

Volunteers working with kids in Kathmandu



The Mountain Fund

Changing the world, one village at a time



Monastery reconstruction Thulo Syabru

Inside

"Give a man a fish, he'll eat for a day.
Give a woman microcredit, she, her
husband, her children and her
extended family will eat for a lifetime."

Pg. 2

Project Updates. See where your
investments in develop are going and
what your investment has done to
date.

Pg. 3

Lizzy Scully interview with Mountain
Fund Executive Director, Scott
MacLennan

Pg. 5

Mountain Fund founder gets married
in Nepal

Pg. 7

Charity or Development ?

Give a man a fish and he'll eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and
he'll eat for a lifetime.

This axiom, believed to be of Chinese
origin, is of course immediately
recognizable. We are a charity but our aim
is self-sufficiency, not dependency. Our
work is teaching and not merely giving.

Take our healthcare programs. They may,
at first blush, look like outright charity, but
they are not. The hospital and the clinics
are staffed and operated by Nepali's with
support from Mountain Fund. We are
working with the local community to
develop governing boards who own and
operate these facilities for the community.

By helping these community organizations
to develop the management skills they
need we are in the process of creating
locally managed health care networks with
the ultimate goal of self-sufficiency.

Amartya Sen, winner of the Nobel Prize in
economics, in his book "Development as
Freedom," talks about health care and
education as basic freedoms. These basic
freedoms must exist if people living in
poverty are to be empowered toward
economic development and ultimately
self-sufficiency.

Continued on Page 2



Monastery rebuilding project

Charity or Development ? continued from page 1.

"Give a man a fish, he'll eat for a day. Give a woman microcredit, she, her husband, her children and her extended family will eat for a lifetime."



Women's Safe House Program

"Without a healthy and educated population no nation can hope to devise the economic systems needed to lift itself out of poverty" says Sen. The act of charity, defined here as giving someone something, is itself not going to bring about any real or lasting change. In fact it is likely not going to bring about any change at all. For most of us this can be seen clearly every Christmas morning. Gifts are unwrapped at a furious pace, only to be ignored and stuffed into a closet a few days later. Getting something, with no investment of your own, seldom provides a sense of satisfaction, pride of ownership and responsible behavior flowing from that ownership.

If a village were to get a health clinic for example, with no investment on the part of the village, can we rightfully call it "their" clinic? I think to be correct you'd have to call it a clinic on loan to the village. Without ownership there is no responsibility. If it is not mine, how much do I really care what happens to it? Our hospitals and clinics are locally owned and operated. We require that the community is heavily invested in the outcomes and further that they have responsibility for the outcomes as measured by their own community standards. Community boards decide if a project is needed and, if so, what the community will contribute and where they can help. The success of the project needs to be viewed in terms that the community values and accepts as truly being successful.

It's not about charity, it's about development. Don't think "donate" but rather think "invest." When we ask for your support, really we are asking you to make an investment in communities. These communities are also investing but cannot, given the extreme levels of poverty they face, invest enough resources to become self-sufficient *at this time*. I emphasize *at this time* because, with a small investment from you, they can become self-sufficient over time.

Economist Jeffery Sachs, author of "The End of Poverty", uses a way of looking at the road to self-sufficiency that expresses it well, I think. People living in poverty, as extreme as this, need to get one foot on the rung of the ladder in order that they can begin the climb out. Your support of what we do at Mountain Fund is that first step onto the ladder.

