

**STORIES AND SOLUTIONS FROM  
THE MOUNTAINS**

**COP28  
EVENT  
REPORT**

**PREPARED BY**

**MOUNTAIN  
SENTINELS**



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Art by Hella Hidai

## Stories and Solutions from the Mountains

# EVENT REPORT

*Just and Sustainable Climate Futures: Stories and Solutions from the Mountains* highlighted community-based approaches to climate adaptation, mitigation and sustainable mountain development. Participants from mountains worldwide contributed their lived experience, research, knowledges, and stories about restoration of mountain environments and Communities.

Katie Kamelamela, Assistant Professor at Arizona State University and Mountain Sentinels Fellow, and Jacob Stewart, Mountain Sentinels Community Director, organized the event in observation of UN International Mountain Day (Dec 11). It was hosted at the JustNorth Pavilion at UNFCCC COP28.

The event proposed six questions which were discussed in small groups. During the small group discussion, participants submitted answers on our digital platform. Following the small group discussion, participants were asked to highlight commonalities and share with the larger group.

Of the 18 participants, seven groups of 2-4 were self-formed which engaged participants from various backgrounds including educators, students, NGOs, community knowledge holders, government party members, researchers and practitioners.

## MOUNTAINS IN DIALOGUE

### Group Discussion



# THE STORIES AND SOLUTIONS

Facilitators Dr. Kamelamela and Jacob Stewart proposed six questions: (1) *what are the mountains that claim you?* (2) *what do you envision COP28 to accomplish for mountains and their communities?* (3) *what does restoration mean to you?* (4) *what is needed for healthier/better restoration for mountain people and all our relations?* (5) *what existing materials/resources do you use for work with mountains?* and (6) *what are common themes you heard throughout this discussion?*

Participants first submitted responses to the digital platform and then discussed their responses within their small groups while music, developed by [@WildAlchemyLab](#) and their plants, and [paintings by Hella Hidai](#), an Afghan woman and artist living under the Taliban regime, played in the background. We thank them for their contribution to the space and for sharing their stories.



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## WHAT MOUNTAINS CLAIM YOU?

Mountains at COP28





Upon group reflection, participants reported several common themes both within and between groups: connection, community, education, landback, revaluing, and vulnerability.

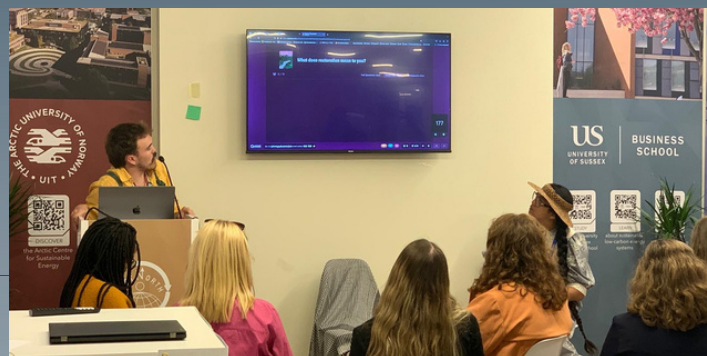
**Connection** and interconnection emphasised the need for people to build, or rebuild, relationships with each other and the land. It also called for a stronger understanding of nature, mountains, and more-than-human systems as their own entities with independent agency.

**Community** highlighted that while we are geographically spread, our roots are connected. Our interconnected communities are often at the forefront of climate change but at the back of the decision-making room. Participants noted that a paradigm shift is needed to solve this paradoxical representation or lack thereof.

**Education** is needed to develop community-led sensitization about the impacts of climate change. The creation of interconnected, contextual, human-rights-grounded education systems for communities world-wide is key to supporting and restoring mountain communities.

### Landback and Indigenous Stewardship

*Participants engage in conversation during the Just and Sustainable Climate Futures: Stories and Solutions from the Mountains event.*



*Jacob Stewart (left) and Katie Kamelamela (right) lead the group through a discussion about mountain restoration.*

demand not just observation but integration in the restoration of mountain communities. As traditional knowledge holders for restoring relations between, and of, humans and more-than-humans, indigenous stewards provide governance, conservation, and practical solutions needed for restoring mountain ecosystems.

**Revaluing** articulated the need for policymakers to look beyond the economic value of mountains. Human, social, and environmental capital are pivotal in understanding the true value of communities. This must be reflected in how the Loss & Damage fund is operationalised, I.E. through rigorous and inclusive impact analysis in line with best practices that look beyond the economic.

**Vulnerability** echoed through every contribution as participants felt that COP28 was disillusioned and removed from the realities of climate change in our mountain communities. Glacial lake outbursts, floods, droughts, and desertification both up- and down-stream emphasize how interconnected mountains are beyond their individual communities. Mountains are not silos and their vulnerability ripples through every ecosystem, community, and being.



Art by Hella Hidaï

## OUTCOMES

Following the event, and COP28, Mountain Sentinels collected the responses from the digital platform and generated a participant summary. We have anonymised the responses to each of the questions and uploaded them to a closed Google Sheets, [here](#).

Of the 18 participants present during this discussion, 10 provided emails to be involved in our work beyond COP28.

This document serves as the first outcome of the *Just and Sustainable Climate Futures: Stories and Solutions from the Mountains* event. We are hoping to integrate this work into our methods beyond COP28 and further an interconnected, community-based policy approach to mountain vulnerability, education, landback, and revaluing.

## FURTHER PARTICIPATION

### Engaging beyond COP28



# THANK YOU

The Mountain Sentinels leadership team and COP28 delegation want to extend our thanks to the organizations that supported us through meaningful collaboration and provided ample opportunities to share the mountain agenda. Without your support, this event would not have been possible.

