

# Capacity-building Workshop on Gender and Social Inclusion in Sustainable Mountain Development

Date: 19 -21 January 2026

Location: ICIMOD, Kathmandu, Nepal

Organised by: ICIMOD

## 1. BACKGROUND

The Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) region is characterized by profound social, ecological, and economic diversity, shaped by its unique mountain geographies, cultural pluralism, and uneven development trajectories. While the region plays a critical role in sustaining the livelihoods and wellbeing of millions of people, persistent gender inequalities and social exclusion continue to influence access to education, resources, decision-making, and institutional opportunities, particularly within higher education institutions (HEIs).

Higher education institutions in the HKH have a pivotal role in shaping knowledge systems, research agendas, policies, and future leadership for sustainable mountain development. However, an earlier regional study conducted under the Himalayan University Consortium (HUC) revealed significant variations among member institutions in how gender and social inclusion (GESI) are addressed in teaching, research, and capacity-building initiatives. Building on this, the current mixed-methods study on GESI in institutional policies of HUC member institutions has further highlighted gaps in recruitment practices, promotion systems, student selection processes, organisational cultures, and policy frameworks that affect women and marginalised groups.

In response, ICIMOD and HUC are convening this regional capacity-building workshop to strengthen conceptual understanding and practical application of GESI in mountain sustainable development, while also supporting institutional transformation within HEIs. The workshop will provide a space for critical reflection, peer learning, and skills-building, linking theory with practice and research with institutional change. It will draw on the findings of the GESI institutional policy study and respond to expressed needs identified during focus group discussions held during the Inter-Polar Conference (September 2025).

## 2. OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the workshop is to enhance the capacity of HUC member institutions to integrate gender and social inclusion into research, teaching, and institutional policies relevant to sustainable mountain development in the HKH region.

Specifically, the workshop aims to:

- Strengthen participants' conceptual and theoretical understanding of gender and social inclusion in the context of mountain sustainable development in the HKH region.
- Build awareness of mountain-specific and intersecting dimensions of exclusion, including caste, ethnicity, disability, indigeneity, citizenship status, livelihood systems, migration, and cross-border marginalities.
- Enhance participants' methodological skills to analyse gender relations and social inclusion in research and institutional contexts.

- Support participants to critically reflect on institutional cultures, policies, and positions within universities and higher education institutions.
- Facilitate the development of practical research ideas and institutional commitments that embed GESI principles in academic and organisational practices.

### 3. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

By the end of the workshop, the following outcomes are expected:

- Improved shared understanding among participants of key GESI concepts, theories, and frameworks relevant to mountain sustainable development.
- Enhanced capacity of participants to apply gender and social inclusion lenses in research design, data collection, and analysis.
- Increased awareness of institutional barriers and opportunities for advancing GESI within higher education institutions in the HKH.
- Strengthened peer networks among HUC members for ongoing collaboration, mentorship, and knowledge exchange on GESI.
- Institutional commitments developed by participants to advance gender-responsive and socially inclusive practices within their institutions.
- Actionable insights to inform future HUC and ICIMOD capacity-building and policy engagement on GESI.

### 4. Draft Agenda

Time	Activities	Responsible
<b>Day 1: 19 January 2026</b>		
10:00 – 10:15 (15 mins)	Welcome note	David Thomas Potter, Strategic Group Head, ICIMOD
10:15- 10:45 (30 mins)	Key findings from the study (KIIs and FGDs)  Workshop Overview and Objectives – Framing the workshop within the HUC GESI institutional study	Dr. Vishal Narain
10:45 – 11:00 (15 mins)	<b>Tea Break and Group Photo</b>	Aruna
11:00 – 11:30 (30 mins)	Participant Introductions and Expectations	Dr. Vishal Narain
11:30 – 12:00 (30 mins)	Interactive Ice-breaker: <i>Personal and Professional Journeys through Gender</i> – Group reflection – Reporting Back to Plenary	Dr. Vishal Narain
12:00 – 1:00 (1 hr)	<b>Session I: Conceptual Foundations of Gender and Social Inclusion</b> - Key concepts: sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, and intersectionality - Rationale for a gender perspective in mountain sustainable development - Mountain-specific inter-sectionalities in the HKH context	Dr. Vishal Narain
1:00 – 2:00 (1 hr)	Lunch	Aruna
2:00 – 3:00 (1 hr)	<b>Session II: Changing Gender Relations in Mountain Contexts</b> – Group discussions based on pre-circulated readings	Dr. Vishal Narain

	– Focus on climate change, glacier melt, migration, remittances, and feminisation of mountain labour	
3:00 – 3:30 (30 mins)	Reporting Back to Plenary	Dr. Vishal Narain
3:30 – 3:45 (30 mins)	Tea Break	Aruna
3:45 – 5:00 (1 hr 15 mins)	<b>Session III: From Concepts to Practice</b> – Group work on applying GESI in professional and institutional settings _ Power Walk – Power mapping exercise: decision-making, voice, representation, and exclusion	Chhaya
<b>Day 2: 20 January 2026</b>		
9:15 – 9:30 (15 mins)	Reflections from Day 1	Dr. Vishal Narain
9:30 – 10:45 (1 hr 15 mins)	<b>Session IV: Theoretical Lenses for Analysing Gender in Mountain Sustainable Development</b> – Ecofeminism and feminist political ecology – Indigenous, disability-inclusive, and youth-centred approaches	Dr. Vishal Narain Chhaya
10:45 – 11:00 (15 mins)	Tea Break	Aruna
11:00 – 1:00 (2 hrs)	<b>Session V: Methodological Approaches to Studying GESI</b> – Social science paradigms – Research ethics, community consent, and knowledge repatriation	Dr. Vishal Narain
1:00 – 2:00 (1 hr)	Lunch	Aruna
2:00 – 3:30 (1.5 hrs)	<b>Session VI: Methods</b> – Ethnography, FGDs, and KIIs	Dr. Vishal Narain
3:30 – 3:45 (15 mins)	Tea Break	Aruna
3:45 – 5:00 (1 hr 15 mins)	<b>Session VII: Group Work</b> – Developing short research proposals and institutional action ideas	Dr. Vishal Narain
<b>Day 3: 21 January 2026</b>		
9:15 – 9:30 (15 mins)	Reflections from Day 2	Dr. Vishal Narain
9:30 – 10:45 (1 hr 15 mins)	<b>Session VIII: Presentation of Group Proposals</b> – Feedback and peer learning	Dr. Vishal Narain and Chhaya
10:45 – 11:00 (15 mins)	Tea Break	Aruna
11:00 – 12:15 (1 hr)	<b>Session IX: Key Learnings and Way Forward</b> – Three key takeaways or institutional commitments from each participant	Dr. Vishal Narain and Chhaya
12:15 – 12:25 (10 mins)	Remarks from HUC Secretariat	Prof. Bim Bahadur Shrestha, Head, HUC Secretariat, Kathmandu University
12:25 – 1:00 (35 mins)	Closing Session, e-Certificate sharing through mail	
1:00 onwards	<b>Lunch</b>	Aruna

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