



# Himalayan Adventure Girls

Training program in Sweden  
12 - 26 Aug 2012



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## **Short introduction of the project**

Himalayan Adventure Girls is a non-profit organisation with the unique purpose of encouraging Nepali women to participate in the outdoors industry as guides and instructors. Tourism has become one of the most important forms of income generation in Nepal and yet women in general have played little part. For the past three years our organisation has sought to provide professional training and to create opportunities for Nepali women to gain meaningful employment in the outdoors industry. Today, seven Nepali ladies have gained the necessary skills and experience to work as professional guides. These young ladies have pushed themselves to excel as raft guides, trekking guides, kayakers and mountain bikers! Many have even competed in whitewater kayaking competitions, the first Nepali women to ever do so! However, as women, they continue to have limited opportunities in Nepal. It is our organisation's goal to provide these girls with new opportunities to continue their training. In this spirit, Inka Gurung, with the help of the Swedish organisation PeaceWorks, is organising a 2 week training camp in Sweden. The purpose of this trip is for the girls to enhance their skills as guides, professionals, and athletes, while also promoting Nepal as a tourist destination. We hope that you will consider supporting them and their continued training in Sweden in August 2011.

## **Introduction of Himalayan Adventure Girls**

### **Background**

Nepal is one of the most famous countries in the world for whitewater rafting and kayaking. With the high Himalayas guaranteeing yearly snowmelt and monsoon rains feeding rivers through the numerous and beautiful valleys, Nepal is a perfect playground for kayakers and rafters of all kinds. Inka Gurung first came to Nepal from Sweden more than ten years ago and soon became one of the many Western kayakers who return every year. Over time Inka began getting frustrated that 100% of the river guides were male. In 2008 she met three Nepali girls who asked her to teach them kayaking and the idea for Himalayan Adventure Girls was formed.

There are currently over 100 rafting companies registered in Nepal. Initially most of the river guides, kayak instructors and safety kayakers were westerners. However, over the past decades Nepal has developed a strong rafting and kayaking community of Nepali guides. The many challenging rivers in Nepal have helped Nepali guides develop unusually competent river skills making them sought after and respected guides worldwide. In particular, Nepali guides often get offered work in countries like Norway, Iceland, Japan, Turkey and Bhutan. Recently Nepalis have even begun competing on the International level at the annual Himalayan Whitewater Challenge, some even continuing on to the world championships.

Until Inka and her girls began Himalayan Adventure Girls, 100% of the Nepali river guides and instructors were male. This project provides the much needed opportunity for ladies to gain employment as guides as well.

## **Vision**

For most women in Nepal the expectation is that they will get married young and spend the rest of their married lives at home looking after their families. But, for many a job as a guide in the rafting or trekking industry is a good opportunity for an amazing change in their lives, perhaps a way out of misery, poverty or boredom. Whatever their background, the goal of this project is to empower Nepali women to work with tourists (especially female tourists and kayakers). Ultimately we would like to see Nepali women travelling the world: kayaking, raft guiding, competing in international kayaking events, and using their newly acquired professional skills.

## **Activities**

Every year a new group of girls is selected from interested applicants to join an introductory training program focused on rafting and kayaking. The program is designed to immerse the girls in the adventure tourism industry as a whole and to prepare them for employment in any variety of adventure related fields. Included in the week long training is an introduction to basic river skills such as swimming, kayaking, and rafting, there is an additional focus on confidence building activities and an emphasis on attaining English proficiency.

After the girls have completed the introductory training Himalayan Adventure Girls strives to offer them several more advanced training camps. These camps are typically about a week long and happen once or twice a year. These camps give all the ladies the chance to get together and share their experiences. The goal behind this additional training is to help the girls continue to build their confidence, perfect their English, increase their professionalism and advance their river guiding techniques. The ladies are given the chance to take the lead in practicing self rescues, scouting rapids, and leading lines. While staying together they are encouraged to use English.

Recently we have also worked with the International Canoe Federation to send some of the women abroad to sporting events such as the World Championships in Canoe Slalom held in Spain in 2009, the World Championships of Canoe Freestyle held in Switzerland in 2009, and a canoe slalom training camp held in Thailand in 2010.

