

Women in Tourism Incubation Report

Project "Mountain is Hers Too (MoHer)"

*"Finding Opportunity Where It Matters:
Women, Work, and Tourism in Nepal"*



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Background And Context



Women in Tourism Incubation



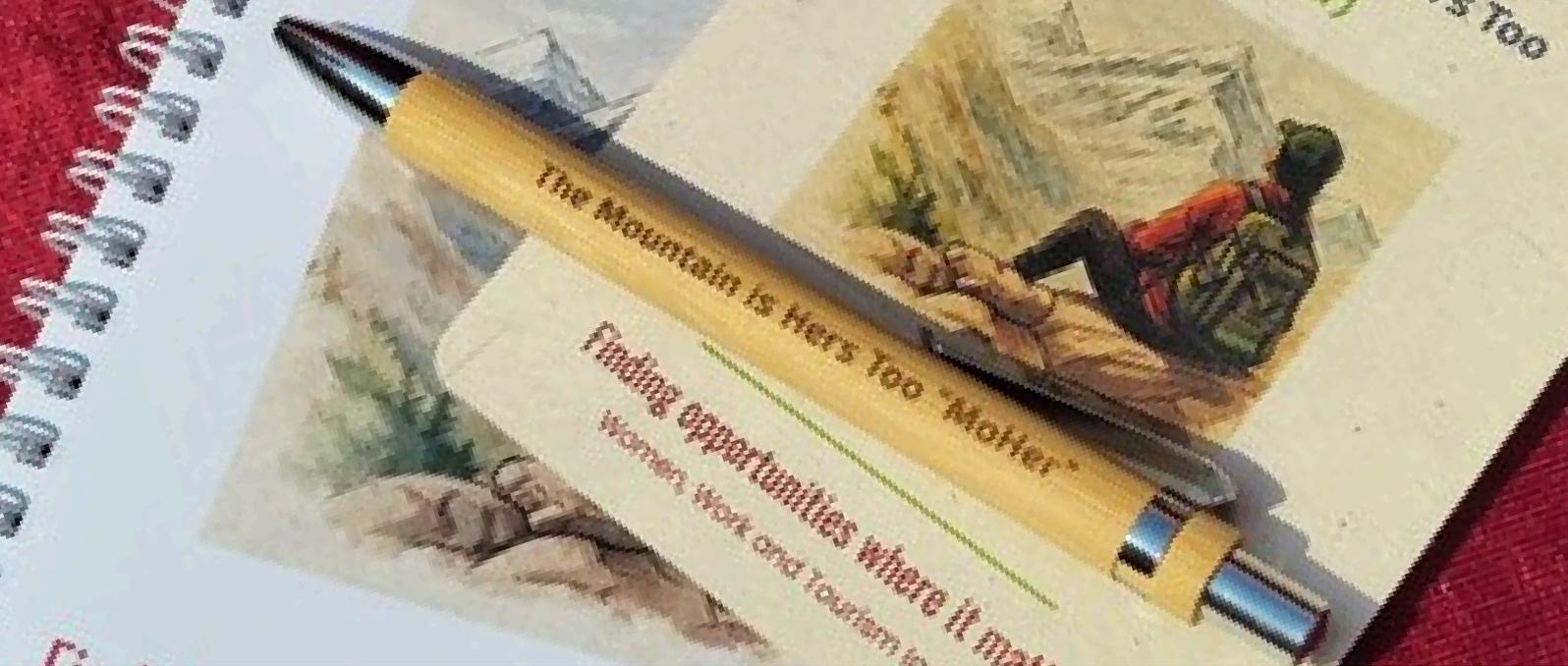
Incubation Objectives



Incubation Process and Outcomes



Next Steps



Background and Context

Tourism is one of Nepal's key employment-generating sectors, yet women, especially from marginalized backgrounds, remain significantly underrepresented in skilled and formal roles such as trekking guides. Social, economic, and educational barriers limit women's access to training, certification, and professional networks within the tourism industry.

