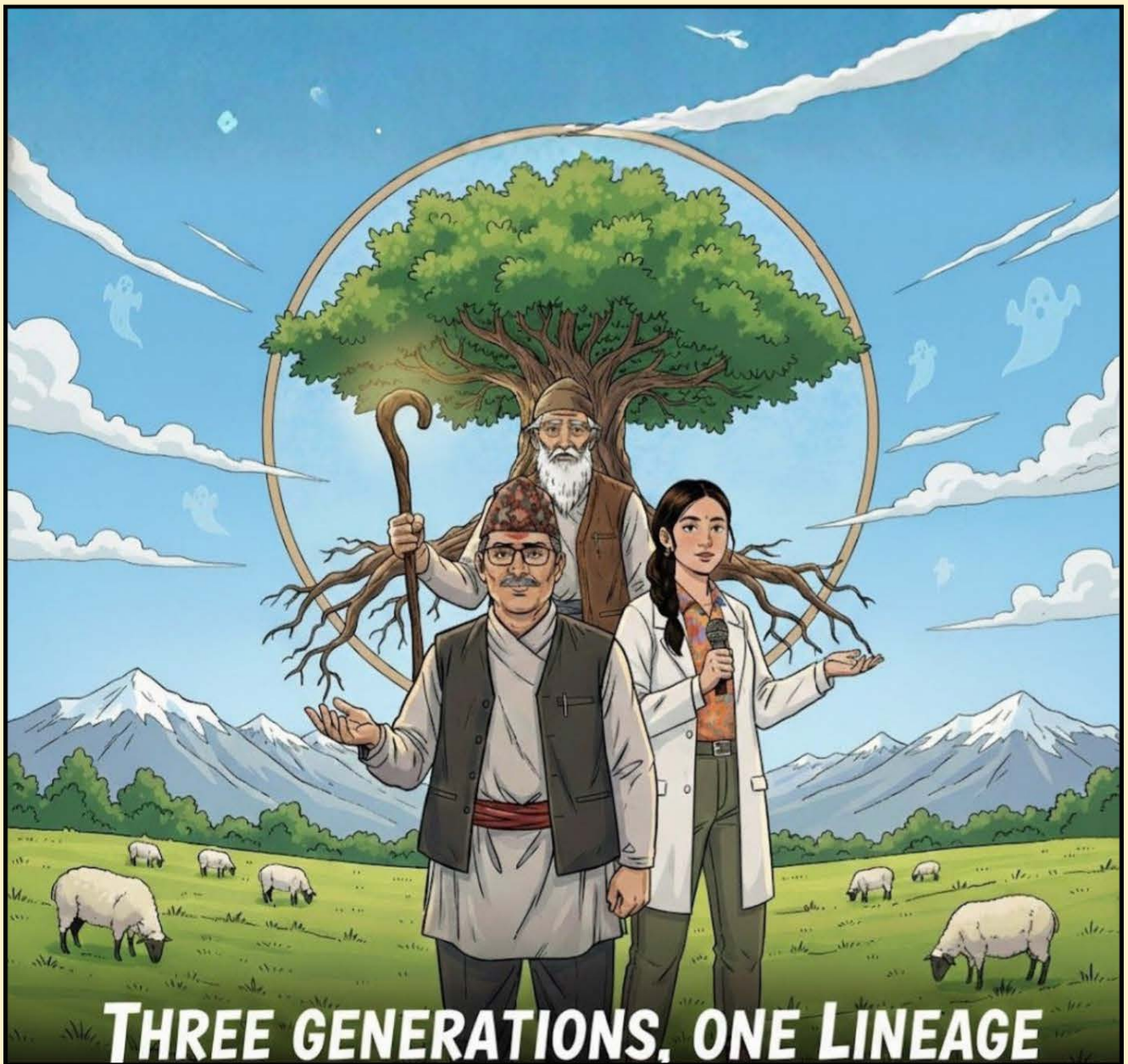




World Organisation  
for Animal Health

# **SKETCHING CHANGE**

**TALES FROM VETERINARIANS ACROSS ASIA-PACIFIC**



**THREE GENERATIONS, ONE LINEAGE**



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

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Note: Designations, statements and opinions in the material do not imply any official position of WOA or partner organisations, and responsibility for interpretation lies solely with the reader.

