"*. This issue has been highlighted by several other OPDs.

Besides, extreme weather events frequently lead to widespread power outages and/or damage to other communication infrastructure, making inaccessibility of information sources and assistive communication devices. The CBM Global official shared his experience, "*In crowded emergency shelters, the chaos and noise can make it difficult for persons with disabilities to communicate their needs. A deaf person may struggle to find a sign language interpreter, while a person with speech impairment may not be understood*

[39] Sapkota, J, 2025. Systematic Barriers Deny Justice to Nepal's Persons with Disabilities, National Federation of Disabled – Nepal (NFDN).

by overwhelmed staff". The combined impact of these communication challenges makes persons with disabilities a high-risk group during climate and weather extremes.

The FGD participants said that while NDRRMA, People in Need (PIN) and Practical Action are working on early warning systems, they have "almost failed to consider the barriers and requirements of persons with disabilities." They noted that these organizations, which use a risk-informed approach and integrated disaster risk reduction and preparedness programs, have not produced early warning systems in a format accessible to all types of disabilities. In response, the agencies acknowledged this issue and said they are working on it in coordination with relevant government bodies. However, the participants pointed out that while both government and development agencies are making commitments in the meetings, they "lack a proper roadmap towards making such information and communication accessible".

4.2.7 Specific types of disabilities that are more at risk

Climate change poses risks to all persons with disabilities, but certain types of disabilities are particularly more at risk than others due to the nature of their impairments and the specific barriers they face. The following four specific types of disabilities that are more at risk include:

- **Mobility Impairments**: Persons with mobility impairment includes individuals who use wheelchairs, crutches, or other mobility aids, as well as those with limited physical stamina. This group faces significant challenges in evacuating quickly during floods, landslides, or other events that requires evacuation. Inaccessible evacuation routes, lack of accessible transportation, and physical barriers like stairs or debris can trap them in dangerous situations. Moreover, assistive devices like wheelchairs can be lost or damaged in a disaster, stripping them of their independence and ability to move, work, or access aid.
- **Sensory Impairments**: This includes individuals who are blind or have low vision, and those who are deaf or hard of hearing. The usually face the challenge of inaccessible information, navigational challenges and communication breakdown. Climate and disaster warnings are often disseminated through sirens, public address systems, or visual media, which are inaccessible to people with sensory impairments. Without sign language interpreters on television broadcasts or Braille/audio versions of warning materials, they may be unaware of an impending threat until it's too late.

> **Case 5: The Struggle to Evacuate**
>
> *In the aftermath of the 2015 earthquake, a person with visual impairment was utterly disoriented, unable to tell which way was safe. Even his own family left him to face the terrifying, silent chaos alone. When he finally received help, it came from a neighbor who was not trained to assist a person with a visual disability. The neighbor tried to guide him, but his hurried, physical touch disorients him even more. The neighbor's instructions like, "Climb up the dyke!" or "Watch out for the rocks!" were useless to him. He tried to explain his needs, but in the panicked moment, the neighbor did not understand his gestures or the need for a verbal description of the path.*

- **Intellectual or Cognitive Disabilities:** This group includes individuals with conditions that affect their cognitive functions, learning, and ability to process information. Individuals with cognitive impairments may struggle to comprehend complex or rapidly delivered climate and disaster warnings. They may not understand the severity of the threat or the necessary actions to take. They may have difficulty making quick decisions during a crisis, such as where to evacuate or what supplies to take. This can put them at a much higher risk of injury or death.

> **Case 6: Apathetic approach in providing early warnings**
>
> *The mother of a boy with a down syndrome disability affected by the 2015 earthquake shared that she was largely unaware of the extent of the disaster until it was too late. The mother had to attend the boy and*

carried him to safety, while she relied on her neighbours to carry her other young family member (daughter) to safety. This case suggests that the apathetic approach of the local authorities in providing accessible early warnings leaves many with disabilities at the mercy of luck and the goodwill of others. The mother said, "Those who can move leave early to safety. We, persons with disabilities, are often the last to be able to leave, and are left behind to cope with the worst of the impacts".

- **Psychosocial Disabilities:** This group includes individuals with mental health conditions like depression, anxiety, or schizophrenia. The stress, trauma, and uncertainty caused by climate change and disasters can severely worsen pre-existing mental health conditions. The loss of home, livelihood, and support networks can lead to increased anxiety and depression. Mental health services are often the first to be disrupted or shut down during a crisis, leaving individuals without essential support and medication.

A mother of a child with psychosocial disability shared her experience how an extreme weather condition distressed her child:

"I bring my child to this care center at 10:00 am and pick her up at 3:00 pm. One day, a sudden and heavy rainfall created traffic chaos, and I was late to pick her up because I have to travel by public transportation. There was no warning for heavy rainfall, and even if it had been, I wouldn't have had access to it. My child was very distressed because she was still at the centre after most of her friends had already left. She was crying and in a panic. This single event disturbed her for several days".

4.3 Coping with Climate Change Impact and Extremes: Lived Experience

Persons with disabilities in Nepal are disproportionately affected by climate change extremes due to pre-existing vulnerabilities, but they are also actively working to build their resilience through a combination of individual and community-led initiatives, often supported by their OPDs. Rather than abstract concepts, young persons with disabilities often understand climate change through their personal encounters with extreme weather events. They are more likely to be aware of its effects through daily observations and the disruptions it causes in their lives, such as flooding, unpredicted rain, heatwaves, or other climate-induced disasters. However, there are very few existing coping strategies reported for building the long-term resilience of persons with disabilities against such climate extremes.

4.3.1 Specific challenges experienced in dealing with effects of climate change

Persons with disabilities have experienced a unique set of challenges in dealing with the effects of climate change, which are often compounded by pre-existing societal and systemic barriers. These challenges are not just about physical limitations but also about social exclusion, economic vulnerability, and a lack of inclusive planning. A survey of 92 young persons with disabilities revealed that inaccessible information and communication was the biggest challenge, reported by 52 of the participants (Figure 8). The second most significant challenge was the lack of accessible emergency shelters during extreme climate events, reported by 50% respondents. In addition, financial hardship and limited mobility were reported as other major challenges by 36% and 32% respondents, respectively. Eighteen percent respondents showed their ignorance to any specific challenges. The financial issue is multifaceted, involving a lack of targeted funding, inaccessible funding mechanisms, and systemic economic inequalities. Seventeen participants stated that they were unaware of any challenges because they had not yet experienced effects of climate change.

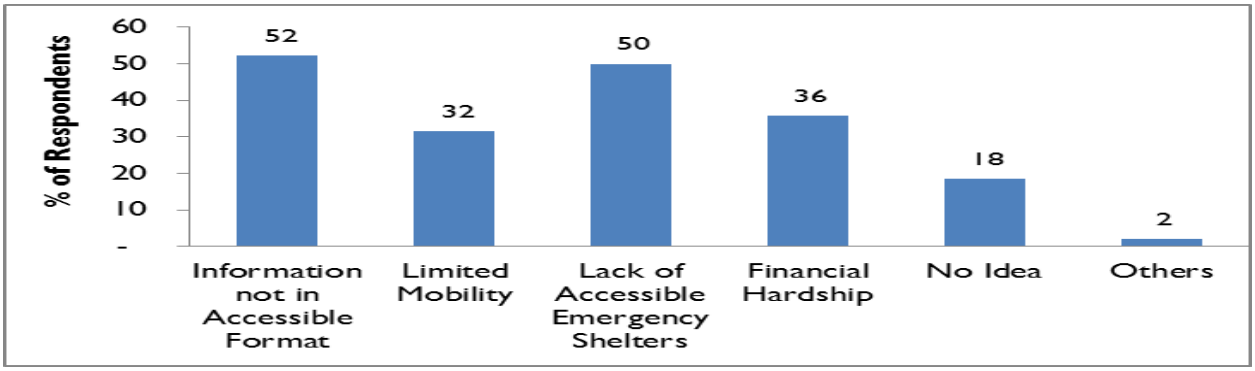

Figure 8: Specific challenge experienced by young persons with disabilities in dealing with climate extremes

4.3.2 Preparedness for the effects of climate change

Figure 9 presents the level of preparedness among young persons with disabilities for climate change and related emergencies. The data reveals a significant lack of readiness: a mere 8% of respondents are fully prepared, and 37% are only somewhat prepared. A major barrier to preparedness is a lack of understanding, with 18% of respondents not knowing what "preparedness" means. The remaining 37% reported having no preparedness at all for the effects of climate change. The key reasons why persons with disabilities are often not prepared for the effects of climate change are:

