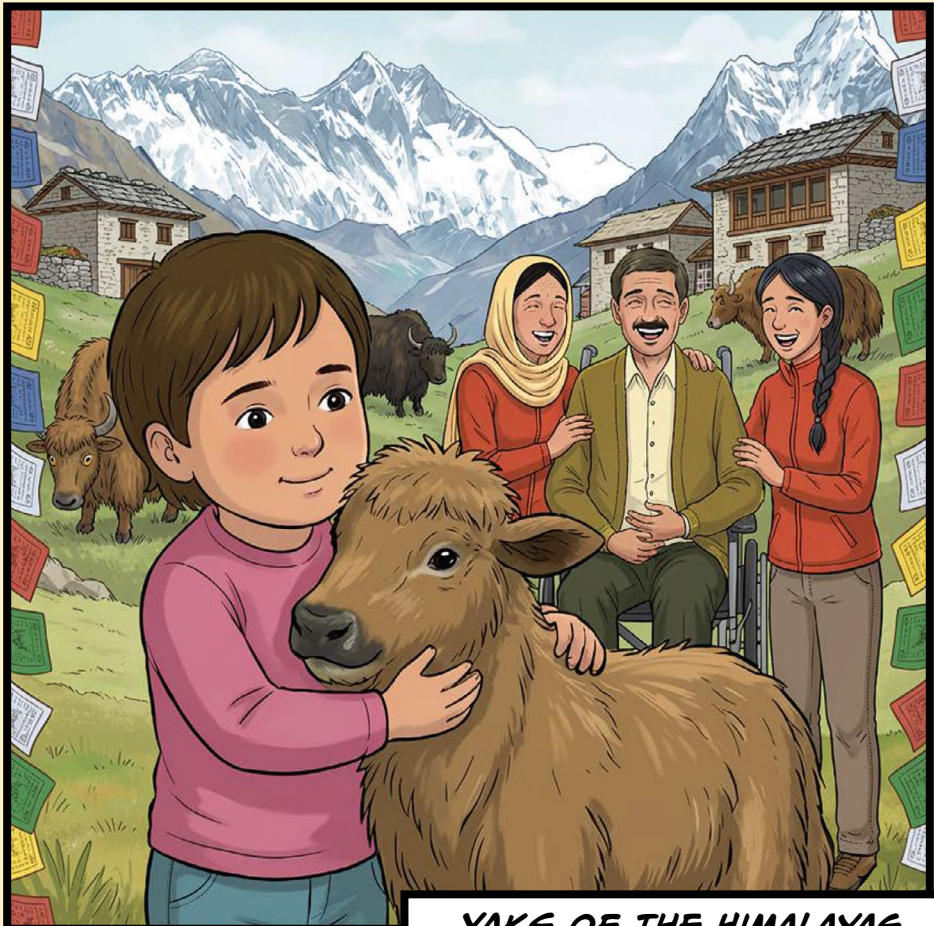




World Organisation
for Animal Health

SKETCHING CHANGE

TALES FROM VETERINARIANS ACROSS ASIA-PACIFIC



YAKS OF THE HIMALAYAS



Scan the QR code to access the comic stories in this publication in digital format, and to read several others.

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ABOUT THIS VOLUME

The World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) is committed to strengthening gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) within the veterinary sector. Our recent work in Asia and the Pacific has shown that, while there is a growing number of qualified women and diverse professionals in the sector, many still face barriers shaped by longstanding norms, insufficient adjustments and unequal opportunities.

As noted in regional studies conducted by WOA in Asia-Pacific, gender stereotypes influence perceptions within the veterinary sector, and the absence of reasonable accommodations reinforces the exclusion of persons with disabilities. These findings highlight the need for continued awareness and action across institutions, training systems, and professional communities.

To foster this change, WOA has expanded its GEDSI initiatives, including awareness raising events and partnerships with veterinary associations and networks in Asia and the Pacific region, in particular the Federation of Asian Veterinary Associations (FAVA), the Asian Association of Veterinary Schools (AAVS) and the International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA). The Comics Competition Promoting GEDSI in the Veterinary Sector, organised between December 2025 and January 2026, invited veterinary students and professionals to reflect creatively on what an inclusive profession looks like.

