



Y4SMD
(Youth for Sustainable Mountain Development)



The **International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, ICIMOD**, is a regional knowledge development and learning centre serving the eight regional member countries of the Hindu Kush-Himalayas – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan. We're working to develop an economically and environmentally sound mountain ecosystem to improve the living standards of mountain populations – now, and for the future. In line with its new Strategic Framework, ICIMOD is strengthening its capacity to develop new approaches to meet the growing challenges in the region posed by climate change and globalisation. www.icimod.org.

APMN and its mandate:

As a follow-up process and the Asian regional response to the [Agenda 21 Chapter 13](#) (popularly known as the 'Mountain Agenda') [International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development](#) (ICIMOD) organised a regional conference in December 1994 in Kathmandu, Nepal. This Kathmandu conference adopted the Sustainable Development of Mountain Areas of Asia declaration or the SUDEMAA Call to Action.

Following to recommendation of the 'SUDEEMA Call to Action 1994', Asia regional response to Agenda 21 Chapter 13, the [Asia Pacific Mountain Network](#) (APMN) was established by ICIMOD in 1995 with a grant support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), as a knowledge sharing platform connecting mountain regions and members through dialogue and networking. The network captures, enriches, and disseminates information from a variety of resources on mountain development issues in and for the Asia-Pacific region.

APMN acts as the Asia-Pacific node of [Mountain Forum](#) (MF), a role it has played since 1996, as well as Asia Pacific Decentralised Hub of the [Mountain Partnership](#) (MP) since 2008. In more than a decade of its operation, APMN has been able to make a notable contribution to build knowledge repositories and expertise by collaborating and networking with and among members and member organisations for sustainable mountain development. APMN currently has 287 organisational and 2068 individual members from 43 countries in the Asia Pacific region and direct access to 5580 individuals 600 organisations from 79 countries worldwide through the Mountain Forum network.

Mobilising Youth to take climate actions:

Climate change is increasingly becoming the most influential environmental pressure to human sustainability. A discussion started by a small group of people in 1960s in relation to increasing CO2 emission to the atmosphere has now drawn global attention and the humanity is forced to take serious actions in curbing emission of climate change causing agents, mitigate its impacts, prepare people to cope with possible disasters, and adapt to the changes which are unavoidable. Different scientific estimations have shown that it is impossible to stop impacts of exaggerated climate change, most importantly various known-unknown effects of Green House Gases (GHGs), which are already emitted to the atmosphere and have life of many decades. Considering all these facts, climate change is now seen as concern of many generations, which will need many decades and even centuries to stabilise to previous or harmless state.



Since climate change is affecting almost every sector of our societies it is not wise to rely on few existing mechanisms to address all these problems. In this context, we see youth as the ice-breaker of this situation in many ways. This includes improving community awareness, advocating climate actions at local, national and international level, promoting research & climate resilient development, enhancing institutional mechanisms, putting pressure to national governments and international communities to give proper attention to climate change and most importantly identifying the missing links and communities that are still far away for the climate change discussions and reaching them and enabling them. Realising this, APMN conceptualised youth focussed activities in early 2008, with the objectives of improving understanding of SMD among the youth professionals and youth groups, enhancing their capacity, and increasing their engagement in SMD relevant activities. Activities implementation arrangement was envisioned in a way that APMN benefits from and works with other programmes and projects of ICIMOD and number of partner organisations.

Mobilising Youth to take climate actions

To ensure full and effective participation of youth in all aspects of development processes, particularly in the mountain areas.

How?

- Understand needs and concerns
- Realize potential (contribution) they have
- Empower
- Engage...engage...engage

APMN formally started 'Youth Engagement in SMD', often referred as 'Y4SMD' or 'Preparing next generation leadership in SMD' initiative with the organisation of an e-discussion on 'Young Can Do' in April 2009 and launch of the report on 12 August same year, on the occasion of the International Youth Day (IYD).



