

Report from trek leader program observation in India, October 2012



The aim of this visit in India

The aim of this visit to India was to participate as an assessor on their trek leader course (including winter conditions) and help identify/prepare suitable trainers for future courses. Because of misunderstandings in IMF and some communication failures between IMF and Rimo Expeditions a National

program and logbook (paper or online) has still not been prepared. IMF did not answer some e-mails for unknown reasons and we received the final documents only a few days before course started. This was a significant factor for why Ronald Whitehead couldn't get Visa on time and he needed to cancel a visit.

When I came to Nehru Institute of Mountaineering the personnel were not informed about our purpose and at the same time I found out that all candidates were going to arrive at NIM only on 13th evening and they will participate on course till 22nd and not 24th as was mentioned previously.

For all of the above reasons I decided that we prepare a new program whose purpose will be as a refreshment course and preparation for next year Trek Leader Course and maybe also for final accreditation.

Findings

- IMF didn't prepare a program of the course: the draft programme that IMF produced in 2010 seems to have been abandoned. My suggestion is that it is necessary to prepare a program, for every course, trek, expedition..., at list a month before or even more, that people can prepare for it. The instructors came on the course without any information or details of what they were going to do.
- At the same time it is necessary to all participants to be given an [equipment list](#). Their equipment was improper for working and at the same time they did not have all necessary equipment for the type of the course (no sleeping-bags etc.)
- NIM didn't get any additional information to prepare all management for the course outdoor (food, porters, tents...). They received notice only that we were coming and we need place for sleeping and eating. There was a disappointing lack of information between IMF and NIM.

- Participant of the course did not have personal first aid kit. I prepared for them a [list of necessary sanitation supplies and medicine](#) which they need and which they can also collect in advance.
- I suggest for any group of over 6 people that they have a doctor. It is important in the case of any accident or AMS complications or any other medical problems.
- In India is not allowed to use topographic maps with contour lines below 100 m and scale from 50 000. For that reason their knowledge from map reading and navigation is very low.
- It is not allowed to bring a satellite phone to India. You need special permission for that.
- Before the course we should get a CV of every candidate. It is important for preparing a program itinerary.
- The level of technical knowledge between the candidates is really low. They use old and sometimes dangerous techniques:
 - Most of the knots I saw for the first time (“Spanish Bowline”...).
 - They did not “close” the rope with eight knot, which could be dangerous situation in lot of manoeuvres.
 - There were a lot of situations where rope “cuted” themselves (Tyrolean traverse...)
 - We used very old ropes that are not good for any rope techniques (to thick, to hard, to heavy, to old...)
 - I've got an information that at NIM instructors teach trainees to walk on glacier without tying on the rope (According to their explanation glacier walking tight on the rope is dangerous)
 - Candidates had old equipment as figure of eight devices for rappelling, old and to short prussic cords, improper trekking shoes...
 - Lock carabineers were opened all the time.
- Their theoretical knowledge is good. They have a lot of experience in working with guests.

Realized program:

09. 10.	Going to the airport and traveling to Delhi
10. 10.	- Arriving to IMF at 2 a.m. - Meeting with Mr Harish and Mr Amit about the course - Checking the situation
11. 10.	- Preparing documentation for the course (equipment list, first aid list, trek leader standards... - Travelling to Ridshig and NIM by bus and car starting at 11 p.m.
12. 10.	- Reaching NIM at 2 p.m. - Meeting with Mr Bishal - Checking a situation
13. 10.	- Working on a program which should be delivered - Waiting for the participant who arrived at evening time (final six) - Introduction of trainees (8. – 9. p.m.) - Lecture and discussion about responsibility and take care of nature and mountains
14. 10.	(8. – 11. a.m.) - Preparing a program together - Arranging equipment - Arranging trekking agency

