



Training Programme on Advanced Trek Guiding Skills

Livelihoods through Ecotourism' programme of Development Alternatives and National Mission on Himalayan Studies (NMHS) organised another round of training on trek guiding from 18-22 December 2020. This was a follow-up to the training programme on basic trek guiding skills for members of our community in Uttarkashi, organised in 2019. The recent training focused on providing advanced skills to lead treks in mountainous areas. Five young men from Uttarkashi, who are being registered as trek guides with the Uttarakhand Tourism Department, underwent the training with the guidance of Suman Singh from Hidden Path Himalayas, a local green enterprise. To support their entrepreneurial venture, DA is supporting them in registering a Private Limited Trekking Company called "Back On Trek". The participants have already worked as apprentices and led a few treks with clients after the first trek guiding training programme in 2019.

The training was conducted en-route a trek to Kush Kalyan, Uttarkashi, at an altitude of 3,141 m. Kush Kalyan is a five-day trek starting from village Thandi where the beneficiaries were given hands-on training sessions for an advanced level trek from seasoned guides. Trainees were sensitised about their environmental responsibility and the need for effective communication of local knowledge on culture and heritage.

Some of the key topics covered were tent-pitching, site selection, leadership and expedition behaviour, cleanliness and hygiene, leave no trace principle, risk assessment, equipment maintenance, Himalayan history and topography, physical attributes of Himalayan peaks, and basic first-aid skills.

The training also included many team-building exercises to encourage leadership and sharing of local knowledge en-route the trek. Another crucial aspect of training focused on operationalisation of the trek enterprise covering topics like preparation of the business plan, connecting the guides to the local association of trek guides, vendors, and clients. In the coming months, another round of training will be organised to take the participants to Dyara Bugyal and Sahastratal Lake.