

Gender Transformative Change in the Hindu Kush Himalayas

THREE DECADES
FOR MOUNTAINS AND PEOPLE



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Gender Transformative Change

To achieve ICIMOD's mission, meaningful and equitable participation of mountain women, men and children is essential in development initiatives. Gender Transformative Change is a useful approach engaged by ICIMOD in accomplishing its purpose by promoting equitable development and research processes in the HKH and to ensure women and men equally benefit from it.

Experiences have shown that gender inequalities hinder the achievement of sustainable development and environments. This is why ensuring gender equality has been regularly asserted through many international and regional forums and policies for achieving development and sustainability goals.

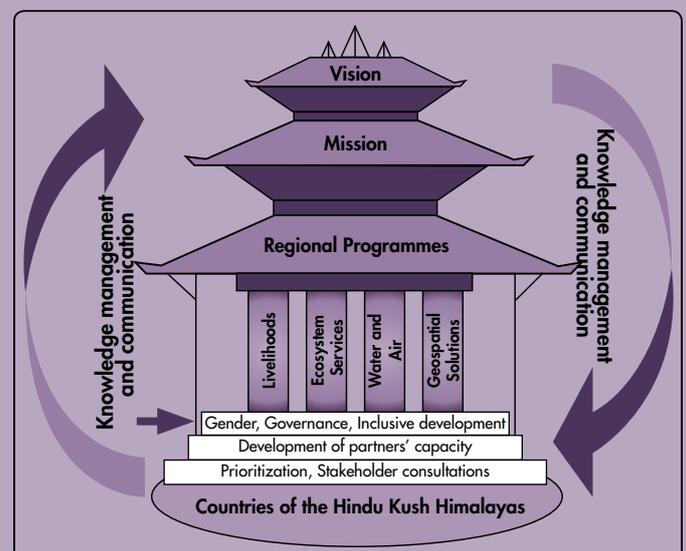
ICIMOD acknowledges these commitments, and further commits itself to fulfill the goal of gender equality and women's empowerment by ensuring gender equity initiatives gain traction and lead to genuine transformative change. It also clearly recognizes that gender bias continues to be a challenge in many societies, including in the HKH region, compounded further by other cross-cutting social, cultural, political and economic inequalities, defined by class, caste, marital status, age, ethnicity, etc.

ICIMOD Vision

Men, women, and children of the Hindu Kush Himalayas enjoy improved wellbeing in a healthy mountain environment.

ICIMOD Mission

To enable sustainable and resilient mountain development for improved and equitable livelihoods through knowledge and regional cooperation.



Knowledge development cycle

Gender Progress at ICIMOD

Since the mid 90s, ICIMOD has promoted gender equity in mountain development through conducting awareness and trainings in its Regional Member Countries; by supporting networking of mountain women; by organizing two major global conferences on gender and mountains, Bhutan+10: Gender and Sustainable Mountain Development in a Changing World in 2012 and Celebrating Mountain Women in 2002; by publishing and disseminating knowledge on gender issues, and introducing several innovations such as the gender champions award, WGEM (women, gender, environment and mountain) network, women's leadership trainings, gender auditing, scoping studies, and capacity strengthening on gender analysis, awareness and sensitivity. Gender issues and equity have been progressively integrated in ICIMOD's Programmes over time through the establishment of a Gender Unit in 2002, a Gender and Governance Division in 2007, a Gender Strategic Institutional Area in 2012 to give gender focused attention, and the Gender Resource Team since 2006 (GReaT, composed of focal points from ICIMOD's programmes and functional areas).

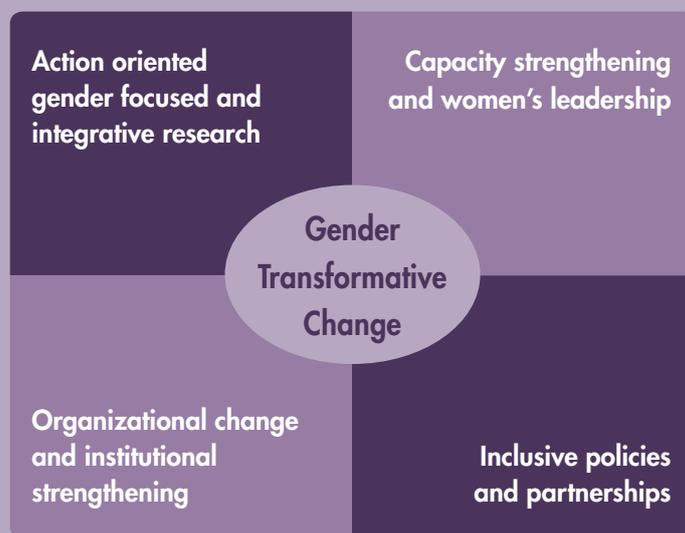
Progress has been made in recent years in terms of research, enhanced knowledge, strengthened capacities and women's leadership skills, expanded gender networks, and institutional mechanisms for addressing gender issues. The Centre continues to be committed to gender transformative change and is working to achieve this through four pillars conceptualized in 2012: i) gender integrative and focused research, ii) gender positive organizational change, iii) capacity strengthening and women's leadership, and iv) impact through gender-inclusive policies and partnerships. However, the 2012 Gender Audit identified a number of weaknesses and challenges in terms of programmatic interventions and organizational change, which the gender policy addresses.