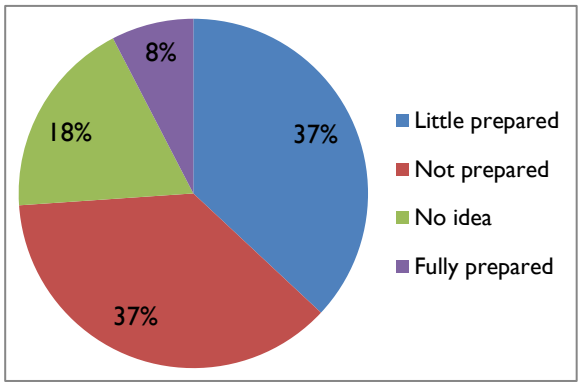

Figure 9: Respondents perception on preparation for the effects of climate

- Lack of information about what the preparedness means and its importance
- Inaccessible information and early warning system (often not in accessible formats)
- Lack of information about the evacuation routes, emergency shelters and other support services
- Physical and structural barriers, such as inaccessible evacuation routes and transportation, unsafe emergency shelters, disruption of medical services, lack of assistive devices
- Social isolation and stigma

Inaccessibility of information is a primary barrier to climate preparedness. For example, weather information is often not accessible to all types of disabilities. Radio and FM broadcasts are not accessible to individuals with hearing impairments or intellectual disabilities. Likewise, weather updates displayed as text on a television screen are inaccessible to those with visual impairments. These gaps highlight the crucial role of media in preparing communities for the effects of climate change. When weather forecast is not accurate, those with intellectual disabilities got confused and cannot be prepared during real weather events.

Local governments are the first responders to disasters, but they are often not prepared for the impacts of climate change and disasters. A number of challenges frequently impede their efforts. As one ward chairperson stated, "*Limited technical knowledge and a lack of training in disaster risk reduction and response are our major challenges. We do not have specialized equipment, assistive devices, proper vehicles, communication devices, or even first-aid kits. Coordination is a persistent problem, along with an over-reliance on security forces and external agencies. The funds allocated for disaster management are*

often insufficient for preparedness and response efforts. Nepal's terrain presents a further obstacle to evacuation and rescue".

4.3.3 Availability and accessibility of information about climate change and climate action

The availability and accessibility of information about climate change and climate action for persons with disabilities is a critical but often overlooked challenge. The barriers they face are systemic and multi-layered, affecting every stage of the information chain, from early warnings to long-term policy documents. Therefore, without access to timely and understandable information, persons with disabilities are unable to prepare for, respond to, or recover from climate-related disasters, and they are excluded from participating in climate action planning.

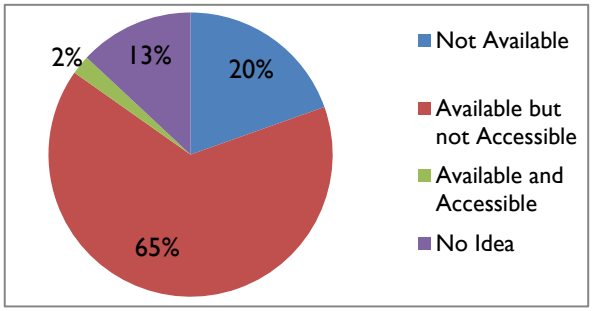

Figure 10: Respondents' perception on availability and accessibility of information on climate change

The survey highlights a critical disconnect between the availability of climate information and its accessibility for persons with disabilities (Figure 10). While a clear majority of respondents (65%) are aware that climate information exists, they lack the means to access it, as it is seldom available in accessible formats. In fact, only a tiny percentage of respondents (2%) reported that climate information is both available and accessible to them. The findings also reveal a major knowledge gap among a significant portion of the community, with 20% of respondents believing the information is completely unavailable and another 13% having no idea what climate information is in the first place.

4.3.4 Livelihood assistance for persons with disabilities affected by climate change

Livelihood support for persons with disabilities affected by climate change is inadequate. This is largely due to two factors: a lack of available data on how climate change affects persons with disabilities, and a lack of accessible information about livelihood assistance. A large majority of the respondents (66%) were unaware of any livelihood support for persons with disabilities affected by climate change (Figure 11). Although 32% had information about this assistance, only 2% had actually received it. Mobility barriers, administrative hurdles, and the cost of travel and logistics were reported as the main reasons for not receiving the support, even when the information was available. Relevant government agencies and organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) should explore and communicate such information to persons with disabilities to address these gaps.

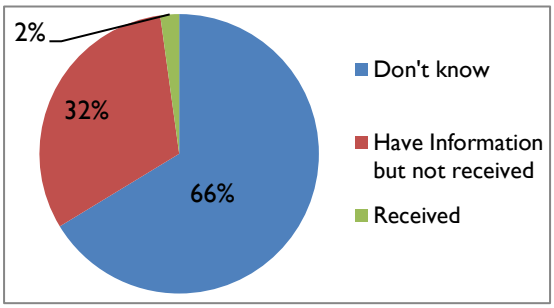

Figure 11: Assistance for livelihood support

The local governments lack even basic data on persons with disabilities, which makes it difficult to identify them and provide livelihood assistance. As one Ward Chairperson explained, "Although the responsibility has been devolved to local government, the w*ard offices usually lack the technical knowledge, skilled human resources and proper equipment to accurately assess and classify different types of disabilities, particularly for non-physical conditions like intellectual, psychological or multiple disabilities. Financial constraints are another barrier to collecting and maintaining disaggregated data of persons with*

disabilities". The Ward Chairperson instead suggested that OPDs collect such data and make it available to the local government/ward offices for their use when needed.

4.4 Engagement of Young Persons with Disabilities and OPDs in Climate Action

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and other international human rights frameworks affirm the right of persons with disabilities to participate in decision-making that affects their lives. Since climate change poses a significant threat to their right, their inclusion in climate action is an obligation—not a choice. Furthermore, their lived experiences offer unique and valuable insights that can lead to more effective, inclusive, and tailored climate policies and programs.

Recognizing that persons with disabilities are not just passive victims, but have a vital role to play in building climate and disaster resilience, OPDs are focusing a growing number of initiatives on their active inclusion in climate-induced disaster planning. For example, NFDN and other OPDs are advocating for meaning participation of persons with disabilities in local government disaster management committees. BYAN advocated to mainstream disability in NDRRMA's Strategic Action Plan for GEDSI in DRRM, 2024. Similarly, NGOs and OPDs are conducting awareness campaigns aimed at changing societal attitudes and perceptions of disability. By training persons with disabilities to become climate champions and advocates, these initiatives are empowering them to speak for themselves and lead change in their own communities. This has not only built the confidence of your persons with disabilities, but also demonstrates to others that persons with disabilities are capable leaders and active participants in building a safer and more just society.

4.4.1 Participation in climate related programs

Young persons with disabilities and OPDs are increasingly engaging in climate action in Nepal, recognizing their unique vulnerability to climate change impacts and their valuable contributions as agents of change. While historical exclusion has been a challenge, there is growing evidence of their participation in policy, advocacy, and on-the-ground initiatives.

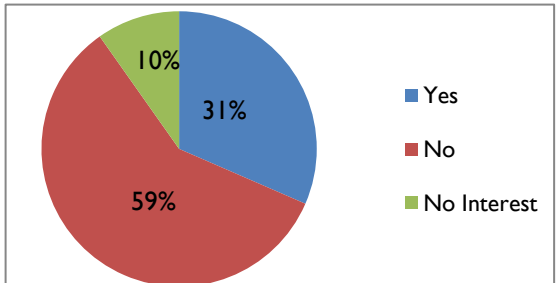

Figure 12: Participation in climate change

Figure 12 shows that 59% of the respondents have never participated in any of the climate change related programs organized by governmental, non-governmental or other organizations. Interestingly, 10% respondents expressed no interest to participate in any climate change related programs.

When asked about their involvement in climate change policy, planning, and implementation at national or local levels, a significant majority of respondents (81%) reported no participation (Figure 13). The primary reasons cited for their lack of participation were:

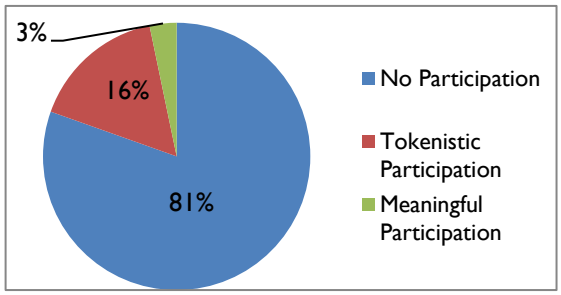

Figure 13: Participation in policy making, planning, implementation processes

- They were not aware of or invited to participate in the programs/processes.
- The participation processes were not accessible to them.
- Participation was not economically feasible due to financial barriers.

