

Peace
Corps

Peace Corps Nepal
Annual Report 2016



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The Peace Corps Mission

Mission: To promote world peace and friendship through community-based development and cross-cultural understanding

Since its establishment in 1961, the Peace Corps has been guided by a mission of world peace and friendship. The agency exemplifies the best of the American spirit by making it possible for Americans to serve - advancing development and building cross-cultural understanding around the world. Through this unique approach to development, the Peace Corps is making a difference in the overseas communities it serves, in the lives of its Volunteers, and back home in the United States. More than 220,000 Volunteers have served in 140 countries since 1961.

The Peace Corps advances its mission through the work of the Volunteers, both during and after their term of service. Rather than providing monetary assistance to countries, the agency sends Volunteers to share their skills and experience while living and working alongside local individuals and communities. This day-to-day interaction provides Volunteers with a unique perspective and the opportunity to partner with local communities to address their development challenges and to strengthen mutual understanding.

The Peace Corps Act (1961) articulates three core goals that contribute to the Peace Corps mission of world peace and friendship:

1. To help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women.
2. To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served.
3. To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.



*Celebrating
December
5th as
International
Volunteer
Day in
Pokhara,
Nepal*



Message from the Country Director



Namaste!

We, the staff and Volunteers of Peace Corps Nepal, welcome you to our annual report for 2016. I am happy and relieved to report that 2016 was an easier year for Nepal as compared to 2015.

The month of January brought with it the end of the border closure and a gradual return to normal both in Kathmandu and at Volunteer sites in western Nepal as the fuel and cooking gas shortages eased. Earthquake reconstruction is well underway, though there is still much work to be done. The country continues to grapple with issues related to the new Constitution and there are occasional protests and transportation strikes that limit Volunteer travel in some areas.

This has been another successful year for Peace Corps Nepal. We continue to make improvements to our Food Security program under the new parameters of a revised Project Framework. Results from our internal Global Annual Volunteer Survey for Nepal indicate that our efforts to continue to improve and enhance our technical training as well site development for new Volunteers are successful and that Volunteer perceptions of staff support in all areas continue to be very positive. Volunteers continue to report that their overall Peace Corps experience is very positive.

As always, the past year included a continuing focus on our Cross-Sector Program Priorities. In the arena of Gender Equity and Women's Empowerment, Peace Corps Nepal was proud to have been selected as one of the Peace Corps posts which are part of former First Lady Michelle Obama's-inspired Let Girls Learn (LGL) program. Staff and Volunteers participated in a three-day training in the summer led by LGL staff from Washington, DC, which resulted in a Volunteer-led working group charged with incorporating LGL strategies into Volunteers' primary and secondary work activities.

Volunteers continued our efforts to provide inspirational learning experiences via Camp GLOW (Girls Leading Our World) programs for adolescent girls, with two multi-day camps held in Pokhara, the first for girls from Syangja, Parbat, Baglung and Myagdi and the second, for girls from Lamjung. Our other Cross-Sector program focuses on Youth as Resources, with a major new initiative in this sector developed by Volunteers in Nepal being our first two multi-day Camp GROWs (Girls and Guys Reinventing Our World) for both teenage girls and boys held in Palpa and Lamjung Districts.



In our Annual Report, you will find updates on our progress in meeting the goals and objectives of our Food Security Project. Also included are a variety of Volunteer success stories as well as information on Volunteer training, placements and demographics. We hope you will enjoy reading this report and learning more about the activities of the Peace Corps in Nepal in the fifth year after our return. We are excited about the work done to date as well as the prospect for future contributions to be made in collaboration with the people and Government of Nepal as Peace Corps grows and expands.

We would like to express our deepest appreciation to our partners and stakeholders: the Ministries of Finance, Agricultural Development, Health and Population, Foreign Affairs, and Home Affairs for their collaboration and support; to USAID for its financial and organizational support; to the Suaahara and KISAN projects for their technical assistance; and to the Female Community Health Volunteers, Farmer's, Women's, and Youth groups; Agriculture and Health Supervisors and Counterparts at District and VDC levels for their partnership; and the host families who so warmly welcome and integrate our Volunteers into their homes and hearts.

Respectfully,

Nelson K. Chase
Country Director
Peace Corps Nepal





PCV Matt Bockey working with community members in a bio-intensive garden

Peace Corps Nepal Food Security Project

The Peace Corps arrived in Nepal in 1962, one of the first countries to welcome Volunteers after the creation of the agency by President Kennedy in 1961. Since then, more than 3,700 Peace Corps Volunteers have served in schools, government agencies, and NGOs. The program suspended operations in September of 2004 due to security concerns but returned in 2012, at the request of the Government of Nepal, to work in collaboration with USAID as part of a Food Security Project. The purpose of the Food Security Project is to improve the food security of rural families, especially for the most vulnerable populations in targeted communities in the mid-hills of western Nepal.

In July 2016, President Obama signed into law the Global Food Security Act, which was passed by Congress with broad bipartisan support. As one of 11 agencies that comprise Feed the Future, the Peace Corps has been actively involved in developing the U.S. Government's Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS). The GFSS represents a coordinated approach to address food insecurity.

Peace Corps has developed and rolled out its Food Security Strategy for 2017 and beyond. The strategy is strongly aligned with the objectives of the global whole-of-government strategy, and is built around Peace Corps Volunteers' unique contribution to the four pillars of food security: availability, accessibility, utilization, and stability.

Since September of 2012, five groups of Peace Corps Volunteers have served in the Food Security Project and the current number of PCVs is 55. The sixth group of Volunteers to serve in Nepal since we re-opened will arrive in April of 2017.

In the spring of 2015, the Inspector General's (IG) office from Peace Corps headquarters carried out a program review of the Food Security Project. After meeting with stakeholders at the central and field levels, the IG recommended that Peace Corps Nepal narrow our project framework, improve our site selection process, and revise our training programs based on Peace Corps guidance and practice.



In response to these recommendations, Peace Corps Nepal carried out an evaluation of the Food Security Project in the summer and fall of 2015, in consultation with our key stakeholders. This work has resulted in a revised project framework which targets rural smallholder farming families, particularly women and children, and focuses on nutrition-sensitive agriculture.

The key components of the new framework are soil conservation/management, bio-intensive gardening, and nutrition education. The framework also outlines four anchor activities for all Volunteers (1) composting, (2) construction and management of fruit tree nurseries, (3) improved cook stove construction, and (4) mushroom cultivation. The new framework became effective as of January 1, 2016.

Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) efforts in support of our Project Framework may include the following activities: bio-intensive gardening, composting, seed production, community seed bank



PCV Sarah Hendrix planting trees with her counterpart



PCVs Garland Mason & Jesse Ollie Gelinas at their demonstration garden

development and management, mushroom cultivation, fruit tree cultivation, nutrition education, and nutrition and agriculture-related behavior change. Activities conducted by individual Volunteers vary depending on the needs of their communities.

Finally, a major development in 2016 was that Peace Corp Nepal became a new post for the Let Girls Learn (LGL) Initiative. We developed a comprehensive Gender and Let Girls Learn Strategy in September 2016, with the support from our Regional Gender Advisor in Washington, D.C.. The strategy emphasizes gender integration into our food security activities within the project framework. It also identified three anchor activities: Guys and Girls Reimagining Our World (GROW) Camps as well as 1, 2, 3 Go! and Learning, Educating and Demonstration (LEAD) programming. Additionally, our Volunteers have also established an LGL task force for the promotion of gender integration activities.

(Note: 1,2,3 Go! is our personal Hygiene and Malnutrition Program for school-age youths.)



Overall progress of the Food Security Project in 2016 has been encouraging. The tables below provide details of our progress on all indicators in FY 2016.

