



हिमाली जोश MOUNTAIN SPIRIT



Mountain Trail: Issue 1, 2012

Message from the president

Dear Members and friends,

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to share with you all that, Mountain Spirit an NGO dedicated to conservation of the environment and social development of the mountain communities has successfully entered into its 16th years. The journey of 16 years wouldn't have been possible without the continuous support of dedicated members, advisers and supporters.

The biggest asset of our organization is our members. Today we have over 90 valuable members spread across 16 mountain districts of Nepal. We are very fortunate to have such members who are working hard to make the communities a better place to live and enjoy. Our members' roles and responsibilities have become ever increasingly important in the current context: a changing social-political scene of Nepal. Our small effort will have a bigger impact towards the nation's development as a whole.

Therefore, we the executive team strives to serve our members with improved communication with up-to-date information on our activities through e-newsletter and our Mountain Spirit website. We hope that this e-newsletter will be a solution to be in touch with our members who are scattered around Nepal and abroad. So, let's stay connected with just a few clicks away!

Your feedback and suggestions will be highly appreciated, so please do let us know how we could improve our mode of communication with you and make our e-newsletter and website more members' friendly and interactive.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for entrusting us the new executive team and especially for me to become the president of this prestigious organization.

Thank you,

Nima Lama Hyolmo
President

Message from adviser

Dear members,

Namaste! As a membership-based organisation, regular communication and contact with our members has always been a top priority for Mountain Spirit. During the 16th Annual General Meeting this year, we decided to produce a regular electronic newsletter to help us stay in touch with MS members in various parts of Nepal and around the world. This is the age of electronic media, and I encourage all members to try to engage and capitalise on it. In the future, I hope this newsletter will become a channel for individuals to share their news and views with the wider membership. Tashi Deleg!

Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa

Outgoing President and Adviser

About this e-newsletter

Dear members,

Greetings from Mountain Spirit! We are publishing a quarterly e-newsletter, which will include news of MS activities, updates about members and relevant articles. This issue includes messages from new President Nima Lama and Adviser Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa, coverage of Mountain Spirit's recent activities and achievements, brief introductions of the new executive committee members and advisers, remarks from the outgoing president and organisation notices.

This issue could not have been possible without support from our members and Mountain Spirit staff. In particular, we are thankful to all the executive members and advisers for providing their information. We are grateful to our outgoing President Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa for his remarks on Mountain Spirit. Similarly, thanks goes to associate member Jemima Diki Sherpa for providing editing support and executive member Chhewang Lama for layout design.

We will be publishing the next e-newsletter in mid-December, and we request all our members contribute by sending in articles.

Lhakpa Tenji Lama (Sherpa)

Executive Director

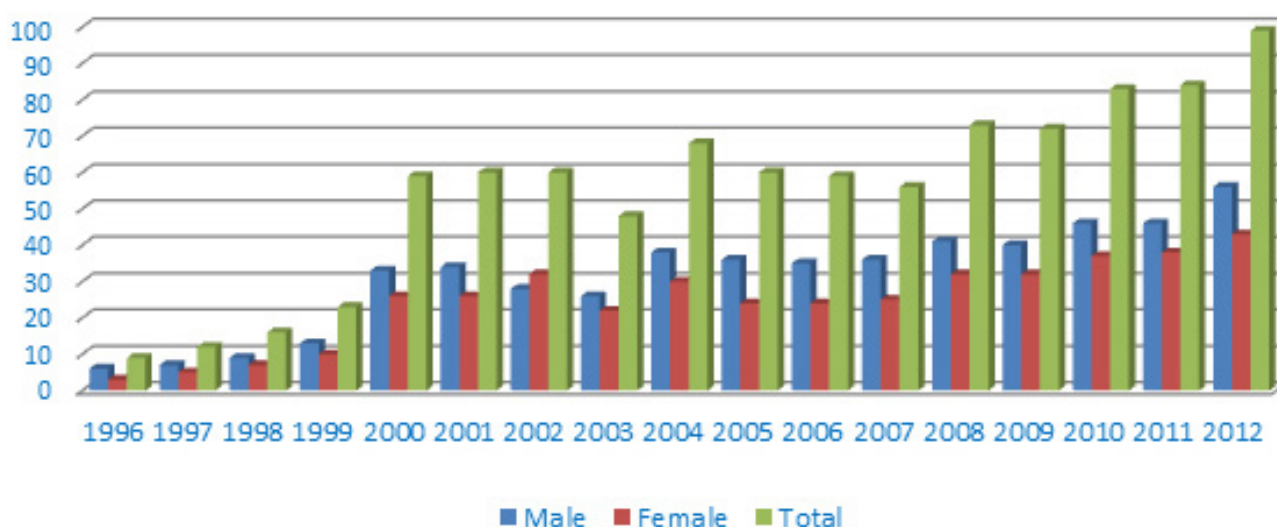
16th Annual General Meeting successfully completed