## 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 WOAH 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, WOAH 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 WOAH'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**

# Survival in Humla

Adanchuli-2, Humla.  
A land of beauty—and hardship.



Here, animals are survival,  
Not livelihood alone.



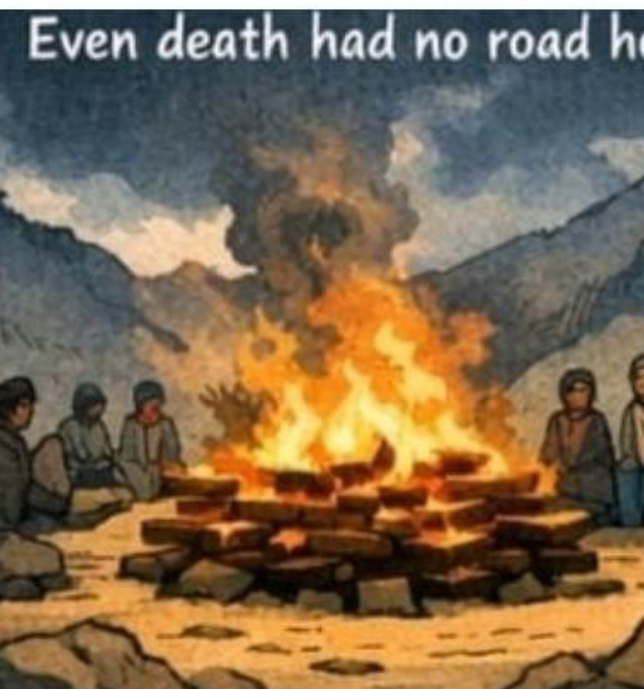
Geography made survival hard. I  
have to walk miles for salt & bread.



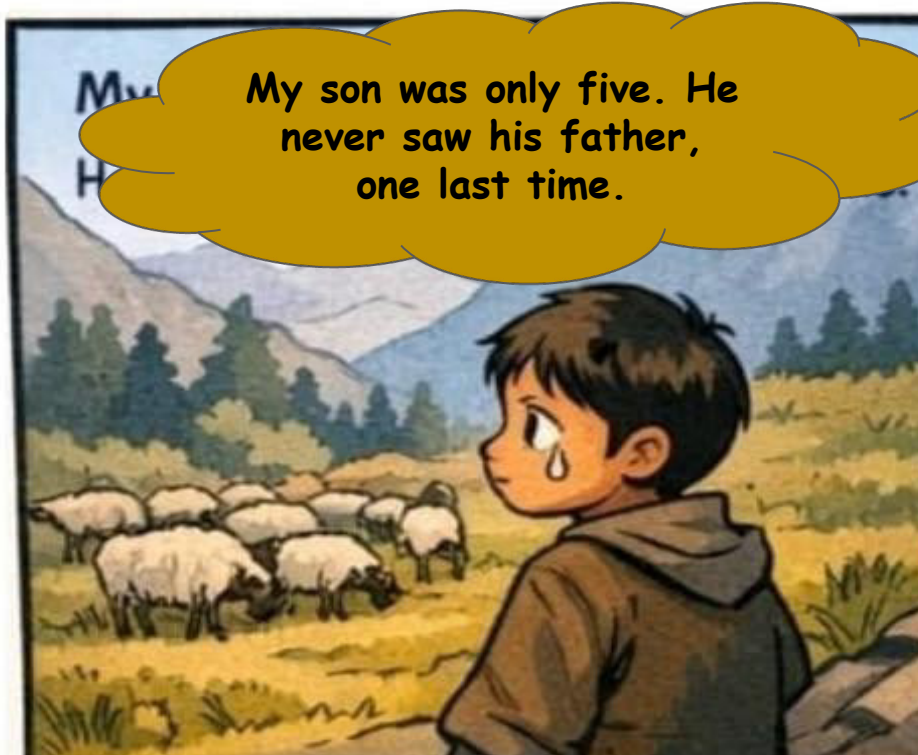
One journey, fever arrived.  
No medicine, No way back to  
home.



Even death had no road home.