Although 19% of respondents reported participating in the process, only 3% of the respondents had meaningful participation. The participation of the remaining respondents was largely tokenistic.

Climate change is a distant issue

A person with a severe physical disability stressed that young persons with disabilities and their families are often poor and anxious about how to afford food, housing, and assistive device. For them, climate change is not a primary concern. Some persons with disabilities also feel like a burden to their families, who may wish to get rid of them. In such situations, young persons with disabilities will not have the time or mental capacity to think about climate action. Therefore, to get them involved, their basic rights of food and shelter must be guaranteed first. For them, climate change is a distant issue.

- Representative of CIL Kathmandu

4.4.2 Discrimination in the process of participating in climate-related policymaking

The discrimination faced by persons with disabilities in the process of participating in climate-related policy making and action plans preparation is a profound and systemic issue. Despite being among the most vulnerable to climate impacts, their voices are consistently marginalized or completely excluded from the spaces where decisions are made. Even in very cases where persons with disabilities have participated, they have experienced discrimination and biases. The survey revealed that 39% of respondent had not yet participated in any such processes. Of those who had, 54% said they hadn't experienced discrimination, because their participation was merely tokenistic. However, 46% of respondents reported experiencing discrimination and biases during the participation process. They were told that they lacked skills and knowledge to participate, and couldn't contribute in climate action.

The findings from the key informant interviews also corroborate the survey findings that persons with disabilities and their representative organizations (OPDs) are rarely invited to, or informed about, national and local climate policy meetings, workshops, and consultations. The Chairperson of Prayatna Nepal said, "*Policymakers often operate under the misguided assumption that they are not relevant stakeholders, viewing them as passive aid recipients rather than active contributors. Even when an invitation is extended, it is typically sent to an umbrella organization (federation), which sometimes sends a random individual, leading to mere tokenistic participation*". This suggests that both the inviting agencies and OPDs/federations should be held accountable for ensuring the right person is sent to policymaking or program planning processes.

The respondents from the non-governmental sector highlighted that there is discrimination in the governance structures for climate action and disaster risk reduction and management. They added, "These structures, from federal to the local level, have ignored the mandatory participation of persons with disabilities, living a gap in addressing the specific needs and requirements of persons with disabilities for their meaningful participation in climate action and DRRM". They concluded that this requires revisiting policies and guidelines to ensure their meaningful participation in such structures at all levels.

An official from the Climate Change Management Division of the Ministry of Forests and Environment was asked why the representation of persons with disabilities was not ensured in the committee to develop the NDC 3.0, which has, to a great extent, addressed the issues of persons with disabilities. The official replied, "There were two representatives from OPDs, but we accept we might not have been specific about their participation and capacity to contribute to the NDC 3.0 process". He added, "The NFDN, the umbrella organization of OPDs, is also not serious about it and often sends participants on random basis, whose participation would be merely tokenistic in several cases".

When NDRRMA was asked in the government is content with tokenistic participation of persons with disabilities, the official did not agree with this statement. He said, "We acknowledge that we have capacity limitations, especially in terms of understanding of disability-inclusion and their specific needs and requirements, which has kept our traditional view of persons with disabilities as vulnerable aid recipients. We need to change our attitude and behavior to increase the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities. We know about climate change and disaster management; OPDs know about disability-inclusion. There is a big gap to bridge these two areas of knowledge to result in disability-inclusive climate policy and program outcomes".

4.4.3 Knowledge about persons with disabilities pioneers on climate change as role models

Raising awareness about disabled pioneers and role models in the climate change movement is essential for several reasons. It not only highlights their invaluable contributions but also inspires others to see themselves as active agents of change, not just as passive victims of climate crisis. The survey revealed that majority of surveyed respondents (39%) did not know any persons with disabilities pioneers and role models (Figure 14). Thirty-two percent knew only a few, mostly from their own OPDs. A mere 5% of respondents knew many persons with disabilities as role models in climate change field. A significant number of respondents (24%) had no idea who the pioneers or role models in the climate change movement are.

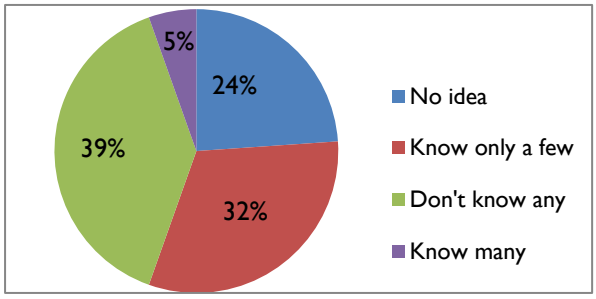

Figure 14: Awareness about role models with disabilities in climate change field

4.5 Increasing participation of Young Persons with Disabilities in Climate Action

Although progress is being made, the challenge remains immense. Increasing participation of young persons with disabilities in climate change, including effective coping mechanisms still rely heavily on the support of NGOs and the persistent advocacy of OPDs. The ultimate goal should be to ensure that national and local government policies on climate change and disaster risk reduction and management are fully implemented and genuinely disability-inclusive, sothat every person with a disability in Nepal has the resources and support needed to cope with a changing climate.

We want to be seen as active agents of climate action

"Despite being marginalized, we, young persons with disabilities have a strong desire to actively participate in climate action. We want to be included in decision-making processes, from local adaptation planning to national climate policies. We feel that our unique perspectives and knowledge, rooted in our lived experiences, are valuable for creating more inclusive and effective climate solutions. However, we are often excluded from relevant discussions and decision-making processes just because of our marginalization. We want to be seen as active agents of change action and not just as passive victims of climate impacts ".

- Extract from the FGD with BYAN Climate Champions

4.5.1 Bringing forward the voices and experiences of young persons with disabilities

Figure 15 presents the respondents' opinion on how the voices and experiences of young persons with disabilities can be more effectively highlighted in climate change discussions. The respondents emphasized the need to move beyond simply "helping" young persons with disabilities to empowering them as leaders, innovators and essential stakeholders. Empowering young persons with disabilities in climate action requires a multifaceted approach. Ensuring accessible communication was reported by 59% respondents, highlighting the need for accessible communication (such as sign language, Braille, and

audio) in all climate-related programs and meetings. Increasing participation in policymaking and leadership roles was reported by 48%. Almost half (49%) of respondents felt it is crucial to provide targeted training and capacity-building opportunities to enable their involvement at both governmental and non-governmental levels. Additionally, 46% respondents think that partnerships with OPDs that have climate expertise can ensure meaningful engagement. Forty-two percent respondents believe that governments and development partners should allocate dedicated budget for disability-inclusive programs, and OPDs should advocate for that. Moreover, 43% respondents believe that involvement in government programs, particularly in the planning process and decision making levels, is important for bringing forward the voices and experiences of young persons with disabilities in climate action. Finally, 47% respondents think it is necessary to create an enabling environment that provides opportunities for all types of disabilities in climate action decision-making.

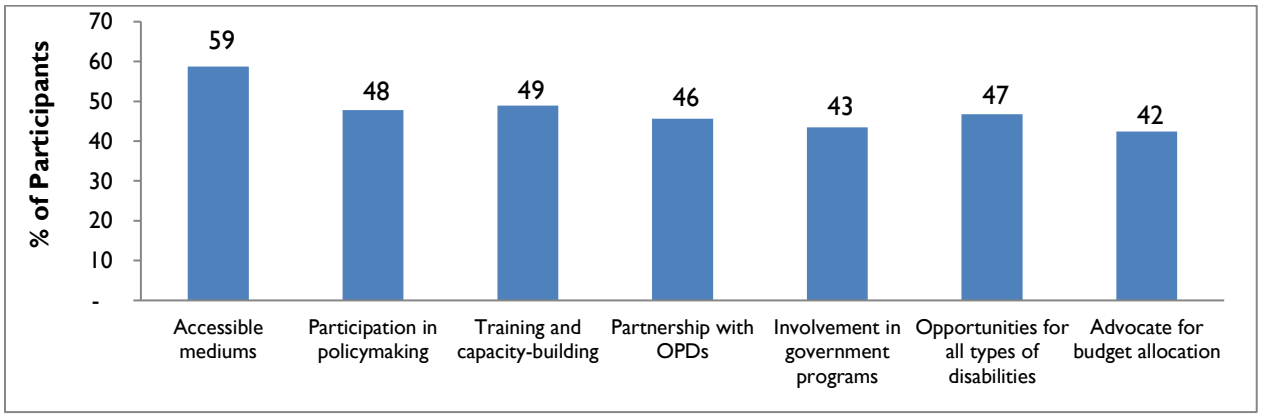

Figure 15: Empowering persons with disabilities for climate change discussions

The key informants and focus group participants emphasized that direct participation and leadership are crucial for including the voices and experiences of young persons with disabilities in climate change discussions. The fundamental principal of disability rights, "Nothing about us without us" must be applied to climate discussions. The General Secretary of NFDN stressed that, "*governments and relevant agencies should create an environment for young persons with disabilities to be actively involved in designing, planning, and implementing climate policies at all levels, from local to international. This includes ensuring their meaningful inclusion in major events like the UN Climate Change Conferences (COPs)*". He further added, "*It is also vital to empower and fund organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) that are led by and for young people*". Though it sounds simple, holding meetings and workshops in accessible venues also helps to increase the participation of persons with disabilities in climate discussions.

