Development of Cultural and Ecotourism in the Mountainous Regions of Central and South Asia

Humla Eco-tourism and Trekking Promotion Project
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Proponent Organization</th>
<th>Nepal Trust</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location for Project Implementation</td>
<td>Humla District of Nepal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Beneficiaries</td>
<td>Poor local communities of 5 VDCs in Humla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Duration</td>
<td>January -December 2007</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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ABSTRACT

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Humla can be considered as Nepal’s poorest and remotest district. At the same time it households the most pristine and untouched nature areas in Nepal. Humla contains a great diversity of flora and fauna. The last decade nature based tourism is growing rapidly. This tendency has shown the great possibility Humla has to attract more visitors to the region; if ecotourism is managed properly, it potentially provides opportunities to earn (foreign) revenues that can help sustain local communities and their natural habitats. In Humla many people struggle to survive as only a small part of the land is arable due to the rugged landscape. This means that hardly any form of industry is possible. As the landscapes, the people along with their history and culture, the main attractions why tourists travel in the first place, are already there, tourism seems the obvious sector to develop in Humla.

This report presents the results of the ‘Humla Eco-tourism and Trekking Promotion Project’ that has been implemented by Nepal Trust in 2007 with support of UNESCO in order to promote as an ecotourism and trekking destination. On behalf of Nepal Trust, this report comes up with several projects and activities the organization has been involved in to develop Humla and its communities with sustainable tourism as driving engine.

Keywords: Ecotourism, sustainable tourism, Humla, UNESCO, Nepal Trust.

"Only after the last tree has been cut down. Only after the last river has been poisoned. Only after the last fish has been caught. Only then will you find that money cannot be eaten”.
~ Native Cree Prophecy ~

"It might be said that the human race is incapable of withstanding the drastic changes that are taking place in today’s world. For those changes have been so terrible, so far reaching and, above all, so swift, that they make those that caused the disappearance of the dinosaurs pale into insignificance.

Man has not had time to adopt to the sudden and powerful changes that his technology and society have produced around him, and it might safely be said that many of today’s illnesses are the means used by the cosmos to eliminate this proud human race. Man is the only animal to have created his own environment. Ironically, he is also the only one to have thus created his own means of self destruction.”

~ Ernesto Sabato (1911 - ), Argentinian writer ~

“The goal of life is living in agreement with nature”.

~ Zeno (335 BC - 264 BC), from Diogenes Laertius, Lives of Eminent Philosophers ~
We gratefully would like to acknowledge the support of a number of people and organizations that guided, assisted and supported in any positive way with our research that has led to the realization of this report. First of all we would like to show our appreciation towards the UNESCO administration and especially Nipuna Shrestha for her understanding and help. Secondly our gratitude goes out to those who provided us with useful guidance and support, notably Roy Cameron from the ‘Watershed Action Through Education and Research’ program (WATER) and the Centre for Environment Education Nepal (CEEN) who conducted workshops and research on sustainable water use and education in tourism in Humla, but also Timothy Harward from the Central Himalaya Project (CHP), who is affiliated to the Centre for Nepal & Asian Studies and the University of Kumaon, Garwhal and Tribhuvan, who conducted research on cultural tourism development in Humla.
In addition to this we could never come up this report without the help of the respective local communities and authorities, lodge owners, tour operators and travel agencies from the private sector. Finally, our gratitude goes out to Rotary International and all the tourists that have visited Humla over the years and contributed in any positive way to the development of the villages and inhabitants. As help is always a welcoming friend, Nepal Trust would like to thank you all.

Ir. Jeroen Rahul van den Bergh
"If people destroy something replaceable made by mankind, they are called vandals; if they destroy something irreplaceable made by God, they are called developers".

~ Joseph Wood Krutch (1893–1970) ~

The Humla Ecotourism promotion project which started in the year 2002 has almost crossed five years under the implementation of UNESCO, Kathmandu and Nepal Trust. Humla has a unique and rich cultural and natural heritage which offers great potential to develop the site into a main tourist destination, which can contribute to the local economy in order to sustain the local culture, well being and civilization. The role of Nepal Trust is to facilitate in the development and improvement of the host-guest relationships with a clear focus on the sustainability of local Humli communities and their natural environments. This has led to the main activities for the year 2007 that have been focusing on developing local infrastructure and the environmental education of both locals as tourists, intertwined with cultural exchange, education and capacity building in the tourism field (see paragraph 4.2 and 4.3). Next to this research, surveys and workshops have been conducted on 1) how to improve water usage and sanitation along the trekking trails to deliver better health facilities (see paragraph 4.4) and 2) to promote cultural tourism along the old trading routes in Humla (see paragraph 4.5).
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~ Sears, Roebuck, and Co., Consumer’s Guide, 1897 ~

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“Statistics: The only science that enables different experts using the same figures to draw different conclusions”.

~ Evan Esar (1899 - 1995), Esar’s Comic Dictionary ~

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<td>page 9</td>
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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

"R.I.P. A careless abbreviation of requiescat in pace, attesting to indolent goodwill to the dead. According to the learned Dr. Drigge, however, the letters originally meant nothing more than reductus in pulvis".

~ Ambrose Bierce (1842 - 1914), The Devil's Dictionary ~

ADB  Asian Development Bank
CBO  Community Based Organisation
CBS  Central Bureau of Statistics
CDO  Chief District Officer
CEEN Centre of Environment Education Nepal
CNAS Centre for Nepal & Asian Studies
CPN  Communist Party Nepal
DDC  District Development Committee
GDP  Gross Domestic Product
GHT  Great Himalayan Trail
HDI  Human Development Index
HPI  Human Poverty Index
IUCN  World Conservation Union
MHP  Micro Hydro Power
MoCTCA  Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation
NTB  Nepal Tourism Board
NTTR Nepal Travel Trade Reporter
PAN Parks Protected Area Network Parks
SNV Netherlands Development Organisation
TAAN  Trekking Agent Association Nepal
UK  United Kingdom
UNDP United Nations Development Programme
UNEP  United Nations Environmental Programme
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VDC  Village District Committee
WATER Watershed Action Through Education and Research
WTO  World Tourism Organisation
WWF  World Wildlife Fund for Nature
CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

“There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct or more uncertain in its success than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things”.

~ Niccolo Machiavelli (1469 - 1527), The Prince (1532) ~

1.1 Background
Mountains are crucial to the survival of the world’s ecosystems, as they cover 1/5 of the earth’s surface area and house about 10% of its population. The greater Himalayan region is the most populous mountain region and sustains more than 150 million people and impacts the lives of 3 times more living on the plains and in the river basins below. Because of their isolation and remote living areas, mountain peoples generally have poor access to employment, health and social services, roads, markets, electricity and other conveniences that others take easily for granted in their own daily lives (SNV, 2006).

However, people living in Humla have to deal with harsh socioeconomic conditions, like lack of infrastructure, geographical isolation, high unemployment rates and poverty, political and economical marginality and climatic hardship. Despite many efforts during the past, the loss of biodiversity has continued due to habitat fragmentation or destruction, over harvesting, pollution, inappropriate management methods, unsustainable tourism etc.

Today the World Conservation Union (IUCN) can be seen as the flag bearer of the debate that is going on in regard to biodiversity. Remarkable is the fact that during the 2004 international third IUCN World Conservation Congress that was held in November 2004 in Bangkok, tourism hardly played a significant role in this debate, as it is not explicitly integrated into policies and programs (Duim, 2005) It is important to make optimal use of tourism, as this sector has enough potential to give financial boosts for ecotourism projects in Humla, which can benefit both local people as their natural environment.

The criteria for ecotourism employed in the literature may be summarized as follows:

1. Minimal physical and social impacts on the visited area
2. Ecological education of the tourist at the natural site
3. Notable economic participation by local residents

Based on these criteria, which are pointed out by Wunder (1999), it seems valuable to take this scientific background into account as guidance for this report to build upon.