Goals and Results of the Food Security Project in FY 2016

Goal 1: Smallholder farming families, including women and school-aged children, will sustainably improve soil conditions for garden and field crops.

Objective 1.1: By 2018, 936 smallholder farmers will employ one or more sustainable and climate smart soil conservation and management technique to their garden(s) or field(s) to reduce soil loss; improve soil fertility; increase water capture, retention and improve distribution; and, increase overall soil productivity..

Accomplishments: PCVs worked with their counterparts and community partners to train and coach individual smallholder family members in soil conservation/management techniques and practices to lower risks of weather-related soil loss; improve soil fertility; and increase water capture, access and soil moisture retention. The key activities PCVs conducted under this objective included composting, green manure, crop rotations and water capture/retention techniques (e.g., mulch, earthworks)

Indicators	People benefited		
	Males	Females	Total
AG-005-FTF: Number of individuals who have received Peace Corps assistance/ supported short-term agricultural sector productivity or food security training.	1937	2907	4844
AG-003-FTF: Number of farmers and others who have applied new technologies or management practices as a result of Peace Corps assistance/support.	855	1389	2244

Goal 2: Smallholder farming families, including women and school-aged children, will sustainably increase production of diverse and nutritious food crops.

Objective 2.1 By 2018, 936 smallholder farmers will implement one or more improved vegetable gardening practices, including introduction of new nutrient-rich vegetable varieties, to increase yield and/or diversify existing gardens or new gardens.

Accomplishments: PCVs worked with their counterparts and community partners to train and coach individual smallholder family members in bio-intensive gardening practices to increase garden productivity and diversity of vegetables grown. The key activities PCVs conducted under this objective included nursery development, appropriate bed design/preparation, companion planting, triangular spacing, IPM, seed selection/saving and cultivation of new, nutrient-rich vegetable crops.



Indicators	People benefited		
	Males	Females	Total
AG-005 FTF: Number of individuals who have received Peace Corps assistance/supported short-term agricultural sector productivity or food security training.	1937	2907	4844
AG-003 FTF: Number of farmers and others who have applied new technologies or management practices as a result of Peace Corps assistance/support.	855	1389	2244
AG-014: Number of individuals, out of the total number of individuals the Volunteer/partner worked with, who implemented one or more new or improved garden practices.	468	273	741

Objective 2.2 By 2018, 1170 smallholder farmers will plant one or more new varieties of trees as part of their farming system, specifically varieties that will have a positive impact on nutrition either from direct consumption of leaves, fruits or nuts; by producing animal fodder; by increasing income generating possibilities; or, by enhancing production of other food crops.

Accomplishments: PCVs worked with counterparts and community partners to train and coach individual smallholder family members in improved tree production techniques and practices to increase the number and variety of trees grown on their farms. The key activities PCVs conducted under this objective included nursery site selection, construction and management, seed quality and management, sapling production (from seed or by vegetative production), grafting and budding on to indigenous root stock and out-planting of saplings that support improved nutrition.

Indicators	People benefited		
	Males	Females	Total
AG-005: Number of individuals who have received Peace Corps assistance/supported short-term agricultural sector productivity or food security training.	1937	2907	4844
AG-003: Number of farmers and others who have applied new technologies or management practices as a result of Peace Corps assistance/support.	855	1389	2244
ENV-026: Number of individuals, out of the total number of individuals the Volunteer/partner worked with, who planted trees.	643	908	1551
ENV-027: Number of trees planted with the assistance of the Volunteer/partner.	N/A	N/A	6144



Goal 3: Smallholder farming families, including women and children, will improve their nutrition.

Objective 3.1 By 2018, 7800 smallholder farmers, particularly women of child-bearing age and children under 5, will adopt one or more new food consumption or feeding practices/ behaviors that improve nutrition outcomes.

Accomplishments: PCVs worked with their counterparts and community partners to train and coach individual smallholder family members in evidence-based nutrition practices included in the Essential Nutrition Actions (ENA) framework (e.g., nutrition for adolescents and women during pregnancy and lactation, complementary feeding starting at 6 months (with breast feeding), prevention of Vitamin A deficiency in women and children, prevention and control of anemia in women and children). The key activities PCVs conducted under this objective included informal one-on-one or group trainings and demonstrations in a home, health center or school setting to promote access, consumption and feeding of diverse, nutrient-rich foods; follow-up sessions to encourage/reinforce increasing access, consumption and feeding of diverse, nutrient-rich foods; and baseline and follow-up surveys to observe increased dietary diversity.

Indicators	People benefited		
	Males	Females	Total
AG-047 FTF: Number of people trained in child health and nutrition through Peace Corps assistance/support to health area programs.	1507	2624	4131
AG-046 FTF: Number of children under 5 reached by Peace Corps assistance/support to nutrition programs	550	646	1196



PCV Jennifer Panuska teaching school children about transplanting seedlings



Other Peace Corps Nepal Initiatives

Cross-Sector Programming Priorities

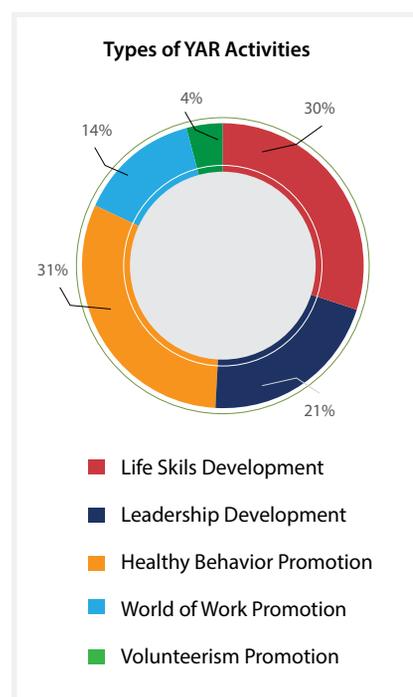
Cross-Sector Programming Priorities (CSPPs) are cross-cutting areas that Peace Corps Volunteers in Nepal emphasize and try to integrate into their work, regardless of their primary project. The CSPPs represent long-term strategic commitments of the Peace Corps world-wide. Referring to the country context, Peace Corps Nepal has prioritized two CSPPs: Gender Equity & Women's Empowerment and Youth as Resources.

Youth as Resources

Youth as Resources (YAR) activities engage young people to contribute to community improvement, health promotion, environment and other civic projects.

In 2016, 42 Volunteers carried out youth development activities in different parts of Nepal, benefitting 5,305 individuals (M: 2,457 and F: 2,848) and 190 service providers (M: 89 and F: 101). PCVs worked with their counterparts and community partners to conduct youth leadership trainings, youth group health trainings, sexual and reproductive health classes, public speaking trainings, sports activities, youth mentorship sessions, environmental protection campaigns, health and sanitation campaigns at schools, as well as Peace Corps Nepal's first youth-focused agriculture and nutrition camp (**GROW - Girls and Guys Reimagining their own World**).