Mountain Spirit's 16th Annual General Meeting was held successfully on 19 August 2012 under the chairmanship of Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa at Hotel Seto Gurans, Baluwatar in Kathmandu. A new nine-member executive committee was elected, with Mr. Nima Lama as president. The AGM also endorsed the progress report presented by General Secretary Mr. Nima Lama, financial report presented by Treasurer Mr. Nono Lama and annual plan for the coming

year presented by board member Mr. Lakpa Sherpa. During the meeting, 12 new associate members were welcomed and endorsed, while six existing associate members were promoted to general member status. The organisation began with just nine founding members in 1996 now has 99 members from 16 districts of Nepal. The AGM also discussed and approved the proposal to establish a Mountain Spirit forum in the United States in collaboration with US-based members.

Membership status (1996-2012)



Workshop and training program

On the occasion of the 16th Annual General Meeting, Mountain Spirit organised a one-day workshop and training program on 18 August 2012 in Kathmandu. The first half of the day was a workshop on 'Federalism, Inclusion and Rights of the Indigenous Minorities'. Various scholars and leaders highlighted issues of federalism, indigenous rights and practices in Nepal and other countries. Mr. Pasang Sherpa, a former member of the Constituent Assembly, noted that the indigenous movement in Nepal is not intended to ignite ethnic conflict but rather aims to establish social justice for all. Dr. Mahendra Lawoti, Professor of Political Science at Western Michigan University, shed light on the myths and realities of federalism by sharing various examples of the federal system in different countries. He said that Nepal is moving against a global movement towards federalism,



and that the media has played a key role in creating the myth that federalism will create problems for Nepali society. Dr. Sara Shneiderman, Associate Professor at Yale University, gave a presentation on 'Inequality and Affirmative Action', focusing on practices in India and the United States during their respective state restructuring processes. Mr. Chhakka Bahadur (Chhewang) Lama, a scholar from Humla, made a slide

presentation on tourist attractions in Humla and the Mt. Kailash region of Tibet Autonomous Region. During the program Ms. Yangkila Sherpa, a former Mountain Spirit adviser, expressed her good wishes for the successful completion of the AGM. The program chairperson and Mountain Spirit President Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa highlighted the objectives of the organisation and thanked all the presenters.



The second half of the day was allocated for a training session on participatory communication and Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) Analysis. Mr. Kamal Phuyal, an experienced participatory communication trainer, shared his knowledge of development theories and participatory approaches by

involving participants in various exercises. The training also focused on the role of facilitators and the importance of participatory communication while working in different contexts. Mountain Spirit's Lhakpa Tenji Lama facilitated a brief training session on SWOT analysis.

REDD+ Readiness socioeconomic and resource survey

Mountain Spirit signed a contract with World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Nepal on 16 November 2011 to conduct a socioeconomic and resource survey for the REDD+ Readiness program, which aims to reduce carbon emissions through reforestation. A team from Mountain Spirit, led by Ms. Janita Gurung, completed the survey by visiting eight districts in the Sacred Landscape Region: Ramechhap, Dolakha, Sindhupalchowk, Rasuwa, Ilam, Panchthar, Khotang

and Bhojpur. The field data collection team was led by Mountain Spirit Secretary Mr. Tshewang Tashi Lama and the other team members were Mr. Khadak Rokaya, Mr. Kishor Sherpa, Ms. Mingma Sherpa, Mr. Lhadorchi Sherpa, Ms. Sonam Dolma Sherpa, Mr. Pemba Lama and Ms. Yangdu Sherpa. This program provided an opportunity for these MS members to develop their community consultation skills and explore the situation of mountain districts.

