

The Big Climb Nepal 2022: UN International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development

Kathmandu, Nepal, November 2022

The Big Climb Nepal 2022, an initiative in the form of an 11-day trek to Everest Base Camp (5,300m) through the Sagarmatha National Park, will commence on 8 November, 2022. The aim of the trek is to raise awareness about the challenges faced by indigenous mountain communities, and to highlight the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development.

Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1979, the Sagarmatha National Park displays great potential for sustainable tourism but faces challenges as a result of climate change. During the trek, the team will meet with stakeholders and youth representatives from the Sherpa communities to hold dialogues and understand the perspectives of the indigenous people of the region. UNESCO and The Big Climb Nepal, through a number of consultations en route, will seek to create a better understanding of the lives of the mountain communities in the Everest region.

The expedition is joined by Tim Challen, Founder of The Big Climb initiative, Michael Croft, UNESCO Representative to Nepal, Nepali champion trail runner Mira Rai (Mountain Partnership Ambassador, Salomon Athlete, and National Geographic Adventurer of the Year, 2017), along with youth trail runners from the Mira Rai Initiative, UNESCO colleagues from the Nepal Office, and representatives from the private and public sectors.

“Sagarmatha National Park World Heritage Site (Mt. Everest) represents many things to many people around the world – a monument, a destination, a challenge. But it is also a home and a culture. In 2022, as we commemorate fifty years of the World Heritage Convention, we recognize that it is crucial that local voices prevail over the next fifty if sustainable development is to be a reality. With our partners, we undertake The Big Climb in anticipation of Sagarmatha’s wonders, yes, but above all we go to listen - and to learn.”

- Michael Croft, UNESCO Representative to Nepal

“After being shot and severely injured during an armed robbery in Nairobi, I have been leading young women and men to mountain summits so that they may become agents of positive change in their communities. Understanding the voice of youth, and putting them at the forefront of development is key to better and more durable environments.”

-Tim Challen, The Big Climb

“Born at the foot of the world’s third highest peak, my fascination and respect for these giants of the Himalaya are deeply anchored in my soul. From kitchen boy to climbing Sherpa, I soon became Sirdar – the leader of the climbing Sherpa teams on 8000-meter peaks. I have had the privilege of climbing Mount Everest nine times, and other 8000 meter summits more than 14 times during my career.”

-Norbu Sherpa, Chief Guide, The Big Climb Nepal

About The Big Climb Nepal

The Big Climb Nepal was founded in 2022 to further expand the concept and the impact of The Big Climb Kilimanjaro. The Big Climb’s founding partners include the Sustainable Mountain Alliance (SMA) and the PDAid Foundation. Since 2006, the founder of The Big Climb, Tim Challen, has led over 650 climbers to the summit of Africa, Mt. Kilimanjaro (5895m), to raise awareness on social issues affecting our planet and people. Annually, selected youth from disenfranchised communities in Kenya and Tanzania climb Mount Kilimanjaro joining representatives from the private and public sectors. Together, they demonstrate solidarity in the face of adversity and are supported, following the Climb, through a mentoring programme, supported by the PDAid Foundation.



About the UNESCO Office in Kathmandu

Established in 1998, the UNESCO Office in Kathmandu works in all UNESCO's fields of competence, namely education, sciences, culture, communication and information, with the aim of contributing to building peace, alleviating poverty, and fostering sustainable development and intercultural dialogue. Under the theme *Fostering Agency and Inclusion*, UNESCO's current country strategy focuses especially on youth and indigenous communities, while at the same time seeking to support Nepal's integration within related international frameworks for the benefit of the country, the region and beyond – for viewed through the Organization's lens, Nepal is a country of much substance and meaning, and one that possesses a strong rationale for robust UNESCO engagement.

For more information

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