

Build trust

Amanda Daflos leads trekkers through Nepal

Exploring the wilderness and the culture

Sacramento's Amanda Daflos (Deloitte Consulting) recently returned from Nepal where she led trekkers on an awe-inspiring trip of natural and cultural beauty. (Read a pre-trek story posted on DeloitteNet in May 2007 [here](#))

After studying there in 1999, Nepal became one of Amanda's favorite places. To help it get much-needed tourist revenue, she co-founded [Nepal Trek and Trail Run](#) to share the wonders of the country with others. Through this hike and run, she and co-founder John Oliva, both fluent in Nepalese, bring trekkers into the country and give them an athletic and cultural trip of a lifetime: a three-day tour of Katmandu; a seven-day trek through the Annapurna Mountains with 33 Nepali porters, kitchen staff, and assistants; a 13-mile trail run for the runners; several cultural activities, and a visit to the [Himalayan Cataract Project](#), where a portion of the trip's proceeds go.



Amanda and co-founder John Oliva. Macchupuchre in the background.

"There are many mountain climbing trips in Nepal, but most don't include cultural activities like drinking tea in an off-the-beaten-path tea shop," said Amanda. "People miss the chance to appreciate the depth of the culture. We do both."

New experiences for Westerners and Nepalese. Before the trekkers got there, Amanda and John met with their Nepalese team to set things up. Speaking Nepalese with Westerners was new and exciting for them, and having one of those Westerners be female *and* a leader left some wondering how to act. In some cases, it was the first time they had ever taken direction from a woman. "They were really wonderful," said Amanda. "Although perhaps nervous about my role, they seemed to appreciate the chance to work with me. We emphasize teamwork and engage them in leadership activities in the evenings to break down barriers and strengthen our team's performance. John and I eat traditional Nepali dinner with the staff every night just for that reason, which is rather unusual."

When the trekkers arrived, some were a bit anxious, but it didn't take long for them to adapt to the Nepalese attitude of *Ke Garne*, which translates to "What to do?" and means, "Don't worry, it's all okay." The calming started at one of their first lessons in Nepalese culture when they enjoyed a traditional meal and ate with traditional utensils - hands. As the Westerners tried to pick up rice with their fingers, they experienced the hospitality of the Nepalese and realized that their hosts, who had never had Western visitors before, were learning from them as well.



Skirts made to order

On the agenda for the women was a trip to buy Lungis, traditional Nepalese skirts. In a town that had seen very few Westerners, the trekkers picked from bolts of brightly colored material and watched as local women sewed it into skirts. While hesitant at first, the Nepalese women relaxed after Amanda explained the tour in their native language. The new experience to them was exciting and profitable, as they collected about \$20 from each woman. And each trekker walked away with seven or eight custom-made skirts.

"I am so inspired every time I think of the Nepalese people who have so little, yet give so much. On this trip, I saw a shooting star and realized that I never really knew what 'lucky' was until I got to know Nepal, a place where small things mean so much."

A significant, long-term impact on Nepal. After learning about the Himalayan Cataract Project from Amanda and John, a trekker who works for a U.S. eye care company is discussing making a sizable donation to the organization. Clearly, Nepal Trek and Trail Run is doing what Amanda set out to do: bring tourism dollars into the country; show people the beauty of the Himalayas; introduce people to the culture, rich in ways other than money; and raise money for the Himalayan Cataract Project.

Here are some photos from the incredible trip.



Have a few moments? [View more photos here](#). Want more information? [Amanda](#) would be thrilled to talk with you.