Project Updates

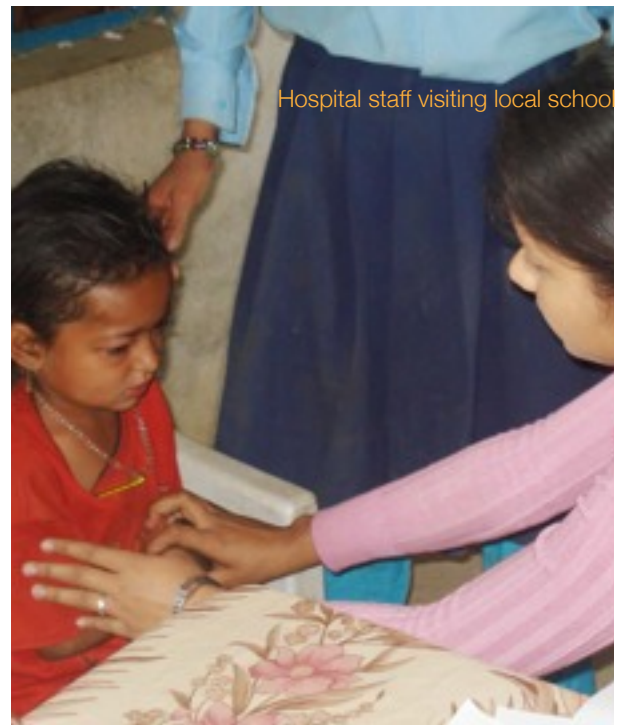
Porter Program - Thanks to Charles River Apparel we have six large bags of clothing on the way to Nepal this month. This will enable us to make appropriate clothing available to porters. As you learned in past issues we've relocated the former IMEC/Mountain Fund program to the Rasuwa District. That has enabled us to work more directly with porters in the Langtang National Park area. In January our program manager, Surya, had a meeting with the local porters in our hospital in Kalikasthan. Nearly 50 porters from the area attended. We are planning to hold regular classes for the porters in such topics as conversational english, reading, yoga for athletes to prevent injury and other relevant and useful topics as they suggest. If you'd like to invest in better working conditions for porters you may do so [here](#).

Kalikasthan Hospital - Part of our \$1.00 per person per YEAR program this hospital is the anchor for health care in the Rasuwa District of Nepal. Thanks to donations we have received from ardent supporters we are now able to outfit a medical laboratory at the hospital. That's really a giant leap forward both in terms of our ability to properly diagnose disease and create a proper hospital for the district. Our doctor and nurse recently conducted a health camp in a nearby school. Twenty-seven students received free medical care and medicine. We need to invest a lot more in this hospital and if you'd like to make an investment that will return huge dividends you can do so [here](#). It costs less than \$1.00 per person per YEAR for this hospital to operate.

The Gho-Ngag Dhargye Mangche Gompa - This monastery was built 350 years ago, all by one man, Garwang Rinpoche. It took him 12 years to build it. It sits a little way off from the village proper and in the past vandals have taken some of the statues and documents. This project will repair the monastery and protect it for future generations. Five workers have already spent an entire year repainting the interior of the monastery (see photo prior page). Much work is still needed to secure the property against vandals who have, in the past, attempted to take statues and sacred texts. This project is being sponsored by Kahtoola. If you'd also like to invest in the preservation of this true cultural treasure you may do so [here](#).

Volunteer Program - Our volunteer program in Nepal looks to be headed for record numbers this year. We have as many as 30 volunteers already booked for our home stay program. Those volunteers will assist local nonprofit organizations in and around Kathmandu. At least five people are booked to take part in a moving medical camp this April. We'll visit remote villages and give free medical care to those in need. A key goal of these treks is to raise awareness of our clinics in the area and encourage patients to seek medical care early, especially pregnant women. To learn more visit this page <http://www.mountainfund.org/online/index.php/volunteer/volunteer-in-nepal>

Women's Safe House Kathmandu - This new program is up and running. We are housing seven women at this time. If you would like to invest in a better future for one of these women, please do so [here](#).



Hospital staff visiting local school

Many Thanks

The Mountain Fund depends on donations from individuals and a handful of really good companies that help us out a lot. Here are a few we'd like to thank.



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The over 4,000 supporters who read our news !

Our nonprofit incubator at The Mountain Fund

In addition to starting and running a number of projects of our own in mountain communities, we support others who are working to improve lives, provide access to essential freedoms such as education, healthcare, clean water and basic human rights. These dedicated social entrepreneurs are “making it happen” with a little help from The Mountain Fund. Some, if not all, will go on to become independent nonprofit organizations and change the world.



This group is providing 47 girls in the mountainous regions of Liberia, in Bong and Margibi counties, with education scholarships for the 2008/2009 school year. This year, Mountain Fund newsletter readers helped Girl's Education International obtain \$5,000 in funding from the Crocs and Outside Magazine Inspiring Soles program.



The North East India Project is working along side the villages of North East India to assist and support in the areas of healthcare, education, water resource, and economic development, while preserving their culture and basic way of life.

Benefit El Salvador: The Zaragoza Project

Noah Harper is helping to establish a health clinic for the people of Zaragoza, El Salvador. This clinic serves a population of nearly 35,000.



An organization based in Nepal the Mount Everest Foundation for Sustainable Development is helping schools and clinics in the area just south of the Khumbu.

