

BIJA VIDYAPEETH



NAVDANYA'S MISSION

TO PROTECT NATURE AND
PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO
KNOWLEDGE, BIODIVERSITY,
WATER AND FOOD.

Dear Bija Reader,

We are now entering our 10th year of hosting interns at Bija Vidyapeeth, Navdanya's biodiversity conservation farm in Uttarakhand, India. The program is flourishing and becomes more and more dynamic with every new season.

Interns at Bija Vidyapeeth continue to contribute to the operations of the farm and are always bringing their diverse backgrounds, research interests, skills and endless enthusiasm together.

This newsletter has been created in the spirit of reconnecting and preserving

the community ties to Navdanya's work at Bija Vidyapeeth. We hope to share our experiences and projects with those who came before us, and perhaps with those who hope to come in the future.

Peas and Love,
Bija Interns, Dec. 2010



Gandhi and Globalisation 2010

TO LOVE IS TO BE ON THE PATH OF
GANDHI - S. KUMAR

From November 24th, 2010 to December 4th, 2010, Bija Vidyapeeth hosted Navdanya's 10th annual Gandhi and Globalisation course.

Inspired by the lifeworks of Mohandas Karam Chand Gandhi, twenty participants, seventeen interns/volunteers and six guest faculties congregated to share and discuss the practical application of Gandhi's teachings in addressing contemporary concerns.

This year's conference commenced with the lighting of the oil lamp by Gandhian Sri, Satish Kumar. The lamp, symbolic of the capacity for knowledge (light) to melt away the human ego (wick) and negative tendencies (oil), stood to remind course participants of a pathway towards Truth.

Following, ten days of dialogue, spanning topics from Gandhi's message of non-violent cooperation to composting toilets, ensued. Discussions were led by a powerful group of guest lecturers, each of whom has infused the teachings of Gandhi into their work.

Participants of this year's conference were honoured by the messages and presence of Satish Kumar, the editor of Resurgence Magazine, Madhu Suri Prakash, a professor of Educational Philosophy, Aruna Roy, the founder and leader of 'Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan' (A Non-Party People's Organisation), Vimla and Sundarlal

Bahuguna, pioneers of the Chipko movement, and Dr. Vandana Shiva.

Central to the theme of each lecture were the four pillars of Gandhi's philosophy- *Sarvodaya*, *Swaraj*, *Swadeshi* and *Satyagraha*. Although initially addressed by Satish, each presenter drew the link between their struggle for ecological and social rights and Gandhi's message of non-violent resistance. From Dr. Shiva's *Seed Satyagraha*, to Sunderlal's message on the importance of conserving and planting trees, participants were reminded of the power of peaceful civic action in defending the rights of our Earth and of ourselves.

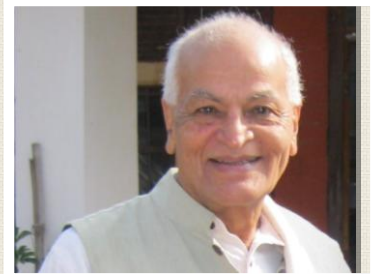
In accompany to this year's lecturers, significant learning stemmed from the stories and interests of course participants. From our sessions with Madhu Suri Prakash, who encourage each participant to share the personal story that brought them to Bija Vidyapeeth, to our evening sessions where we shared poetry, music and stories, a deep sense of intimacy amongst the participants formed. From this, the diversity of life experience and interests of participants were highlighted, as was our collective experience in seeking truth and justice within our individual communities.

Each left the course inspired by the simplicity and relevance of Gandhi's teaching, and by the capacity each person has to evoke positive change through the tools he once so humbly encouraged.

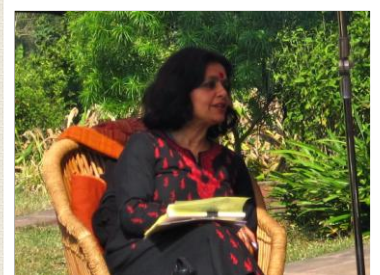
FACULTIES



VANDANA SHIVA



SATISH KUMAR



MADHU SURI PRAKASH



VIMLA & SUNDARLAL
BAHUGUNA



Seeds of Hope, Gardens of Hope

At Bija Vidyapeeth, Navdanya's Earth University, interns developed two educational projects this season.

Seeds of Hope, Gardens of Hope

Modern urban life is increasingly alienating humanity from the Earth/Bhoomi. Specific to the concern of Navdanya, contemporary patterns of development act to distance people from the natural environment, and thus their right to a healthy living and to the very sources of their food. In an effort to address this concern, Navdanya has initiated a school vegetable garden programme entitled 'Seeds of Hope, Gardens of Hope' (Asha Ke Beej, Asha Ke Chaman), to encourage school age children in India to create their own school gardens.

