

PHILIPPINES

Exploring the Nexus of Indigenous Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and Climate Change



SCOPING STUDY

Building New Constituencies for Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR): Climate Change and SRHR



LILAK
PURPLE ACTION FOR INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S RIGHTS

2023

SCOPING STUDY: PHILIPPINES

Exploring the Nexus of Indigenous Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and Climate Change

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PUBLISHED BY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Philippines ranks high among countries most affected by the climate crisis, and the disaster risk will continue to intensify as the country is exposed to more typhoons, flooding, and landslides. This impacts not only the livelihood but also the health of marginalised sectors including Indigenous women. While the intersections between climate change and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are growing in recognition (ARROW, 2022; UNFPA, 2021), there remains a gap in understanding how climate change affects indigenous women and their sexual and reproductive health and rights, particularly in the Philippines.

The main objective of the research study was to explore the nexus of climate change and Indigenous women's SRHR and recommend policies grounded in the context of Indigenous women.

The study found that climate change negatively impacts Indigenous women's food, livelihood, and health, making their responsibilities as food providers, healers, and the family's primary caregivers, all the more burdensome. Economic, food, and health insecurities, caused by poor governance, institutional exclusion of Indigenous peoples from social services, discrimination, and land encroachment, make Indigenous women more vulnerable to hunger, malnutrition, exhaustion, and extreme emotional, mental, and physical distress. Their situation is made worse during times of disaster or normal times when the adverse impacts of climate change are incrementally felt.

Indigenous women also suffer from the government's poor disaster response and risk reduction and management. Lack of accurate and timely information, evacuation centres with safe spaces for women and breastfeeding mothers and sufficient and appropriate relief packs, are some of the areas of struggle that Indigenous women face during typhoons, landslides, floods or extreme weather events.

Indigenous women and children's needs remain invisible in many climate response programmes and initiatives. There remains a disconnect in initiatives to directly link sexual and reproductive health and rights with climate change. Gender mainstreaming in climate action, disaster risk reduction and disaster or emergency management in the country is still amiss and lacks sound plans and implementation that consider the multiple and intersecting identities of women.

This study recommends the Philippine government be made accountable for the non-fulfilment of its mandates to protect, promote and fulfil Indigenous women's rights, particularly their sexual and reproductive rights. They should be enjoined to demolish structural barriers, including both formal and informal rules, that allow the discrimination, disempowerment and further marginalisation of Indigenous women and their communities.

The government should also adopt the climate justice framework and hold accountable the nation-states and corporations that are responsible for the climate crisis. Lastly, the government should ensure the representation of Indigenous women and their meaningful participation in all levels of decision-making processes, and support and develop women-led climate solutions.

Indigenous women and children's needs remain invisible in many climate response programmes and initiatives. There remains a disconnect in initiatives to directly link sexual and reproductive health and rights with climate change. Gender mainstreaming in climate action, disaster risk reduction and disaster or emergency management in the country is still amiss and lacks sound plans and implementation that consider the multiple and intersecting identities of women.

INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT

The fulfilment of the rights of Indigenous women and girls in the Philippines is impeded by multiple discriminations that they face every day. They are discriminated against due to their gender, Indigenous identity, socio-economic status, age, and disability, among others, and this makes them one of the most vulnerable and marginalised sectors in the country, even within their communities. Indigenous women are faced with a high level of poverty, low level of education and literacy, limitations in access to health, basic sanitation, credit and employment, limited participation in political life, and the prevalence of domestic and sexual violence, according to a 2019 Report of the Philippine Commission on Human Rights (CHR).

In 2018, the CHR conducted a sectoral monitoring of the human rights situation of Indigenous women. Among the findings was the difficulty of Indigenous women accessing reproductive health information, and health commodities and services. There are documented cases of maternal deaths during transit to health facilities due to distance from their homes, as well as discriminatory practices of healthcare workers with Indigenous women experiencing degrading treatment and verbal abuse. The 'No Home Birth' policy of local governments also discriminates against Indigenous women's traditional healing knowledge and birth practices and ignores their struggles with the Philippine healthcare system.

In 2019, there were approximately 2,600 maternal deaths, 1.8 million unintended pregnancies, and 1.1 million cases of unsafe abortion with around 1,000 dying of post-abortion complications documented (Marquez et al., 2020). Data specific to Indigenous women were not available due to poor data disaggregation which is reflective of Indigenous peoples' social and political exclusion.

The healthcare system in the Philippines is expected to worsen as climate change impacts continue to intensify. The first and worst affected are the disadvantaged and poor communities who are unable to protect themselves, and who are unable to afford quality health care (WHO, 2021). The Philippines ranks high among countries most affected by the climate crisis, and the disaster risk will continue to intensify as the country is exposed to more typhoons, flooding and landslides (WBG & ADB, 2021). The detrimental impacts of climate change continue to vary among diverse social groups and factors such as Indigenous identity, age, income groups, occupation, and gender, among others, making Indigenous women more vulnerable.

While the intersections between climate change and sexual and reproductive health and rights are growing in recognition, there is a gap in understanding how climate change affects Indigenous women and their sexual and reproductive health and rights, particularly in the Philippines.

In 2022, LILAK and the CHR Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights Center found that Indigenous women feel the worst impacts of climate change as it destroys their sources of food and livelihood. Government support including relief packages and health services were reported to be infrequent and insufficient at most (LILAK & CHR, 2022).

While the intersections between climate change and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are growing in recognition (ARROW, 2022; UNFPA, 2021), there is a gap in understanding how climate change affects Indigenous women and their SRHR, particularly in the Philippines.

As such, this research aimed to establish the linkages between climate change and Indigenous women's sexual and reproductive health and rights in the hope of building a set of gender and climate policy recommendations that are grounded on their realities.

LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES

Many Indigenous women live in Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDAs). To reach their communities, multiple, lengthy, limited, and expensive land, air, and water transportation are necessary. For this study, we partnered with Indigenous women's grassroots organisations that collected data on the ground. Communication with each partner community researcher had to be conducted online or through mobile phone calls but this proved to be challenging due to poor signal in their areas.

In some areas, even though they belonged to one community or one organisation, participants lived far from one another and therefore had to travel to a halfway location for the interviews and focus group discussions. Other times, the researchers themselves travelled to each participant for the surveys and interviews. Both required hours to more than a day's worth of travel time. This not only makes data collection challenging but also future data validation and popularisation initiatives.

In the Philippines, there is also no official population count of Indigenous peoples, much less disaggregated data on the number of Indigenous women and children. The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) maintains that there are at least 110 ethnic-linguistic groups. The 2015 census conducted by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) estimates the number of Indigenous peoples to be anywhere between 10 and 20% of the total population or anywhere between 10 to 20 million.

To broaden and deepen our understanding of the nexus of climate change and Indigenous women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, more Indigenous women must be reached. To do this, more resources, both time and monetary, are needed. There must also be a strong demand for national and local governments to prioritise disaggregated data collection of Indigenous peoples in aid of future studies.

In many Indigenous communities, women's bodies are considered private, even taboo, and are not often made subjects of public discussions. During the study, while the focus group discussions provided safe spaces for conversations on SRHR, a few participants questioned the necessity and relevance of discussing what they regard as a private and intimate matter. Researchers answered all questions participants had and assured them of confidentiality.

To broaden and deepen our understanding of the nexus of climate change and Indigenous women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, there must also be a strong demand for national and local governments to prioritise disaggregated data collection of Indigenous peoples in aid of future studies.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The main objective of the study was to explore the linkages between climate change and the sexual and reproductive health and rights of Indigenous women. To meet this objective, key-informant interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with Indigenous women from the following communities:

1. *Hanunuo* and *Buhid Mangyan* of Bulalacao in Oriental Mindoro;
2. *Ayta Abellen* of Sta. Cruz in Zambales; and
3. *Subanen* of Midsalip in Zamboanga del Sur.

Several climate- and women-focused NGOs were also interviewed. Aside from collecting primary information, previous studies and reports (both published and unpublished) were also referenced in this research.

The findings of the study will be shared to various stakeholders with the aim of crafting an action plan for local, national, regional, and global advocacy.

Based on the main objective, the study answered the following research questions:

1. How are Indigenous women affected by climate change, specifically their sexual and reproductive health and rights? How are they adapting?
2. What are the gender-responsive climate-related policies, programmes and activities (both government and NGOs), and are these implemented and/or felt by Indigenous communities?
3. What are the interventions/support needed to ensure gender and sexual rights, women empowerment, and climate resiliency?

METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted from June to August 2023. The research team employed a mixed-method approach in data gathering and analysis. Primary data was collected through semi-structured surveys, key-informant interviews and focus group discussions among Indigenous women, and key informant interviews with representatives of selected NGOs. Secondary data on policies, programmes, and research studies on the nexus of climate change and sexual and reproductive health and rights were also collected through desk research.

In many Indigenous communities, women's bodies are considered private, even taboo, and are not often made subjects of public discussions. During the study, while the focus group discussions provided safe spaces for conversations on sexual and reproductive health and rights, a few participants questioned the necessity and relevance of discussing what they regard as a private and intimate matter.