## **Goal**

The goal of Himalayan Adventure Girls is to help build a strong community of experienced Nepali ladies working as outdoor guides. Our organisation would like to help create a talented team of women with the best training and experiences possible in all outdoor adventure fields linked to Nepali tourism. By encouraging the girls themselves to take leadership positions the senior girls take pride in coaching the newer members. Together the girls work as a team to constantly update their skills and gain new competences. Finally, we hope that the Nepali ladies can make an international reputation for themselves. Our organisation seeks to help them in this endeavor by supporting their participation in national and international athletic competitions and by helping them secure seasonal guide work abroad.

## **Introduction of PeaceWorks and Fokus Asien**

### **PeaceWorks Sweden**

is a youth organization with more than 3000 members with the goal of a sustainable world in peace where young people are active members of the society.

### **Fokus Asien**

aims to provide a platform within PeaceWorks where members are given the opportunity to engage in Asia-related issues. Our future goal is to bring together dedicated young people who want to do something concrete in order to improve an issue or problematic situation in Asia.

### **River of Rights – a Women Empowerment and Environmental Project connecting Nepal and Sweden**

Through our project River of Rights we want to contribute to the strengthening of the position of women in Nepal by supporting Himalayan Adventure Girls. We believe that empowerment is a cornerstone that needs to be developed further and by providing girls with an education that will result in a job, and hence an income, the situation for Nepali girls will improve. We hope to be able to provide concrete support in project planning, the spreading of information, media contacts, publicity and by organizing a full day with workshops on women rights and project planning when the girls arrive to Sweden in August/ as well as providing solidarity, friendship and a basis for cultural exchange.

Read more about Fokus Asien on: [www.fokusasien.com](http://www.fokusasien.com)  
and more about PeaceWorks on: [www.peaceworks.se](http://www.peaceworks.se)

## **The purpose of the visit to Sweden**

### **1. To learn about Swedish culture and the international adventure industry**

The most professional Nepali outdoor guides are the ones that have travelled to the west. Guides can benefit greatly from learning first-hand about western organization skills, food, hygiene, and much more. By gaining insight in the adventure field in Sweden the girls will be able to bring fresh ideas back with them to Nepal. From their visit they will be better prepared to welcome guests in Nepal in the future.

### **2. To conduct training in Olympic Canoe Slalom**

Olympic calibre training in Canoe Slalom is scarce in Nepal as there is only one slalom event a year and no permanent courses. In Sweden the girls will have a chance to do some proper training with a professional Swedish Canoe Slalom coach and to learn the newest techniques and regulations.

### **3. To increase exposure and promote female tourism in Nepal.**

The Himalayan Adventure Girls have already received a lot of attention in Swedish media, so we are expecting additional publicity during this visit. Aside from spotlights in several Swedish outdoor magazines, an article about us in one of Sweden's biggest newspapers and several interviews with Swedish reporters, there is also a documentary being made about the project for Swedish television.

#### **4. To increase the knowledge about womens rights and environmental issues.**

Through workshops with PeaceWorks the team of Nepali girls will gain knowledge about womens rights issues as well as environmental issues and how to communicate these matters. This knowledge they can then share with incoming adventure girls as well as with women in their own communities and in remote areas.

### **Day by day program**

#### **12 Aug**

Departure from Kathmandu.

#### **13 Aug**

Arrival in Stockholm Sweden. Pick up at the airport and drive to Swedish family city home. Swedish dinner and rest.

#### **14 Aug**

Sightseeing in Stockholm- Swedens capital – one of the cleanest capitals in the world. Meeting the Sweden Nepal society and organization PeaceWorks Sweden.

#### **15 Aug**

Workshop in Stockholm with organization PeaceWorks about environment and womens rights. The girls will here give a presentation about Nepal, Nepali culture and adventure tourism. Media attending.

#### **16 Aug**

Visit to Swedish family home in the countryside plus half day cycling.

#### **17 Aug**

Drive 3 hours to small river town of Dala-Floda, base for kayak camp. Visiting local kayaking club and kayaking company.

#### **18 Aug**

Canoe slalom training. In the evening visit to a local ecological farm with Swedish ecological dinner. At the dinner the girls will give a presentation to the local people about Nepal, Nepali culture and adventure tourism in Nepal.

#### **19 Aug**

Canoe slalom training. In the evening mountainbiking.

#### **20 Aug**

In the morning, chance for local people to try kayaking with the Nepali ladies. In the afternoon - Canoe slalom training.

#### **21 Aug**

Canoe slalom training.

#### **22 Aug**

Experiencing and learning about high ropes course at local adventure centre. Camping.