The competition aimed to celebrate storytelling, artistic talent, veterinary commitment and GEDSI values, and to inspire dialogue through accessible and engaging narratives. Among the winning submissions, the comic presented here captures the imagination, concerns, and aspirations of veterinarians in different parts of the Asia and the Pacific region. The story reminds us that inclusion is not only a policy goal—it is a shared cultural commitment that strengthens the profession and the communities it serves. While we could not award all participants with prizes, we appreciated all entries and will be sharing additional comic stories of note on our website (see QR code on the cover inner page).

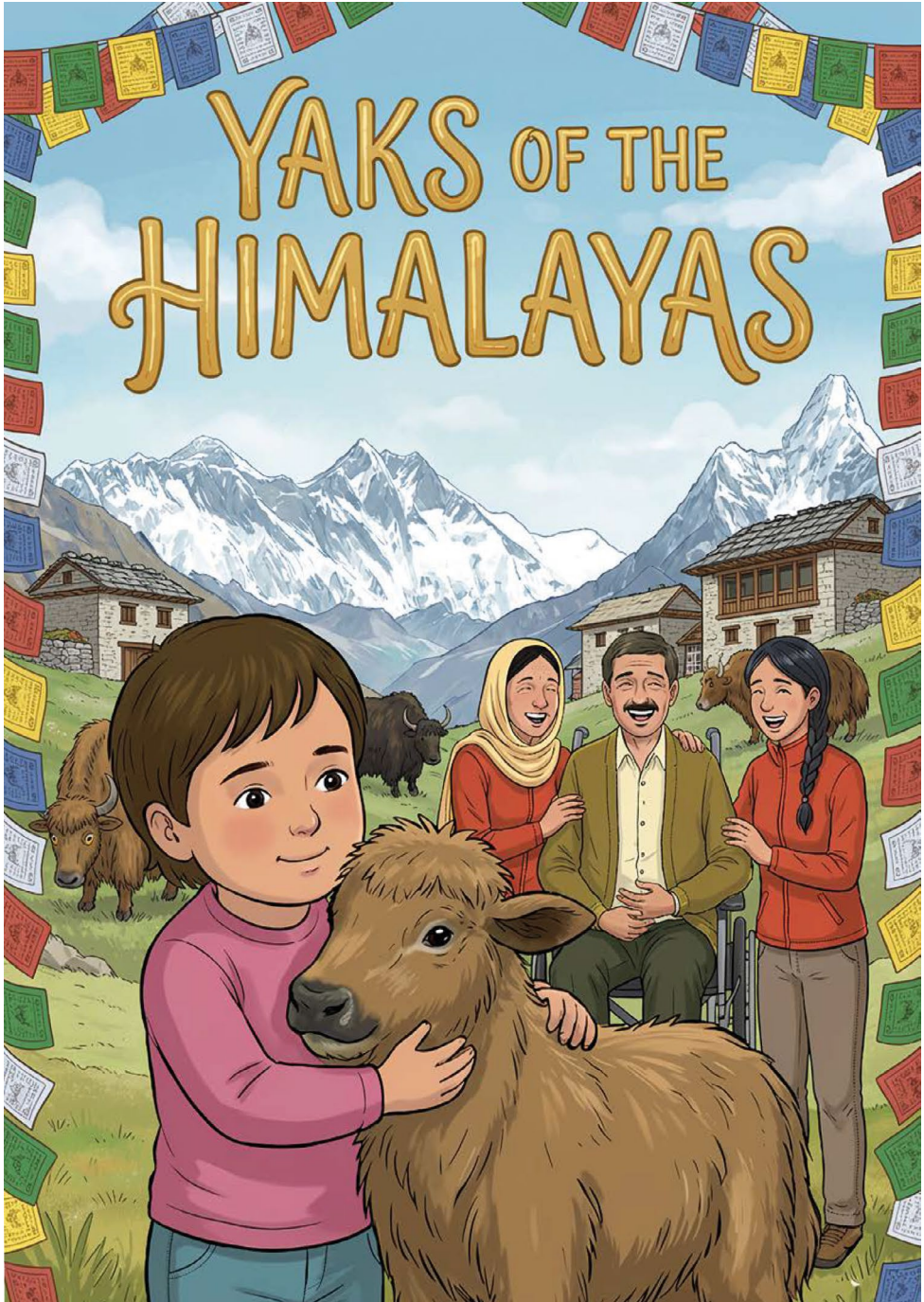
We extend our heartfelt congratulations to the winners of this competition, and thank all participants for adding their voices to this important conversation. This comic enriches WOA's ongoing efforts to promote a veterinary sector where everyone can thrive, advancing our mission to improve animal health and welfare globally and ensure a better future for all.