In this study, we partnered with three Indigenous women grassroots organisations in Luzon and Mindanao:

1. *Katutubong Kababaihan sa Maporac* (KASAMA) of the *Ayta Abellen* Indigenous Community in Sitio Maporac, Barangay Cabangan, Santa Cruz, Zambales;
2. *Samahan ng Katutubong Hanunuo Mangyan* (SAKAHAMA) of the *Hanunuo Mangyan* Indigenous Community in Barangay San Roque, Bulalacao, Oriental Mindoro; and
3. The *Kesalabukan Tupusumi* Organisation of the *Subanen* Indigenous Community in Midsalip, Zamboanga del Sur.

The three organisations were selected based on their previous documentation of the impacts of the climate crisis on their communities. They were also selected considering the foundational trust that LILAK has built with them after several years of dedicated partnership.

Each grassroots organisation selected five to seven participants varying in age, marital status, and whether they had children. All Indigenous women participants were 18 years of age and above. In total, 17 Indigenous women participated in the study.

Aside from Indigenous women, five women from women, Indigenous, and climate justice organisations were also interviewed on their respective organisations' agenda and advocacies:

1. Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR);
2. *Kapunungan sa mga Kababayan-ang Banikanhon Isip Lig-ong Nibarug ug Naghiusa* (KABILIN Bukidnon Indigenous Cultural Community);
3. Philippine Movement for Climate Justice (PMCJ);
4. Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center (LRC); and
5. 350.org.

Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyse the collected data. Descriptive statistics was used to summarise the demographic data and survey responses of the respondents. Thereafter, thematic and content analysis of the storylines and information collected was used to determine general themes and messages from the survey, focus group discussions and key informant interviews.

LITERATURE REVIEW

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

Health and Care Work

Indigenous women's concept of health goes beyond the body's lack of illness or disease. Good health considers more than the physical but the holistic physical, social, emotional, cultural, and spiritual well-being of a person and a community (LILAK & CHR, 2022). Many Indigenous women are their communities' healers (*babaylan, hilot or abularyo*), spiritual leaders, and traditional birth attendants (*paltera or pandaytyan*). Indigenous women are holders of traditional knowledge and practices in healing and caring. They practice a holistic care system with women being cared for from first menstruation to pregnancy, post-natal, child-rearing, and healing (LILAK & CHR, 2022).

Within their households, Indigenous women also care for the sick and ensure the well-being of the family. Often they take on the role of the household's food providers, ensuring that the family is fed even in times of crisis (LILAK & CHR, 2022). The gendered care or reproductive work socially assigned to women impacts their capacity to achieve good health and puts them at risk for health complications (LILAK & CHR, 2022). In a study conducted by LILAK and the CHR Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights Center (2022), it was found that Indigenous women in households that experience food crises are hungrier compared to other members of the family. Believing that the health of the household is the women's or specifically the mother's primary responsibility, Indigenous women would eat last, if at all, during times when food is limited which is often also during times of disaster (such as typhoons, earthquakes, pandemics, armed conflicts, and so on) (LILAK, 2013; LILAK & CHR, 2022).

Access to Health Services

Most Indigenous women have difficulty accessing sufficient, convenient, and appropriate health care and services (Pasimio, 2020; LILAK & CHR, 2022). Hospitals and health centres are often located in town centres and have a considerable amount of distance from Indigenous communities in GIDAs. To access these health facilities, Indigenous women would need to walk long distances or pay for transportation (Pasimio, 2020; LILAK & CHR, 2022). They also reported many of the facilities lacked basic equipment, supplies, and health personnel (LILAK & CHR, 2022).

Cases of discrimination have also been documented as Indigenous women access healthcare services. In 2016, *Ati* Indigenous women in Cagayan were scolded by the health centre's doctor for having sweaty and foul-smelling vaginas during check-ups (Pasimio, 2020). The *Ati* women claimed the distance from their homes to the health centre required several hours of walking which made them sweaty. They have since stopped going to the health centres. Discrimination has also been documented in Mindoro Occidental with the *Mangyan* Indigenous people reporting that their public hospital houses a *Mangyan* wing that seems to be dirtier than the rest of the hospitals and with fewer personnel (Pasimio, 2020). Because of the unreliability of government healthcare and services, compounded with direct and indirect experiences of discrimination, Indigenous women depend on their traditional healers and traditional knowledge and practices of healing, or during dire occasions, would go to private clinics despite higher fees (Pasimio, 2020; LILAK, 2022).

The preservation of the Indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge and practices in healing, which rely on land and natural resources found within their ancestral domains, have also been threatened by destructive corporate-led development projects such as mining, logging, and plantations, and the government's institutional discrimination of Indigenous women's traditions (Pasimio, 2020). The lack of sustained, sufficient, and appropriate healthcare and services has also made Indigenous women beholden to corporations

such as mining companies that provide social services that should have been state obligations (Pasimio, 2020).

Family Planning and Home Birthing

Indigenous women also carry the primary responsibility of family planning, relying on both contraceptives provided for by barangay or municipal health centres and herbal contraceptives found in their communities. Among Indigenous communities, contraceptives are accessed by married women. In the same study conducted by LILAK and CHR (2022), it was found that unmarried and widowed women do not access contraceptives on the basis that it is only socially accepted for married women to use these.

While Indigenous women have a long-standing tradition of home birthing either by themselves or with the aid of family members or traditional birth attendants, home birthing has been criminalised in some provinces in the Philippines, with local governments issuing ordinances that penalise both the mother and the traditional home birth attendants (Pasimio, 2020; LILAK, 2013; LILAK & CHR, 2022). Some Indigenous women leaders, as documented by LILAK (2013), have also reported mothers being excluded from or denied government social services such as cash grants, with local government agencies going as far as to refuse birth certificates and other services such as post-natal check-up and vaccinations to children who were not born in hospitals or health centres.

The 'No Home Birth Policy' was issued in response to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and now the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) that aim to reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births (Pasimio, 2020). In the Philippines, the Aquino government, pointing to home birthing as the leading cause of maternal deaths adopted the Newborn and Child Health and Nutrition Strategy (MNCHN), dubbed the 'No Home Birth Policy', which pushes mothers to give birth in privatised health facilities (IBON Foundation, 2016). While the Department of Health (DOH) denies ever issuing an anti-home birth policy, the Manual of Operations (MOP) of the MNCHN, released in 2011, contains clear prohibitions of traditional birth attendant-assisted delivery (including attendants trained by the government), and instead promotes delivery in licensed health facilities (IBON Foundation, 2016).

In a statement released in 2013, the National Indigenous Women Gathering Committee described the policy as discriminatory against Indigenous women for bearing no recognition or consideration of their customary ways and lived experiences (LILAK, 2013). According to Pasimio (2022), the no-home birth policy is discriminatory against Indigenous women, citing traditional beliefs and practices particularly that of the *Alangan Mangyan* and the *B'laan* Indigenous women on giving birth alone. Home birth also provides Indigenous women with holistic and prolonged care by their family and traditional birth attendants which begins during pregnancy, birthing, healing, and caring for the newborn child and the breastfeeding mother (Pasimio, 2022). Their experience in giving birth in hospitals which forces them to be inspected and touched by strangers has caused them great discomfort (Pasimio, 2020).

Indigenous women living in GIDAs have difficulty accessing hospitals and health centres usually located in town centres (Pasimio, 2020). To reach the nearest health facility, many Indigenous women must travel by foot, by horse, or by motorcycle (known in many communities as *habal-habal*). This makes transportation all the more difficult during pregnancies and especially during labour (Pasimio, 2020). Furthermore, the expense needed for transportation, medical fees, and other expenses, such as accommodation and food while staying in the town centre, add to the burden on Indigenous women and their families during pregnancies and labour (Pasimio, 2022).

Indigenous women have also reported some health facilities lacking equipment, supplies, and health workers (LILAK & CHR, 2022). However, this problem is not only found among Indigenous communities. The lack of funding for government hospitals, insufficient health professionals and health facilities, and the transfer of the responsibility of health financing from the government to the individual through prioritisation of health insurance are part of the "chronic problems" of the Philippine health care system (IBON Foundation, 2016).

During the National Indigenous Women Gathering, Indigenous women called for the decriminalisation of traditional health practices such as the *paltera*, *mangnguyapi*, and *hilot* (LILAK, 2013). Further, they reaffirmed that healthcare is a right of Indigenous women and that they

should not be charged PHP 1,500 (~USD 27) to PHP 3,000 (~USD 53) to give birth in health centres (LILAK, 2013; Pasimio, 2020). The Indigenous women then called for Reproductive Self-Determination, demanding the Philippine government to recognise and respect the right of women to choose when, where, and how to give birth (LILAK, 2013).

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate Change and Food Security

While Indigenous women have suffered economic poverty and food insecurity, this was found to have worsened by existing threats and different factors over the years (LILAK & CHR, 2022). One of these factors is climate change and the rising global temperature. In the past years, LILAK (2022) has documented the impacts of climate change on the livelihood and food security of Indigenous women. Many of them are farmers who plant rice and crops to feed their families and earn a living (Pasimio, 2013). Indigenous women have reported observing changes in weather patterns that impacted their farming calendar and have resulted in a decrease in crop yields. Droughts have become longer and more intense, and typhoons have become stronger and have resulted in more devastating floods and landslides. In Mindanao, the *T'boli* Indigenous women have reported an increase in pests that destroy their crops as a result of intense heat (LILAK & CHR, 2022). During times of climate disasters that destroy farmlands and disrupt farmers' planting or harvest seasons, Indigenous women farmers do not merely suffer losses in profits but become economically and food insecure (LILAK & CHR, 2022).

