
**"In support of the children and elders
of the high Himalayan mountain
villages of Nepal."**



THE PARTNERS NEPAL



NOVEMBER 2025

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

From November 5 to 24, 2025, The Partners Nepal (TPN) led an official field mission to Solukhumbu District, led by Chairman Ang Rita Sherpa and Treasurer Bhala Kaji Kulung, in the presence of long-time supporters and advisors Dr. Les and Dr. Barbara Omotani of the Omotani Caring Foundation (USA).

The visit was intended to examine the success of ongoing TPN-supported programs, evaluate implementation quality, and explore potential to expand future collaboration. During the mission, the team toured important project sites, met with community stakeholders, and assessed the efficacy of interventions in reforestation, community development, education, and eldercare.

The visit confirmed the tremendous positive impact of TPN's programs and provided critical insights into changing community needs, operational issues, and strategic priorities. Dr. Les and Dr. Barbara's constructive feedback and engagement were extremely helpful in identifying local goals and enhancing TPN's future planning.

The November 2025 field mission demonstrates TPN's ongoing commitment to transparent project implementation, evidence-based decision-making, and long-term collaboration in support of the well-being of mountain communities in eastern Nepal.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE FIELD VISIT

The main purpose of the November 2025 field visit to Solukhumbu was to assess the progress and impact of TPN's key community-based programs, with a special emphasis on the One Day One Tree reforestation initiatives in Khumbu, which is located within Sagarmatha National Park and its Buffer Zone. The team visited to significant plantation sites in Pangboche, Khunde, and Khumjung, as well as the Khumjung community nursery, to assess seedling growth, site protection measures, and community involvement in long-term ecosystem restoration.

The team also visited at the Sir Edmund Hillary Memorial Museum in Bung, the ongoing One Day One Tree restoration activities in the surrounding areas, and the community pond and horticulture support programs in Chheskam—initiatives that directly help to improve local livelihoods, strengthen water security, and promote environmental resilience.

In addition, the delegation visited various monasteries and schools in Solukhumbu, meeting with local officials, teachers, monks, and community groups to better understand changing needs and potential areas for partnership. The TPN's adviser and founder of the Omotani Caring Foundation (OCF) brought substantial value by allowing donors to see the outcomes of their contributions directly and discuss future strategic directions with community stakeholders.

3. COMMUNITY-BASED CONSERVATION INITIATIVES: ONE DAY ONE TREE IN SOLUKHUMBU (KHUMBU)



The team visited some of TPN's main community-based conservation efforts, such as the One Day One Tree plantation sites and high-altitude nurseries in Pangboche and Khumjung. On November 9, 2025, the team traveled to Pangboche to inspect the One Day One Tree locations and the nursery, which was established in 2016. The survival percentage of approximately 95% at elevations over 3,800 meters indicates the efficacy of TPN's long-term regeneration strategy in fragile alpine environments.

On November 12, 2025, the team continued its inspection in Khunde and Khumjung, visiting additional planted sites as well as the Khumjung Community Nursery. The Omotani Caring Foundation's advisor and donor thoroughly reviewed nursery management techniques, species performance, and community engagement. Their findings confirmed the significant impact and long-term viability of TPN's conservation efforts in the Khumbu region. Overall, the visits demonstrated the efficacy and durability of TPN's high-altitude reforestation effort, which serves as an important example for rebuilding devastated Himalayan landscapes.





@One Day One Tree plantation sites in Khunde and Khumjung from 2022-2025

4. COMMUNITY-BASED CONSERVATION INITIATIVES IN CHHESKAM: ONE DAY ONE TREE AND THE COMMUNITY POND

The team reviewed TPN’s community-based conservation initiatives in Chheskam, Mahakulung RM-1, focusing on the One Day One Tree plantations, the community nursery established in 2020, and the restored Haribu community pond. On 20 November 2025, the delegation—guided



by Mr. Vidhay Raj Kulung and Mr. Anjan Kulung of the Shree Chamlang Youth Society—visited several high-altitude plantation sites, where nearly 95% of trees have survived above 3,800 meters, demonstrating remarkable progress and strong community stewardship.

The Haribu community pond stood out as a symbol of determination and resilience. Without machinery or road access, twenty community members carried the heavy tarp from Chheskam over two days, completing all excavation and construction manually. Today, the pond provides reliable irrigation, strengthens horticulture, supports eco-tourism, and serves as an essential climate adaptation measure for the village.

