21 Years ago, just prior to founding SeedTree in 1995, I chased this rainbow from the first fragment glimpsed down a narrow Kathmandu alley, until it opened up onto the scene above at Rani Pokhari, "the Pond of the Queen." Its beauty seemed especially auspicious for women, as I knew 1st Lady Hillary Clinton was meeting with the US Ambassador Sandy Vogelgesang. I had recently the good fortune to spend time with AMB Sandy and the delegation of US and Nepali officials touring their Rapti Development Project in Dang. When I had mentioned my faith in working from the ground up, Sandy challenged me to consider "class action," whereby a change in law or policy could improve conditions or open opportunities for vast numbers of people. She said she would look forward to my report later back in Kathmandu.

Nepal's late Queen Aishwariya welcoming Hillary & Chelsea Clinton to Nepal, 3/31/95, with Ambassador Sandy Vogelgesang.

By then, I had much to report. My trial of envisioned participatory methods had met with unanticipated enthusiasm, and success at engaging one village in tree planting, was quickly replicated in five more. I knew I could accomplish my goals in Nepal. Gazing at the rainbow, I thought of Hillary and Sandy meeting, these women so near the pinnacles of political power, actors in the sphere of "class action." I resolved to somehow use both (top down & bottom up) approaches in my work.

Dreams that we dare to dream …

As it appeared Hillary was to be our next President, I was excited with the prospect that policy and practice might work powerfully together for our environment, just as the policy of Community Forestry has meant so much for Nepal, lifting women in the field toward equality.

As Hillary spoke of working with Al Gore and of having a plan dear to her heart, I **dared to dream** of a 21st Century Civilian Conservation Corps, filling deserts with PV arrays, insulating buildings, turning degraded lands into productive forests and grasses sequestering carbon as they produced enough biomass to sustain a renewable energy cycle, giving training and self respect, cheaper than mass incarceration, healthier than coal mines, building the infrastructure to heal our very thin atmosphere.

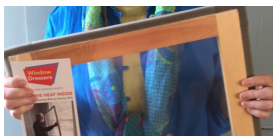
Well, though at the national level, such must be **dreams deferred,** we can surely lead effectively from more local levels. Al Gore make an optimistic case coming from the private sector in his encouraging TED talk this year (follow link).

As women in our Eco-Ed classes often apply their learning without further SeedTree funding. so I acted locally to improve the ecological impact of the **SeedTree Home Office,** also my home. With solar electric now under $1/watt, a fraction of the first installed in 1998, I could fill the inverter's capacity. Maine's hard-won policy of net metering, requiring power companies to purchase excess power produced by grid-intertied

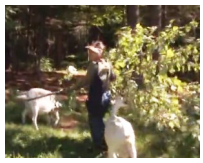
♻ Printed on 100% recycled paper

home installations, encouraging adoption of this clean, renewable energy. (14 of our Eco-Ed participants also installed solar panels for their homes.)

Joining volunteers at one of Windowdressers' many organized "community builds," we made clear plastic, framed insulating panels for windows. The inserts reduce emissions and the cost of heating, while allowing in sunlight and the view. Nearly all the Home Office's windows are now insulated with these energy conserving panels.



SeedTree was invited by Shana Hanson of nearby Three Streams Farm to give a presentation "Use of Fodder Trees in Nepal" at an international (France, Russia, Canada, US) 7-day workshop on pollarding. By this practice of pruning coppicing trees for fodder, Shana sustains goats on her woodland farm. Relatively rare in the Northeast, Shana was delighted to learn how common it is in Nepal, and requested the slideshow and a discussion on the 'Real' Economy." 'Real,' in this case means not only the financial, but the 'benefit economy,' measured by the sustainable, integral values of health and well-being, as is SeedTree's focus at home and in Nepal.



Pollarding: Maine & Nepal

***Pushpa Poudyal (right), SeedTree's Jhapa Branch Manager** with 2016 **Eco-Ed Facilitators of Jhapa**, holding texts of "Ourselves and Our Environment."*

destabilized by earthquake. As advised, I canceled plans for a summer visit, rescheduling for January, 2017. Under such adverse conditions our five Jhapa groups heroically did their part to address underlying causes locally, bringing all SeedTree programs to do their groups.

