



**Peace  
Corps**  
NEPAL

# Annual Report 2024





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# Peace Corps Mission

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

Established in 1961 by John F. Kennedy, President of the United States of America, Peace Corps is an international network of Volunteers, community members, host country partners, and staff who each have a unique service journey, defined by an enduring desire to learn and grow. Since its establishment, the Peace Corps has been guided by a mission of world peace and friendship.

Through service, members of the Peace Corps network hone transferable skills that help them become and inspire the next generation of global leaders. Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) represent the people of the United States. With humility and intercultural competence, they integrate into and work with their host communities to foster world peace and friendship.

More than 240,000 Volunteers have served in 140 countries since 1961. Rather than providing monetary assistance to countries, the agency, through Volunteers, partner with community members, host country partners, and staff both during and after their term of service. 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.

Peace Corps has been partnering with the government of Nepal and collaborating with Nepali communities and individuals since 1962. At the invitation of the government of Nepal, Peace Corps Volunteers work alongside community members on locally prioritized projects that build relationships, promote knowledge exchange, and make a lasting and measurable impact.

Nearly 4,000 Americans have come to serve as Volunteers in Nepal over the past 62 years. Currently, Peace Corps/Nepal is implementing Agriculture, Education, and Environment/Eco-tourism projects. Peace Corps Volunteers serve for two years in their assigned communities and schools; Peace Corps Response Volunteers (PCRVs) serve from between three to twelve months.



Peace Corps Nepal staff

# Message from the Country Director



Namaste!

As the Country Director of Peace Corps/Nepal, I am pleased to share with our partners, Volunteers, stakeholders, and fellow service organizations our 2024 Annual Report.

Throughout 2024, Peace Corps had three cohorts with 48 total Volunteers serving in Nepal, partnering with communities to solve local challenges. In 2024, Peace Corps welcomed two new groups of Volunteers including Group N209, the 209th group of two-year Volunteers to serve, and NR1, the first-ever group of PCRVs in Nepal. PCRVs are more experienced, specialized volunteers who work on high-impact, shorter term assignments of up to one year. The new NR1 Response Volunteers are in the field, assisting schools improve learning and teaching through information technology, partnering at the university level to improve agricultural research outcomes, and working in picturesque rural communities to build resilient, tourism-based economies.



“

We are also very excited to announce that Peace Corps and the Ministry of Forest and Environment (MOFE) have developed and agreed on a new project in the environment sector with the goal of supporting individuals and communities to sustainably manage their natural resources and generate income through forests-based micro-enterprises.

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The existing Group N208 Volunteers who arrived in June 2023 have been augmented by Group N209 and all are now serving as English Education and Food Security Volunteers in seven districts of the Gandaki and Bagmati provinces.

We are also very excited to announce that Peace Corps and the Ministry of Forest and Environment (MOFE) have developed and agreed on a new project in the environment sector with the goal of supporting individuals and communities to sustainably manage their natural resources and improve their livelihood opportunities. The first cohort of Environment Volunteers is expected to arrive in January 2025.

None of these accomplishments would be possible without the support and collaboration of our Government of Nepal counterparts. We are thankful for their time and dedication.

Looking forward to 2025, Peace Corps/Nepal is excited to continue supporting our counterparts and partner communities in all our core activities while also welcoming two new groups of Volunteers to Nepal.

### **Troy Kofroth**

*Country Director*

*Peace Corps Nepal*



# Peace Corps Nepal

## Highlights from 2024

The second group of two-year Peace Corps Volunteers after the COVID-19 pandemic arrived in the country on January 21, 2024, adding Volunteers in the education and agriculture sectors. After three months of Pre-Service Training, the new PCVs swore-in on April 4, 2024, and started their service at their assigned sites.



For the first time in Peace Corps/Nepal's history, the first group of Peace Corps Response Volunteers (called Group NR1) arrived in the country in May 2024. There were total of ten PCRVs including four digital learning and training, three agriculture research, and three eco-tourism PCRVs. PCRVs are more experienced professionals and serve for a shorter period of time from three to twelve months. After ten days of initial orientation, they started serving at their assigned sites.



Also in 2024, and after a request from the Government of Nepal, Peace Corps/Nepal received approval to implement a new Environment Project. Peace Corps/Nepal completed the project design after consulting with multiple stakeholders including MOFE at the federal and provincial levels, Division Forest Offices, Sub-Division Forest Offices, Community Forest User Groups, USAID, and various international organizations. Peace Corps/Nepal and MOFE signed a project collaboration letter on September 3, 2024. Peace Corps/Nepal expects the first group of two-year Environment Volunteers to arrive in January 2025.



In the next sections of this annual report, we provide additional details of Peace Corps/Nepal's work and accomplishments during 2024.