The study also found that accessible communication and information is another key to bringing forward the voices and experiences of young persons with disabilities in climate action. Promoting this involves: creating accessible information in various accessible formats, designing inclusive climate education and public awareness campaigns with universal accessibility in mind, and harnessing lived experiences through personal narratives. A climate activities with physical disability opined, "*Encouraging and amplifying the stories of young persons with disabilities who have been directly affected by climate events can put a human face on the issue for stakeholders*". This approach helps stakeholders to understand and internalize the specific challenges faced by persons with disabilities, such as inaccessible evacuation routes or the loss of assistive devices during a disaster.

The study findings highlighted that providing training and resources to young persons with disabilities and their representative organizations can equip them with the skills to engage in climate advocacy. This

includes training on climate science, policy frameworks, and effective communication. At the same time, it is essential to training climate professionals and policymakers on disability inclusion. There is a need to bridge the gap between the disability rights movement and the climate justice movement. The Chairperson of Prayatna Nepal said, "*Climate organizations should actively engage with and learn from OPDs, while disability activists can strengthen their advocacy by building alliances with mainstream climate groups*". Like other key informants, she also stressed that in the current situation of funding constraints, coordination and partnership among OPDs are equally important for achieving collaborative and synergistic outcomes.

4.5.2 Policies and programs to address social impacts of climate change

Young persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected by the social impacts of climate change. To address these issues, a comprehensive set of policies and programs is necessary, focusing on inclusive and rights-based approaches. This also requires active involvement of young persons with disabilities and OPDs in all stages of planning, implementation, and evaluation. The surveyed young persons with disabilities suggested a number of specific policies and programs to address the social impacts of climate change (Figure 16). The top recommendation, reported by 58% respondents, was to develop inclusive climate and disaster policies that specifically address the needs of persons with disabilities. Additionally, 53% respondents recommended making climate change education and awareness programs accessible. Other key suggestions included ensuring the effective implementation of existing policies through the meaningful participation of young persons with disabilities (48% respondents), and developing inclusive emergency preparedness and response systems (41% respondents). An equal number of respondents (41%) also called for economic and livelihood support for those affected by climate disasters. Seven respondents did not provide a suggestion.

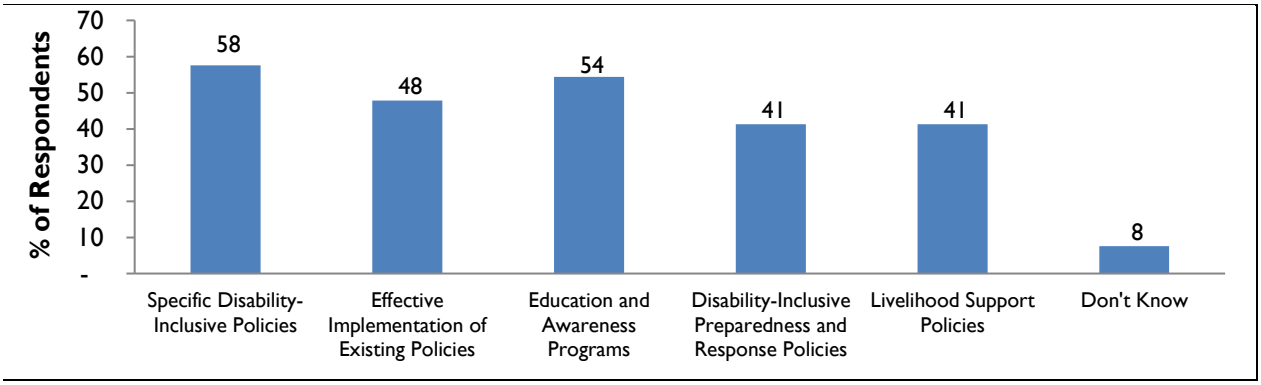

Figure 16: Policies and programs suggested by the surveyed young persons with disabilities

The key informants also stressed the need for a comprehensive and intersectional approach, centered on policies and programs that prioritize the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities. They focused on mainstreaming disability rights into all climate policies rather than simply allocating some budget or program for persons with disabilities or OPDs. The CBM representative said, "*It is crucial to ensure meaningful participation in policy and programs by creating formal mechanisms to ensure the full and effective participation of OPDs and persons with disabilities at all levels of climate governance*". A respondent from another INGO working on early warning systems said, "The right-holders have a misunderstanding that persons with disabilities are vulnerable and cannot do anything. They need to be made understand that persons with disabilities have the capacity, but there are many barriers that need to be addressed by the government as well". This requires advocacy on how climate justice is important for persons with disabilities.

The President of Down Syndrome Society Nepal suggested, "*Policies must recognize that vulnerability to climate change is not uniform within the disability community. They should address the compounding factors of marginalization, such as gender, age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. For example, women and girls with disabilities often face heightened risks of gender-based violence during and after disasters*". Other key respondents also highlighted that such policies and programs need to support persons with disabilities in transitioning to climate-resilient livelihoods. The NDWA Chairperson said, "*The policies should also allocate specific and targeted funding for disability-inclusive climate projects and ensure that persons with disabilities can access micro-financing and other financial support to build their resilience*".

However, many of the respondents from government agencies have stressed their limited knowledge and exposure to the needs of persons with disabilities in relation to climate change. "We are not very familiar with how climate change has impacted persons with disabilities, or what their specific needs or requirements are for mitigating those impacts. The capacity of government employees should be built on disability-inclusive development and climate policy so they can design climate action from a disability lens", said an NDRRMA official.

4.5.3 Strengthening leadership of young persons with disabilities in climate action

Strengthening the leadership of young persons with disabilities in climate action is crucial for creating effective and equitable solutions to the climate crisis. The surveyed young persons with disabilities identified three key interventions to strengthen their leadership in climate action (Figure 17). The young persons with disabilities surveyed suggested three key interventions to strengthen their leadership in climate action. The top suggestion, from 71% respondents, was inclusive leadership and capacity-building programs. Additionally, 64% respondents stressed the need for guidance and mentorship from experienced climate activists and individuals with disabilities. The final key intervention, mentioned by 47% respondents, was increased access to knowledge and resources and tools related to climate change and advocacy strategies. Eight respondents had no suggestions.

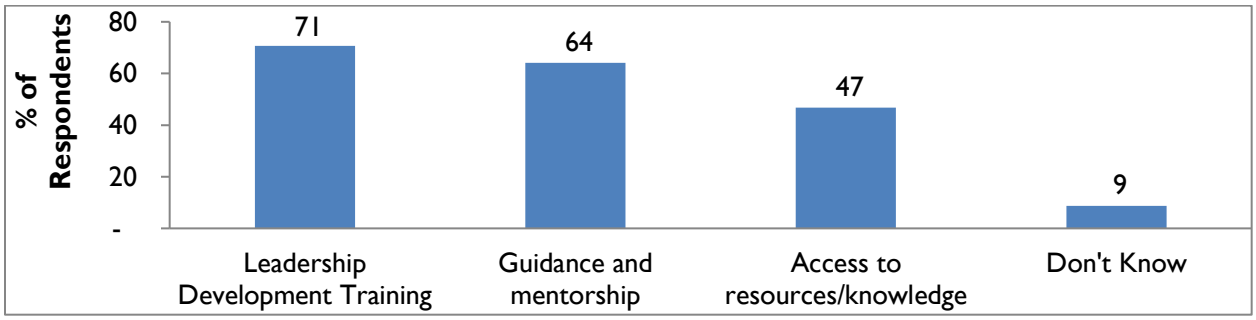

Figure 17: Perception of young persons with disabilities for strengthening leadership in climate action

Similar to the respondents' suggestions, the key informants also stressed the need for a multi-faced approach to empower and strengthen the leadership of persons with disabilities, focusing on access, capacity building and meaningful inclusion. The General Secretary of NFDN said, "*It is crucial to develop leadership and advocacy training programs that are co-designed with and for young persons with disabilities. Integrating disability-inclusive climate education into school curricula and informal learning spaces can help young persons with disabilities understand their rights and vulnerabilities in the context of climate change, empowering them to become advocates and leaders for their communities from a young age*".