For the third consecutive year we gave **emergency vegetable seed support to Jhapa groups, and** continued that support for **our mountain communities in Nuwakot and Sindhupalchowk,** still struggling to recover from the devastating earthquakes of 2015. In Jhapa, each of 120 families with a total of 542 household members received 100 grams (3.5+ oz.) seed including: mustard greens, radish, coriander, yard-long beans and Italian beans. Ram Gautam distributed the same (substituting cauliflower and garden peas for the beans) to the 9 mountainous communities' 225 households' with 1104 members, for 1646 people reached by seed aid.

All our programs begin with an appropriate form of **Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)** of community interest and preparedness to join. The Nursery and Tree Planting PRA explores which species are used for the specific purposes: fuel, fodder, timber, food, medicine, beauty, fertilizer, pollution, climate or erosion control — which are endangered, which and how many would the group care to plant.

Some Jhapa women even brought poly-potted seedlings into their homes to save them from the flood. Despite thousands lost, the 5

SeedTree 2016 Project Districts in Nepal

Our newly opened branch in Jhapa, the most SE district in Nepal faced the sort of extreme flooding we can expect to increase with our warming earth. We lost communication as towers went down. Flooded roads to Jhapa were impassible and those to Chitwan faced increased danger of landslide from monsoon torrents over precipices

Jhapa groups planted 34,699, which with our 3 other branches brought **SeedTree's all time total to surpass 5 million trees planted,** thanks this year especially to the targeted support of Plant-It 2020 and Credo.

For a needed well, the PRA could take the form of a group discussion and consensus as to where it should best be sited. This well in Jhapa serves, not only the school, but the grateful neighboring community as well.

The earthquake recovery in our mountainous districts of Sindhupalchowk and Nuwakot, managed by Ram Gautam, has been pitifully slow. After one year, still most were living in makeshift shelters. Long delayed release of financial aid has only recently reached those households, so home reconstruction has taken priority over our plan to construct 45 biogas plants. The plan and funds are on hold for the next chance in the new year. The vegetable seed we provided again this year was very much needed and deeply appreciated.

We learned this year of another kind of success story coming from the SeedTree partnership with Ram Gautam and the Nepal Agro-Forestry Seed Cooperative, Ltd. NAFSCOL. We asked our Nepal Programs Manager, Beeju Poudyal to learn and share more, which I paraphrase:

The Chepang community of the mountains of Chitwan are among the district's most isolated and disadvantaged. Bir Bahadur Chepang, a subsistence farmer with poor land, had woven baskets, collected and sold some seed for a pittance. Illiterate and unable to even speak Nepali fluently, Bir didn't know the considerations or techniques of proper seed collection and handling. Noticing this, Ram organized a training session for Bir and others. Recalling it, Bir said "I was capturing the notes in my mind so that I could recall them later." Bir not only captured, but applied the lessons diligently, making a new and more prosperous career for himself, earning a better income for his family and gaining a highly respected status in his community.

Since co-sponsoring workshops on seed collection and Community Forestry with the District Forest Offices in Banke and Chitwan during our first full program year, 1996, education has become increasingly integral to most aspects of our work — how we integrate for healthy growth, bottom up, top down, and out-reaching.

Beeju Poudyal interviews seed gatherer Bir Bahadur Chepang, with Ram Prasad Gautam of NAFSCOL in our shared office in Kathmandu.

At right Ram inspects seed of a ficus variety popular for fodder, collected by Bir Bahadur.

Another way we educate and function is through work study arrangements. Three coordinators getting a college education while working with SeedTree have gone on to take positions with Helvitas, WWF, and the Agro-Forestry University in Nepal.