- The same year APMN worked together with Asia-Pacific Decentralised Hub of the Mountain Partnership Secretariat at ICIMOD to organise 'Online Training Course on Basics of Advocacy', which benefitted twelve APMN members.
- In August 2009, with generous support from PANOS South Asia, fifteen APMN members (mostly youth) were trained on 'Climate Change and Multimedia Communications'.
- In September - October 2009, APMN organised an e-discussions on 'Climate change in mountain areas of Asia: What are our priority issues for the Copenhagen meeting (CoP 15)?' aiming to attract the views of youth on this topic.
- The e-discussion was coincided with another APMN cosponsored event, 'South Asian Youth Summit on Climate Change (3-6 September) which attracted over 80 participants from South Asia and beyond. First of its kind, this event brought a new momentum in youth engagement in climate change in South Asia, and the event host, Nepalese Youth Coalition for Climate Action (NYCA) introduced a new initiative, 'Mountain Action', to advocate climate actions in mountain areas. More at <http://nyca.net.np/saysocc09/>
- In September 2009 APMN started issuing a special bimonthly thematic digest on 'mountain climate change' targeting youth groups and network members.
- APMN cosponsored and provided knowledge support to 'Youth in Climate Action' campaign, ran from 1 to 14 December 2009. The event was organised by Eco-Friends Nepal (EFN), Climate Change Coalition (3C), and College of Applied Sciences-EF (CASEF), among others to mark the International Mountain Day (11 December) and the Global Day of Action: International Demonstrations on Climate Change (12 December). The fourteen-day long campaign-cum-capacity building programme targeted school and college students, civil society and development organisations. The campaign included awareness rallies, workshops in school and colleges, drama shows/ role plays, and a training.

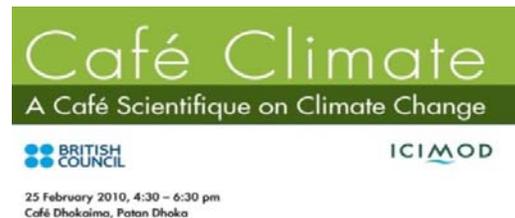
- The APMN Node Manager gave youth focused presentations on 'Climate Change in Mountain Areas of Asia' at various local events including an interaction programme organised by the NawaYuva monthly magazine in September; A seminar-cum-training on climate change for Nepalese youth organised by Small Earth Nepal (SEN, an APMN member) as part of the International Climate Champions programme of the British Council in October; an interaction programme on 'Climate change and its impact in Nepal', organised by Society Towards Environment Protection (STEP) Nepal in November. Similar talks were also organised at Amrit Science College and NYCA lecture hall, specifically for youth activists and undergraduate students.
- Ms Sania Shah, Symbiosis Institute, Pune, India and Ms Sujita Bajracharya and Ms Bijaya Malla from South Asian Institute of Management (SAIM), Kathmandu Nepal worked with IKM/APMN under the mentorship programme.
- A few seed grants were made available to local youth groups to mark international observations, including World Wetlands Day, World Water Day, World Environment Day, International Youth Day and International Mountain Day.
- Considering the increasing interest of youth in social networking, bookmarking and micro-blogging sites, APMN has developed its own platforms which are used to get connected with the youth members and widely share relevant information.



- APMN in Facebook;
 - o APMN Facebook Community: www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=26268588716
 - o Environmentalists Without Borders: www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=171967553141
 - o Sustainable Mountain Development (SMD): Agenda 21 – Chapter 13: www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=252226318840
- APMN in Delicious: <http://delicious.com/apmn.media>
- APMN in Twitter <http://twitter.com/apmnicimod>

After reviewing activities implemented in the first year and considering lessons learnt, APMN together with Integrated Knowledge Management (IKM) Programme, Public Relations Unit, Himalayan University Consortium (HUC) unit and Mountain Environment and Natural Resources Information System (MENRIS) Division of ICIMOD, the British Council, the Small Earth Nepal and other partners, developed more knowledge intensive capacity building activities for the year 2010, which we have found very useful in enhancing skills and improving access of youth. Following are the highlights;