The number of women travelers is increasing every day. Solo women travelers often feel more secure sharing tents or remote trails with other women, and female guides often provide deeper access into the lives of local village women, offering a perspective male guides might miss. When female guides lead tours, they are more likely to direct tourism spend toward other female-owned businesses (weaving cooperatives, women's homestays, etc), creating a wider net of empowerment.

The opportunities available for women on mountain tourism are very limited and are comparatively in higher numbers with low-skilled and illiterate jobs in informal sectors like tea shops, small lodges. Apart from some women who manage local hotels/lodges as a form of honour on the trekking trails, the majority of them are associated with lower-level jobs compared to men, who are engaged in executive and higher-level jobs in the organized sector. While they manage high-level logistics and guest relations, this is often viewed as an extension of domestic work rather than a professional skill, depriving them of formal certification and higher wages.

Professional trekking guide licenses require formal training through the Nepal Mountain Academy (NMA) or NATHM. Marginalized women often lack the initial capital, literacy levels, or the “social permission” to leave their households for weeks for intensive training.



Social Lab, in collaboration with the Swiss Foundation for Solidarity in Tourism, is implementing Project “Mountain is Hers Too,” or MOHER, which responds to this gap by creating an inclusive, merit-based pathway for women to explore tourism careers, build professional skills, and access certified trekking guide training and industry exposure.

The project doesn't just train them but rather validates and professionalizes the managerial skills these women already possess.



Women in Tourism Incubation

The MoHER project used social media and local networks to find women across Kathmandu valley who were ready to start a career in tourism. Our digital outreach reached over 70,000 young people, leading to 300 applications. From this pool, we carefully selected 60 dedicated participants to join our incubation program.

70,000+

people reached
through digital
platforms

300

formal
applications
submitted

60

women chosen
for the incubation
program

The 60 participants were selected based on:

Mandatory Eligibility Criteria

Gender

Female

Age

18 - 30 years at the time of application

Educational
Qualification

+2 (higher secondary education) completed or
above

Residence

Based in Kathmandu valley

Socio-economic
Background

Priorities given to those belonging from
marginalized and disadvantaged socio-
economic background



Socio-Economic Background

- Women from low-income or economically vulnerable households
- First generation professionals or earners
- Women from rural, peri-urban, or underserved communities
- Women with limited prior access to professional training or networks
- Women facing structural barriers to entering tourism (social norms, financial constraints, lack of exposure)

Motivation and Career Interest

- Genuine interest in tourism, trekking, hospitality, or outdoor livelihoods
- Openness to exploring non-traditional and field-based career pathways
- Willingness to learn
- Readiness to participate in group-based learning, mentorship, and peer exchange

Incubation Objectives

Through this, the project aims to give the participants clarity on tourism and trekking options, along with building confidence and practical skills. This initiative also aims to create certified and licensed professionals, creating stronger linkages between women and the tourism industry resulting in an increased visibility of women's participation in Nepal's tourism industry.

- Understanding tourism markets, seasons, and opportunities
- Career Orientation
- Professional Skills Development
- Self-Branding and Marketing
- Income Generation Training
- Exposure to real world tourism environment
- Certified professional training pathways



Incubation Process and Outcomes

Overview of tourism and trekking in Nepal



An introduction to the importance of the sector and the various career paths available in the field.

Safety, Responsibility, and Ethics in Tourism



An insight into the hazards, essential moral, and operational compass required in the sector.

Trekking as a profession



Shifting the narrative of trekking from a casual hobby to a recognized, high-value career path.

Interaction with a Trekking Professional



Real world insights into the industry and direct Q&A session with veteran trekking guide Yangchhen Sherpa.

Knowledge on Different Kinds of Travelers in Nepal



Exploring the diverse demographics that fuel the tourism economy.

Guide Preparedness 101



A deep dive into the technical readiness and mental fortitude required to lead in the Himalayas.

Personal Hygiene and Emotional Intelligence



Establishing high personal hygiene standards to reflect service quality, while mastering emotional cues and building empathy to bridge local traditions with international guest backgrounds

Self assessment and personal readiness



A reflective session where participants evaluate their personal readiness.