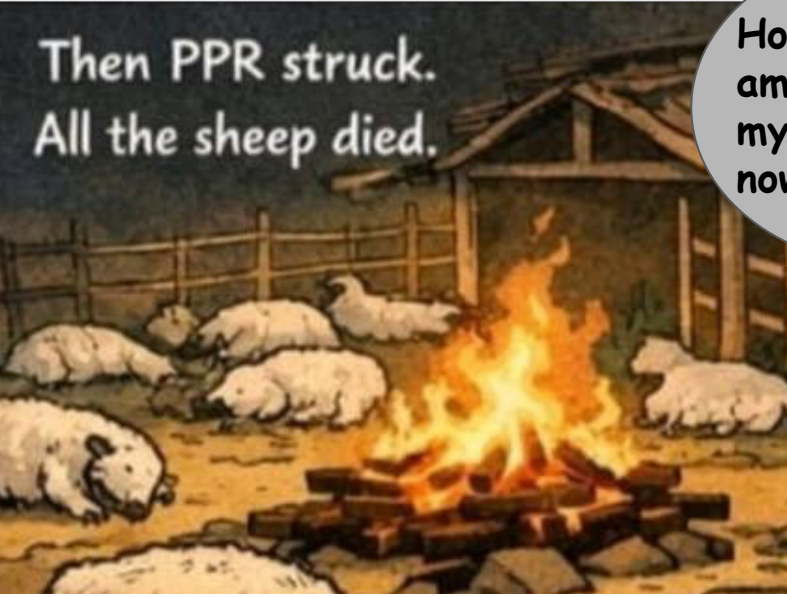


My son was only five. He  
never saw his father,  
one last time.

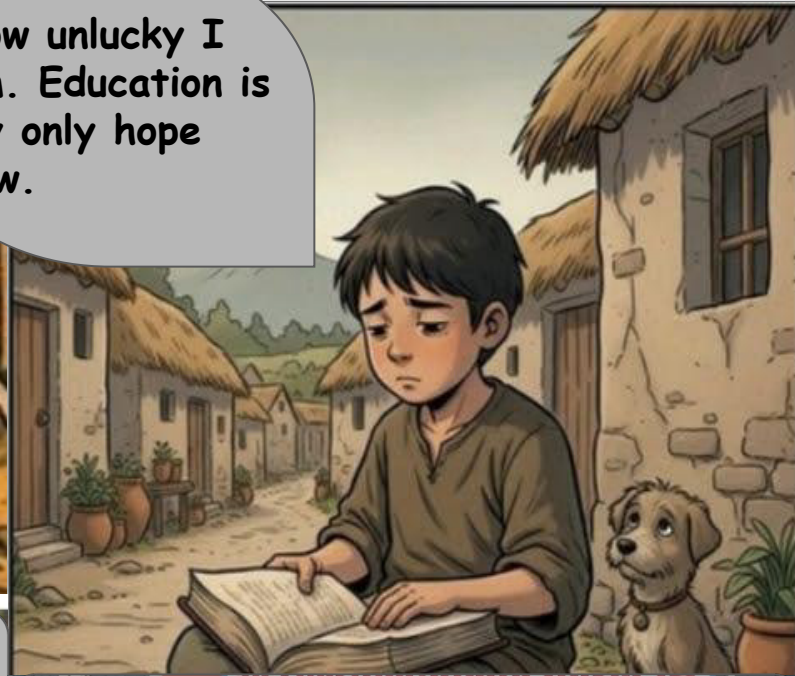


# From loss to purpose

Then PPR struck.  
All the sheep died.



How unlucky I  
am. Education is  
my only hope  
now.



Education was a ray of hope, my  
love towards animals guided my  
journey towards animal health.



