



# Women of DISTINCTION

## HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

*Prarthana Gurung*

Prarthana Gurung is the Director of Campaigns and Communications at Adhikaar, which means “rights” in Nepali. This is the only women-led center that provides direct services to the Nepali-speaking community, and organizes low-income workers and impacted community members to promote social justice and human rights.

For nearly two decades, Adhikaar has organized its membership base of 6,500 nail salon, domestic, and other low-wage workers to create access to information, build community leadership, and grow collective power to win rights for our communities, and dignity and equity for all.

Ms. Gurung began her journey in 2012, learning the ABCs of organizing from immigrant women staff and members that are the beating heart of the organization, whom she lovingly calls “didis,” or “elder sisters” in Nepali.

Throughout her tenure, she has been part of teams leading several successful efforts to defend and build immigrant worker power both locally and nationally, including the introduction of HR6 (Dream and Promise Act) in Congress.

At the forefront of nail salon organization in New York and nationally, Adhikaar led the historic 2015 State wins, including a Nail Salon Bill of Rights, the first of its kind in the entire Nation, and other unprecedented worker health and safety regulations with a broad coalition of labor, AAPI, and reproductive justice groups.

As co-founders of the NY Healthy Nail Salon Coalition with NYCOSH, Adhikaar is organizing their base of 1,400 Nepali-speaking nail salon workers through the All Hands In campaign to push for the passage of the Nail Salon Minimum Standards Council Act, the country’s first-ever sectoral worker council for the nail salon industry.

Ms. Gurung spent several years in Washington, D.C., working with foundations and national nonprofits to support the scaling up of campaign organizing and communications for environmental justice groups. These groups worked on issues such as anti-fracking and indigenous land rights in several states nationwide. Ms. Gurung also supported communications for DC Ferguson, a broad coalition of groups that called on the D.C. Council to repurpose \$2.9 million in funds for new police officers to support community-led peacekeeping initiatives.

She is currently pursuing her Master’s degree in Labor Studies at the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies and is the first-generation daughter of Nepali immigrants. Born and raised in the South, she now calls Jackson Heights home.

***Prarthana Gurung was selected as a  
2024 Women of Distinction honoree by Senator Jessica Ramos***

