

# MOUNT EVEREST

## AND ITS ASCENT



### Managing the Everest region

This is a role-play activity in which students represent different interest groups of the Mount Everest region, specifically the formation of the Sagarmatha National Park which was established in 1976. Students should have an understanding of the positive and negative impacts of tourism in the area; see the background information in the factsheets *Who lives in the Everest region* and *Tourism in the Everest region*.

### Sagarmatha National Park

It was created a national heritage site in 1976 and on the world heritage list in 1979. Funds for its development came from the New Zealand Government. Management of the park has had to take into consideration the needs of the resident Sherpa population with those of conservation aims and the demands made on the area by tourism and mountaineering.

Objectives of the management plan are to:

- ensure the protection of wildlife, water and soil resources, not only because of the park's national and international significance but also to safeguard the interests of the resident Sherpa population
- enable the Sherpas to determine their own lifestyle, while protecting their cultural and religious heritage from the negative impacts of tourism and mountaineering

### The Park

- Two nature protection areas have been identified in the south of the park, to be managed as undisturbed areas free from human interference.
- A Park Advisory Committee, consisting of local leaders, village elders, head lamas and park authority representatives, was re-established in 1987 and has achieved more cooperation and support for the park
- The importance of tourism in the local economy has also encouraged Sherpas to assist in protecting the area
- Indigenous plant nurseries have been established at Namche Bazar and Trashinga
- The Himalayan Trust, established by Sir Edmund Hillary, has sponsored several school, hospital and bridge construction projects
- Goats are now banned from the park to protect the mountain vegetation
- Steps have been taken to help meet the energy needs of increasing numbers of tourists, including regulations regarding firewood collection, reforestation and increased use of kerosene.

From UNESCO website at [http://www.wcmc.org.uk/protected\\_areas/data/wh/sagarmat.html](http://www.wcmc.org.uk/protected_areas/data/wh/sagarmat.html)

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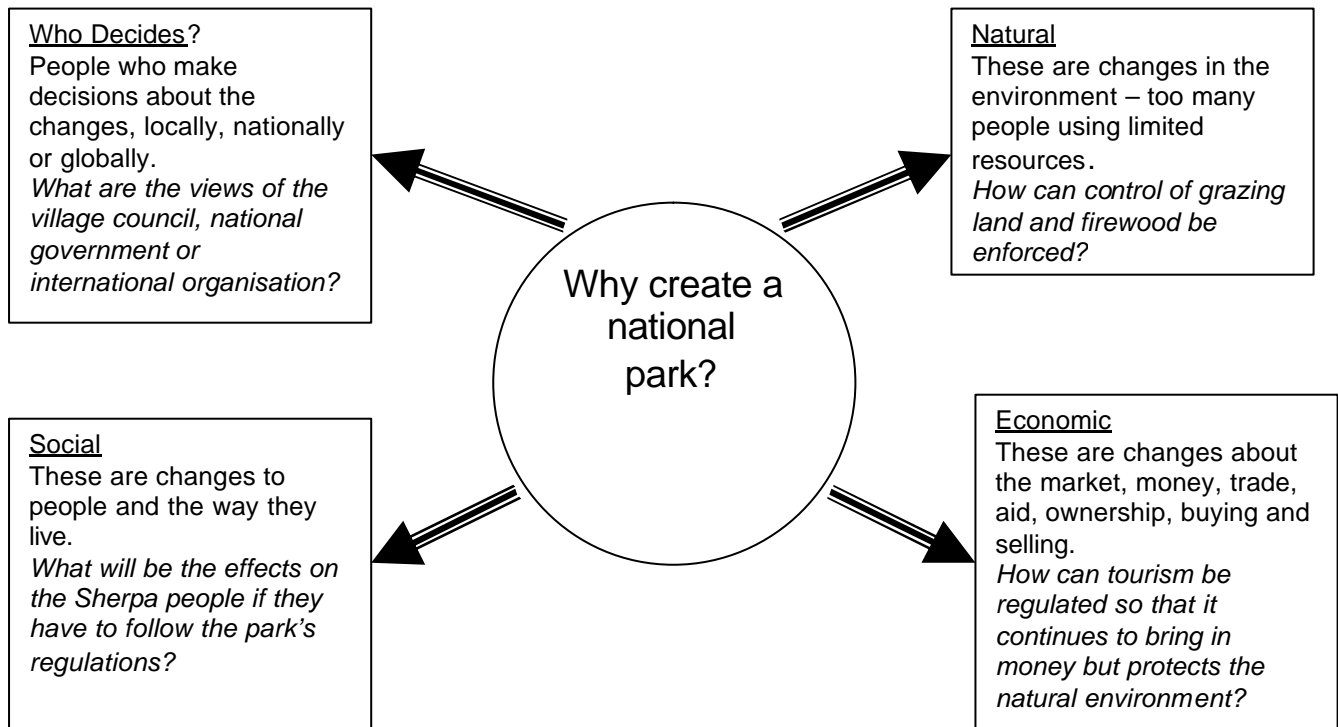


