



The Mountain Fund News

April 2008



The Best News on the Planet !

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Health Care Update From Nepal

Greetings from Kathamandu.

With the support of the Mountain Fund there are now two clinics where once no medical services were available. Over 10,000 families have access to primary health care. These clinics cost less than \$2.00 per family per year to operate.

Mountain Fund has returned to Kathmandu following two weeks in the Rasuwa District of Nepal. Located a few kilometers from the border with Tibet the Rasuwa District is home to dozens of small Tamang Villages. The Tamang are believed to have migrated from Mongolia via Tibet hundreds of years ago and settled in this remote mountain area. Life in many Tamang Villages carries on much as it has for centuries. For many of the villages subsistence farming is their way of life and these rugged, inventive people have learned how to survive on the steep hillsides of the northern Rasuwa District.

Mountain Fund first visited these villages in 2001 and began working with Karing for Kids - Nepal, a Nepali organized NGO (nonprofit) who had started a small health outpost in an area of the district where no healthcare existed. The clinic, located at Goljung, was the only source for



nearly 7000 Tamang villagers living in Goljung, Gatlang, Chilime, Tatopani and the hills nearby.

This March we took volunteer EMT's to work at the Goljung clinic and at the soon to be open Thulo Syabru clinic. While the EMT's attended to the medical needs of the villages Mountain Fund's program director Scott MacLennan and Bhunima Lama labored to prepare the Thulo Syabru building for occupancy and use as a clinic. The building has not been fully utilized for several years and needed a great deal of cleaning. First the two connected a water supply system to the building and then set about in earnest to scrub the entire place in preparation for the clinic opening in April.

Bhunima Lama hard at work cleaning the new clinic.



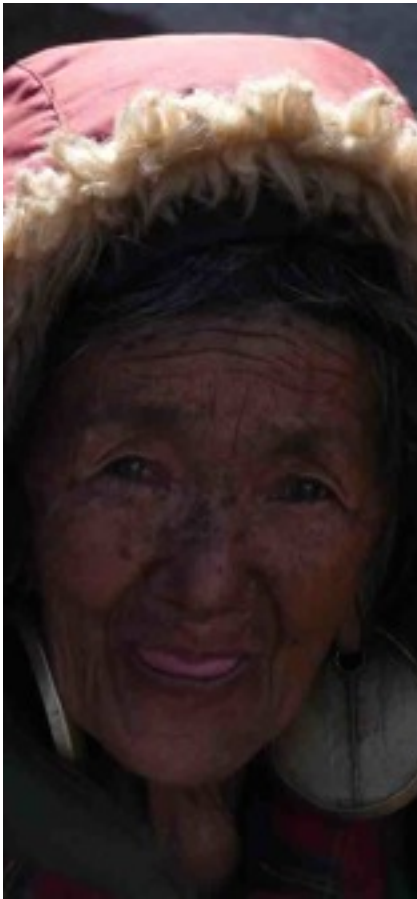
Rasuwa Facts.

Human Development Index 0.394

Population 44731

Literacy 33.96%

Out patient room at KFK clinic, Goljung. >>>>>



New medical lab at KFK clinic provided by American Nepal Medical Foundation and The Mountain Fund. >>>>>





Mountain Fund's program director Scott MacLennan on latrine duty at the new Thulo Syabru clinic.

MOUNTAIN PORTER SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Mountain Porter Support Program operated jointly by International Mountain Explorers Connection (IMEC) and Mountain Fund moved its location this past month for the office and porter clothing bank. The office is now in The Mountain Fund Volunteer Visitor Center. The center is located in the New Scout Building in Lainchaur across from the palace. The clothing bank has been relocated to Mountain Fund program director Scott MacLennan's home in Sokedhara.

The Volunteer Visitor Center is open and free to all Mountain Fund, IMEC and South American Explorers Club members and provides travel assistance, volunteer referral services and free internet for members and working volunteers.

The Mountain Fund also learned that Porters Progress was planning to close the clothing bank it runs in Lukla for the Everest region porters. After conversations with International Porter Protection Group, Porters Progress Lukla and Porters Progress Nepal we are very close to an agreement under which all porter clothing bank management in Nepal will be consolidated. At the present time there are three primary organizations providing free clothing assistance for porters. Porters Progress Kathmandu, Porters Progress Lukla and the Mountain Porter Support Group operated by IMEC. Under the proposed merger these three groups will operate as one with financial support from Mountain Fund, Porters Progress USA, IMEC and International Porter Protection Group.

Porter clothing programs were first introduced to Nepal in the 1990's by IMEC. Over the past decade the number of porter programs and clothing banks has grown as has the locations where porter clothing can be obtained. While this has created some positive benefits for porters it has also lead to duplication of efforts by the various porter support groups. Uniting all of these efforts under one management system will reduce operating costs and improve efficiencies. While discussions are continuing it looks very promising for a consolidated porter program soon.

The Mountain Fund and IMEC are also opening a branch office in Syabru Bensi this month. Located at the start of the Langtang Trek and Tamang Trail this location will afford porters from the nearby Tamang villages an excellent opportunity to borrow appropriate clothing for working in this region. Space and management of the clothing bank have been generously donated by Hotel Llasha in Syabru Bensi. Clothing for porters will be available at the hotel starting late this month. Thanks much to Hotel Lasha for their kindness and support in making this possible.



This is a porter about to start the Langtang trek. For the next 6-7 days he will carry all three of the backpacks shown here up and down steep and rocky trails. He will earn approximately 300 rupees per day for this hard labor. That's a little less than \$5.00US per day.

Without porters there would be no trekking in Nepal. Every year thousands of westerners come here to trek the Himalaya and they depend on the hard work of these men to make such treks possible. Tourism in Nepal is the largest industry and produces over 40% of the country's income. None of the trekking tourism would happen without the hard work of porters.

As a group they are the most marginalized sector of the tourist and trekking industry. Unlike trekking agents and guides there is no professional association for porters. They are not represented by anyone except the few NGO's who have made it their cause to speak out in favor of decent wages and working conditions for porters.

Please support efforts to protect porters from abuse, low wages, overweight loads, improper clothing and even death from exposure. Help support porter programs today by making a donation [here](#).

Highest Mountain on Earth is now Closed !

The government of Nepal announced today that Mount Everest is closed until after May 10th. Climbing teams can go as high as camp two and no further. Acclimatization trips are allowed to camp three but overnight stays are not allowed.

This move comes on the heels of protests over the treatment of Tibetans and may be at the request of the Chinese. A group of Chinese climbers are on the north side of Everest (Chinese side) and headed for the summit to plant an olympic flag.

Both China and Nepal seem concerned that the top of the world may become a stage for protests and have closed the summit until after the Chinese team can hold their olympic ceremony.

**More news soon from
www.MountainFund.org**