Government authorities (e.g., NDRRMA, CCMD, local government) have also accepted their limited efforts to strengthen the leadership of your persons of disabilities in climate action. "*We accept that we haven't done what we should have to empower these vulnerable but capable groups,*" they said. "*The government needs to develop accessible and inclusive training programs in climate change and disaster risk management, and ensure their meaningful participation in policy-making and implementation. The government must also provide funding and mentorship opportunities and create awareness campaigns that highlight their contributions, in collaboration and partnership with young persons with disabilities and their organizations. Moreover, the government also needs to translate existing legal frameworks (e.g., NDC 3.0) into actionable implementation plans and practices that specifically address the intersection of disability and climate change*".

4.5.4 Roles of the government and OPDs

The roles of government and OPDs in increasing the participation of young persons with disabilities in climate-related policies and programs are distinct yet complementary. Both are essential to ensure that this particularly vulnerable group is not only protected but also empowered to be active agents of climate action. The survey with young persons with disabilities highlighted five major roles (Figure 18). The majority of respondents (73%) stressed the importance of providing accessible education, training, and awareness programs on climate change and advocacy. Sixty percent respondents urged for proportional representation of young persons with disabilities in climate-related programs and decision-making processes. Expanding partnerships among young persons with disabilities, OPDs, and government agencies was reported by 57% respondents. Another important role, reported by 45% respondents, is to collect and maintain disaggregated data on persons with disabilities and to run programs based on their needs and abilities. Forty-three percent respondents also highlighted the government and OPDs' roles in changing the narrative from "persons with disabilities are victims" to "they are contributors."

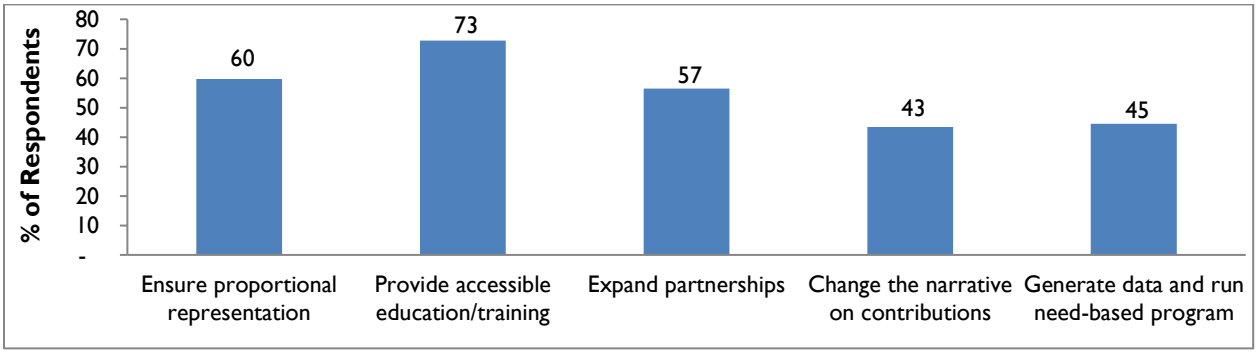

Figure 18: Perception of young persons with disabilities on role of government and OPDs to increase participation of young persons with disabilities in climate action

> ***Not Renewing Disability Identify Card is a growing Concern***
>
> *Persons with disabilities do not get disability identify (ID) cards, first due to a lack of knowledge about their rights and the importance of having an disability ID card; second, fear of stigma and discrimination; and third, the cost of bureaucratic barriers to get one. Furthermore, quite a few persons with disabilities who do not receive a social security allowance have stopped renewing their ID cards. They find no incentive to renew the ID cards. This makes it difficult to get the accurate disaggregate data on persons with disability, especially since national data on disability is believed to be underestimated".*
>
> *- Ward Chairperson, Lalitpur Metropolitan City*

Perception of the Government's Role

Young persons with disabilities largely perceive governments as having the primary responsibility for creating the enabling environment for their meaningful participation. The feel the most fundamental role of government is to embed disability inclusion into all climate-related policies and legislation. This means going beyond general statements and including concrete, measurable actions in national climate plans. They also believe governments must allocate specific and sufficient financial resources for disability-inclusive climate action, including funding for accessible infrastructure, inclusive early warning systems, and support for disability-led climate initiatives.

Governments are also seen as responsible for collecting disaggregated data that includes disability status. This is crucial for evidence-based policymaking. Without data on how climate change impacts different disability groups, policies will remain uninformed and ineffective. Additionally, young persons with disabilities during FGD said, "*We expect governments to provide climate information and early warning systems in accessible formats (e.g., Braille, sign language, and easy-to-read materials)*".

The FGD participants stated, "*We believe the government must actively create and maintain formal, accessible, and safe spaces for their participation. This includes a seat at the table in national and local climate dialogues, advisory bodies, and delegations to international conferences like the UNFCCC's Conference of the Parties (COPs)*". The perception is that this participation must be authentic and not just tokenistic.

Young persons with disabilities view the government as accountable for upholding international human rights obligations, particularly the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). They see a significant gap between government commitments and actual implementation, and they expect to be part of the monitoring and evaluation process to hold the government to account.

Perception of OPDs' Role

Young persons with disabilities see OPDs as their most trusted advocates and as essential partners to both them and the government. The BYAN climate champions opined, "*We see OPDs not just as service providers; they are the representative voice of the disability community and have a crucial role in empowering them directly through training and mentorship on climate policy, advocacy skills, and communication in accessible formats*". OPDs are seen as a critical bridge between the individual and the policymaking sphere for providing a collective voice for young activists who might otherwise be unheard.

Young persons with disabilities see OPDs as the watchdogs of government action. "*We expect OPDs to track government commitments and policies to ensure they are disability-inclusive*", said the Program Coordinator of Prayatna Nepal. A Project Coordinator of NFDN said, "*OPDs are also expected to use their expertise and influence to lobby for the inclusion of disability rights in climate policies at all levels, from local to international; and to be prepared to use legal and advocacy tools to challenge discriminatory policies or those that fail to protect the rights of persons with disabilities"*. Young persons with disabilities believe OPDs are uniquely positioned to provide the government with technical and experiential knowledge on accessibility, universal design, and the specific needs of different disability groups. By fostering partnerships with mainstream climate organizations, OPDs can ensure that disability inclusion is not an afterthought but a central tenet of climate action.

4.5.5 Strengthening collaboration between persons with disabilities and stakeholders

Strengthening collaboration between persons with disabilities and stakeholders (OPDs, government and development partners) is a critical step for developing and implementing disability-inclusive climate programs. Effective collaboration is a "whole-of-society" approach that moves beyond simple consultation to genuine partnership. Without a coordinated, multi-stakeholder approach, policies to risk

become ill-informed, implementation will fail to reach those most in need, and the expertise of persons with disabilities will remain untapped.

Figure 19 presents the perception of young persons with disabilities for strengthening collaboration for disability-inclusive climate action. The majority of respondents (73%) suggested developing shared policies and frameworks to promote inclusive and accessible climate action. Additionally, 62% respondents urged for the creation of platforms for regular dialogue and coordination among all stakeholders, including young persons with disabilities. Fifty-seven percent respondents reported the need to expand economic, technical, and managerial skill and knowledge support to ensure the meaningful participation of young persons with disabilities. Finally, 55% respondents highlighted the importance of collecting inclusive, disaggregated data and using it to increase participation in an evidence-based manner.

