

4th World Congress on

CLIMATE CHANGE AND GLOBAL WARMING

August 06-07, 2018 Osaka, Japan

Climate change adaptation: Education to action!

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The only choice left for Nepal to combat climate change is to increase the capacity of the people to adapt to the changed situation and to increase their resilience. The Centre for Environment Education Nepal (CEEN), with funding from Helvetas Nepal, launched a four-year project in selected 13 rural schools and communities of mid-eastern hills. The project aimed at educating students to take active roles in improving the adaptive capacity of the community and act on climate change awareness and adaptation and sensitizing local farmers at risk to become aware of climate risks and opportunities, plan and adopt measures to increase their adaptive capacity against climate vulnerability and hazards. The students were expected to become keen observers of local problems and issues, analyzers of situations and risks; designers and implementers of projects; participants in community decision-making and development; communicators of risks, their causes and management options; mobilisers of resources and people; constructors of social networks. The teachers from these selected schools were trained to encourage the students to investigate and explore the past environmental condition with that of the present, thereby enabling them to perceive the possible future trends on rainfall patterns, water sources, flowering time, sowing and harvesting time, appearance and disappearance of birds, plants, flowers, along with incidents of different hazards like hailstorms, floods, landslides, epidemics, etc. with children asking their parents, grandparents and elder members in the community about changes taken place over the last 30-40 years. In the meantime, the selected community members (normally members of Community Learning Centers and Community Awareness Centers (CLC/CAC) and other existing institutions) from the school vicinity were selected for sensitization and adaptation planning. Effort was made to select the farmers who were the members of these grass root institutions who also had their children at the local school.

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