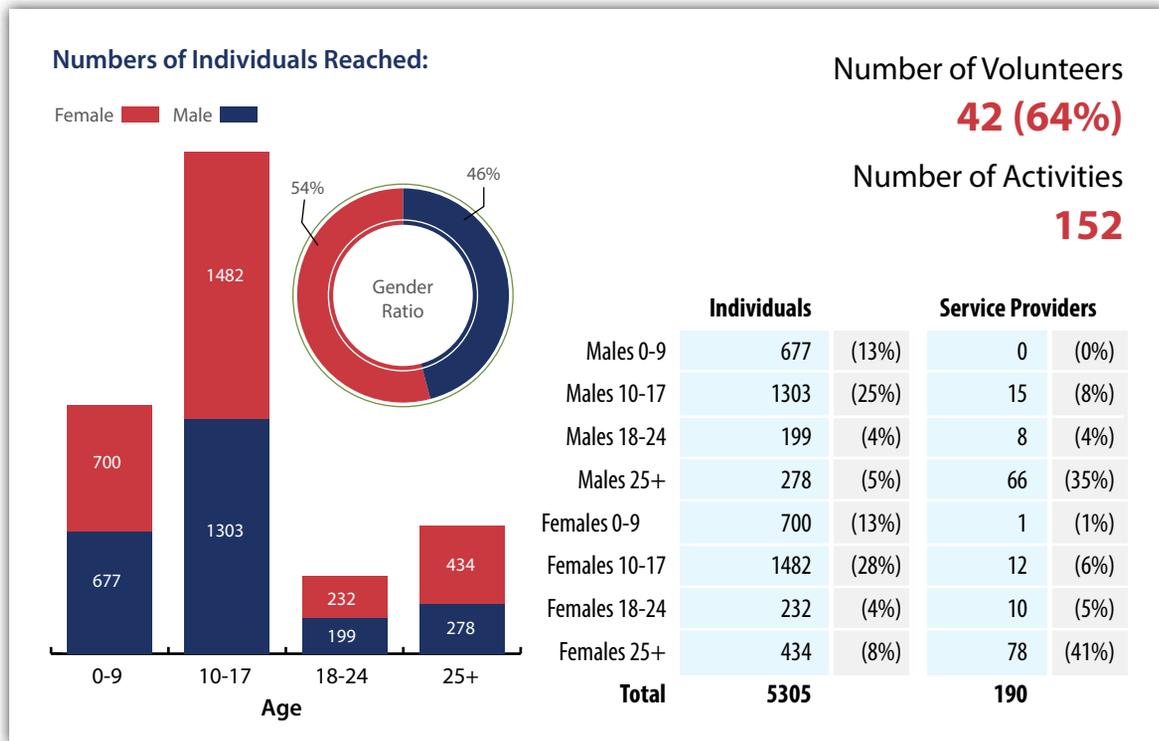
They also established youth clubs, eco clubs, and computer and English language training classes for students. Additionally, many PCVs incorporated "Working with Youth" into their primary activities, primarily via nutrition and sanitation trainings at local schools, establishment of school kitchen gardens, construction of off-season vegetable houses, and mushroom cultivation trainings at local schools. The majority (61%) of youth-focused activities carried out by the Volunteers focused on developing life skills and promoting healthy behaviors among the youth population, primarily between the ages of 10 to 17 (53%).



Youth group members participating in GROW Camp activity with PCV Melissa Goldman & Jean Rayhle



Participation in Youth as Resources Activities



Project Example: GROW Camps - Positive Youth Growth in Nepal

The word 'Grow' evokes development, improvement, strength, and other images of expansion. In the spring of 2015, Peace Corps Volunteers developed Camp Grow an interdisciplinary program to provide youth with trainings in sustainable agriculture and leadership. In line with Peace Corps Nepal's project framework, GROW was a program where Nepali youth could freely address and discuss local, district, and national-level environmental, food security, and social issues; and the return to combat them.

In 2016, Camp GROW was carried out in two districts: Lamjung and Palpa District. In Palpa District, Camp GROW was the first Peace Corps project in Nepal to be supported by the Let Girls Learn (LGL) initiative. GROW Palpa was organized by 10 PCVs in Palpa; nine PCVs brought four youth to the camp from their respective Village Development Committees (VDCs). A total of 36 youth (17 males & 19 females) from diverse backgrounds and different parts of Palpa District participated in the program. Similarly, GROW Lamjung benefitted 16 boys and girls aged 14-17 and four adult chaperones from Gorkha, Lamjung, and Parbat districts.

Participants working on Farm Web Matrix



The goal of the camps was to increase growth on any subject introduced during Camp GROW, for instance, nutrition, health, and agriculture. Camp GROW consisted of five-intensive days of trainings related to nutrition, agriculture, leadership, and social justice. The camp's food



Participants and PCVs at GROW Camp in Palpa



Participants learning the proper way to plant seeds

security trainings included themes of agriculture (soil management, home gardening, nursery development, tree management, and land management); appropriate cooking techniques; leadership; gender and caste equality; and equity. The camp emphasized the importance of building and utilizing individual, community, and national level opportunities in agricultural, nutrition, health, and social sectors.

Camp GROW was a large effort that brought together many diverse cultures, communities, personalities, ethnicities, castes, and ages of participants and organizers. PCVs worked diligently for six-months to plan, organize, discuss, and improve every detail of the camp in order to execute the most successful camp possible.

As 2016 has come to a close, PCVs in Palpa and Lamjung have noticed changes in their youth since attending the camp. Participants have tried new techniques learned at the camp. Some of the participants gave school-wide trainings. After returning to their communities, the participants and chaperones have already begun putting into practice the techniques they learned at the camp. One group trained their local farmers in the production of organic liquid pesticides from wild plants. Others used the "air nursery" technique to germinate moringa seeds. Regardless of which methods they try, these youth are undoubtedly more interested in agriculture than they were before attending

Camp GROW. GROW has become a platform for growth in any aspect. Simply questioning oneself and one's actions is a form of growth – the main goal of the camp!



Camp GROW graduates lead liquid pesticide training for a farmer's group in Lamjung. Liquid pesticide can be made from locally-available materials such as leaves, urine, ash, chili peppers, etc. As a part of their community action plan, these students trained three farmer's groups in liquid pesticide production and application

As we move forward, Peace Corps Nepal is now venturing to launch GROW clubs in schools for incoming Peace Corps groups. Whether GROW Club focuses on food security or social-based themes, our goal at Peace Corps Nepal is to expand positive growth in Nepali youth in any capacity.

Camp GROW directly benefitted 52 youth between the ages 12-18 and 13 community chaperons from Palpa, Gorkha, Pariat, and Lamjung Districts.



Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

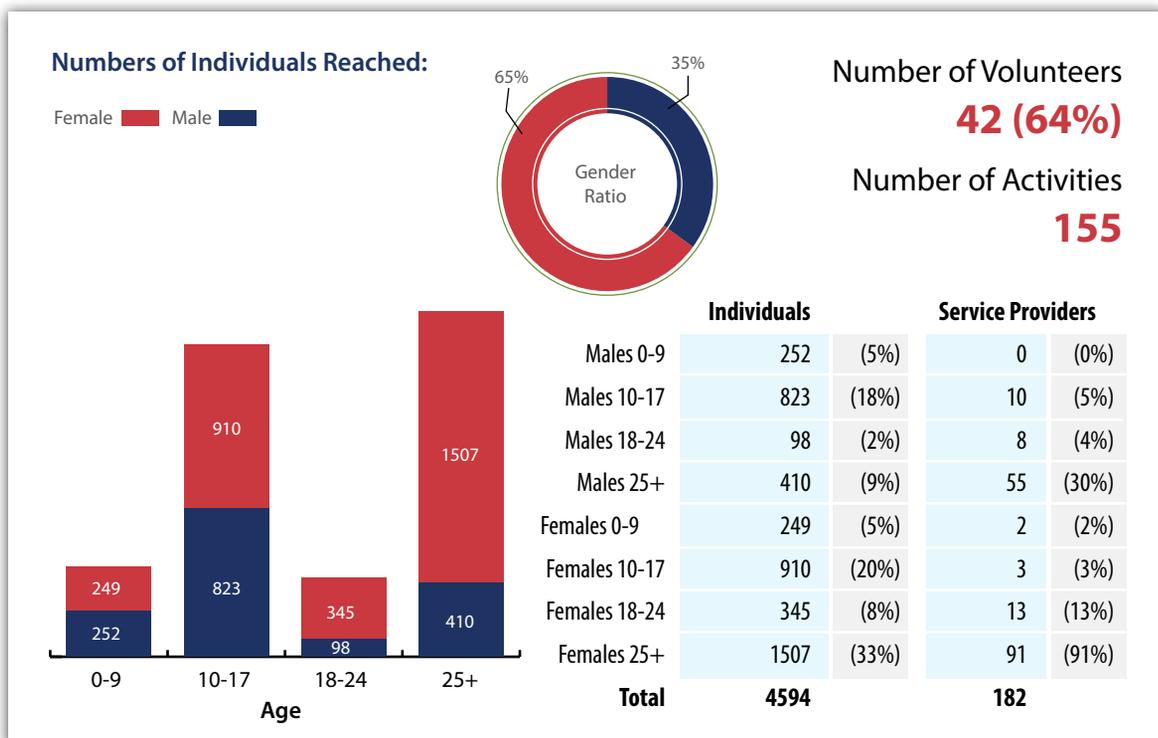
Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GenEq) activities integrate gender considerations, promote gender equality and women's empowerment, and reach groups of women, girls, boys or men who have been traditionally excluded from access to skills, benefits, and opportunities.

