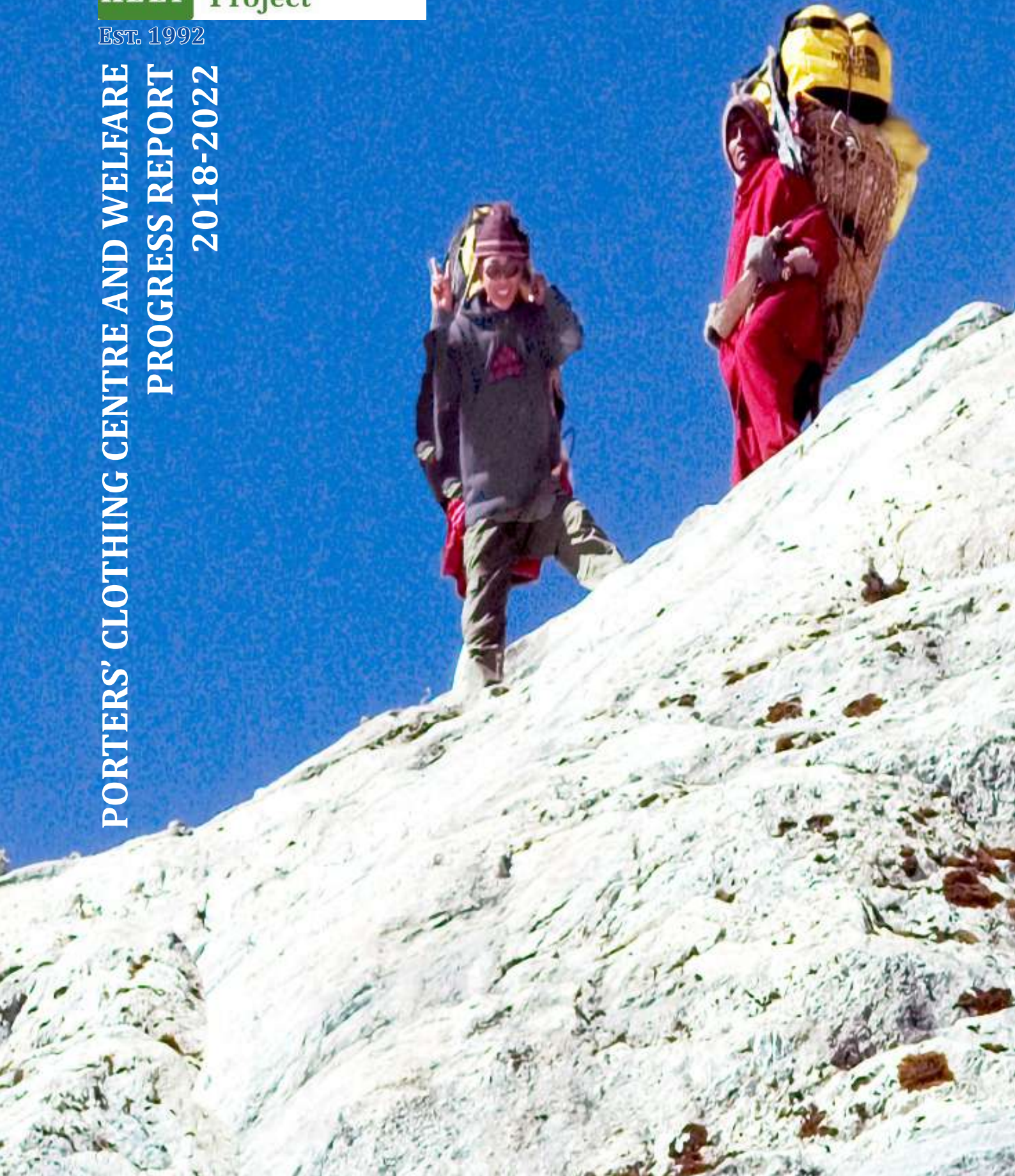




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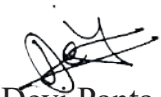
PORTERS' CLOTHING CENTRE AND WELFARE
PROGRESS REPORT
2018-2022



Message from the Chairman



It is with great pleasure, I present you the progress report of our Porters Clothing Centre (PCC) and Porters Welfare Programs, 2018-2023. This program is among the sustainable tourism promotion programs of KEEP. Since its establishment in 2009, KEEP's PCC has benefitted more than 3500 porters from Nepali trekking industry. The porters who would have otherwise faced health and safety hazards in the Himalayas during the trek. KEEP's porters' welfare programs have helped numerous porters by imparting the knowledge required for their safe trekking. These welfare programs not only enable porters with all the knowledge they require about their welfare, but also teaches them about environment conservation. KEEP has always been an advocate for porters who are the most neglected people in the trekking industry of Nepal. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all our donors and supporters of PCC and Porters Welfare Programs, and, hope for the continued support in the future as well.