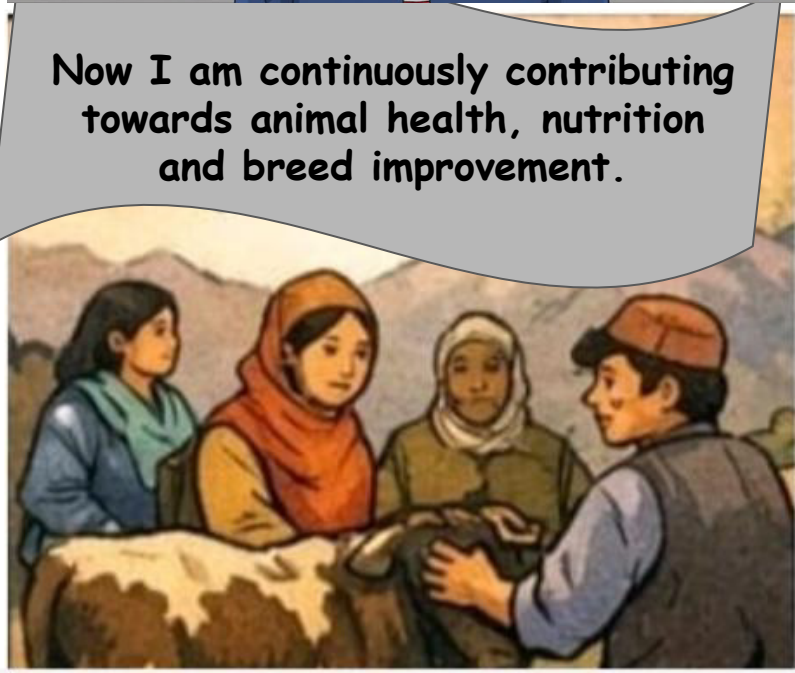
I became first livestock officer of  
Humla, and I'm serving the land that  
shaped me



Strengthening rural resilience,  
protecting the voiceless, and  
empowering the farmers is  
my priority.



Now I am continuously contributing  
towards animal health, nutrition  
and breed improvement.



# Difficulties growing up

Dad... one day I will become a great doctor & treat my dog myself.



Hey look - she's going to school. Doesn't she have other work to do ?



Growing up I realized what women in Humla have to suffer. Gender inequality, polygamy, and child marriage are common here.



Even where the world felt far away, my dream stayed alive and I decided to study Veterinary medicine.



Veterinarian? A female? Her father has gone mad! How can he support her?



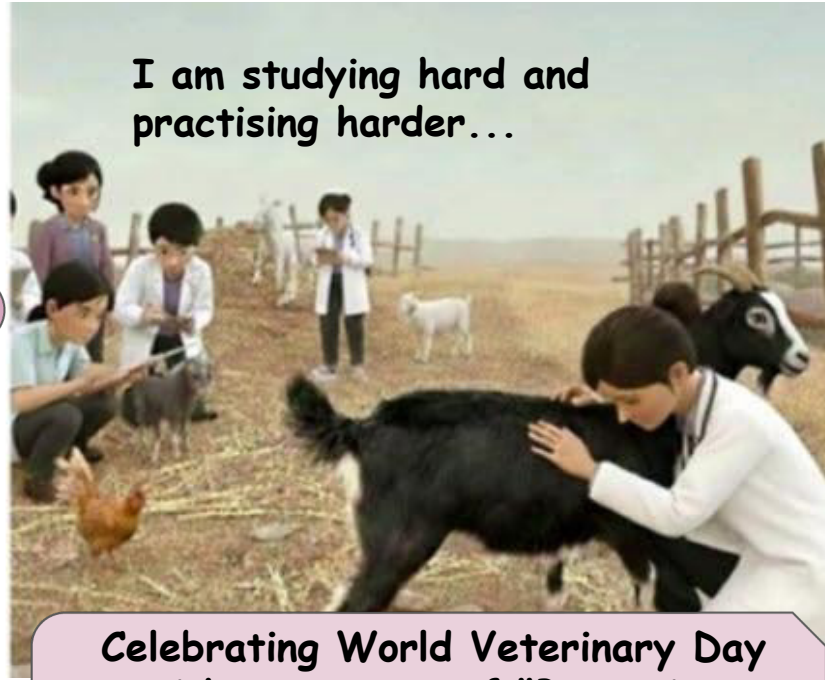
I chose to chase my dream. I decided to study veterinary medicine.



# My academic journey



I am so happy today joining my dream university. It's only possible because of my father's support.



I am studying hard and practising harder...

Celebrating World Veterinary Day with a message of "Promoting Diversity, Equity & Inclusiveness in the veterinary profession".

I stayed rooted on practise and extension work.