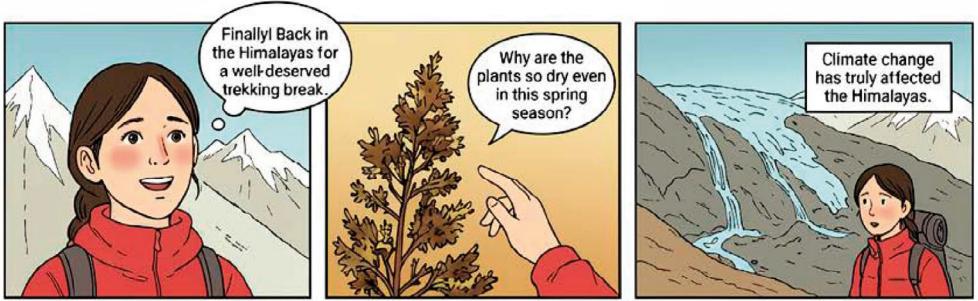
Dr Tomoko Ishibashi
*WOAH Regional Representative
for Asia and the Pacific*

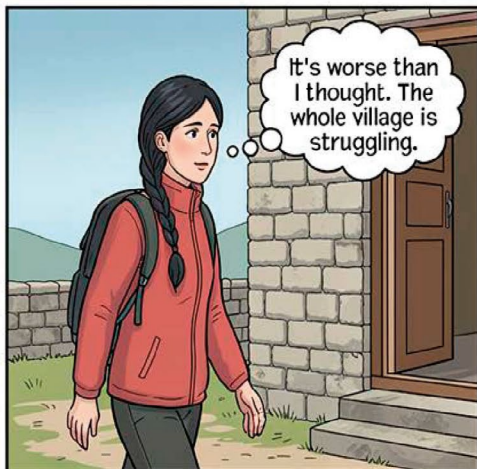
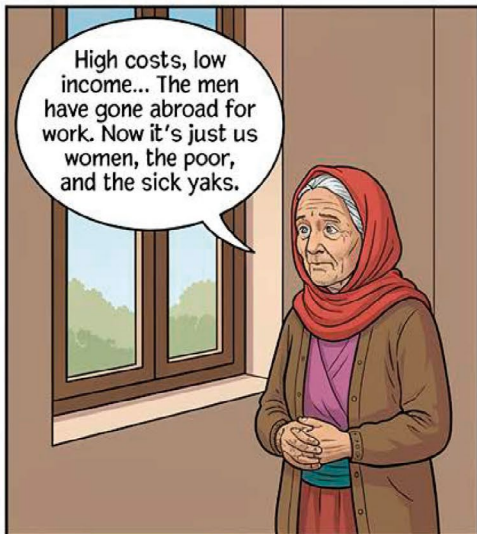