Despite the challenging terrain, Dr. Les and Dr. Barbara Omotani undertook a three-hour uphill trek to observe the thriving plantations and meet local volunteers—an experience that renewed community pride and reinforced their commitment to long-term restoration.



@One Day One Tree plantation sites in Chheskam 2023-2025





@ Dr. Les Omotani and Dr. Barbara Omotani visiting One Day One Tree plantation sites in Chheskam 2023-2025

5. VISITING THE EDMUND HILLARY MEMORIAL MUSEUM AND ELDERLY CARE CENTER IN BUNG



With the generous support of Sir Edmund Hillary Stiftung Deutschland, NepalHilfe Tirol, Engage Nepal, LED, the Omotani Caring Foundation (OCF), and individual donors such as Peter Nichols and Manfred and Brigitte Braml, The Partners Nepal (TPN) has restored the historic health post established by Sir Edmund Hillary in 1989. Once a vital medical lifeline for southern Solukhumbu, the facility was destroyed in the 2015 earthquake, leaving the community without essential services.

In response, TPN rebuilt the site—together with donors and the Hill Development Conservation Group—as the Sir Edmund Hillary Memorial Museum and Elder Care Centre, honoring its legacy while meeting urgent healthcare and social needs. Today, the center provides medical services to residents of Bung, Chheskam, Gudel, Sotang, and Pawai, and offers dignified care for vulnerable elders. Of its ten beds, seven are currently occupied by elderly individuals who now receive nutritious meals, warmth, clean bedding, and daily support.

Generous contributions from Dr. Les and Dr. Barbara Omotani have further improved the facility through new mattresses, a washer and dryer, carpets, cupboards, bedsheets, pillows, and boundary fencing. These enhancements have significantly strengthened the safety and comfort of the elderly residents, ensuring a secure and caring environment for some of the region's most vulnerable community members.





6. PROMOTING HORTICULTURE FOR LIVELIHOODS IN CHHESKAM



The Partners Nepal, in partnership with the Chamlang Society Youth Group, has implemented horticulture as an additional climate adaptation and livelihood project in Chheskam, in addition to reforestation and the community pond. About 300 orange and lemon seedlings have been planted on grounds that have been neglected for years as a result of growing out-migration.

The community is laying the groundwork for future revenue generation by turning these abandoned plots into fruitful orchards, particularly as road access steadily improves. Beyond merely planting, this horticultural endeavor is a calculated move toward long-term resilience. Younger generations will be encouraged to appreciate the economic possibilities of their ancestral lands by the burgeoning orchards, which will also mitigate the strain on nearby forests and diversify household livelihoods.

Despite the fact that time constraints prevented donors Drs. Les and Barbara Omotani from visiting the horticultural sites, the project amply illustrates how modest, well-thought-out interventions can revitalize deserted land, transforming the difficulties of migration and land abandonment into chances for sustainable development and community revitalization.



"Cultivating Hope: A Shared Vision for Himalayan Conservation and Culture"

1. VISITING THE SAGARMATHA NATIONAL PARK HEADQUARTERS IN NAMCHE



The Sagarmatha National Park Headquarters in Namche Bazaar serves as the principal administrative and informative hub for the Everest region, providing travelers with valuable information on the park's animals, geology, culture, and conservation projects. The Tenzing Norgay Sherpa Exhibition Hall, located near the headquarters, honors the first Everest summiteer's life and legacy. The exhibition includes rare photos, mountaineering artifacts, and anecdotes that emphasize Tenzing Norgay's accomplishments and pivotal position in Himalayan climbing history. The Park Headquarters and exhibition together provide an inspiring introduction to the natural magnificence and cultural diversity of Sagarmatha National Park, making it a must-see for all trekkers passing through Namche.



2. SHERPA MUSEUM, NAMCHE BAZAAR - A WINDOW INTO HIMALAYAN HERITAGE



The Sherpa Museum in Namche Bazaar is a cultural attraction that gives visitors a complete overview of the Sherpa people's history, rituals, and mountaineering legacy. It is located on a hillside above Namche and has a particular gallery dedicated to Tenzing Norgay Sherpa and other notable climbers, as well as typical family displays, handcrafted goods, and historical photos of early Himalayan expeditions.

The museum also provides clear insights into Sherpa religion, festivities, and daily life, emphasizing the community's strength and cultural diversity. Visitors may enjoy stunning panoramic views of Thamskerku, Ama Dablam, and Everest from the museum's courtyard, which serves as an inspiring backdrop that connects the museum's displays to the mountains that define Sherpa identity. Hikers and pilgrims should visit the Sherpa Museum to learn about the Sherpa people's tremendous contributions to Himalayan mountaineering and conservation.