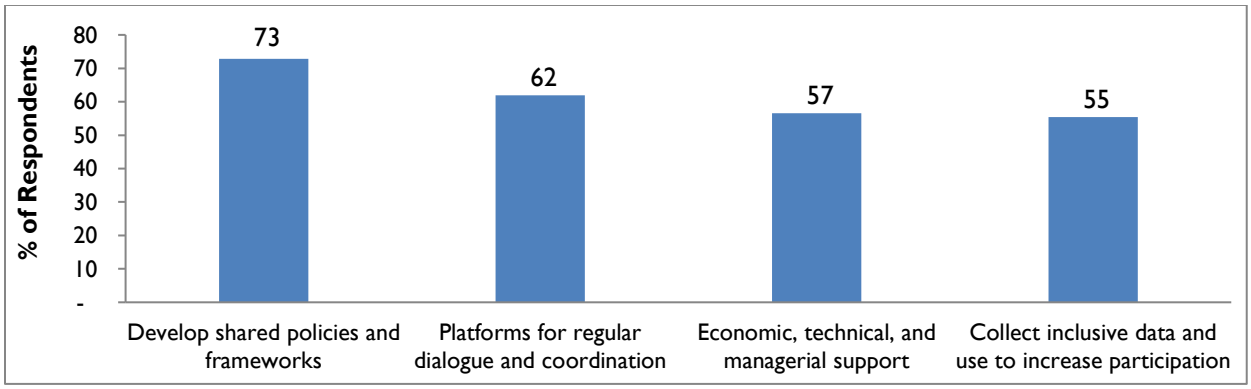

Figure 19: Perception for strengthening collaboration for disability-inclusive climate action

An important point raised by both government and non-government stakeholders is the poor coordination and partnership among the OPDs, and between OPDs and their umbrella organization, the NFDN. There is a lack of combined voices from different disability-specific OPDs. For example, an organization for physical disabilities coordinates less with an OPD for visual impairment and vice versa.
The CBM Global Nepal official said, "*In the aftermath of a global funding crisis, there appears to be competition among the OPDs for funding. Since OPDs and persons with disabilities are not a priority for the government, and the government does not have any dedicated funds for persons with disabilities, global funding is crucial for their existence and sustainability"*. This fact has also been realized by the OPDs.

The key informants highlighted several key strategies and best practices for strengthening collaboration. They believe that the guiding principle for all collaboration should be a culture of "Nothing about us without us," ensuring that persons with disabilities are involved as equal partners at every stage of a project's lifecycle. Key strategies for improved collaboration include co-designing policies and programs, ensuring active and meaningful participation, building trust, and enhancing the capacity of all stakeholders to work together effectively. The OPD leaders stressed that capacity building for OPDs should focus on technical knowledge and organizational development. In contrast, training for governments and development partners should focus on disability rights, inclusion, and the principles of accessibility and universal design for climate infrastructure, early warning systems, and information dissemination. Moreover, moving beyond ad-hoc collaboration to create formalized, structured, long-term partnerships is necessary for sustainable impact. Efficient collaboration also requires a strategic approach to resources, moving away from fragmented and parallel efforts.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

To effectively increase the participation of young persons with disabilities in climate action, a multi-faceted approach is needed that addresses systemic barriers and empowers them as agents of change. The following recommendations are tailored to the context of young persons with disabilities.

5.1 General Recommendations for All Stakeholders

1) Strengthening the capacity of young persons with disabilities and their organizations:

Empowering young persons with disabilities with the skills and knowledge of climate change is crucial to building their confidence and helping them transition from being consulted to taking on leadership roles. This empowerment includes educating them on the basics of climate change and its impacts, mitigation and adaptation, as well as mainstreaming them into climate actions. The following capacity building approaches would be relevant or necessary:

- ***Targeted training and skill-building:*** The OPDs need support to design and implement training programs on climate science, disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM), advocacy, and project management. Having OPDs design and deliver these programs ensures that they are accessible and relevant to different types of disabilities.
- ***Support for youth-led initiatives:*** Government and donor agencies should provide direct funding and technical support to youth-led disability organizations and groups. This will enable them to develop and implement their own climate action projects, which could range from basic climate change training to advocating for policy changes at the national level and lobbying for participation in local planning and decision-making processes.
- ***Establish mentorship programs:*** Creating a mentorship network can significantly strengthen the capacity of young persons with disabilities. Experienced disability rights advocates and climate experts can guide and support these young leaders. This will help them navigate complex policy landscapes and build the confidence needed to speak at high-level forums.

2) Ensuring meaningful participation in decision-making and planning processes

The participation of young persons with disabilities should move beyond the present tokenistic presence to achieve genuine influence on policy and planning. This can be achieved through:

- The young persons with disabilities (and their OPDs) should advocate for government policies that require the inclusion of young persons with disabilities and their representative organizations on all climate-related committees. This ranges from policy formulation to on-the-ground implementation in alignment with the “leave no one behind” principle.
- Accessibility of physical infrastructure is equally important for ensuring meaningful participation of persons with disabilities. All government buildings and meeting venues for climate-related events should be physically accessible, and all climate information and communication materials (e.g., early warning systems, policy documents, websites) must be available in accessible formats (Braille, large print, sign language, plain language).
- A thorough review of Nepal's climate change policies is essential to identify and address gaps in disability inclusion and meaningful participation. This requires ensuring that specific actions and indicators are included to measure the participation of persons with disabilities.
- Deep-rooted social stigma, negative attitudes, and institutional discrimination in Nepal are significant barriers to meaningful participation. Therefore, it is urgent to launch public awareness

campaigns in partnership with OPDs to challenge negative perceptions of disability and highlight the valuable contributions of persons with disabilities to climate action.

3) Enhancing accessible and inclusive information and education

Information is the first step towards meaningful participation. To ensure this, climate education and early warning systems must be designed from the very beginning–starting with school curricula-to be accessible for young persons with diverse disabilities. The following strategies are recommended to help enhance information and communication for young persons with disabilities.

- One of the biggest barriers for persons with disabilities to access climate and disaster related information is the format in which climate and disaster information is communicated. A single format, like a written SMS, may work for someone with a physical disability but won't be accessible to a person who is visually impaired. Therefore, climate-related information, public awareness campaigns on climate change and DRR, and early warning and emergency alerts should be developed in multiple accessible formats, including Braille, audio, sign language, and easy-to-read materials with clear visuals. Unfortunately, relevant government agencies, such as NDRRMA, Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), Department of Hydrology and meteorology (DHM) have not yet recognized the need to develop and share information in formats accessible to persons with various disabilities.
- As young persons with disabilities become more digitally literate, a crucial area for development is creating technology-based platforms and apps that provide real-time, accessible climate data and early warning information. Examples include, but are not limited to, mobile alerts with audio, text-to-speech functions, flashing lights, or vibrations.
- To ensure that young persons with disabilities are not only aware of climate issues but also understand their role in addressing them, local governments in Nepal should promote disability-inclusive curricula for both formal and non-formal education. As they have the authority to develop and implement localized school curricula, they should incorporate disability-inclusive climate change modules into the national framework. The OPDs should advocate for and support these efforts.

d) Improving access to climate finance and resources

One of the major obstacles preventing young persons with disabilities from participating in climate action decision-making is a lack of funding. To sustain their work and genuinely improve their meaningful participation, young persons with disabilities (and OPDs) need direct access to financial resources dedicated for persons with disabilities. The following approaches and strategies are recommended to help young persons with disabilities to get better access to climate finance and other resources.

- The government or donor agencies should establish a dedicated fund for persons with disabilities. This could be a specific fund or a "disability inclusion" window within existing climate funds at both national and local government levels, making it easily accessible for youth-led disability initiatives. Additionally, the application process should also be simplified, and technical assistance should be provided to help applicants overcome bureaucratic hurdles.
- The government, donor agencies, international development partners and NGOs should partner directly with young persons with disabilities (and their OPDs) for climate actions. Such collaboration and support will enable these groups to access larger grants, strengthen their institutional capacity, and amplify their advocacy efforts on a national scale.
- The government and donor agencies and development partners working on climate change should provide training and resources to help young persons with disabilities develop skills in

proposal writing, financial management and reporting. This will make them more competitive when seeking funding.

e) Fostering an enabling environment (legal and policy framework)

Achieving sustainable change requires a strong legal and policy framework, as well as a fundamental shift in societal attitudes to overcome stigma and discrimination that persons with disabilities face. The following strategies are recommended to help create an enabling environment to address the intersection of climate change and disability.