### The Situation

Representatives from different groups are meeting to decide if they are to form the Sagarmatha National Park in Nepal. There are 6 roles for and against the formation of the park. The class can be divided into groups of six, each student being given a role. Students who are given the same role can work on the following tasks together before presenting back to their groups. Finally a vote is taken on whether the park should be formed.

### Activity One

Use the following framework to help students to ask questions about the main issues and their interrelationship with environmental, social, economic and political factors.



### Activity Two

With the students, create a set of rules for group discussion – the village elder should make sure everyone has a chance to speak. Each group of students will need a role card each. They need to read the information on the card and decide whether they are for or against creating a national park, they need to list the reasons why they feel that way and can attempt to persuade others to their point of view. As a group, they need to make a decision – for or against. Discuss what problems were most difficult to settle? What were the main points of argument? Were compromises reached – how? What would happen if no-one came to an agreement? Did anyone lead the group?

(Adapted from Geolinks: Creating A Park On Top Of The World: The Sagarmatha National Park, Marianne Kenney)

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### **Village Elder (neutral – can be persuaded for or against)**

Forty years ago you saw thick forests around Synanbouche (now the site of an airstrip). It used to take days to find the yaks among the trees. You are torn. You think reforestation would be a good idea and you must think of your great-grandchildren's future. But you also see how much the economy of the village has gained from the wealthy tourists and you think a park might stop the number of tourists to the area.

### **Hotel Owner (Against)**

Since the airfield was constructed at Lukla, thousands of trekkers and tourists have come to the Everest area and increased the demand for hotels, restaurants and fuel. You were able to put up your hotel with the area's timber and continue to need fuel for the trekkers. You think the park will restrict both firewood and yak grazing. You understand about protecting the environment, but think that, without firewood and tourists, you will have no business.

### **Sherpa Sirdar (For)**

You would be in charge of forestry and other outdoor activities. Your main concern would be the visitors centre, the forestation project and raising awareness. How are you going to persuade the Sherpa people to think that the park will benefit everyone? How do you stop your friends and neighbours burning their fuel outdoors? How do you raise awareness amongst women who are the main collectors of fuel? What do you say to people who can't feed their yaks or goats?

### **Minster of Tourism and Environment (For)**

Your department would oversee the five year development, construct buildings, and devise a management plan for the park. You think your biggest problem will be stopping the cutting of firewood. The economy of the area is tied to cutting and hauling the wood. You also have to think about the needs of the tourists and the wealth they bring to the area.

### **Representative from UNESCO (For)**

You are willing to provide \$50,000 to upkeep and restore the Buddhist temples in the area. This will involve the Sherpas in the project if a park is created. Religion is an important part of the people's lives here and this idea will help to persuade people to vote for the park. Sherpas will have their say in the development of the park, its construction and reforestation.

### **Tea shop owner (Against)**

Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world and the trekkers and tourists have brought a good income. You are already in debt to moneylenders to pay for your daughter's wedding. You need your business to be successful and rely on tourism. You don't want your grandchildren leaving the country to find work overseas.

For testimonies by Nepali people, see [www.mountainvoices.org/nepal.asp](http://www.mountainvoices.org/nepal.asp)