While prices of basic commodities have been high due to inflation, prices of food, especially vegetables and rice, increase during the monsoon season. Indigenous women and their families, whose diet is mainly rice and vegetables and who maintain their good health by eating nutritious food suffer from high prices. (LILAK & CHR, 2022).

As primary food providers, Indigenous women also shoulder the burden of ensuring that the family is fed during times of food crisis (Franciscan International et al., 2016; LILAK & CHR, 2022). This negatively impacts their health, causing

them mental, emotional, and physical distress (LILAK & CHR, 2022). During times when food is not enough for all members of the household, Indigenous women would be the last to eat, if at all, ensuring first that her husband, children, and other members of the family have enough to eat (Franciscan International et al., 2016; LILAK & CHR, 2022). This puts them at a higher risk of malnutrition and diseases and reduces their quality of life.

Government Disaster Risk Response and Management

The isolation and exclusion from government support, including disaster risk reduction and management plans and implementation, have long been areas of struggle for Indigenous women (LILAK & CHR, 2022). Basic social services, including relief packages, are insufficient, inconvenient, and culturally and contextually inappropriate (LILAK & CHR, 2022). Insufficient and inappropriate support for Indigenous farmers has also been a criticism against the Philippine government. Hybrid seeds which require more usage of chemical fertilisers and pesticides have been prioritised instead of Indigenous seeds (LILAK & CHR, 2022). During seed distribution as part of disaster recovery programmes, Indigenous women have reported receiving seeds from the Department of Agriculture (DA) that were not compatible with their soil or season (LILAK & CHR, 2022).

Much of the gaps in the government's relief and recovery programmes were more obvious during the COVID-19 pandemic when Indigenous women reported receiving insufficient relief packages or receiving little information, if any at all, on what, when, and how to avail of government support (LILAK, 2020; LILAK & CHR, 2022).

Corporate-led Development and Climate Change

The impact of the climate crisis on Indigenous women's health is compounded by existing land and resource conflict and the government's corporate-led development agenda. Large-scale mining, logging, and plantations have encroached upon ancestral domains (LILAK, 2012). Large-scale mining comprises 66% of officially recognised ancestral domains in the Philippines (Franciscan International, et. al., 2016) and is estimated to have risen after former president Rodrigo Roa Duterte lifted the nine-year moratorium on new mining projects in 2021. By building over agricultural lands,

depleting communities of irrigation water to use in mineral processing, or polluting the soil, water, and air, large-scale mining has harmed the livelihood, food and water security, and health of Indigenous women (Pasimio, 2013; Franciscan International, et. al., 2016). The destruction of land and water also destroys the livelihood of Indigenous women and makes their role as food providers a heavy one (Pasimio, 2013). The destruction caused by mining to the ecosystem has also made Indigenous communities more vulnerable to landslides and floods which have become more catastrophic due to climate change (Franciscan International, et. al., 2016). In a 2020 documented case by LILAK, the *Tuwali* Indigenous community in Brgy. Didipio, Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya reported that the mining company's tailings pond overflowed after succeeding typhoons hit the province (Pasimio, 2020). The water was feared to contain toxic wastes from the mines which then flooded their villages, downstream farms, and their main sources of food and livelihood (Pasimio, 2020).

The displacement of Indigenous peoples from their ancestral domains has also made them more vulnerable to the adverse impacts of the climate crisis. In Barangay Kusiong, Datu Odin Sinsuat (DOS), Maguindanao del Norte in BARMM, 27 *Teduray* Indigenous people, many of whom were children, died in 2022 in a landslide after they were displaced from their ancestral domain and forced to relocate to a resettlement area (Rappler, 2023). The *Teduray* community whose ancestral domain covers the mountains by the shores of Kusiong were forced to relocate to the foothills of Mt. Mindandar in 2020 after private leisure resorts were constructed along the shore (Rappler, 2023). In interviews with *Teduray* Indigenous people by Rappler (2023), it was found that a political dynasty in Maguindanao owns at least one of the private resorts and that the social amelioration fund meant to support families during the COVID-19 pandemic was distributed as "compensation" for their relocation. The social amelioration fund, known commonly in the Philippines as *ayuda* which can either refer to cash or relief goods meant to aid households during times of disaster, has also been misused in the interest of political or corporate agenda in other Indigenous communities, as documented by LILAK during the pandemic lockdown (LILAK, personal communication, 2020).

Frontliners and First Responders: The Roles of Indigenous Women in Climate Change

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the failures of the national and local governments to respond to disasters. In 2020, Rodrigo Duterte issued a militaristic response to the health crisis, deploying more armed police and military to erect checkpoints, guard villages, and ensure people's compliance with lockdown protocols. During the first few months of the pandemic lockdown, LILAK (2020) documented a lack of life-saving information dissemination about the virus and the lockdown among Indigenous communities, a lack of or insufficient distribution of relief packages, and the social exclusion and further isolation of Indigenous women and their families.

To fill the gaps in the response of the government, citizen fundraising and relief operations sprang organically in different parts of the country, including among Indigenous communities. Indigenous women and LILAK organised the BABAYEnihan relief and recovery initiative which aimed to distribute food and hygiene kits, along with critical information on COVID-19 and government policies, to Indigenous women and their families. This initiative documented Indigenous women becoming frontliners during the pandemic, purchasing and repacking sacks of rice and other relief goods and distributing these to their communities (LILAK, 2020). Indigenous women took on the roles of front liners and first responders as extensions of their roles as their families' and communities' food providers and healers.

However, the initiative of Indigenous women to aid during times of crisis was not only unrecognised but was met with red-tagging or labelling as terrorists or communist rebels by the Philippine government (LILAK, 2021). LILAK documented (unpublished) a case of a *Mamanwa* Indigenous woman who stopped distributing much-needed rice to her community after the military accused her of distributing supplies to rebels in the mountains (LILAK, personal communication, 2021). The presence of military within or near their communities, founded on the Duterte government's declared war against insurgency, was enough to send a "chilling effect" to Indigenous women and forced them to stop any aid activities (LILAK, 2023). In the same year that Indigenous communities, along with other sectors of the country, were experiencing economic and food crises, the Philippine

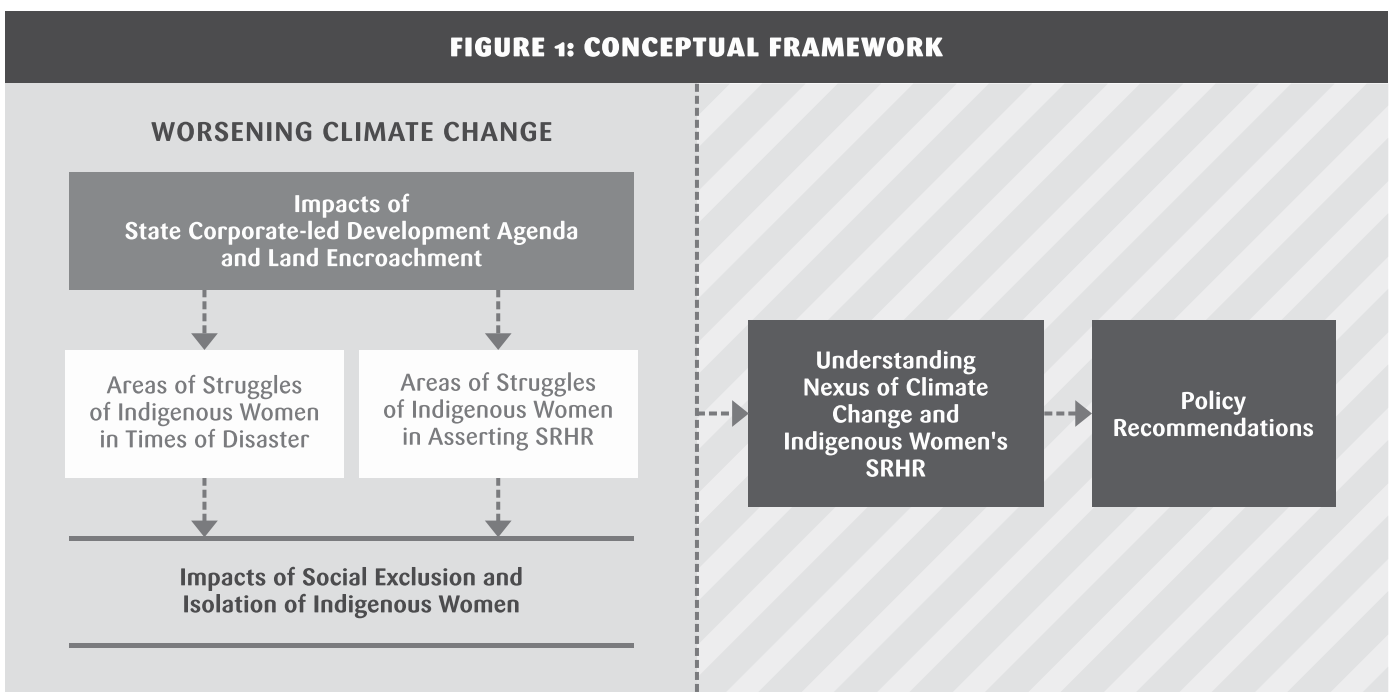
government passed the Anti-Terrorism Act, a contentious law that human organisations such as LILAK see as potentially threatening to human rights defenders and Indigenous women defending their rights (LILAK, 2021).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The rapid rise of global temperature and the extreme weather phenomenon that come along with it are the results of governments prioritising profit over people and maintaining a corporate-led development agenda. While much of the carbon emissions are products of the industries of countries such as China and the USA, countries in the Global South such as the Philippines suffer the brunt of its catastrophic impacts. The continued failure of industrialised countries to take accountability for the damage they have caused the global environment sits in the backdrop of their continued extortion of natural resources from resource-rich countries such as the Philippines. This extortion, permitted and prioritised by the national government, resulted in land encroachment of ancestral domains and the subsequent violation of the rights of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous women.