- To inform disability-inclusive policymaking and planning, it is crucial to acknowledge the diversity of persons with disabilities and their varying needs. This requires disaggregated data on persons with disabilities by disability, location, gender, ethnicity, and other intersecting factors. Therefore, the government, particularly local governments/ward offices, should invest in collecting disaggregated data on disability. This data not only provides evidence to demonstrate the disproportionate impact of climate change, but also informs disability-inclusive policymaking, planning, and advocacy for targeted interventions. The availability of such disaggregated data will also help the local governments and emergency agencies identify and safely evacuate or rescue persons with various disabilities during disaster.
- The government agencies and OPDs should launch campaigns that challenge stereotypes and highlight the contributions of young persons with disabilities in climate action. These campaigns should use positive and empowering narratives to reframe the perception of persons with disabilities from passive victims to active leaders. OPDs should collaborate with and support relevant government agencies, local governments and development partners to ensure that the campaign content and materials are relevant and accessible.
- Young persons with disabilities, through their organizations (OPDs), should advocate for the full implementation of disability rights legislation and climate and DRR related policies and plans, including the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the NDRRMA Strategic Action Plan for Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (GEDSI in DRRM), Local Disaster and Climate Resilience Framework[40] (LDCRF) and Nepal's NDC 3.0. This ensures a legal basis for the inclusive participation of young persons with disabilities in climate action.

5.2 Recommendation for Government Agencies including Local Governments

- Promote the meaningful participation of young persons with disabilities and their representative organizations (OPDs) in climate change policy-making. This should occur at all stages, from national-level consultations, planning, and design down to the local government level, especially through development of inclusive LAPA or Local Disaster and Climate Resilience Plan (LDCRP).
- The relevant government departments need to adopt a co-design approach for climate-related policies and programs involving young persons with disabilities from the very beginning. Their firsthand experiences offer invaluable insights that lead to more effective and inclusive policies.

[40] The LDCRF is developed by NDRRMA to consolidate various disaster-related strategies, guidelines, and policies into a single, integrated document. The framework is expected to contribute to resilient development and integrate disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation into local development plans.

- The government and relevant agencies should ensure that all climate-related meetings, workshops, and conferences and information/communication are both physically and communicatively accessible. This includes sign language interpreters, accessible venues, and materials in alternative formats accessible to all types of disabilities. They should also cover the costs of transport and personal assistants for persons with disabilities.
- The government, in collaboration with relevant development partners, NGOs and OPDs, should mandate and fund the creation of physically accessible emergency shelters, evacuation routes, and other public facilities for use during climate-inducted disaster. Local governments, especially Ward Offices, should provide this information to the families of persons with disabilities.
- To empower and support persons with disabilities, duty bearers/service providers must first understand what disability is and how persons with disabilities can contribute to managing the impacts of climate change. Therefore, the government, in partnership with donor agencies, development partners, and OPDs, must urgently provide training for emergency responders, community leaders, staff of development partners and NGOs, and government officials including local government/ward officials on understanding disability, disability inclusion, and the specific needs of persons with disabilities during a disaster.
- The government should install a universally accessible early warning system in every *tole* (neighborhood) where a person with a disability resides. This system should be addition to general community-wide systems to ensure no one is left behind. Moreover, the approach needs to be localized, multi-faceted, and community-driven.

5.3 Recommendations for Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs)

- To acknowledge the widespread impact of climate change on persons with disabilities, the OPDs should integrate climate change into its strategic priorities and action plans. This can be done using a twin-track approach: (a) Mainstreaming climate action efforts into all existing programs and advocacy work. This ensures that climate change is not treated as a separate, niche issue but as an integral part of the organization's mission; (b) Targeted interventions by developing specific initiatives to address the unique needs of persons with disabilities. This helps removing barriers to access, providing tailored support, and implementing projects that directly benefit them in the context of climate change.
- OPDs can build knowledge of climate change and governance, and learn new advocacy strategies, by seeking partnerships with climate justice groups and organizations that have already prioritized climate change into their programs. Joining climate change networks is another great way to strengthen these partnerships.
- OPDs should raise awareness about climate change among the members, staff, persons with disabilities and their families and caregivers. Understanding climate change is critical for the families and caregivers of persons with disabilities because they are on the front lines of managing climate risk for their loved ones. Increasing their knowledge will encourage their involvement in climate action at all levels.
- OPDs should empower young persons with disabilities on climate change and mobilize them for community awareness and advocacy, and provide them with regular mentorship support. Additionally, OPDs should actively engage them in planning and decision making at all levels of climate change action.
- OPDs should engage in evidence-based advocacy at both the national and local levels by strengthening collaboration among OPDs and exploring joint campaigns. Such advocacy should

on creating a supportive policy environment that: (a) acknowledges the unique and disproportionate effects of climate change on persons with disabilities, (b) allocates specific resources to address the effects, and (c) ensures that service providers treat persons with disabilities equitably and with accessibility in mind.

- OPDs should organize training programs on disability inclusion development for climate change professionals and policymakers at all levels, especially at local government level. This is crucial because local governments play a powerful role in planning, designing and implementing disability-inclusive climate action at local level.

5.4 Recommendations for I/NGOs and Development Partners

When working on climate change projects, it is essential to include persons with disabilities and their representative OPDs. Some of the recommendations to ensure inclusive and effective engagement of Young people with disabilities in climate actions are as below.

- Conduct awareness-raising activities for the staff of I/NGOs to transform their organization's culture and operations to be more disability-friendly, and encourage disability-inclusive approaches while working with persons with disabilities.
- Actively engage with persons including young people with disabilities (and their OPDs) throughout the project, including the design, planning, implementation, and monitoring phases. Make sure to identify and remove any barriers that could prevent their full and meaningful participation, especially in local level planning processes (e.g., LAPA, LDCRP).
- Assess community-level vulnerability of persons with disabilities to climate change using inclusive, participatory methods. This will help the service provider understand the root causes of exclusion and allow persons with disabilities to share their specific needs, perspectives, and solutions in climate change perspective.
- Implement capacity-building activities on climate change, its impact and mitigation and adaptation measures to persons with disabilities and their organizations. This approach helps to build confidence of persons with disabilities through transfer of knowledge, and empowers them to advocate for their rights.
- Collect disaggregated data of persons with disabilities by disability, gender, ethnicity, location, and age. This data helps identify and make vulnerable groups more visible to climate change policymakers, thereby ensuring that no one is left behind.

5.5 Recommendation for Young Persons with Disabilities

Young persons with disabilities have a crucial and multi-faceted role to play in climate action. Their participation is not just about inclusion; it's about bringing unique perspectives, expertise, and a powerful sense of urgency that can make climate efforts more effective, inclusive and equitable. They are not merely recipients of climate policy-they are critical actors in its formulation and implementation. The following approach and strategy are recommended for young persons with disabilities.

- Young persons with disabilities have a direct understanding of how climate change intersects with disability. Therefore, they should use their lived experience as a powerful tool for advocacy, making the impacts of climate change tangible to policymakers.

- Young persons with disabilities are experts in their own needs and can co-design climate solutions that are accessible to all types of disabilities. They should also look for opportunities to actively participate in and lead advocacy campaigns. This will help them push for disability-inclusive climate policies at all levels of government—from ward to the national parliament.

- Young climate activists with disabilities, in collaboration with OPDs, should work to hold government bodies, NGOs, and the private sectors accountable for their commitments to climate justice and inclusion. They should serve as a bridge between the disability community and the mainstream climate movement. Moreover, they can leverage their unique skills to develop and adapt technology for climate resilience.
- Experienced young climate activists with disabilities can mentor younger children and peers, passing on knowledge and skills related to disability-inclusive climate action and advocacy. This helps create a new generation of leaders on disability-inclusive climate actions.
- Young persons with disabilities, especially climate activists, should use their voices and platforms to raise awareness about how climate change disproportionately affects their community. They can also share personal stories through social media, blogs, or public speaking to connect with a wider audience and inspire action.
- Young persons with disabilities can lead or participate in community-based research to gather disaggregated data on disability and evidence on how climate change affects persons with disabilities in their local areas.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: CHECKLIST FOR INDIVIDUAL SURVEY WITH YOUNG PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES)

Looks Understanding and Perception of CC Impacts on young Persons with Disabilities

1. How aware are you of the climate change?
2. Do you perceive climate change as a significant threat to you? Why or why not?
3. Have you experienced the impacts of climate change on you (persons with disabilities)? If so, what are the key impacts and their consequences?
4. In what ways do you believe climate change disproportionately affects persons with disabilities compared to the general population?
5. Can you provide specific examples of how your disability (or the disability of someone you know in your family) makes you more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change?