In 2016, 42 Volunteers carried out various activities to promote girls' leadership and women's empowerment activities in different parts of the country benefitting 4,594 individuals (M: 1,583 and F: 3,011) and 182 service providers (M: 73 and F: 109).

Volunteers conducted two Girls Leading Our World (GLOW) Camps, delivered menstrual hygiene and sexual reproduction classes at schools, trained women to make sanitary pads, and led essay competitions on women's development. They facilitated awareness-raising sessions on domestic violence, HIV awareness, women's literacy, and "Girls Rising" DVD screenings discussion sessions. They also provided basic computer trainings through the establishment of a computer center as well as Girls Leadership facilitator trainings, delivered gender sessions at schools and developed gender equity murals.

Many PCVs also incorporated gender components to their primary activities, mainly via nutrition awareness classes for pregnant and lactating mothers, improved cook stove trainings for women, off-season vegetable cultivation for female farmers' groups, and mushroom cultivation projects involving mothers' group members.

Participation in Gender Equity and Women's Empowerment (GenEq)





Students practicing critical thinking in small groups

Project Examples: Camp G²LOW Brings Girls and Guys Together To Lead Our World

In recent years, our Volunteers have brought boys and girls together separately for multi-day camps: for boys, camp (BRO) “Boys Respecting Others” and for girls, camp (GLOW) “Girls Leading our world”. The overall aim of these camps is to support girls and boys to become allies for gender equality. Conducting these camps with either boys or girls has been successful for generating discussion and creating a comfortable environment, but the conversation is often biased. As the roles of both men and women are equally important in achieving gender equality, our Volunteers decided that conversations should be happening with both girls and boys in the same room. To address this need, in July of 2016, eight Peace Corps Volunteers held a five-day girls and guys leadership camp (G²LOW) in Pokhara.

The camp focused on teaching gender-equal attitudes and qualities so that boys and girls can all enjoy equal rights, create mutually respectful relationships in both public and private spheres, and become leaders in the future. With this aim, the camp brought together 14 boys and 14 girls aged 14-15, including six community counterparts. Camp G²LOW

provided a supportive environment where boys and girls together discussed gender roles and their expectations, caste issues, techniques for gender and caste inclusion, male and female sexual health, communication, public speaking and leadership.



Students practicing public speaking and leadership skills



PCV Kaitlyn Moberly, her counterpart, & students celebrate completion of Camp G^ALOW

Female students shared their first-person perspectives of being female in Nepal, including their experiences with inequality and unequal access to opportunities. Boys were able to share their fears and concerns around social and economic pressures placed on them by their families, society, and culture. With discussions led by various speakers, NGOs, and Peace Corps staff, the participants from various communities in Nepal were able to have sensitive conversations, for probably the first time, in the same room. One of the additional objectives of the camps was to begin to build the entrepreneurship skills of these students; and in so doing, they were taught to make pencils from recycle materials as an example.

Throughout the camp, students practiced public speaking skills, discussed characteristics of a good leader, and built confidence through various activities, lectures and open discussions. At the end of the camp, students worked with their respective Peace Corps Volunteers and counterparts to think critically about issues in their communities and form action plans to address at least one of them. With skills and knowledge learned from previous days, their

action plans included methods to work toward gender and caste inclusion.

At the end of each day, students engaged in various activities to help the group become more comfortable with one another. They attended martial arts/self-defense classes, had dance lessons, toured Lakeside in small groups, created crafts from recyclable materials, and wrote and performed poetry. Students from various communities, who may have never met otherwise, formed close friendships, sharing vulnerability and honesty with a new group of peers.

By the end of the camp Volunteers, counterparts and Peace Corps staff found that all the participants had noticeably improved skills in public speaking, communication and knowledge around sexual health, gender equality, and caste systems and had built confidence in becoming good leaders and supporters of gender equality.

Volunteers hope to continue the tradition of including boys and girls together in camps to further their empathy and understanding and in so doing to create a mutual, respectable, and supportive environment for one another.



Project Examples: Capacity Building Workshop for Boys and Girls

In December 2016, fifteen students aged 13-15 from the 8th and 9th grade classes of some of the schools in Lamjung came together for a capacity building workshop in Pokhara put on by Peace Corps Nepal Volunteer Celine Smith and the NGO, in conjunction with Kopila Nepal.

Over four full days the students discussed issues surrounding children's rights, mental health, gender, and leadership. Two teachers from the community also came as counterparts, to engage in the training and help the students apply what they learned once they returned to their community.

The idea for this camp came from Celine's observations of the situation of the children and schools in this particular community. Every community has their own specific issues, and one of the important actions that can be taken

in any community is to empower the youth to pinpoint what they observe as problematic and begin to take action towards improvement. As a result, the camp leaders decided to focus on four issues in order to empower and prepare the students to become agents of change.

Upon discussion with the NGO Kopila Nepal and community counterparts, they decided that discussing children's rights would be a good introduction to get the students' attention on the first day and a great tool for empowerment. For the 2nd day, as mental health is something that is rarely talked about in Nepal and yet is a necessary component to being a well-rounded and healthy individual and community member, students discussed the stories of their lives through art. On day three, as one of the most prevalent issues in all of Nepal is that of gender inequality, they discussed the difference



Participants at the capacity building workshop



between gender and sex as well as socialization, gender roles, gender in our communities, and gender-based violence.

Finally, on the last day, in order to put everything that they had learned into action, the students learned about leadership - who are leaders, what it takes to be a good leader, and the importance of including marginalized community as leaders. This last session was led by a member of the Feminist Empowerment of Dalits Organization (FEDO).

After the training, the students returned to their villages to create presentations to give to the students of their schools to start discussions on these issues and on how to begin working on

them. The students have the help of their teacher counterparts who helped lead the camp as well as the support of the staff of their schools. This process will be an ongoing, aided by the founder of Kopila Nepal coming to the schools at the end of January to talk to the students about any questions or concerns they have had since returning to village. She will also help them implement their new knowledge and skills in their own communities.

These fifteen students had memorable experience that has motivated them to become agents of social change in their community and they are eager to share this with their peers and community members.



Students doing a team-building activity with PCV Celine Smith



Arrival of Peace Corps Trainees at Kathmandu airport, April 2016

Peace Corps Nepal Volunteer Training in 2016

Who are the Volunteers?