Incubation Process and Outcomes

Marketing and Branding Workshop

A workshop on building a marketing mindset for career growth, professional presence and personal brand to attract clients and agencies



Elevator Pitching Workshop

A training session on how to concisely and confidently communicate their values and passion in a short amount of time.



Storytelling for tourism professionals

A session on mastering the art of transforming knowledge into engaging narratives to enhance the trekking experience and build deeper connections with guests.



Incubation Outcomes

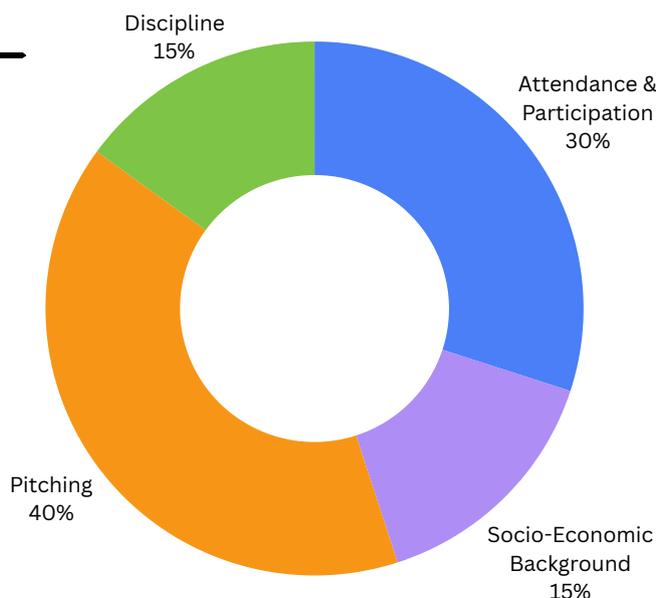
- 60 women successfully completed the “Women in Tourism” incubation, gaining foundational knowledge about Nepal’s trekking and tourism sector.
- Participants developed essential professional soft skills, including elevator pitching, storytelling, and self-branding.
- Fellows strengthened their ability to transform personal passion for trekking into a professional career pathway.
- The program helped participants build confidence and professional identity as aspiring tourism professionals.
- The incubation phase served as a development and screening platform to identify high-potential candidates.
- Selected participants are now prepared to transition into the Advanced Training Program for certified trekking guide training.



Next Steps

Evaluation of the incubation participants based on:

- Career Pitching
- Attendance & Participation
- Socio-Economic Background
- Discipline



Following a merit-based evaluation, 20 high-potential participants will be selected for the Advanced Training Program.

This is designed to transition women from informal roles into certified leadership positions through three core pillars:

Exposure Visits

Providing direct interaction with industry leaders and women-led trekking agencies to build professional networks and market literacy.

Trekking Guide Training

Intensive technical and soft-skills capacity building, focusing on high-altitude safety, navigation, and sustainable tourism practices

Licensure Support

Facilitating the formal certification process through NMA/NATHM, removing the financial and bureaucratic barriers to legal, high-wage employment.

Next Steps



From the initial cohort, 20 female youth will be selected for a full scholarship to complete a rigorous 5-week training program and receive formal trekking guide licensing support. This comprehensive scholarship includes bi-weekly in-house mentorship and career readiness workshops to bridge the gap to professional employment. To ensure practical mastery, participants will join two exposure visits focused on on-field safety leadership and first-aid leadership, equipping them with the high-level expertise required to lead in the Himalayas.

The remaining 40 will be enrolled in mentorship support, and industrial placement support.

Digital Annex Index

Supporting Documentation for the “Mountain is Hers Too” Project

Annex	Category	Documents Included	Access Link
Annex A	Administrative	Attendance Sheets, Program Agenda, Consent Form	External Link
Annex B	Technical	Evaluation Sheets, Observation Remarks	External Link
Annex C	Media	<i>Incubation Program Photos, Pitching Videos of participants</i>	External Link

Women in Tourism Incubation Report



THANK YOU