1.2 Humla
The Nepal Trust concentrates its activities mainly in 1 portfolio region, knowingly the Upper Karnali River Zone, in the district of Humla. Humla district is located in the northern corner of Karnali zone and borders China (Tibet) to the north (see figure 1 below).
The district headquarter is Simikot. The district covers an area of 5,655 sq. km and has a population of 40,595 (CBS, 2001). The elevation ranges from 1,524 to 7,337 meter. There are two peaks above 7,000 meter: Nalkankad and Saipal. The climate is temperate and alpine. Agriculture is the main occupation, with millet the main crop. The main caste/ethnic groups are Chhetri (44%), Thakuri (20%), and Sherpa (14%). The main language spoken is Nepali. According to the Human Development Index (HDI), the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita is US $1,014. Next to that Humla lies in the most remote, isolated and food deficit area of Nepal and only 1% of the total land is arable (District Profile 2004), which makes it therefore the poorest of Nepal’s 75 districts (there are no roads and hardly any communication facilities, few schools and minimal health facilities) as the box below indicates (UNDP HPI, 2001/3/5 and CBS, 2001).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Nepal</th>
<th>Humla</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Total Area</td>
<td>147181 sq. km.</td>
<td>5,655 sq. km</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Altitude Range</td>
<td>90-8848 m.</td>
<td>1,500-7,300 m</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Total Households</td>
<td>4253220</td>
<td>6,953</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>23151423</td>
<td>40,595</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Average Birth Rate</td>
<td>2.25%</td>
<td>3.20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Gross National per Capita</td>
<td>US$ 269</td>
<td>US$ 186</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Human Development Value</td>
<td>0.526</td>
<td>0.367</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>8</td>
<td>HDI Rank</td>
<td>136/177 Countries</td>
<td>68/75 Districts</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Human Poverty Index</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>63.8</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>HPI Rank</td>
<td>74/177 Countries</td>
<td>75/75 Districts</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Life Expectancy</td>
<td>68.6</td>
<td>58.37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Literacy Rate above 15 Years</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
<td>US$ 1,420</td>
<td>US$ 1,014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 - Profile Nepal and Humla

There is a flight connection from Nepalgunj and Surkhet to Simikot. For the local transportation (i.e. for trekking), one can make use of yaks, horses, mules or porters. There are only few lodges and guest houses available in Simikot, as in other regions camping is the most common way to accommodate oneself. Based on the above mentioned, one can conclude that Humla’s main constraints are:

- Extreme poverty
- Lack of awareness and education
- Political instability
- No reliable transportation facility
- Lack of proper coordination among tourism stakeholders
- No government initiatives for tourism development: infrastructure, empowerment, awareness etc.

1.3 Nepal Trust
The Nepal Trust is a Scottish charity and Nepali NGO which over the past 10 years has grown into an amazing cost-effective grass-roots organisation. The Nepal Trust is dedicated to work together with communities of Humla by responding to their needs for improved access to basic health, education, employment, food security & renewable energy resources. The Nepal Trust contributes to this by strengthening the ability of poor communities to help them to improve their livelihoods. In order to do so, Nepal Trust uses the knowledge and capacity of local communities, (inter)national consultants and volunteers and is supported by donors and partner organisations such as Rotary International and UNESCO.
The six major practice areas of Nepal Trust are:

1) Tourism - Social Enterprise & Business Development
2) Culture & Heritage Preservation
3) Primary Health Care
4) Alternative Energy
5) Education, Literacy & Empowerment
6) Food Security & Agricultural Development

1.4 Project relevance
In order to recognize the justification of this ecotourism project, the author proposes the practical relevance to be considered. This relevance shows how this project will be a valuable input for further efforts into ecotourism, sustainable development and nature conservation. This is very essential for knowledge production and effective ecosystem management in Humla. Briefly, the description of this relevance is presented in sub section below.

1.4.1 Practical relevance
Today tourism is one of the largest industries in the world; it produces 4.4% of the world’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employs around 200 million people globally (Eagles et al., 2002). In addition to this, the World Tourism Organization (WTO) states that tourism nowadays has become a major sector of economic activity since the latter part of the twentieth century (Eagles et al., 2002) and all indications are that it will continue growing at a global average of 4.5% in the years to come (Font et al., 2004). At the same time, our global heritage of living species is threatened as never before, as the (protected) natural areas that harbor so much of the world’s biodiversity are exposed to the pressures of unsustainable development. The precautionary approach urges us to be especially concerned about tourism in nature areas, given the risk of damage and destruction to this unique natural resource (Eagles et al., 2002).

The WTO continues that with this growth a diversification of tourism products and destinations is taking place, with increased demand for nature based tourism, including ecotourism, visitation to national and natural parks, rural based tourism and the like. It is estimated that within the tourism sector itself about 10% of international tourists wish to purchase natural and cultural heritage sites, which makes this particular segment the fastest growing within the sector overall (UNEP, 2005).

Nature and woodland in particular, is and will remain a very popular destination. The need to find peace in nature will remain an important one for people in the future. There will be a greater demand for experiencing natural and landscape environments and for cultural and historical knowledge (Staatsbosbeheer, 2004). Humla is home to many natural beauties and can be considered a great potential Nepali tourism destination.

1.5 Scope of report
This report consists of 5 chapters. The first chapter of this report presents the background of Humla and Nepal Trust the relation to Nepal Trust. Next to this the relevancy will be discussed. The second chapter of this report includes the goals, project activities, strategies and outcomes, along with the specific objectives of this project and the most important challenges faced in developing this report. The third chapter focuses on the relationship between tourism development in Humla and the role of Nepal Trust in this. The chapter deals with issues such as nature based tourism, sustainable tourism practices, social mobilization and enhancement of local economies. The fourth chapter focuses on the ecotourism projects of Nepal Trust, implemented in 2007. These projects include the national UNESCO ecotourism interaction program, the Treks-to-Build program, the WATER program and conducted research regarding cultural tourism. The fifth and final chapter contains a general discussion, concluding remarks and project outcomes.
CHAPTER 2 - PROJECT DESCRIPTION

“Plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work”.

~ Peter Drucker (1909 - 2005) ~

2.1 Introduction
This second chapter includes the goals, project activities, strategies and outcomes, along with the specific objectives of the “Humla Eco-tourism and Trekking Promotion Project” and the most important challenges faced in developing this report the way this report is structured. It shows in which theoretical framework this study has been set up by explaining what the key concepts of this study are, how sustainable development plays an important role and which models are used and why. Next to this the methodology is mapped out, in which becomes clear in what way research has been done, which research paradigm is used and what kind of research was needed to reach certain objectives. This all is followed by a paragraph dedicated to limitations and difficulties that were faced during the field visit.

2.2 Goal
The goal of the project is to contribute in improving the living standard of the local people by promoting ecotourism (conserving their unique culture and nature) in Upper Humla.

2.3 Objectives
In order to achieve the main goal, the project has specified the following objectives:

1) Coordinate and network among the stakeholders for sustainable ecotourism promotion in Humla
2) Improve and promote the Upper Humla Natural and Cultural Trail
3) Empower, encourage and support local communities for ecotourism development
4) Raise awareness and educate local communities and tourists in regard to sustainable water use
5) Promote cultural tourism in Humla

2.4 Project outcomes
The project will bring the following outputs:

1) Local communities and other stakeholders empowered, encouraged and involved in ecotourism development initiatives
2) Coordination and networking amongst tourism stakeholders in both district as well at centre level strengthened
3) Upper Humla Natural and Cultural Trail improved, developed and promoted
4) Increased knowledge level of local communities and tourists in regard to sustainable use of water resources, health and hygiene and products and services

2.5 Initial and current activities
The main initial activities to be carried out under this project can be found below.

- Interaction among centre level stakeholders (NTB, TAAN, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA), Tour Operators, (I)NGOs) for product development, networking, marketing and promotion of tourism in Humla
- Coordination among stakeholders, information materials distribution, website linkages/ updates
- (Inter)national workshop - prepare a comprehensive presentation based on the retrospection of the activities; participation in the workshop for sharing experiences and final planning
- Interaction among District Level Stakeholders (DDC, NGOs, CBOs and entrepreneurs) for ecotourism promotion in Upper Humla

Nepal Trust & UNESCO
- Upper Humla ecotourism development committee formation, planning and orientation
- Kitchen garden training and orientation (vegetables and fruits growing)
- Improving the Upper Humla Natural and Cultural Trail (trails, bridges and campsites)
- Re-publication and distribution of trail leaflets and codes of conduct and update the Humla tourism website (www.visithumla.org/com and www.hiddenhimalyas.org), link the website with websites from other partner organizations

However, important is to stress the fact that due to unforeseen setbacks that Nepal Trust had to deal with (see paragraph 2.8), the abovementioned activities have been slightly changed. Instead of the ‘Formation of the Upper Humla ecotourism development committee’ and the ‘Kitchen garden training and orientation’, Nepal Trust implemented several educational and awareness workshops regarding sustainable use of water resources throughout Humla. These workshops fall under the WATER program and were facilitated by CEEN. Next to this Nepal Trust organized several treks in Humla district, that are part of the ‘Treks-to-Build’ program, in order to promote tourism in Humla and develop local infrastructure along the trails. These treks involved Rotary International, (inter)national scouting organizations, students, teachers, doctors, health workers engineers and tourism professionals. Next to this scientific research has been conducted in order to promote and develop culture tourism in Humla.

