



Promoting Peace Through Human Development in Exiled Tibet

As the U.S.-led war on terrorism gains momentum, three BYU students quietly work on the flank to counter terrorism in a very unique way. For the past two years Jason Monson, David Farmer, and I, Blaine Johnson, have been developing what is referred to as “substantive responses” to conditions that give rise to terrorism. Late last year, we established the Paramita Group, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting peace and human development in potentially-violent communities.

All three of Paramita Group’s founders have participated in an International Study Program (ISP) Field Study during their time at BYU. In fact, that is how we met. Between the three of us, we have been to Asia six times in just four years. Co-founder David Farmer noted, “ISP has provided us with experiences that are unavailable to

students at most universities. Without having seen the reality of life outside America, it would have been very easy for us to not concern ourselves too deeply with the suffering of others. Now we feel it our responsibility to do something.”

The Foundation is Set

In 1998, I spent four months with two other BYU students at the Grameen Bank in Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh. While there, I researched how Islamic values and Bangladeshi culture interact with the increasingly-pervasive Western economic system. In particular, I researched how trust, kinship, and morals positively influence the microfinance process.

Shortly thereafter, I joined up with the India Field Study program. During my first week in India, I traveled to Dharamsala, home of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

No Events