The overall goal is to encourage students to form an appreciation of gardening, with the hopes that they will grow to understand the important role that they can play in securing their own food access and in preserving the biodiversity of India's seed heritage.

Commencing in September 2010, interns Vanessa Goodall (Canada), Abhyudai Dhawan (India) and Holly-Creighton-Hird (UK), reached out to schools across Dehradun and are proud to announce the establishment of three school gardens.

This season we celebrated the students' gardening achievement at Bija Vidyapeeth with the Harvest of Hope Festival. The festival commenced with an interactive tour of Bija Vidyapeeth, where students explored the journey of our food from the seed to the spoon, which was followed by a lunch sourced from the fields. This day of sensory learning culminated in an afternoon of games and art which gave room for the students to share and learn of the gardening experiences of other students from across the region.

Currently, the Seeds of Hope team looks forward to expanding this project through to Spring 2011.

Biopiracy-the Student Version In October 2010, six interns at Bija Vidyapeeth began working on a student version of Dr. Shiva's book, *Biopiracy*. The original book details how commercial interests use intellectual property rights to legitimise the exploitation of indigenous knowledge and resources, with no compensation to those who have developed and propagated the knowledge over millennia.

The aim of the project is to make the book's subject matter accessible to young teenagers through summarised content, updated case studies, engaging activities, and colourful illustrations. As part of the Harvest of Hope Festival, students from local schools read preliminary content and drew images representing some of the book's major concepts.



SEEDS OF HOPE

Interns, Federico Deuse (Italy), Guiomar Espijo Castela (Spain) and Brittny Anderson (Canada) working with students from Ann Marys' School (Dehradun) to weed their school garden.



BIOPIRACY

Students from the Harvest of Hope Festival drawing illustrations for the student version of Biopiracy

The final publication will be available in PDF format, so those in the Navdanya network will be able to access it and use it in their classrooms.



HARVEST OF HOPE

Participant schools, teachers and Navdanya interns celebrating the students school harvest at Bija Vidyapeeth.

Intern Projects

This season, interns collaborated on three research projects, including a trip to the Tehri Dam, a field study of women organic farmers and an economic study of the wealth generated per farm acre.

Tehri Dam

In mid-October, a group of Navdanya interns travelled to Tehri (located in Uttarakhand, India), to document the damage resulting from the heavy monsoon cloudburst. The area surrounding the Tehri Dam, which in 2008 Navdanya predicted would not withstand a heavy monsoon (due to the inability of the waterlogged mountains to drain away excess water), was widely impacted. The resulting landslides collapsed homes and infrastructure, and washed away roads, fields and crops.

Located on the Bhagirathi River (a principal tributary of the River Ganges), the Tehri Dam is the 5th tallest Dam in the world and supplies electricity and drinking water to Delhi. However, it's construction displaced over 80,000 people and it's presence increasingly exerts environmental and social stress upon the region.

During the trip, Navdanya interns Lakshmi Eassey (USA/India), Geeta Bhassin (USA/ India), Nuno Belchoir (Portugal), Eva Munk-Madsen (Norway) and Hannah Claxton (UK) met villagers who described how 50% of houses had been damaged in their village. At the shore of the reservoir people were flooded from below and above simultaneously. Fields and homes by the dam shore were submerged as the water level rose from 820 to 835 meters.

Women Farmer Profiles

Interns Eva Munk-Madsen, Lakshmi Eassey and Hannah Claxton spent their internship at Navdanya traveling to the Pratap Nagar (Tehri Valley) and Rudraprayag (Mandakini Valley) regions of the Garhwal Himalayas. The goal was to meet and interview women farmers who utilise traditional and organic methods.

This team of interns were granted a small window into a world where the knowledge and wisdom that drives daily life has descended 10,000 years of heritage. For the interns, the project brought forth many questions including why is diversity important, what is work, what is enough and what are the impacts of a fast changing world?

Wealth Per Acre

This project is a counter to the agro-industry notion of Yield Per Acre. Instead of comparing food systems according to the productivity of one crop, this research group will compare different farming systems according to the *wealth* produced per acre.

By understanding the subsidy structure in India, the required inputs (chemical, water, labor), the productivity of diverse crops, and the home economics of farmers, the project hopes to create a comparison that brings the

WEALTH PER ACRE



The WPA group hopes to create a policy prescription for the Indian government that would call for the end of governmental induced growth of the chemical, corporation-driven industrial food model.

TEHRI DAM

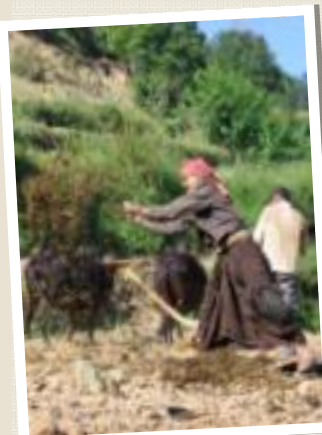


“It’s a disturbance in nature” said 74 year old Sri Mahinder Singh, who was born in Tehri district. He never before witnessed a rain as heavy as this.