	<p>(11. a.m. – 1.30 p.m.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Navigation practice - Movie about navigation <p>(4. p.m. – 7. p.m.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First Aid, lecture and how to teach <p>(8.15 p.m. - 9.30 p.m.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of the day, discussion
15. 10.	<p>(8 a.m. – 11. p.m.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equipment prepare for outdoor activities - Finalizing a program for Tekhla <p>(1. p.m. – 3. p.m.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lecture, discussion about environmental care (How to teach participant about environmental care) <p>(4. p.m. – 6. p.m.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lecture about Culture and Religion, practical <p>(8. p.m. – 9. p.m.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparing for three days practical activities - Review of the day
16. 10.	<p>(8.30 a.m. – 9.30 a.m.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Going to Tekhla by bus <p>(9.40 a.m. – 11. p.m.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lecture about camp settings and setting a camp <p>(11. a.m. – 1. p.m.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lecture about equipment, care of equipment and use of equipment <p>(2. p.m. – 5. p.m.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Practical activities on knots, anchorages, pulleys, belaying systems <p>(7.30 p.m. – 8.30 p.m.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of the day
17. 10.	<p>(8. a.m. – 1. p.m.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Practical activities during walking: scrambling, fixed ropes, river crossing <p>(3. p.m. – 5. p.m.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tyrolean traverse <p>(5. p.m. – 7.30 p.m.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working in pairs: Trek organising, trek management - Schedule of camping place <p>(8. p.m. – 9. p.m.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of the day
18. 10.	<p>(8. a.m. – 1. p.m.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rappelling systems (How to descent people from difficult part of the path) with help of rappelling devices - Lowering systems - Hoisting on the rope - Provisional transport means of injured person. <p>(1.30 p.m. – 2. p.m.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Camp cleaning and packing <p>(2.15 p.m. – 5. p.m.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trek from Tekhla to NIM: working on trek organisation, trek leading <p>(8. p.m. – 9. p.m.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of the day
19.10.	<p>(8. a.m. – 10. am.)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rescue procedure in India: how, who, what is necessary... - Risk management - Insurance - Leadership, difference between Trainer and Leader <p>(2.30. p.m. – 5.30 p.m.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal presentations: How to organise a trek and trek management - How to prepare a lecture (example Weather) <p>(8. p.m. – 9. p.m.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of the day
20. 10.	Traveling to Dehradun and to Delhi (taxi and train)
21. 10	Delhi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finalizing a report - Discussion with representative of IMF
22. 10.	Travelling home

List of the candidates

Nmb.	Name	Surname	Date of birth dd.MM.yyyy	E-mail	Cell phone
1.	RANJU	CHAKRABORTY	25.12.1978	MITHUROCKS25@GMAIL.COM	9830085948
2.	SUHAIL	AHMAD	20.07.1987	SUHAILCAPTAIN@GMAIL.COM	9760108621
3.	SHRIPAD	SAPKAL	08.08.1981	SHRIPAD.SAPKAL@GMAIL.COM	919975569990
4.	PANKAJ ¹	SAH	15.07.1970	/	09456395858
5.	SUDIPTO	PAL	09.08.1985	SUDH1985@GMAIL.COM	09432705421
6.	DEBABRATA -DEBU	MUKHERJEE	20.09.1962	INDIGUIDE@MAIL.COM	+919433075501 +918961578967
7.	UJJWAL	GIRI	23.12.1981	UJJWALGIRI_81@REDIFFMAIL.COM	+919811566614
8.	THINLES	KONCHOK	15.11.1979	THINLESK@YAHOO.CO.IN	8010157780
9.	TASHI	RHUNCHOK	03.08.1989	TASHIZANGLA@GMAIL.COM	7409622284
10.	SKALZANG	RIGZIN	10.11.1981	SRIGZIN2003@REDIFFMAIL.COM	8527024377
11.	UDEN ²	SHERPA	15.05.1980	UDENSHERPA@YAHOO.COM	8800994315
12.	NEERAJ	KUMAR	8.6.1963		8755146419
13.	BHIM	LAMA	01.01.1975	PEACENEPAL2009@YAHOO.COM	8800994319

¹ He participated on Petzl Found. trek leader course 2010 in Manali.

² He went to home on 14. 10. 2012 because of trekking organisation.

Suggestions

- a. For India is necessary to prepare a National program in which they follow UIAA recommendations. I am personally willing to help, drawing from my 10 years' experience in Nepal and in preparing programs for Alpine Association of Slovenia, and we also have other experts within the UIAA Training Standards Panel who are willing and able to help and advise. If we/they decides for that step I strongly recommend that IMF set as coordinator Mr Debabrata Mukherjee who will be our contacting person and at the same time coordinator between different organisations. But this means that the first step is for IMF to commit.
- b. Before that it is necessary to organise a meeting between Petzl Foundation, IMF and Rimo Expedition representatives and to resolve properly, as they need to set up a collaborative group to take the development forward and empower assessed candidates to deliver a structured scheme.
- c. It necessary to organise a meeting with Institutes including NIM and ABVIMAS, because they still use out-dated techniques in their teaching methods during basic and advanced courses. I've got a feeling that they are preparing to change things but they need support (ideally though a few days' seminar). This is really important for the whole system because most of the futures mountaineering generations are passing through their hands for training. For that meeting I suggest that is the responsibility of IMF – again, we are ready and willing to help but need in-country support.

Without addressing the above issues I do not see any future development, which would be a great shame as they have some good candidates who are prepared to work also as a volunteers.

Prepared by: Matjaž Šerkezi

Attached:

- Equipment list
- First Aid kit
- Index
- Catalogue
- Trek leader standards
- Weather_lecture_example

