SEED Together Renewing Endangered Ecosystems through human ecology

SeedTree Projects in Progress

Issue 16 Annual Report 2011

Economics and Ecology, often seen in conflict, intersect in the 'eco' or *home* in the most life-enhancing ways. As we strive to make ourselves at home with, rather than heedless of the natural world we share with its other life forms, we also augment human values. In the long term these include financial values as well.

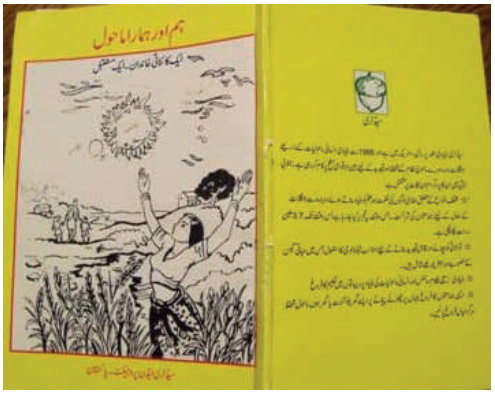
A good example came from Madi, an area long isolated from the rest of Nepal by the Chitwan National Park and the ridge forming Nepal's southern border with India.

In 1996, the Suryamukhi (sunflower) group of Madi, stands with their new SeedTree nursery.

Even by Sept. of '96 our 5 Madi groups had collectively earned $463.44 from sale of the nursery's excess seedlings.

This March as we met again, I asked what had been gained in the 15 years since. Socially, the transformations were remarkable. During my first '96 visit, the women would not face me or give their names until told by the village teacher it was all right to do so. In March, I when asked those 3 1996 participants to tell what had come from their efforts, they responded happily. When pressed for quantifiable results, Kusma Pave, the President, (*in black shawl foreground* below) in whose thatch and mud daub home I had stayed in '96, told she had just sold her matured rosewood, *dalbergia sissoo*, **earning $2225** for her family. The other trees continue to supply abundant fuel and fodder. Mulberry trees feed fruit to humans and wildlife. Bear have marched in a line "like soldiers" to feed on the ripe berries, and leaf feeds the silk worms whose cocoon has become a major (*continued. p.3, col.1)*

Pakistan: Applied Eco-Education is essential to protect and renew our forests and ecosystems. Sharing this view, EDEN (Ecological Development Educational Network) founder Aqif Shahzad sought SeedTree's help with their faith-(in nature)-based environmental education in Pakistan. EDEN works primarily with the threatened Christian minority but also with the Muslim community, urging for greater participation by and respect for women. Three EDEN women inform us that often the women they serve are ignorant of even their own bodies' functioning. They are adding this teaching to show how the natural systems of earth, air, water, energy, agriculture, forest, etc., are interactive with — ***actually compose*** *our bodies.*—to show how our the health of these natural systems and our own health are so intimately inter-related. We published



"Hum aur Hamara Mahawl," Aqif's Urdu version of *"Ourselves and Our Environment"* for STEP (SeedTree EDEN, Pakistan),

(continued p2, col.1)

Printed on 100% recycled paper

and trained five teachers, holding classes in different parts of eastern Pakistan.

8 young women from our classes join Aqif in an additional 2-day Ecology workshop in Punjab. 22 pledge to practice.

Among the classes' initial projects have been tree-planting and plastics recycling, including the making, advocacy and use of cloth shopping bags. Ten EDEN leaders led the planting of 5000 trees to attract birds and provide much needed shade. Heat reaching 127 ˚F in some areas of Pakistan, as well as extreme flooding affected STEP. EDEN is shaken by the recent loss one dedicated member's life to dengue, a mosquito borne disease on the increase. We hope our initial grassroots "seeding" may grow here, where it is so needed.

In Nepal, our classes are firming the foundations for long term change. In March (right) I introduced our participatory approach to a new partner, Ram Gautam of Nepal Agro-forestry Seed Cooperative opening a with a new nursery group in Sindhupalchowk, mid-hills north east of Kathmandu. While assessing their interest to participate in our Nursery and Tree-Planting program, they also expressed keen interest for these classes. Our generous donors, (p. 4), joined this year by Alternative Gifts International allowed us to start 25 classes in Nepal, bringing the total classes now running to 30.

3-day Training prepared 26 new Eco-Ed Class Facilitators including 2 schools and 2 clubs, to lead courses in their Nepal communities.

The old open hearth wastes fuel and is a health hazard, especially to women and their young children.

Our improved stoves conserve up to 50% fuel wood while creating a more clean, smoke-free and healthy home.

Home biogas systems multiply benefits: clean fuel, sanitation, organic fertilizer (instead of burning dung cake, left) while keeping methane, 20+ x more heat-retaining than CO2, out of our atmosphere.

Since improving the use of fuel in the rural homes is a a mission-related activity with such marked benefits for both folk and forest, we promote construction through both small grants and as a practical application for our Eco-Ed classes. Through grants, we funded 80 improved stoves and 30 biogas plants this year. We also include these technologies as suggested applications in our classes, several of which constructed more (included in the table on page 4,) or restored to service those that had fallen into disuse for want of more education, advocacy, or needed repairs. Nearly all participants engaged in Community Forest, village public areas maintenance and, as in Pakistan, in recycling.

Dang Facilitator leads an Eco-Ed class, reading, discussing, and planning practical activities.

(continued from p.1, col. 1) source of income for many of our Madi communities.

Mulberry nursery at left, Morus alba, one of few grown from cuttings rather than seed.

