

Kathmandu Environmental Education Project

Porters' Clothing Bank



Progress Report

February 4, 2010

Acknowledgement

Kathmandu Environmental Education Project (KEEP) has been running Porters' Clothing Bank (PCB) successfully. KEEP extends its sincere appreciation and gratitude to all supporting individuals and organizations.

KEEP is very grateful to Mr. Ian Wall, Mr. Ramesh Dhamala, Ms. Karen Valenti, Mr. Scott M. Ms. Elsie James and Dr. Jim Duff for their continuous assistance in establishment and success of KEEP's PCB. Similarly, KEEP recognizes its staff specially Mr. Ngima Pakhrin, PCB incharge for his hardworking to make the project successful.

Thank you all.

DB Gurung
Director
KEEP

1. Background of Porters' Clothing Bank

Porters play a vital role in the tourism industry, enabling tourists to visit Nepal's most picturesque but warped geography, with their incredible strength. However, every year porters die tragically or get injuries temporarily or permanently from altitude sickness or cold related illness like hypothermia, frostbite and snow blindness due to lack of the necessary or appropriate clothing. Since the mountaineering problems are inescapable, Kathmandu Environmental Education Project (KEEP) has setup Porter's Clothing Bank (PCB) on 1st September, 2009 at its office in Jyatha, Thamel, Kathmandu to abstain from such tragedies.

The main objective of KEEP PCB is *“to provide ill-prepared porters with better clothing, suitable for their treks in a mountain environment”*.

2. Why PCB is Important?

Porters in Nepal have high chance of occupational health hazard. The majority of porters are sustenance farmers, travelling from lower elevations to the higher elevated trekking routes to find employment. Contrary to the belief that porters are adjusted to the cold and the altitude of the Himalayas, every year many porters suffer from a variety of illnesses such as altitude sickness, snow blindness, hypothermia and frostbite, and some even die as a result. In the event that porters do become ill while in the mountains, they will often be denied adequate medical attention and instead be paid off to travel alone down the mountain and face the problem of finding and affording emergency treatment. Furthermore, many porters are uneducated about the risks of high altitude trekking and lack the basic equipment needed.

In implementing the PCB, KEEP is helping to better equip porters for the alpine terrain and prevent the unnecessary illnesses and fatalities which occur among porters in Nepal each year. Moreover, the PCB aims to educate tourists, trekking agencies and porters alike about the acceptable standard of treatment of porters and the need to improve porter access to appropriate clothing and equipment.

3. Achievement of PCB

IPPG (International Porter Protection Group) has undertaken to finance the operation of this bank for its first two years. CAN (Community Action Nepal), Mountain Kingdoms (UK), World Expeditions (UK), Porter's Progress (UK) and IMEC (International Mountain Explorers Connection) has helped in set-up of PCB. Working in partnership with these organizations, PCB

has been able to provide independent trekkers and small trekking companies with a cheap and convenient means of equipping their porters and educate tourists about acceptable standards of porter treatment. KEEP initially bought 100 sets of new clothes items, such as pants, jackets, trekking boots and sunglasses to set up the clothing bank in August. Since then, PCB had received several donations from groups such as International Mountain Explorer Connection, Mountain Fund and Himalayan Mountain Guides. 201 sets of clothing have also been lent to various trekking agencies and individual trekkers for use for their porters since September. However, we have also had some items damaged or lost by the trekking companies during use. In light of the number we have so far lent out, this loss has been minimal, although it highlights the need for a continuing flow of donations to the project.

Recently, the office of the Porters' Clothing Bank has been moved to the same building where the KEEP office is located. This will enable better organization of the clothes and equipment and as well as facilitate coordination between the KEEP and PCB. Over the last four months, the PCB has been lending individual trekkers and trekking agencies full sets of clothing and equipment for their porters at a small refundable deposit. This project has proved to be highly successful in improving the treatment and working conditions for porters around Nepal.