3. A SPECIAL REUNION WITH PETER HILLARY AT KHUMBU LODGE, NAMCHE



During our most recent trip to the Khumbu, we experienced a surprise and emotional reunion at Khumbu Lodge in Namche Bazaar. Twelve years later, in the Himalayas rather than Antarctica, we had the opportunity to encounter Peter Hillary again.

In 2013, Dr. Les Omotani, Dr. Barbara Omotani, Peter Hillary, and I embarked on an unprecedented journey to Antarctica as part of the National Geographic Lindblad Expedition. The encounter became much more meaningful when Peter and we reconnected in Namche, surrounded by the mountains that are so directly tied with Hillary's legacy.

Warm memories, mutual respect, and reflections on the enduring spirit of exploration and conservation characterized our brief contact. It offered as a heartbreaking reminder of how often friends with similar hobbies cross paths, especially in places like Khumbu.

4. A VISIT TO PHURTE VILLAGE IN KHUMBU



On November 7, 2025, the team went to the Phurte Nursery in the Thame Valley, roughly a two-hour climb from Namche Bazaar. The tour's purpose was to check the nursery, which was established in 1984 by Canada's Sir Edmund Hillary Foundation and continues to play an essential part in Khumbu forestry efforts. We've reconnected with friends and family we hadn't seen in a long time. Mr. Pemba Nuru Sherpa, a long-time teacher for Sir Edmund Hillary's project, and Mr. Ang Thanke Sherpa, a nursery in-charge in Phurte, have provided valuable advice for our One Day One Tree projects.

The trail to Phurte was pleasant and picturesque, albeit one section had been damaged by a recent landslide. Thanks to the local community's efforts, a temporary upper trail had been created, allowing us to safely circumvent the devastated area.



5. TENGBOCHE MONASTERY - SPIRITUAL HEART OF KHUMBU



Tyangboche Monastery (Dawa Choling Gompa), one of the most famous Himalayan monastery, serves as the spiritual core of the Khumbu region. From its 3,867-meter perch atop a panoramic ridge, it provides breathtaking views of Everest, Ama Dablam, Lhotse, Nuptse, and Thamserku. Lama Gulu founded the monastery in 1916, and it has been rebuilt twice, once after the 1934 earthquake and again after the 1989 fire, with the help of the Sherpa community and international donations. It is still firmly anchored in the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism, with a prayer hall filled with murals, Guru Rinpoche sculptures, and rows of butter lamps creating a very calm air.

The yearly Mani Rimdu Festival in Tyangboche, where monks perform tremendous blessing ceremonies, sand-mandala rituals, and holy masked dances, is well-known all over the world. On the final day of the Manirimdu festival, which we were fortunate to witness, the senior monks were closing off their 21st days of puja at the monastery. We next saw the monks' classroom and quarters, including the Gompa Kitchen, where we were asked to tea by the senior monks.





6. SCENIC MOUNTAIN FLIGHT TO GOKYO AND EVEREST BASE CAMP



We got the opportunity to take a mountain flight on our way back to Hotel Everest View. Our mountain flight from Tengboche provided us with one of the most breathtaking flying experiences in the Khumbu region. We enjoyed breathtaking views all the way as we flew over the high slopes toward Gokyo Lake, Everest Base Camp, and finally Ama Dablam Base Camp. We made a fast 10-minute landing at Gokyo Lake, where the surrounding peaks and azure waters provided an excellent photographic opportunity.

From here, it provided us with a breathtaking view of Makalu, the world's fifth-highest mountain, and Cho Oyu, the world's sixth-highest. We also enjoyed amazing views of Mount Everest, which towered over the surrounding Himalayan giants as the helicopter approached the eastern side. This mountain flight was a standout highlight of our Khumbu trip, because to the magnificent lakes, towering snow-capped peaks, and unusual aerial views.



7. A VISIT TO THE HILLARY MEMORIAL CHORTEN, KHUNDE VILLAGE



Our visit to the Hillary Memorial Chorten in Khunde was made even more memorable by the fact that we arrived on horseback, along a peaceful trail that overlooks the entire Khumjung-Khunde Valley. On the leisurely ride, we traveled through huge meadows, pine trees, and yak pastures before seeing the white chorten against the backdrop of breathtaking Himalayan peaks.

