

UNFPA NEPAL

Results Achieved in Nepal

2022



THREE ZEROS by 2030

Ending unmet need for family planning

Ending preventable maternal death

Ending gender-based violence and harmful practices

Copyright © UNFPA

All rights reserved

Annual report 2022

Photo credits

UNFPA Nepal and Luis Tato

Stories compiled by

UNFPA Nepal

Nepal Country Office

P.O. Box 107, Kathmandu, Nepal

Published in 2023 by UNFPA Nepal

UNFPA is the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency.

Our mission is to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled.



UNFPA NEPAL

Results Achieved in Nepal

2022



TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD 6

OUR KEY RESULTS 8

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH 10

- Increasing choice for family planning
- Safer births
- Obstetric fistula
- Humanitarian emergency responses

ENGAGING ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH 14

- Empowering adolescent girls and boys
- Comprehensive sexuality education
- Youth-friendly health services

GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT 20

- Combatting violence against women and girls
- Supporting referral pathways for survivors
- Community outreach
- Anchoring responses in institutions
- Ending harmful practices

POPULATION DYNAMICS 27

- The population and housing census
- Strengthening the statistical environment

MANAGEMENT SNAPSHOT 30

- Resource delivery
- Key partners
- Programming locations
- Policy engagement

THE WAY FORWARD 37

- Key priorities ahead
- Accelerating our development results
- Lessons learnt

FOREWORD

When I arrived in Nepal six months ago, my immediate impression was that this is a country undergoing significant social and economic change. The population of Nepal is at the heart of this transformation. These rapid shifts are reshaping social and economic patterns in profound ways. They also impact all aspects of public and private life.

These trends are well captured in the 2022 population and housing census that was published recently. The census results show positive outcomes across a range of indicators, including maternal health, longevity, and education, as well as in other areas that are a result of investments in the welfare of the population more broadly.

As Nepal moves towards middle-income status by 2026, women and adolescent girls must be central to this ongoing transformation. The voluntary commitments Nepal made at the ICPD+25 are absolutely crucial to realizing the full potential of this country. And I believe sexual and reproductive health and rights are central to accelerating wider development progress in society and the economy.

Women still experience obstacles in accessing these rights. That is why we have set out to deliver three life-changing results by 2030, which is the deadline for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. These are zero unmet need for family planning, zero preventable maternal deaths, and zero gender-based violence and harmful practices such as child marriage.

The UNFPA country office in Nepal is also evolving to meet the needs of a changing society. We are committed to ensuring our work is responsive to the needs of the population and agile enough to respond to new and emerging issues, while at the same time ensuring that no one is left behind, especially vulnerable communities and persons with disabilities.

As our new country programme document for the period 2023-2027 is now agreed with the Government of Nepal, we will continue to accelerate results over the coming period, strengthening our partnerships to deliver positive outcomes for women and adolescent girls.

I would like to sincerely thank our staff and partners for their commitment and work towards meeting these three zeros. Without support from the Government of Nepal and our international partners, the risk of leaving women and adolescent girls behind in Nepal's development story is very real, and their commitment, together with that of our national implementing partners, has never been more essential than in the years ahead of us.



Won Young Hong
UNFPA Resident Representative
Nepal



OUR KEY RESULTS

- **510,633 couple-years of protection from users of all modern family planning methods in 2022.**
- **188,630 unintended pregnancies and 114,720 unsafe abortions averted.**
- **In 2022, 32.7 percent of health posts supplied all five temporary family planning methods that is an increase of 7.4 percent from 2021**
- **20,324 women and adolescent girls received dignity kits during humanitarian emergency responses.**
- **7,422 adolescents attended the Rupantaran life skills programme increasing their individual and collective agency to target and respond to gender-based violence and harmful practices.**
- **18,067 pupils learnt from the comprehensive sexuality education material available in the adolescent-friendly information corners in 2022.**
- **A total of 84,795 adolescent girls and boys have increased access to their sexual and reproductive health through youth-friendly health services.**
- **6,338 survivors of gender-based violence were supported to access health and psychosocial support services at one-stop crisis management centres.**
- **1,763 gender-based survivors and 351 dependent children were provided with secure accommodation.**
- **19,587 couples and members of communities participated in gender transformative couple discussions and social change dialogues.**
- **116,105 members of local communities participated in local gender-based violence outreach sessions.**
- **Data processing was completed and preliminary results of the population and housing census released in 2022.**



SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

INCREASING CHOICE FOR FAMILY PLANNING

In 2022, UNFPA programmes, in partnership with national and local governments, continued to strengthen family planning supply chain management to ensure family planning commodities are widely available. During this period 32.7 percent of health posts supplied all five temporary family planning methods that is an increase of 7.4 percent from 2021.

Through our global supply chain management unit, over three-quarters of a million commodities were procured in 2022, assisting to build a responsive and resilient supply chain. This included the distribution of 1.8 million condoms, 29,123 intrauterine contraceptive devices, 48,384 oral contraceptives, 15,300 emergency contraceptives, 12,000 implants, and 773,100 Depo-Provera doses that were available free at the point of access.

The management of supply chains for these commodities was also strengthened with a further 200 health facilities from all eight districts of Madhesh province supported with an area gap analysis and staff training to strengthen the utility of the national electronic logistics management information system for family planning commodity management and reduce the potential for stockouts at delivery points. The national average stock-out rate of family planning commodities was 9.21 percent in 2022.

Future planning for commodities is also improved with a detailed and costed family planning plan for the period 2023–2030 that was supported with UNFPA technical advice to the government. This plan quantifies the needs for family planning commodities to meet targets in the Sustainable Development Goals. A hotline operated by professional midwives also provided responses to inquiries from 6,945 women and girls, advising them on their sexual and reproductive health and rights and providing referrals and counselling.

SAFER BIRTHS

The UNFPA continued to support the professional development of midwives to increase the capacity of service providers to ensure safer births. Professional training pathways that were only introduced in 2016 in Nepal with the introduction of a new generation of birth attendants and midwives continued to be strengthened.

This included reviews of the midwifery national training package, the training of working midwives, and the incorporation of basic standards into service provision. The UNFPA also partnered with universities to develop undergraduate courses and degree qualifications for midwifery that are now available in five different institutions. In 2022, 23 graduates were awarded their degrees and are now working in the maternal healthcare sector and will deliver approximately 1,500 newborns annually.