Dr Naree Ketusing
*WOAH Sub-Regional Representative
for South-East Asia*

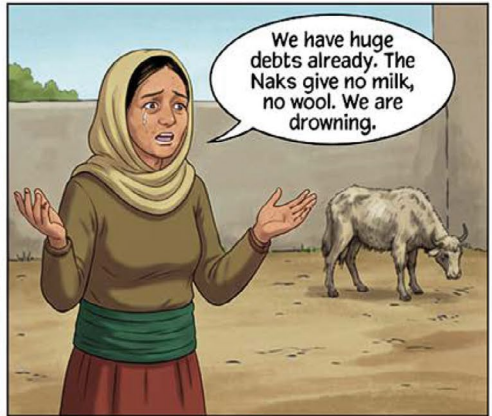
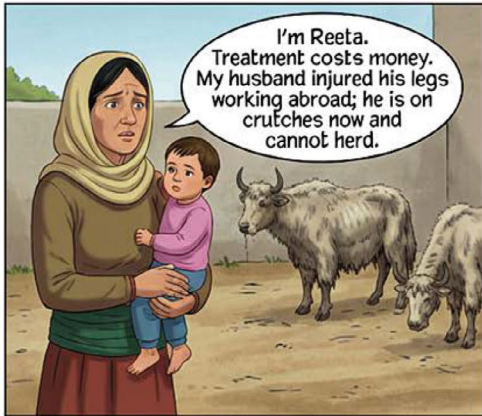


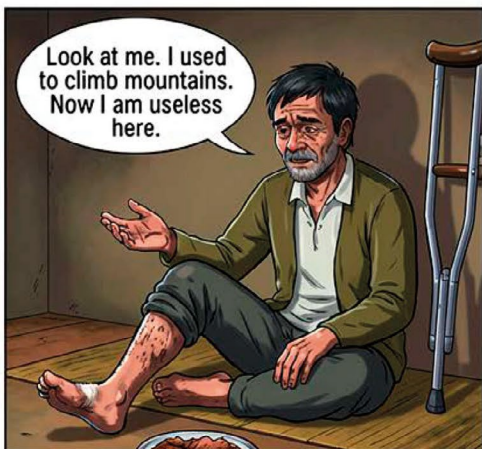
YAKS OF THE HIMALAYAS

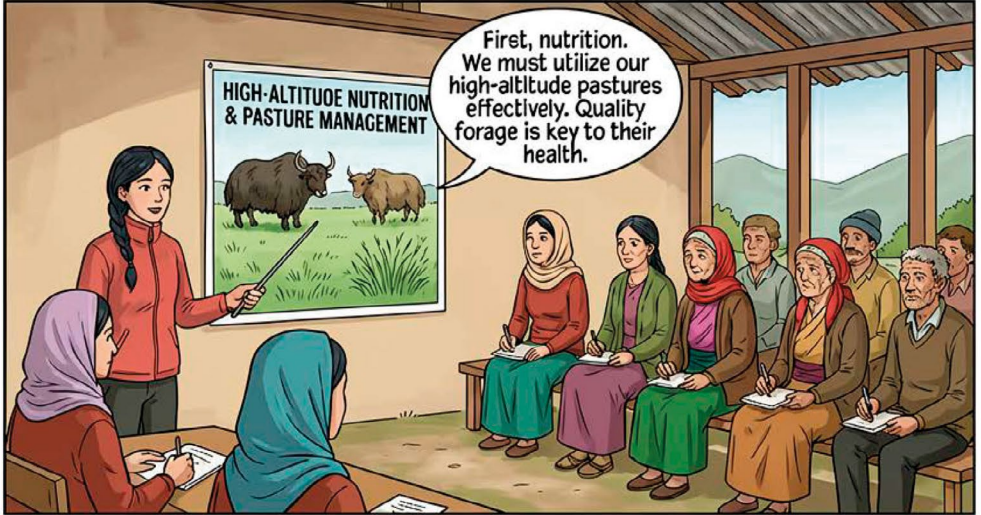
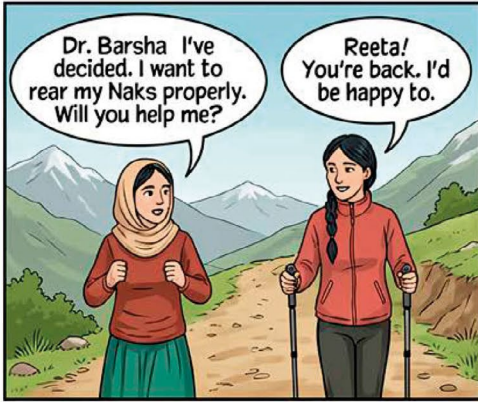