Indigenous women take on the roles of food providers and healers of their families and communities. They are the ones socially assigned with care and reproductive work. While access to health care and services have long been areas of struggle for Indigenous women, these are compounded during times of disaster and crisis caused or made worse by climate change. As Indigenous women resist against institutional neglect, exclusion, and isolation by asserting their rights to health, food, livelihood, reproductive self-determination, social services especially in times of disaster, and ancestral domain, they are silenced by policies that criminalise dissent, hinder free speech, and narrow safe spaces for resistance. However Indigenous women continue to assert, collectivise and form solidarities with other sectors.

This research aimed to find the nexus of climate change and Indigenous women's social and reproductive health and rights to develop recommendations that will contribute to gender policies, specifically on SRHR, in the context of climate change (see Figure 1).



FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

THE NEXUS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND INDIGENOUS WOMEN’S SRHR

The findings of the research reaffirm previous studies on the multiple roles of Indigenous women within their families and communities (see Figure 2). Indigenous women are the ones primarily tasked to perform care or reproductive work which includes raising the children, maintaining the household budget, and keeping the home in order. In times of economic crisis, Indigenous women look for alternative income or loan money from relatives or moneylenders. As the primary food providers, Indigenous women shoulder the burden of putting food on the table, and whenever there is a food shortage, ensure that all members of the household are fed before eating what is left if there is any food left for them at all. They are also the ones tasked to care for the health of not only their families but often their whole communities. They are keepers of traditional knowledge and practices in healing and perform the role of traditional birth attendants.

As the primary caregiver of the family, Indigenous women are more at risk of malnutrition, exhaustion, chronic stress, and diseases. Insecurities in food, livelihood, and health cause Indigenous women intense emotional, mental,

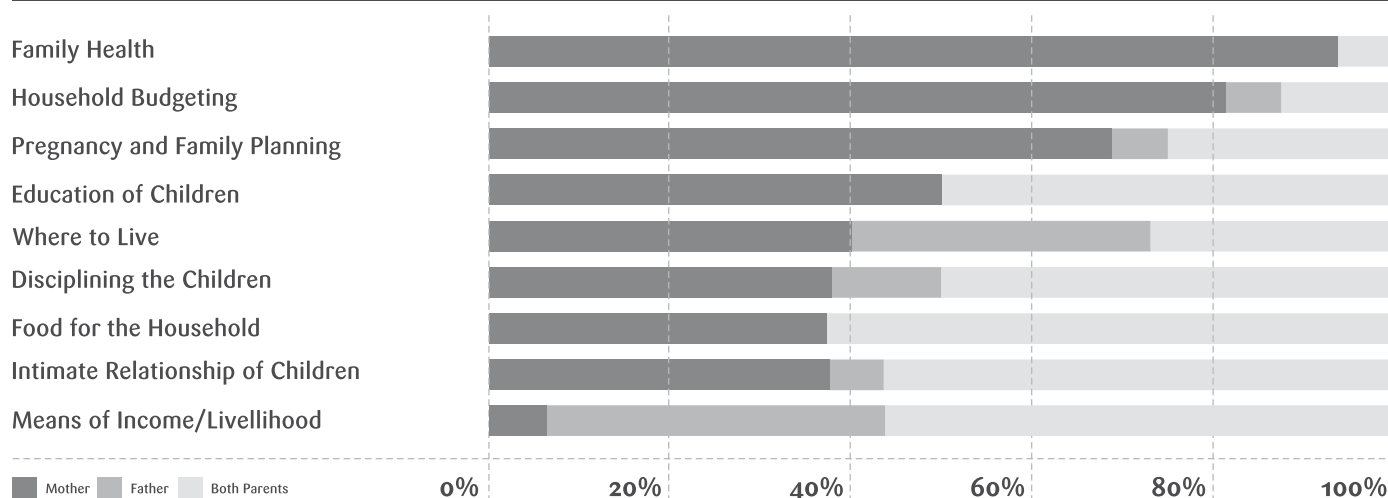
and physical distress, and this is even more intensified during times of crisis and disaster caused by extreme weather events. While Indigenous communities suffer from institutional exclusion, land encroachment, and the catastrophic impacts of the climate crisis, the multiple identities of Indigenous women make them vulnerable to different forms of discrimination that may take place based on their gender, Indigenous identity, age, socioeconomic status, and disability, among others. These identities coupled with their assigned social and cultural roles impact the ways Indigenous women cope with climate change, maintain their wellbeing, and assert their rights to health.

CLIMATE CHANGE NEGATIVELY IMPACTS INDIGENOUS WOMEN’S FOOD, LIVELIHOOD, AND HEALTH

Food and Livelihood

All participants have observed the impacts of climate change on agriculture. Indigenous women have reported experiencing more frequent and stronger rains and typhoons that have resulted in landslides and flooding; and longer and hotter dry spells that have resulted in droughts. The *Ayta*

FIGURE 2: DECISION-MAKING ON HOUSEHOLD CONCERNS



Abellen in Cabangan Zambales, many of whom are farmers and fisherfolk, have been harvesting crops reduced in both quantity and quality. They have also been catching fewer fish in the Cabangan River, affecting their food security and livelihood. According to them:

“There’s less crops for sale, less pineapple, because of poor harvest due to pests.”

“Life is harder. In the past there were a lot of fish from the river, now there’s almost nothing to harvest, and no other means to augment the household budget.”

“Because of the weather changes, our planting calendars need to shift; we have seen more crops not growing properly because there’s not enough rain or it is flooded because there’s too much rain, resulting in reduced harvest. This is an added burden among the poor.”

In the southern part of Luzon, the *Hanunuo* and *Buhid Mangyan* of Bulalacao, Oriental Mindoro have long been suffering from a lack of clean potable water. Their community relies on a single spring for water. However, the intense heat would dry it completely, and frequent rains would turn it muddy and unsafe to drink. The *Mangyan* women would have no choice but to buy bottles of distilled drinking water or else suffer diarrhoea and other diseases caused by contamination and poor sanitation. During longer and more intense dry spells, water used for irrigation and livestock would also dry up, resulting in pests and diseases ravaging their crops, and their livestock dying from dehydration.

In the province of Zamboanga del Sur in Mindanao, *Subanen* women have taken notice of the impacts of the longer dry and wet seasons on their crops. In the past, they harvested rambutan in July and in August, but now harvests are done in November. They could no longer plant rice, corn, and other crops because of how quickly they would wilt during the dry season or be submerged in floods during the monsoon season. This has severely impacted their livelihood and has also made them food insecure. Like in the community of *Mangyan*, the *Subanen* women also suffer from water shortage. They would pay their barangay for water services but would often only get around 30 minutes of flowing water

in a day. Due to the impacts of climate change on agriculture, they have also become dependent on chemical fertilisers to increase crop yields:

“In the past, food was abundant or easy to find. Now it’s difficult to find food like native mushrooms. In the past, we did not use commercial chemical fertiliser but still, we harvested big corn.”

The *Mangyan* women who could no longer rely on farming have also gone to formal work, doing laundry or cleaning houses. They have begun to rely more on producing and selling native products such as beadworks and mats. However, this is not sustainable as they could only earn money whenever there’s an order. Others have relied upon foraging food in the forests to relieve their hunger. The loss of livelihood has also resulted in students dropping out of school to help their parents.

Health

Indigenous women rely on nutritious food to maintain the health of the family. The impact of climate change on their livelihood and food security puts Indigenous women at a larger risk for hunger, malnutrition, and diseases due in fact to their role as food providers and caregivers. Unsafe drinking water also makes them vulnerable to diseases such as cholera, diarrhoea, dysentery, hepatitis A, and typhoid. Food insecurity also causes distress among Indigenous women, with some of the participants experiencing chronic pain from the stress of surviving every day.

Extreme weather events caused by rapidly rising global temperatures have also made Indigenous women and their families more vulnerable to fever, cough, flu, skin allergies, pneumonia and asthma, high blood pressure, heat stroke and even death. *Ayta Abellen* women have also experienced a blow in their morale with the extreme weather causing losses in their livelihood:

“We feel discouraged to farm because it’s either too hot or too cold; the moodiness of the weather also affects the farmers who worry about income losses.”

INDIGENOUS WOMEN ARE PUT AT RISK BY POOR DISASTER RESPONSE, RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT

During times of disaster such as typhoons and landslides, Indigenous women suffer from the government's poor emergency response. In the community of *Subanen* in Zamboanga del Sur, the local government is slow to respond to disasters, and while there are Barangay Emergency Rescue Teams, they are not equipped to respond to landslides. They shared:

“When there’s a landslide (in our community), rescuers are unable to respond quickly because they’re at the municipal centre. When there’s a fire, expect that they will only arrive after the fire has already consumed everything. During a landslide, the victims will die first before the rescuers arrive.”