For more:

<http://www.navdanya.org/news/141-flooding-and-submersion-in-tehri-district-2010>

WOMEN FARMER PROFILES



The interviews have been compiled for a forthcoming Navdanya book and will be added to the Navdanya website in 2011.

From Seed to Spoon



The Rice Harvest

On Monday October 11th, we began the long process of harvesting, threshing and storing approximately 500 varieties of rice at Bija Vidyapeeth.

Roughly the same varieties are planted each year, and when the new harvest is completed, it is placed in the seed bank, while last year's supply is removed and taken to the kitchen to be consumed by interns, staff and visitors.

Each variety of rice is planted in an area that covers several square meters and is separated by a row of finger millet (Ragi/Muduwa) to distinguish where the next variety begins. The harvesting process begins with the more experienced seed keepers cutting and bundling a small sample of each variety. Afterwards, staff and interns come through and cut each section down as close to the root as possible.

Under the guidance of Navdanya staff, interns spent the weeks of October and November assisting with the rice harvest, which involved bending over, squatting and standing in the hot sun for several hours at a time - one shift before lunch, and one shift after.

Working in the morning means the rice stalks are wet with dew and more difficult to cut. In the afternoon, after drying in the sun, they are easier and faster to cut. However, each stalk is like a thin piece of paper, and at the end of each shift, you notice your fingers and forearms are covered in tiny paper cuts.

This is what organic farming takes. No heavy machinery, no solitary farmer sitting in the AC listening to music while monotonously driving back and forth endless fields of grain - just a lot of hands, all working together, chatting, picking every stalk one by one.

“My meals have tasted better these last two days, not just because I worked hard enough to appreciate every bite, but also because I now know the work that went into each grain I ate” - Stephanie Leite, USA.

Once harvested the rice was left to dry for a week in the fields. After, it was gathered and brought to the seed bank for threshing. This was perhaps the most engaging process as interns, volunteers and guests were given the opportunity to learn different techniques to removing the tiny rice grains from the stalks. From rolling the rice under our feet, to hitting the rice with heavy sticks, we worked while enjoyed the sun, the physicality of the work and the company of the Navdanya staff who willingly shared their knowledge and experience.

This process also gave interns the time to learn to visually distinguish the rice varieties. From the domestic short grains to the Basmati from Japan, the colours, lengths and even smells varied significantly. For most interns, this was our first rice harvest, and the experience again brought to light the amount of physical work required to create enough rice for a small family's consumption, as well as for future harvests.

Staying Connected

For those interested in keeping up to date as to the activities at Bija Vidyapeeth, Navdanya has a few options in which individuals can stay connected or contribute.

1.) Bija Magazine Subscription.

Future subscriptions of Navdanya's quarterly magazine will be made available online through www.navdanya.com. For back order issues of Bija Magazine, please forward requests to navdanya@gmail.com or Ph: No. 91-011-2698077 / 26532561

2.) Scholarship Fund

We are pleased to announce the first Scholarship Programme at Bija Vidyapeeth Seed College in Dehradun. The Bija Fellowship is open for applications from Indian Nationals who would otherwise not be able to fund themselves to take a placement at Bija Vidyapeeth. We are asking for sponsors and donors to help make this scholarship programme a reality as we believe the participation of Indian Nationals would truly enrich the environment at Bija Vidyapeeth. This will act as an important step towards ensuring that Navdanya education and knowledge opportunities find homes and application within India.

The current per student cost for an Indian National to spend 2 months at Bija Vidyapeeth Seed College is Rs12,000 (approx. US\$260) and for 3 months Rs18,000 (approx.

US\$390). It is also our recommendation that the fund includes Rs2,000 (approx. US\$45) per student to cover travel and personal expenses. If you would like to sponsor a student internship or make a donation please contact the Bija Vidyapeeth Farm manager for details of how to make a donation or to make an application. Contact: interns@navdanya.net / 0135 269 3025

3.) Golden Manure

Part of the outcome of the Gandhi and Globalisation 2010 course was the desire to implement a composting toilet at Bija Vidyapeeth. Bija Vidyapeeth is currently looking for knowledge and resources to implement this project. The "Golden Manure" fund has been established in support of this project. If you wish to donate, please contact finance@navdanya.net / admin@navdanya.net for details.

4.) Future Interns and/or volunteers.

For those interested in completing an internship at Bija Vidyapeeth, or volunteering, please contact interns@navdanya.net for details. Bija Vidyapeeth welcomes new people who are looking to learn by doing, to obtain hands on experience in traditional agricultural techniques of northern India and to experience community living.

With thanks,

Bija Interns, Dec. 2010