4. Current stock of the PCB

Table 1: stock in Porters' Clothing Bank till January, 2010

Clothing Items	Bought by KEEP	Total of Other Donations	Condition	Damaged by trekking companies	Maintenance:		Lost by trekking companies	Overall Total
					Repair	Laundry		
Jackets	100	206	Used				2	304
Pants	100	21	Used				5	116
Shoes	100	139	Used	29	92		5	205
Sun glasses	100	79	Used				25	154
Socks	100		Used				85	15
Gloves	100	34	Used				12	122
Sleeping Bags		35	Used					35

Recently KEEP has ordered another 100 sets of clothes, including jackets, trousers, boots and socks for coming spring season.

5. Financial Report of PCB

Table 2: Total income/expenditure till January, 2010

S.N.	Income		Expenses		Net Balance (NRs)
	Details	Amount (NRs)	Details	Amount (NRs)	
1	The Mountain Kingdom - UK	24,273.45	Furniture, Cupboard & Carpet	50,000.00	392,010.79
2	IPPG	129,100.00	Signboard	23,290.00	
3	Community Action Trek	63,130.00	Jacket, trousers, Boot, sunglass & Socks 100pc	260,000.00	
4	The Mountain Fund (Iodine)	18,742.00	PCB Office rent for 6 months	100,800.00	
5	World Expedition	61,600.00	PCB Boucher printing charge	11,300.00	
6	Louise Cook	12,320.00	PCB In-charge remuneration for 4 months	16,000.00	
7	Else James	44,170.00	Advertisement in news papers	9,515.00	
8	P.P.UK	60,465.00	Transportation	400.00	
9	International Mountain Explorer Connection	221,186.00	New computer Purchase	30,300.00	
10	IPP (Sept,09 - Feb, 10) <i>(Running cost of PCB)</i>	60,000.00	Cloth laundry	1,510.00	
11	Trekking Encounter Limited (Book & Cash)	47,185.00	Advance for new cloths	30,000.00	
12	KEEP UK A/C(£1062)	119,549.34			
13	Landing cloth	63,405.00			
Grand Total	925,125.79		533,115.00		

6. How can you Support PCB?

We always appreciate any contribution you can make to the Porters' Clothing Bank. We are currently in need of people who are travelling from the US or UK to act as couriers to transport some of our stockpiled clothing. If the volunteer courier is willing to cover shipping costs from

the storehouse in Britain or America, to their home in that country, a tax exemption receipt is available for the expense incurred. Please contact us at least one month prior to your departure for Nepal at keep@keepnepal.org.np, if you are able to assist us.

Financial donations are greatly appreciated, and are preferred to donations of clothing as KEEP is then able to purchase new clothing in Nepal and cover costs of repair and replacement of items. Usually donations of used jackets and pants from Westerners do not fit Nepali porters who tend to be smaller. However, donations of other clothing items such as socks, sunglasses, warm gloves and sleeping bags are always welcome. If you are able to contribute financially to the KEEP Porters' Clothing Bank, kindly use the following contact details.

Wire Transfer

1. KEEP Nepal

A/C 01-0140872-51
Standard Chartered Bank Nepal Limited
Lazimpat, Kathmandu, Nepal
SWIFT CODE: SCBLNPKA

2. KEEP UK

Account Name: Trekking Encounters LTD
A/C 16568044
Nat West Bank, Dundee Branch, Scotland
Sort Code 60-24-75

Your willingness in supporting the KEEP Porters' Clothing Bank is greatly appreciated.

7. Special Gratitude

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the supporters of Porters' Clothing Bank project. With your support, KEEP has been able to run this PCB project smoothly. We express our sincere appreciation to following organizations.

- International Porters Protection Group (IPPG)
- The Mountain Kingdom – UK
- International Mountain Explorer Connection
- Trekking Encounter Limited
- Community Action Trek
- The Mountain Fund
- World Expedition
- Intrepid Travels
- Else James
- P.P.UK
- Louise Cook

8. Photo palette

