Issue 23 SeedTree 2017

Projects in Progress:

Trees for Peace and Food Security

In late 2016, Nepal Peace Corps Volunteer Leader Elliot Amkraut, learning of our program, invited a collaboration between our organizations. On January 6, Carol met with him and Nepal Peace Corps Director Dinesh Karki in their Kathmandu Office. Dir. Karki explained their Nepal program aimed to establish food security in underserved areas where the people had little or even no land. We all recognized a complementary overlap of our programs, a natural alliance. SeedTree offers the Volunteers seed support and locally developed and integrated procedures to organize and educate communities for effective human ecology action. The Corps' network of volunteers could extend our program into new areas, otherwise unreachable and provide on site monitoring. Our schedules, however, were not such an easy fit for a full program in 2017. Many of the Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) were about to complete their 2 year service terms. Nevertheless, with little preparation, three PCVs, after their groups (3 groups in Gulmi, 1 in Palpa) expressed interest. We sent Baburam Vishwakarma to these sites to help conduct Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) of interest in participating in our tree planting program. After several days of gathering and

Baburam & PCV Anna Burgess access needs in Palpa.

Ram Gautam and Suraj Upadhaya visit a nursery on a hillside terrace in Nuwakot. Tanki (Bauhinia purpuria) grows on the right above. Below a mother climbs a mature tanki tree in Jhapa, while her son gathers her pruning for fodder and firewood. A relish reminiscent of artichoke is made from tanki flower buds.

packing the desired seed, Ram Gautam returned o the PCVs' sites to help construct and sow the nurseries. However, disturbance around local elections deterred the 3 Gulmi groups from participating. They returned our seed. Among the pilot sites, only Anna's (left)

Sowing Palpa nursery bed.

succeeded to plant their nursery. Due to her completing her term of service, we had little follow up.

Clearly, more would be needed: 1—a more permanent local presence sharing a commitment to accountability and 2—more extensive education. We will more discuss on page 4 how we are providing these requisites for a successful program. A most generous $20,000 grant from Anderson-Rogers Foundation has allowed us to prepare confidently to realize this collaboration's great potential and future ones as well.

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As we could not the assemble the Peace Corps Volunteers until September, we proceeded with calling our branch programs' managers to our Kathmandu office. With two young Mainers excited by our program joining, our next door neighbor, Raj Bahadur Giri, Director of the Kathmandu Training Center (KTC) invited us to their more spacious conference room.

Jhapa Program Manager Pushpa Poudyal reports on progress (left).

Director Giri elaborates on Carol's slide presentation for the students at the Kathmandu Training Center..

After discussing the branch programs, Carol gave the slide presentation developed for Yale's online Reforestation Course. KTC Director Giri was thrilled by the mention of his mentors: Robert Chambers, a leading proponent of Participatory Rural Appraisal PRA and Father Moses Coady, who led fishing communities of Nova Scotia into self-reliant development. Recognizing the close alignment of our approaches, he requested we show the presentation to the KTC students, selected from remote and undeveloped areas all over Nepal. Their government supported program requires a half year of community service upon completion of their 1.5 years of study. We've begun exploring a future collaboration with KTC's service term.

Ram Gautam, brings visual aids and humor to the Nuwakot Eco-Ed Facilitator training.held in January.

Eco-Ed Facilitator training began in January. For 2017 each of the branch managers held their own three day training in Nuwakot, Chitwan and Jhapa. I was able to attend the first day and hear classes led primarily by our Central Mountains Manager Ram Gautam, his son Sujan, and Beeju Poudyal who also translated my slide presentation in Nuwakot, as previously at KTC and later for the Facilitator Training in Chitwan.

The home near the school where we held the 3 -day training for the 10 Nuwakot Facilitators had a terraced kitchen garden from which our lunch was prepared from the 2nd generation of vegetable seed supporters had so generously donated for the Earthquake recovery. The twice Improved Cooking Stove (ICS) upon which our meal was prepared had been constructed upon a table-height frame, allowing comfort and storage space below.

Improved ICS & recovery garden

Recovery in remote and most severely damaged Sindhupalchowk was slow. Government aid was just released. Many homes were crudely fashioned from the rubble left behind, as at right below.

Group Leader Sanumaya Thapa's newly remade home, built to a safety standard to qualify for $500 gov. aid..

Her neighbor stands before her makeshift shelter with hide she has tanned with the gathered cuttings of (Woodfordia fruticose).

Ram's own Sindhupalchowk home was yet undone. Our aid had been a vital and continuing support, growing, like their thriving fruit trees, toward a more hopeful future. In the winter dry season, the trees, including the mulberry, were heavily cropped for

Our recovery's Guava and Mango trees are carefully tended..

One agro-forestry technique: planting trees (barely visible) and grasses along the vertical faces of their terraces to stabilize them while giving fuel, fodder and fertilizer. In the summer these mulberry trees will give fruit.

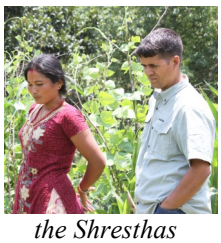
fodder. Many were planted so as to curb the estimated 35 tons/acre/year (Maskey and Joshi, 1991) of topsoil washing from the terraced slopes of Nepal toward the rising deltas of Bangladesh.

Nine groups' receive Eco-Ed Facilitator training in Chitwan

Pushpa Poudyal, above left, with the Jhapa Facilitators for 3-day training.