Impacts of Climate Change on Young Persons with Disabilities

6. How do climate change/climate-related events have impacted your access to essential services?
   - Climate change impact on your health:
   - Climate change impact on your education:
   - Climate change impact on your livelihoods and food security:
   - Climate change impact on your support systems:
   - Climate change impact on your mobility/transportation:
   - Climate change impact on your water and sanitation:
   - Climate change impact on your participation in decision-making process in the society:

Preparedness, Response and Coping with Climate Extremes:

7. Do you feel you are adequately prepared for climate change impacts (including climate-related disasters or emergencies)? Why or why not?
8. Are you aware of any disaster preparedness plans (for climate-induced disasters) in your community? Are the plans inclusive of the needs of persons with disabilities?
9. Do you feel that information about climate change and climate actions is sufficiently available and accessible for you?
10. How are you currently coping with climate change impacts? What support do you need?
11. What specific challenges have you faced in coping with climate change impacts/climate extremes?
12. Are you aware of any support available to persons with disabilities whose livelihoods are affected by climate change?
13. How does climate change affect the availability and accessibility of essential support services for persons with disabilities?
14. What role do government and OPDs play in assisting you before and/or during climate-related events? Any specific experience or example?

Social Inclusion and Participation

15. Are you currently engaged with/involved in any climate action initiatives, groups or disability related organizations that work on climate-related advocacy, campaigns and decision making? If yes, what?

16. Did you ever participated in climate change policy-making, planning, and implementation processes at local or national levels? If not, what are the barriers?
17. Have you ever felt excluded from climate discussions or initiatives due to your disability? Can you share an experience?
18. Have you encountered any stereotypes or misconceptions about the ability of young persons with disabilities to contribute to climate action? Give example.
19. Are there sufficient role models or mentors with disabilities in the climate action space for young people to look up to? Do you know any?
20. How can the voices and experiences of young persons with disabilities be better amplified in discussions about climate change?
21. What roles can disability organizations and advocates play (or can play) in addressing the social impacts of climate change on young persons with disabilities?

Solutions and Recommendations

22. What specific actions or policies do you believe are needed to address the social impacts of climate change on young persons with disabilities?
23. Do you believe your lived experience as a young person with a disability offers a unique perspective or valuable insights for climate action? If so, how?
24. Do you feel you have the necessary knowledge, skills, and confidence to effectively participate in climate action? If not, what knowledge and skills do you need?
25. How can you be empowered to take on leadership roles in climate advocacy and action?
26. Is there adequate financial or logistical support available for you to participate in climate initiatives?
27. What specific strategies or approaches would be particularly effective for you in increasing your participation in climate action advocacy?
28. What role can the government, Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) play in enhancing your participation in climate actions?
29. What role can local communities and families play in supporting your participation in climate initiatives?
30. How can collaboration between youth organizations, disability organizations, government bodies, and international agencies be strengthened to increase participation of young persons with disabilities in inclusive climate action?

ANNEX 2: CHECKLIST FOR FGD

Understanding Climate Change Perceptions and Experiences

- When you hear 'climate change,' what's the first thing that comes to your mind?
- What changes have you observed in the weather patterns in our community over the past few years? (e.g., more intense rain, longer dry spells, hotter summers, storms).
- Do you think these changes are related to 'climate change'? Why or why not?
- Have you or your family experienced any specific climate-related events recently? (e.g., floods, landslides, droughts, heatwaves, extreme cold, storms).
- Can you describe what happened and how it affected you directly?

Understanding of Social Impacts on Persons with Disabilities

1. **Accessibility and Mobility:**
   - How do extreme weather events impact your ability to move around your home, community, or access essential services (e.g., healthcare, market, school)?
   - Are infrastructure and public spaces in your community accessible during or after climate-related disasters?
   - What are the specific barriers you face? (e.g., damaged ramps, flooded pathways).

2. **Health and Well-being:**
   - How do changing climate conditions (e.g., heat stress, increased humidity, spread of diseases) affect your health or the health of persons with disabilities you know?
   - Is it harder to access healthcare services during or after a climate-related event?
   - What mental health impacts have you observed or experienced due to climate change or related disasters?
   - Are there specific treatments, or assistive devices that become difficult to obtain or use?

3. **Information and Communication:**
   - How do you usually receive information about impending climate-related hazards (e.g., flood warnings, storm alerts)?
   - Is this information provided in formats that are accessible to you?
   - Are emergency alerts and public announcements inclusive of persons with disabilities?
   - What are the challenges or barriers in getting timely and understandable information?

4. **Livelihoods and Economic Security:**
   - Has climate change affected your livelihood or ability to earn an income? If so, how?
   - Are persons with disabilities able to access climate adaptation programs or resources that support livelihoods?
   - Are there any specific economic challenges faced during recovery from a climate event?

5. **Social Inclusion and Participation:**
   - Do persons with disabilities have a say in local climate change adaptation plans or disaster preparedness efforts?
   - Are your concerns and needs being heard by community leaders or decision-makers regarding climate action?
   - How persons with disabilities could be better involved in these processes?

Coping Mechanisms, Challenges, and Recommendations

1. **Current Coping Strategies:**
   - What strategies or measures do you currently use to cope with the impacts of climate change?
   - Are these strategies effective? What makes them effective or ineffective?"
   - Do you rely on family, community, or external support?

2. **Barriers to Adaptation:**
   - What are the biggest challenges or barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from adapting to climate change or preparing for disasters? (Consider financial, informational, attitudinal, or physical barriers)

3. **Recommendations for Inclusive Climate Action:**
   - What specific actions or changes would you recommend to make climate change adaptation and disaster preparedness more inclusive for persons with disabilities in our community?
   - What roles can the government, NGOs, DPOs, and the community play?
   - What kinds of support or resources do persons with disabilities need to better cope with climate change impacts? (e.g., accessible infrastructure, inclusive information, specialized training, social protection, etc.)

ANNEX 3: CHECKLIST FOR KII

Background and Context

1. Could you please describe your role and how it relates to persons with disabilities or climate change?
2. How long have you been working in this field/area?
3. In your opinion, what are the most significant climate change issues or hazards affecting [specific area, e.g., Nepal, your community] currently? (e.g., floods, landslides, droughts, extreme heat/cold, erratic rainfall, GLOFs if applicable for Nepal).

General Understanding of Disability Inclusion

1. How would you describe the current level of awareness and understanding of disability issues within the climate change sector?
2. Are there existing policies or frameworks that address impacts of climate change on young persons with disabilities and disability inclusion? If yes, how effective are they in practice?

Impacts of Climate Change on Persons with Disabilities

1. In what specific ways do you observe persons with disabilities being disproportionately affected by climate change impacts or extreme weather events, compared to the general population?
    - Specific impact areas: Health, livelihoods and food security, WASH, Shelter and housing, education, Assistive devices and mobility.
    - Can you provide examples?
2. Are early warning systems and climate information provided in accessible formats for all types of disabilities? What are the gaps?
3. What are the challenges persons with disabilities face during evacuation processes in climate-related emergencies?
4. Have you observed or do you know of mental health impacts on persons with disabilities due to climate change anxiety, displacement, or loss?

Existing Responses and Gaps

1. What efforts are currently being made by your organization (government, NGOs, OPDs, or other actors) to address the impacts of climate change on persons with disabilities?
2. Can you describe any specific programs, projects, or initiatives?
3. To what extent are persons with disabilities and DPOs involved in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction initiatives at local, regional, or national levels?
4. Are their voices meaningfully heard and integrated into decision-making processes? How can the voices of persons with disabilities be better amplified in climate change discussions and decision-making?
5. How well do different stakeholders (government, DPOs, NGOs, UN agencies) coordinate their efforts on disability-inclusive climate action?"
6. Is there sufficient data and research available on the specific impacts of climate change on persons with disabilities? What are the gaps?

Recommendations and Opportunities

1. Based on your expertise, what are the top 3-5 priorities for ensuring disability-inclusive climate action (in general and of your organization/office)?
2. What policy or legislative changes are needed to better integrate disability inclusion into climate change and DRR frameworks?"

3. Are there existing policies that need to be enforced or updated?"
4. What kind of capacity building or training is needed for persons with disabilities, OPDs, government officials, and humanitarian actors to effectively address climate change impacts?"
5. Are sufficient financial and technical resources being allocated for disability-inclusive climate action? If not, what is needed?
6. What specific roles do you see for the government, DPOs, international organizations, and local communities in driving disability-inclusive climate action?
7. Are there any innovative approaches or best practices (local or international) that you believe could be adopted or scaled up to improve level of engagement in climate-related advocacy and planning processes?
8. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding the impact of climate change on persons with disabilities that we haven't covered?"