Devi Panta
Chairman, KEEP

Message from the CEO



KEEP primarily provides the services of the Porter Clothing Centre to both freelance porters and guides. The nature of mountain tourism, and in particular, the trekking industry in Nepal is based purely on supply and demand and thus full time employment for this sector for employees is susceptible to the potentially negative impact of both local and international events. Under these circumstance it is impossible for the majority of agencies to retain the services of both guides and porters for twelve months of the year and as such virtually all of this sector's work force are deemed to be seasonal and 'freelance'.

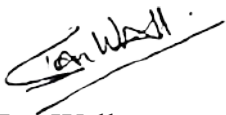
Porter and guide wages are minimal, especially when considering that their potential three-four months of seasonal earnings has to sustain their family, and often extended family, for the year, and often beyond that if circumstances restrict travel, as in the case of the covid pandemic where these daily wage earners were put under considerable financial pressure. Consequently financial constraints often preclude the porters and guides from purchasing suitable shell-clothing for their occupational duties. Even in 2022-2023 there have been several incidents where trekking professionals have suffered as a result of not being properly equipped.

KEEP has been providing suitable clothing for mountain related and high altitude environmental

workers since 2009 and thus adding another layer of protection for this vulnerable sector that are the backbone of the mountain tourism industry. Without the support and assistance of many organisations and individuals KEEP would not be able to provide this service.

KEEP is very much aware that not only is it imperative that the porters are appropriately equipped for their professional duties but that they are also healthy, fit and strong. To this end KEEP has further developed the Porter Welfare element of its work to incorporate distant porter community improvement in infrastructure, including providing food subsidies during the Pandemic. The community work includes building community toilets, water supply systems, classrooms and tree planting to minimise soil erosion. This work is now becoming a major part of KEEP's role in looking after our porter communities.

Finally, it is great sadness that I have to report the passing of Paul, our long serving volunteer who many of you will remember was the face of the Porter Clothing Centre for many years. Paul met with an unfortunate accident incurring injuries from which he did not recover. A KEEP supporter, volunteer and friend 2014 - 2022.



Ian Wall,
Advisor/International CEO

A Word from our Supports

SST Foundation

The Swiss Foundation for Solidarity in Tourism (SST) supports organizations and projects worldwide that contribute to sustainable tourism development with financial contributions. Through its contributions, the SST Foundation helps to secure the livelihoods of the population in tourist destinations, to improve their economic conditions and to protect the environment. It also helps to promote initiatives and new ideas for a balanced cultural exchange between tourists and locals. Since 2014, the Foundation has also supported the Porters' Awareness - Workshops of KEEP in Nepal. We wish KEEP Nepal continued success and are convinced that KEEP's activities support the goals of the SST Foundation.



Schweizerische Stiftung für Solidarität im Tourismus
Swiss Foundation for Solidarity in Tourism

Best regards,

Hansjoerg Ruf,
SST Foundation

Mr. Tom and Mrs. Karen Hodgman

To make this porters welfare program successful Karen and Tom have provided outstanding support to KEEP. It's been 4 years that KEEP has received regular support from them for the Porter Welfare program, we are very fortunate for your support of KEEP and KEEP's program.

We would like to thank you both for your support.



Porteurs d'Avenir Support

Porteurs d'Avenir is supporting KEEP from long time ago and this organization also helping KEEP by providing clothes and shoes that are used in trekking and expeditions. Their main aim is to support the porters of Nepal and organization is doing great job for the welfare of the porters. Pauline Pretet from Porteurs d'Avenir is supporting KEEP by providing the trekking gear useful for the guides and porters. In November, 2022 Pauline has supported KEEP with 19 pairs of shoes and in April, 2023 she had supported KEEP's Porter Clothing Centre (PCC) with 13 pieces of jackets, 8 pieces of



pants and 3 sets of shoes.

Maintaining, replacing and repairing items is an ongoing task and one that KEEP will never complete. KEEP is extremely grateful for all the support from many organisations and individuals from around the world, without whom KEEP would not be able to continue with its work. A complete list of supports appears at the end of this report.



History of KEEP's Porters' Clothing and Welfare Centre.

Nestled amidst the breath taking Himalayan peaks, Nepal stands as a beacon for adventure seekers and mountain enthusiasts from around the globe. With the rich cultural heritage and awe-inspiring landscapes, it comes as no surprise that tourism has become a major contributor to Nepal's economy, serving as the second largest foreign income and revenue-generating industry in the country. Year after year, thousands of visitors embark on treks and expeditions attempting to explore the beauty of the most famous mountain range in the world.