#### **23 Aug**

Trying different kinds of kayaking, such as sea kayaking, racing kayaks and stand up boards. In the evening, team building activities.

#### **24 Aug**

Attending a local Swedish festival.

#### **25 Aug**

Departure

#### **26 Aug**

Arrive Kathmandu

## **The goal of the visit to Sweden**

After this educational trip to Sweden we are expecting to see a fully confident team with new fresh techniques, experiences and understanding of western culture who will welcome and guide tourists in Nepal with the best skills and attitude possible. We are also expecting this team to easily take on the task of sharing their experiences and skills with younger and newer female guides. Ultimately we are expecting their visit to Sweden to increase the numbers of Swedish visitors to Nepal by exposing a new fresh side of Nepali tourism.

## **A short introduction of the 7 girls**

### **Radha Tamang**

22 years old from Sindupalchowk. Joined H.A.G. in 2008. Works as safety kayaker, raft guide and kayak instructor for Ultimate Descents Nepal. Is president of H.A.G. Head instructor for incoming girls. Trained by International Canoe Federation in a canoe slalom training camp in Thailand in December 2010.

### **Sita Thapa**

24 years old from Pokhara. Works as safety kayaker and assistant kayak instructor for Equator Expeditions. The first girl to learn kayaking with Himalayan Adventure Girls in 2008. Has competed in the Himalayan Whitewater Challenge in 2008, 2009 & 2010. In 2010 she won the ladies down river race title.

### **Ritu Gyamdan**

21 years old from Langtang area, works as trekking guide and is training to be a river guide for Adventure Aves. Joined H.A.G. in 2009.

### **Kamala Magar**

19 years old from Sindupalchowk, Trainee guide and assistant kayak instructor on the Bhothe Koshi river with Equator Expeditions since 2009. Attended to the White Water Circus Project in 2004 and 2005 where she first learned kayaking. Competed in Himalayan Whitewater Challenge 2009 and 2010.

### **Goma Sunuwar Rai**

19 years old from Okhaldunga. Training to be a river guide with Lotus Waves Nepal, and freelancing as a trekking guide in the Annapurna region. Has competed in mountainbike events and was the winning lady of Himalayan Whitewater Challenge in 2010.

### **Kamala Chepang**

20 years old from Kurintar, Trisuli river. She is completing her SLC (school leaving certificate) this spring and is training to become a river guide. Joined H.A.G in 2008.

### **Anu Shrestha**

24 years old. Safety kayaker and instructor for Ultimate Descents Nepal. Training to become a canyoning and raft guide. Anu has competed in the Himalayan Whitewater Challenge in 2008, 2009 and 2010. In 2010 she won the Nepali ladies' freestyle title.

## Budget

### Costs:

Flight tickets Kathmandu - Stockholm	7 x 1300 USD	9100 USD
Travel insurances	7 x 35 USD	245 USD
Sweden visa fees	7 x 70 USD	490 USD
Stockholm local transport	7 x 30 USD	210 USD
Rental minibus in Sweden	950 USD	950 USD
Food in Sweden	1700 USD	1700 USD
Sightseeing entry / activity fees	7 x 150 USD	1050 USD

**Total: 13745 USD**

## The work group

**Inka Gurung** founder and adviser of Himalayan Adventure Girls

- Project Leader - will organize the trip to Sweden, be in charge of the training, search for sponsors internationally and contact media.

**Wilda Nilsson** from PeaceWorks will help with finding sponsors in Sweden and contacting media.

**Ritu Lama and Radha Tamang** members of Himalayan Adventure Girls will get the Nepali team ready for travelling and search for sponsors in Nepal.

## The time plan

**Jan - March-** Send the proposal and newsletter out to all contacts – All work group.

**Feb – April -** Collect fundings. – All work group.

**May –** Organise visas and purchase flight tickets – Ritu and Radha

**June-July –** Organise the trip in Sweden with local sponsors and supporters – Inka.

**August –** Meet Nepali media prior to departure – Ritu and Radha.

**August –** Complete the training in Sweden - All work group.

**September –** Meet media in Nepal after arrival – Ritu and Radha.

**September –** Make a project report with pictures and send out to all contacts. – Inka.

## Read more

For full project reports, pictures and latest news: [www.farawayadventures.com/girls](http://www.farawayadventures.com/girls)

See the facebook group: Himalayan Adventure Girls

## Contact

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