Peace Corps Volunteers are American men and women who commit to serving 27 months in a developing country, living and working directly with members of their village communities. During their service, Volunteers do not receive a salary, but instead receive a very modest "living allowance." Volunteers come from a variety of educational and experiential as well as ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. Peace Corps Volunteers bring to their communities their motivation to help communities to help themselves. They bring creativity, ingenuity, and a different perspective to their work with their communities.

The fifth group of 24 Peace Corps Trainees (PCTs) arrived in Nepal on April 3, 2016. Their arrival helped to continue contributions and traditions created by the over 3,700 Peace Corps Volunteers who have served before them in Nepal from 1962 until 2016. After five days of orientation at the Training Institute for Technical Instruction (TITI) in Sano Thimi at Bhaktapur District, the new Trainees proceeded to Panauti in Kavre District 31 kilometers southeast of the capital to begin their intensive pre-service training.

Pre-Service Training

The Trainees first three months in country are devoted to Pre-Service Training (PST), at the completion of which they are officially sworn into Peace Corps service. During the following 24 months there are periodic trainings, including the In-Service Language and Technical trainings, a Project Design and Management workshop that includes government and community counterparts, the Mid-Service training at the half-way point of their work in Nepal, and the Close-of-Service Conference as the Volunteers prepare to finish their work at their sites and return to the United States.



Trainees conducting community training on integrated pest management



PCVs John Henley & Joshua O'Malley designing community-based projects together with their counterparts during the Project Design and Management Workshop

During PST, Trainees live with Nepali host families and are completely immersed in Nepali culture. They receive formal training in Nepali language and traditions as well as learn methods and approaches to staying safe and healthy for the duration of their service as Volunteers. Trainees also receive technical training for assisting their communities in identifying, prioritizing, and addressing food security challenges. The Trainees carry out practicum activities at the end of the PST which are similar to their anticipated activities at their permanent sites. Trainees are assessed throughout their training, and upon successful completion of PST, they are officially sworn in as Peace Corps Volunteers.

The main purpose of the PST is to help Trainees become equipped with the knowledge, skills

and attitudes they require in order to live and work effectively in Nepal for two years. For this purpose Peace Corps Nepal conducts training using a "Community-based Training" (CBT) model. In this model Trainees live with a Nepali family for 10 weeks and train in small "clusters" of 4-5 Trainees in communities that have similar characteristics to those communities in which Trainees will eventually live and work. They eat whatever their family eats and are also involved in house-hold chores such as cooking food, cutting grass, milking cows as well as taking part in festivals and in family events. In addition host families now provide each Trainee with a small gardening space at their homes to allow them to begin to put into practice the perma-gardening skills they are learning. The CBT model helps trainees practice their new technical as well as Nepali language skills with their host families and communities and provides better opportunities to learn more of Nepali culture.

Responsibility for learning is given to the Trainee in this training model. Trainees are encouraged to work and learn independently or in small groups. Instead of passively receiving information, Trainees are asked to complete independent research and share results. The trainers' role is predominantly that of a facilitator and resource person. CBT helps to focus each Trainee on learning how to live and work successfully in their Nepali communities by empowering Trainees to build supportive and nurturing relationships within the local context. These relationships will be integral to a successful service in the Peace Corps.

A recent innovation in Nepal re: the CBT model is our new methodology for language in-service training which takes place 4-6 months after the new Volunteers arrive at their sites. Rather than bringing the Volunteers to a central location for the training, our language teachers travel to each Volunteer's site for five days to work with

Community orientation prior to Volunteer arrival in Lamjung District





N203 Peace Corps Volunteers with U.S. Ambassador Alaina B. Teplitz after their Swearing-in Ceremony

her or him on their language abilities as well as to support each of them in their adaptation to the community, culture and work at their new homes.

Another recent innovation in preparing sites for the arrival of the new Volunteers involves community orientation meetings. Peace Corps staff now conduct local-level stakeholders' meetings as part of the site development process. The key personnel of the community (i.e. VDC Secretary, social mobilizer, field-level government office representatives, Mothers' group members, farmers group members, school teachers, youth leaders, etc.) meet with our program staff and are briefed about the Peace Corps Nepal program, the Food Security project, cultural differences between Nepal and the U.S.A., Peace Corps policies and the role of

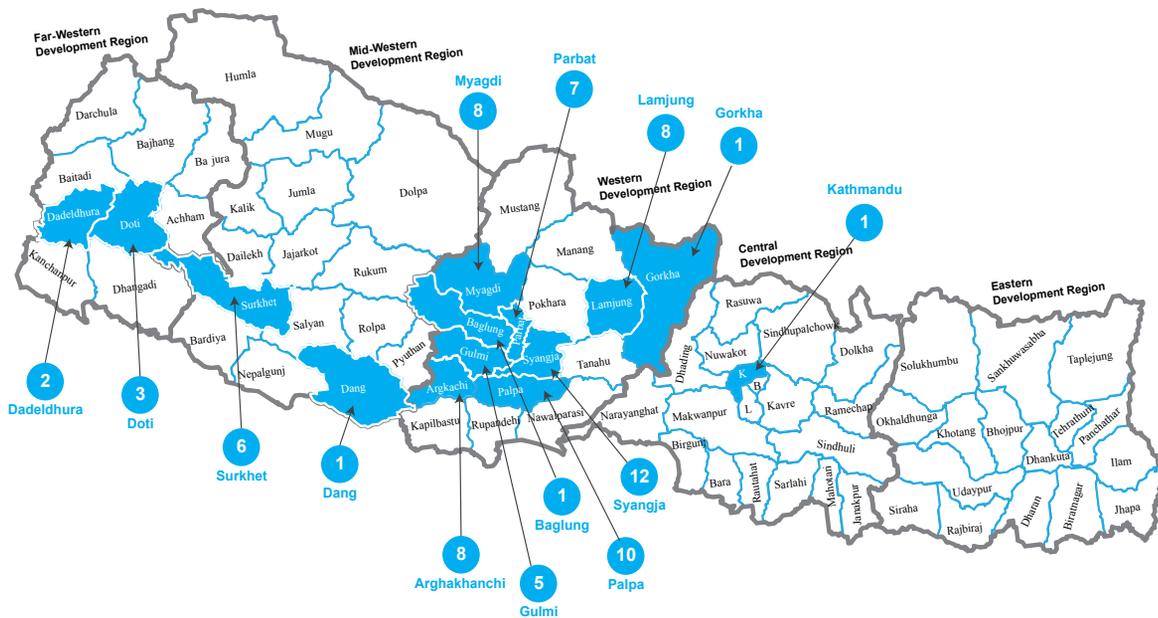
Volunteers. The overall aim of the orientation is to inform 20-25 key members of the community about Peace Corps Volunteer service before their arrival. The practice has been very helpful for the Volunteers' integration into their communities.

In 2016 Pre-Service Training ended on June 10 when the twenty-four Peace Corps Trainees were sworn in as Volunteers by the US Ambassador to Nepal Alaina B. Teplitz amidst a special Swearing-in Ceremony held at the envoy's residence in Kathmandu. Mr. Kul Chandra Gautam, a former Deputy General Secretary of the United Nations, who was taught and mentored by PCVs in Tansen, Palpa to seek higher education, graced the occasion as the guest of honor.



Placement Districts and Demographics of Volunteers

Peace Corps Volunteers Assignment Districts



In 2016 there were a total of 73 Volunteers serving in 14 districts of Nepal. During the year 24 new Volunteers were placed in the five districts of the Western Development Region in Syangja, Parbat, Myagdi, Lamjung, and Arghakachi.