Gendered Challenges

The nature and pace of global, economic, socio-cultural and environmental changes differentially impact on women's, men's and children's livelihoods and wellbeing. Increasingly, their adaptive capacities to these new changes depend on their access to resources, knowledge, services, and meaningful engagement with development and governance institutions. Resilient responses are also related to gender divisions of roles, property ownership that considerably limits or favors women's and men's

ability to make decisions, and the ability of development organizations to value existing gendered knowledge, agency and experiences. Women and men must also be able to make and own their choices and exercise control over their assets. Experience has shown that they manage and cope with these new realities in different ways due to socially-constructed gender norms and relations of power. Therefore, it is important for ICIMOD and its partners to be aware of gender issues, to address them and to promote gender analysis and equity.

Gender issues in the HKH also present many challenges and nuances. Diversity of cultural contexts and national capacities often compel the use of different strategies to increase women's and men's access to and control political-economic, socio-cultural and natural resources, as well as equitable and meaningful participation in development initiatives, and decision and policy making. To address these challenges and to ensure sustainable development through inter-disciplinary/trans-disciplinary approaches that will equally benefit men and women, ICIMOD's Gender Equity Policy lays out a long term goal to effectively contribute to addressing the practical and strategic needs of women, men and children in the HKH region. The 2007 Gender Equity Policy was revisited and strengthened to match with the Strategic Framework 2012 and Medium-Term Action Plan III (20013-2017). Special attention was given to both (MTAP III) strengthening gender focus and integration in programmatic work and organizational change to make ICIMOD a gender-responsive institution.



Four pillars of gender transformative change



Gender Strategy

MTAP III requires strengthening of gender in the research agenda, within the Centre, and across partnerships. A strategy will be developed that includes the following elements.

Integration of Gender into the Research Agenda

- Include gender where appropriate in output, outcome, and impact statements, ensuring gender integration across Regional Programmes.
- Have gender experts review programmatic plans and progress.
- Ensure that professionals with gender analytical skills are part of Regional Programme teams at the management level.
- Ensure solid and rigorous science and analysis on gender and natural resource management topics.
- Plan for articles that include gender analysis, and reward staff in appraisals.

Capacity strengthening and women's leadership

- Have more women in leadership roles across ICIMOD.
- Enhance and increase number of professionals trained in women's leadership, management, and negotiation skills.
- Continue commitment to, and profiling of, gender champions within ICIMOD and the region.
- Build experience through the many leadership roles that are available across ICIMOD (not just top posts).
- Provide mentoring to women professionals.

Gender inclusive policy and partnerships

- Ensure better gender impacts through the strength and gender expertise of partners.
- Facilitate a network of gender experts and women scientists for mountain environments.

- Identify groups that are strong at gender and socio-cultural analysis and choose them for work within partnership strategies.
- Scale out women's leadership training for partners.
- Conduct training on gender and inclusive development.
- Increase the number of women professionals and scientists at meetings, workshops, and conferences.
- Contribute to strengthening of women's roles and participation in regional policy for a.
- Strengthen capacities of partners on gender analysis and equity.
- Enhance the role of regional member country gender focal points.

Gender positive organizational change

- Update and strengthen gender equity policy according to MTAP-III.
- Achieve a greater gender balance among staff and professionals.
- Actively recruit women by engaging gender networks and individuals (include gender sensitive clause).
- Make the workplace more gender friendly for women (through childcare centre, flexible working hours, gender sensitivity training, a strengthened anti-sexual harassment policy, improved safety and security).
- Improve the gender and diversity working environment at ICIMOD, with a focus on making it more accessible to women to attract more women scientists.
- Uphold the Gender Resource Team (GReaT) as an advisory group.
- Celebrate and observe International Women's Day.
- Carry out a gender audit every three years and compare to baseline in 2012.



Gender Equity Policy Goals and Objectives

The goal of ICIMOD's Gender Equity Policy is to ensure gender equality and transformative change in sustainable and equitable mountain development in the HKH.

Objectives

- To ensure equitable and meaningful participation of both men and women at all levels of sustainable mountain development and policy-making.
- To respect and uphold equal rights, and equitable access to and control over resources and benefits for women and men.
- To strengthen the capacities and empowerment of women, including leaders, decision-makers and producers of knowledge.
- To ensure gender integrative and focused work into all research and development activities of ICIMOD and its partners, and to make ICIMOD a gender equitable and sensitive organization that provides opportunities and benefits to all staff.

Gender Definitions and Concepts

Gender – refers to the socio-culturally and political-economically constructed roles and responsibilities ascribed to women and men that change over time, are context and historically specific and are inseparable from power relations. It also refers to a domain of characteristics that shape the value, status and access to resources of women and men within different societies.

Gender equality – is the measurable equal representation of women and men. Gender equality does not imply that women and men are the same, but that they have equal value and should be accorded equal treatment, opportunities and benefits.

Gender equity – is the process of being fair to women and men. To ensure fairness, strategies, policies and measures must often be available to compensate for women's historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on a level playing field. Equity leads to equality.

Gender analysis – refers to the systematic examination of the multiple roles, relationships, social institutions, agency and processes between and among women and men in different cultures and societies, focusing on imbalances of power, wealth, workloads, ownership and access to resources.

Gender transformative change – goes beyond identifying and exploring the symptoms of gender equality, and addresses socially constructed norms, attitudes, and relations of power that underlie them. It is committed to rigorous gender analysis, organizational change, capacity and institutional strengthening, and ensuring gender positive impact through meaningful participation of women and men in leadership, policy and decision-making processes and institutions.



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