

Picture yourself carrying a 50-lb. load over an 18,000-foot pass 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 who carry goods for foreign trekkers in Nepal, Africa and Peru.



Aren't Porters Adjusted to the Cold and Altitude?

The majority of the world's porters are not the famous Sherpas of the Himalayan region who carry loads at altitude for foreign climbing expeditions. Instead, they are impoverished sustenance farmers who travel from lower elevations to trekking and expedition routes in search of work. Their incredible strength in the face of such difficult work has led to the myth that porters are immune to cold- and altitude-related ailments. This is a misconception. Many porters suffer from altitude sickness, hypothermia, snow blindness and frostbite while on the trail.

How Many Porters are Injured a Year?

No one knows exactly how many porters are injured or die every year, but preventable tragedies are reported each season:

- A porter died in the Khare region of Nepal of High Altitude Pulmonary Edema after descending from a Mera Peak trek. The trek leader had a Portable Altitude Chamber but no one thought to use it for the porter.

- A porter was paid one day's wage and sent down alone after suffering severe altitude sickness in the Everest region. He was found in a state of collapse and brought to the Pheriche Aid Post, where he spent nine days in a coma. He had both feet partially amputated due to frostbite.



- Three porters, lacking proper clothing for a late season storm, died of hypothermia-related causes when a powerful storm hit Mount Kilimanjaro in September 2002. One of the porters, suffering from the cold along the Machame route, decided to descend the mountain on his own. His body was later found at 12,630 feet, between the Shira and Baranco camps.

How Does IMEC Help?

Working in partnership with the International Porter Protection Group, Kathmandu Environmental Education Project, Porters' Progress and the Inka Porter Project, the Porter Assistance Project seeks to:

- Provide independent trekkers and small trekking companies with a convenient and inexpensive means of equipping their porters.
- Educate the tourist population about acceptable standards of porter treatment.
- Offer English language and first aid classes in order to motivate and empower porters.

Please Visit our Offices!

Porter Assistance Project offices in Kathmandu, Nepal, Moshi, Tanzania and Peru stockpile water- and wind-resistant jackets and pants, quick-drying synthetic "base" layers, gloves, socks, hats, sunglasses and footwear. The equipment, donated by manufacturers, ski schools, and individuals, is available for trekkers/climbers and tour operators to borrow to outfit their porters. All that is required is a small, refundable deposit.

Have extra time while in Kathmandu or Moshi? Please stop by our offices and teach an English language or basic medicine and hygiene lesson to a group of porters!

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 adventures are team efforts, and we all need to consider the strength and value of all the men and women who make our experiences in the mountains 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.

The International Mountain Explorers Connection

The International Mountain Explorers Connection is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to promote responsible and sustainable connections between travelers and the people of developing mountain regions of the world. IMEC provides and coordinates education, assistance, and cross-cultural experiences for members, volunteers, trekkers, and local communities.

Special thanks to the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG), Porters' Progress, and the Himalayan Rescue Association (HRA) for providing photos and materials.



Help Lighten the Load:

Support the International Mountain Explorers Connection

Please return this application to:

International Mountain Explorers Connection
PO Box 3665
Boulder, CO 80307-3665
Fax: 303.998.1007

Prefer to join over the phone?

Call 888.420.8822 or 303.998.0101 in Colorado

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please provide the following contact information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Country: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail: _____

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY

Please check the membership category you prefer.

(Memberships are U.S. tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law):

	Single	Couple	Membership Benefits
Basic:	<input type="checkbox"/> \$40	<input type="checkbox"/> \$60	One year of Kangri News and MountainNet, access to IMEC Volunteer Handbooks, exclusive travel and insurance discounts and use of the Nepal, Tanzania and Pakistan Clubhouses.
Supporting:	<input type="checkbox"/> \$60	<input type="checkbox"/> \$90	Basic membership plus an IMEC baseball cap or T-shirt.
Contributing:	<input type="checkbox"/> \$125	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175	Includes a cap or T-shirt plus any paperback book from our catalog.
Lifetime:	<input type="checkbox"/> \$500	<input type="checkbox"/> \$750	Includes a cap or T-shirt plus any item from our catalog.
Next Life:	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1500	No need to renew in your next incarnation.