Skills training was also provided for 99 nurses and auxiliary nurse midwives on how to use the safe delivery application that was introduced in 2021. Five additional modules were added to this course, including how to manage complications in the antenatal stages and during delivery. A further 177 professionals were provided orientation training to promote a safer and more enabling environment for maternity care.

OBSTETRIC FISTULA

Patients were supported to access the fistula treatment centre in Koshi province that provided life-changing surgical repairs in 2022, including for 39 women and girls, that received free obstetric fistula treatment with a success rate of 97.4 percent. Support for patients included all aspects of surgery and post-surgery recovery and observation.

Technical assistance from experts also supported the Ministry of Health and Population to produce a revised version of the national medical standards. This volume includes medical standards for the treatment of fistula obstetric. The manual will be finalized in 2023 and provide a standard reference work for national procedures for clinicians and clinical supervisors in the treatment and post-care support of obstetric fistula.

HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY RESPONSES

UNFPA emergency responses in 2022 reacted to the impact of climate-change related events, including floods and earthquakes. The UNFPA's prepositioned kits, which included inter-agency reproductive health kits, dignity kits, and kishori kits, provided 20,324 women and girls of reproductive age with essential access to safe sexual and reproductive health and hygiene during these responses across six provinces.

The kits included essential drugs, equipment, and supplies needed to provide reproductive healthcare in crises, which are assembled into a set of specially designed pre-packaged kits, as well as basic hygiene items and other supplies to ensure the health, dignity, and safety of women and girls, such as underwear, sanitary napkins, menstrual pads, and a flashlight.

To ensure timely emergency responses, stock in the five prepositioning sites used by UNFPA was replenished, and these currently house 19,207 dignity and kishori kits and seven sets of inter-agency reproductive health kits ready for emergency distribution.

UNFPA also supported the completion of local disaster preparedness and response plans that outline risks, capacities, and preparedness planning in three municipalities in the Madhesh and Lumbini provinces that face multiple climate-related and natural hazards. Training for officials in risk assessment and data collection tools was conducted to strengthen

KEY RESULTS

- **510,633 couple-years of protection from users of all modern family planning methods in 2022.**
- **188,630 unintended pregnancies and 114,720 unsafe abortions averted.**
- **The average stock out rate of family planning commodities was 9.21 percent in 2022.**
- **20,324 women and adolescent girls received dignity kits during humanitarian emergency responses.**



STORY

STORY: THE POWER OF CHOICE

A gathering of women is sitting under a tree that provides shade from the morning sun, waiting for the Khajuri family planning camp and health post in Dhanusa district of Madhesh province to open. These women are from a clutch of small houses directly across a large village field where new goalposts for a makeshift football pitch were recently erected to respond to the growing popularity of the sport in Nepal. These 20 women have arrived here to receive a basic health checkup and discuss family planning with the healthcare staff.

The health post and family planning camp encourage women and men to choose how they manage their family lives. These camps and the family planning clinics supported by UNFPA and the Family Planning Association of Nepal are a key link between families, communities, and sexual and reproductive health service provision.

Deep Narayan Mandal, who is managing the event, explains, “the camps offer essential services for women, offering them accurate and context-appropriate advice and a range of contraceptives if they choose family planning methods.” According to UNFPA analysis, this investment in the sexual and reproductive health of women pays significant wider community dividends. In the Asia Pacific region and Africa, for example, every dollar invested in reproductive, maternal and child health interventions delivers a minimum of USD 14 return

One of the women in this group, Punita Mandal, has a four-year-old daughter sitting on her lap. This is her third child, and she has decided to take contraceptive pills after visiting one of the camps while her husband returns for his home visits from across the border in India, where he works. “I feel more comfortable with pills because I can just stop taking them if I want a baby or if I think the pills are not working for me,” says Punita. She came to this decision after a consultation at the clinic, and her husband, supports this decision.

Many of the women sitting here have similar stories, with a large number of male family members working across the border or further afield. The free contraceptives available at the clinic give these women much more control over how they plan their families. Punita stresses that “family planning gives us the power of choice in our lives, and we can decide when we want to have children, and this helps us plan for their financial future.”

Cost is a major factor that drives these women to think about how they grow their families. Asha Devi Mandal emphasizes the importance of family planning to avoid additional costs and financial stress from having more children. She explains, “if I have more babies, we would need to spend more money on hospital bills, and as the babies grow, it would add to our financial stress.” Other women nod their heads in agreement and stress they cannot afford to have too many children like in previous generations. “Our generation was married off at a much younger age,” explains Asha. “We would like to ensure our children have a brighter future.”

All of these women work in farming and spend up to four hours daily in the fields or tending livestock. With most of their husbands away working, they are also solely responsible for all of the domestic work, including household cleaning, cooking, and childcare, which means long days for each of them.

Most women here attend the camp on a monthly basis and receive contraceptive pills because they feel it gives them the flexibility and amount of control that they require. According to Kabita Mandal, a big advantage of the camp is that it is on their doorstep, a few hundred metres away from their homes, and this provides easy access to a community clinic for family planning and other reproductive health services. She continues, “because it’s close to my home and it saves me from travelling long distances to the provincial hospital in Janakpur, it is a great help to people in the community, who can all walk to the clinic within 15 minutes. This is especially important for these busy women, who can often wait hours in a hospital without any guarantees they will receive an appointment.

These small, community-led family planning camps and outposts are changing the way communities feel about using family planning. In gaining access to their sexual and reproductive health and rights, these women are able to more fully make plans for their families and make decisions that inform their futures. The advantages of family planning choice are clearly felt in the wider community, and the impact on lives is evident for all the community to see.

ENGAGING ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH

EMPOWERING ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND BOYS

In 2022, a total of 7,422 adolescents—4,341 girls and 3,081 boys—attended the UNFPA-supported Rupantaran life skills programme for adolescents. This programme supports pastoral care and mentoring in small groups for a period of 6–9 months for adolescents to develop new sets of practical skills and build social capital, increasing their individual and collective agency to experience healthier, safer, and more empowered transitions to adulthood.

A high number, 85 percent, of adolescents participating in the programme demonstrate enhanced knowledge, life skills, and attitudes to establish healthy relationships, including an understanding of gender-based violence, enabling them to make informed decisions about marriage, education, and sexual and reproductive health.

To provide a more supportive family and community environment for these participating adolescents, 2,809 parents also completed an adult module of the programme. Mentors worked with parents to improve their understanding of the needs and rights of the girls, and the role of Rupantaran in their development.

