It seems that every day there is another catastrophic event somewhere in the world. From the horrific shooting in Las Vegas, to the devastating earthquake in Mexico, to the slew of hurricanes pummeling Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico, and the Caribbean Islands. With poor leadership, the negative impact of these occurrences is amplified. In times of uncertainty, it is important that we stick together; we have strong roots. We here at the Diyalo Foundation stand with you in making the world a better place.

Education is one solution. Only through learning can global society continue to grow beyond borders and transform to cherish the values of humanity, equality, and justice for all.

This summer has been eventful for Diyalo as we learn from our partner community in Sewalung. In August, Co-Founder Surya Karki, Education Director Aditi Adhikari, and our two rockstar interns from Wellesley College, Tanisha Rayamajhi and Katie Hoeffinger, visited Sewalung. There, they built classroom bookshelves and filled them with books, conducted evaluations, teacher trainings, and worked with parents to ensure quality education continues at home.
Community Voice
Tanisha Rayamajhi, Field Intern

On my recent trip to the Sewalung Diyalo School, I had the opportunity to speak with a number of community members. I asked each member I interviewed four questions: How did you find today’s Parent Education session? What are your thoughts on Sewalung School so far? How does your relative find school? What would you like to see in the future of the school?

I’ve included three of the interviews here alongside photos of each respective interviewee. For the full write up, see the latest blog post on our website.

The responses were very positive and they shed light on how our work is affecting the lives of our partner community in Sewalung.

How did you find today’s Parent Education session?

Limbu: I really enjoyed it. I like what was said about positive encouragement and giving praise to your children, even on small accomplishments, instead of just pointing out their wrongdoings.

What are your thoughts on Sewalung School so far?

Limbu: I am really happy with the education this school is providing my son and the community. I’ve heard that students from Sewalung Primary School tend to do better and perform at a higher level when they join the secondary boarding (private) school in the village than students who’ve
started in that private school itself. That makes me really happy. I also really appreciate the teachers here.

**How does your son find school?**

Limbu: He loves it. He is so eager to come everyday and gets angry if anyone suggests he stay home to help with fieldwork during harvest season. He really loves his teachers, especially Bedmaya Miss and Kedar Sir.

**What would you like to see in the future of the school?**

Limbu: Higher-level classes, so our children don't need to move elsewhere after Grade 5. That would be really nice. And a steady source of drinking water, maybe even a provision for school lunch or snacks one day.

_____ 

**How did you find today’s Parent Education session?**

Rai: I liked that this effort brought together parents and taught us ways we can encourage our children’s education and development. It made me feel involved with the school, and through it, with my child. I think it was very important, especially because most mothers of students here, like myself, never went to school so we don't know what kind of support a school-going child needs. It was funny to hear what different parents do and how they deal with their children too.

**Thoughts about Sewalung School?**

Rai: I am grateful for all the extra effort put in by the foundation in things such as this parent education session, the teacher trainings, the new classroom libraries, it is all adding so much. When I was young, I was not allowed to go to school. One day, when my parents were out in the field, I snuck into school and sat in a class. When I went home, my dad hit me badly. Seeing all that
is going into the education of my two daughters makes me so happy and so grateful.

**How do your daughters find their school?**

Rai: They love English! They want English books, more teaching and conversation in English! They will be so delighted to see these libraries on Sunday.

**What would you like to see in the future of Sewalung School?**

Rai: Drinking water and leveled grounds, so we don't have to be scared our younger children will fall down this slope. And, flowers. Studying would be even nicer in a pretty place. Lots of flowers.

---

**What did you think about today’s Parent Education session?**

Limbu: I like that the foundation cares enough beyond just children and their schooling. Educating the community on supporting children and training our teachers over the last week has made the involvement feel very wholesome.

**Thoughts about Sewalung School?**

Limbu: It's incredible, the effect this has had on children here. Kids who didn't want to go to school now want to. They see it as a fun thing to do, a fun place to be. Children from nearby come to see the school. This makes my heart happy. Early Childhood Education especially, was a shining gift to the village.

**What would you like to see in the future of the school?**

Limbu: Plants and a garden, so our kids have food to eat and flowers to see. I would also like for the school to strengthen in resources and for it to stand as proof that we don't need private boarding schools with fees in order for our children to receive a
good education. We can provide that right here in a free community school.

**What do you think could be done better from Diyalo’s part?**

Limbu: Involving the parent community more, even on small things, would be good. With the tree plantation, for example, asking the community beforehand where we would like the trees would’ve felt even nicer than seeing tree saplings here as a surprise. And perhaps interested people would be able to plan to meet and talk with members of Diyalo Foundation. It would also help by giving a feeling of engagement, even if it’s not through critical decisions.

---

**Teacher Training**

*Aditi Adhikari, Director of Education*

This past month, our visit to the school coincided with summer monsoon recess. With teachers out of class and students at home, the staff and I had ample time to not only focus on the two training sessions I held, but also to review the material covered. The teachers also had time to work individually on their lesson plans and their approaches to teaching various subjects at each grade level. As a result, the lesson plans they developed were directly in line with their recent training.