- Co-organised 'Cafe Scientifique' on climate change with Mr. Clive Bowman of University of Highlands and Islands (UHI Millennium College), UK on 25 February 2010, together with the British Council. The cafe was attended by over 60 youth climate enthusiasts including the British Council's International Climate Champions. Second 'Cafe Scientifique' in this series was organised on 25 March 2011, where Dr Garrett Kilroy, an ICIMOD expert on integrated water resources management (IWRM), was the guest specialist at this year's Café Climate. He gave a PowerPoint presentation on 'River basins and climate change', based on his work in Europe and the Hindu Kush-Himalayas. Some 50 people attended second event.
- Offered financial, technical and/or knowledge support to Youth Network for Social & Environmental Development (YONSED), ClimateHimalaya, Youth Alliance for Environment (YAE), Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) to mark international days through implementation of capacity building activities focusing youth and climate change, media reporting and biodiversity and climate change. The Node Manager also attended launch of the



ClimateHimalaya Initiative (CHI) in Roorkee, India on 5 June, marking the World Environment Day. CHI is member of APMN and is lead by youth professional Mr. Kashinath Vajpai.

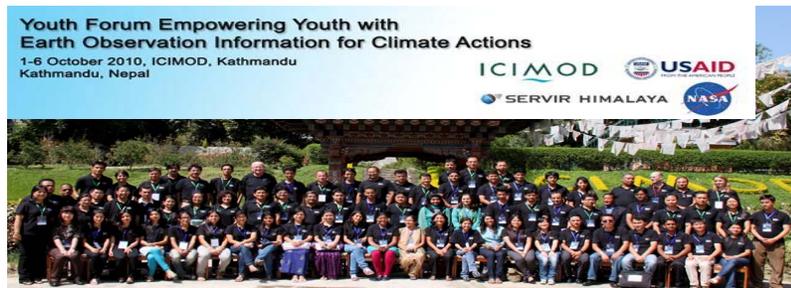
- Co-organised a half-day Interaction Programme on 'Youth Engagement on Climate Change: Nepalese Perspective', to mark International Youth Day on 12 August.
- On the occasion of International Year of Youth (2010-11), APMN started publishing special monthly digest on 'Youth' starting in August 2010.
- Supporting to the British Council's International Climate Champions programme, APMN as part of IKM programme of ICIMOD, co-organised regional workshop entitled 'entitled "Creating a Sustainable Network of Climate Change Champions', for British Council's 34 Climate Champions from Nepal, Bangladesh and Uzbekistan. The participants were trained on basics of climate science, information



Regional workshop on 'Creating a Sustainable Network of Climate Change Champions' for British Council's ICCs from Bangladesh, Nepal and Uzbekistan)

collection using various standard methodologies like Participatory Rural Assessment (PRA), World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) etc; knowledge generation, documentation and sharing, including use of social medias for networking.

- APMN together with Mountain Environment and Natural Resources Information System (MENRIS) Division of ICIMOD organised Youth Forum on 'Empowering Youth



with Earth Observation Information for Climate Actions', 1-6 October 2010, which was attended by 40 youth from ICIMOD regional member countries - Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan. The Youth Forum was instrumental in improving understanding of youth on application GIS and Earth Observation technologies in developing climate solutions. In order to strengthen institutional capacity of the youth organisations, NYCA was included as one of the organisers of the event.

- APMN together with Himalayan University Consortium (HUC) unit of ICIMOD provided financial and technical support to the Small Earth Nepal and the Consortium for Capacity Building (CCB) of the University of Colorado, Boulder to organise the first International Graduate Conference on Climate Change and People in Kathmandu, from 15-19 November 2010. The conference was successful in bringing together about 150 young climate researchers from 'Greater South Asia from Kyrgyzstan to Bangladesh and to Southeast Asia'.
- One of key activities this year in this line is publication of this issue of the Asia Pacific Mountain Courier on 'Youth and climate change' theme, which we hope would be useful to capture and share youth impressions about climate change with stakeholders attending the Cancun meeting (COP 16).

Lessons learned:

Challenges in preparing next generation leadership in climate change

- Youth are defined and well accepted as an agent of change, but the youth agenda is not well penetrated in many systems – donors, implementers, promoters...
- There are very limited funding opportunities available to implement perspective plans to build capacity of youth
- Some promoters have resources but lack knowledge of what exactly youth need?
- High rate of distraction in youth

Feedbacks we received from young professionals

- Exposure - What others are doing? What is available? What is possible to do? Where to make an intervention? How to get there?
- Tools - How things work? Where to get tools, applications, methodologies? How to reach out to people? How to own/make use of tools?
- Network - How to create a team? What strengthens an institution? How to sustain network/institution?
- Knowledge - Where to get? How to validate? How to replicate and use?