### Agriculture Sector: Food Security Project

Peace Corps/Nepal's five-year (2021-2026) Food Security project facilitates a sustainable increase in agricultural productivity and diversification, agriculture-based income, and dietary diversity among smallholder farming households in rural communities. Peace Corps/Nepal closely works with the government line ministries in the design, implementation and evaluation of the project.

Peace Corps/Nepal's Food Security Project is built around four pillars of food security: availability, accessibility, utilization, and stability.



Peace Corps Food Security Volunteers engage with interested rural smallholder farmers and their households in nutrition and agriculture interventions ranging from fruit tree promotion, beekeeping, high-value, low-volume crop cultivation, and practices in accessing, cooking, and consuming nutritious foods that are locally available. In addition, Volunteers help increase leader farmer capacity to provide sustainable extension services in and around their rural communities and enhance the basic business management skills among leader farmers so they can generate agriculture-based income.

Peace Corps/Nepal's Food Security Project is built around four pillars of food security: availability, accessibility, utilization, and stability. Peace Corps' approach to Food Security is in line with the U.S. Global Food Security Act, which was signed into law in July 2016.

Throughout 2024, there were fourteen Volunteers serving in the three districts in Gandaki province, and the next group of Volunteers will arrive in January 2025 to serve in Gandaki and Lumbini Provinces.

### **Food Security Project Goal 1: Agriculture Productivity and Diversification**

In 2024, PCVs primarily worked with rural and smallholder farming families, including Women of Reproductive Age (WRA) and school-aged children, to sustainably increase production of

diverse and high-value, low-volume food crops. Volunteers have promoted improved management practices and technologies on ginger, turmeric, beekeeping (*Apis cerena*), oyster mushroom, and fruit and nut tree promotion.

In beekeeping, Volunteers have been instrumental on providing training to farmers on colony management, forage management, promoting local practices on feeding, insect pest and disease management, and providing improved beehives as a tool to increase the production of honey.

In oyster mushroom production, Volunteers have been working with local agrovets, municipal and ward offices, and smallholder farmers on increasing the access of production inputs including but not limited to supply the spawns and providing the improved production, consumption and marketing techniques.

Similarly, in fruit and nut tree cultivation, Volunteers helped farmers to rejuvenate orchards through intercropping management and topsoil amendments. Volunteers have also promoted the planting of fruit tree varieties specific to agro-climatic zones at the sites where Volunteers are placed.



### Food Security Project Goal 1 Impacts and Accomplishments

In 2024, of the 756 (61% women) Nepali farmers who collaborated with PCVs on food and nutrition security initiatives:

- 53% have already applied improved agricultural practices and technologies for better production. Some of those practices include but are not limited to crop genetics, cultural practices, pest and disease management, soil health management, post-harvest handling and storage.
- More than 100 farmers received training on improved crop cultivation management practices and technologies on ginger, turmeric, and mushroom farming. With this support they were able to harvest 40 kg of ginger/turmeric and 487 kg of mushroom.
- 96 smallholder farmers planted 1,066 fruit and nut trees through establishing five fruit tree nurseries in the communities.
- More than 150 farmers (54% female) were trained in improved practices on beekeeping. As a result, 211 improved beehives were installed, and 41 kg of honey harvested.
- 20,681 square meters of land were managed through improved agricultural management practices or technologies.
- On average, each Volunteer worked with eight households on ginger/turmeric and mushroom production, seven households on fruit and nut trees production, eleven households on beekeeping management and 1,477 square meters of land has been improved.

### Food Security Project Goal 2: Increased Dietary Diversity of Household Members

In 2024, Food Security Volunteers primarily worked with smallholder farmers, particularly households having Women of Reproductive Age, along with families and school-aged children, to adopt one or more new food consumption or feeding practices and behaviors which ultimately improve dietary diversity of the households.

**PCVs facilitated cooking demonstrations during home visits, and this activity led to an increased consumption of neglected and underutilized but nutrient dense crops.**

PCVs worked with Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs), health post staff, the health section of the municipality, schoolteachers, and mothers' and farmers' groups to train and coach individual smallholder family members in evidence-based nutrition practices included in the World Health Organization's Essential Nutrition Actions (ENA) framework. The key activities PCVs conducted under this objective included informal one-on-one and group trainings in homes, health centers, and schools. These trainings promoted access to and the consumption and feeding of diverse and nutrient-rich foods. Through follow-up sessions, PCVs reinforced lessons and confirmed an increase in dietary diversity among participants.

At the household level, Volunteers worked with host families and WRA by implementing the garden-to-plate concept. PCVs facilitated cooking demonstrations during home visits, and this activity led to an increased consumption of neglected and underutilized but nutrient dense crops. Volunteers also collaborated with schools and health posts to develop nutrition corners that include nutrition-related messages.