Along with academics, I am fearless in advocating for animal health.



Your work stands out. Keep it up!



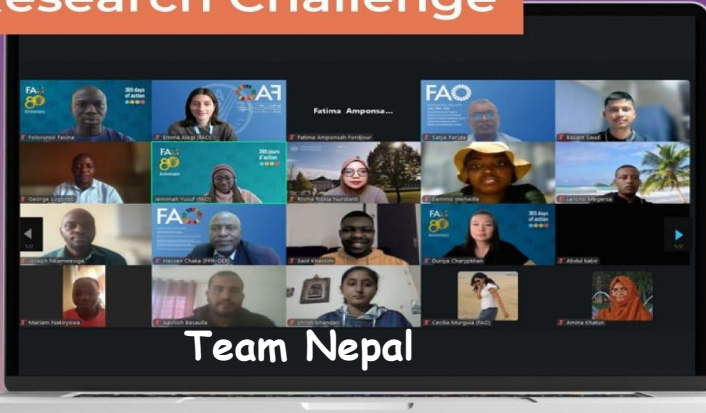
I am happy for getting appreciation from IVSA for my work.

# Driven by curiosity and research

I worked under the research topic "Identification, Isolation & Management of Newcastle disease in commercial broilers". I hope my findings will contribute to better animal health & the livestock industry.



PPR Transformative Research Challenge

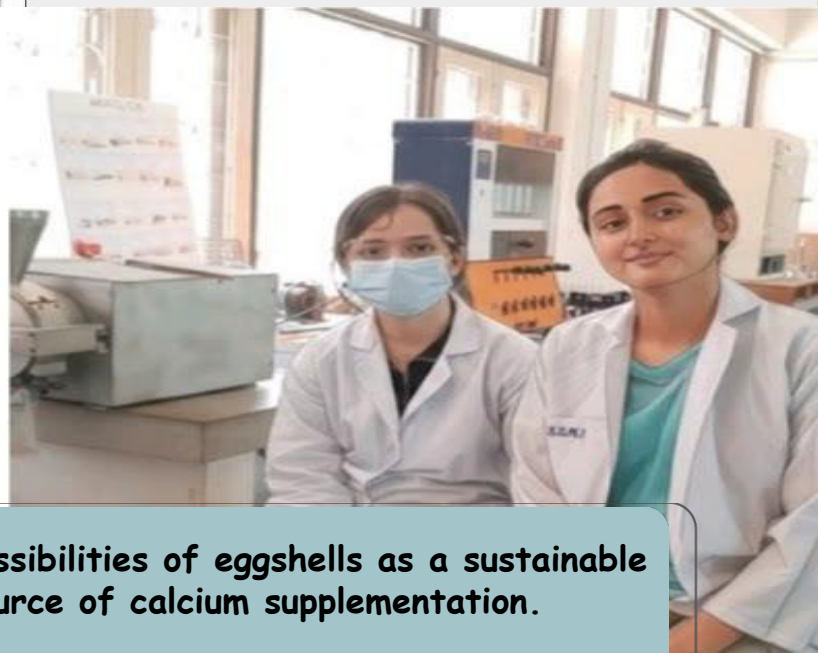
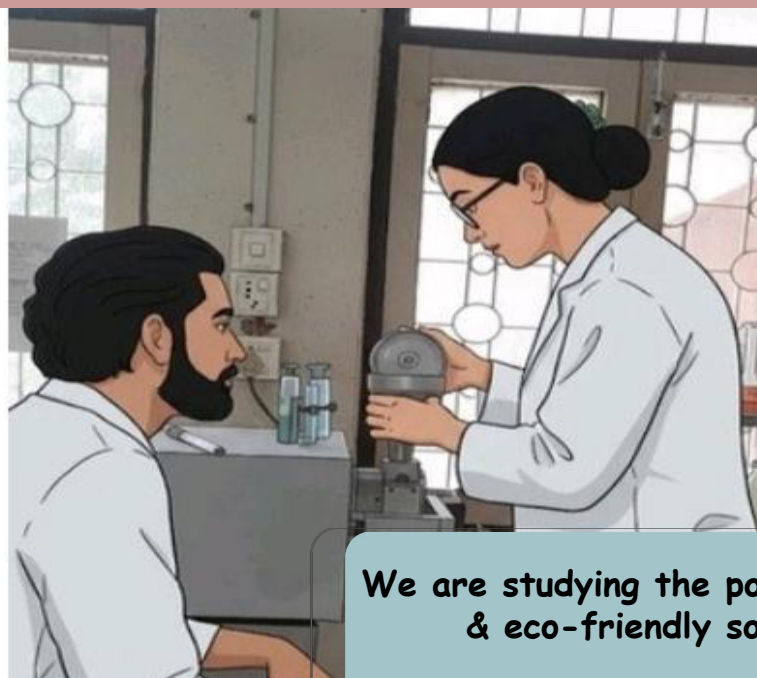