2.6 Strategy
In order to achieve the goal and sustain the programs, the project will adopt the following strategies:

- Networking and coordination among the tourism stakeholders on both district and central level
- Maintain proper linkages at different levels of stakeholders within the sector to ensure the sustainability of the program after withdrawal of external support
- Give emphasis on awareness and empowerment of the local communities about the potentials and the benefits of sustainable tourism
- Mobilize local resources to ensure the sustainability

2.7 Monitoring and Evaluation
Monitoring and evaluation is essential for successful and effective conversion of inputs into outputs. Nepal Trust in coordination with UNESCO will carry out the mid term and final evaluations of the entire project to access the effectiveness of the program activities, socioeconomic and environmental impacts, project relevance in relation to improve the living standard of local communities, efficiency of the implementer and sustainability of the project.

2.8 Limitations
During the implementation of project activities in regard to the UNESCO project, Nepal Trust had to cope with several issues with now ex-staff, which has damaged the organization in several ways. The initial project coordinator, Mr. Gelu Sherpa, caused several conflicts within the organization, which has led to major time delays and the loss of significant and relevant data to finalize the project in an appropriate manner. As these matters are considered official crimes by Nepali law, Nepal Trust has filed an official complaint at the CDO office in Kathmandu for further investigation and settlements. Due to this unfortunate matter, Nepal Trust as organization has been forced into the position to change the initial project activities in order to come up with a still satisfying result. We hope those involved in this project will understand our viewpoint and provide us with the necessary support.
CHAPTER 3 - HUMLA AND TOURISM

"We still don't know exactly how many species there are on Earth but the best estimate is around 30 million, 1.4 million of which have officially been recorded. If current patterns of deforestation and habitat loss continue, we shall soon be wiping out species faster than we can record their existence”.

~ Jonathon Porritt (1950 - ) ~

3.1 Introduction
This chapter focuses on the relationship between Humla and tourism and how Nepal Trust is trying to build a bridge between these two. It serves as an introductory chapter concerning these matters and gives a general background on tourism development and its possibilities in Humla (paragraph 2), the way Nepal Trust is implementing its ecotourism activities and what ecotourism development should involve (paragraph 3). This chapter ends with concluding remarks (paragraph 4).

3.2 Humla and tourism development
Due to the geographical situation and the lack of resources, there is little possibility of any industrial development in the region. Tourism is the only suitable industry that can develop a remote place such as Humla, as other forms of industrial development are virtually impossible. Despite the fact that many of the 27 Village Development Committees (VDCs) of Humla are suitable for sustainable tourism development (Simikot is the gateway to the Mt. Kailash and Lake Mansarovar in Tibet, but Humla also houses many other unique and supportive religious, natural and cultural tourism assets), very few organizations, including the DDC of Humla, have been involved in tourism development. Nepal Trust has been involved in tourism development in Humla since 2000 with the financial and technical support from United Nations, Educational and Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Upper Humla Natural and Cultural Trail can be promoted as another tourism product in this region, yet this trails needs development and promotion for sustainable tourism development in this region. The following table (table 2) gives an overview of the major tourism attractions in Humla.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>ATTRACTIONS</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| 1    | Natural     | - Endangered NTFPs and A/MPs: Yartsagunbu (Cordyceps Syneses), Jatamsi (Nardostashys Grandiflora), Kutki (Picrorhiza Scrophulariiflora) etc.  
      |             | - Endangered and elusive animal species like snow leopard, musk dear, blue sheep, lophophorus, etc.  
      |             | - Limi, Nyin and Changla Valley  
      |             | - Lakes  
      |             | - Mt. Changla |
| 2    | Socio-cultural | - Unique culture of different ethnic groups: Mongolian and Aryans stock  
      |             | - Buddhist and Tibetan culture  
      |             | - Humla handicrafts  
      |             | - Festivals/ cultural rites: Mani (Feb. - March), Ami in Bargaon (mid May), Raling (June 1st week), Saun Purni (July), Shaman in Nyin Valley and Dozam, Ananta Puni (Sept. 4th week), Bhaiol Puni (Nov. 4th week), Dashain/ Tihar (Oct. – Nov.), Vajraguru in Yalbang (Nov.) and Sonam Losar (Dec.) |
| 3    | Religious   | - Ancient monasteries like Halji, Raling, Yalbang  
      |             | - Temples  
      |             | - Religious stones  
      |             | - Old monuments |

Table 2 - Tourism attractions in Humla
3.3 Nepal Trust and ecotourism
Nepal Trust uses tourism, the world’s largest industry, in a responsible way as driving catalyst for job creation, income generation & local (economic) development in the poorest parts of Nepal. Nepal Trust organizes & runs (commercialized) treks throughout Nepal to develop Humla by combining business with sustainable development. Nepal Trust is supported by UNESCO to promote Humla ecotourism and develop the Humla Natural & Cultural Trail (see chapter 4). In regard to tourism activities, Nepal Trust has adopted specific strategies for working towards its mission and objectives:

- Use trekking tourism as a tool of community development and change in lives of remote areas through activities such as ‘Treks-to-Build’ programs. The Nepal Trust believes that this strategy will benefit both the community and tourists in terms of development and cultural sharing
- Select tourism projects that directly benefit the communities
- Create partnerships at (inter)national, governmental and local level for effective implementation of tourism programs in Humla
- Involve communities directly in tourism programs at local level and encouraging them to contribute to the projects
- Mobilize local people as project staffs and local resources for the projects

Nepal Trust believes that:

“The concept of ‘ecotourism' relates to an environmentally responsible tourism that provides direct benefits to natural areas and to the economic welfare of locals, promoting conservation and sustainable development. However, the term is often misused as tour operators make a 'brand' out of 'eco', leading to cynicism and accusations of inappropriate western modernisation. Tourism development can only succeed if the needs and wishes of the local people are respected and accounted for, as such we work closely with the host populations and with our visitors to ensure that locals are not oppressed, that their daily life is not disturbed unnecessarily and their dignity remains intact.” Unlike many other industries, the Nepal Trust believes that tourism can turn the geographical remoteness and rugged landscape of Humla – the very things that normally hinder development in Nepal's remotest districts - into economic assets for its native inhabitants”.

Humla should therefore serve as an attraction, or hook, to bring visitors to the region and consequently stimulate the local economy through the direct and indirect purchases. The UNESCO project aims to provide a nature conservation based response to the growing market of nature-oriented tourism by creating a quality brand (WWF PAN Parks, 1999), which stands for:

- An expanding network of well managed nature areas with a high conservation value
- Areas which are widely known by local Humli communities as natural capitals of their habitat, which they know and are proud of
- ‘Must see’ sites for visitors and wildlife lovers that stand for responsible high quality nature based experiences for visitors
- Wider public and political support for Humla through changing attitudes and growing economic value of the district
- New income for Humla district and, in particular, new jobs for local people in rural areas

3.4 Concluding remarks
In the course of this chapter on Humla, its tourism development and the role Nepal Trust can play in this, it became clear that ecotourism is developing itself rapidly the last years as there is a growing interest in nature based tourism among the public. This offers great possibilities for Humla to increase its revenues and employment rates by using tourism as driving engine. When considering tourism as income instigator, it has to be bared in mind that a sustainable kind of ecotourism is needed in order to minimize damaging impacts on nature and depletion of natural resources. This has to be done in order to keep the environment as beautiful and untouched as it can be; the main reason why tourists visit Humla in the first place. The importance of local involvement is brought in discussion to map out the importance that factors such as social and political support, financial and human resources, goals and strategies and natural features have on maintaining the environment of Humla.
CHAPTER 4 - ECOTOURISM PROJECTS 2007

"Many present efforts to guard and maintain human progress, to meet human needs, and to realize human ambitions, are simply unsustainable... They draw too heavily, too quickly on already overdrawn environmental resource accounts to be affordable long into the future without bankrupting those accounts. They may show profits on the balance sheets of our generation, but our children will inherit the losses."