“There is a Barangay Emergency Rescue Team, but they can only act on minor problems, like assisting children in crossing the river. In cases of climate change impacts such as a landslide, the barangay officials will either go to or call the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office at the municipal centre to send rescuers. Sometimes they come late especially if their vehicles are not in good condition.”

Information

Indigenous Women also suffer from a lack of information during typhoons, earthquakes, and disasters. The *Hanunuo* and *Buhid Mangyan* women lamented the lack of communication and warnings from the local government on disasters. They rarely receive information about typhoons, how strong they are, and whether they should evacuate yet or not. They are especially isolated as almost every part of their community does not have reliable mobile and Internet signals. Local governments also do not inform them when it is safe to return to their homes after evacuating.

Indigenous communities receiving little to no accurate and timely information during times of disaster became even more apparent during the first few months of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. Indigenous women who live in GIDAs

with very weak signals did not receive any information or news about the virus or the lockdown policy passed down by the Duterte government. The presence of police and military barricading their villages was the only indicator that something was amiss. To deliver information to Indigenous women, LILAK (2020) developed a chain messaging initiative, passing all critical news and information about COVID-19 to Indigenous women leaders who then passed them on to members of their organisations and communities and so on. Not only did this circulate information that could have decided life or death, the simple text message asking Indigenous women “*Kumusta?*” or “How are you?” broke their isolation.

Evacuation Centres

According to the *Ayta Abellen* women, the evacuation centre in their locality did not have safe spaces for women such as toilets exclusively for them and breastfeeding rooms. At night they feared for their safety and the safety of their children. The evacuation centre also did not house a healthcare worker, nor were there officials to ask for help in case of emergency or incidents of VAW. Government officials would only visit during the first few days of evacuation. Afterwards, the evacuees were left to fend for themselves. The *Ayta Abellen* also experienced discrimination in cases wherein the local government only provided relief to political allies.

The *Hanunuo* and *Buhid Mangyan* do not have a designated evacuation centre. In times of disaster, they would seek shelter at a nearby church. Not only were Indigenous women and breastfeeding mothers not provided privacy, but they also felt unsafe from the roof structures being torn and water leaking. While food was distributed, it was hardly enough, and water was unavailable.

Relief Packs

Insufficient relief packs were also common stories among Indigenous women. Relief packs distributed in the community of *Ayta Abellen* were insufficient for the whole family's sustenance, let alone considered the needs of women.

Meanwhile, the *Hanunuo* and *Buhid Mangyan* recalled receiving relief packs from the government with foul-smelling rice and expired canned goods. The *Mangyan* women also

received seeds from DA but these were neither suitable for their cropland nor the season. According to the *Mangyan* women:

“The relief packs from the local government unit are not enough. The rice had a foul odour and so did the canned goods. They smelled rancid, so we threw them away. We didn’t want to get sick from consuming them.”

The severe lack of reliable rescue teams, accurate and timely information, safe evacuation centres, well-equipped with both supplies and personnel, and even relief packs with enough food and water, put Indigenous women at a higher risk for danger, illnesses, and gendered violence.

POLICIES ON SRHR AND CLIMATE CHANGE

National Policies, Legislation and Initiatives Related to SRHR

There are several national policies, legislation and initiatives on sexual and reproductive health and rights already in place (see Appendix 1, Table 1). The majority of these policies have been initiated and implemented by the Department of Health (DOH), as the agency primarily responsible for providing national policy direction and national plans, technical standards and guidelines on health.

The primary law that guarantees and enables measures for sexual and reproductive health and rights is the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health (RPRH) Law of 2012. This ensures that people can obtain comprehensive and accessible reproductive health services, including family planning. The champions of the law, including the Department of Health, Commission on Population, civil society organisations and development organisations, envision that this legislation will contribute to reducing maternal and neonatal death and pregnancy complications, prevent unwanted pregnancies and illegal abortions, aid in addressing sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS, and improve the overall health and well-being of the people, among others. In Congress, among those who championed the RH bill were Akbayan Representative Walden Bello, Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman, Ifugao Rep. Teddy Baguilat Jr., Senator

Risa Hontiveros, Sen. Pia S. Cayetano, and the late Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago.

Eleven years since the enactment of the RPRH Law, the implementation of the RPRH Law has yet to be evaluated. While the passage of RPRH is considered a victory, its implementation remains a challenge because of lack of funding, and on-the-ground resistance to sex education programmes and distribution of contraceptives. There is still a lot to be done for women’s rights and gender equality, such as the legalisation of divorce, the recognition of sexual orientation and gender identity expressions, and the decriminalisation of home birth and abortion.

Other relevant national legislative measures on sexual and reproductive health and rights include laws on HIV and AIDS, increasing the age of sexual consent, and ending child marriage. There are also policies on family planning and maternal and adolescent health services, and the Magna Carta of Women provides for a Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for Sexual and Reproductive Health at the early stage of a crisis event.

The existing legislative measures and policies on SRHR, however, do not consider the diverse and unique contexts of women, particularly that of Indigenous women and children. Programmes to bridge gaps between Indigenous cultural practices and the national policy objectives are not developed. Indigenous women have a lot of “catching up” to do to fully understand and appreciate SRHR, without disregard for their cultural identities and practices.

National Policies, Legislation and Initiatives Related to Climate Change

Appendix 2, Table 2, lists legislation and policies relating to climate change. There is recognition of the vulnerabilities of marginalised groups, such as the poor, women and children, people with disabilities, and indigenous peoples. On paper, women’s issues are paid attention to, without consideration for the unique contexts of Indigenous women and children. For instance, the Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Laws adopted gender-mainstreaming in principle in the preparation of climate action and disaster risk reduction and management plans. This includes having sex-disaggregated data and conducting gender analysis in

planning, gender-balanced participation in policy formulation and development planning, and gender-responsive disaster preparedness and response, among others. However, while there are existing declarations of principles and statements, these policies have either not been translated into implementing guidelines or are deemed unimplementable.

Programmes to bridge gaps between Indigenous cultural practices and the national policy objectives are not developed. Indigenous women have a lot of “catching up” to do to fully understand and appreciate SRHR, without disregard for their cultural identities and practices.

Past studies have already underscored the weak inclusion of gender in plans and programmes. The Philippine Movement for Climate Justice notes that no women-led climate response/programme has ever been approved under the People’s Survival Fund, a programme intended to provide funding support for local government units and accredited community organisations for their climate adaptation projects. Further, in a recent study by the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities, Assistance and Cooperation for Community Resilience and Development Inc., and CARE in 2020 assessing climate-related projects in the country from 2013-2017, found that gender is not a priority objective in the projects. Furthermore, there are no efforts to deepen the contextualisation of plans and programmes to address climate-related impacts on Indigenous women and children.

Non-government Initiatives for the Fulfilment of SRHR and Climate Action for Women

In the Philippines, groups that actively work to support claims to sexual and reproductive health and rights include the Women’s Global Network on Reproductive Rights (WGNRR), National Rural Women Coalition/*Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan* (PKKK), and Likhaan Center for Women’s Health. They implement programmes that raise awareness of sexual and reproductive health and rights, among others, and campaign for SRHR. These groups have, through different initiatives, contributed to the enactment of the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Law in 2012 (see Appendices).

Climate justice organisations, recognising that women are among the most vulnerable to climate change impacts, also implement programmes/initiatives and support campaigns that highlight women’s issues.

The Philippine Movement for Climate Justice, of which LILAK is a member, implements the Building Safe, Sustainable, and Resilient Communities for Vulnerable Sectors including Children, Women, and Families (BSSRC-VSICWF) Programme, which lobbies for the adoption of a people-centred development at the local and national levels. Among their women-specific campaigns, together with member and partner groups like PKKK, LILAK, and Oriang, include, mainstreaming gender perspectives in national policies, action plans, and other measures on sustainable development and climate change, using gender analysis, sex-disaggregated data, gender-sensitive indicators and benchmarks, and developing tools to support gender perspectives; inclusive local climate change action planning; gender-responsive disaster risk reduction, flexible financing mechanism to reflect women’s priorities and needs, etc. PMCJ observes that while many of the country’s climate policies mention gender in the text, these are merely on paper and women’s participation in many processes remains minimal, if not absent.

The position of the Asian Peoples’ Movement on Debt and Development (APMDD), a regional alliance of peoples’ movements, community organisations, coalitions, NGOs and networks, working on social transformations focused on people-centred development, and economic and environmental rights and justice, also working with campaigns in the Philippines, is there is no climate justice without gender justice because gender equality is an integral component in ensuring that women can confront the impacts of climate change.

NGOs play the role of filling the gaps that the government neglects to do. The challenge is for the movements to consolidate and coordinate these initiatives and jointly push for the full attainment of sexual and reproductive health rights, gender justice and climate justice, especially of and for Indigenous women and children.