The **Kate Kinley Gregg Work Study Scholarship** is awarded to a woman with SeedTree mission-related career goals, financial need and demonstrated academic excellence. It has fully supported Beeju Paudyal through her BSc and completing her M.Sc. in Watershed Management from the Institute of Forestry, Pokhara this year. While earning the highest marks, Beeju was also able to take a very responsible role helping with translations, communications, monitoring and, as a trusted partner, disbursing funds to the branches. Since graduating, Beeju has received a Rufford grant to further study elephant-human conflict in her home district Jhapa, important to the human ecology of the area. Kate is gratified to have found such a conscientious and worthy recipient of her generosity, and Beeju is most grateful for the changes this is bringing in her life.

SeedTree's selection committee is presently reviewing 3 applications to select the next recipient.

Beeju Poudyal

Suraj Upadhaya has been a SeedTree Work Study Scholar through BSc, MSc, in Nepal and is now a Research Assistant, PhD student at U of GA. maintaining budget, planning and negotiations via close iPhone connections with SeedTree Programs and Branch managers, and the Home Office. He took up supervisory tasks during his first visit back to Nepal. Here Beeju snaps *Suraj and the Eco-Ed Facilitators Nuwakot of as she, Suraj (left) and Ram (4th from right) visit for a refresher course.*

They also visited Nursery and Tree planting sites in Chitwan. Baburam VK of Seed Tree Nepal, managed our groups in the three Southern Central Districts of Chitwan, Nawalparasi, and Makuwanpur.

Branch Mgr. Baburam VK (left) & Suraj (right), Navajagriti Community Forest

Gillian Blooomfield has completed the first editing of my slide presentations completed and filmed last year at Yale School of Forestry and remotely at the Home Office. Thanks to her previous experience designing an online course in Forest Restoration for Latin American students, Gillian's informed interest drew forth a remarkably comprehensive and detailed overview of the salient features of SeedTree's work in Nepal. She has organized the video in three sections: An Introduction focused on the Theory of PRA, the Tree Planting Program, and Complementary Programs. It will be featured in a course this spring in **Online Training Program of the Environmental Leadership and Training Initiative (ELTI) at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.** This course will initially be aimed for scholarship students from Asia.

ELTI's Gillian Bloomfield

This wonderful opportunity marks the SeedTree's 21 year old maturity by dispersing our most viable seed. May it fall on fertile soil.

On the horizon, other such opportunities appear. Elliot (Elie) Amkraut, Peace Corps Volunteer Leader, is helping with NGO outreach on behalf of the PC volunteers in western districts. Elie recently stopped by our NAFSCOL—shared office in Kathmandu. Ram told him he was working for our organization, and directed him to our website seedtree.org. Elie contacted me inviting collaboration, with a particular interest in "Ourselves and Our Environment" curriculum and PRA. I will meet him and the Program Officer on January 6th. We already plan to do a PRA together and he and any of the 50 food security PCVs may attend our Central Mountains 2017 Eco-Ed Facilitator Training.

Beeju has already met Elie. All of us see a host of converging interests and opportunities for fruitful collaboration. However, until January 6th, I am on this side of the rainbow, standing firm.

Carol Kamala Kinsey
Executive Director: SeedTree

SeedTree 2016 Program Outcomes Summary:

	1995-2016	2016
Trees planted	5,090,414	190,315
Scholarships	96	2
Wells or pumps:	104	1 / (1)
5-month Eco-Ed Courses Groups	246	23 w/ 587 participants
Improved stoves ICS	1,938	195
Biogas/stove/latrine plants constructed (Dang's delayed 20 done)	580	45 delayed by quake recovery
(**Emergency**) Vegetable seed support / kitchen gardening	2208	345 households
# of 587 Eco-Ed participants without further SeedTree funds, also made or engaged in:		
Biogas plant construction		16
Wells/pumps (made or remade)		313
Organic Vegetable/ kitchen gardening		551
Green manuring / Compost		101 / 539
Sericulture / bee-keeping / fishery		5 / 2 / 1
Installed solar electric panels		14
Improved stoves constructed		11
Improved waste mgmt / latrines constr.		581 / 164
Reuse and Recycling		524