As of December 2016, with the departure of the N201 group, we now have 55 active Volunteers, currently serving in one district in the Far-West Development Region (Doti), two districts in the Mid-Western Development Region (Surkhet and Dang), and 7 districts in the Western Development Region (Arghakachi, Gulmi, Palpa, Syangja, Parbat, Myagdi, and Lamjung).

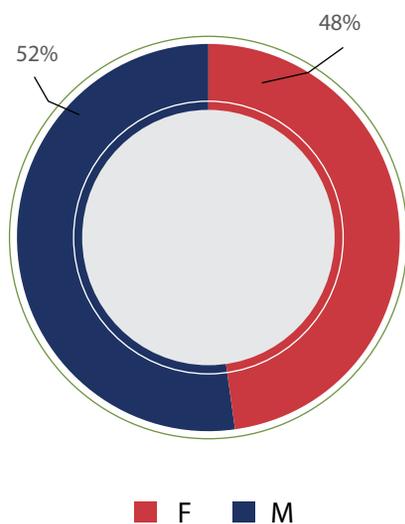
Peace Corps Nepal is phasing out its current program in the Far-West Development Region for the near future, as our strategy will be to place Volunteers in the districts where it is easier for the Volunteers to collaborate on projects with other Volunteers placed closer to them. Volunteers will continue to be placed predominantly in communities within the mid-hills where food security is a major concern.



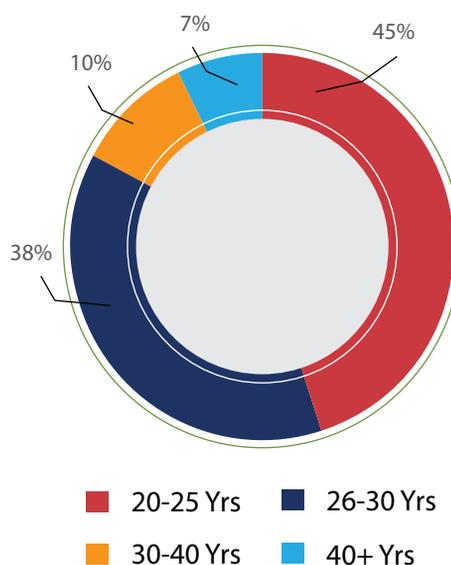
Placement of Volunteers in 2016

Districts	Regions	Active Volunteers in 2016
Dadeldhura	Far-West	2
Doti	Far-West	3
Surkhet	Mid-West	6
Dang	Mid-West	1
Arghakachi	West	8
Gulmi	West	5
Palpa	West	10
Syangja	West	12
Parbat	West	7
Baglung	West	1
Myagdi	West	8
Lamjung	West	8
Gorkha	West	1
Kathmandu	Central	1
Total		73

Volunteer Gender Breakdown-2016



Volunteer Age Breakdown-2016





Peace Corps Nepal Success Stories

Fruit Trees to Secure the Future

Located in the middle hills of Far Western Nepal, Volunteer Garret Morris's VDC (Village Development Committee) is certainly on the rise. With great road and market access and attention from various NGOs as well as Nepali government programs, the VDC has seen substantial development in the past few years. The people there, however, are not immune to many of the issues that threaten Nepal, specifically young men traveling abroad for work, leaving women with high workloads, and poor accessibility to micronutrient foods. After analyzing the community's strengths and weaknesses and more importantly building strong relationships

throughout the VDC, PCV Garrett Morris suggested a fruit cultivation and propagation project. The idea quickly picked up interest. Traveling to villages throughout the VDC, Garrett found ten farmers who were especially excited about the idea and willing to not only give up their own time and resources to the project, but teach new techniques to their own communities as well.

Everything was in place for the project, except for one major difficulty - Garrett had a background in nutrition and had little to no experience or knowledge in agriculture let alone

PCV Garrett Morris in his community's fruit tree orchard





fruit cultivation and propagation. But the lack of experience didn't stop him or his farmers from moving forward. With the help of a variety of Nepali agriculture literature resources and skills learned from Peace Corps trainings, Garrett and the ten farmers built small fruit nurseries on their own land.

As the months went by, Garrett spent time with each farmer sharing what knowledge and advice he had and practicing new techniques with them according to the season. Seeing his own limitations and the need of a proper training for his farmers, Garrett wrote a grant to take his ten farmers to a 5-day permaculture training led by the Himalayan Permaculture Center. The training was not only a great opportunity to learn new skills, but more importantly it connected these ten farmers to each other, all of whom shared the vision of one day having their own fruit tree nursery and orchards. What were ten small dreams became one strong vision. Preceding the training, Garrett worked with the Nepal Government Horticulture Center in Kathmandu to acquire 150 improved variety citrus seedlings for the farmers. The effort that each farmer put into planting and caring for their seedlings showed their investment of the project and vision of the future. To create sustainability and reproducibility in the project, each farmer also received a disease-resistant variety of tree

optimal for citrus rootstock which will provide them seedlings to graft on in the future, thus allowing them to propagate enough of the improved variety for their own orchard as well as their community.

To further ensure success, the group of ten farmers then received feedback and training from one of Nepal's most progressive fruit tree nurseries, Everything Organic Nursery (EVON). Garrett took two trainers from EVON to each of his model farmer's homes, where they provided orchard advice and one-on-one cultivation training, thus solidifying the farmer's knowledge and confidence in their own nurseries and orchards.

With the skills from these trainings and shared experiences, these ten farmers are now prepared to continue building their nurseries and orchards to a quality only seen in Nepal's top nursery operations, let alone the Far West. The fruits of their labor will provide needed nutrition to their families as well as an steady source of income. In sharing their fruit orchard knowledge with the youth in their communities, these farmers will provide them with an enticing, lucrative alternative to working abroad. The future is looking quite fruitful for this group of farmers and their communities.

Restoration of a Community's Water Supply

On December 5 the Volunteer Sending Agencies in Nepal celebrated International Volunteer Day with a half-day conference in Kathmandu. The agencies involved included Peace Corps, KOICA, CECI/Uniterra, UNV, VSO and AVID.

The culminating event of the celebration was to honor volunteers in Nepal who have made significant contributions to their communities in the past year. Three Nepali volunteers were honored at the event, and one international volunteer was also honored.

Peace Corps Volunteer Nathan Chaput was selected as this year's International Volunteer of the year. You will find below the description of Nathan's work that was provided to the independent judges for the event, along with a photograph of Nathan at work in his community.



Nathan Chaput is a Peace Corps Volunteer serving for two years in a rural community in the district of Gulmi. Nathan's passion and dedication to farming and agriculture started from a young age on his family's dairy farm in Vermont. He has taken his extensive experience and tirelessly worked to introduce new practices and support existing structures in his village's agricultural systems.

He facilitated a water conservation project that directly increases water access for 80 homes and indirectly involves another 30 households. Through this project, he has facilitated the replacement of 2.5 kilometers of water piping to increase water access for over 1,200 community members.

To promote sustainability and water conservation, he has also created and facilitated very successful trainings on water conservation in agriculture, permaculture techniques and increased biodiversity. He facilitated these trainings for over 110 participants and plans on continuing to offer these trainings to interested groups and communities. This project also involves the creation of a community fund for future maintenance and sustainability through responsible financial management.

Along with water conservation, Nathan has also focused on increasing access to diverse and highly nutritious food sources. He has distributed over 500 kale plants in his community as part of his biodiversity trainings, and has created a moringa tree project. Through the moringa tree project he has trained communities on the benefits of this highly nutritious tree, both for food as well as fodder, and has distributed over 200 seedlings.

He has not only volunteered in the agriculture sector though. He has also worked in the local schools, teaching several hundred students about proper hand-washing techniques and the importance of hygiene.