~ Our Common Future, World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) ~

4.1 Introduction
This chapter focuses on the tourism development projects Nepal Trust has been implementing in 2007 in order to develop and promote ecotourism in Humla. It starts with a short retrospect on the national ecotourism interaction program conducted by Nepal Trust on 10 May 2007 to inform and discuss the roles of stakeholders involved in tourism development of Humla. It continuous with an overview of several treks that Nepal Trust organized as part of the ‘Treks-to-Build’ program, in order to promote tourism in Humla and develop local infrastructure along the trails (see paragraph 4.3). Next to this emphasizes lies on several educational and awareness workshops regarding sustainable use of water resources throughout Humla. These workshops fall under the WATER program (Watershed Action Through Education and Research) and were facilitated by the Centre for Environment Education Nepal (CEEN) (see paragraph 4.4). Next to this, Timothy Harward, International Coordinator of the Central Himalaya Project (CHP), conducted research and surveys in order to promote and develop tourism regarding historic sites and native culture along the trails (see paragraph 4.5).

4.2 UNESCO interaction program
An interaction program named ‘Roles of Stakeholders in Promotion of Tourism in Humla’ was organized by Nepal Trust in Kathmandu on 10th May 2007 to promote tourism in Humla. Participants from different travel agents, tour operators, Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) and representative of different political parties from Humla (among others Communist Party Nepal Maoists or in short CPN Maoists) participated in the program. The main objective of the interaction program was to identify 1) the key stakeholders and their roles in promotion of tourism in Humla and 2) the issues of tourism development in Humla by collecting individual and organizational commitment of different stakeholders. All participants gave their commitments to fulfill the identified roles (see annex I). To promote Humla as a tourist destination and create awareness among stakeholders, an article regarding this interaction program has been published in the magazine ‘Nepal Travel Trade Reporter’ (NTTR), vol. X, issue no. 23, May 21-27, 2007 (see annex II).

4.2.1 Methodology
About thirty participants, representing various public and private sectors, and (I)NGOs working in the field tourism development participated actively in the program. The program started with a brief presentation about the current situation and tourism development of Humla. The presentation was followed by group discussions and group work. Each group was given a format to focus their ideas and inputs only on the necessary topics (see paragraph 4.2.3) and had to give a short presentation including comments and suggestions of their outputs afterwards.

4.2.2 Group discussion
After the presentation the participants were divided into three groups for further discussion. The groups were given a pre-designed format in order to concentrate their discussion and input on the necessary topics. All the participants actively participated in the group discussion and presented their findings, input and ideas afterwards to the whole group. The outcomes of the group discussion can be found below.
4.2.3 Outputs interaction

During the interaction the participants discussed five major issues of tourism development in Humla, knowingly infrastructure development, product and service development, marketing and promotion, policy and governance and empowerment of local people. The major findings of the interaction are summarized below:

- **Infrastructure development**
  One of the key components in tourism is infrastructure development. Though Humla has unique type of cultural value and natural environment, it lacks proper infrastructure required for tourism, such as trail improvement, water supply, campsites, waste bins, signboards, accommodation facilities, communication and health facilities, information centers, regular flights, hydro power, etc. To develop these infrastructures, stakeholders like government, Nepalese Tourism Board (NTB), local people, VDC, DDC, TAAN should work collectively in lobbying and policymaking.

- **Products and service development**
  Products and service play a significant role in the promotion of tourism. Identifying various attractions is one thing; to integrate them into tourism is as much as important. Humla has various products that can be developed as income generating tourism products, such as fruits and herbs, local handicrafts, cultural and natural heritages.

- **Marketing and promotion**
  Once products and services have been identified they can be used for tourism purposes, they have to be marketed and promoted collectively by local communities, governmental bodies, the private sector as well as (I)NGOs. Major activities include attending national and international trade fairs, publishing promotional materials (i.e. through IT technology), organizing ‘FAM’ trips and develop linkages and partnerships with public and private sectors.

- **Policy and governance**
  Policies and effective governance strategies play a significant role in Humla’s tourism development. Tourism entrepreneurs argued that the government’s policy of charging high entrance fees is the one of the main obstacles to attract tourist to Humla. Nowadays foreign tourists have to pay a US$ 90 permit fee for the first week and US$ 15 for every day after. Next to that they have to pay a US$ 5 fee to Humla DDC. Hence, policy makers should revise the present policy and legislation concerning entry fees, preservation of nature and culture, declaring Humla as a national park or protected area, etc.

- **Empowerment local people**
  While developing tourism, local people should have certain knowledge and skills in handling tourism businesses and cater (foreign) tourists in an appropriate way. Training is needed for local people, lodge owners, home stay providers, porters, cooks etc. Local people should benefit the most from tourism, which should provide them with income and employment. The government, local bodies and I/NGOs can play an important role in the management of funds, formulation of proposals and implementation of programs.

4.2.4 Comments and suggestions from participants

After the presentations and group discussions the participants shared their views and made comments and suggestions for the promotion of tourism in Humla. The major comments and suggestions made by the participants are:

- *If we can disseminate the message of peace and security in Humla, then there is possibility in increase of the tourists*
- *Coordination at different level is essential for the development of tourism in Humla*
- *Tour operators and travel agents are most effective medium to disseminate information for proper marketing of the products Lobbying for the formulation of district level tourism development policies and changing the government policies*
For tourism development in Humla, the revenues collected from tourists should be invested for development of infrastructure and other facilities

It is very essential to form a separate committee for tourism development for the Karnali region

Though, Humla is receiving very limited number of tourists, it could be promoted as its strength and can be developed as unique destination

Interaction programs regarding tourism development should be organized frequently and members from government representing organization must attend these programs

The government should come up with clear policies for tourism development in Humla and there should not be any hassles and delayed services required for tourists

4.2.5 Conclusion

The participants, representing both private and public sector, actively participated in the program (see annex III). They shared their experiences, learning and views for the development of tourism in Humla. Humla, with great tourism potentials can be developed as a unique destination in Nepal to compete with similar products in Tibet and Bhutan. The tourist arrivals trend interprets that tourists are attracted to the destination even in the conflict situation in the country. These potentials need to be explored and promoted with close coordination of all stakeholders involved. In all, the interaction succeeded to identify the roles of different stakeholders to promote tourism in Humla and receive their commitment.

4.3 ‘Treks-to-Build’ program

This paragraph focuses on the 2 treks that Nepal Trust organized as part of the ‘Treks-to-Build’ program, in order to promote tourism in Humla and develop local infrastructure along the trails. These treks involved among others Rotary International, (inter)national scouting organizations, students, teachers, doctors, engineers, volunteers and tourism professionals. A brief description of these treks is given below.

4.3.1 Scout Trek to Electrify Til

This trek group consisted out of 12 young British scouts and their group leaders from Wharfedale, along with biologist Roy Cameron from the WATER program (Watershed Action Through Education and Research). The main purpose of the trek was to install solar panels in a remote village named Til, which lies in the Limi Valley in the upper part of Humla in order to improve infrastructure facilities along the trail. Electricity brings next to light also other advantages for local people; as it enables them to read and study in evenings it also creates better opportunities for education, social activities and the like. In total 40 households were provided with 4 lights, whereas the local monastery, school and community centre were supplied with 8 lights. This comes down to 43 installations with a total of 184 lights. The project was funded by Rotary Club of Ilkley Wharfedale, UK and organized by Nepal Trust. Several pictures of this trek can be found in annex IV.

The solar equipment was provided by Lotus Energy who set up a social mobilization program for the local community to educate them about the use of solar energy and how to maintain and use the equipment properly. The equipment was eventually installed by the scout group, local people, engineers and Nepal Trust as a collective effort. For this trek Nepal Trust used 30 mules, horses and cross breeds, 12 horsemen, 7 cooking staff, 4 guides and 1 health worker. To transport the solar equipment from Kathmandu to Til, Nepal Trust used 20 mules, 8 horse men up to Chomsa, Til villagers from Chomsa and 2 engineers.