The road ahead: Empowering & engaging (2010-2012)

- Improving community awareness
- enhancing institutional mechanisms
- Promoting climate actions at local, national and international level
- Research, knowledge generation and documentation
- Pushing climate resilient development
- Putting pressure to national governments and international communities to give proper attention to climate change and most importantly identifying the missing links and communities that are still far away for the climate change discussions and reaching them and enabling them.
- Are we still on time to better equip ourselves for Rio+20, COP 17 and other important events?

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." - Margaret Mead

We hope to continue our youth focused programmes in coming years to effectively mobilise youth professionals and groups to advocate sustainable mountain development and mountain climate change issues at national, regional and global level. In 2012, when we sit in Rio+20 meeting (which also comes as Bishkek Summit+10 and International Year of Mountains+10) to discuss further on future of Mountain Agenda, we hope, our small efforts will help engage some new leaders in the process, bridging the age gap SMD leadership. First phase of APMN's first phase youth focused activities will be concluded in 2012 (forming clear ground for second phase activities), which is foreseen as most important year in the history of environment movement and particularly in the context of SMD.

Utilising lessons learned through number of activities implemented in previous years;

- 2008/2009 - understanding needs and concerns, and
- 2010 – realizing potential and empowering youth

We envision 2011 and 2012 as the years of empowering and engaging the youth in mountain development and climate actions.

This will be realised through continuation of ongoing collaboration with SERVIR Himalaya (ICIMOD initiative supported by NASA and USAID), British Council's International Climate Champions (ICC) programme, Asia Pacific Youth Forum initiative of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO), and Youth Encounter on Sustainability (YES) course of the Activating Talent in Sustainability (ACTIS), an off-spin project of ETH Zurich, Knowledge management wings of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), among others. New partnerships are being explored in the context of Education Supporting Sustainable Asian Livelihood (ESSAL) project, facilitated by the Himalayan University Consortium of ICIMOD, and the International Programme on Research and Training on Sustainable Management of Mountain Areas (IPROMO) project of the Mountain Partnership.

