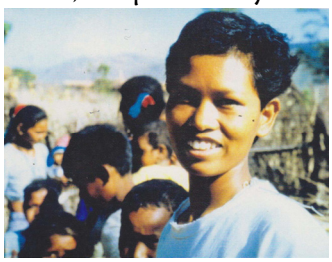
SeedTree Projects in Progress

Issue 18

SeedTree Annual Report 2013

Generations …

This year, Dang Program Manager of 18 years, Ved B. KC took sabbatical leave saying: "I fill myself full satisfaction and pride with this organization, flowing its aid to the grass roots, needy. That's why there is great name, deep memory and love of SeedTree in Dang."



Sayni Chauhary (left) with Ved Bahadur KC and Sayni's late mother (right), village leader in '96 Dang nursery.

Ved has offered technical aid as we form a new partnership for Dang with an old ally, Sayni Chaudhary. Sayni's translations with a Tharu village in Chitwan helped SeedTree get started in 1995 while she was on her way for leadership training in Japan. In 1996 we provided a nursery & tree planting program to her village, Fulbari Gidhaniya.

This June she reported that little 1996 nursery had produced 1500 trees. The original 19 women, including Sayni, had planted the trees on their private lands. Of the 6 reporting in 2013 most had either built or greatly improved their homes, such replacing thatch with a metal roof, from partial sale of some of the matured trees. All had kept many around their home, for shade, beauty and a constant supply of fodder and fuel.

Sayni has subsequently founded Sister Home a local NGO which will serve 5 villages with SeedTree programs in 2014. Already they have begun 5 Eco-Ed classes after completing our Facilitator Prep Course in Chitwan. In all 21 groups in 5 districts attend Eco-Ed Classes.

For 2013 we published a revised edition of our manual "Ourselves and Our Environment" with chapter review discussions kindly suggested by Nabin Baral, Ph.D., a separate facilitator guide, and further clarification of Climate Change and the influence of human actions and choices.

Thanks for the finishing work on this edition also go to our Kate Kinley Gregg Work-Study Scholar Beeju Poudyal, who having completed her B.Sc. with honors, has joined M.Sc. Forestry at the Institute of Forestry Pokhara, Nepal. Beeju has taken on In-Country coordination, now sharing the role of Nepal Programs Coordination role with Suraj Upadhaya who has joined U.KY Forestry M.Sc. with a teaching assistanceship. Beeju was very helpful with translations whenever the Nepali was spoken at 78 rpm, exceeding my 33 rpm comprehension.

Beeju Poudyal center and Sayni left, tour a SeedTree assisted West Chitwan Community Forest in June.

During our June supervisory visit to several former planting sites and Eco-Ed classes, we began a Participatory Impact Assessment PIA, designing a survey with input from Dr. Pokhrel of IOF and Dr. Rob Lilieholm of U. Maine. This PIA seeks to understand the multiple impacts, economic and ecological, of our programs. We will continue until we get a statistically significant sampling of our hundreds of sites. But lacking that now, the many examples of transformation we saw were truly impressive.

…& Regenerations: In Chitwan, I was particularly struck by the economically and ecologically positive transformations arising from our most popular tree, *bokaino*, *Melia azedarach.* I observed two in our Chitwan office compound. From 1997 only a couple inches in diameter (dbh), they were cropped ruthlessly for fodder and fuel each year, often until bare. I feared they would die. Yet by 2008 1*(left)* they were thriving at 15"dbh.

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Even so, I was amazed to see the number of modern, comfortable homes that had been constructed from this understandably popular, regenerating tree. An example of just one man and his family:

From left to right: 1– His original home at time of his joining our tree planting program, with thatch and mud floor, now serves as a goat stable. 2- From these regenerating trees, he has built a comfortable new farm house, 3- another house in town, and 4- still has a fine forest diversified through continuing with our program.

Seeing the success of requiring fodder species to be planted with environmental credit for livestock rearing, my initial ecological skepticism was overcome. Right, 3 examples:

A $50 loan for a buffalo calf has yielded milk and its own new calf. She values her growing assets @$550.

A $50 loan for goat rearing enabled this physically challenged man to send his extended family's children to school.

A$50 calf loan has matured into a cow worth $350 , a $20/month income from milk, plus a new calf.