The second aim of this trek was to raise awareness among tourists and local people on sustainable use of water resources and to conduct research on the water situation in Humla in order to educate local people about health and hygiene. To carry this out, several workshops and clinics, that are part of the above mentioned WATER program (see paragraph 4.4), were given along the trail.

On return, an interaction program with Nepal Scouts, hosted by country director Mr. Shree Ram Lamichane, at the scout headquarter in Kathmandu was set up with the intention to bring scouts from Nepal and UK together for cultural exchange. The program educated both Nepali as UK scouts about their activities and history and was considered a great success by both sides. A short documentary to promote the work of Nepal Trust and scouting was made and broadcasted on national television (see annex IV).
4.3.2 Trek to Discover Upper Karnali River Zone

The second trek consisted out of 15 people from UK (among them were Nepal Trust directors, supporters and members) and several Nepali facilitators. The main purpose of the trek was to conduct site surveys, visit Nepal Trust project sites and local (I)NGOs and look at potential future projects throughout Jumla, Mugu and Humla. The trek started at Bardia National Park and continued up to Jumla from where the group walked to Simikot. From Simikot several field visits to Torpa, Raling Gompa and Kermi were made. Among the participants on this trek were dentists, doctors, health workers, teachers, engineers, tourism professionals and translators. Due to this composition, Nepal Trust was able to 1) deliver basic dental- and healthcare along the trails for local (tourism) entrepreneurs and communities and 2) to conduct research on healthcare, infrastructure, education and (tourism) potentials to develop services and products along the trails. A short overview per practice field is given below, whereas several pictures of this trek can be found in annex V.

- **Healthcare**

Several dental clinics were given in which over 100 tooth extractions were done and many people were examined by (local) doctors and health workers who provided local people with the necessary medical supplies. Next to this, several visits were made to local hospitals/ clinics and interviews were conducted with doctors, medical personnel, patients and local people to gain insight in medical conditions along the trails. Next to this, health clinics were given to local entrepreneurs at lodges, restaurants, community centers and shops in order to stress the importance of hygiene and food preparation, sanitation and clean water and the basic elements of medical treatment.

- **Infrastructure**

There were several engineers (both civil, technical as mechanical) to inspect local infrastructure (such as bridges, trails, micro hydro power plants (MHP), solar panels, lodges, health posts, etc.) and come up with possible solutions/ future projects to improve the current conditions. Ideas that came up were the refurbishment of Torpa health clinic to deliver healthcare for both tourists as local communities. Next to this ideas were opted to construct a vocational training centre for solar and water energy and repair the MHPs in Kermi, Lali and Limi Valley. This will generate income for local people as they can charge tourists a small fee for to use electricity along the trail (recharging of batteries, cameras, torch lights, mobile phones and the like).

- **Education**

Teachers and translators conducted research on educational systems in the three districts. Visits were made to several local schools and interviews were held with local teachers, students and people to see the condition/ constraints of education delivery.

All in all, the trek was a big success which resulted in happy tourists (among them Rotarians) who will spread the positive word about Humla in order to promote the area. This can eventually lead to new donors, partnerships and projects that can improve Humla as a tourist destination.

4.4 WATER program

As mentioned above, Nepal Trust developed a new concept in cooperation with the Centre for Environment Education Nepal (CEEN) regarding sustainable use of water resources in five communities this UNESCO ecotourism project has been focusing on in Humla (Simikot, Bargaon, Lali, Ghoti and Limi). Roy Cameron, a biologist, worked over 6 years in Bhutan conducted research for the WATER program, which stands for ‘Watershed Action Through Education and Research’ (see annex VI). In the sections below the project focus, expected outputs and benefits are mapped out.

4.4.1 Focus

The main focus of the WATER program is to encourage tourism entrepreneurs, schools and adult literacy groups to become active mobilizing forces within their local community and collaborate with local people living within a watershed to take decisions and actions that will bring direct improvements to their lives in areas of tourism, health, education, income generation, farm production, food/ energy security and livestock management.
The program works at community level and serves as an education process that guides learners towards identifying some of the main difficulties local people are facing within the local water catchments and help them to improve the situation.

4.4.2 Outputs
The WATER program aims at benefiting the education sector in Humla, local people and District Development Committee (DDC). A short summary of desired outputs is given in table 3 below.

### TABLE 3 - OUTPUTS WATER PROGRAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Education**| ▪ Students acquire knowledge and skills for community development and mobilisation (research, inquiry, analysis, critical thinking) which will be assets to the community  
                ▪ Training for teachers in active learning  
                ▪ Water and soil testing equipment; biological indicators; Faecal E coli tests  
                ▪ Identification books and charts; compiled geographical information for the area; local maps  
                ▪ Computers for Secondary schools for data storage and analysis; schools may function as community resource centre with internet access  
                ▪ Links to private schools in Kathmandu to provide temporary teachers, training and scholarships |
| **Local people**| ▪ Awareness and appreciation of community assets (natural, cultural, institutional)  
                ▪ Mobilized to plan and make decisions about using assets to improve the social and economic situation for the community  
                ▪ Plans and proposals from community will lead to demand driven services from DDC and NGOs  
                ▪ Adult literacy to acquire skills for planning, writing and presenting proposals, getting information, reading instructions, advocacy, communicate with tourists, requesting services from DDC, NGOs |
| **DDC**      | ▪ A more demand driven approach will lead to more effective and targeted services for local communities and will enhance the performance of district level delivery of health, education, agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, etc.  
                ▪ Training and technical assistance from national and international NGOs  
                ▪ Sector staff would become more like facilitators of community programs rather than providers i.e. on-farm research on new technologies or crop varieties |

### Table 3 – Outputs WATER program

4.4.3 Benefits
Nepal Trust can develop tourism in Humla by implementing the WATER program. Table 4 below shows Nepal Trust activities to develop tourism infrastructure per VDC, but also how the WATER program can be beneficiary to this.

### TABLE 4 - BENEFITS WATER PROGRAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VDC</th>
<th>Nepal Trust activities</th>
<th>Expected benefits from the WATER program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simikot</td>
<td>Guest house; adult education; health camps; tourism training; tourism facilities</td>
<td>Health and sanitation; mother and child health; economic opportunities from Hildun hydro; food security; income from tourism and craft sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bargaon</td>
<td>Health post; solar panels; overseas volunteers</td>
<td>Health and sanitation; mother and child health; economic opportunities from Hildun hydro; food security; increase income from tourism and craft sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lali</td>
<td>21.5 kW hydro; school food grinder; walnut oil and medicinal plant press</td>
<td>Sustain hydro through sound watershed management; increase income from tourism and craft sales; mother and child health; malnutrition; food security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghoti</td>
<td>Rebuilt government health post; health education; toilet construction; solar panels; 50 kW hydro</td>
<td>Mother and child health; malnutrition; increase income from tourism; feasibility of end uses for electricity to be generated: sawmill; oil presses; medicinal herb oils;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limi</td>
<td>Health post; solar panels; three 6 kW hydros; monastery preservation; UNESCO tourism</td>
<td>Health and sanitation; mother and child health; food security; fuel wood management; increase income from tourism and craft sales; promotion of culture; income generation from harvesting plants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 – Benefits WATER program
4.5 Cultural tourism development in Humla

Timothy Harward, International Coordinator of the Central Himalaya Project (Universities of Kumaon, Garwhal and Tribhuvan/ Centre for Nepal & Asian Studies), recently carried out a Historical Survey of the Simikot - Yari (Hilsa) route. In the subsections below the background for this micro study is given along with the study relevance, the main objectives and the results.

4.5.1 Background

The sheep, mule, dzok and yak caravans and agriculture have been the main sources of income for Humla in the past. Though only 1% of the land is arable, agriculture is still the main income source for local people today (see paragraph 1.2). In the old days, people used to bring salt and wool from Tibet and exchange this in the Terai regions for grain. Later in the 1950s, after the advent of Chinese in Tibet, major economical, cultural and infrastructure changes occurred and supplies are now brought to Taklakot from the other parts of China. These are bought by Humli's at Taklakot for trading in Simikot. This new trading system is slowly replacing the ancient trading system between the Humli and Tibetans. All this is slowly changing the modus of the Caravan traders into wholesalers who buy from China and sell-on within Humla. This reduction in the trade opportunities for Humli's must slowly be further reduced and will finally disappear once the Taklakot-Simikot road is complete. Goods will then be carried by truck from Taklakot/ Hilsa to Simikot and on to the whole of Humla. There is a general lack of job and income generating opportunities in Humla. Some people are depending on the sale of non-timber forest products which, if not controlled or if not replaced by an alternative source, will cause adverse effects on the biodiversity that is a main asset of the area.