A new cohort of 165 peer facilitators and 163 teachers were also trained to deliver an adapted version of Rupantaran that places greater emphasis on gender-based violence and harmful social and gender norms in 83 targeted schools in 2022. Key content from the scheme was also packaged for radio and broadcast on radio stations, reaching an estimated 46,000 adolescents in 2022.



COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION

A total of 18,067 pupils, including 11,604 girls and 6,463 boys, learnt from the comprehensive sexuality education material available in the adolescent-friendly information corners UNFPA supported in 86 schools in 2022. These corners are providing pupils access to safe and supportive spaces to acquire the knowledge and information related to sexuality education as well as the skills to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Of these learning corners, 16 were upgraded in 2022 to conform to multi-purpose and model standards, including access for persons with disabilities. These rehabilitated facilities were equipped with basic digital equipment, improving student access to existing and additional free online learning material. To localize this content, an online-based platform, 'Know Your Body and Your Rights,' was developed to provide key information on sexual and reproductive health and rights and will be launched in 2023, specifically targeting adolescent audiences.

An update of the national training guidelines for comprehensive sexuality education to produce a competency-focused teaching handbook that will further improve teaching practices was also completed. And technical assistance was provided to ministries in developing mentoring and coaching guidelines as part of a pilot to strengthen post-training development in comprehensive sexuality education.

To promote community awareness and ownership, a series of orientation sessions were delivered to a range of different stakeholders to support a more conducive environment for sexuality education. These reached 450 members of parent and teacher associations, school management committees, and health nurses who reached 8,919 adolescent students in 18 schools with improved information on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

YOUTH-FRIENDLY HEALTH SERVICES

Eight health facilities in five priority districts were certified to provide adolescent-friendly sexual and reproductive health services in 2022, employing the UNFPA-supported certification package criteria and trained assessors. A total of 84,795 adolescents, including 42,199 adolescent boys and 42,596 teenage girls, used services in one of the UNFPA-supported health centres during the year, increasing access to their sexual and reproductive health. There are now 116 health facilities nationwide certified by the Ministry of Health that are operational and supported with specialized training and counselling guidelines for clinical staff. A further 83 health providers also received training on delivering adolescent-friendly services in 2022.

Targeting specifically young mothers, 6,000 people attended UNFPA-supported family planning camps organized following a gap analysis of sexual and reproductive healthcare services in four provinces. A range of family planning services are available in the camps, as are key checks for reproductive health morbidity, including cervical cancer.

UNFPA also continued to advocate with key policymakers in Lumbini province for the promotion of Khushal Pariwar—a happy family approach—which resulted in resource allocation through the provincial government. It also assisted local governments in orienting 432 elected officials and health-care managers on the safe motherhood roadmap, which was approved in 2021, in eight districts in Madhesh province.

KEY RESULTS

- **7,422 adolescents attended the Rupantaran life skills programme increasing their individual and collective agency to target and respond to gender-based violence and harmful practices.**
- **18,067 pupils learnt from the comprehensive sexuality education material available in the adolescent-friendly information corners UNFPA supported in 86 schools in 2022.**
- **There are now 116 certified youth-friendly health services. The UNFPA-supported centres provided 84,795 adolescent girls and boys with increased access to their sexual and reproductive health.**



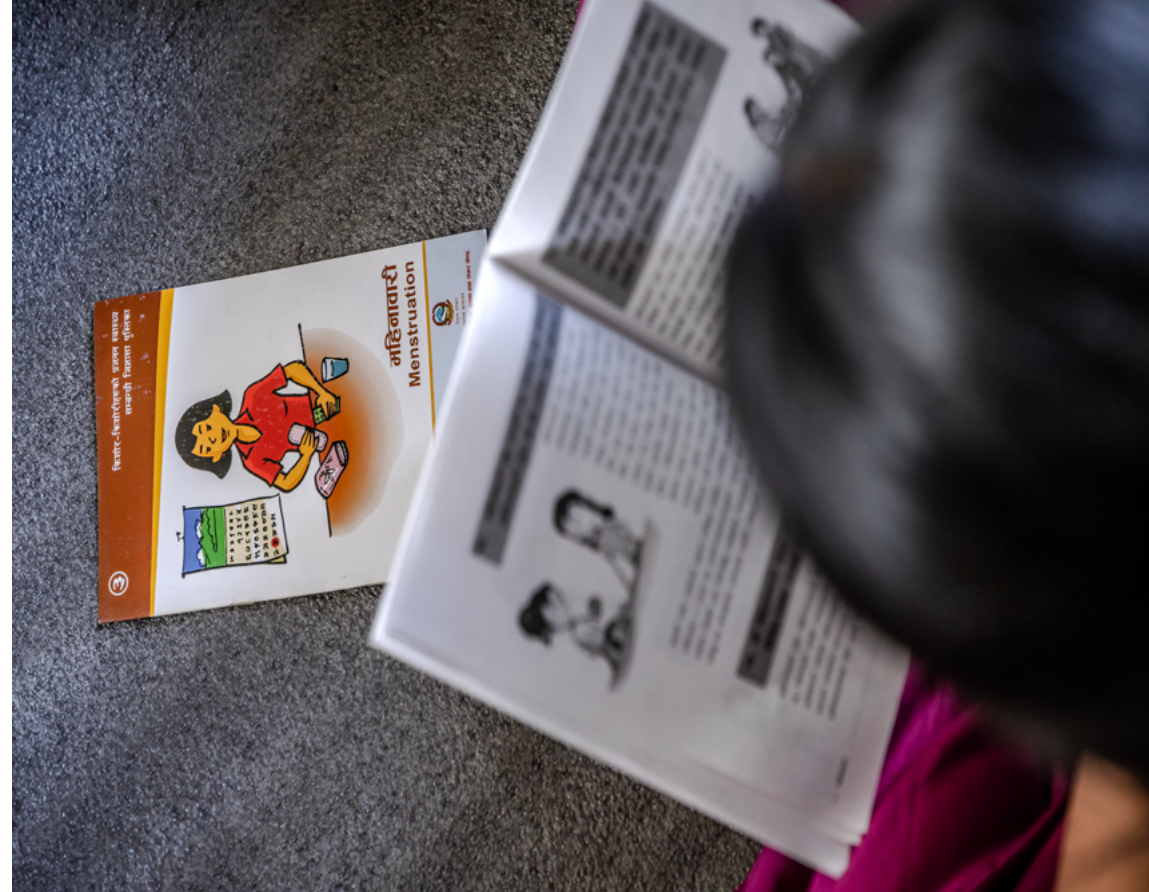
STORY

INFORMING FUTURES, CHANGING LIVES

As adolescents mature, they experience enormous changes, in their sexual and reproductive lives. Especially in Nepal's rural communities where adolescents can face many cultural and social barriers, these changes and reactions to them make it difficult at times for young people to fully access sexual health services and information. The stigma around sexuality, gender inequality, and a lack of access to transportation and financial resources can all discourage young people from seeking support at this important time in their development.