\$ _____ **Make an additional contribution to the Porter Assistance Project**

Corporate Sponsorships also Available, Please Contact Us

(Please add \$5 for Memberships outside of the United States for postage and handling)

CHOOSE YOUR FREE GIFT for supporting level and up

Choose one:

IMEC baseball cap T-Shirt T-shirt Size: _____

Book or catalog item: _____

(For Contributing and Life Memberships only)

PAYMENT INFORMATION

Please provide the following payment information:

Credit card type: Visa Mastercard Cash/check

Cardholder name: _____

Card number: _____

Expiration date: (mm/yy) _____

Signature _____

Help Carry the Load: How You Can Help

1. **Provide proper clothing and equipment.** Porters need adequate footwear, socks, waterproof jackets and pants, gloves, hats, sunglasses, etc. that are appropriate for their destination. Clothing and gear for loan is available at the IMEC offices in Nepal and Africa, Porters' Progress offices in Nepal, and Porters of the Inka Porter Project offices in Peru.
2. **Provide proper shelter and sleeping arrangements.** Where no shelter is available porters should be provided with tents and sleeping bags (or a sleeping pad and blanket).
3. **Provide proper food, cooking equipment and water.** If porters are required to purchase their own food, wages should be adjusted accordingly.
4. **Properly care for sick or injured porters.** Porters deserve the same standard of treatment, care and rescue as their clients. Sick or injured porters need to be sent down with someone who speaks their language and understands the problem. If available, porters should also be provided insurance.
5. **Check that porters are paid a fair wage for their work and location and given their intended tips.** Wages vary in each country with trek location, length of trek and weight of load. Trekkers are encouraged to inquire at local agencies to learn about current recommended tips and wages.
6. **Check that porter loads don't exceed physical or legal limits.** In Africa and Peru loads should not exceed 25 kilos (including personal gear), the legal limit.
7. **Spend time with your porter.** There is much to be learned from these inspiring men and women, and spending time in direct contact with them will encourage good performance on their part and enhance your own experience on the trail.
8. **Report all instances of neglect or abuse.** The International Porter Protection Group maintains "Porter Logbooks" found in the IMEC/Porters' Progress office.
9. **Pick up a load yourself!** It won't take long to understand how tremendous these people really are.



*International Mountain
Explorers Connection*
The Connection to Responsible Travel

PO Box 3665, Boulder, CO 80307
303.998.0101 • Fax: 303.998.1007

info@mountainexplorers.org • http://www.mountainexplorers.org

Da Costa Hotel, Mawenzi Road, Moshi, Tanzania
phone: 074-481-7615 • kili@mountainexplorers.org

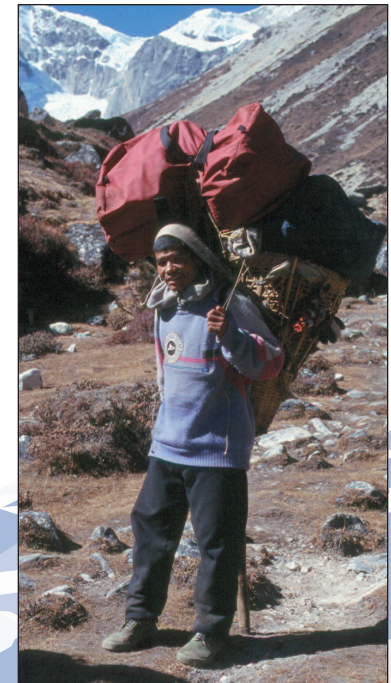
P.O. Box 7736, Kathmandu, Nepal
phone: 977-1-2081407 • members@mountainexplorers.org



*International Mountain
Explorers Connection*

Promoting responsible and
sustainable connections between
travelers and the people of
developing mountain regions
of the world

**PORTER
ASSISTANCE
PROJECT**



International Mountain Explorers