Another nine new facilitators received training in Chitwan (below, left) and in Jhapa, four at right. Selections of Work-Study-Scholar / Coordinator Suraj Upadhaya's report of his summer field visits to the branch programs are paraphrased here:

"**Nuwakot:** After driving 3.5 hours on the bumpy road, we reached our first destination, a nursery [front page banner] established by Kundala Besitol Women's Group on the private land of Sabitri Shrestha and her husband. He remarked that while that land could grow three crops in a year, using it for community and conservation makes him feel good. Sabitri said, "The motivation and encouragement to allow our private land for community benefits came from the eco-ed class," Mr. Shrestha added that growing agricultural crops is for immediate benefits, but planting trees are for long term benefits. Their seedlings include olive trees, successful in their area.



the Shresthas

Next, we went to Mahadevsthan Women's Group's community where more than 45 participated. After introductions from all, we decided to perform the SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threats) analysis of our Eco-Ed program, to better understand the community's response and improve as needed. Participants are learning and have been able to see the changes in their lifestyle from the classes. The facilitator became so aware of environmental issues, she felt the need for them to be heard in local level policy, and offered her candidacy for local election. Another motivated woman is now vice chair of her Village Development Committee.

Mahadevstan **SWOT of their Eco-Ed Classes:**

Strengths: We learn the importance of forests, hygiene, and to re-use and recycle
Any one can participate. No need for formal ed.
Provides platform for social interaction and for solving social issues

Weakneses:
Unfamiliar Words
Time Schedule
Resources (Building, electricity)
Lack of more regular evaluation

Opportunities: Recognition and rise of new leaders
Exposure to wider issues
Help in increasing confidence
Identification of local resources and of group issues
Help in tree species selection

Threats: Men are not always supportive of participation.
Time conflict
Lack of literacy
Other opportunities might not get priority

Jhapa: During our visit to Jhapa, we encouraged and mobilized Sachetana and Dadagau Women's groups to restore biodiversity by replanting land left vacant in Khundunabari (below) after the Bhutanese refugees temporarily encamped there had been transferred to USA, Australia, and UK. Previously, the Nepal government had cleared a *Shorea robusta (Sal)* forest to allow space for the refugee camps. This is also one of the major causes of deforestation in eastern Nepal. The Armed Police supported us with planting and engaging the community to protect the newly planted trees from their grazing animals.

Restoring a forest cleared for refugee camp in Jhapa.

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Chitwan: How happy I was to see three One Horned Rhinoceros in an area so recently barren at Setidevi Community Forest (CF), Chitwan! SeedTree has been working with this user group to convert it into mature forest, providing good habitat for mega-fauna, including the Spotted Deer and Hog Deer we also saw. —— *Suraj Upadhaya*

Developing a permanent nursery with Setidevi CF allows sustainable, multi-generational regeneration. Its proximity to our Chitwan office provides easy access for visitors like Dr. Brian Roth of U. Maine, who gave a presentation on his work with American Chestnut restoration at our office, Kathmandu Forestry College KAFCOL, and the Institute of Forestry IOF. We share

Setidevi CF Nursery

Dr. Roth & daughter plant ceremonial tree during tour at right with CF guide, son & our Chitwan Asst. Sanju Vishwakarma.

the conviction that the academics and action should inform, enlighten and guide each other.

Susmita Satyal

The Rob Lilieholm Scholarship, supporting a graduating KAFCOL student's final research, is selected on the basis of academic excellence, financial need and interest in a topic related to SeedTree's mission. The 2017 award went to Susmita Satyal for her proposed study: Contribution of Agroforestry on Livelihood of Community Forest User Group Members. We are inviting her to share finding of the case study of two CFUGs in Kabhre District at our four day training workshop to be held in January 2018 for participating PCVs, as Agroforestry is so essential for food security in Nepal.

Beeju gave a slide presentation to the PCVs at our first chance to meet with them all on September 22, to prepare them to make a well-informed decision whether to participate — if they can find a Local Leader (LL) to share the commitment to accountability we require. Eleven such PCV/LL teams will join our four day workshop 1/23-27/2018.

The Kate Kinley Gregg Work-Study Scholarship is awarded to a woman aspiring toward a SeedTree mission-related career with financial need and academic excellence. With Beeju completing her MSc. this year, it was time to choose a new recipient. Shilpa Hamal from Baglung, was selected by our academic committee. She has completed her first supported semester at IOF with distinction. While academic work always takes priority, Shilpa is helping us prepare bilingual Agroforestry training materials for the PCV/LL teams' workshop and will attend. We wish Silpa all success. Beeju has set a fine example. While effectively managing our Nepal programs, she has complemented Jhapa work with a Rufford grant to continue her research in Developing Human-Elephant Coexistence Strategies. One such is the use of solar electric fencing. (The Home Office's solar was completed, so we met a deadline while the grid was out for 4 days.) Via another modern technology, Zoom, she joined 31 other environmental leaders live from 18 countries to complete the Yale ELTI Course 7/10-8/20/2017 for which Carol presented SeedTree's story as a case study. Our SeedTree seeds are dispersing as if on wings in the wind.

Shilpa Hamal

SeedTree 2017 Program Outcomes Summary:

	1995-2017	2017
Trees planted	5,193,292	102,878
Scholarships	99	3
5-month Eco-Ed Course Groups	246	23 w/ 587 participants
Improved Cooking Stoves ICS	2.102	164
Biogas/stove/latrine plants	710	130
530 Eco-Ed class participants from 22 groups		
without further SeedTree funds, also made or engaged in:		
Organic Vegetable/ kitchen gardening ,		424
Composting		410
Solar electric elephant fencing		67
Latrines maintained old / constructed new.		259 / 101
Reuse, Recycling, waste mgmt.		503