Today, when looking at the annual amount of foreigners visiting Tibet via Humla this district may be considered as a highly popular destination for tourists. Buddhism, the Himalayas, the ancient Tibetan culture and traditions of both areas appeal to many westerners. Many visitors fly to Humla (1600 in 2006/ 2007) and walk the old trade and pilgrimage route from Simikot to Hilsa and up to Holy Mount Kailash, one of the most important pilgrimage sites. Bearing this mind, it is not difficult to imagine that the cultural (and natural) endowments of Humla offer a great opportunity to develop (eco) tourism and income generation. As mentioned in paragraph 3.2, Humla has a number of important monasteries, pilgrim sites, sacred stones and many other cultural assets.

Hence, it should be possible to link Humla's trading and cultural history with Tibet and to demonstrate this in a way which will attract more tourists and enable the development of a supporting infrastructure for regular treks that increasingly go to Tibet en route to the ancient pilgrimage destinations of Manasarovar and Mount Kailash, and for a new breed of historical and cultural treks which will lead tourists to explore the cultural and historical heritage of Humla. By linking up Humla's historical background with tourism development, the old trade and pilgrimage route that once brought income and prosperity to the district, can serve once more as an instigator for tourism development in order to generate income and help local communities to enhance their livelihoods.

4.5.2 Study aim

The aim of this Historical Survey by the Central Himalaya Project (CHP) was to explore the main route connecting Simikot with West Tibet to determine whether there were additional Pillar Stones to those already found on the lower stretches of the ancient trade and pilgrimage way between Surkhet and Simikot. This was the medieval route which was developed by the Khasa Kings of West Nepal (1100 - 1400 AD) and controlled by a 2m wide highway specially built by them between their summer and winter capitals of Sinja and Dullu. The route was protected by the Khasa cavalry and all caravans whether from India or Tibet were taxed en route.

For the past 10 years Tim Harward has been leading the CHP in studying this route, identifying and recording all the monuments and connected buildings and facilities along its way (Dharamasalar, Mungara, Mandirs, Kots, Pillar Stones, etc.). The 220 Pillar Stones so far found along this route are primary evidence which is slowly revealing useful historical data relating to the Khasa Malla and the later dynasty of the Baisi Raja. Interestingly 40% of these Pillar Stones have been found to have Buddhist symbols and/ or texts which reinforce the idea that the route was well used by Buddhist teachers and monks when traveling from India, through West Nepal to Tibet.

The Khasa Kings of this central Himalayan Empire were fervent Buddhists and they are known to have supported a large number of monasteries in Jumla and Humla.
4.5.3 Results
This short survey to further the objectives of the CHP has helped to strengthen our understanding of the history of this important district in the following five key ways:

1. A new major 13th century (probably fortified) monastery was identified at Tumkot and details of its archaeological significance photographed and recorded. The construction of its walls revealed that it was built using the same traditional technique as was used in the building of monasteries in Tibet. Its correct Tibetan name is the White Conch Monastery (Dunkhar Choerom). Its sect (Sakyapta) is confirmed as being the same as that of Halji in the Limi Valley before the latter changed to the Dighu Kadgyatpa sect. The immediate historical significances are that Tumkot was built at much the same time as that of Halji Monastery and it was therefore likely that, like Halji, it was also supported by the Khasa Kings of west Nepal. The relatively close location of both these important monasteries is significant. The present Lama of Tumkot is the 14th descendant of the Great Lama of Dunkhar Choerom.

2. Two forts were found at Yalbang and Yangar. The fort at Yalbang was originally built on top of the huge rock face against which the present village is built. Today it has a Chorten on its summit. Indications of foundations were found and mapped out and photographed. Interestingly, this fort is only half an hour away from Yangar. The original name of the fort was Yang (meaning difficult or dangerous to access) Ghari (meaning fort). This proved to be a heavily fortified site running along a ridge from a huge rock behind the village of Yari for a distance of approx 800m. The West flank of this ridge overlooked the range of hills ahead on the Eastern sides of which it was possible to read the remains of significant but ancient cultivated fields, now disused. The top of the ridge was given the name of ‘Bonpo dutsar’ or ‘stay place of the Leader’; this usually meant the next in line of importance to the king in which case one might presume that it was not the King's fort or residence and that he lived or ruled somewhere else. Another Tibetan name was given to the centre of the fort known as the 'bowl fort' or 'Charsyong' which accurately described the body of the fort. It seemed probable that the fort could have held up to 500 people with their livestock. This therefore was a very significant fort which was held by a Buddhist population. Its age seemed to be between the 12th - 14th centuries AD. An archaeological evaluation of this site would be very interesting but time consuming and was unlikely to be carried out for the foreseeable future.

3. No Pillar Stones were found which seems to indicate that in the medieval period the communities were neither large nor sufficiently settled to be able to create stone records of important matters. This is consistent with transient communities where the Buddhist Monasteries were the main centres of stability. There as been no time to address the possibility of monastic records but this remains another line of field research to be considered in the future.

4. The ancient fort at Simikot which Timothy Harward surveyed ten years ago has since been converted into an army barracks and is no longer accessible by locals or tourists. It is built on a typical eagle top position and has a clear vista of 360 degrees. Its name is derived from its location as 'the marsh fort' as it is effectively sited above a marsh.

5. Simikot itself has a fine wager source which was previously carried buy up to six stone 'mouths' or taps. Today the mouths do not directly provide water which is delivered by plastic pipe. The design of the taps and the remains of auspicious barley sugar decoration below suggest that this was built in the time of the Khasa Malla when they controlled Humla as part of their empire. It would therefore be approximately 600 - 700 years old. It is worth noting that nothing of this level of sophistication has been found elsewhere in Humla.

4.5.4 Conclusion
It should be said that this is the first recorded survey of the archaeological importance of the route from Simikot to Yari (Hilsa) and that only a further and longer survey followed by selected sites for excavation can begin the process of establishing some kind of formal record of the history of the beautiful and remote district of Humla.
CHAPTER 5 - DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

“Finally, in conclusion, let me say just this”.

~ Peter Sellers (1925 - 1980) ~

In the course of 2007 many activities have been carried out in order to implement the ‘Humla Eco-tourism and Trekking Promotion Project’ in an appropriate way. In order to do so, several people and organizations have been consulted ranging from governmental bodies to (I)NGOs to the private sector. Many of them share same goals on how to improve sustainable ecotourism in Humla, its infrastructure, basic needs and have many years of working experience in the field as well. By using their expertise it was possible to gain a better insight in the current situation in Humla regarding tourism. This was very useful to come up with conclusions regarding the tourism development in Humla as seen from several perspectives as these findings and other collected data complement each other in ways to achieve this. In this chapter special attention has been given to three points of consideration and the project outcomes.

5.1 Infrastructure

In the former chapters several matters regarding project activities were mapped out. What needs to be mentioned here is the fact that these projects are meant to improve the livelihoods of those living on and around the trails in the first place, rather then just to please the visiting tourists that are needed in order to provide additional income for locals. This applies especially for the more remote areas of Nepal, such as Humla, where indigenous people can benefit even more from foreign tourism expenditures. There are still many places in Humla untouched due to their remoteness, such as the Limi Valley, despite the fact that they have high tourism potentials. Ecotourism is indeed one of the catalysts that can generate additional income in Humla, as for some market segments remoteness is an attraction but for many ease of access is very important as well. Some points of consideration here are:

- Medical facilities (hospitals, health posts, rescue centers)
- Accommodations (hotels, resorts, motels, guest houses, inns, home stays)
- Accessibility (distance, mode of transport)
- Communication (Internet, telephone, fax, post offices)
- Markets (where one can buy souvenirs and other goods)

5.2 Products and services

Another point of consideration is that Humla is not ‘established’ fully in terms of products and services offered to tourists locally. Local people often lack the skills, awareness, capital and linkages to provide what trekking companies and tourists require. Another issue that should be addressed here is the low capacity to meet tourist expectations in the first place. Most people living in remote areas, especially women and disadvantaged groups, may have never traveled outside the vicinity of their own villages and have no understanding of who tourists are and what they expect. Toilet building, proper sanitation, health/ hygiene, water usage and awareness raising programs are addressing problems of poor sanitation and hygiene along the main trekking trails.