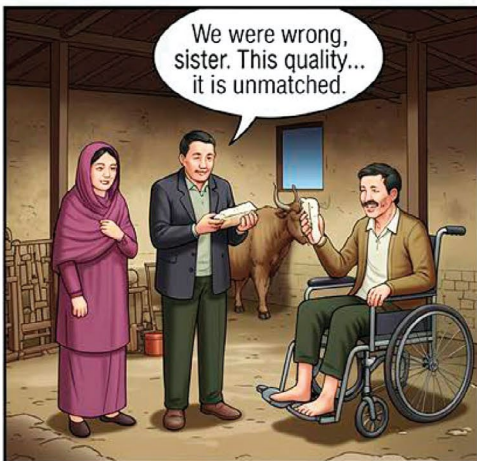


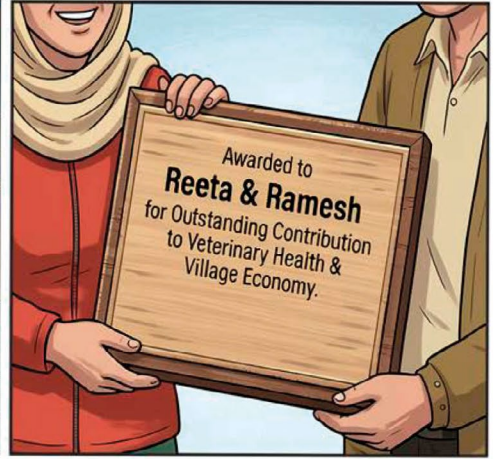
**Naks = female yaks*











ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Neha Shrestha

Dr Neha Shrestha is a dedicated registered veterinary doctor (Nepal Veterinary Council Registration Number: 1735) based in Itahari-4, Sunsari District, Koshi Province, Nepal. She earned her Bachelor in Veterinary Sciences and Animal Husbandry (B.V.Sc. and A.H.) from Purbanchal University in 2022 and subsequently specialised with a Master's degree in Animal Nutrition and Fodder Production (ANU) from Tribhuvan University. Dr Shrestha served as a Veterinary Officer for the Itahari Sub-Metropolitan Municipality for two years and since August 2025 serves as a Livestock Development Officer (Seventh level) for the Ministry of Industry, Agriculture, and Cooperatives (MoIAC), Koshi Province.

Aspiring to use her knowledge in nutritional science, Dr Shrestha is committed to the betterment of livestock productivity across the province. In the high-altitude regions of Koshi Province, yaks are not merely animals, they are the backbone of nutritional security and economic stability. Dr Shrestha aims to use her position to implement sustainable practices that ensure these vital creatures and the families who depend on them can thrive despite the mounting pressures of the modern world.

Comic Description

'Yaks of the Himalayas' is a narrative exploring the vulnerabilities and triumphs of rural Himalayan farmers. The story centers on Reeta, a woman whose family is on the brink of economic collapse. With her husband, Ramesh, disabled by an injury sustained while working abroad, a common and devastating reality for many Nepali families, the burden of survival falls on Reeta and her struggling yaks and naks. The comic highlights the 'vicious cycle' of low productivity, debt and forced migration that plagues the region.

The narrative takes a hopeful turn when Dr Barsha, a veterinarian, introduces the transformative power of science: proper nutrition, deworming and breed improvement. Through the lens of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GEDSI), the story shows how empowering women like Reeta with technical knowledge can stabilise the village economy. It also subtly addresses the impact of climate change on high-altitude pastures, emphasising that 'science isn't magic' but a practical tool for resilience. This comic tells the story of a low-income family hit hard by disability transforming their struggle into a spark of inspiration for all of Nepal. In a nation where agriculture is the backbone but gender equity is still a hurdle, Reeta's journey proves that empowering women can uplift entire communities. By modernising Yak rearing through science, the story offers a practical path to resilience against the harsh realities of climate change. Ultimately, it shows that with the right knowledge and inclusion, even the most vulnerable families can lead the way toward a more prosperous and stable country.

The comic also underscores that with the collaborative support of the Nepal Government and international bodies such as WOA, FAVA, AAVS, IVSA, and Australia DFAT, farmers do not have to choose between their homes and their survival. It is a tribute to the idea that good animal husbandry is the foundation of a prosperous, inclusive and stable Nepal.

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