



**UNHCR**

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

UNHCR Regional Representation for the Benelux and the  
European Institutions

Rue Van Eyckstraat 11b  
B - 1050 Bruxelles/Brussel

Tel.: 02/627.17.40  
Fax: 02/627.17.31  
Email: belbr@unhcr.org

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## TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Subject: Recommendation for the Vajra Foundation

UNHCR extends its congratulations to the Vajra Foundation, on the occasion of its tenth Anniversary.

UNHCR has had the pleasure of cooperating with the Vajra Foundation in Nepal for nearly a decade. It was almost ten years ago that the Foundation first proposed to introduce solar cookers into refugee camps in eastern Nepal. These camps house some 108,000 refugees from the neighbouring Bhutan. Today, with help from its funding partner the Dutch Refugee Foundation (Stichting Vluchteling), Vajra Foundation's action has given 90,000 of the Bhutanese refugees access to solar cookers for preparation of their daily meals. This is the largest concentration of parabolic cookers in the world.

The solar cookers are a sustainable and environmentally friendly cooking method. The Foundation's initiative has helped to protect the environment and improve refugees' relations with local population, as the refugees are no longer compelled for cut firewood in the areas surrounding the camps. The solar cookers are manufactured in Nepal and therefore also provide employment for the local population.

This project is an excellent example of the results which can be achieved through cooperation between large international organizations like the UNHCR and smaller, innovative agencies like the Vajra Foundation.

UNHCR especially appreciates the Foundation's community-based approach, which encourages the refugees and local communities to be receptive to innovation and has a positive impact on several sectors such as health care and education as well as environmental protection. UNHCR believes this is a very effective way to offer refugees and the local population in Nepal sustainable solutions to improve their health and their social and economic situation.

UNHCR is grateful to the Vajra Foundation for this achievement. We look forward to continuing our collaboration in support of deprived communities.



Judith Kumin  
UNHCR Regional Representative in Brussels