Community-based land and forest management project in Sagarmatha



Mountain Spirit is currently collaborating with Italian NGO CESVI to implement the European Union-funded 'Community-based land and forest management project' in the Sagarmatha National Park. The project started in February 2010 and will be phased out by the end of September. This project aims to support the community-based component of the Sagarmatha National Park and Buffer Zone Management Plan and contribute to the sustainable management of natural resources in the Himalayan region. The project launched small re-granting programs in nine different user groups in Chaurikharka, Namche and Khumjung VDCs. The programs include

plantation and fencing, landscape restoration, multi-purpose greenhouse and nursery development, fire control systems development, metal bridge construction and establishing gas and kerosene depots. Besides this, various capacity building trainings such as fire control, business skills and marketing, sustainable tourism and non-timber forest product management were conducted. Since Mr. Damber Thapa resigned from the post of Senior Field Co-ordinator, MS Executive Director Mr. Lhakpa Tenji Lama is currently overseeing the project. He is accompanied by social mobilisers Mr. Sonam Dorji Sherpa from Khunde and Mr. Lhakpa Chhiri Sherpa from Lukla.

Eco-Walk program 2012



On the occasion of World Environment Day, Mountain Spirit organised an Eco-Walk program on 30 June 2012 around Sundarijal, Kathmandu. The Eco-Walk is an annual program that both Mountain Spirit members and non-members can attend. There were more than 100 participants this year. This year's walk started from the main market of Sundarijal and extended into Shivapuri National Park, and participants collected

rubbish along the trail. At the picnic spot just below Mulkharka village, the participants played a series of fun interactive games, followed by a brief talk program. Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa, president of Mountain Spirit and Dr. Ghana Gurung, director of World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Nepal both spoke about the importance of environmental conservation. Mountain Spirit Vice-President Ms. Chhing Lamu Sherpa highlighted the objectives of the organisation.

Appointment of executive director

On 19 August 2012, Mountain Spirit appointed Mr. Lhakpa Tenji Lama (Sherpa) as executive director to oversee various MS activities including the MS-CESVI project in Sagarmatha National Park and Buffer Zone. Mr. Lama was a founding member of Mountain Spirit and is current general secretary.

Appointment of new office assistant

In place of Mr. Sunil Tandukar, Ms. Mingma Sherpa was appointed as an office assistant. Sunil resigned from his post in order to pursue further study. Mountain Spirit wishes him good luck for his progress. Mingma has previously contributed to this organisation as a volunteer.

Agreement between Mountain Spirit and Khumjung School Alumni Association (KSAA)

Mountain Spirit signed a mutual cooperation agreement with the Khumjung School Alumni Association (KSAA). As per the agreement, KSAA will use office facilities and staff support from Mountain Spirit and will share the house rent and staff salary costs. The agreement was signed by MS General Secretary Mr. Nima Lama and KSAA Secretary Ms. Sonam Phuti Sherpa.

Brief introduction of new executive members

Mr. Nima Lama, new president of Mountain Spirit, is originally from Shermathang village of Kiul VDC, Sindhupalchowk. He joined MS in 1999 and became an executive member in 2008. He was elected as general secretary of MS from 2010 to 2012. He also served as secretary of Foreign Affairs for the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN). Professionally, he is a tourism entrepreneur and is actively involved in various community and social organisations such as Trekking Agencies' Association Nepal (TAAN) and Yangrima Trust.



Mr. Nima Lama, President



Mr. Lakpa Sherpa, from Bhojpur Bazar of Bhojpur district, is the new vice-president of Mountain Spirit. He became a MS member in 2005 and was also an executive member of the outgoing committee. His educational background is in political science and economics, and he has extensive teaching experience. Currently, he is principal of Laboratory Higher Secondary School in Kirtipur. He has also actively involved in various education-related committees with the Sherpa Association of Nepal.