In order to encourage greater awareness of sexual and reproductive health and rights, UNFPA supports the Government of Nepal in developing a comprehensive sexuality programme that guides young people through adolescent growth and puberty and helps them learn about their bodies and sexuality issues in an age-appropriate manner. This comprehensive sexuality education is an important part of an adolescent's development, according to Ramesh Gupta, who teaches students at Tilaurakot High School. He explains, "the aim is to promote the health and well-being of young people by providing them with the information and skills they need to make responsible and informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health."

As a result, increasingly students are receiving a more accessible range of age-appropriate lessons on sexual and reproductive health, gender and sexuality, and life skills both within schools and in communities. These help them understand the challenges and opportunities of puberty and learn about sexuality as they develop the skills needed to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health.



As well as teaching in classrooms, some of the schools provide an adolescent-friendly information corner that also supports students by offering non-judgmental and confidential services in a safe and supportive environment as they mature into teenagers. "Adolescents cannot always access accurate and reliable information about sexual health and sexuality in Rajpur. This can lead to misinformation and misconceptions, and put them at risk of unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, and other negative health outcomes," says Yashoda Thapa, the focal person at one such corner.

Adolescent-friendly information corners provide comprehensive sexuality education, which can help fill this gap, by offering accurate and age-appropriate information about sexual health, relationships, and reproductive rights. This information can empower adolescents to make informed decisions about their sexual health, and help them build healthy relationships.

For a lot of adolescents, this corner serves as a safe space for them to not only receive sexual health education outside of school but also to express themselves. One student who visits one of these corners is Rajendra Darji who says, “by providing a welcoming and inclusive space, we have access to the information and resources we need to make informed decisions about our sexual health.”

Another teenage girl that visits a school corner in Madhesh province, Sabeeha Khatun, explains, “I am curious about menstrual health and hygiene, and how to maintain good health during my period.” Sabeeha says also that “my parents encourage me to attend sessions so I can learn more about menstruation and bodily changes in a supportive environment.”

Whilst schools are a central place for students to learn about their sexuality, wider community outreach is also essential to engaging with young people on their sexual and reproductive health. Prakriti Regmi attends a community camp meeting in Rajpur where she says she has learnt about menstrual health and hygiene. “I feel more confident to make informed decisions about my health and well-being.” She continues “I used to feel shy and scared to talk about these things, but now I feel more comfortable and know that it is important to talk more openly.”

As adolescents learn more about sexual health and relationships in a safe and supportive environment, they are increasingly demonstrating confidence in their understanding of their bodies and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

School lessons help introduce students to a range of topics essential to their healthy development into adults, and the school corners provide a safe space for them to access further information. Support in community groups and better access to sexual and reproductive healthcare centres also means girls and boys are able to discuss their experiences with one another and have access to trained staff to ensure they can access information essential for their development, reducing negative social and health outcomes.





GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

COMBATting VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

The UNFPA programmes in Nepal continue to address discriminatory social and gender norms and empower women and girls to exercise their rights to bodily integrity and access multi-sectoral, survivor-centred services, fostering zero-tolerance for any form of gender-based violence and harmful practices, such as child marriage and gender-biased sex selection.

SUPPORTING REFERRAL PATHWAYS FOR SURVIVORS

In 2022, the UNFPA supported strengthening the capacity of government service providers and civil society organizations to provide quality, essential services and care for survivors of gender-based violence, including safe houses and shelter homes, one-stop crisis management centres, and community-based psychosocial workers.

During this year, 6,338 survivors of gender-based violence accessed one of the 12 one-stop crisis management centres and were provided with health and psychosocial support services, as well as other assistance such as police and legal aid through referrals. An additional 2,809 gender-based violence survivors and 526 dependent children received support from the 19 safe houses and two referral shelter homes supported by UNFPA. Out of this total, 1,763 survivors were provided with safe accommodation, along with 351 dependent children.





A core group of 146 community-based psychosocial workers and their coordinators, as well as 23 case managers and 13 psychosocial counsellors, were deployed to the one-stop crisis management centres supported by UNFPA, providing a key link between survivors and support services. Based in communities, these provide crucial entry points into wider support services that survivors can be referred to. In 2022, the community-based psychosocial workers identified 9,155 survivors of gender-based violence, provided them with psychosocial first aid, and referred 6,133 survivors to different types of services along the referral pathway.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

In 2022, a total of 2,509 individuals participated in the gender-transformative couples' programmes in 19 municipalities to promote healthy relationships and develop non-violent conflict resolution skills and positive masculinities. To promote change on a wider family and community level, 4,657 relatives of married men and women also participated in this programme.

Our community partners also supported engagement with mother's groups, local cooperatives, and various resource user groups, with 12,421 members of these community-based organizations participating in group discussions for social norms change and gender-based violence prevention. The community-based psychosocial workers led outreach activities, with 116,105 members of local communities in 26 municipalities participating in sessions on gender-based violence, improving mental health, and psychosocial support.

ANCHORING RESPONSES IN INSTITUTIONS

Supported by UNFPA advocacy 19 targeted municipalities allocated increased funding for gender equality and women's empowerment in their budgets in 2022, including gender-based violence prevention and response. These municipalities allocated a total of USD 1.3 million—an average of 1.01 percent of the total budget of all the municipalities.

ENDING HARMFUL PRACTICES

At a policy level, UNFPA supported the localization of the national strategy to combat gender-biased sex selection introduced in 2021. Orientation sessions for 163 officials and key actors in state and non-state organizations were convened to map out linkages with existing policies and strategies at provincial and local levels.

To accelerate localization the UNFPA supported the establishment of committees in four municipalities responsible for the oversight of the local implementation of the national strategy. Local, district and provincial costed implementation and action plans were also supported. Four municipalities adopted new strategies to either end child marriage or harmful practices, and a fifth adopted an action plan to end child marriage.

A total of 47 key religious leaders also participated in sensitization sessions on the impact of gender-biased sex selection and ending child marriage to increase awareness of negative impacts and their potential role in working with communities to raise awareness.