Earth Spirit Rejuvenation

Earth Spirit is assisting Bolivian communities, financially and technically, with developing potable water and sanitation systems; performing watershed assessments for watershed associations, government agencies, and non-profits and recommending restoration projects and leading projects which provide jobs and job training in indigenous traditional practices for youth and women and environmental and cultural education.

Please visit our web site today and learn about all the great up-and-coming agents of change [The Mountain Fund](#) is supporting.



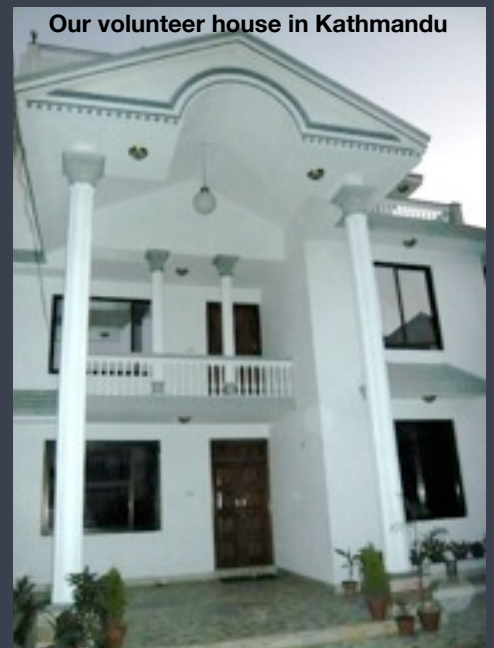
Our Newsletter Sponsor

We are pleased that Summitclimb.com is our newsletter sponsor for 2009. Summitclimb has been a great supporter of Mountain Fund since it's inception. We have a tremendous amount of respect for the good people at Summitclimb.com.

In addition to guiding the highest peaks in the world, Summitclimb gives a lot back to local communities. Their service trek in the khumbu area supports local schools, clinics and in Deboche has substantially rebuilt a nunnery. Year in and year out, Summitclimb returns and helps these poor communities.

Please consider joining Summitclimb's Service Treks. You'll have the experience of a lifetime as well as hands on giving to the wonderful people of Nepal. Learn more about Summitclimb's charitable service treks [HERE](#) or visit www.summitclimb.com today!

Our volunteer house in Kathmandu



Lizzy Scully interviews The Mountain Fund

The Mountain Fund: A year of change

By Lizzy Scully

Ever imagined visiting Nepal? How about working as a volunteer in a health clinic in Peru? Or, have you dreamed about trekking through some of the biggest mountains of the world while at the same time giving back to the world community through volunteer work?

With the new and improved mission it implemented this year, The Mountain Fund is making dreams a reality for hundreds of people around the globe. I recently sat down with TMF's Founder and Executive Director Scott MacLennan to discuss the latest and greatest TMF programs and the new direction his organization took this past year.

LS: What is your new and improved mission?

SM: Our primary mission now is to run small, affordable projects on our own. We still have a lot of "partners," but our role with them is more limited now in scope to being what the IRS calls a "fiscal agent." This means we will still accept donations on behalf of our "partners" and afford them our tax-free umbrella. However, rather than jump from thing to thing all over the globe, we are still supporting other organizations to do that, while maintaining a tighter focus for ourselves.

LS: What does this change mean?

SM: We are now focused more geographically and are working with individual villages on many projects at the same time. Plus, we've taken the approach like a three-legged stool—first basic healthcare, next make the schools stronger, and then work with women to establish micro lending and create new economic opportunities. For example, in Thulo Syabru we have a health clinic, we are working with a women's group, we are supporting the school, and we are rebuilding a monastery.

LS: How does this improve the success of your programs?

SM: We have active village committees guiding and managing the process, so we can be more confident that the village's biggest needs will be met. Plus, we have in this way a very direct and immediate form of feedback from the stakeholders.

LS: Why the change?

SM: We are always asking ourselves what's working and how can we do a better job. It's important to be accountable to donors and be able to produce the maximum results with the money they entrust to us. Out of that self-examination we determined that we needed to narrow our focus

a little in order to be able to produce the kind of results we wanted to see.

LS: How are you funding your projects?

SM: Ordinary people fund our projects by contributing their money and time to causes they feel some ownership of. Our donors want that experience of feeling connected and knowing that their donation, no matter how small or large, really had impact.

LS: What are some of the positive outcomes you've seen?

