

Sir Edmund Hillary School Seeks Seeds to Grow the Future in Nepal

At the heart is a solar-powered, geodesic growingdome in partnership with a historic school built in the clouds of Mt. Everest.

KHUMJUNG VILLAGE, SOLUKHUMBU DISTRICT, NEPAL, September 5, 2023

[/EINPresswire.com/](https://EINPresswire.com/) -- A bold and transformative mission for high-altitude agriculture in the Himalaya is underway. At its heart is a solar-powered, eco-friendly, geodesic growingdome paired with a historic school. The dome will allow for

culturally sensitive, community-directed priorities, involving sustainable-regenerative agriculture, biodiversity, enhanced nutrition, waste-management practices, and entrepreneurial development.

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I see now, 'Yes, it's possible.' And for so much more, the growingdome as a living laboratory for serving our community's health, nutrition and traditional practices.”

N.D. Rai, Principal

“Such a dome will bring us many benefits,” said N.D. Rai, current principal of the Hillary School. “Healthier, less-expensive variety of vegetables in the wintertime for my staff and hostel students will be a wonderful thing. A new curriculum will enable the school to use the growingdome to teach about our Indigenous, sustainable practices and provide career education for opportunities in agribusiness in the community.” he added.

The project is tracing an historic pathway, in rarefied air among [the Sherpa highlanders](#) and the encircling clouds of

Sagarmatha. A schoolhouse was built in those clouds in 1961 by [Sir Edmund Hillary](#), appreciative of the Sherpa people, after he and [Tenzing Norgay](#) were the first to summit Mt. Everest in 1953.

Visiting the storied Hillary School on his second trek through the Khumbu, Gary Lesley, a former pilot, business owner and entrepreneur, drew an unexpected assignment while sitting with the



The Heart of the Growingdome in Khumjung Village

principal. After a tour, Principal Rai, a former student of the school himself, opined if only he might have a special greenhouse, that he could grow produce through the snowy winter months. While also pursuing graduate studies in anthropology, Lesley's interests with the resilience of the Sherpa culture enhanced his receptivity to the challenge. One year later, as promised, Lesley returned to share a plan presenting the latest off-grid, growing dome technology and how it could make the principal's dream possible; harvesting new life, harmonious with deeply rooted traditions, and serving the good of all. School Board Director Laxman Adhikari later authorized Lesley to form a team to pursue the plan and secure necessary funding.

Pema Chhosang is a lodge owner in Khumjung, schoolboard member and Sherpa community leader. "The village is filled with excitement about such a growingdome," he said. "We will build it together with the school and see it as a great tool to mix our traditional knowledge of the land with new methods of food production. It will show us how to expand what is possible!" Chhosang is a highly respected expedition leader, including three successful Everest summits, and credentialed in construction. He will be the project lead for coordinating procurement of local materials and labor used in building the growingdome. The team places a high value on his inputs and wise counsel.

About the Sir Edmund Hillary School; Khumjung Village, Nepal

Located 12 miles from the base of Mt. Everest, the highest point on earth, the Hillary School of Khumjung Village in Nepal was built in June 1961 as a gift of appreciation by Sir Edmund Hillary and his team for the Sherpa Community he loved and respected. Today, current Principal N.D. Rai directs over 250 students, six days a week, from surrounding villages, for pre-school through 10th grades. The original, 2-room Schoolhouse in the clouds has been re-purposed into a museum and a series of buildings now makes up the ever-expanding, progressive campus. Elevation of Khumjung is 12,400' and the nearest roadway is an arduous, five-day trek on foot. For more visit: www.himalayantrust.org

About Growingdome in the Clouds Foundation, Inc. (GDITCF)

The Growingdome in the clouds Project is committed to making the vision a reality for the Sir Edmund Hillary School and communities of Khumjung and Khunde in Nepal. A grassroots crowdfunding campaign by the new foundation has been launched to finance and support the two-year, \$250,000 mission. Formed in July 2023 as a nonprofit, 501(C)(3) organization, for the purpose of fundraising and over-seeing the procurement, GDITCF has initiated its public relations campaign. For more visit: www.growingdomeinthecLOUDS.org . Foundation President Gary Lesley, who resides in Mankato and Treasurer Susan Michaletz, of Minneapolis, are both MNSU alums and remain active with their university, in addition to a variety of business pursuits. Lesley is currently completing his master's degree in Anthropology. Secretary of the organization; Lem Tingley, is the owner of Growing Spaces, based in Pagosa Springs, CO, and is the manufacturer of the growingdome. For more, visit: www.growingspaces.com

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