Development of tourism facilities and products, such as camping sites, hot baths from natural hot water springs (in Kermi), cultural attractions (mane stones, shows), villages, mountains or tours should be in cooperation with CBOs that will use expert advice and guidance from development organizations. An often forgotten aspect is that the locals should be informed as well about the tourism opportunities. As most villagers in Humla are depending on agriculture, local people can benefit by getting market information and road access to tourist destinations so they can contribute to the increased demand of meat, fruit, vegetables, poultry, eggs and fish (ADB, 2004).
Nepal Trust with support of UNESCO provided tourism awareness among the locals and visitors by giving trainings and orientation sessions. Taking the above mentioned issues regarding the development of infrastructure in consideration, it becomes clear that:

- Humla needs more development to attract tourists
- Existing infrastructure should be improved before developing new one
- Ownership should be developed among locals (projects/ infrastructure developed)
- Capacity building of locals (by locals) is needed to contribute to sustainable development

### 5.3 Marketing and promotion

To develop and promote trekking in Humla it is important to find strategic partners that can enhance the exposure of Humla, such as tour operators, travel agencies, development organizations, (I)NGOs and the like. Initiatives such as stakeholder meetings definitely will bring Humla under the attention of a wider public. Hence, it is important to:

- Create flows of information and communication (by having meetings, share news, reports and future plans)
- Share knowledge and experiences of certain areas
- Exchange linkages and ideas on fundraising
- Exchange expertise and visions on marketing

### 5.4 Project outcome

Finally, after taken all these points in consideration, it becomes clear that there are a lot of actions needed to increase benefits to local Humli communities by using (eco) tourism as driving engine. These issues go well beyond simply promoting tourism or implement another participation strategy, although work at grass-roots level to develop strategic enterprises and build local capacity can be seen as a key component. Overall, by taking the main goal, objectives and project outcomes of this UNESCO project into account (see paragraph 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4), it can be said that Nepal Trust made great effort to comply with them and a positive contribution to the promotion and development of (eco) tourism Humla has surely been made. An overview of concluding remarks and project outcomes can be found below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 5 - CONCLUDING REMARKS AND PROJECT OUTCOMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increase economic benefits/participation local people</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Boost local employment, wages and additional ecotourism income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Create local enterprise opportunities in the areas of renewable energy projects (MHP, solar), health, education, culture/ heritage preservation)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 – Concluding remarks and project outcomes
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“The secret to creativity is knowing how to hide your sources”.
~ Albert Einstein (1879 - 1955) ~

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EPILOGUE

“After all is said and done, a lot more will be said than done”.

~ Unknown ~

Humla is a unique place that houses Nepal’s finest and untouched nature. Due to the remoteness of the district and the harsh conditions local communities have to cope with, there has been an urgent need to promote sustainable ecotourism development. In this report issues were raised to see how tourism can be a propulsive force to gain more financial resources through tourism (trekking) in order to sustain nature conservation and support local communities. From this notion several projects in Humla has been carried out by Nepal Trust with support of UNESCO; a search for opportunities to gain more publicity and financial benefits for nature conservation with sustainable tourism as driving catalyst. In order to achieve this, several programs relating to tourism, (environmental) education and resource usage, health, renewable energy and culture/ heritage preservation have been implemented to improve trekking conditions along the tourism trails in Humla for both local people as well (foreign) visitors. Doing projects in one of Nepal’s poorest districts, which still copes with the aftermath of a post conflict history, provided us different angles to look at things and brought us new knowledge and experiences. Hence, Nepal Trust faced several difficulties in the last year, but next to this we also were blessed to experience nice things such as traditional ways of (rural) life, local Humli people and their culture, music and dance, local cuisines, architecture and of course nature. The last year Nepal Trust worked with a lot of dedication and pleasure on the realization of this UNESCO project and due to the fact that we have a new committed team of dedicated and enthusiastic people, we hope to continue our partnership with UNESCO for the years to come in order to sustain tourism development and nature conservation in Humla.

Ir. Jeroen Rahul van den Bergh
Development of Cultural and Ecotourism in the Mountainous Regions of Central and South Asia

Humla Eco-tourism and Trekking Promotion Project

APPENDICES

Nepal Trust

UNESCO
## ANNEX I - PERSONAL COMMITMENT INTERACTION PROGRAM

### PERSONAL COMMITMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Linda Elsner</td>
<td>Mountain Spirit</td>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>• Send volunteers to help for development activities&lt;br&gt;• Support project as a media/communicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pranil Upadhaya</td>
<td>Innovative Tourism Society Nepal</td>
<td>Founder Member</td>
<td>• Mainstream the knowledge and awareness building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Temba D. Yolmo</td>
<td>Mountain Spirit</td>
<td>Program Coordinator</td>
<td>• Develop tourism related projects for Humla and promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Babita Lama</td>
<td>THIS</td>
<td>Chairperson</td>
<td>• Support to manage home stay&lt;br&gt;• Communication access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Lila B. Baniya</td>
<td>Nepal Tourism Board</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>• Link the Humla tourism website with NTB website&lt;br&gt;• Publish information in guide books if the soft copy of the total information is provided.&lt;br&gt;• Provide outlet for the information dissemination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mingma Sherpa</td>
<td>TRPAP</td>
<td>Tourism Planning Specialist</td>
<td>• Involve in FAM trip to promote tourism.&lt;br&gt;• Share experience and learning for policy change, planning, and development of tourism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Nima Lama Yolmo</td>
<td>Social Tours</td>
<td>General Manager</td>
<td>• Promotion of Humla area for tourism activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Chhimi Lama</td>
<td>CPN Maoist</td>
<td>RBM</td>
<td>• Involve in tourism development activities&lt;br&gt;• Lobby for government take initiatives to promote tourism in Humla&lt;br&gt;• Process of Karnali Tourism Development Committee formation.&lt;br&gt;• Preparing Raling Festival in 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Chhiring Duntop Lama</td>
<td>CPN Maoist</td>
<td>DCS</td>
<td>• Support for tourism development as other parties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Bijaya Pradhan</td>
<td>Dream Nepal</td>
<td>Ex. Chairman</td>
<td>• Marketing and promotion&lt;br&gt;• Product Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Bishnu Subedi</td>
<td>Nature Trails</td>
<td>Managing Director</td>
<td>• Develop promotional materials and promote with other destinations&lt;br&gt;• Link website&lt;br&gt;• Participate in FAM trip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Gautam .M. Shrestha</td>
<td>Nepal Trust</td>
<td>Trustee</td>
<td>• Help to grow Nepal Trust activities to develop Humla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Surendara Lama</td>
<td>Firante Treks</td>
<td>General Manager</td>
<td>• Promote tourism mobilizing local people&lt;br&gt;• Use local products&lt;br&gt;• Preserve local culture and environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Development of Cultural and Ecotourism in the Mountainous Regions of Central and South Asia