SM: The most positive outcome I have seen from our longer running projects is that people in neighboring villages are coming to us and asking for our help. They've seen the benefit of our work, and they want the same thing for their village. Given the really remote and rural places we are working, that's a huge breakthrough.

LS: What do you consider one of your more successful projects and why?

SM: One of our newest projects, the Kathmandu Women's Safe House Project, is having a huge impact for a low cost. Nepal is one of the top five worst places for women, according to a 2008 Foreign Policy Report. Twenty-nine percent of Nepali women feel that a husband was justified in beating his wife for going out without asking permission or "neglecting" the children, among other things.

On top of that 21 percent of the women aged 15-19 are pregnant or have children, while only 35 percent are able to read and write. Put it all together and you have child-brides, who

Lizzy Scully - Mountain Fund interview continued.

cannot read, raising children and believing their husbands should beat them at times.

Working with The Women's Foundation of Kathmandu and the Tessa Horan Fund, we are now housing women who are victims of abuse, and The Women's Foundation is providing counseling, job training, and childcare.

While the cost to Mountain Fund supporters is only the housing and food for these women, the overall impact created by the combined forces of Mountain Fund and The Women's Foundation is really extraordinary in helping abused women and in addressing the problem as a whole in the country.

LS: What's new with your volunteer program?

SM: We have significantly upped our activity for volunteers in Nepal and Peru—we now have a three-story place in Nepal where we have our volunteer coordination staff and a volunteer home stay program. We have hosted more than 60 volunteers this year who collectively provided thousands of hours of volunteer labor in Nepal this year!

We hope this experience plants a seed in the minds of our volunteers and opens their eyes to the sort of crushing poverty they'd never see and perhaps could never believe exists. If they take that idea back to school or their communities, they may move on to careers in which they remain sensitive to the harsh conditions

the world's poor live in. Perhaps one of them will become a real social entrepreneur and change the world.



Lizzy Scully, writer/editor and climber, lives in Lyons, Colorado. She's a senior contributing editor for Rock and Ice magazine and a columnist for Rocky Mountain Sports. She also works with a variety of companies: Skirtsports, Evolv, Trango, Montbell and others.

Lizzy is one of the founders of Girl's Education International and a true social entrepreneur.

what's this cookin'?

bigworldstew is brand stewardship for world changers, world changers like the Mountain Fund. We're an agency that works with brands that are trying to make the world a better place. We've heard it before. "You're name is odd. What does bigworldstew mean?"

It's easy to explain, really. We work with brands that are trying to make the world a better place. Many of these are non-profits, NGOs, or for-profits with a clear corporate social responsibility platform with services ranging from global ministry to sports to community development. That's the bigworld.

We are honored to be the agency partner of the Mountain Fund. We will be working with the Mountain Fund's partnership marketing program; specifically corporate sponsorship and valuations.

bigworldstew has causes not clients. We are thrilled that the Mountain Fund is one of our causes.

The Mountain Fund

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Volunteers in Nepal





Mountain Fund Gets Married

Founder and Executive Director married in Nepal in typical Hindu ceremony.



This is a postscript to the news. As it is personal I added it here after the newsletters was “officially” ended. There is, however, a good Mountain Fund story associated with it.

As you can see in the photo in the upper left, there are a number of non-Nepali women, dressed in the traditional sari. There's 14 of them attending the wedding to be exact. They are a group of nurses from a nursing college in Canada who came to Nepal to volunteer and join one of our medical treks. They were staying at The Mountain Volunteer house in Kathmandu. The nurses were asked if they'd like to attend a real Nepali wedding and they jumped at the chance. Collectively they decided it would be great fun to show up all dressed in local garb. I was not there for this next part, but as it was told to me, two things happened.

First, there was the matter of 14 nurses from Canada all attempting to get ready to go to the wedding, but none knowing how to put on a Sari. The story, as told to me, was quite funny. Whatever the truth may be, it did result in the wedding starting one hour late and an angry driver honking the horn in front of the house as he waited, impatiently, to drive the group to the temple. Next, there was the matter that apparently, no one mentioned to the nurses that they were attending not just some Nepali wedding, but our wedding. When they walked in the door of the Hindu temple several of them seemed surprised to discover that they were there to see their house mom and trekking guide's wedding.

The picture on the lower left is about the honeymoon. We took the 14 nurses trekking in Langtang National Park, of course. I am not certain it's what Sunita had in mind.

Scott