As we approached the ridge, we had access to panoramic views of Ama Dablam, Thamserku, and Mount Everest towering in the distance. As we stood next to the memorial dedicated to Sir Edmund Hillary, we were filled with gratitude for his lifetime devotion to the Khumbu people. The serene ambiance, fluttering prayer flags, and steady, rhythmic horseback ride made the event really memorable—a one-of-a-kind opportunity to recognize Hillary's incredible legacy in the Himalayas.

8. A VISIT TO THE KHUNDE COMMUNAL BUILDING IN KHUNDE VILLAGE



Our visit to the Khunde Communal Building was one of the trip's most emotional experiences. The Khunde Mothers Group, known for their dedication to cultural preservation and community well-being, hosted a special welcome reception for TPN's respected advisor and donors, Dr. Les and Dr. Barbara Omotani.

Dr. Les and Dr. Barbara made significant financial contributions to the restoration and expansion of the kitchen building through The Partners Nepal, resulting in the establishment of this communal room. Their effort has strengthened a gathering place that is now Khunde village's cultural center.

The welcoming ceremony was cordial and tradition-based. The Mothers Group extended tremendous hospitality by offering them Sherpa chang, or traditional rice beer, after greeting them with a magnificent Sherpa welcome song. The crowd erupted in laughter, cheers, and traditional dancing as khatas (white ceremonial scarves) were draped around their necks to commemorate their friendship and contributions. More than just a warm welcome, the celebration at the Khunde Communal Building was a passionate expression of gratitude, community pride, and the Omotani family's long-standing partnership with the Khunde people.





@Glimpses of Dr. Les and Dr. Barbara at Khunde Communal Building with Khunde Mother's Group

9. A VISIT TO THE HILLARY VISITOR CENTER - PRESERVING KHUMBU'S LEGACY



Sir Edmund Hillary built the Khumjung Secondary School (also known as the Sir Edmund Hillary School) in 1961, and it is located in Khumbu Pasanglhamu Rural Municipality-4 in Solukhumbu at an elevation of 3,790 meters above sea level.

The Hillary Visitor Center at Khumjung Secondary School provides a remarkable view into Sir Edmund Hillary's life and legacy, whose partnership with the Sherpa culture altered the Khumbu region. The center, housed in Hillary's first school in 1961, displays ancient images, archives, and artifacts documenting the history of community development, healthcare, and education in Khumbu through the Himalayan Trust.

The Visitor Center provides trekkers with an excellent opportunity to learn about Sherpa culture, the growth of local education, and Hillary's close relationship with the people of the Everest region. It is located beneath the famed peak of Khumbila and surrounded by traditional green-roofed Khumjung houses. The tourist center aims to preserve and showcase Sir Edmund Hillary's legacy by achieving the following objectives: Use engaging displays to educate young people about Sir Ed's life and values. To promote Sir Ed's legacy and provide detailed information about his endeavors.





@Glimpses of Dr. Les and Dr. Barbara at Khumjung Secondary School

10.A VISIT TO KHUMJUNG GOMPA IN KHUMJUNG VILLAGE



Khumjung Gompa, located beneath the renowned summit of Khumbila in the heart of Khumjung town, is one of the most important monasteries in the Everest region. For generations, the monastery has served as a gathering place for Sherpa communities, spiritual practices, and cultural identity. It is based on the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism. Within the prayer hall, visitors may see traditional thangkas, Buddhist deity statues, and wonderfully built wooden structures, all of which reflect Khumbu's rich artistic past.



The monastery is also famed for its renowned "Yeti scalp," a relic that has enthralled climbers, scientists, and visitors from all over the world. Aside from its particular goods, Khumjung Gompa continues to play an important role in Sherpa culture. It features notable festivities such as Dumji, in which monks perform rites and sacred masked dances that bring the entire community together. Khumjung Gompa provides visitors with a thorough grasp of the Sherpa culture's rituals and values by blending spirituality, folklore, and cultural continuity.

11. OUR STAY AT THE ICONIC HOTEL EVEREST VIEW (HEV), KHUMJUNG



After three wonderful and memorable days in Tyangboche, our next stop in Khumbu was the **World's Highest Hotel**, a remarkable destination in Nepal and the Solukhumbu region. Perched at 3,880 m (≈12,730 ft) inside Sagarmatha National Park, Hotel Everest View is celebrated by the *Guinness Book of World Records (2004)* as the highest placed hotel in the world. The vision for this remarkable lodge began when Japanese explorer **Mr. Takashi Miyahara** first gazed at Everest from Syangboche ridge—an unforgettable moment that inspired him to create a world-class retreat in the heart of the Himalayas. The hotel opened its doors in 1971 and has been a pioneer of luxury in the Everest region ever since.