CONCLUSION

Climate change has impacted Indigenous women's sources of nutrition (food and water), their livelihood, physical and mental health, and access to health services during emergencies. Accessing health and reproductive services has been an area of struggle for Indigenous women. They experience discrimination in the form of exclusion from adequate and culturally appropriate basic social services (e.g. no clean water in the community, health clinics located far away, or health clinics with no nurses, doctors, or midwives, and/or insufficient equipment). This is made worse in times of disaster with no accurate and timely information dissemination during disasters, no safe spaces for women and breastfeeding mothers in evacuation centres, and the needs of indigenous women not considered in relief and recovery.

While the climate vulnerabilities of women and children, especially of the poor and marginalised, have long been recognised by international bodies and even by the national government at least in policy documents, Indigenous women and children's needs remain invisible in many climate response programmes and initiatives. Sexual and reproductive health and rights is necessary to build the capacity and resilience of communities to climate shocks and impacts (UNFPA, 2021). There remains a disconnect in initiatives to directly link SRHR with climate change. Gender mainstreaming in climate action, disaster risk reduction and disaster or emergency management in the country is still amiss and lacks sound plans and implementation that consider the multiple and intersecting identities of women. There is an absence of IEC on climate change, adaptation strategies, disaster prevention and the like, with the government leaving communities, particularly Indigenous communities, to cope on their own.

Healthy and empowered women are key to shaping environmental stability, sustainable economic development, and climate resiliency. This underscores the need to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, in climate change discussions and actions, and to further contextualize this to Indigenous community experiences.

Existing land encroachment and resource conflict within Indigenous peoples' ancestral domains exacerbate and make Indigenous peoples more vulnerable to the impacts of the worsening climate crisis. The roles of Indigenous women as caregivers, food providers, healers, and farmers, among others, also put them at a higher risk for harm, violence, and diseases. Their exclusion from social and health services and discrimination under the country's inadequate healthcare system leave them with little ways to cope during times of disaster, and even during normal times when the adverse impacts of climate change are incrementally felt.

The stories presented here, however, illustrate ground realities and give a glimpse of the climate change experiences of select Indigenous women groups. This paper contributes to the body of knowledge on the importance of SRHR for people's health and survival (Guttmacher-Lancet Commission/Starrs et al., 2018). Healthy and empowered women are key to shaping environmental stability, sustainable economic development, and climate resiliency. This underscores the need to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, in climate change discussions and actions, and to further contextualize this to Indigenous community experiences.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper recommended current and future initiatives of various government and non-government agencies to improve the sexual and reproductive health and rights and climate situation of Indigenous women, and Indigenous communities in general. Presented below are broad recommendations, followed by recommendations gathered from Indigenous women themselves.

1. ON THE STATE OBLIGATION TO RESPECT, PROMOTE AND FULFIL INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S RIGHTS

- a. The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) and the Philippine Statistics Authority, along with the provincial and local governments, should endeavour to conduct a population census of Indigenous peoples in the country. This information is essential in government planning and decision-making in all aspects, including ensuring that the basic needs of Indigenous peoples, women and girls, are provided.

Further, the NCIP, especially at the regional, provincial and local levels, should be active in mapping out the risks and vulnerabilities of indigenous communities to impacts of climate change, and disasters. The NCIP should be closely coordinating with the disaster risk reduction and management offices to ensure that indigenous communities are included and considered in all of its activities, training, developing plans and responses. The NCIP should ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalised, including Indigenous women and girls, elders, and persons with disabilities are considered in the planning, and are addressed.

- b. There should be intensified efforts to inform the public about climate change and its impacts, and what can be done at the community level, particularly Indigenous communities, to adapt and combat the impacts of climate change. The impacts of climate change are felt by communities in their daily lives, and culturally appropriate climate adaptation and disaster

preparedness must be developed at the community level to support community resiliency. This encompasses programmes that will ensure proper management of the environment and natural resources that will build local capacity for resilience. With these, indigenous women can be active partners in disaster risk, reduction and management at the local, and even at the national level.

- c. Government agencies should be made accountable for the non-fulfilment of their mandates to protect, promote and fulfil Indigenous women's rights, particularly their sexual and reproductive rights. They should be enjoined to demolish structural barriers, including both formal and informal rules, that allow the discrimination, disempowerment and further marginalisation of Indigenous women and their communities.

The government should adopt the climate justice framework and hold accountable the nation-states and corporations that are responsible for the climate crisis.

- d. The state must respect the rights of Indigenous women to their ancestral domains as enshrined in the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act.
- e. The state must recognise and develop Indigenous and women-led climate solutions and recognise their role as food providers, leaders, stewards of the environment, and first responders during times of disaster.

2. ON SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES:

- a. There should be disaggregated data available at the local up to the provincial levels, including information on sex, women who are pregnant, lactating, with a disability, of old age, Indigenous identity, to aid in the enhancement of disaster risk reduction and management and contingency planning.

- b. Representation of women, including Indigenous women, should be recognised in discussions and decision-making processes, not merely for tokenism, but to ensure their meaningful participation so that their concerns are considered and addressed in climate-related and disaster-preparedness decision-making processes. This is part of the recognition of the contribution of rural and Indigenous women, in the pursuit of genuine sustainable development and better quality of life for all.

This will ensure that Indigenous knowledge systems and practices, including health care practices, are discussed in various forums and recognised by governmental agencies. Further, Indigenous women should be encouraged and allotted a seat in key leadership positions to effectively contribute to discussions and decision-making processes.

Additional funding and support should be allocated to ensure the construction of gender- and culturally-appropriate, disability-inclusive and child-friendly facilities, including evacuation centres in each locality, and accessibility of sexual and reproductive health services even during disasters.

3. THE INDIGENOUS WOMEN RESPONDENTS AND FGD PARTICIPANTS MADE THE FOLLOWING SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS ON SRHR AND CLIMATE ACTIONS:

- a. Inform the Indigenous communities, especially in geographically isolated areas about the health care programmes and services;
- b. Enforce non-discrimination against Indigenous women in the provision of basic health services. Government personnel, especially those providing frontline services, must behave in a non-discriminatory manner and should be sensitised on the client's needs based on culture and status;
- c. Equip health centres with permanent staff (doctor, nurse or midwife) so that they can urgently respond to community needs especially during calamities;
- d. Provide basic water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities in Indigenous communities;
- e. Appoint an Indigenous woman leader in the Barangay and Municipal Local Government Unit who understands the traditional beliefs and practices of Indigenous communities;
- f. Recognise home deliveries of babies in accordance with local traditional practices; Provide regulatory support instead of prohibition by local ordinance;
- g. Support the passage of the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Expression Equality Bill and the Anti-Discrimination Bill;
- h. Conduct climate and gender awareness programmes across government agencies and schools (public and private);
- i. Initiate women-led climate actions through the People's Survival Fund and other mechanisms;
- j. Enhance disaster risk reduction management and contingency plans and Contingency Plans per *barangay*, especially in vulnerable and marginalised communities, such as Indigenous communities, including women, children, elderly, differently-abled people, and ethnic minorities;
- k. Prepare and place girls- and women-friendly relief packs (e.g., napkin, bra, panty, clothes, malong/blanket, mosquito net, bath soap and shampoo, laundry soap), and food supplies (e.g., rice, vegetables and dried fish, coffee, milk, and water) good for one week for a family of six), and medicine;
- l. Establish safe and proper evacuation centres, with space for women;
- m. Provide comfort rooms with a sufficient supply of clean water, accessible to women, senior citizens, and differently-abled persons; and
- n. Provide hotline numbers so people know who to call in case of problems.



Accessing health and reproductive services has been an area of struggle for Indigenous women. They experience discrimination in the form of exclusion from adequate and culturally appropriate basic social services.

While the climate vulnerabilities of women and children, especially of the poor and marginalised, have long been recognised by international bodies and even by the national government at least in policy documents, Indigenous women and children's needs remain invisible in many climate response programmes and initiatives.

APPENDICES

[A] TABLE 1: PHILIPPINES POLICIES, LEGISLATION AND INITIATIVES ON SRHR

POLICY	BRIEF DESCRIPTION AND DETAILS IN RELATION TO SRHR
Law ending child marriage (Republic Act No. 11596, enacted in 2022)	A law criminalising child marriage and provides penalties to solemnising officers, parents, guardians, or adults who fixed, facilitated, or arranged child marriage.
Law increasing the age for determining the commission of statutory rape (Republic Act No. 11648, enacted in 2022)	Amends Article 266-A (1)(d) of the Revised Penal Code and the Anti-Rape Law of 1997. Based on the law, any adult engaging in sexual contact with anyone 16 or under would be committing statutory rape unless the age difference between them is three years or less and sex was consensual, not abusive or exploitative.
HIV and AIDS Policy Act (Republic Act No. 11166, enacted in 2018; repealed RA 8504 or the Philippine Aids Prevention and Control Act)	Ensures “the delivery of non-discriminatory HIV and AIDS services by government and private HIV and AIDS service providers, and develop redress mechanisms for persons living with HIV.” Under the law, the following initiatives should be undertaken in relation to HIV and AIDS: information and education campaign; preventive measures, safe practices and procedures; screening, testing and counseling; health and support services.
National Policy on the Prevention of Illegal and Unsafe Abortion and Management of Post-Abortion Complications (Department of Health Administrative Order (DOH AO) DOH AO 2018-0003)	Recognises the need for family planning and maternal health services in the prevention of unintended pregnancy and illegal and unsafe abortion, and provision of post-abortion care.
National Policy on the Minimum Initial Service Package for Sexual and Reproductive Health in Health Emergencies and Disasters (DOH AO 2016-0005)	Provides for the provision of comprehensive health services, including the implementation of the MISP for SRH at the early stage of the crises; provision of women's kits or dignity kits, which are “a package of supplies and materials for distribution to women of reproductive age affected by disaster situations.”
Guidelines on Implementation of Mobile Outreach Services for Family Planning (DOH AO 2014-0042)	Provides standards, protocols and management arrangements for family planning outreach, especially in geographically isolated or highly populated and depressed areas.
National Policy and Strategic Framework on Adolescent Health and Development (DOH AO 2013-0013)	Mandates local government units to deliver basic adolescent/reproductive healthcare services and distribute family planning goods and supplies.
Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act (Republic Act No. 10354, enacted in 2012)	Guarantees universal and free access to medically-safe, non-abortifacient, effective, legal, affordable, and quality reproductive healthcare services, methods, devices, supplies. Persons under 18 should get parental consent to access contraceptives.
National Strategy Towards Reducing Unmet Need for Modern Family Planning as a Means to Achieving MDGs on Maternal Health (DOH AO 2012-0009)	Provides for an updated and comprehensive approach to reduce unmet need for modern family planning services.
Guidelines on Ensuring Quality Standards in the Delivery of Family Planning Program and Services Through Compliance to Informed Choice and Voluntarism (DOH AO 2011-0005)	Provides policy and programme direction for the delivery of family planning services and enable them to make informed choice and voluntary decisions.
Magna Carta of Women (Republic Act No. 9710, enacted in 2009)	Reaffirms that women's rights are human rights; it provides that “response to disaster situations shall include the provision of services, such as psychosocial support, livelihood support, education, psychological health, and comprehensive health services, including protection during pregnancy; the State shall provide for a comprehensive, culture-sensitive, and gender-responsive health services and programmes covering all stages of a woman's life cycle.”

[B] TABLE 2: PHILIPPINES POLICIES, LEGISLATION AND INITIATIVES ON CLIMATE CHANGE

POLICY	BRIEF DESCRIPTION AND DETAILS IN RELATION TO SRHR
Climate Change Commission Resolution No. 2019-002	Resolution mainstreaming and strengthening gender-responsive approaches in the formulation and implementation of climate change policies, plans, programmes, and activities recognising, among others, that “women often bear more of the burden of its effects due to unequal access to resources, education, job opportunities, land rights, social and cultural norms and their diverse intersectional experiences based on ethnicity, identity, sexual orientation, religion, function and age, among others”. This includes the generation of sex-disaggregated data and conduct of gender analysis in planning.
Climate Change Commission Resolution No. 2018-0022	Constituting the Gender and Development (GAD) Focal Point System to “ensure and sustain the agency's critical consciousness and support on women and gender issues.”
People's Survival Fund Act (Republic Act No. 10174 enacted in 2012)	Amended the Climate Change Act to include the provision of long-term finance streams to enable the government to effectively address the problem of climate change.
National Climate Change Action Plan (2011-2028)	Outlines the country's strategy for adaptation and mitigation with the ultimate goal to “build the adaptive capacities of women and men in their communities, increase the resilience of vulnerable sectors and natural ecosystems to climate change, and optimise mitigation opportunities towards gender-responsive and rights-based sustainable development”
National Framework Strategy on Climate Change (2010-2022)	Serves as the basis for climate change planning, research and development, extension, monitoring of activities, and climate financing, to protect vulnerable and marginalised communities from the adverse effects of climate change; includes gender mainstreaming as one of its guiding principles.
Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010 (Republic Act No. 10121 enacted in 2010)	Provides for a national framework on disaster risk reduction and management, among others, this includes considerations for vulnerable and marginalized groups including women, children, elderly, differently-abled people, and ethnic minorities.
Climate Change Act (Republic Act No. 9729 enacted in 2009 amended in 2012 with Republic Act No. 10174)	<p>The Climate Change Act created a framework to integrate the concept of climate change, in synergy with disaster risk reduction, in various phases of policy formulation, development plans, poverty reduction strategies and other development tools and techniques.</p> <p>It mandates a gender-responsive approach in climate action and disaster risk reduction, recognising the vulnerability of the Filipino communities, particularly the poor, women and children, to dangerous consequences of climate change.</p>

[C] LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS FROM WOMEN AND CLIMATE JUSTICE GROUPS

1. Ms. Jesse Sunga, Campaigns and Communications Officer of Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR). WGNRR is an international non-governmental organisation that advocates for sexual and reproductive health and rights worldwide. <https://wgnrr.org/>.

WGNRR's Pasya PH, available on Youtube and Facebook, raises awareness about the latest updates on SRHR in the Philippines and helps support women and girls in making informed choices about their body and free from discrimination, stigma and violence. The online channels are complemented by an Advocacine, or advocacy magazine. Other programmes of the WGNRR are the Power Up! Project that built the capacity of youth-led and youth-serving organisations through media, art, and social media campaigning, which led to the formation of the Youth Advocates for SRHR (YAS!), and #PACisEssential! that focuses on advocacy for post-abortion care, which they push for with the Philippine Safe Abortion Advocacy Network (PINSAN), all under the banner of #SRHR4All. The WGNRR is also advocating for the decriminalisation of abortion and the implementation of comprehensive sexuality education in the Philippines.

2. Ms. Luz Bador, President of Kapunungan sa mga Kababayan-ang Banikanhon Isip Lig-ong Nibarug ug Naghiusa (KABILIN Bukidnon Indigenous Cultural Community) and former President of National Rural Women Coalition/Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan (PKKK). PKKK is a coalition of 326 organisations representing the sectors of small farmers, fisherfolk, rural workers, Indigenous peoples, informal and formal workers in the rural areas. It works for the empowerment of rural women and creation of an enabling policy environment for the fulfilment and protection of rural women's rights. <https://pkkk.org/>.

PKKK, through its local organisations such as the Kapunungan sa mga Kababayan-ang Banikanhon Isip Lig-ong Nibarug ug Naghiusa (KABILIN) in Negros Oriental, is implementing the Sexual Health and Empowerment Advocacy. Part of the initiative is conducting SRHR orientations/trainings at the barangay level specifically on human rights, including the gendered body and caring for reproductive health parts of

women, with the long-term goal of organising gender-based violence watch groups that will support women in face of gender-based violence. Like the WGNRR, PKKK has also delved into social media, through the Inday Chika Podcast, to raise awareness among women and girls on accessing health services, sexual health and empowerment, etc. They also provide psychosocial services in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development. In the past, PKKK had actively pushed for various legislations on women and children, including the Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act, Safe Spaces Act, Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, Protection of Children Against Child Abuse, etc.

Other than SRHR and women's rights, PKKK's Rural Women Agenda also aims to improve the lives of rural women, their households and their communities by: fulfilment of rural women's property rights in agrarian reform, ancestral domains, and coastal resources; access to basic services and social protection, safe and adequate food and potable water, right to fair wages and just working conditions; recognition, reduction, redistribution and representation of unpaid care work; access to sustainable and women friendly agriculture and fishery support services; representation and participation in the implementation of gender and development programmes and local sectoral representation; fulfilment of a peace agenda, especially in Mindanao; right to safe environment and protection from the impacts of climate change; promotion and protection of the rights of children and young women (PKKK, n.d.).

KABILIN, an all women organisation in Negros Oriental is composed of 80% IP women. They are engaged in SRHR initiatives, as well as climate-, disaster- and environmental-related initiatives in Sta. Catalina, such as planning, facilitation and implementation with the local government in El Niño contingency, local climate change adaptation, solid waste management, and forest and mangrove rehabilitation; they also organised the *Alyansa Kontra Mina sa Sta. Catalina* to oppose mining operations in Negros Oriental, realising the many impacts of mining on women. This includes the effect of mercury and cyanide on the reproductive health of women, threat to food security, etc.

3. Ms. Jinky Esguerra, Food, Land, Water and Climate Campaign Officer of the Philippine Movement for Climate Justice (PMCJ). PMCJ consists of 150 national networks, alliances, and local organisations representing basic sectors,

grassroot communities, the marginalised and the most vulnerable. It was formed to advance the notion of climate justice as a solution to the climate crisis the world is facing today. <https://climatejustice.ph/>.

The Philippine Movement for Climate Justice is implementing the Building Safe, Sustainable, and Resilient Communities for Vulnerable Sectors including Children, Women, and Families (BSSRC-VSICWF) Program which lobbies the government to adopt a people-centred development at the local and national levels. Among their women-specific campaigns, together with member and partner groups like PKKK, LILAK, and Oriang, includes, mainstreaming gender perspectives in national policies, action plans, and other measures on sustainable development and climate change, using gender analysis, sex-disaggregated data, gender-sensitive indicators and benchmarks, and developing tools to support gender perspectives; inclusive local climate change action planning; gender-responsive disaster risk reduction, flexible financing mechanism to reflect women's priorities and needs, etc. PMCJ observes that while many of the country's climate policies mention gender in the text, these are merely on paper and women's participation in many processes remain minimal, if not totally absent. PMCJ established a Gender Working Group to ensure that a gender lens is consistently integrated in their work.

4. Atty. Mai Taqueban, Executive Director of Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center (LRC). LRC works for the recognition and protection of the rights of Indigenous peoples and upland rural poor communities to land and environment. <https://www.lrcksk.org/>.

The Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center (LRC), working for the recognition of and protection of the rights of Indigenous peoples and upland rural poor communities to land and environment, is focused on four thematic areas – economic justice, environmental justice, food sovereignty and Indigenous women's rights. LRC's initiatives on climate change and women's rights is integrated in their work on legal servicing, policy research and advocacy.

In their 2021 discussion paper titled *Climate Litigation in the Philippines: Trends and Possibilities*, LRC said that the current legal framework in the country is not clear on how to hold countries or anyone, such as fossil fuel corporations,

accountable for their contributions to climate change. There is no strong jurisprudence on climate change, loss and damages and accountability, and so what is required are tangible climate accountabilities policies. To this end, LRC is pursuing climate accountability legislation, which is currently under consideration in relevant committees in the Lower House.

Meanwhile, early this year, they also issued a discussion paper titled *Towards a Just Mineral Transition in the Philippines*, articulating proposals to support a just minerals transition within the shift to a low-carbon pathway or clean energy transition. Their recommendations include the adoption of a just minerals transition in the country's minerals policy framework and other existing policy blueprints, and the legislation of local no-go zones.

5. Ms. Norly Mercado, Asia Regional Director of 350.org. 350.org is an international movement of people working to end the age of fossil fuels and build a world of community-centred renewable energy for all. <https://350.org/>; <https://world.350.org/philippines/>.

350.org is an international environmental organisation that works in pursuit of energy justice and distributed renewable energy solutions. In the recent months, the organisation shifted strategies towards campaigning for community-based renewable energy projects, while still campaigning against harmful energy projects.

350.org affiliate, 350.org Pilipinas supports climate movements by providing support to local partners in digital campaigning, media and communications, creative engagement, and nonviolent direct actions. They also capacitate climate activists and community partners in campaign designing, communications, and solar technology.

OTHER ORGANISATIONS

6. WLB. The Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau (WLB), the first feminist legal organisation in the country, has worked and contributed in shaping Philippine jurisprudence and legal landscape through the cases that they handle, and through policy legislations to protect women against violence and discrimination. The work that they do to promote women's rights are categorised in their three programme areas: engendering the barangay justice system, human

rights and policy advocacy, and understanding women's access to justice.

In their core programme, Engendering the Barangay Justice System, implemented in Negros Occidental, Quezon, Samar, Masbate and Zambales, WLB advocates for local laws and policies promoting women's rights, empowers women and their organisations, and builds and develops bodies of knowledge, tools and resources for community-based women's organisations and local partners (WLB website, n.d.).

7. YACAP. Youth Advocates for Climate Action Philippines (YACAP), as stated in its name, is an alliance of youth individuals and organisations with chapters across the Philippines, led by youth themselves. YACAP employs various strategies to advocate for immediate global climate action, climate justice, systemic change, and in defence of environmental defenders. Their past initiatives include the Klimalaman: The Podcast, a podcast series on climate change and what the Filipino youth can do, and the crafting and launching of the Youth Climate Agenda 2022 for the national elections.

8. APMDD. The Asian Peoples' Movement on Debt and Development (APMDD) is a regional alliance of peoples' movements, community organisations, coalitions, NGOs and networks, working on social transformations focused on people-centred development, and economic and environmental rights and justice. Their programmes are on global and public finance; ecological debt, environmental justice, climate change; right to essential services and natural resources; gender and women; and strengthening APMDD as a movement.

For APMDD, there is no climate justice without gender justice, knowing that gender equality is an integral component in ensuring that women are able to confront the impacts of climate change. Among the calls of APMDD is the crafting of climate change plans and policies that address gender-specific impacts of climate change while considering rights-based resource conservation, adequate and gender responsive climate finance, and new and additional funding resources for women to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change (APMDD, 2021).

[D] QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Questions to women organisations

- 1.1 What are your current programmes/ interventions securing women's SRHR? What specific SRHR are you focused on? What are the current SRHR agenda/ policies that you are advocating?
- 1.2 What climate change issues are you tackling at present, and what women's rights and issues (including Indigenous girls and women) are focused on/tackled (if any)?
- 1.3 What government climate-related policies/ programmes are there that can be implemented better/enhanced to be gender-responsive and ensure SRHR (including in disaster response)?
- 1.4 Who among the policy-makers or decision-makers do you think can be considered as allies in the SRHR and climate agenda?
- 1.5 What programmes/interventions on climate change and women's rights do you think should be proposed and implemented within the next five years (could be local or national level)?

2. Question to climate justice organisations

- 2.1 What climate change issues are you tackling at present, and what women's rights and issues (including Indigenous girls and women) are focused on/tackled (if any)?
- 2.2 What government climate-related policies/ programmes are there that can be implemented better/enhanced to be gender-responsive and ensure SRHR (including in disaster response)?
- 2.3 Who among the policy-makers or decision-makers do you think can be considered as allies in the SRHR and climate agenda?
- 2.4 What programmes/interventions on climate change and women's rights do you think should be proposed and implemented within the next five years (could be local or national level)?

3. Questions to Indigenous women

- 3.1 One-on-one interview on the following: socio-demographic information, family's health and access to health services, pregnancy and family planning.
- 3.2 FGD on the following: pregnancy, marriage, climate change experiences, what needs to be done by government agencies, trainings needed.

4. Questions to CCC

- 4.1 Do you have current programmes/interventions on climate change (adaptation/mitigation) and women's rights (including Indigenous girls and women)? What are these?
- 4.2 How are you able to ensure that programmes/interventions on climate change are responsive to the situation of women, and the situation of Indigenous peoples (in terms of planning and monitoring and evaluation)?
- 4.3 What government policies/programmes are there that can be implemented better/could be enhanced to be gender-responsive and ensure SRHR amidst the climate crisis (including disaster response)?
- 4.4 What programmes/interventions on climate change and women's rights do you think should be proposed and implemented within the next five years (could be local or national level)?

[E] SUMMARY TABLES

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

INFORMATION (N=17)		RESPONSES (N=17)	
AGE (Average age of respondents: 40) 18-30 18% 31-40 24% 41-50 47% 51-60 11%		PERCEPTION OF PERSONAL HEALTH Very good 24% Good 71% Not Good 5% Bad Health —	
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT Primary 23% Secondary 53% College 12% N/A 12%		PERCEPTION OF FAMILY'S HEALTH Very good 41% Good 53% Not Good 5% Bad Health —	
PRIMARY OCCUPATION None 17% Farmer 47% Others (day worker, selling, IPMR, etc.) 36%		USUAL FAMILY ILLNESS Flu 70% Cough 70% Fever 65% High blood pressure 29% Lose bowel movement 5% Others (headache, stomach ache, GERD) 17%	
INDIGENOUS IDENTITY Ayta Abelen 29% Hanunuo Mangyan/Mangyan Buhid 35% Lambangian 35%		HOW THE FAMILY ADDRESSES ILLNESS Homecare 100% Goes to clinic, health center, hospital 53% Seeks help from traditional healer 41%	
ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATION None 29% Community Organization 71%			

RESPONSES (N=17)			
HOW THE FAMILY KEEPS HEALTHY Eating healthy Getting enough sleep and rest Getting vaccinated Drinking vitamins Regular check up Others (Cleaning home/surroundings)	100% 82% 59% 12% 5% 5%	PRACTICE OF FAMILY PLANNING (N=16) Yes None	94% 6%
		SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON FAMILY PLANNING PRACTICES (N=15) Own research Midwife Traditional healthcare worker Health centre worker Hospital	67% 27% 13% 13% 7%
WHO IS IN CHARGE OF FAMILY'S HEALTH Mother Mother and Father	94% 5%	FAMILY PLANNING PRACTICED (N=15) Pills Withdrawal IUD Implants Injection/Injectables Abstinence Others (herbal method; calendar method)	47% 20% 13% 13% 13% 27%
TRAVEL TIME TO NEAREST HEALTH CENTRE Less than 1 hour 1 – 4 hours	94% 5%		
ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON SRHR Yes None	76% 23%	GO-TO PERSON/FACILITY IF THERE ARE PREGNANCY PROBLEMS (N=16) Health centre Hospital Traditional healthcare worker	38% 38% 31%
SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON SRHR (N=13) Mother Traditional healthcare worker Health centre worker Doctor Others (Grandmother, older sister, NGOs)	69% 7% 15% 23% 23%	WHO DECIDES ON NUMBER OF CHILDREN (N=16) Wife Husband Both husband and wife	56% 13% 31%

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This research is an initiative of a regional partnership working together on **Amplifying Voices of Women in all their Diversities in Asia on the Nexus of Climate Change and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)**. The three partners are from Bangladesh, Nepal, and the Philippines. The regional partnership generates evidence on the impact of climate change on SRHR, specifically on Indigenous women and girls, women and girls with disabilities, and women and girls living in coastal areas.

ARROW is a regional non-profit women's NGO based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and has consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Since it was established in 1993, it has been working to advance women's health, affirmative sexuality and rights, and to empower women through information and knowledge, evidence generation, advocacy, capacity building, partnership building, and organisational development.

LILAK – Purple Action for Indigenous Women's Rights is a collective of women's rights advocates, activists, feminists, and Indigenous women, with the goal to contribute to political, economic, cultural, and social empowerment of Indigenous women.

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