Everest Community Network
Improving Internet Connectivity for the Sherpas of Nepal
July 2023
Our Project Partners

The Sherpa people of Nepal have called the Himalayas home for hundreds of years.

In the villages of Khunde and Khumjung, a community of 1,700 people are working hard to make a living, raise their families, and maintain their way of life.

But climate change and digital isolation are threatening their sustainability.
The villages of Khunde and Khumjung are 32 kilometers from the Mount Everest Base Camp.
The Challenges

1) Reliance on the Climbing Industry

The primary source of income is tourism related to Everest climbing expeditions, which has some serious drawbacks:

• Tourists usually bypass the villages to go straight to the Everest base camp, so the local economy doesn’t benefit as much as it could.

• Expeditions are hard and dangerous work. One third of deaths that occur on Everest expeditions are Sherpa.

• Climate change is making the climb even more dangerous, threatening climbers’ safety and the industry at large.

• Reliance on the climbing industry leaves few employment options for local youth. The outmigration of young adults threatens the sustainability of Khunde and Khumjung and the Sherpa culture.
The Challenges

2) Remote Location

The villages’ remote location and lack of infrastructure present real obstacles to opportunity and growth.

- The nearest road access is a two-week hike away. Goods must be brought in by donkey or by helicopter, at great expense.
- Communication with the outside world is difficult. At present, residents have limited mobile Internet access and must travel some distance to get a signal.
- Education, health care, and other digital opportunities are limited.
The Solution

Reliable and affordable high-speed Internet will open a world of opportunities for the people of Khunde and Khumjung. It can help them overcome challenges posed by their remote location, attract tourists to spend time in the villages (not just on Everest), and build new business models and sources of income.

The Internet can also improve the community’s access to education, health care services, and more, making mountain living more sustainable.
Funding Needs

$100,000 USD

$50,000 to install fiber optic cable infrastructure.

$50,000 to support digital capacity building and new initiatives to spur income generation, offer entrepreneurism, improve medical care, and expand educational opportunities.
Fiber deployment: 2023

In May 2023, we laid 8.3 kilometers of fiber optic cable from Syangboche to Khumjung and Khunde villages.

Everest Link, the local Sherpa-owned and operated Internet Service Provider, laid the cable in collaboration with village residents.

We connected the school, hospital, and local community clubs and are currently receiving interest for home connectivity through a local seven members steering committee.

The network will run on a non-profit basis in collaboration with the Everest Link.
Remaining Plan: 2023 and beyond

Digital Transformation

GOAL: Support training and capacity building to help the community make the most of its connectivity.

- General digital capacity building
- Technical workshops in network troubleshooting and maintenance
- Sherpa Home Stay services startup
- Setting up a Sherpa community innovation lab
- Establishing a telehealth clinic at Khunde hospital
- Providing supplementary STEM educational opportunities to students at Khumjung school
- Deploying a IP based security system so those who need to migrate from the area during winter can monitor their land and assets
Why the Internet Society?

We are a global non-profit organization dedicated to an open, secure, and trustworthy Internet for everyone, everywhere.

Our unique skillset and global yet local presence allows us to effectively deliver our mission around the world.

30 years of experience championing the Internet

Global reach + grassroots engagement
- 135 Chapters & Special Interest Groups
- 87 Organizational Members
- 87,777 Individual Members

Over 100,000 people trained worldwide
Thank you.

Naveed Haq
Regional Infrastructure and Connectivity Director, Asia
Pacific, haq@isoc.org

Adrian Wan
Project Lead, Connecting the Unconnected
wan@isoc.org

Joao Aguiar
Project Lead, Connecting the Unconnected
aguiar@isoc.org