To increase awareness of strategies to end child marriage and gender-biased sex selection, media gatekeepers and journalists were sensitized as part of the overall outreach activities. Media outreach also included the production of public service announcements and documentary programmes aired across 10 radio and television channels during peak viewing and listening times.

KEY RESULTS

- **6,338 survivors of gender-based violence were supported to access health and psychosocial support services at one-stop management crisis centres.**
- **1,763 survivors and 351 dependent children were provided with secure accommodation.**
- **9,155 survivors were identified by community-based psychosocial workers and provided with psychosocial first aid and referrals to response services.**
- **19,587 couples and members of communities participated in gender transformative couple discussions and social change dialogues.**
- **116,105 members of local communities in 26 municipalities participated in local gender-based violence outreach sessions.**



Norwegian Embassy







STORY

A NEW START

At the end of a small narrow road in a residential area of Kathmandu sits an anonymous looking four storey building. On each of the top two floors a workforce of about 90 sit quietly at artisan benches meticulously stitching and treating strips of leather to produce a variety of leather products including bags, wallets and belts.

This busy workplace, with machines buzzing gently and strong earthy, woody scents in the air, is home to a remarkable group of women. A sixth of the workforce in this little factory are hired from across Nepal's provinces and share a common history as survivors of gender-based violence. They are not unique in this experience.

Levels of gender-based violence against women and girls are high, and one in five women in Nepal has experienced physical violence. Eighty percent of these involves husbands. Attitudes also reinforce violence with 28.5 percent of women actually believing that a wife's being violently treated is justified.

"I faced violence daily" says one of the young women "I felt unable to speak out against it. I felt alone and had no support." This response from those women and girls that experience violence is common and women across Nepal suffer from isolation and the threat of being ostracized from communities if they talk out about the violence they suffer. A significant barrier faced by survivors, however, is also the ability to leave the extended family homes of the perpetrators of violence that leaves them feeling trapped, with no income or economic opportunities to live independent lives.

All the women in this factory were exposed to serious forms of violence and accepted for residential stays in shelter homes a year ago to ensure a safe space for them to be able to receive support from trained staff. During these stays they received basic vocational training to assist them to become more independent that can often include beauty therapy and sewing skills.

As part of this programme, UNFPA with its local partner Saathi, has linked up with the private sector to identify longer term workplace opportunities for survivors. The business owner of this factory, Amit Shah, explains "running a factory in Nepal is challenging including finding skilled labour. Staff turnover is very high and the men tend to migrate as soon as they get an opportunity."

His daughter, Alisha Shah, who manages the firm continues "we spotted an opportunity when we talked with our partners that are running safe houses for women to provide training and employment for these women that are less likely to migrate. They have been through difficult times, but it is mutually beneficial to employ these women and we value their work. They are hardworking and motivated."

An initial period of working in the factory consisted of carrying out simple tasks such as piecing together products and as they gained experience, each woman progressed to more complex design tasks, like structuring products. Over a period of six months, they have become a regular part of the workforce.

This experience has not only given these survivors a route out of the cycles of violence experienced, it is also, changing their lives. Although the salary remains modest, having an independent income allows them to move on from their previous lives. "After coming to the factory, we learnt new skills and gained independence, which has given us hope and a positive outlook on life," says one of the group's members. Another adds "I now have a more positive place to think about the future."

All of these women highlight the desire to create a brighter future for their children and many stress the importance of education and investing in their children so they are able to grow into independent adults that can stand on their own two feet, especially those with daughters.

The factory too plans to continue expanding the business and provide increased job opportunities in the future. With the support of these women, the managing director is optimistic about the company's prospects, of expanding to export to more countries the products. Overall, the company says it is committed to growth and creating more opportunities for its workers.

Being in a stable workplace has given these women more than just an income, but a way out. "These skills help us think there is hopefully a brighter future" one explains. She also stresses "women who experience violence in their lives should not hesitate to seek support and should not tolerate violence in their lives." This is important advice in a country such as Nepal where an estimated 66 percent of women that experience violence do not seek assistance.

These women share a common story of hardship, but also hope and resilience in the face of gender-based violence. And as they sit together sharing their experiences there is a strong sense of solidarity. They are aware that there are challenges ahead, but as a group they now, feel much more in control of their lives, and face the future with a positive outlook.



POPULATION DYNAMICS

THE POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS

The preliminary results of the population and housing census were released in 2022 following nationwide and large-scale enumeration and data processes. In support of this census, UNFPA's experience in collecting and managing population data meant it was able to provide key technical expertise to the National Statistics Office on a range of technical issues.

To assist in managing the large volumes of data, UNFPA assisted with the design of technical tools based on best practices, including digital tabular formats allowing for the full disaggregation of data through the census website. Training in data imputation and editing were also conducted to enable the staff of the National Statistics Office to produce a census dataset that meets best practice standards.

UNFPA also supported the creation of an online digital data visualization platform that displays a range of population data maps and graphics, allowing users easy access to census data across all administrative levels of Nepal.

To strengthen the linkages between data supply and demand, a technical platform consisting of statisticians, other potential data users, and the National Statistics Office was supported to promote discussion on the range of analysis and usage of census data. In partnership with the US Census Bureau, specialized staff of the statistical office also attended a peer-based review meeting that was convened to discuss innovations in technology for the distribution of accessible and user-friendly census results.

A summary report prepared by the multi-disciplinary team that observed key stages of census delivery and field operations was completed in 2022, capturing lessons learnt and recommendations for future planning purposes.



STRENGTHENING THE STATISTICAL ENVIRONMENT

On a policy level, UNFPA convened partners in preparation for a UN joint technical mission on strengthening the overall environment for civil registration and vital statistics, especially on Sustainable Development Goal targets.

Focal points from the National Statistics Office and the National Identity and Civil Registration Department of the Ministry of Home Affairs were supported to attend a United Nations global conference on civil registration, vital statistics, and gender. This was attended by national statistics offices, planning departments, and other civil registration and vital statistics stakeholders and statistical bodies from across the world, who shared experience and best practice examples of how to use civil registration and vital statistics to advance gender equality.

With the technical support of UNFPA, the National Statistics Office also partnered with the Ministry of Health and Population to produce a maternal mortality study in 2022. This study involved undertaking verbal autopsies to determine the cause of death of women of reproductive age a year prior to the census being conducted.

KEY RESULTS

- **Data processing was completed and preliminary results of the population and housing census were released in 2022.**
- **A user-friendly digital data visualization platform displaying a range of population data maps and graphics across all administrative levels of Nepal launched.**



STORY

SISTERS LOOKING FORWARD TO THEIR FUTURES

At Shiksha Sadan Secondary School in Biratnagar - 6, a group of friends are chatting about their experience of the Rupantaran skills development programme they have recently completed. At 16 and 17 of age two of the girls are sisters.

