

This case study is one of several produced by the **CLARA** network to coincide with the publication of the IPCC Special Report on Land. We're showcasing **CLARA** member climate solutions which demonstrate the **rights-based, low-emission development pathways** needed for reducing emissions while **promoting livelihoods** and **ecosystem integrity**.

Climate Action and Safeguarding Rights: Community Forest Management in Nepal

Over 22 million hectares of Nepalese forest are community-managed, benefitting climate, nature and rural households

Organisations and individuals involved

22,266 Community Forestry User Groups (CFUGs) across Nepal. This comprises about 30 million households in rural and urban communities.

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Location

The community forestry program is implemented across Nepal based on the national forest legislation (Forest Act 1993)



IN NEPAL, more than 22 million hectares of forest have been established as sustainable community-owned and managed forests, providing multiple climate and social benefits. Many communities are also organizing campaigns to establish community rights in the lowland forests in order to control deforestation and forest degradation.

The Nepalese Government's Divisional Forest Office, or in some cases local government and NGOs, provide funding for the development of forest management plans by Community Forestry User Groups (CFUGs). After the transfer of forest ownership, the CFUGs generate income by mobilizing their forest resources for domestic use or commercial purposes. Forest management plans formulated by each CFUG and carried out according to local contexts include provisions for climate change adaptation, mitigation and disaster risk reduction.

The main goal and objective of the community forestry campaign in Nepal is to reduce deforestation and forest degradation, and to increase ground covered by native forests. Thus

the campaign contributes to increased carbon capture and improved livelihoods through the expansion and sustainable use of forest resources.

Some of the key actions undertaken by CFUGs are wild-fire control, open grazing management, controlling illegal encroachment, native species regeneration and planting, and forest management. These actions support community-based forest enterprises, and ensure improved access to food and clean drinking water, and healthy ecosystems in which plants, animals and water sources are protected help to increase climate resilience across the country. At least 25% of the income of the CFUGs is allocated for the sustainable management of forests, and 35% of the income of CFUGs is allocated for poverty alleviation. The remainder of the income is invested in actions such as establishment of solar energy and micro-hydro systems in rural areas, community health and education, early warning systems in flood-affected areas, maintaining rural roads, and fulfilling basic social security at the community level.

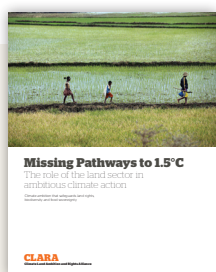
Testimony

Bharati Pathak, Chairperson, FECOFUN

“We have been struggling for 30 years for the legal recognition of the tenure rights of Community Forestry User Groups. Earlier, major parts of the forests were deforested and degraded, but we have now restored our forests and ecosystems through community forestry. The community forests in Nepal are an integral part of forest-dependent communities, micro-enterprises and eco-tourism. We have learnt that the community forest campaign must be an ongoing process for securing collective community forest tenure rights.”

‘Missing Pathways’ to climate action

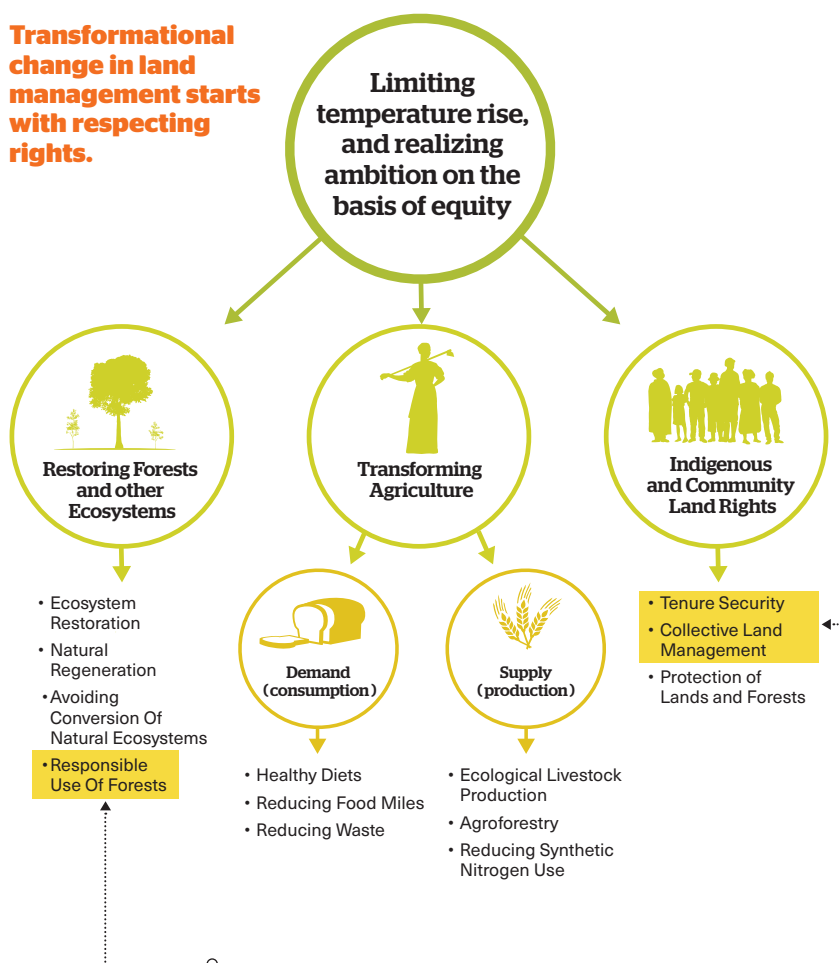
Last year, CLARA published the report ‘Missing Pathways’, identifying areas of global mitigation ambition rooted in land rights, restoration, agroecology, and food system change.



This example follows ‘Missing Pathways’ to climate action by...

Prioritising an interconnected system whereby protection and management of nature acts as a path to climate resilience and action, whilst strengthening local livelihoods and sustainable relationships with the land. Goals are oriented around rights (land, womens’, food access) and biodiversity and ecosystem protection. Community forestry is also clearly recognized in national legislation—the project contributes to Nepal’s climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts, thus appearing not only as a local and short-term action, but as a long-lasting solution.

Transformational change in land management starts with respecting rights.



This action prioritises the **responsible use of forests** and **collective land management**, which in turn strengthen and are enabled by **tenure security**, resulting in a durable system where rights and nature are respected.

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