Founding story

Diyalo Foundation was founded in 2014 in the United States. Our mission was to empower young Nepalese people through education. In 2017, Diyalo Foundation Netherlands was founded and started the concept of sending volunteers to Nepal to work on educational projects using their unique skill sets. These projects together with the construction of the school allowed Diyalo to grow and gain experience in development work with local communities. In early 2020 the global COVID-19 crisis meant our volunteers could no longer travel to Nepal. Diyalo realized that Nepal was ill-equipped to deal with this health crisis. The goal of Diyalo, helping to improve the well-being of the future of Nepal accompanied with our obtained experience in development work and network in Nepal. We needed to figure out a way to help Nepalese youth without sending volunteers abroad.

Diyalo Foundation Netherlands sat down to brainstorm on a new approach to help the local community. The starting point was figuring out the local need. We reached out to one of our Nepalese contacts and through various personal connections we got in touch with the National Innovation Center (NIC). NIC told us they did not want money but expertise to develop COVID response technology. To fulfill this need, Diyalo contacted TU Delft, UC Berkley, and Stanford University. These knowledge institutions partnered with NIC and helped them complete the production of ventilators, UV disinfection chamber boxes and a machine to produce the fabric for N95 masks. These products were developed using locally sourced materials and at a fraction of the cost compared to existing products with the same functionality.

This new approach to the projects taught us some important lessons. We realized that there is a high demand for knowledge among Nepalese youth. It was also during this time that we formed our team in Nepal because we learned how valuable it was to have people aboard who know the Nepalese culture. Moreover, our new projects attracted a lot of positive energy from the local community and the knowledge institutions we partnered with. Before, we were energetic and involved but this energy did not always transfer to the local community.

Based on these insights, we created our existing model. With this improved model Diyalo wanted to move away from the traditional approach of western NGOs. Diyalo believes that knowledge creates more value and lasting impact than money. Diyalo always makes sure that the projects we work on serve the local needs and we guide them from start to finish. Take a closer look at our model here [link].

 Co- Founders

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