Our animals are our lives



Working under topic "Gender mainstreaming in the eradication of PPR" with FAO.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



We are studying the possibilities of eggshells as a sustainable & eco-friendly source of calcium supplementation.

# Global advocacy

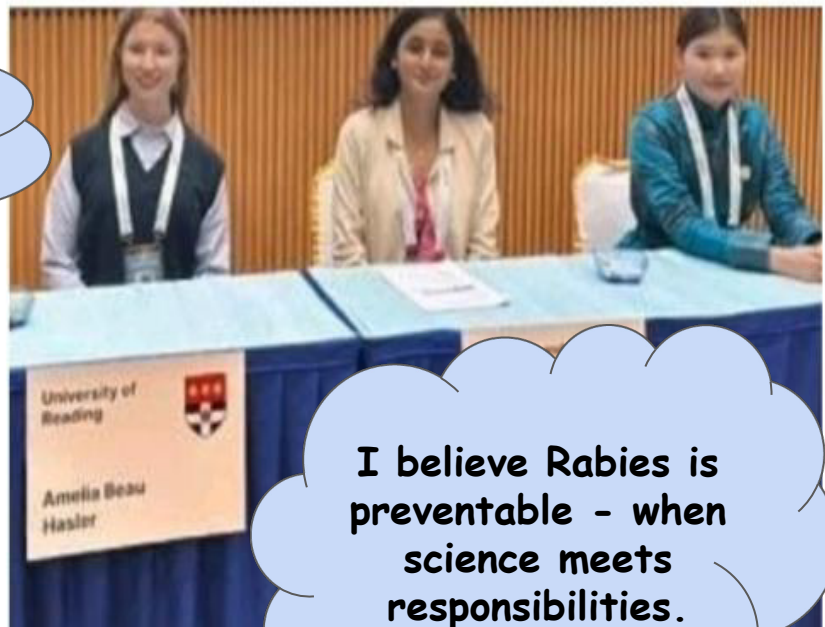


I am representing the Agriculture & Forestry University, Nepal at ISS-2025.

I would like to highlight the issue of Antimicrobial Resistance & suggest inclusive policy making.



I would like to present my research findings on Newcastle disease.



I believe Rabies is preventable - when science meets responsibilities.

I am attending conferences about rabies awareness in Rabies Week organized by WOAAH & Nymat Nepal.



# Breaking the stereotype

Training opportunity? For livestock farmers? From FAVA? Brother, let's attend the meeting.

But I think women manage animals everyday. They must be included in this training.

We take their care. We notice sickness first. This training will be most effective if we attend too.



Back to my village..

Let's attend this training together.

Okay Let's go.



Together we can, stronger we are...



Leadership is shared, not assigned.

When women lead, systems become stronger.



# Continuing a legacy

I am the first female veterinarian of Humla. I promise to serve, heal and protect.