With **panoramic 360° mountain views** and **Mt. Everest visible from every room**, HEV offers a rare blend of comfort and Himalayan grandeur. Despite its remote location, it provides warm hospitality, comfortable rooms, and excellent cuisine—making it an ideal acclimatization stop or a peaceful mountain escape. Guests can explore nearby Sherpa villages, walk through fir and rhododendron forests, or simply relax while taking in one of the world’s most iconic landscapes. Hotel Everest View remains a testament to adventure, vision, and timeless beauty—an unforgettable place to experience the majesty of the Everest region.

12.A VISIT TO THUPTENCHOLING MONASTERY - A SANCTUARY OF TIBETAN BUDDHISM IN SOLUKHUMBU



Thuptencholing Monastery, located above Junbesi village, is one of Nepal's most major Tibetan Buddhist centers. It was founded in the late 1960s by His Holiness Kyabje Trulshik Rinpoche, the 14th Dalai Lama's tutor and renowned Nyingma master, to provide a safe sanctuary for monks and nuns who fled Tibet in 1959.

More than 500 monks and nuns now live at the monastery, which offers free lodging, food, healthcare, and education. It is well-known for providing instruction in scripture studies, ceremonial arts, meditation, calligraphy, music, and Cham dance, as well as preserving holy lineages such as Dudjom Tersar and Longchen Nyingthig. Thuptencholing houses rare relics, ancient writings, and ceremonial treasures, as well as an important retreat facility where practitioners participate in arduous three-year meditation retreats. The monastery is recognized as a powerful spiritual site, attracting pilgrims for pujas, blessings, and key festivals such as Lhabab Duchon and Losar. Thuptencholing, which is strongly linked to Lower Solukhumbu and the wider Everest region, is a living oasis of compassion, culture, and spiritual education, surrounded by the peaceful Junbesi valley, rhododendron forests, and distant Himalayan peaks.





@Glimpses of Dr. Les and Dr. Barbara at Thuktencholing Monastery

13. JUNBESI PRIMARY SCHOOL, JUNBESI - A LEGACY OF SIR EDMUND HILLARY



Our visit to Junbesi Primary School in the beautiful settlement of Junbesi served as a powerful reminder of Sir Edmund Hillary's long-lasting influence in Solukhumbu. Sir Edmund Hillary and the Himalayan Trust established the school in 1963 as one of the earliest educational institutions in lower Solukhumbu, Nepal. This marked the beginning of his lifelong commitment to improving education and opportunity in the community.

The school, situated in a tranquil valley surrounded by terraced farms and ancient monasteries, remains an important part of Junbesi and the surrounding communities' educational system. Its classrooms have produced generations of Sherpa and Rai students, many of whom have gone on to become teachers, medical professionals, tour guides, and civic leaders. Even though it is modest, Junbesi Primary School illustrates Hillary's vision of education as a tool for self-determination. The school has been in operation for over 60 years, thanks to the dedication of local educators, parental support, and a strong feeling of community pride.

The head master Mr. Chungba Sherpa provided a tour to the school provided insight into its historical significance as well as a thorough grasp of how one humble institution, founded in 1963, continues to shape the future of Junbesi's kids.





@Glimpses of Dr. Les and Dr. Barbara at Jubesi Secondary School

14.CELO MONASTERY VISIT, JUNBESI - A LIVING HERITAGE OF SHERPA BUDDHISM



Celo Monastery is one of the oldest and most revered gompas in lower Solukhumbu, rising above the scenic Sherpa hamlet of Junbesi. It is based on the Nyingma lineage of Tibetan Buddhism and reflects the early spiritual lives of Sherpa families who migrated from eastern Tibet centuries before. The monastery has sacred images, guardian deities such as Celo Chhawang, as well as an extraordinary collection of murals, thangkas, and hand-carved wooden structures that illustrate the area's rich cultural past.

Celo Gompa remains a vital hub of community activity as well as a historic site. While pilgrims and trekkers visit the Junbesi valley for its tranquil atmosphere and panoramic views, local families come for blessings, healing rites, and festivals such as Lhosar and Gutor. The short, attractive journey to the monastery amid pine woods and terraced farmland provides a tranquil introduction to Sherpa culture and spirituality. Celo Monastery, which combines history, ongoing custom, and Himalayan handicraft, provides an important window into Sherpa Buddhism and the lower Everest region's long-standing spiritual legacy.