Of course, our trees and the forests they enrich, protect and sometimes create, provide human food and medicine, as well. The leader of Tan Khola's **newly created Community Forest** (above) described the previous condition as bare. Now a richly diverse forest shelters several edibles including asparagus which Seed-Tree gave, and wild foods including fiddleheads, held left, and nettle, used for food and fiber. Protected also are an array of wildlife from lowly leeches to at least one critically endangered, lordly Bengal tiger.

Fruit trees are always in demand and we are planting several species. One oz. of Phyllanthus emblica /Amla's (*right)* juice containing 3.7 grams of Vitamin C, it is is a main ingredient in traditional medicine. Amla's fruit is used in condiments; its seed oil in skin and hair care. Other fruits planted this year, include the sacred marmalade flavored *Bel*, Guava, the uniquely Nepali *Lapsi*, 2 species each of Cherry and Fig, and inedible, inedible, but very useful soap nut, *Ritha*.

With 40 million tons of soil lost annually, Nepal's need for erosion control is especially great. Siva-Shakti Community Forest User Group leader (above) amused us as he extoled the transformations wrought by the bamboo and trees we had planted on what had been a bare and eroding hillside for three full minutes, apparently oblivious to the torrential monsoon downpour.

From Seed Tree Nepal's sites in Chitwan, we climbed into the hills of Dhading to visit villages managed by Ram Gautam, of our SeedTree NAFSCOL partnership. In addition to the Nursery and Tree Planting program, the women were very active in applying what they had learned in our Eco-Education Classes. Many had smoke rising from their new chimneys after making our improved, more fuel-efficient and healthy smokeless stoves. Biogas plants had multiplied, as government support has grown, enabling us to provide a motivating amount to more homes, (cont.p3)

Our Amazonian Eco-Reserve in Southeastern Peru, near Manu, protects 1235 acres at the far frontier of contact between the modern and native worlds. Registered as "Nahua Fundo," meaning "deep" in the remote region of the most recently contacted tribe, the Nahua have now given it a name of their own. During their two-day journey down three rivers to the nearest town, they had been fired upon while sleeping on other's lands. Working with SeedTree's Adam Stone, supporter Sheila Riser and several other pioneers who recently visited the reserve, the Nahua have named the reserve at two rivers' confluence: **Albergue Dorado,** as it will serve as a refuge on these trips in their dugout canoes. It will also shelter the macaws drawn to peck the minerals on the river banks, the endangered spider monkeys and all the forest species under threat. An on-site Nahua caretaker will in turn protect the land from timber and wildlife poachers.

Our crew replanted mahogany previously taken by illegal harvest, along with several other native species including fruits, medicinal, species used for home construction, etc, for a total of 3900 trees were planted in Peru. Children near the Pucallpa base camp gathered soda bottles and recycled them as pots for the seedlings.

Adam Stone taps a copaiba tree.

Seeing the disruption and illness it has brought tribes, the Nahua resist the enticing offers of the oil companies. Adam, is exploring livelihood options that will sustain a more healthy interaction with modernity. A promising example is *copaiba* (genus *Copiafera).* Highly valued for medicine, incense, and varnish, its resin may be tapped and directly substituted for diesel. Yields of 40-53 liters/tree/year have been reported by the USDA. Perdue University has estimated "a 100 acre plot of trees could produce about 25 barrels of oil per year." Enrichment plantings of this tree could allow our Nahua allies a renewable fuel alternatives to the fossil oil they avoid. The interaction between Adam's SeedTree emissaries, the Nahua, and the adjacent loggers, who are now planting trees, may prove pivotal in guiding the region toward more sustainable directions.

In Lahore and three other **Pakistani** communities, Aqif Shahzad of EDEN utilized SeedTree's scant funds resourcefully through education, collaboration with garden groups, government nurseries and volunteers.

Bata (shoe company) for example: "used to give gift to poor and orphan kids…. Upon our request they planted trees for the very first time in their entire period of service." In Greentown, Aqif went to schools and motivated children to collect a mountain of about 70,000 plastic bottles taken for a local recycling factory. EDEN also succeeded in turning one vacant urban lot into a nursery. In Lahore, where the Christian areas have faced terrorist attacks, EDEN courageously works with Muslim and Christian communities.