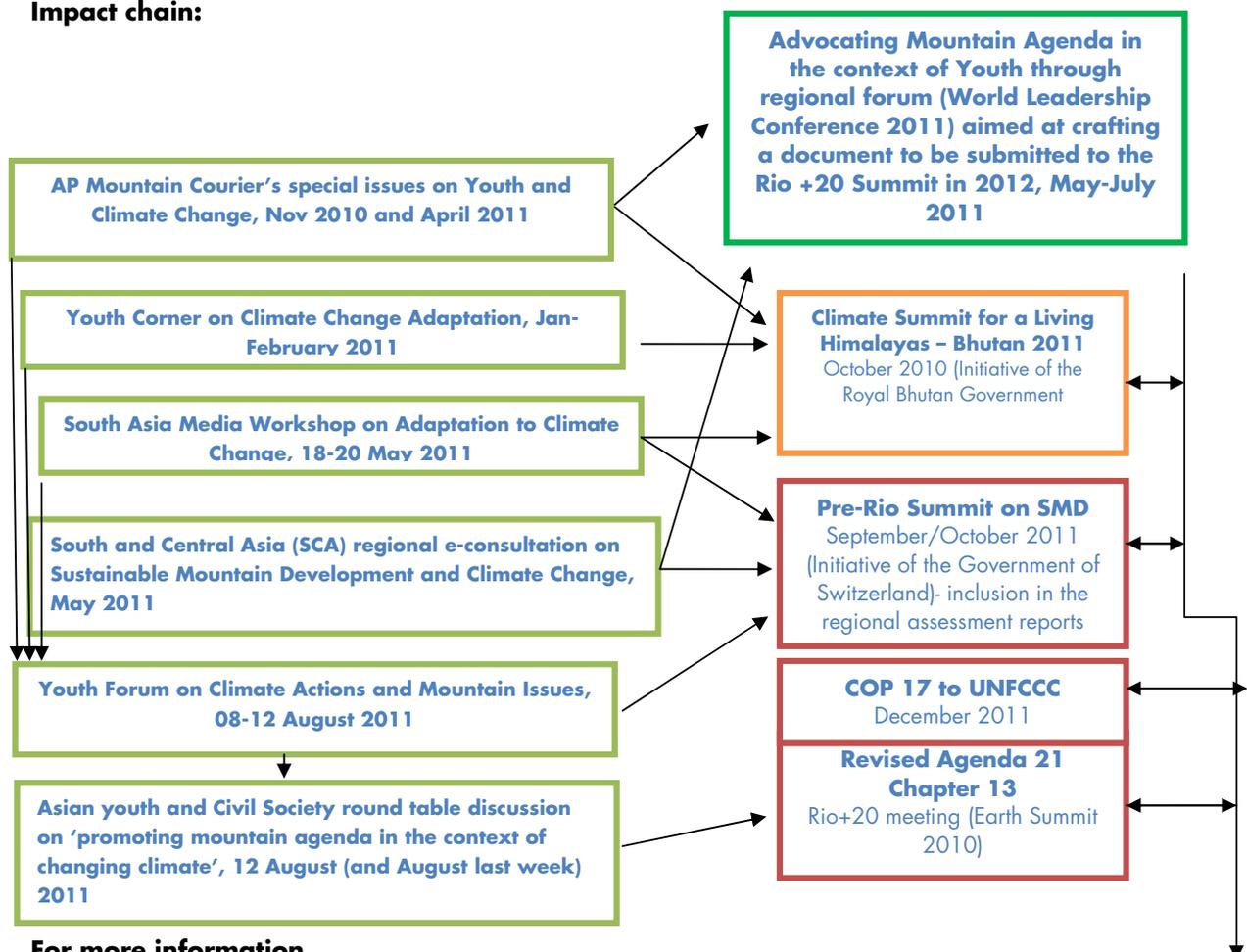
Looking at the present status of the Y4SMD initiative, we already have a number of good stories to share with you. 75 youth we trained last year on Climate Change Adaptation (CCA), the usage of Geo Information Systems (GIS) and Earth Observation, and knowledge exchange, are now actively advocating mountain agenda and CCA in all regional member of ICIMOD. Youth groups in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Bhutan have taken new initiatives such as media campaigning, organisation of regional conferences and advocacy of these issues in international meetings, including UNFCCC processes and Asia regional Youth Forums. APMN supported youth initiatives in Nepal and India, most noticeably Small Earth Nepal (SEN), Nepalese Youth for Climate Action (NYCA), Climate Himalaya Initiative (CHI), and Youth Network for Social & Environmental Development (YONSED) have made significant progress in this direction. In 2010 alone we supported more than 12 youth initiatives in the region, benefiting more than 500 youth. There are many other developments which we'll continue to share with you through our publications, website, discussion lists and our thematic digests.

Activities planned for 2011/12

Considering lessons learned during implementation of youth focused activities in recent years and to ensure the youth make effective presence with better knowledge, clear understanding in important meetings in coming days, most importantly in RiO+20, COP 17 and Bishkek+10, APMN proposes following activities to be implemented in 2011/2012.

- South Asia Media Workshop on Adaptation to Climate Change, 18-20 May 2011 (25 Journalists from Print, TV, Radio or online media who regularly cover environmental issues, especially climate change and its effects, from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka). More at <http://www.icimod.org/?q=3119>.
- Youth Forum on Climate Actions and Mountain Issues (30 ICIMOD RMCⁱ participants and 10 from other countries in Asia Pacific region), 08-12 August 2011. More at <http://www.icimod.org/?q=3279>.
- Asian youth and Civil Society round table discussion on 'promoting mountain agenda in the context of changing climate' (30 RMC participants, 10 other SUDEEMA parties' representatives and representatives from UN agencies and developed economies in Asia Pacific region, more preciously Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand), 12 August and last week of August 2011 (As part of ICIMOD meeting on Green Economy).

Impact chain:



For more information,

Please visit www.icimod.org/apmn or

Write to Mr. Tek Jung Mahat at tmahat@icimod.org or Daan Boom at dboom@icimod.org.

ⁱ ICIMOD RMCs are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan.