



Group photo at the final Youth Challenge with the winners and participants.

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"Being part of the process with youth is a highlight of my life," national UN Youth Volunteer from Nepal recounts

Every year on 12 August, the world observes Youth Day, this year's theme – Intergenerational Solidarity: Creating a world for all ages – was dedicated to youth and their role in bringing about a positive change to the world. One of these people bringing about positive change in Nepal is Kriti Thapa, national UN Youth Volunteer with the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), who works with youth to raise awareness on social issues. And in doing so, she focuses on the crux of the Sustainable Development Goals – leaving no one behind!

According to the [Nepal Population Distribution in 2021](#), more than 60 per cent of Nepal's population is between the age of 15-64 years. If utilized well, this important demographic can become a leading opportunity for the country's growth towards sustainable development.

Globally, the current population of youth is the largest in history - this is significant! However, this event in history has not seen astounding achievements from youth. Many factors have impacted this, plus the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has further lessened any hope.

As a young adult just starting to build her career, Kriti Thapa's initial

experiences during the pandemic were overwhelming. Right before the pandemic hit, she got an opportunity as a trainee at UNICEF, but that too gave her limited learning due to lockdown thereafter. Later, as restrictions relaxed, she rejoined UNICEF as national Youth Volunteer and served under the youth initiatives of the organization.

“ As Volunteer Coordinator, my engagement with young people is not limited to only volunteers but with a wide range of youth networks. Together with colleagues, I work to create more youth opportunities. It is very exhilarating! --Kriti Thapa, national UN Youth Volunteer with UNICEF, Nepal

Currently, UNICEF Nepal has more than 1,500 online youth volunteers in its roster - under the Global Volunteer Initiative, where Kriti regularly interacts with youth to increase their awareness on various issues in society - such as incidence reporting, COVID-19 awareness, climate change, and more. This awareness is done via a series of virtual sessions, trainings, social media postings, and more.

During the pandemic, virtual meetings have been very beneficial. This has not only upgraded youth's technical skills but it has made it easier to provide equal opportunities and connect with young people all over Nepal.

“ Interacting with young people during the pandemic has been an inspirational journey. These experiences have been an eye opener and have made me passionate to scour for similar engagements. As a young person myself, I am always surprised by the talent, motivation, confidence, and creative ideas these young people have for their country. --Kriti Thapa

UNICEF works with the global [U-Report](#) platform where some 8,700 U-Reporters share their voices and information about issues affecting young people and children. This data comes in the form of surveys.

“ We currently work with seven youth advocates to elevate their voices and actions with UNICEF in areas of mental health, gender-based violence, nutrition, climate change, and disability inclusion. --
Kriti Thapa



Kriti, together with her team, also builds skills and opportunities of the young people in Nepal through [Generation Unlimited \(GenU\)](#) initiative. Recently a Youth Challenge was completed through GenU in partnership with the UN Development Programme (UNDP), International Labour Organization (ILO) and Impact Hub Kathmandu. Five teams were selected in this challenge based on their advocacy campaigns. They were allotted 1 lakh Nepalese Rupees each as seed money to implement their ideas to fruition. These teams were from Kathmandu, Janakpur and Kailali, and their solutions targeted many topics, including LGBTIQ+, mental health and single mothers.

“ Being part of the process with youth is a highlight of my life! -- Kriti Thapa

 Asia and the Pacific

• International Youth Day

Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 10: Reduced inequalities](#) [SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals](#)