Bangladesh–India–Nepal Youth Climate Action & Learning Exchange Project.

1. Context and Rationale

Climate change is currently profoundly affecting the lives, livelihoods, environment, and future development of populations in **Bangladesh, India,** and **Nepal.** Across various regions of these three countries, there is a rising incidence of floods, cyclones, droughts, landslides, severe heat waves, water scarcity, biodiversity loss, and climate-induced livelihood crises. These risks disproportionately impact youth, women, marginalized communities, smallholder farmers, the working class, and other vulnerable groups.

While young people are among the groups most severely affected by climate change, they are simultaneously a vital force for change. Their innovative thinking, aptitude for using technology, social connectivity, leadership potential, and eagerness to address local issues can play a crucial role in building a climate-resilient society. However, the reality is that meaningful youth participation in local-level climate planning, decision-making, and implementation processes remains limited.

Although young people possess an interest in and awareness of climate issues, various obstacles hinder the translation of this interest into tangible initiatives. A lack of practical knowledge, limited leadership opportunities, a scarcity of necessary resources and funding, restricted access to experienced organizations, and weak local and cross-border networks significantly impede their potential.

Against this backdrop, it is crucial to create opportunities for experience sharing, mutual learning, cross-border communication, joint leadership, and the undertaking of local climate initiatives among the youth of **Bangladesh, India,** and **Nepal.**

Integrated Development Organization (IDO) believes that instead of viewing young people merely as a population affected by climate change, it is essential to foster them as climate activists, innovators, leaders, and partners in change. With this objective in mind, the proposed exchange program will serve as an effective platform for the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and innovative ideas among youth from **Bangladesh, India,** and **Nepal.**

2. Project Concept

The proposed initiative is essentially a ***Youth Climate Action and Learning Exchange Programme*****,** involving youth, youth organizations, emerging youth leaders, and representatives of local-level climate initiatives from **Bangladesh, India,** and **Nepal.**

Through this program, participants will have the opportunity to visit and exchange experiences regarding initiatives implemented at the local level in their respective countries covering areas such as climate adaptation, climate resilience, eco-friendly livelihoods, biodiversity conservation, natural resource management, disaster risk reduction, and climate justice.

Alongside the exchange of activities, participants will share their experiences and knowledge with one another through discussions, experience sharing, field visits, group work, problem-solving workshops, and youth leadership development programs.

Special emphasis will be placed on the sequential process of **"learning → connecting → collaborative thinking → local action."** In other words, the exchange activities will not be

limited to merely acquiring knowledge; rather, young people will be encouraged and empowered to translate the experience gained into tangible climate initiatives within their own communities.

3. Main Objectives of the Project

Overall Objective:

To create the capacity and opportunities for youth-led, effective climate action at the local level by fostering knowledge, experience, leadership, and cross-border cooperation among the youth of **Bangladesh, India,** and **Nepal.**

Specific Objectives:

1. To enhance the practical knowledge and skills of youth regarding climate adaptation, resilience, environmental conservation, biodiversity, and climate justice.
2. To establish a robust cross-border network for learning and collaboration among youth and youth organizations in **Bangladesh, India,** and **Nepal.**
3. To share and promote successful and innovative local-level climate initiatives among one another.
4. To strengthen the capacities of youth in leadership, communication, problem-solving, and climate advocacy.
5. Encouraging and supporting young people to undertake small-scale local climate initiatives in their respective areas, based on the knowledge and experience gained through the exchange.

4. Proposed Key Activities

a. Cross-border Youth Exchange

An exchange program will be organized with the participation of selected youth representatives and representatives from youth organizations from **Bangladesh, India,** and **Nepal.** Participants will have the opportunity to gain firsthand knowledge about various local-level initiatives aimed at addressing climate change.

b. Experience and Knowledge Sharing Session

Participants will present successful initiatives, local issues, innovative solutions, challenges, and lessons learned from their respective countries. This will foster an environment for mutual learning.

c. Field Visits and Practical Experience

Visits will be conducted to observe successful models of climate adaptation, agriculture, water management, biodiversity conservation, eco-friendly livelihoods, disaster risk reduction, or community-based initiatives.