All in all, Nathan has been a very successful Volunteer who is passionate, knowledgeable and diverse in his projects. He demonstrates that dedication leads to amazing results. He is effortlessly able to promote new practices while respecting traditional methods of thought. He has tirelessly worked alongside his community to improve food security in his village and his efforts deserve the utmost recognition.

PCV Nathan Chaput with his community group working in a water restoration project





Mixed Fruit Tree Orchard Offers Alternatives to Declining Citrus Production

The District of Lamjung is suffering from what the local agricultural technicians term “citrus decline.” According to local residents, the area used to have healthy citrus orchards, from which many farmers obtained both improved nutrition from eating and income from selling fruit. However, the trees have been mostly wiped out in recent years due to pests, diseases, and poor cultivation techniques on the part of the farmers. The evidence of the citrus decline can be seen in the few remaining mandarin orange trees, which suffer from yellow leaves, sour fruits, and worsening conditions until they eventually die.

In response to this problem, PCV Elliott Amkraut discussed the idea of a mixed fruit orchard with a local model farmer. They both shared the dream of a small fruit orchard from which her family could eat delicious produce year-round. One advantage of a mixed plantation is that the wide variety of fruit trees lessens the risk that one specific pest or disease could wipe out the whole orchard, as in the case of Lamjung’s citrus decline. Another benefit is that rather than all of the fruits ripening at the same time, in a mixed orchard they ripen at different times throughout the year, delivering a more consistent benefit to the family’s diet.

The model farmer placed an order for mango, lychee, pomegranate and mandarin seedlings at the Khudi Agricultural Service Center. In addition, Elliott was able to bring back two macadamia nut seedlings and one improved guava seedling from a private nursery in Pokhara. The model farmer paid for all of these seedlings, most of which were available cheaply due to a subsidy from the District Agricultural Development Office.

The farmer, her family, and Elliott spent the next month measuring and planting the mixed fruit orchard according to the method he learned



PCV Elliott Amkraut working with a community counterpart to establish kiwi trellises

from his Peace Corps tree plantation training. This method involves digging a large hole and filling it with both raw and decomposed biomass (green leaves, brown leaves, finished compost, etc.). In the end, they planted 17 seedlings, 16 of which are still alive. They also sowed dhaincha as a green manure in the orchard and used it to mulch the trees, and are currently in the process of intercropping the orchard with a variety of vegetables.

While it will be a few years until this orchard starts to fruit, Elliott is happy with the way it looks now and hopeful that once it starts producing, other local farmers will take note and attempt something similar. Many farmers have already seen the young orchard and some have expressed interest in planting their own.

Elliott also believes that this project was effective in transferring skills to host country nationals, as the farmer and her family have not only learned the proper method for planting a fruit seedling, but have practiced that method 17 times. Recently, this farmer brought in another pear seedling, and he was pleased to see that she planted it using the new method in a place where it has ample room to grow.



Mushroom Cultivation for Nutrition Promotion and Income Generation

Volunteer Sarah Anderson's VDC is located in the Far West Development Region of Nepal and is very large with 37 mothers groups and 13,500 people. Each village has at least a few malnourished children and there is a strong need for off-season crops that both increase the nutritional value of the family's diet and increase their income. Many NGOs and INGOs have addressed this issue by funding large-scale, high-risk projects such as plastic houses that grow tomatoes. However, these tomatoes are fragile and hard to carry over the long distances required to reach the market. Mushrooms are both light weight and yield a high price per kilogram. Overall, mushroom cultivation is both low cost and high value. To address this opportunity, Sarah proposed mushroom cultivation to the mother's groups of her VDC because it could increase the protein and mineral content of the family's diet and increase their income.

In September, 2015 Sarah organized 16 mother's groups who were interested in mushroom cultivation. Each group donated their own straw, firewood, dark room, and various supplies for the project. In October 2015, a staff member of the District Agriculture Development Office (DADO) came to train the mothers groups about the theory of mushroom cultivation. In November 2015, another staff member from the DADO office conducted a practical training for all 16 mothers groups. During the training, the mother's groups created bags of mushrooms that were kept at the local Health Post as a model colony. At the end of the day, all 16 groups went home with 20 bags of mushroom seed and supplies to develop their own colonies.

After one month, the mushrooms started growing and each group reported that their colony had produced mushrooms. The



PCV Sarah Anderson with her mothers group members preparing straw for mushroom production



highest producing group was the Health Post model colony which produced 35 kilograms of mushrooms over 2 months. Each mother's group both consumed and sold the mushrooms to neighbors. Consuming the mushrooms increased the amount of protein, vitamins and minerals in their diet, and selling them raised money for the household as well as allowed the groups to purchase seeds a second time. Ten of the original 16 groups funded half the cost of seed for the second round of cultivation and have reported that the bags are growing well.

In the words of a community member, their village "is well known for its quality honey and refined butter. Now we can be known for our mushroom production as well!" Next year, the District Agriculture Development Office (DADO) staff has agreed to continue working with the VDC Health Post to bring quality mushroom seed to the people. The knowledge of mushroom cultivation has spread throughout the VDC and is now available as both an income generation project, as well as something that can easily be done at home to increase the amount of vegetables in a family's daily diet.



A local community beneficiary of the mushroom project

Moringa: Utilizing a Local Resource for Development

Moringa was not new to the villagers of Volunteer Max Miller's VDC in Parbat District. As children, many of the now aged farmers from this village of Nepal's Western Development Region used to play alongside the Modi Khola (a local river) and enjoy the seeds of moringa trees that once lined its banks, trees that have long since been cut down. For others in the community, moringa has meant a tasty option as a vegetable dish during their many years working and living in India. Some enterprising farmers have even endeavored to bring this tree back with them but with little success. Awareness of moringa

was present in the area. What had been lost, however, was a knowledge of the health benefits of this tree, of its many uses, and of its proper cultivation. When Max's community counterpart - a motivated farmer who has worked for many years in the business of food processing - heard about all of these things at a Peace Corps workshop, he instantly saw the value of bringing this information back to his community. Thus began a multi-month project to create a moringa nursery with the intention of expanding moringa farming in this VDC. The aim was simple: educate people on moringa, offer them the resources to



benefit from moringa, and create a situation where both supply and demand for moringa could be generated.

“Where can we get seeds? When do we plant them? Where can we plant them?” These are the questions that Max and his counterpart had to ask themselves as they began work on their project. They already knew about moringa’s benefits but they had no idea how to cultivate moringa. After hearing about a group of moringa trees located across the Kaligandaki River in the neighboring district of Baglung, they set off on foot to try to find answers. In a nearby village they learned about moringa cultivation from local farmers and gathered seeds harvested from the seed pods of local trees. All of these efforts culminated in the creation of a moringa seedling nursery in the middle of Max’s community. As soon as the seedlings of this nursery were ready, Max and his counterpart organized a seminar to spread what they had learned to community leaders from the various villages. Teachers, health post workers, village mobilizers, and more came and learned about the nutritional benefits of moringa (an ample source of vitamin A, vitamin

C, calcium, potassium and protein), about its uses (not only as a food for humans but also for livestock), and about its cultivation methods (well-draining soil is a must). Word traveled back to farmers throughout the region and, through the implementation of a series of trainings, over a hundred farmers were instructed on these topics and provided with moringa seedlings of their own.

With these trainings only recently carried out, it is too early to say what the lasting impact will be. The goal is that farmers, after enjoying the nutritional benefits of moringa through their own consumption, will be able to sell their surplus yield of moringa leaves. They are already working to prepare everything necessary to establish a large-scale nursery for the upcoming year to provide seedlings for all interested farmers in the VDC and beyond. With over 120 local residents already trained on moringa and approximately 500 moringa seedlings distributed, even if the commercial aspect of the project does not find success, farmers will be, at worst, left with a perennial source of nutritious food in the form of their new moringa trees.



