



Transition pathways towards gender inclusion in the changing musical landscapes of Nepal (*amplifyHer*)

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Addressing the globally set Sustainable Development Goals (UNESCO) requires that culture is seen as an important investment in the future. The *amplifyHer* project aims to increase understanding of the systemic interconnectedness of music tradition, social power dynamics, and gender hierarchies, as well as the potential of non-linear, emergent transformative change towards gender inclusion in and through musical arts and their public forms in society. The research will be conducted in Nepal where rituals and festivals feature patriarchal music making, where female music making is still associated with stigmatisation, and where gender inequality continues to be a key barrier to education and women's political agency. It highlights how patriarchal public music making risks sustaining unsustainability if conservation alone is taken as the sustainability goal, as suggested in much of the literature. By seeking drivers for socio-political change, the project's approach challenges views of musical heritage that stress social-political neutrality, and instead, emphasises the two sides of music's social power: That it can silently sustain hierarchical inequalities and exclusion equally as it can generate social transformation. It suggests that such transformation is possible through

new social, spatial, musical reconfigurations that enable 'performing difference' in the public sphere.

Our objectives are to:

- Co-develop systems reflexivity through knowledge on the negotiation and boundary-crossing of Nepali females who have been able to perform music amidst contradictory values and social expectations;
- Co-design systems interventions and leadership visions towards sustainable, gender-inclusive musical landscapes in Nepal;
- Co-construct gender-based conceptual systems frames that inform global research, practice, and policy that strives towards sustainable musical heritage; and
- Promote responsible music professionalism and heritage activism, and the international academic careers of the Nepali team.

The project's aims align with Finland's development policy priorities, based on UNESCO's Agenda 2030, as well as with policies that highlight the sustainability of vulnerable musical heritage. The social impact in Nepal will be achieved through multiple activities that demonstrate the possibility of gender-inclusiveness and that make space for women's stories in Nepal.



Main publications:

Treacy, D., Tuladhar, R. & Westerlund, H. (in press). Gender and music education in Nepali cultural ecosystems: Public pedagogy towards social and cultural sustainability. In A. de Quadros, A. & S. Oberoi (Eds.) *Music Education in South Asia: Context and Practice*. Routledge.

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