@Glimpses of Dr. Les and Dr. Barbara at Celo Monastery in Junbesi

15.A VISIT TO CHIWANG MONASTERY IN PHAPLU, SOLUKHUMBU



Chiwang Gompa, one of the most revered monasteries in the Sherpa region, sits atop a quiet forested hill overlooking the Solu Valley. Visitors to Chiwang, the origin of the Mani Rimdu festival, have a unique opportunity to learn about the spiritual roots of Himalayan Buddhist culture. The monastery, created a century ago by the Sange Lama from Phaplu, is home to colorful thangkas, traditional wooden structures, and revered statues that reflect centuries of religious tradition. The monastery is 102 years old, as indicated by the calligraphy on display.

The ascent to Chiwang offers amazing views of the valley and neighboring hills as it passes past pine trees, village roads, and breathtaking scenery. Each autumn, the monastery transforms into a vibrant cultural stage where monks perform the well-known Mani Rimdu masked dances, chanting ceremonies, and blessing rites, bringing people from all across Khumbu and Solu. Chiwang Gompa provides a unique glimpse into Sherpa culture in the Everest foothills, whether you visit for the history, spiritual environment, or breathtaking scenery.



@Glimpses of Dr. Les and Dr. Barbara at Chiwang Monastery

16.VISIT TO PHAPLU HOSPITAL, PHAPLU, SOLU DISTRICT



After lunch at Mountain Vibes in Phaplu, we have visited the Phaplu Hospital in Phaplu. Phaplu Hospital was established in 1975 by Sir Edmund Hillary and the Himalayan Trust to bring essential healthcare services to the people of lower Solukhumbu—an area that previously had little or no access to medical care. Built during a deeply emotional period in Sir Edmund Hillary’s life, the hospital stands as a living tribute to his commitment to the Sherpa community, even as he mourned the tragic loss of his wife, Louise, and daughter, Belinda, in a plane crash the same year.

For decades, Phaplu Hospital served as a vital lifeline for thousands of families across the region. It was later handed over to the Government of Nepal under the Ministry of Health to ensure long-term sustainability and continued public service. Today, while new facilities support medical operations, the original building constructed by Sir Ed has been preserved and now serves as staff quarters—continuing to play an important role in the hospital’s mission. Phaplu Hospital remains a symbol of Hillary’s enduring legacy of compassion, resilience, and service in the Himalayas.

17. VISITING RATNAGE DANDA, PHAPLU - A SCENIC RIDGE OF SOLUKHUMBU



The Ratnage Range, located above Phaplu in Solu, is a beautiful ridge famed for its diverse wildlife, peaceful walking trails, and panoramic Himalayan views. The range, easily accessible from Phaplu and Salleri, offers breathtaking views of Karyalung, the Numbur Himal, and Solukhumbu's undulating mid-hill topography. The trail is exceptionally colorful in the spring since it passes through mixed forests of pine, rhododendron, and oak. The Ratnage Range is a popular destination for both locals and hikers seeking day walks, sunrise views, and peaceful moments of reflection. Because of its soft terrain and picturesque views, it is one of the most fun and underappreciated spots in lower Solukhumbu. The ridge is an hour's drive from Phaplu and has a well-paved motorable road.



@GLIMPSES OF DR. LES AND DR. BARBARA AT RATNAGE DANDA (RIDGE)

18. CHHESKAM, MAHAKULUNG RURAL MUNICIPALITY-1, SOLUKHUMBU



Chheskam, located in Mahakulung Rural Municipality-1, Solukhumbu, is a prospering Rai village at 1,950 meters on the lower pathways to the Makalu-Barun and Salpa-Arun Trails. Unlike many other villages, Chheskam offers a distinct combination of biodiversity, cultural diversity, and accessibility, making it an ideal location for community-based development, ecotourism, and conservation.

The Rai people make up the majority of the population, and Kirati customs, oral histories, and nature-centered rituals are deeply engrained in daily life. Visitors get a genuine cultural experience because vivid festivals, music, and dances are still widely enjoyed. While many surrounding villages are experiencing rapid cultural loss and depopulation, Chheskam has maintained its strong cultural identity and communal spirit.