The two trainings were in Social Studies and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math); these trainings focused on general approaches for experiential learning, rather than topic-specific or grade-specific pedagogy. After both trainings, teachers had three-hour sessions to develop their own lesson plans. After the planning period, they shared those lesson plans with the rest of their teaching team. I gave the teachers a format that they could use to observe each other teaching and we made some rules for how we would give and take feedback. Teachers gave feedback to the others on the strengths and weaknesses of their lesson plans. This teacher-learning workshop provided a safe and constructive space to improve lesson plans, share teaching techniques, and improve overall pedagogy. There was clear progress made, and the teachers enjoyed being challenged and learning new teaching methods.
At the end of the four-day training program, I gave the teachers a challenge: I asked them to teach one of their subjects by using real world activities and reflection as much as possible, as opposed to route memorization – this technique is used to promote experiential learning. In practice, this meant that teachers would use the textbook in one course as little as possible. For example, Man Bahadur Sir would teach third grade math without using the textbook. Instead, he would teach students multiplication by having them count the sides of triangles, the legs of chairs, and the legs of spiders. This exercise will help teachers explore new, more progressive ways of teaching and learning, under my guidance. The Government textbooks, as well as textbooks published by private publications, are pedantic and leave little room for teachers to be creative and innovative. When teachers use the National Curriculum instead, they can design content for their classes to cater to individual needs of their students and also meet the standards that the curriculum has outlined. The teachers had just learned a lot of new things about designing content, and we felt like one subject per teacher was a good place to start.

In August, we also started teaching mixed-grade classes for Art, PE, and Language Arts. Mixed-grade classes allow younger students to learn from older children. They also give the teachers a few additional free periods. Teachers can use these free periods for planning, grading their students’ written work, and collaborating with other teachers. The teachers were excited about the new schedule because it creates more time for them to plan their classes and lesson plans.

Giving teachers the tools they need to plan lessons, work collaboratively, and give and take feedback was a big step in improving the quality of teaching and learning at the school. Providing them the time to think about individual students’ learning processes and allowing autonomy to decide how to teach is an important step in creating a school environment where students are growing every day, and where teachers are also flourishing.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Aditi Adhikari, Director of Education
The first time I went to the Sewalung Diyalo School last November, I was shocked to find that our students didn’t bring food to school. Like most public and private schools, our school did not have the resources to provide a mid-day meal to our students. When the lunch bell rang, the kids jumped up from their seats and ran directly to the playground to start playing games.

It was clear that the children were not used to eating during the school day. This is a big problem because hungry children simply cannot learn and reach their potential. When I talked to the teachers about this, they told me a few new kids brought a tiffin box at the beginning of the year, but these students became embarrassed after a while because they were the only ones who brought food to school. Eventually, they stopped too.

During my studies and work in education and development, I learned about the effectiveness of parent education programs around the world. I heard first-hand accounts of how these programs helped address behavioral issues, increase community participation in schools, and improve communication channels between teachers and parents. So, we decided to design a parent education program for our school and the community it serves. During my trip, I met with the teachers to organize a parent education program. In my first session with the teachers, we talked about the importance of parents’ involvement in their students’ education and how to increase that involvement. We put forth a plan to hold a series of four parent education meetings, walked through the subjects of those sessions and assigned a teacher to each.

Parents, members of the School Management Committee, and the teachers attended the first parent-education session. During this meeting, we talked about the importance of sending kids to school with lunch. One of the mothers told us she was worried that her
son would not wash his hands before eating his lunch. Once they had a chance to talk about the importance of bringing to school, one of the mothers said, “I will make sure to pack some food for my daughter every day and take some time out of my day to spend with her. I think these are both things that we will all do as parents from now on.”

We talked about the importance of positive reinforcement and how to make students feel like they were being heard. One father talked about how his daughter was bullied on her way home from school. The teachers discussed these issues. They also explained that their jobs went beyond classroom teaching. They talked about how they monitored the kids when they were playing and carried drinking water to school when the water supply was broken.

Although not all parents attended the meeting, the participation from the community was very encouraging. The parent education session not only gave the parents and teachers a chance to talk about these important issues, it also gave parents a chance to talk to each other. These sessions helped parents become more comfortable discussing their children's growth with the teachers.

Given the success of these first sessions, everyone has agreed to continue to hold parent-teacher conferences every few months to discuss their children’s overall development.

Get Involved

Giving Tuesday Donation Match
November 28th

On November 28th, Global Giving is offering their annual Giving Tuesday donation match. Your donation to the Diyalo Foundation on Giving Tuesday will be multiplied! Bookmark our page here.

Diyalo Foundation Wants You

Interested in getting involved? We can always use extra hands on deck. Feel free to reach out to info@diyalofoundation.org. We are currently seeking active board members and volunteer positions.