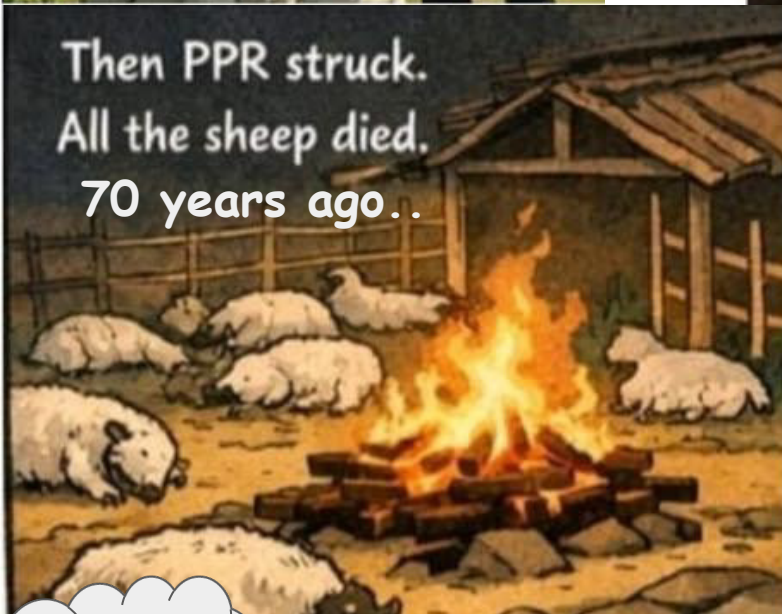


Serving the land that shaped me, because Humla was hard to reach, many stayed away - so I chose to stay.



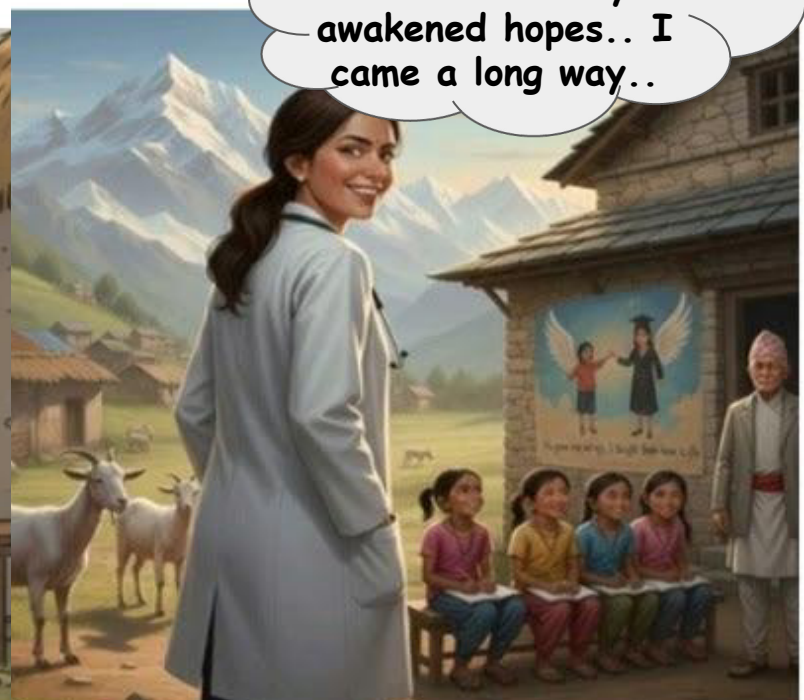
Now I am working under the joint strategic theme of WOAAH & FAO to eradicate PPR by 2030.

Then PPR struck.  
All the sheep died.  
70 years ago..



From my small dream to many awakened hopes.. I came a long way..

I believe you  
Fly high dear



# Three generation, One lineage

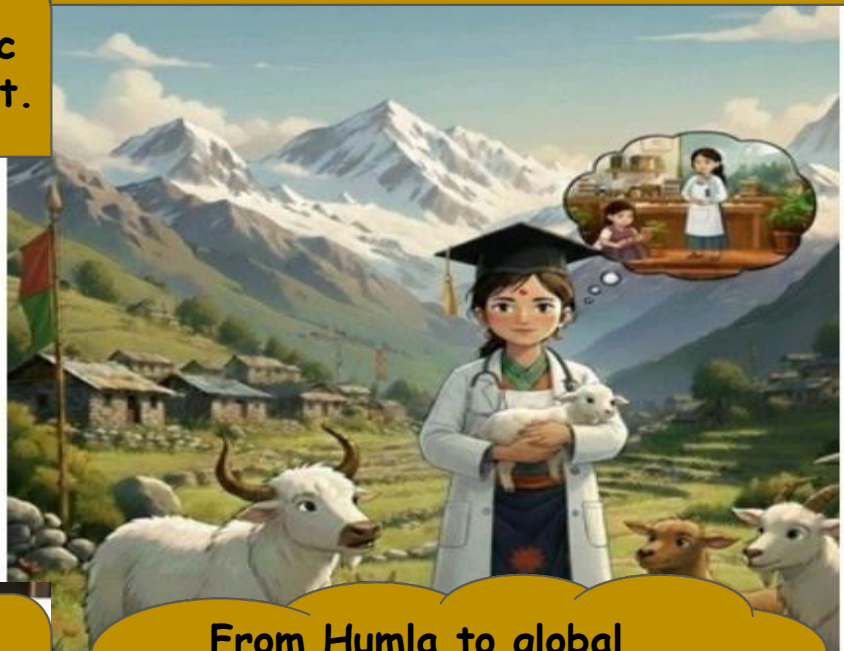
I was the only earning person in family & sheep were the only source of earning.