Behind the scenes of such picturesque travel experiences, there exists a group of professionals who shoulder the weight, both literally and metaphorically, of the trekking experience, the porters. While the Nepali government has set the standard weight allowance for porters at 35kgs, these hardworking individuals, often hailing from remote communities, will

often be encouraged to overload themselves by carrying weights much more than 35 kilos in order to lighten the weight of their client's packs.

Over 40,000 Nepalese are hired as porters annually and these individuals play a pivotal role in ensuring the success and safety of trekking clients around the country, but all too often, they face poor conditions and challenges



in terms of inadequate clothing and gear that hinder their ability to perform such duties in safety while at the same time supporting foreign tourists.



Recognising the need to uplift the working conditions and well-being of such a profession, KEEP established the Porters' Clothing Centre in September 2009 with the aim of *“providing poorly equipped porters with better clothing, suitable for their work in a mountain environment.”* Throughout the consecutive years, the PCC successfully established itself as the main provider of full sets of clothing and equipment for a nominal fee that is later spent directly used covering the costs of running and maintaining the PCC.

An expanding focus of the PCC



It has been extremely difficult for freelance guides and porters to remain financially solvent over the last three years. With this in mind KEEP is now providing a Welfare service to many porter communities. These facilities include the tree planting to reduce soil erosion, providing rice during the lock-down, supplying warm clothing to rural families of ‘retired’ porters and supporting their communities where possible and providing cooking pots to families that have been struck by natural disasters.

Program Destinations

Date	Location	Participants
2018	Taplejung	67
2019	Gorkha	200
2020	Cheskam	233

Date	Location	Participants
2021	Parchyang	203
2022	Tumling	40
2023	Temal	50
2023	Sarshyu	24

Porters' Awareness Workshop 2018 & 2022

It is always difficult to predict the attendance figures for any of the KEEP programs, we receive a prediction from the local organisers but this is often totally inaccurate, and many more participants than were estimated turn up thus the training facilities don't always meet KEEP's presentation venue expectations!

In 2018, KEEP successfully travelled and conducted a workshop in the far- east part of the country in Taplejung. There was a turnout of nearly 70 participants who were grateful for such accessibility to quality training conducted in their home region. Not all attendees were directly involved in trekking, many came from hoe-stay and other related service occupations.

In 2019 KEEP successfully travelled and conducted a workshop in the Dharche, Gorkha District. There was a turnout of nearly 200 participants who were grateful for such accessibility to quality training conducted in their home region. Not all attendees were





directly involved in trekking, many came from home stay and other related service occupations.

In 2020, KEEP conducted a successful Porters’ Awareness Workshop in Cheskam, Solukhumba. The workshop was delivered with the support of SST (Swiss

Foundation for Solidarity in Tourism), Mountain-People, Porteurs d’Avenir and Crooked Trail. As many as 233 participants attended the workshop, which was themed ‘Our Porters – Our Responsibility.’ It entailed a thorough review of practical and useful information by knowledgeable, competent instructors well-versed in the wide range of subject matter covered.

In 2021 KEEP hosted two workshops. The first took place on February in Tumling, Maijogmai Rural Municipality, Illam and boasted a turnout of 40



participants. The second was situated in Parcchyang, Rasuwa and gathered 203 male and female porters. KEEP once again successfully delivered the Porters’ Awareness Workshop with the support of the Swiss Foundation for Solidarity in Tourism (SST Foundation), Mountain-People, Porteurs d’Avenir and Crooked Trail.

In 2022, workshop took place in Timal Rural Municipality - 06, Kavrepalnchowk, on August 17th-19th. There were 50 attendees who greatly appreciated the knowledge they inquired thanks to KEEP, Mountain-People, Porteurs d’Avenir, Swiss Foundation for Solidarity in Tourism (SST Foundation) and Crooked Trail.

As the previous year, the theme of the workshop was ‘Our Porters – Our Responsibility.’

In 2023, the Workshop took place in Naukunda Rural Municipality

during June 3rd-5th. There were 24 attendees who greatly appreciated the knowledge they acquired thanks to KEEP, Mountain-People, Porteurs d'Avenir, Swiss Foundation

for Solidarity in Tourism (SST Foundation) and Crooked Trail. As the previous year, the theme of the workshop was 'Our Porters – Our Responsibility.'

PCC Database

Since the Porter Clothing Centre was established, KEEP has been lending clothing items such as warm jackets, trousers, fleece jackets, boots, sunglasses, socks, gloves and sleeping bags to a large number of porters. Our records show that as many as 5856 porters from 480 different trekking companies as well as many freelance porters and guides have directly benefited from KEEP' PCC and an unknown number benefiting from the KEEP Welfare Program.