Chandani Thakur, the eldest of the sisters exclaims enthusiastically “I didn’t know that we should not get married before the age of 20 because everyone around me was getting married when I became a teenager. Even my mom used to tell me to be ready to get married.” Although child marriage has declined in the past two decades Nepal still has one of the highest rates in South Asia. Of women aged between 20–24 years, 22 percent were married or in union, before they had reached the age of 18. Three percent were married before the age of 15.

She continues “now that situation has changed for me and what I learnt in the Rupantaran course has taught me a lot about things like our rights as children to play and not to be married off at an early age. I am more confident and braver now, and I can communicate effectively with my mother. My brothers used to tease me at home, but now I am able to fight back.”

The 10-week course is part of a package that includes pastoral care and mentoring in small groups for adolescents to develop new sets of practical skills and build social capital increasing their individual and collective agency to experience healthier, safer and more empowered transitions to adulthood.

Another big change the girls have seen is that neither is being pressured into marriage by their mother, as in many other cases, who is fully supportive of their ambitions. Their mother explains “I want to make sure my daughters receive an education and are independent.” She continues “everyone told them to just attend primary education, and that would be sufficient to run a household, because that’s all that was expected from them. Despite this, they have found their voices and are able to make choices about their futures.”

The girls also learnt about their rights to play outdoors, to be treated with respect by their parents, and the right to be treated equally as the boys that has helped them negotiate with their mother and siblings.

Chandani also says that “the restrictions that my mom placed on us are slowly being removed, as we have built more trust, among each other. She was able to explain to her mother the importance she places on completing her education and being financially independent as a person before getting married. The girls continue “we used to think our mothers knew better because they were older. But we have learnt to talk with our mother about things like child marriage and how it is harmful as well as the other issues we discussed in the sessions.”

The girls also made new friends at the sessions that included boys and after an initial period where boys would disrupt classes girls increasingly took the initiative. Chandani explains “the classes were mixed. The boys would tease us at times and be very naughty, but Rupantaran taught them how to behave! They all now behave, and if not, then we girls put the boys in their place!”

Like many adolescents in Nepal these bright young girls have glamorous role models that are stars of the Bollywood film and music industry. Although their ambitions to become public sector professionals in the future may not be in the spotlight of celebrity, they are developing into young adults able to fulfil their dreams with self-belief and a sense of agency which is inspirational to their mothers and peers in the school.



MANAGEMENT SNAPSHOT

RESOURCE DELIVERY 2022

UNFPA CORE
NON-CORE/DONOR



SOURCE OF FUND

2022 USD

	BUDGET	EXPENDITURE
UNFPA CORE	2,861,106	2,597,533
NON-CORE/DONOR	7,597,341	6,611,349
TOTAL	10,458,447	9,208,882

DONORS AND PARTNERSHIPS, 2022

UNFPA PROGRAMMES	DELIVERY 2022, USD	CORE	NON-CORE	FUNDING SOURCES/ DONORS IN 2022
SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH	2,044,079	957,535	1,086,544	DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE, AUSTRALIA, EUROPEAN UNION, ROYAL NORWEGIAN EMBASSY IN KATHMANDU, UN-CERF, UNFPA SUPPLIES, UNFPA MATERNAL AND NEWBORN HEALTH THEMATIC FUND, UNFPA
ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH	559,339	242,327	317,012	DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE, AUSTRALIA, UNFPA
GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT	5,555,249	626,878	4,928,371	EUROPEAN UNION, ROYAL NORWEGIAN EMBASSY, SWISS AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION, UN-CERF, UNICEF, ILO, UN WOMEN UNFPA
POPULATION DYNAMICS	887,982	608,560	279,422	FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE, UNITED KINGDOM, SWISS AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION, UNFPA
PROGRAMME COORDINATION AND SUPPORT	162,233	162,233	-	UNFPA

KEY PARTNERS IN 2022

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia, European Union, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, United Kingdom, Royal Norwegian Embassy in Kathmandu, Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation, UNICEF, International Labour Organization, UN Women, UN CERF, UNFPA Maternal and Newborn Health Thematic Fund.

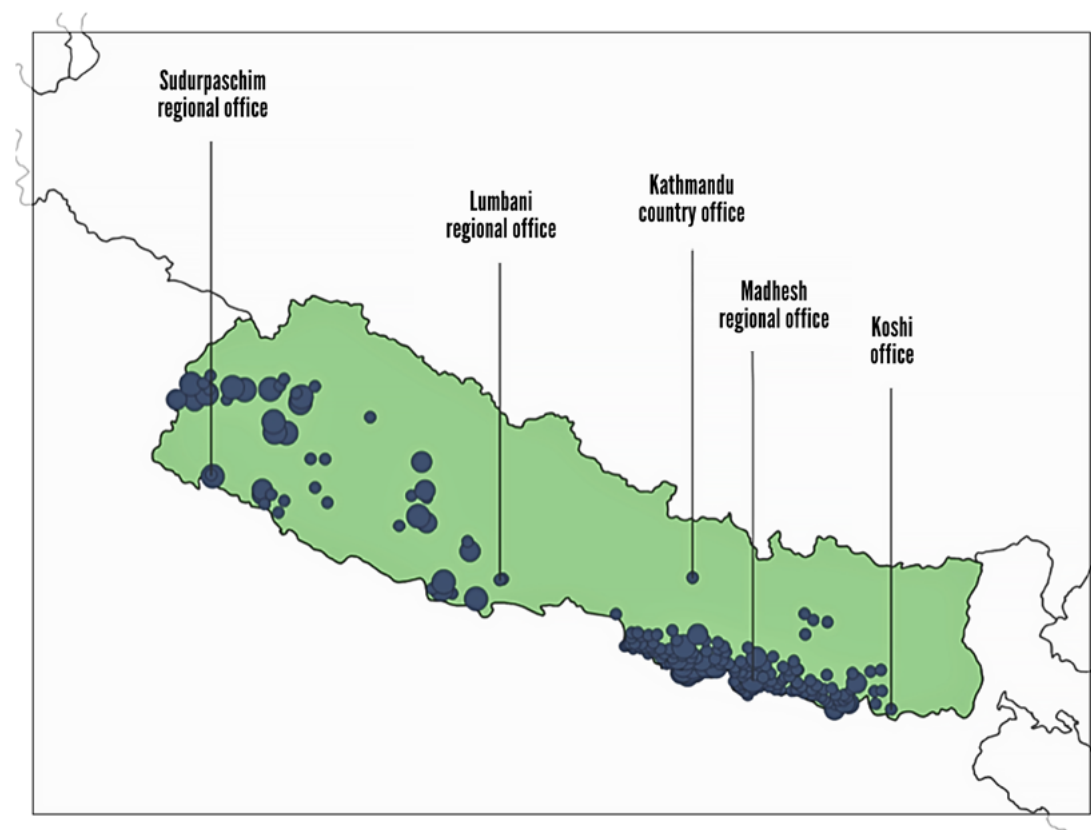
STATE INSTITUTIONS

Ministry of Health and Population, Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