Nepal Programs (*cont from P. 2*)

Assessing Impacts in a Changing Context:

In 1995 when our seed ideas for forest regeneration first splashed into the realities of rural Nepal, SeedTree was often the first or only ecologically oriented program to contact many of the remote and isolated communities. Our impact was dramatically evident and clear, first socially, and increasingly, as with time, ecologically. Among the isolated villages of Madi, Chitwan, or Dang, we were more of an "isolated variable."

Addressing these groups' isolation, we committed to informing and linking them with other "agencies positioned to support them and replicate their success." To these ends, SeedTree hosted collaborative workshops with District Forest Offices, District Development Offices, and Nepal Gov. agencies, such as Tree Improvement, Parks and Wildlife, Institutes for Agriculture and Forestry, other NGOs and INGOs, We contributed at the forming of National policy for Buffer Zone, as to USAID's development of its current Forest Sector support, called "*Hariyo Ban, Nepal ko Dhan*," (Green Forest is Nepal's wealth).

This success in integrating our groups with other organizations has begun to cascade, challenging our old forms of reporting. As the urgency of global warming is increasingly recognized, more are finding our targeted activities of sanitation,

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biogas and improved stoves serve so many human and environmental aims. For example, Suraj reported that a UNICEF/Nepal Gov, declared for 2013 Sindhupalchowk and Chitwan, ODF (open-defecation-free) areas, requiring working latrines for citizenship papers or Government services. Thus the high numbers of latrines constructed or renewed in by Eco-Ed class members reported in our 2013 Program Outcomes Summary should be understood in this context and cannot be expected to continue at such rates in the future. That said, I have continued to show Eco-Ed activities undertaken without additional ST funds, showing [in blue] those where our classes are known to have received other organization's financial support. Thus we ease their job, as they find our groups well motivated, mobilized and already engaged in these activities.

One immeasurable but profound result of our classes is the change in women's understanding of, and confidence in their place in the world. This Dhading woman (right) dramatizes how they used to turn away if a stranger said "Namaste," a phenomenon frequently seen in our initial contacts. Now these women are informed and confident to contribute their perspectives to community life for the benefit of all. I was struck to hear minimally literate women, mentioning "oxygen and carbon dioxide" as they prepared to ceremonially opened the planting season with song, dance and added pride and joy.

Eco-Ed class grad tells how they used to be too shy to speak.

SeedTree is pleased to welcome two new directors, George (*left*) and Sylvia Ritz of Maine, running the Andrea Ritz Clinics in Paraguay. Sylvia is an educator and George, a forester and long-time Peace Corps trainer in Paraguay. After receiving an invitation to assist with Paraguay's WWF Director, Luz (Lucy) Aquino with reforestation, I learned that George had been her mentor, and authored of a book in the local languages on the tree species of Paraguay. We now are exploring whether the new regime in that country will welcome SeedTree's help with much needed reforestation.

For most of the shots in this report, we thank our man with a camera, Eric Carlson, among the new generation taking part in our program. Eric, a Master's student of SeedTree Board Director and University of Maine Assoc. Prof. of Forest Policy Rob Lilieholm, joined our field visits while studying land tenure in Nepal. When WWF/TAL Chitwan Chief called us to explore collaborations, Eric saw an opportunity to use the information collating techniques of Dr. Rob Lilieholm's Sustainable Solutions Initiative, SSI's team. Rob and another of his Master's students, Jared Stapp, join us in Nepal this May to study, learn and teach how SSI's information systems mapping can best identify promising new program areas.

SeedTree 2013 Program Outcomes Summary:		
	1995-2013	**2013**
trees planted	**4,410,096**	**194,408**
Wells/pumps: new constr./(old maintained)	**97**	**No new/ (46)**
5 mo. Eco-Ed Classes	**178**	**25 with 619 participants**
improved stoves constructed/(restored)	**1,248**	**63/(32)/ [66]**
outhouse latrines constructed/(maintained)	**731**	**[64]/(304)**
biogas -stove -latrines new constr./(restored)	**389**	**76[33]/(97)**
vegetable gardening/ organic agriculture	**1312**	**482**
scholarships	**89**	**3**
Additionally. # Class participants, without further SeedTree funds did:		
composting		**300**
recycling		**542**
organic fertilization, green manure		**352**
fishery pond or bee-keeping		**4**
horticulture		**126**
Sanitation, improved waste mgmt.		**559**