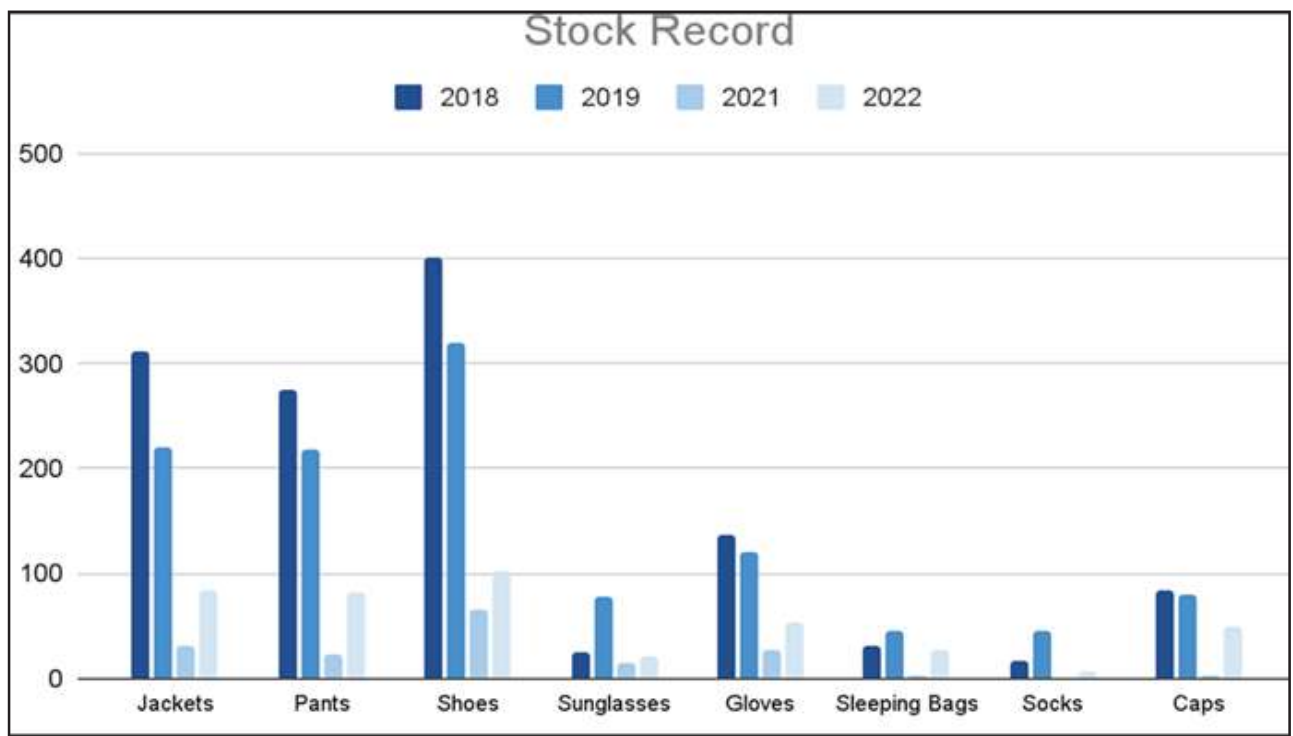
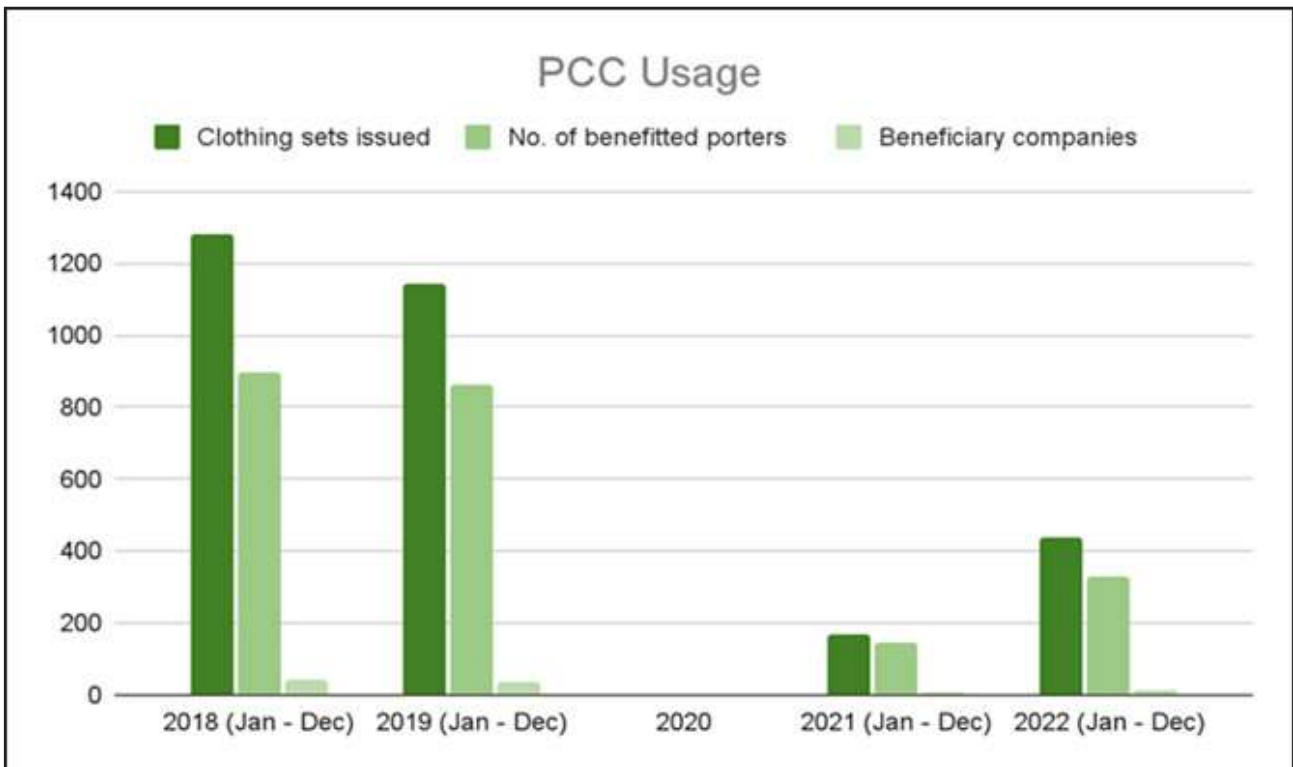
The following tables illustrate the development in the stock of the PCC from 2009 until 2022:

Year	Clothing sets issued	Beneficiary companies
2009	201	16
2010	524	53
2011	732	66
2012	742	82
2013	372	33
2014	451	45
2015	469	55
2016	70	9
2017	300	16
2018	1284	43
2019	1142	37
2021	168	10

Inventory 2022

Items	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	2019	2021	2022
Jackets		240	537	443	330	170	170	368	311	221	32	84
Pants	116	279	403	302	107	150	150	318	275	219	23	82
Shoes	234	206	206	227	205	103	464	114	401	320	65	102
Sun Glasses	159	81	267		301	65	205		26	79	15	21
Gloves	122	83	62	181	220	205	65		137	121	27	53
Sleeping bags	56		30		35	38	38	5	32	45	3	28

Items	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	2019	2021	2022
Socks	92	17	17		17	15	32		18	46		6
Caps						40	40		84	81	2	49
Mattress										10		9
One Piece								1				



Thanks to the invaluable and unwavering support of individuals and organisations from across the globe, the Porter Clothing Centre (PCC) has defied adversities such as the catastrophic earthquakes of 2015 and the economic downturn brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic 2020 - 2021. The generous financial contributions and material donations have been instrumental in sustaining the operations of the PCC during these challenging times. Please note the gap in data in 2020 occurred when KEEP was forced to pause the PCC work due to the unforeseen circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic; therefore, there is no data to be included in the graphs.

The data presented above provides us with valuable insights into the preferences of freelance porters and trekking companies when it comes to clothing items. It is evident that shoes/boots, jackets, and pants/trousers, in that

order, are the most sought-after items. Armed with this knowledge, the PCC has meticulously managed and expanded its inventory to meet the demands of porters, ensuring they have access to the essential clothing items they require.

Despite the impressive stock inventory that has been built over time, KEEP recognizes the ongoing need for both financial and material donations. This continuous support is essential for sustaining and further enhancing the working conditions of porters. Every contribution, no matter how big or small, plays a crucial role in our collective effort to uplift and empower these hardworking individuals who form the backbone of Nepal's trekking industry.