NON-STATE ACTORS

Adventist Development and Relief Agency Nepal, Association of Youth Organizations Nepal, BP Koirala Institute of Health Sciences, Central Department of Population Studies, Centre for Mental Health and Counselling-Nepal, Centre for Research on Environment, Health and Population Activities, Centre for Victims of Torture, Emory University, Forum for Awareness and Youth Activity, Nepal, Family Planning Association of Nepal, International Alert, IPAS Nepal, LIFE Nepal, Maternity Foundation Midwifery Society of Nepal, Marie Stopes International Nepal Red Cross Society, Proteus Fund, Sancharika Samuha Nepal, Skill Information Society Nepal, Siddhartha Social Development Centre, Voluntary Services Overseas, Women Rehabilitation Centre.

PROGRAMMING LOCATIONS



POLICY ENGAGEMENT

The UNFPA Nepal country office supported policy development at the national, provincial, and local levels in all targeted areas during 2022. This included support for revisions to federal legislation as well as policies at the local level implementing federal and provincial laws.

In 2022, there was a key amendment to the law on sexual violence that was ratified by the national parliament following UNFPA and partners convening of technical experts to support the Parliamentary Committee on Law, Justice, and Human Rights. This legislation strengthened the legal framework for survivors by increasing the time period of the statute of limitations for the reporting of rape from one year to two years for adults and three years for vulnerable communities.

Adult survivors are now able to file a report within two years of the incident, while survivors under the age of 18 and above 70 and survivors with disabilities will be able to file a case within three years. In addition, the previous provision allowing sentencing of survivors who made false accusations of rape or retracted accusations, was removed.

During this year, three gender equality and social inclusion policies were adopted in three different municipalities in Sudurpaschim province with UNFPA policy support. Local governments have also allocated a budget for the gender-based violence elimination fund, in addition to the budget contributions from the Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens and the provincial government, demonstrating increased levels of anchoring of our priorities in national institutions.

UNFPA policy advocacy also resulted in a new family planning compact being signed between the Government of Nepal and UNFPA in 2022. This agreement outlines government commitments to incrementally increase financial contributions to the supply of family planning commodities, starting at one percent and rising annually.

Following policy engagement and technical assistance by UNFPA, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology has, in 2022, integrated comprehensive sexuality education into the new School and Education Sector Plan 2022–2032, making the plan more inclusive and gender-responsive. Likewise, the Lumbini administration developed a 10-year provincial strategic plan for ending child marriage that integrated sexuality education and prioritized it as a preventive strategy for ending child marriage.

Strengthening resilience in emergency settings, the UNFPA contributed to the development of the earthquake contingency plan and the joint monsoon emergency response plan of the Government of Nepal and the United Nations Humanitarian Country Team with inputs on sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender-based violence from the cluster and sub-cluster partners.

A gender-based violence sub-cluster action plan on emergencies for the years 2022–23 was also endorsed by the chair of the federal protection cluster coordination committee within the Department of Women and Children in the Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens, with UNFPA support.



STORY

INSPIRING FUTURE MIDWIVES

“Midwifery is not yet recognized as a skilled profession in Nepal despite its importance in maternal and neonatal healthcare,” explains Rajini Malla, who is a third-year student preparing to graduate with a degree in midwifery from a university in Kathmandu. She is one of 20 students in her year who are part of a UNFPA-supported programme to encourage the growth of a cadre of professional midwives to support the environment for safer births in Nepal. Since the introduction of the course in 2016, there are now five universities offering the course.

Like many of her peers on the course, Rajini is already a trained nurse who has made a decision to develop her career in midwifery based on witnessing a shortage of trained medical professionals in this area. She explains that “many health posts don’t have a gynaecologist or skilled birth attendant. A pregnant mother walked into one of my health centres facing maternal and foetal distress and needed immediate medical care, but there was no one around who could help.” The incident is one of many in Nepal with complications experienced by pregnant mothers that could have been avoided with the presence of specialized staff.

A fellow nurse recounts her own experience when she was pregnant. “I remember how hard it was with my twins and to give birth. I faced a lot of challenges—so much abuse, shouting, and what we have been taught here is called obstetric violence. My twins came three hours apart, and I didn’t receive anything to help me with the pain. I am sure there are many other mothers out there who have had a similar experience” stresses Jyoti Karn.

A shortage of skilled birth attendants remains a key challenge for maternal health and in remote villages, the dangers of complications in pregnancy are very real without access to antenatal care and birth facilities. Hemakumari Gharti Magar, another qualified nurse, agrees: “I have worked in three different district hospitals in very remote locations. I have to do everything because there are no gynaecologists or skilled birth attendants. I managed to the best of my ability, but I was worried because I was not competent in this area or trained, so I really wanted to study midwifery, and this is why I opted to take this course.”

For Rojina Lamichhane, there is an especially rewarding aspect of this profession. “I like engaging directly with mothers and new-born babies. I know that my role is important in someone’s life from when they conceive until they become mothers. It pushes me to do better when mothers specifically ask for me, even after one year of delivery, and want me to attend to their questions. This is a relationship of trust that I have formed with mothers, and it inspires me.”

After attending over 100 births, she continues to marvel at putting into practice what she learnt as a student on the course. But the big change for her is in how to approach patients. She explains, “one of the things I really learnt was that, unlike nursing, midwifery teaches you to be kind to mothers and babies, and you learn how to build a relationship with your patients. You have to be devoted to your work and your patients.”

The course is giving these nurses much more than the skills required to be midwives. Hemakumari explains, “in the past six months, I have learnt so much, but more importantly, all the clinical practice has given me the confidence to do better. This, coupled with the theories, has really equipped me with the knowledge and skills I need.”