Chheskam has extraordinary biodiversity since it is located in a unique ecological corridor connecting Sagarmatha and Makalu-Barun National Parks. Not all adjacent villages can boast the abundance of resources provided by their trees, which include bamboo, nettle, lumber, medicinal herbs, and daphne (used in traditional Lokta paper and fiber). In comparison to its neighbors, Chheskam is a superior alternative for tourist and conservation initiatives if its abundant natural resources are managed sustainably.



@GLIMPSES OF CHHESKAM VILLAGE

19. CHOOSING THE HISTORIC TREKKING TRAIL FROM JUNBESI TO JIRI



After visiting Bung and Chheskam, we decided to travel the traditional trekking route from Solu to Kathmandu via old Junbesi and then to Kathmandu via the historic trekking route from Jiri to Solukhumbu via Lamajura Pass. The motivations for choosing this trail were to explore it and possibly revive the historic route. We had a fantastic trip and felt now would be an excellent opportunity to revitalize the old trails.

Reviving the traditional trekking route from Jiri (Dolakha) to Solukhumbu via Lamjura Pass (3,500 m) is a powerful chance to rehabilitate one of Nepal's most culturally rich and scenic pathways while supporting the broader goals of the Great Himalayan Trail (GHT). Once known as the "classic Everest approach," this route takes you through different mid-hill landscapes, Sherpa and Rai villages, rhododendron woods, and high passes that capture the soul of rural Nepal.

Re-establishing this trail as a major tourism destination would not only honor its historical significance, but would also distribute tourism benefits more evenly across remote communities, relieve pressure on congested Khumbu routes, and promote sustainable, low-impact trekking experiences—all of which are core principles of the GHT's vision to connect people, culture, and mountain environments across Nepal. With minimal expenditure, we can revitalize this trail across GHT's bottom segment.

During this trip, we drove from Phaplu to Jiri via Lamjura pass, Bakanche, Kinja, Bhandar, Deurali, Shivalaya, Jiri, Charikot and to Kathmandu via short loop to Kalichowk Hindu and Buddhist temple.



20.A SPECIAL WELCOME TO OUR ADVISORS, DR. LES AND DR. BARBARA OMOTANI



The Partners Nepal was honored to welcome our long-time supporter and advisor, **Dr. Les Omotani**, and **Dr. Barbara Omotani**, founder of the Omotani Caring Foundation (OCF), to our office. Chairman **Ang Rita Sherpa**, along with executive members **Bheem Raj Rai**, **Bhala Kaji Kulung**, **Shova Kulung**, **Januka Kulung**, and TPN member **Ms. Mingma Yanji Sherpa**, gathered to extend a warm reception.

The meeting offered a wonderful opportunity for introductions and for sharing updates on TPN's ongoing work in conservation, cultural preservation, and community development across the Himalayan region. We expressed our deep appreciation for Dr. Les's steadfast support and guidance over the past twelve years—an inspiring journey that began in Antarctica and continues today in Nepal. Each member had offered scarf (Khatas) to Dr. Les Omotani and Dr. Barbara Omotani at the office.

As a gesture of encouragement and friendship, Dr. Les and Dr. Barbara kindly distributed OCF caps and badges to TPN team members, reaffirming their heartfelt connection with our mission. To conclude the visit, Chairman Ang Rita Sherpa presented a **Certificate of Appreciation** to Dr. Les Omotani in recognition of his unwavering commitment, dedication, and encouragement in supporting mountain communities through The Partners Nepal. We look forward to continuing this meaningful partnership for many years to come.



21. CONCLUSION

In November 2025, TPN strengthened its long-standing relationship and shared commitment to mountain conservation, cultural preservation, and community well-being with a field visit with esteemed advisers and funders Dr. Les and Dr. Barbara Omotani of the Omotani Caring Foundation (OCF). From November 5 to 24, they had the opportunity to see firsthand the breadth and depth of TPN's activities, which included social service projects, community development, cultural heritage, and reforestation.

The journey brought them from the highland villages of Pangboche, Khunde, and Khumjung, where they witnessed the expansion of One Day One Tree nurseries and plantings, to the Khunde Communal Building, which they had generously funded since its start. Dr. Les and Dr. Barbara seen how their initiatives continue to benefit communities and regional organizations. As they visited the Sir Edmund Hillary Memorial Museum and Elderly Care Center in Bung, as well as the forestry project, community pond, and new horticulture project in Chheskam, their appreciation for TPN's complete, community-led approach grew.