The list shows which Agencies and individuals made use of the PCB service:



2018

- White Lotus Adventure
- Annapurna Foothills Treks & Adventure
- Unique Adventure International
- Tsum Valley Treks & Expedition
- Annapurna Treks & Expedition
- Zen Adventure Holidays
- Dream Himalaya Adventures
- Nepal Sanctuary Treks
- Yeti Mountain Adventure
- Himalayan Sherpa Adventure
- Himalayan Guide Nepal
- Himalayan Trails Trekking & Climbing
- Core Treks
- Anna Nepal Trek
- Aventura Trek Nepal
- Snowy Horizon Treks & Expedition
- Campo Base Treks
- Ski Guides Nepal
- Different Treks Service
- Himalayan Vision Treks
- Iceland Trekking & Expeditions
- Mountain Ram Adventures
- Ecological Treks
- Adventure with Altitude Expeditions
- Yatri Trekking

2019

- Churen Himal Treks & Expedition
- Visit Himalaya Treks
- Joy Treks
- Yatri Trekking
- Nepal Environmental Treks & Expeditions
- Let's Go Himalaya
- Nepal Trek Hub
- Campo Base Treks
- Shiva Treks & Expeditions
- Trekking Encounters Nepal
- Himalayan Holidays Trekking
- Charming Guide Adventure Trek
- Sherpa Alpine Trekking Service
- Golden Nepal Trek & Expedition
- Explore Manaslu
- Across Himalaya Tours & Treks
- Yeti Mountain Adventure
- Nepal Sanctuary Trek
- Annapurna Treks & Expeditions
- Mountain Treks & Expeditions
- Rainbow Mountain Treks
- Ministry of Culture Tourism & Civil Aviation
- Cho Oyu Trekking
- Nepal Environmental Treks & Expeditions
- Himalayan Nirvana Trekking
- Nepal Trekking Team
- Magical Nepal Treks
- Nepalwelt Trekking
- Mandala Trekking
- Sherpa Alpine Trekking Service
- Bright Way Trek & Expedition
- Aasra Eco Treks
- Churen Himal Treks & Expeditions
- Firante Treks & Expedition
- Let's Go Himalaya

- E.B.C. Treks & Expedition
- Kailash Himalaya Treks
- Happy Feet Mountaineers

- Himalayan Trail Finder
- Pema Treks & Expedition
- Off the Wall Trekking

2020

Pandemic Lockdown

2021

- Pema Treks & Expeditions
- Himalayan Range International
- Eco Trip Nepal Treks
- Unique Adventure International
- Himalayan Trails & Climbing

- Alpine Ramble Treks
- Annapurna Foothills Treks
- Himalayan Adventure Labs
- Aasra Eco Treks
- Himalayan Leaders Treks & Expedition

2022

- Yeti Mountain Adventure
- Adventure Treks Nepal
- Freedom Adventure
- Churen Himal Treks & Expeditions
- Sherpa Alpine Trekking Services
- Altitude Randonnee Trekking
- Off the Wall Trekking
- Yatri Trekking

- High Mountain Himalayan Treks & Expeditions
- Cho-oyu Trekking
- Anna Nepal Trek
- Pema Treks & Expedition
- Annapurna Foothills Treks & Expeditions
- Himalayan Yogi Adventure
- Himalayan Vacation Treks & Expedition

Support KEEP's PCC & W Program

Porters English Language Course:

The ability to communicate is essential when it comes to safety and security of the clients, with this in mind KEEP has successfully conducted English Language Courses (ELC) for porters in their communities. Below is the list of Porters English Language Course delivered.

Dec, 2020 to Jan 2021	Yarsha, Rasuwa	14
	Sarshyu, Rasuwa	54
Dec, 2022 to Jan, 2023	Sarshyu, Rasuwa	48

COVID-19, Relief Program 2017

Due to COVID-19 pandemic all businesses were closed and the travel restriction had a huge impact on tourism and the ability of freelance trekking staff to earn a daily wage. When COVID was in

peak, the porters had to remain unemployed for many months during which time families had no option to purchase food. During those hard times the porters living in Kathmandu did not have access to land on which to grow their own vegetables so KEEP organized a program to donate food materials to the most needy tourism porters. During this time KEEP supplied food to 65 families near the Balaju bypass area. At that time, a porter known to KEEP, Ram Bahadur Negi walked to Kathmandu from Rasuwa in 2 hours to receive the relief food items distributed by KEEP so that he could feed his family of five.

Distribution off useful utensil for villagers of Yarsha, Rasuwa

In April, 2023 with the support of Mrs. Meena Sherpa and Sherpa Society Solukhumbu in coordination with KEEP distributed useful utensils to the Porters of Naukunda Rural Municipality, Doklan who had lost many items due to natural disasters.

Distribution of Warm clothes

KEEP has distributed warm clothing to the old people of Yarsha and Srashyu in 2022 and 2023. In 2022 we had distributed 75 pieces of warm jackets in Yarsha, Rasuwa and in 2023 total of 275 pieces of warm jackets were distributed in Yarsha and Sarshyu.

In November, 2023, KEEP has purchased 54 pairs of Goldstar shoes for porters clothing center (PCC) with cash donated by sponsors and Porteurs d'Avendir, France who donated another batch of shoes.