**Humla Eco-tourism and Trekking Promotion Project**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 14  | Tanka Dawadi        | Karnali Excursions | Tour Manager               | - Making Humla as an unique destination  
                                             | - Promote it as main destination in website  
                                             | - Make itineraries                           |
| 15  | Rajeev Dangol       | NTTR               | Sub Editor                | - Promote Humla through publications                                          |
| 16  | Nirmala Shakya      | Explore Himalaya  | Tour Manager               | - Make new itinerary for website                                             |
| 17  | Manoj K. Sharma     | Nepal Trust       | Trustee Member            |                                                                                 |
| 18  | Monica Oliveros     | SNV                | Advisor                    | - Cooperate for further possibilities of tourism development in Humla        |
| 19  | Kiran Paudel        | P.O.Box: 20425     | Development Activist       | - Advocacy with the Policy makers  
                                             | - Propagate Kailash Pilgrimage in rural Nepal.  
                                             | - Lobbying with I/NGOs for infrastructure development  
                                             | - Media sensitization                          |
| 20  | Shoba Raymaji       | Nepal Trust       | Secretary                  |                                                                                 |
| 21  | Pawan Tuladhar      | Nepal Trust       | Vice President             |                                                                                 |
| 22  | R.M. Pradhan        | Nepal Trust       | Treasurer                  | - Do my best for developing Humla                                            |
| 23  | Prashanna Shrestha  | Nepal Trust       | President                  | - Make necessary arrangement for funds to promote Humla.                     |
| 24  | Gelu Sherpa         | Nepal Trust       | Executive Director         | - Implement the ecotourism project activities properly                       |
| 25  | Sigrid Maier        | Getup Palpa       | Ecotourism Advisor         | - Exchange and share experiences and learning                                |
| 26  | Hari Prasad Limbu   | Nepal Trust       | Finance Director           | - Prepare necessary budget for the project activities  
                                             | - Share experience and learning                |
| 27  | Sunita Sharm        | Nepal Trust       | Admin. Cum Fin. Manager    | - Coordinate with stakeholders to promote tourism in Humla                   |
| 28  | Kumar Karki         | Nepal Trust       | Trekking In charge         | - Organize trekking in that area                                             |
| 29  | Raju Gurung         | Nepal Trust       | Office Assistant           | - Assist during interactions, meetings, workshops for tourism development.  
                                             |                                                                                 |
| 30  | Jeroen van den Bergh | Nepal Trust     | Management Consultant      | - Assist in trek programs in Humla  
                                             | - Promote Humla as tourism destination (IT, itineraries, presentations, etc.)  
                                             | - Find (local) partners/donors  
                                             | - Organize workshops  
                                             | - Prepare reports for stakeholders  
                                             | - Develop new tourism concepts/projects |
| 31  | Lhakpa Tenji Lama   | Mountain Spirit   | Advisor                    | - Facilitate tourism related programs  
                                             | - Share experience and learnings  
                                             | - Prepare reports and disseminate to the participants and other stakeholders |

Nepal Trust & UNESCO
Travel Warnings on rise

The US State Department has cautioned US citizens against travelling to Nepal, by issuing updated information on the security situation of Nepal on May 15, 2007, saying that the Maoist party remains a danger despite having recently joined the interim government. The advisory of the Department of State remains concerned about the security situation in Nepal and continues to urge American citizens contemplating a visit to Nepal to obtain updated security information before they travel and to be prepared to change their plans at short notice.

"Given the nature, intensity and unpredictability of disturbances, American citizens are urged to exercise special caution during times when demonstrations are announced, avoid areas where demonstrations are occurring or crowds are forming, avoid road travel and maintain a low profile," the warning reads.

Similarly, the ethnic tensions in the Terai region have also raised concerns. In the travel advisory issued on May 10, 2007, Australian embassy has still put Nepal under high degree of caution; the overall level of advice has not changed. Many other countries have also advised their citizens to exercise caution while travelling to Nepal stating that travel beyond Kathmandu Valley remains unpredictable.

Mobile phone in EBC

Spice Nepal, a private cellular phone company declared that it would install its base station in the Everest area so that mountaineers and trekkers can use their mobile phone up to the Everest Base Camp within two months time. The availability of mobile phones service in the Everest region is expected to be a great help for mountaineers and in this area who are largely depending on the satellite phones at present. The company has already initiated the process to receive the government’s nod to go ahead with its plan. If succeeded, Spice Nepal would be the first company to run GSM mobile phones in the tallest part of the world.

Nepal re-elected as President of WTF

Nepal has been re-elected as the president of World Tiger Forum (WTF) for next 3 years by its general assembly. Forest Minister will be the President of the Forum while Forest Secretary as the President of its working committee. The Forum, which was established in 1994 to work for conservation of tiger has 7 member states including Nepal. The general assembly of the forum had recently concluded in Kathmandu along with the international symposium on tiger conservation where officials and conservationists from 12 countries showed their participation.

Ancient mural found

A cave in remote northern Nepal with a spectacular Buddhist mural unseen for centuries has been found, said a team of scholars and explorers. The team members said that it appeared as if the cave was reserved as an assembly room for Buddhist teachings. The local shepherd led the team to the cave in the Mustang district bordering Tibet. He had sheltered in it decades earlier during a rainfall. Wall paintings dating back to as early as 13th century, Tibetan manuscripts executed in ink, silver and gold, and pre-Christian era pottery shards have also been discovered. The team comprising 8 members- 4 Americans, 1 Italian, and 3 Nepalis explored at least 12 caves located at an altitude of 14,000 feet near Lo Manthang area of Mustang from March 9 to April 4, 2007.

Austrian Air suspended operation

Austrian Air suspended its seasonal operation from 16 May 2007. According to the officials of Austrian Air, the airline stopped its direct flight from Kathmandu to Vienna until 2008. However, it will continue to operate via Delhi or Bangkok. Austrian Air operates seasonal flight to Nepal that halts its operation from mid May to mid September. It was the only airline that was operating scheduled flight from Kathmandu to Vienna and vice versa everyday. Hence, this stoppage has led to a deep concern to the travel trade industry.

Interaction to develop Humla

Nepal Trust, the NGO working in economic development of Humla district organized an interaction program on May 10, 2007 to identify the roles of stakeholders in promotion of tourism in Humla district. The participants from the group discussions attributed that without proper accessibility tourism cannot foster and Humla is facing the accessibility problem as one of the major setbacks. There is no alternative to improve accessibility to enter Humla and airborne are very expensive comparable to other destinations which amounts to over US $ 400 per pax.

Similarly, being a restricted area, tourists needs permit from the Nepal government for US $ 90 per day per tourist. During the discussion, participants also stressed on a need to revise and waive the royalty fee for Humla and help increase the number of tourists for the economic development in the area. Humla is also the gateway to Mt. Kailash. Some trekking trails have been developed by Nepal Trust but they are in the most primitive way and private sectors are yet to promote them as their alternative trekking destinations. Humla is a home to poorest people and also one of the remotest districts of Nepal. Nepal Trust is working for the economic development of the Humla with financial support from UNESCO.

Appa’s 17th Ascent on Everest

Appa Sherpa, the World Record Holder has set another record by scaling Mount Everest for the 17th time on May 16, 2007 at 8:44am. Appa beat his own record when he set his foot atop Mount Everest for the 17th time. Appa was leading the team of Super Sherpa Everest Expedition 2007.

Lhakpa Gelu Sherpa another record holder, who climbed Everest 13 times, was with Appa in the team with other five high altitude workers of the expedition. Other members in the team included Pasang Geljen Sherpa, Anjai Sherpa, Ang Passang Sherpa, Pemba Rinjee Sherpa and Mingma Tsering Sherpa. At the same time, Appa Sherpa and Lhakpa Gelu Sherpa jointly released a travelogue book “Sagarmatha ko Adhar Bibir Bata” written by Pratik Dhakal on 16th of may, 2007. This event has made both the record holder climbers as the first book releaser on the top of the Everest relating to travelogue literature, and the above mentioned book has become the first of its kind released on the top of the world. The handling agency of the expedition team was World Records Expedition and Treks Pvt Ltd. Kathmandu, Nepal.
ANNEX III - PICTURES INTERACTION PROGRAM 2007

Interaction program setup

Group work

Interaction among stakeholders

Discussion

Presentation outcomes

Group photo participants
ANNEX IV - PICTURES SCOUT TREK TO ELECTRIFY TIL

UK scout group

Installation light in local home

Installation solar panel in local home

Installation house wiring at community centre

Preparation solar gear with Humli people

Interaction program Nepali scouts
ANNEX V - PICTURES TREK TO DISCOVER UPPER KARNALI RIVER ZONE

Nepal Trust sign board

Dentist at work

Health clinic along tourism trail

Promotion local culture/ heritage

Interaction Torpa education/ health

Interaction Ghoti 50 kW micro hydro
ANNEX VI - PICTURES WATER EDUCATION PROGRAM

Water well inspection along tourism trail

Water workshop by Roy Cameron

Interaction on water, hygiene and health

Water education for food preparation

Sanitation/ toilets along tourism trail

Nepal Trust solar shower for hygiene
ANNEX VII - PICTURES HUMLA AS CULTURAL TOURISM DESTINATION

View along route to Hilsa

Long shot Tumkot Monastery

Yalbang Fort

Mane Stone

Tibetan prayer wall

Mane Stone