Mr. Lakpa Sherpa, Vice-President

Mr. Lhakpa Tenji Lama (Sherpa) is originally from Beni-3, Tumbuk village of Solukhumbu district. He is one of Mountain Spirit's founding members and has previously served the organisation in various roles including executive member, general secretary and president. Mr. Lama has an academic background in tourism management and has worked with various national and international organisations on community development using appreciative and participatory approaches.



Mr. Lhakpa Tenji Lama (Sherpa), General Secretary



Ms. Tuka Cheki Sherpa, originally from Chuhade of Triyuga Municipality, Udayapur, has been appointed secretary of Mountain Spirit. She holds a Masters in Rural Development. She joined Mountain Spirit in 2000 as a volunteer and then became a general member. She served two years as a program co-ordinator for Mountain Spirit from 2009. She has gained experience working with various national and international organisations on programs including socioeconomic surveys and community participatory planning.

Ms. Tuka Cheki Sherpa, Secretary



Ms. Mingma Sherpa, Treasurer

Ms. Mingma Sherpa became a general member of Mountain Spirit in 1997 and also served as an executive member on the outgoing committee. She has now been appointed as treasurer of new executive committee. Ms. Sherpa is originally from Gumdel-3 of Ramechhap district. Her educational background is in business administration and she now runs her own business.

Mr. Ang Tenjing Sherpa, executive member, is a permanent resident of Chitretham in Nametar VDC of Udayapur. He joined Mountain Spirit in 1997 as a general member. He has extensive experience in agriculture development, especially organic seed production. In 2000, Mr. Sherpa worked as an agricultural expert in Namche VDC's Thame Valley for a Mountain Spirit program funded by EcoHimal. He is currently working as a technical officer with the Agriculture Research Centre in Sunsari.



Mr. Ang Tenjing Sherpa, Executive Member



Mr. Chhewang Lama, Executive Member

Executive Member Mr. Chhewang Lama is originally from Bargaun of Humla district and has an educational background in information technology. He became a MS general member in 2007 and was a co-ordinator for the 2012 Eco-Walk program. He is a tourism entrepreneur and is managing director of a trekking company called Responsible Treks.

Mr. Lhakpa Gelu Sherpa, from Chhulemu, Salleri VDC of Solukhumbu, is now an executive member of Mountain Spirit. He holds a Masters of Philosophy in Management and is currently senior faculty and program co-ordinator at Kathmandu College of Management (KCM). He is also affiliated with various organisations such as Pasang Lhamu Sherpa Memorial College, the Management Association of Nepal and the Sherpa Association of Nepal.



Mr. Lhakpa Gelu Sherpa, Executive Member

Ms. Praju Gurung first became affiliated with Mountain Spirit in 2007 and became a general member in 2009. She is currently pursuing a Masters in Environmental Science. Ms. Gurung was one of the Mountain Spirit team members that conducted the Dudh-Koshi Sub-Basin socioeconomic baseline survey in Solukhumbu and Khotang for World Wildlife Fund in 2008. She is also affiliated with STEP Nepal-Mustang and the Nepal Red Cross Society.



Ms. Praju Gurung, Executive Member

Brief introduction of advisers



Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa

Dr. Lhakpa Sherpa has been involved with Mountain Spirit from its formative stages and served as president of the organisation from 2008-2012. His interests and specialisation are in conservation of mountain environments, preservation of mountain cultures and sustainable livelihood of mountain communities. Dr. Sherpa received his Ph.D. in Forest Resources from the University of Washington in 1999 and became the first person from the Sherpa community to earn a doctorate. Dr. Sherpa was employed by the Nepal Government from 1980 to 1999 and served as warden of a number of national parks, and was also actively involved in the planning and creation of Sagarmatha National Park, Makalu-Barun National Park and Kanchanjunga Conservation Area. In 2000, he joined The Mountain Institute and became an international expert and manager of the Qomolangma Conservation Project in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) of China. In 2004, he became co-director of TMI's Himalayan Program and worked extensively on cultural conservation. He is now a senior fellow with TMI and also serves as the president of the Khumjung School Alumni Association. In 2009, Dr. Sherpa received a Fulbright Post-Doctoral Fellowship to join Yale University where he was appointed as a research scientist. He is currently involved in conducting a research project on sustainable tourism in the Khumbu Region.