We appreciate any contribution you can make to the Porters' Clothing Centre. Please note: Used jackets and pants in Westerners' size do not necessarily fit Nepali porters, and if shipped to Nepal from abroad, they will, unfortunately, be stopped at the border and KEEP will be charged import duties. Hence, financial donations are often preferred to material donations, as they go a long



way in ensuring our work can continue. Donations cover expenses of purchasing new clothing, repairing and replacing damaged items, and further help KEEP in covering expenses related to staff and rental charges for the Clothing Centre.

Please make any donation via wire transfer to KEEP's offices in Nepal or the U.K., with an indication in the subject reference that you are donating to the PCC. **KEEP's BANK DETAILS**

KEEP in Nepal (under KEEP)

Standard Chartered Bank Nepal Limited
 Account number: 01-0140872-51
 Lazimpat, Kathmandu, Nepal
 SWIFT CODE: SCBLNPKA

KEEP in the U.K.

(under Charles Hebert)
 Charles Hebert First Direct Bank
 Account number: 55638208
 Sort code: 40-47-65

How you can help

Donations

Both financial and material donations help ensure KEEP; specifically the PCC is able to continue operations. In our pursuit of providing porters with the best possible gear, we are immensely grateful for the abundant supply of Nepali-made hiking shoes that have been generously donated. However, as we strive to enhance porter's safety and comfort on challenging terrains, we currently face a

shortage of technical shoes and boots that are specifically designed for more demanding conditions, including snow and ice.

To address this critical need, we humbly appeal to those who have access to high- quality western-made trekking boots. Your generous donations of this specialized footwear would be a great benefit to what the PCC can offer to porters, empowering them to navigate treacherous terrains with confidence and ease.

A Note Concerning Donating Used Clothes

If you are in Nepal, and, have nice, used, trekking gear and clothing to spare – such as warm jackets, trousers/pants, hats, socks, sunglasses, warm gloves or sleeping bags – we gratefully welcome your donation. As mentioned, note that Nepalese tend to use smaller sizes than Westerners. Please drop your donations off in person or dispatch them to KEEP's offices in Thamel. Thank you!



KEEP's PORTER CODE

Our Porters Our Responsibility

Many people are keen to suggest that trekkers should carry their own gear and should not try to get porters to do 'menial work for foreigners'. However it should be remembered that this work is the only way these porters can earn money to support their families and

in all middle hill communities with the lack of good infrastructure a porter is the only form of transporting goods for the village people.

The only way to abuse a porter is to over-load him and under-pay him!

Hire a porter in Nepal:

Hiring a porter is a good way to directly help rural communities. A porter's salary from one trek can sustain their families and benefit their local community for several months.



Select strong and experienced porters for high, remote treks:

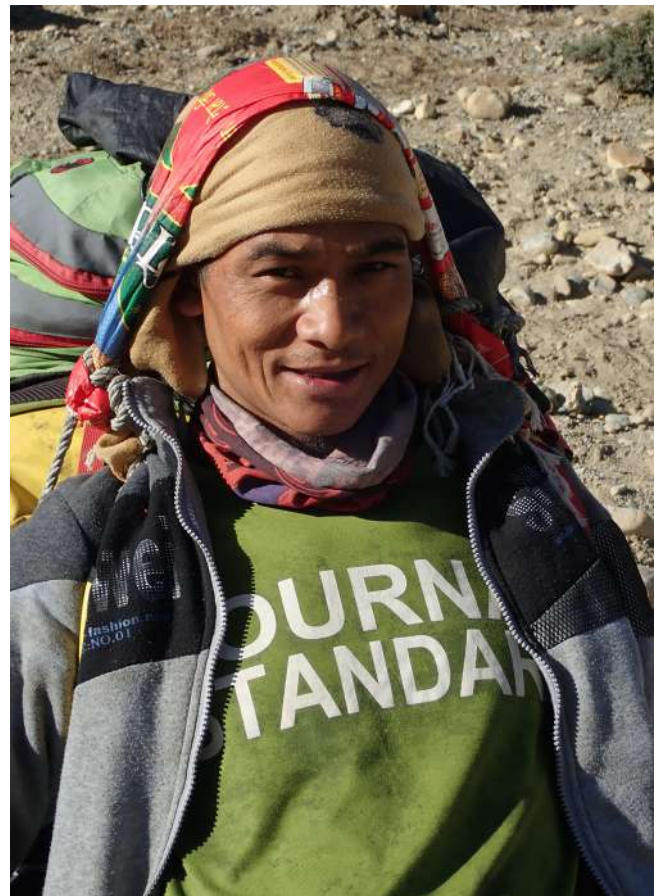
Make sure your porter is also provided with sufficient food, clothing, equipment, a sleeping mat and a tent for the entire duration of your trek.