All these women share a common feeling of empathy in their work as midwives toward mothers and babies. And they share an enthusiasm for the midwifery profession that bodes well for the future, acting as role models to future midwives, and working in communities to increase the safety of births with their skills and experience.





THE WAY FORWARD

KEY PRIORITIES AHEAD

In 2023, our ninth country programme cycle commenced following endorsement by the Executive Board. In line with national priorities, the vision of this programme is to accelerate the achievement of universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, with a focus on reducing preventable maternal deaths, the unmet need for family planning, gender-based violence, and other harmful practices.

The programme will take forward the voluntary International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD+25) and Family Planning 2030 commitments, with an emphasis on strengthening the implementation of policies and financing, improving the quality-of-service delivery, and transforming discriminatory and harmful social and gender norms that impede gender equality, reproductive rights, and bodily autonomy.

Applying human-rights-based and gender transformative approaches, the programme will address social exclusion and inequalities, with a focus on women and young people, especially those most left behind, including adolescents, most at-risk communities, and persons with disabilities. This will include ensuring that laws, policies, standards, and protocols related to the ICPD+25 agenda across the three tiers of government are inclusive, prioritize the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups, and are implemented.

This also includes acceleration of the implementation of the government's gender equality policy adopted in 2021, as well as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women standards and national legislation for safe motherhood and reproductive health rights. Emphasis will also be placed on supporting the government in delivering on its commitment to finance the full achievement of the ICPD Programme of Action as well as increasing access to population data for development.

There will be a focus on the transition from funding to financing for development that aligns with emerging and new mechanisms for financing our outcomes, such as blended finance. In this respect, throughout 2023 we will strengthen our internal capacity for coordinating and fostering strategic partnerships with the public and private sectors with a focus on innovation. This will include investments in communications to support advocacy, and leading research and analysis to guide policy formulation.

Designed using a risk-informed approach, the programme is aligned with the government's commitment to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and will be implemented along the humanitarian-development continuum. As a result, it will strengthen institutional and community resilience to prepare for, mitigate, and respond to natural disasters and the impacts of climate change and other shocks, including by strengthening inter-agency partnerships.

ACCELERATING OUR DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

To bring about transformative change, our programmes will prioritize interventions that support the development and revision of policies and laws, address bottlenecks and scale up implementation of policies, planning, budgeting and progress monitoring for enforcement of laws, with an emphasis on provincial and local levels.

These will continue to be implemented across national, provincial and local levels, with a focus on Madhesh, Lumbini and Sudurpashchim as these provinces have some of the poorest socio-demographic and health indicators related to gender equality, maternal health and family planning.

In 2023, we will also focus on strengthening new and existing international and national partnerships. We are also in the process of commencing early implementation phases of new projects on sexual and reproductive health and rights, youth empowerment and gender-based violence and maternal health in partnership with the European Union, Royal Norwegian Embassy in Kathmandu and UN agencies.



LESSONS LEARNT

The UNFPA Nepal has a proactive, lessons-learnt approach to programming. In 2022, the seven main lessons learnt are:

- The levels of policy framework development at all three levels of the federal state are subject to different speeds of advancement. Linkages between the three tiers as well as the implementation of services and the rate of development of institutions on all these tiers require strengthened policy attainment monitoring systems and closer linkages to ensure gaps can be clearly identified and opportunities to scale up innovations transformed into actions.
- Whilst there are increasing national public financing commitments in the areas of gender-based violence responses and sexual and reproductive health and rights, there is a need to accelerate national financial commitments to identify new opportunities in financing models such as blended finance in line with government goals of moving from funding to financing models. Existing schemes such as the gender-based violence elimination fund also require more investment in raising awareness to increase the utilization of these funds. At the same time, it is equally important to strengthen linkages between survivor services and wider economic opportunities such as work placements to ensure survivors of gender-based violence have a longer-term set of opportunities.
- It is essential there continues to be investments in health system strengthening especially at local level to ensure a more resilient healthcare service that can absorb shocks including pandemics, economic crisis or natural disasters. Further human resource investments and policies are also vital in areas such as midwifery where there remains a shortage of skilled staff.
- The rollout of adolescent-friendly health services and programmes to increase awareness around sexual and reproductive health and rights for young people remains unequal across different provinces. There is also a need to invest further in identifying best practices in the area of girls' empowerment as well as comprehensive sexuality education as key drivers of behavioural change, supported by evidence as to what works, and designing strategies for increased scale up and transfer of these actions between provinces and districts. Adolescent groups remain underrepresented in the overall investment in family planning services, with poorer outcomes, that require more targeted interventions.
- Strengthening the linkages between the response and prevention activities is key to creating closer synergy and multi-sectoral coordination. It is essential that skilled resources are more involved in both sets of activities. There is also a need for more sustained engagement with communities at two levels. On a first level, there needs to be sustained targeting of the root causes of gender-based violence and other harmful practices that discourage survivors from seeking support. These pressures are driven by negative and discriminatory social and gender norms that stigmatize survivors. On a second level, there is a need to ensure survivors and communities have a stronger awareness of the referral pathways and are linking survivors with the referral mechanisms, especially mothers' groups, which play an important gatekeeper role in enabling access to formal support for survivors. Stimulating increased demand-side pressures, which include activities with appropriate incentives for longer-term behavioural change, is also crucial.
- The increased frequency and severity of natural disasters and the acceleration of climate change increase the risk to which communities are exposed. Competing priorities continue to limit the investment in sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender-based violence responses in humanitarian programmes, and it is essential to continue to support a humanitarian development and peace nexus to build a resilient society able to cope with humanitarian challenges that include sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender-based violence responses.
- There continues to be a need to support efforts to collect and process disaggregated data to ensure that the needs of vulnerable and marginalized communities are identified at district and provincial levels. Systems for data collection on key areas such as gender-based violence are not routinely maintained, and there are significant gaps in systems and data capacity. In the wider policy area, it is important that a system maximizes the utility of data from not only censuses and other surveys but that it is also able to draw on data from multiple sources, including administrative data, and to support increased data integration and interoperability between systems to realize the full potential of population data.

UNFPA NEPAL


Results Achieved in Nepal 2022




Ensuring rights and choices for all since 1969

UNFPA Nepal
Nepal Country Office
P.O. Box 107, Kathmandu
Email: nepal.office@unfpa.org
Website: nepal.unfpa.org

 **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/UNFPANepal

 **Twitter:** @UNFPANepal

 **Instagram:** [unfpanepal](https://www.instagram.com/unfpanepal)