Ms. Chhing Lamu Sherpa was a founding member of Mountain Spirit and is now an adviser for the organisation. Ms. Sherpa, originally from Finjoling, Tatne of Nametar VDC in Udayapur, has an educational background in Rural Extension and Women from the United Kingdom. Since Mountain Spirit's formation, she has served in various roles and has played an important leadership role in the organisation's overall program design and policy development. She acted as the first president of Mountain Spirit, and later also served as vice president as well as a volunteer executive director for three months. Currently, she is also chairperson of the Nepal Participatory Action Network (NEPAN). In addition, she has experience in participatory development from working with various national and international organisations including the Ministry of Local Development, Action Aid-Nepal, the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation and Plan International (Nepal).



Ms. Chhing Lamu Sherpa

Mr. Ang Phinjo Sherpa, a founding member of Mountain Spirit, is originally from Namche Bazar in Solukhumbu. Mr. Sherpa was appointed as executive director of Mountain Spirit in 2009 and played a significant role in the implementation of the MS-CESVI project in Sagarmatha National Park. In the past he has also served as an executive member and as general secretary. Mr. Sherpa is currently country director for EcoHimal, an Austrian international NGO. He is also actively involved in various social and community-based organisations.



Mr. Ang Phinjo Sherpa



Ms. Ram Maya Thakali is from Jomsom in Mustang district and first joined Mountain Spirit in 1999. She has been involved in Mountain Spirit in a range of roles and responsibilities including president, treasurer, executive member and co-ordinator. Her educational background is in Sociology and she has worked with communities in the mountain region using participatory and appreciative approaches to planning, socioeconomic surveys and institutional capacity building.

Ms. Ram Maya Thakali

Mr. Mingma Norbu Sherpa, originally from Monju in Chaurikharka VDC, Solukhumbu, received his education in conservation governance, sustainable development and tourism. Mr. Sherpa first became affiliated with Mountain Spirit in 2000, became an executive member in 2006, and was appointed president of the organisation in 2008. As president, he contributed significantly to Mountain Spirit's organisational development. He is currently a PhD student at the University of Massachusetts, USA. He has held various roles with organisations including Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee (SPCC), Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Programme (TRPAP) and IUCN Nepal.



Mr. Mingma Norbu Sherpa

Remarks from outgoing President Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa

Why Mountain Spirit?

I joined Mountain Spirit 16 years ago. Although the organisation is small and has at times not been very active, I never left because its mission of "improving livelihoods, preserving culture and environment in the mountains" overlapped with my personal and professional interests.

Mountain Spirit provided an ideal opportunity to meet, work and share with colleagues from different mountain regions of Nepal. Although mountain communities across the Nepal Himalaya share similar cultural and linguistic roots, environments and ways of life, they rarely get the opportunity to meet and talk. They are separated by mighty mountain ranges and deep rivers that kept them isolated. Therefore mountain communities of Solukhumbu rarely interact with those of Yolmo or Taplejung, despite sharing the same challenges and opportunities. Mountain people are generally disadvantaged, marginalised, excluded and poorly represented in national-level decision making processes. Linguistic marginalisation and cultural discrimination are at the core of these problems. Mountain communities also fall behind in development, education, health and, most importantly, employment opportunities.

Organisation of mountain diaspora

Many members of mountain communities end up migrating to cities such as Kathmandu in search of better opportunities. Some of these migrants gradually melt into the communities of their new homes and rarely look back. Others constantly think about improving situations in the mountains so that they can be better places to live and work. Mountain Spirit's members are largely like-minded mountain diaspora who fall in the second category. We believe that solutions to mountain social and economic problems must be sought by mountain communities ourselves. This calls for shared vision, unity and commitment to work together for socio-economic upliftment and to fight for our political rights.