Pay a fair salary:

Salaries vary according to the location you are trekking. Check with KEEP's Porters' Clothing Centre for current porter wages. A porter/guide who speaks English typically earns more. Don't bargain too hard-remember that a little extra money goes a long way in sustaining the life of the porter's family. Consider whether you include food and accommodation in with his wages, or do you deal with the load directly. Many porters would rather keep the accommodation element rather than pay for it so you need to ensure he has adequate shelter and food each night

Pick up a load yourself:

Have a go by picking up a load and it won't take long for you to realize what a tremendous job your porter is doing. Don't overload your porter. Maximum load is 25kg. Remember he has to add his own load to that of the clients.





Typically a porter will carry for two clients

Treat porters to tea or meals:

Offering meals and snacks is a nice gesture. Ensure your porter gets proper food and water throughout the trek, as you depend on their wellbeing.

Spend time with your porter:

There is much to be learned from these hard-working men and women. Spending time in direct contact with them encourages good performances on their part and enhances your own experience on the trail.

Take care of sick porters:

Your porter deserves the same standard of treatment, care and rescue that you expect for yourself. Make sure that sick porters are

sent down the mountains with someone who speaks their language and who understands the problem. Porters should never be sent down alone.

Tip your porter:

Tips can vary, check with your trekking company or KEEP's Porters' Clothing Centre for recommendations. Tips are normally paid at the end of the trek. Give the tip directly to your porter and make sure they know it is because they did a good job. If you have any spare equipment at the end of your trek, it can make a real difference to your porter's standard of living if you give it to them.

Have a meal before you go:

Take your porter/guide for a meal or tea before you start your trek. Find out about him/her and get an idea about whether you will get along. Remember, you will be spending the next few weeks together.

Insurance:

It is important to make sure your porter and guide have insurance cover. In the event of them falling ill you are responsible for their safety





and that might mean a helicopter evacuation. KEEP can advise you on these issues

Connect and use a trekking agency:

Talk to KEEP for a list of recommended trekking agencies.

Please donate:

Any spare clothes or shoes at the end of your trek to KEEP’s Porters’ Clothing Centre. It can make a real difference to your porter’s standard of living.

No child labour: Do not hire children as porters, as this discourages them from going to school and potentially damages their physical development.



Report all instances of neglect or abuse to KEEP’s Porters’ Clothing Centre.

On the 8th September 2022 His Majesty King Charles III succeeded to the throne of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland – as well as 14 other Commonwealth Realms. KEEP had the honour of being present at a celebration organised by the British Embassy, Kathmandu during which time we were able to highlight Porter Welfare issues

Please treat female and male porters and load carrying animals with the same respect - Spend time with your porter – and have fun!



Acknowledgements

Dr. Jim Duff, Dr. Louise Cook, Dr. Nick Mason, Elsie James, Ian Wall, Jan Neuspiel, Karen Valenti, Scott M., Daniel Jacot, Caitlin Vopni, Pauline Pretet, Hansjoerg Ruf, Tom and Karen Hodgman.

Organisations

International Porters Protection Group (IPPG), Nepal
 Globo Trek, Lowa, Transa, Switzerland
 Swiss Foundation for Solidarity in Tourism (SST), Switzerland
 International Mountain Explorer Connection (IMEC), USA
 Mountain People, Norway
 Porters Progress, UK
 Porteurs d'Avendir, France
 The Intrepid Foundation, Australia
 Crooked Trails, USA
 WorldWide Education Partnership for Nepal

Association pour le Respect et la Dignité des Porteurs del'Himalaya (ARDPH), Switzerland
 Community Action Nepal (CAN), UK
 The Mountain Fund, USA
 Trekking Agencies Association of Nepal (TAAN), Nepal
 World Expedition, UK
 Mountain Kingdom, UK
 Kathmandu, NZ
 AlpKit, UK

ORGANIZATION CHART

Advisors



Ukesh Raj Bhaju
Conservationist



Dr. Shailendra Thakali
Conservation &
Livelihood Consultant



Bimal Naharki
Tourism Entrepreneur



Lhakpa Phuti Sherpa
Mountaineering Expert



Ajit Gurung
Consultant Psychiatrist



Fabien Del'Homme
President, SSF France



David Durkan
Philanthropist



Tom Hodgman
Philanthropist



Karen Hodgman
Philanthropist



Wendy Tesdell
Founding Director BridgIT
Water Foundation

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Ian Wall
International CEO



Tara Datta Joshi
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Anjila Paudel
Funding & Program
Research Associate



Narmada Lamichhane
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Ramita Tamang
Coffee Shop Assistant

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**Kathmandu
Environmental
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