

## Introduction

Mountain ecosystems are highly fragile and the livelihoods of mountain people and those of downstream communities are extremely vulnerable to various changes, including global environmental changes.

Migration has traditionally offered people the opportunity to escape socioeconomic and other pressures in their areas of origin and to diversify livelihoods and cope with risks.

Despite a growing consensus that migration itself serves as an adaptation strategy, it is still perceived as a challenge to development and the policy narrative focuses on reducing migration.



## RESULTS

### THE TRUTH ABOUT MIGRATION IN ENVIRONMENTALLY VULNERABLE AREAS OF HKH

- Drivers of migration
  - 44%** Employment
  - 30%** Education
- 17%** Women are joining due to improved education
- Mostly young married men move
- Migration is higher in the mountains compared to plains
- 80%** Internal migration predominates
- Environmental drivers have weak attribution

### MIGRATION AND ADAPTATION: RESPONSE OR AN ADAPTATION STRATEGY?

- USD 3 per day per household** Low remittances, but it helps spatially diversify household income
- Labour migration has positive effect on household adaptive capacities, but - statistically significant for agriculture sector
- External support matters for better adaptation – climate information, membership in community groups, and access to non-government stakeholders
- Adaptation measure are mostly autonomous, with short-term benefit but detrimental long-term effects

### RECOMMENDATION: MOVING FROM RESPONSE TO ADAPTATION

- Policy needs to view migration as a potential adaptation strategy instead of as a barrier
- Enhancement of labour migration outcomes and institutional support for individual adaptation efforts – with the potential for upscaling in a gender-inclusive manner – can improve the quality of, and benefits from, labour migration

## Migration and agriculture linkages in areas of origin

Geospatial analysis (using Landsat data on LULC 1990-2010)

Interdisciplinary approach to understand the complex nexus

Qualitative analysis (FGDs and interviews to validate the findings and understanding local nuances)

Quantitative analysis (Logistic regression analysis using secondary population census and weather data)

### CASE STUDY OF GANDAKI BASIN



#### 1990-2010

Where people move?

Who moves?

Human capital

Natural capital

Changing climate

Agricultural land abandonment in the mountains (>2000 ha per district). In plains forest land converted to agriculture land and built environment

International migration may not be responsible for agricultural land abandonment

If the percentage of female internal out-migrants is increased by **1%**, there is a **37%** higher chance of agricultural land contraction.

Contraction of agricultural land likely to increase by **18%** if **1%** of population has higher qualifications

**32** times higher chance of agricultural land contraction in mountain areas compared to plains

Erratic precipitation has positive influence on agriculture land contraction; increases risk of landslides; drying up of springs also a major challenge