The moringa tree nursery in Parbat



Peace Corps local community orientation in Myagdi district regarding planned arrival of Peace Corps Volunteers

Looking Ahead to 2017-18

The coming year will bring some uncertainty to Peace Corps with the arrival of a new Presidential Administration, but as Peace Corps continues to enjoy significant bi-lateral support in the U.S. Congress, we anticipate that our work in Nepal will continue as before.

In the past year we have developed a new Strategic Plan for Peace Corps Nepal which will guide our efforts over the next two years. Our focus will continue to be on Food Security in the mid-hills of western Nepal, with a primary focus on nutritionally-intensive agriculture. An exciting development in 2016 involved our invitation to join Peace Corps' growing global efforts in the Let Girls Learn (LGL) program, and the coming years will see the incorporation of a number of LGL strategies into our Food Security work as well as in our Cross-Sector priorities of Gender Equity and Women's Empowerment as well as Youth as Resources.

Our next group of 35 Trainees, with backgrounds in both agriculture and nutrition education, will arrive in April of 2017. Their Pre-Service Training will again take place in Kavre district to the east

of Kathmandu. Once training is completed the new Volunteers will be working in villages in the Districts of Lamjung, Syangia, Parbat, Myagdi, Arghakhanchi, Gulmi, Surkhet and Palpa.

Looking forward to 2018, we are investigating the possibility of locating a new training site near



Volunteer Leader Steve Fosher checking out a potential host family for a new volunteer



Pokhara which will be much closer to the work sites of our current Volunteers in western Nepal. This will allow visits to Volunteer sites as part of the training for the incoming group.

An important development we expect to unfold in the next two years will be the planning and design of a new project, to begin with the arrival of 20 Peace Corps Education Trainees in the spring of 2018 or 2019, depending on funding levels.

We will be moving forward in discussions with the Ministry of Education, the U.S. Embassy,

Peace Corps Headquarters in Washington, DC, and our various stakeholders in Nepal on a new English Education Project. Certainly, prior to our departure in 2004, Peace Corps had an important and large Education component as part of our overall program; and we believe that this is the right next step in our return to Nepal. We are excited about the prospects for an Education Project and look forward to diversifying our work in ways that will continue to contribute to the health and well-being of the people of Nepal.



PCV Altijana Sinanovic in front of a greenhouse constructed with discarded plastic bottles

Acknowledgments

Food Security Project Partners

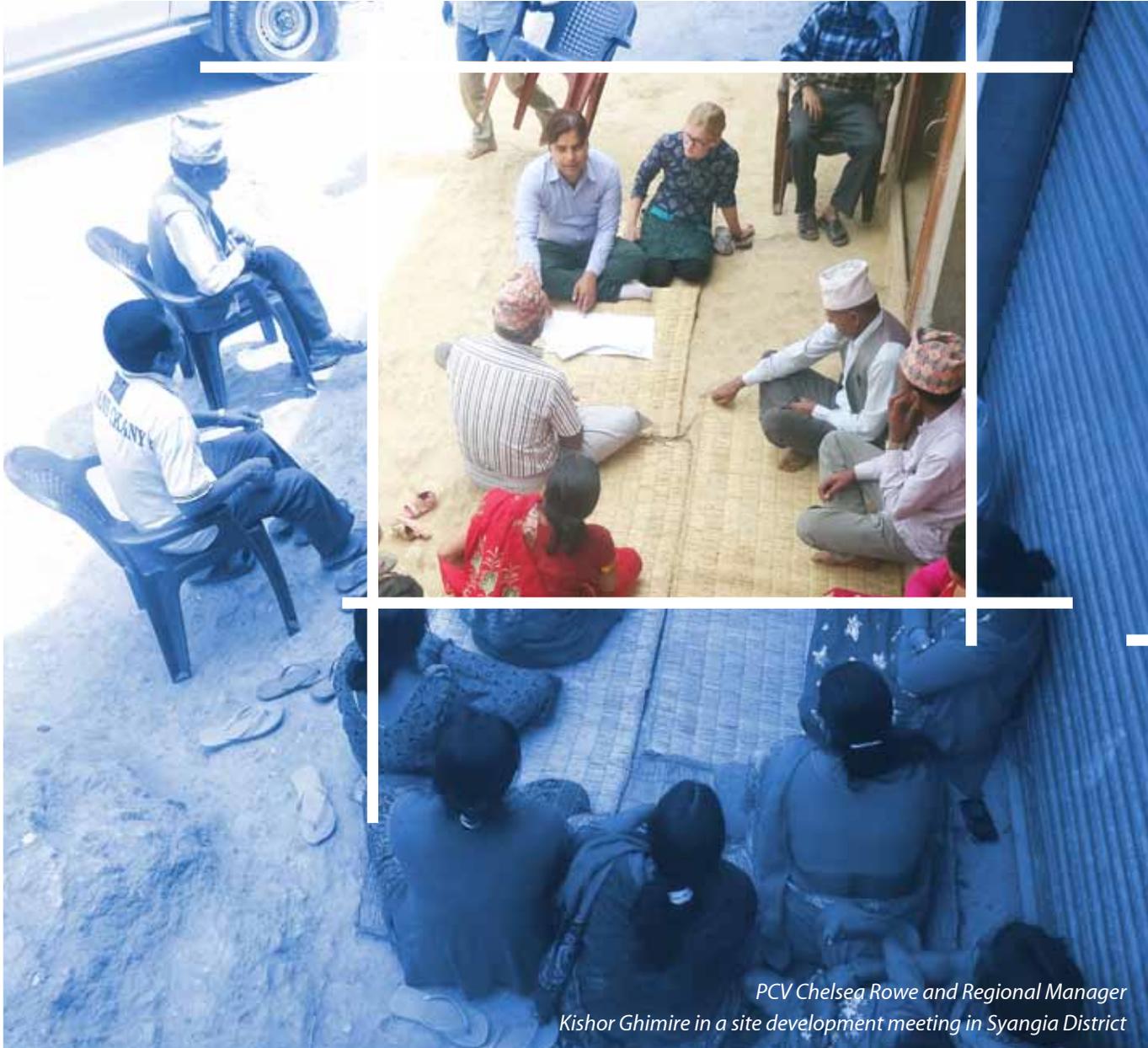
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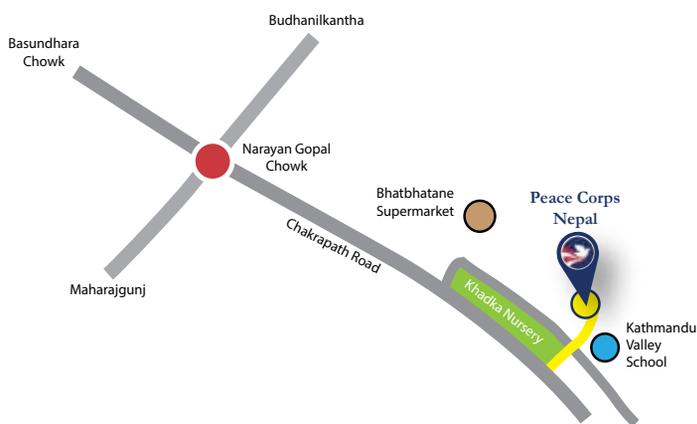
Photos

Peace Corps Nepal Volunteers and Staff



PCV Chelsea Rowe and Regional Manager Kishor Ghimire in a site development meeting in Syangia District

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