The lack of health facilities killed both of us.



After my father's death, education was only a ray of hope. I worked hard and became livestock officer & also ensured my daughter gets proper education.

I crossed numerous socio-geographic barriers. Finally my dreams took root.



When Equality, Education & Inclusion reach the margins, they don't just change individuals - they change systems.

From Humla to global advocacy, this is my journey of Resilience, Education & Inclusion.



# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

## Shristi Bhandari

My name is Shristi Bhandari, a veterinary student from Adanchuli-2, Humla, Karnali Province, Nepal, one of the most remote and underserved regions of the country. Growing up in Humla, I witnessed how limited infrastructure, fragile livelihoods, and gender inequality directly affect animal health and community resilience. These experiences shaped my commitment to veterinary science and social inclusion.

I am currently pursuing a Bachelor of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry (B.V. Sc. & A.H.) at the Agriculture and Forestry University (AFU), Chitwan, Nepal, with strong academic performance. My academic interests focus on microbiology, epidemiology, and the One Health approach, particularly infectious diseases affecting livestock and public health.

With a research background on Newcastle Disease, I have also been involved in vaccination programs, clinical services, and antimicrobial resistance (AMR) awareness initiatives. In 2025, I represented Nepal and AFU at the International Students' Summit in Bogor, Indonesia, where I presented research findings and advocated for food safety, animal health, AMR awareness, and inclusive policy-making. Now I am working on research for "Gender mainstreaming in the eradication of PPR" with Dr. Aashish Basaulla supported by FAO.

Through my academic and community work, I aim to strengthen animal health systems while promoting gender equality and social inclusion, especially in marginalized and remote settings.

### Comic description

This comic story depicts my real life story, the story of a farming family from Humla, Nepal, across three generations: my grandfather, my father, and myself. I first heard this story from my father, saw it unfold through his work and sacrifice, and today, I am living it. My grandfather was a farmer who raised sheep in Humla, where life remains difficult even in the 21st century due to the lack of basic infrastructure.

More than seventy years ago, survival was far harsher. People had to travel long distances from Humla to the Terai to obtain basic necessities. During one such journey, my grandfather fell ill with a fever and died without access to medical care. His body never returned home. After his death, the family's entire flock was lost to Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), destroying their livelihood.

My father was only five years old when he became an orphan. Despite extreme hardship, continued his education, and eventually became the first Livestock Officer of Humla, dedicating his life to improving livestock health and rural livelihoods. In a deeply patriarchal society, he also ensured that his daughters received an education.




Inspired by his hard work and support, I pursued veterinary science despite significant social and geographic barriers. I joined the Agriculture and Forestry University, where I excelled academically and became actively involved in research, with the hope that my work would contribute to improving animal health. I later represented Nepal at an international platform, advocating for animal health, antimicrobial resistance awareness, and inclusive approaches. Returning to my community, I ensure that women have equal participation in discussions and decision-making, because when women lead societies, it grows stronger. Today, I am becoming the first registered female veterinarian from Humla, committed to serving, healing, and protecting in a place where many refuse to stay. It all began as a small dream, and now inspires many girls to dream bigger. Once, my grandfather lost his sheep to PPR; now, I work toward the global goal of ending PPR by 2030. This story shows that when education, inclusion, and equality reach the margins, they do not only change individuals—they change systems.

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