

clothing. Usually, clothes donated by foreigners do not fit Nepali Porters who tend to be much smaller than Westerners and Europeans. However, smaller items such as hats, stretchy socks, sunglasses, etc. are easily transported from other countries and will be greatly appreciated.

### Our Responsibility

Everyone in the trekking industry – trek leaders, sirdars, local agents, and trekkers – must shoulder the responsibilities and costs of taking local crews into the highest mountains on earth. These journeys require team effort, and everyone needs to consider the strength and value of all the men and women who make our experiences in the Himalayas possible. It is imperative that foreign trekkers take steps to ensure that their porters are being looked after, respected, and treated properly while on the trail.

Kathmandu Environmental Education Project along with other non-profit organizations such as Community Action Nepal, International Mountain Explorers Connection, International Porter Protection Group, Porters' Progress UK, and Mountain Fund are putting forth a collaborative effort to set up a *Clothing Bank for Porters* at the KEEP office in Kathmandu, Nepal. Our goal at KEEP, as well as that of our partner organizations, is to reduce and prevent porters' chances of developing hypothermia, frostbite or other illnesses. Our mission is to provide ill-prepared porters with better clothing suitable for their treks in a mountain environment.

We are in need of people and companies who are traveling to Nepal and would be willing to act as couriers to transport some of our stockpiled clothing from the UK and USA. Would you be willing to assist us in this way? *If you are an agency*, please ask your clients if they would be willing to help.

As nonprofit organizations, we greatly appreciate any financial help you can give. If the volunteer courier is willing to cover shipping costs from the storehouse in Britain or America, to their home in that country (Average cost is \$1 per pound) a tax exemption receipt is available for the expense incurred. We will provide you with a letter which explains the courier program along with a letter for Customs.

Please contact us at least one month prior to your departure Nepal at [keep@keepnepal.org.np](mailto:keep@keepnepal.org.np), if you are able to assist us.

Your willingness to support this program for the porters in Nepal is immensely appreciated.



### KEEP Porters' Clothing Bank

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भरिया बिकास  
porters' progress UK



# PORTERS' CLOTHING BANK



*"We are like dwarfs on the shoulders of giants, so that we can see more than they, and things at a greater distance, not by virtue of any sharpness of sight on our part, or any physical distinction, but because we are carried high and raised up by their giant size."*

-Nga Tong





*Picture yourself carrying an 80-lb. load over a snow covered pass in the heart of the Himalayas wearing only rubber sandals, cotton trousers, and a thin jacket. Imagine there being no provision for your safety in the event that you fall, or succumb to altitude or cold. This scenario is all too common for the thousands of brave men and women porters who carry goods for foreign trekkers in Nepal.*

*Aren't porters adjusted to the cold and altitude?*

Unlike the famous Sherpas who carry heavy loads at high altitude for foreign climbing expeditions, the majority of trekking porters are impoverished, sustenance farmers. They travel from lower elevations to higher expedition routes in search of work. Those who are fortunate enough to find work struggle to earn \$7.5 per day to help clothe and feed their families. Porters' incredible strength in the face of such difficult work has led to the myth that they are immune to such ailments. In fact, many porters suffer from altitude sickness, hypothermia, snow blindness, and frostbite. Every year, some die.

*What problems do porters face?*

Malnourishment. Due to local inflation and rising cost of consumption, porters aren't always able to afford to sleep or cook indoors. Instead, they bivouac in caves and/or under trees in the most dangerous areas along popular trekking routes. The lack of warmth, nutrition, and rest severely increases their chances of getting sick and injured.

Overworked. Porters are financially motivate to mentally and physically push themselves beyond their bodies' capacity to carry heavy loads even after exhibiting certain signs of serious altitude illness. Once they are unable to continue carrying, they are often paid off and sent down the mountain alone to find safety. This can prove fatal if porters cannot find, afford, or communicate their need for emergency treatment.

Poorly equipped. Many porters are uneducated about the risk of high altitude trekking and often times lack the basic equipment needed for such terrain. Porters who carry food and supplies are often sent away once their load has been used up. The journey back to the trailhead may involve re-crossing dangerous passes alone without adequate experience and safety equipment.

*How does KEEP help?*

Working in partnership with the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG) and supported by other reputable international organizations concerned with porters' welfare and safety, the Porter Clothing Bank:

- Provides independent trekkers and small trekking companies with a convenient and inexpensive means of equipping their porters.
- Educates the tourists about acceptable standards of porter treatment.
- Motivates and empowers porters to determine their own means of assistance through offering English Language, first aid, and empowerment classes

**Clothing Lending Program**

Porters play a vital role in the tourist industry, enabling tourists to visit Nepal's most picturesque areas while also providing their families with much needed income. Unfortunately, many porters are not provided with proper equipment which often leads to preventable injuries or even death. Every year, porters die from altitude sickness or cold related illnesses while others are harmed by frostbite and snow blindness. These injuries, sometimes with long-term consequences, could be avoided with the proper gear and care. It is KEEP's pleasure to announce a new program, the Porters' Clothing Bank, that will help

ease the burden for porters by providing the necessary clothing and equipment for a nominal cost. KEEP will loan a full set of equipment and Clothing to Porters in return for a deposit of 1000 NRs, When the items are returned, 250 rupees will be retained by KEEP as a service fee to cover the cost of cleaning and repair.

Please Visit KEEP Porters' Clothing Bank  
KEEP PCB is located in Jyatha, Thamel near the KEEP premises. The clothing bank will open September 1, 2009. At opening, the Bank will have approximately one hundred sets of new clothing plus some other clothing items that have been donated by the Mountain Fund. The new items include wind-resistant jackets and pants, Timberland boots (similar to army boots with good soles and stitching), durable gloves, socks, hats, and sun glasses. These items are available to independent Trekkers and small trekking companies to borrow for their porters. The equipment may be borrowed for your porter(s) in exchange for a small, refundable deposit. KEEP PCB encourages Trekkers to support the project through cash donations rather than giving used