Aside from the detailed project assessments, this visit naturally evolved into a rich cultural and environmental journey. We visited centuries-old Buddhist monasteries, traditional Sherpa villages, women's groups, the Sherpa Museum in Namche, the Sir Edmund Hillary Visitors Center in Khumjung, and the Sagarmatha National Park Headquarters. These excursions deepened our understanding of the cultural foundations that sustain TPN's work and highlighted the remarkable resilience of the mountain communities we serve.

Throughout the journey, their curiosity, thoughtful observations, and genuine encouragement reaffirmed the significance of TPN's initiatives in Solukhumbu and Sankhuwasabha. The experience strengthened our shared commitment to preserving cultural heritage, restoring fragile alpine ecosystems, and empowering local communities for generations to come.

Our programs in both Khumbu and Solu would not have been possible without the generous support of our local partners—Pemba Gyaltzen Sherpa of Khumbu Lodge, Pemba Tshering Sherpa of the Himalayan Hotel in Tyangboche, TPN member Bhala Kaji Kulung, and Komal Lama, who safely drove the jeep throughout the journey. We are deeply grateful for their invaluable assistance and dedication.



22.ITINERARY FOR SOLUKHUMBU NOVEMBER 2025

SN	DATE	FROM	TO	REMARKS
1	5th November 2025	Kathmandu	Namche	Flight by Heli via Lukla airport
2	6th November 2025	Namche	Namche	Visited Sagarmatha National Park HQ and the Sherpa Musuem
3	7th November 2025	Namche	Namche	Visited Phurte Nursery and returned to Namche
4	8th November 2025	Namche	Tengboche	Flown to Tengboche by Heli and attended the last day of Manirimdu festival at Tengboche Monastery
5	9th November 2025	Tengboche	Tengboche	Day hike to Pangboche to explore the One Day One Tree project by riding horse
6	10th November 2025	Tengboche	Tengboche	Hiked to the hill top in Tengboche and had visited the monk school and the monastery
7	11th November 2025	Tengboche	Hotel Everest View (HEV)	Mountain Flight to Gokyo lake, Everest Base Camp, Amadablam Base Camp, Khunde and Khumjung and to HEV..visited the forest near by HEV
8	12th November 2025	Hotel Everest View	Hotel Everest View	Horse ride to Hillary view point, Khunde Communal Building, One Day One Tree in Khunde
9	13th November 2025	Hotel Everest View	Hotel Everest View	Horse ride to Khumjung School, Hillary visitor Center, Khumjung Gompa, Nursery and One Day One Tree project site
10	14th November 2025	Hotel Everest View	Junbesi	Flown to Thuptencholing Monastery in Solu, Visited Junbesi Primary School in Jubesi
11	15th November 2025	Junbesi	Junbesi	Day visit to Celo Monastery in Junbesi and Mopung
12	16th November 2025	Junbesi	Phaplu	Drove to Chiwang Monastery and to Phaplu
13	17th November 2025	Phaplu	Phaplu	Visited Ratnage Danda and to Tibetan Refugee camp in Chyalsa
14	18th November 2025	Phaplu	Bung	Drove to Bung via Sotang. Had lunch in Sotang at Shree Dhoj Rai
15	19th November 2025	Bung	Chheskam	Viisted the Elderly Care Center in Bung and drove to Chheskam after lunch in Bung

SN	DATE	FROM	TO	REMARKS
16	20th November 2025	Jiri	Chheskam	Visited One Day One Tree and the community pond site
17	21st November 2025	Chheskam	Phaplu	Drove to Mukli for lunch and stay overnight in Phaplu
18	22nd November 2025	Phaplu		Drove through Junbesi, Lamjura and had lunch in Kenja and overnight stay in Jiri
19	23rd November 2025	Jiri	Charikot	Drove to Charikot for lunch and spent the whole day resting at Charikot panorami view
20	24th November 2025	Charikot	Kathmandu	Drove to Kathmandu and had lunch in Mure
21	25th November 2025	Kathmandu	Kathmandu	Rest in Kathmandu
22	26th November 2025	Kathmandu	Kathmandu	Visited The Partners Nepal's office at Bansbari, Lunch at ARS house
23	27th November 2025	Kathmandu	Kathmandu	Rest in Kathmandu
24	28th November 2025	Kathmandu	DOHA	Flight to Doha for other destination

TEXT AND CONCEPT:

ANG RITA SHERPA (THE PARTNERS NEPAL)

PHOTOS: ANG RITA SHERPA

NOVEMBER 2025

Photo: DR. LES OMOTANI AND DR. BARBARA OMOTANI, NAMCHE BAZAR, NEPAL

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