d. Youth Leadership and Skills Development

Practical sessions will be organized on topics such as youth leadership, climate advocacy, communication, campaign management, networking, project planning, and local-level engagement.

e. Youth Climate Innovation Lab

Participants will work in teams to develop potential solutions for climate-related issues in their respective areas. There will be opportunities to devise and present innovative ideas tailored to local realities.

f. Cross-border Youth Climate Network

A long-term network for communication and collaboration will be established among the participating youth and organizations through the exchange of activities. Initiatives will be taken to sustain this communication using digital platforms.

g. Local Small-scale Climate Initiatives

Following the exchange program, participants will develop concepts for small-scale initiatives that can be implemented in their respective areas such as tree planting, water conservation, climate-resilient agriculture, biodiversity conservation, waste management, environmental awareness, or local climate advocacy.

5. Who will participate?

This program will primarily engage young men and women aged 18–35, representatives of youth organizations, emerging youth leaders, environmental and climate activists, students, young entrepreneurs, and local volunteers working on climate and environmental issues.

Special emphasis will be placed on the participation of women, marginalized communities, and youth from climate-vulnerable areas. Efforts will be made to ensure equal participation, leadership opportunities, and involvement in decision-making processes for women and adolescent girls.

6. Expected Outcomes

The following outcomes are expected to be achieved through the implementation of the project:

- Practical knowledge and skills regarding climate issues will be enhanced among the youth of **Bangladesh, India,** and **Nepal.**
- Young people will gain firsthand experience of successful local initiatives and innovative solutions from various countries.
- Strong cross-border communication and cooperation will be established among youth organizations and leaders from the three countries.
- Youth capacity for leadership, advocacy, and problem-solving will be enhanced.
- New youth-led local initiatives to address climate change will be established.
- Opportunities for youth participation in local-level climate planning and decision-making processes will increase.
- A long-term **'Youth Climate Action Network'** will be formed among the youth.
- New opportunities for regional cooperation among **Bangladesh, India,** and **Nepal** will emerge through the exchange of experiences and knowledge.

7. Expected Outcome

Through this initiative, the focus will be on transforming young people into ***"active partners in climate solutions,"*** rather than merely raising their awareness about the impacts of climate change.

Through an exchange program, a young person will learn about an effective initiative from another country, compare it with their own local context, and take steps to implement it in their area after making necessary adaptations. Consequently, knowledge and experience will not remain confined to the exchange program itself; instead, opportunities will be created to translate them into tangible action at the local level.

At the same time, long-term relationships and cooperation will be fostered among the youth of **Bangladesh, India,** and **Nepal,** which could serve as a foundation for future joint research, advocacy, innovation, climate campaigns, and other regional initiatives.

8. Sustainability and Future Prospects

To ensure the sustainability of the project, an active youth network comprising the participants will be established following the exchange program. This network will be kept active through regular online communication, knowledge exchange, joint discussions, and the sharing of experiences.

Participants will be encouraged to undertake small-scale local climate initiatives and, where feasible, assisted in establishing connections with local governments, civil society, youth organizations, educational institutions, and other stakeholders.

In the long run, this initiative could evolve into a ***'Bangladesh–India–Nepal Youth Climate Action Platform,'*** where young people contribute to regional cooperation in addressing climate change through knowledge, innovation, leadership, and collaborative efforts.

9. Conclusion

The challenge of climate change is not an issue confined to any single country or community; it is a trans boundary and shared reality. Young people in Bangladesh, India, and Nepal share many common experiences regarding climate risks, the environment, and livelihoods. Therefore, creating opportunities for mutual learning, the exchange of experiences, and the fostering of joint leadership among them is both timely and important.

This exchange program proposed by IDO will create opportunities for young people to learn, connect, and take effective action at the local level. Through this initiative, the voices of the youth will be strengthened, their participation in local climate efforts will increase, and a foundation for effective youth climate cooperation among Bangladesh, India, and Nepal will be established.

The core philosophy of this initiative is— "Learn Together, Connect Across Borders, Act Locally, Create Change."

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