

## Shambhavi Poudel

### WWF Nepal



**Shambhavi Poudel** leads the Campaigns and Education Unit at World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Nepal. She works closely with children and young people, placing them at the core of conservation interventions. She recently helped to design a new pilot activity under the targeting natural resource corruption project that focuses on mobilizing youth to promote good community forest governance.

## Her Story

### What does your role entail?

My role involves working with youth on anti-corruption interventions in Nepal. This includes engaging young people both as duty bearers and rights holders. Community forests have been highly successful in Nepal, but in certain cases, poor governance has created opportunities for corruption. Since many

Community Forest User Group members are youths (often female), they can be an important force for change. We recently began a pilot effort working through a community-based organization to strengthen the interface between youth champions and Community Forest User Executive Committee members, to support more regular sharing of information and help enhance ownership. The pilot will also strengthen the skills, knowledge and capacity of over one-hundred Nepali youths on principles of good governance, bookkeeping and financial management.

## What drivers or facilitators of corruption are you working to address?

Identifying corruption is the first step to fighting it. That said, it can be quite difficult to pin down the drivers of corruption, since they are often diverse and can depend on multiple factors. My hope is to empower rights-holders to call for greater transparency and access to information so that they can increase accountability. This will make the governance of community forests more participatory and transparent, particularly in decision-making and financial transaction processes.

“Engaging young people is key to strengthening natural resource governance and countering corruption. I’m inspired by them every single day.”

– Shambhavi Poudel, WWF Nepal

## Is there a critical moment that set you on the course you’re on now?

I have worked on youth empowerment and engagement since the beginning of my career, including in the areas of social entrepreneurship

and environmental protection. In the past few years, I’ve had the opportunity to design and implement behavior-change campaigns. These have taught me that achieving change requires interventions that carefully consider the context in which you are working. My hope is to help address the root causes of corruption sensitively and sensibly through well-designed efforts.

## What’s something unexpected that you’ve learned through your work?

I’ve learned that the problem and solution are two sides of the same coin. It’s people who are corrupt, and it’s also people who can make change happen. Placing people at the center of interventions is therefore key.

## What would you say to other practitioners seeking to address corruption through their conservation programming?

Let’s continue to innovate. We must bring future professionals to the table today—because tomorrow is too late!

## What gives you hope for the future?

Engaging youth in conservation in Nepal has shown outstanding results in achieving zero poaching. The Government of Nepal has emphasized the importance of youth involvement in the preparation and implementation of multiple policies and plans, including the National Youth Policy (2015), Forest Act (2076), and Local Government Operationalization Act (2074). The power and passion of young people to change the world for the better gives me hope.

### About Targeting Natural Resource Corruption

The Targeting Natural Resource Corruption (TNRC) project is working to improve biodiversity outcomes by helping practitioners to address the threats posed by corruption to wildlife, fisheries and forests. TNRC harnesses existing knowledge, generates new evidence, and supports innovative policy and practice for more effective anti-corruption programming. Learn more at [tnrcproject.org](https://tnrcproject.org).

### Disclaimer

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