In recent decades Kathmandu has become a melting pot for mountain people, and many civil society organisations and NGOs focusing on mountain areas and issues have been formed over time. However, most of these organisations focus narrowly on a single area or ethnic group; for instance, Humli organisations are made of mostly members from Humla, and Mustangi organisations focus only on issues in Mustang. There are very few organisations that are cross-community and pan-Himalayan. Mountain Spirit is an exception in that it has members from 16 mountain districts, providing a platform to share ideas and discuss common issues.

Addressing the problems that spread across the Himalayas is beyond the capacity of a single small NGO. However, much can be achieved if Mountain Spirit can effectively mobilise its members. It needs to forge strategic partnerships with other nongovernment and civil society organisations, community groups and government entities to achieve its goals.

Transition

Mountain Spirit celebrated its 16th anniversary as well as its annual general meeting on 19 August 2012. During the 16th AGM a new executive committee was appointed under the leadership of incoming President Nima Lama. Nima-la served as general secretary during my four years of presidency. He is very active and capable. I am proud that the outgoing executive committee has managed to hand over the organisation in a relatively sound financial and moral state. I am confident that the new

committee will carry Mountain Spirit onward towards our goals. I would also like to thank all the members, friends, partners and well-wishers for your kind support and co-operation that has allowed us to successfully complete our term. In particular, my deepest appreciation goes to the members of the outgoing executive committee who gave their best possible contributions. I would also like to thank all the people who have served as office support staff.

Our experience over the last four years has shown that managing an organisation by committee alone is difficult, despite members volunteering for days and months. A qualified director is essential to achieve all of our activities. Therefore, we have decided to have an executive director. Mr. Lhakpa Tenji Lama (Sherpa) has agreed to fill this post. He will also serve as general secretary of the executive committee. As a former Mountain Spirit president and one of the founding members, he is very qualified for this position. We hope that the new executive committee will be able to focus on issues of governance. I wish to express my best wishes to the new executive committee and the new Executive Director Lhakpa Tenji.

Members are our assets

Mountain Spirit's strength lies in the diversity and shared commitment of its members. It is important that we continue to expand our membership and reach out to mountain districts which have not been previously represented. MS should attempt to carry out activities that have wide Himalayan regional appeal. It should rely on its network of members and their activities to achieve its goals. Many of our members are fulltime professionals and business people who are already contributing to betterment of mountain communities. Their work must also be recognised as contributions to the goals of Mountain Spirit.

Mountain Spirit is a non-political entity. We must seek to bring changes through capacity building, awareness raising, institutional strengthening and advocacy work that will empower and strengthen the target communities. This requires regular interaction of members and constant communication through internet technology and social media and websites. Mountain Spirit must also decentralise and expand whenever the opportunity arises. We are planning to open an office in Solukhumbu, and discussions are also underway to form a group in New York, where half dozen of active MS members including former President Mingma Nuru Sherpa and former Coordinator Temba Dongba Hyolmo are now based.

A common platform

Finally, Mountain Spirit is and should be platform for its members. It is an organisation where members are all given equal space to share ideas and work together, develop camaraderie, derive inspirations, learn from each other and build collaborative spirit. A sense of altruism and volunteerism has always been central and should always be encouraged. "How can I contribute rather than what we can get" should be a core principle for all Mountain Spirit members.

May the spirit of the mountains soar high!

Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa

Adviser and Outgoing President of Mountain Spirit

Notices

Orientation and interaction program for new members

We are organising a half-day program for new associate members. We kindly request all new associate members attend this program.

Date: Saturday, 13 September 2012

Time: 1pm – 5pm

Venue: Mountain Spirit office, Baluwatar

MS member information update

The Mountain Spirit office is updating our member information and we request all members send an updated bio-data to Mountain Spirit by mid-October 2012. We appreciate your co-operation.

Articles for e-newsletter

The next issue of the e-newsletter will be published in mid-December 2012. Besides Mountain Spirit news and activities, we are including news related to individual members and articles including descriptive writing, poems, essays etc. Submissions are welcome in both English and Nepali, and are due by 5 December 2012.

Volunteers wanted

Members who are interested in volunteering in Mountain Spirit activities are requested to contact the MS office. You can contribute as a volunteer in various areas, including program development, proposal writing, editing, workshop and training program organisation and report writing. Volunteers will receive a nominal transportation allowance.

Contact

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