"A single malagiri tree ... [Cinnamomum glaucescens Nees, like this Dang sapling} "... has yielded profit of 15,000 NRs. in gross." ($190+ US)

Seeding Structural Change: We see a wider, shared success as partnering institutions develop to sustain the cycle of forest utilization *and* protection. Our consultation, subsequent to our initial work in communities around the Chitwan National Park, at the forming of the Government's Buffer Zone (around Nepal's protected areas) Management Committee, seems to have born fruit. This year Madi's Buffer Zone committee realizing that too many were harvesting their now matured timber trees, had decided to replant. We helped with this nursery to offer seedlings to all Madi. Still groups like Suryamukhi supplemented with their own. As another of our group leaders said in 1996 *"If Seed-Tree is able to assist like this in the future, we will be glad. If not, at least we now have the idea how us to do this for ourselves."*

In 2011, a total of 20 tree nurseries were established with Nepalese farmers', community forest users', and women's groups of Kavre, Sindhupalchowk, Dhading, Chitwan, Nawalparasi and Dang districts. Our tree-planting partner of long-standing, Working Assets / Credo Mobile—while making our voices heard in so many ways —supported our 2011 season with a $4411 grant. Altogether we planted 295,125 saplings of 37 tree species, surpassing 4 million trees planted to date. (see table p.4)

STN's Baburam VK & soap nut seedlings

Peru: To assure sustainable local management of our 1235 acre Eco-Reserve, **Nahua Fundo**, in the Amazonian headwaters of southeastern Peru, we registered a local not-for-profit organization, **Ni Bero, (seed or eye of the rain-forest)** to own and manage. Our handover decision was well timed with the election of a nationalist President. Ni Bero members include the adjacent logging concession manager who demonstrates reforestation after harvest, Seed-Tree representation through Adam and Bella Stone, and neighboring Nahua tribal leaders. The Nahua, only recently contacted by civilization and just upstream, have bravely declined oil development on their lands. Our reserve will support their resolve by helping them organize to meet challenges posed by aggressive illegal logging, oil interests and the need to develop sustainable alternative livelihoods that preserve their jungle home.

Nahua Fundo, habitat for endangered spider monkey and toucan, will save threatened tree species' seed to plant. Ni Bero will coordinate with Jungle Earth Living School to train in organic agriculture and assist in getting such sustainable forest products as cacao, shade grown coffee, and native medicinal plants to market, using the school's access downstream to the Ucayali hub of Pucallpa.

The Scholarship program progresses, with two Dhading girls being helped by a donor associated with our program there. Two of six Barbara Bradford scholarship girls have graduated and the remaining four are on track to do so in April of 2012,

The Kate Kinley Gregg Scholarship recipient Beeju Paudyal, is starting her final year toward

Suraj Upadhaya, Nepal Program Coordinator

her BSc. in Forestry at the Institute of Forestry and has helped us with important translations from English into Nepalese. This Work-Study scholarship has helped us develop our capacity in Nepal. Sangita Pant, Masters Environmental Science student at Tribhuvan University, will study the impacts of improved stove usage and lead a renewable energy awareness campaign in Bhaktapur District. Suraj Upadhaya, who has been coordinating the scholarship, has just completed his BSc at Kathmandu Forestry College – graduating first in his class. Suraj conducted his field research in the highland's of his Dolpa home, studying the interface between the snow leopard's prey: livestock and wild blue sheep. There also he had helped us coordinate the wild olive promotion and planting project. In December we welcomed Suraj as **SeedTree's Nepal Program Coordinator**.

SeedTree NAFSCOL Agro-forestry training mid-hills .

We will share with the Nepal Agro-forestry Seed Cooperative NAFSCOL. office space in Kathmandu. There internet connections allow more immediate communications with the Home Office in Maine, and with the branches in Nepal, reducing the need for such regular international travel.

Dang's restored, prized medicinal vijaysal trees, now yield viable seed!

Since 2011, formal partners, NAFSCOL and SeedTree are historic allies. Both have engaged in educating and practicing seed collection and distribution of native tree species, and our partnership facilitates national native seed distribution, as well as extending our tree planting program. Our collaboration has also introduced a healthy degree of competition with Seed Tree Nepal. Both are learning to better serve their respective districts, while striving to excel.

Our thanks to all the thousands of volunteers in Nepal who joined these "Doing Partners," as to the many US supporters joining our "Donor Partners:"

Alternative Gifts, International
Anderson-Rogers Foundation
Debley, Inc., honoring the memory of David Demere
Kate Kinley Gregg
Working Assets / Credo Mobile to do the following:

SeedTree 2011 Program Outcomes Summary:		
	1995-2011	**2011**
trees planted	4,066,415	295,125
wells / pumps	96	1
5 mo. Eco-Ed Classes	127	**20 completed**
improved stoves constructed/(restored)	970	104/(121)
outhouse latrines constructed/(restored)	497	103/(63)
biogas -stove -latrines constructed/(restored)	224	54/(34)
vegetable gardening/ organic agriculture	621	291
scholarships	82	4
Also Trust & Class participants did:		
horticulture		188
recycling, sanitation & improved waste disposal, forest maintenance		453
made bio-briquettes or other renewable energy alternative		35
fishery pond		6
bee-keeping		43
horticulture		188

The year ended with a presentation at an ESTIA-hosted conference at the University of Maine, exploring opportunities for applying our sustainable values and perspectives closer to home in Maine.