Cooking demonstration session

### Food Security Project Goal 2 Impacts and Accomplishments

In 2024, of the 182 people reached by Peace Corps Volunteers through nutrition activities:

- 75% were women.
- 71 WRA and/or key household decision makers who demonstrate the preparation of recipes that incorporate a wide variety of nutrient-rich foods.
- On average, each Volunteer worked with thirteen households on nutrition initiatives.

### Food Security Project: Complementary Activities

In addition to the primary project activities as outlined by the project framework, PCVs also conducted various complementary activities based on the priorities of the community and PCV interest. Some of the complementary projects conducted by PCVs include English clubs in school, eco-clubs, school gardening, emotional well-being training, solid waste management, activities to empower women and their leadership, water quality improvement, building cold storage, and perfume making using locally grown fragrant plants.



Eco-brick project

### Education Sector: Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) Project

The Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST) and education leaders know that having qualified English-speaking instructors in rural areas will enhance the ability of the education sector to meet its goals of increasing English learning opportunities for all citizens, and that furthering positive education outcomes among students will require the professional development of teachers. MoEST also notes that PCVs are well

suited to further positive teaching and learning outcomes for teachers and students in government schools. PCVs are fluent, highly proficient English speakers trained in student-centered, interactive teaching practices, and in methods of engaging entire communities in developing authentic, meaningful English use. Peace Corps/Nepal's TEFL Project aims to strengthen English language knowledge and communicative skills among students so that they can access academic and professional opportunities. To achieve this outcome, the Peace Corps TEFL project activities focus on building English language teaching and learning capacity among teachers, students, and community members in government schools in rural Nepal. During 2024, there were a total of twenty-four TEFL Volunteers teaching English to students in Grades 4-7 in four districts. The next group of TEFL Volunteers will arrive in January 2025, and after completing their Pre-Service Training, they will be posted to their respective communities and schools in five districts in Bagmati and Gandaki provinces in the last week of March 2025.

### TEFL Project Goal 1: Working with Teachers

TEFL Volunteers collaborate with Nepali counterpart English teachers to support them in building their English language skills, increasing the use of evidence-based teaching practices, and promoting student-centered teaching and learning. In addition, they collaborate to design and implement projects, and identify, develop, and use instructional materials for effective teaching.

In addition to optionally co-planning and co-teaching classes, TEFL Volunteers and their Nepali counterpart teachers engage in Communities of Practice, where two or more teachers share a common interest or passion to enhance their teaching practices. These collaborations can be formal or informal, and members may not see themselves as formal "members" but rather as teachers who have found they can discover (or rediscover) their interest and pleasure in teaching by sharing their trials and successes with other teachers. Through this collaboration, the teachers increase their English language skills.



Education Volunteer teaching English at school

### TEFL Project Goal 1 Impacts and Accomplishments

In 2024, by collaborating with the English teacher Peace Corps Volunteers:

- 29 teachers demonstrated improved English teaching skills.
- 58 teachers demonstrated improved general teaching skills.
- 17 teachers demonstrated female empowerment classroom teaching practices.
- 21 teachers demonstrated improved procedural English.
- 107 teachers participated in informal English learning and conversation practice.
- 76 teachers actively participated in a collaborative community of practice (a professional English language improvement committee).
- 48 English teachers adopted new learning materials in classes.

## TEFL Project Goal 2: Working with Students

While partnering with Nepali Teachers, TEFL Volunteers model best practices through direct classroom teaching, pull-out groups, and one-on-one tutoring. This work includes collaborating with teachers to design, adapt, and pilot learning materials. Outside of the formal classroom, PCVs enhance student engagement with the larger learning community by organizing recreational activities such as theater, music, games, clubs/camps, and digital resources. They collaborate to implement effective classroom management and positive discipline by creating a student-friendly learning environment. Volunteers, counterpart teachers, and students use a mix of traditional and alternative approaches to English language teaching by using the government curricula and textbooks. The focus is on developing the communicative competence in all language skills in students. The Volunteers seek to maximize the use of digital resources to enhance learning.

**PCVs enhance student engagement with the larger learning community by organizing recreational activities.**

### TEFL Project Goal 2 Impacts and Accomplishments

In 2024, the English teacher Peace Corps Volunteers:

- Taught or co-taught 1,562 students of which 784 were girls and 778 were boys.
- Involved 665 students in extracurricular English clubs, tutoring sessions, and/or camps.
- Reached 693 total students, of whom 512 students demonstrated achievement in an English course.



Education Volunteer teaching English at school



## TEFL Project Goal 3: Working with Community Members

Moving student learning out of the classroom and into the community often motivates learners. Similarly, the more that the community goes into the classroom, the more the benefits of schooling are seen and understood. This community engagement shows students how their studies are important to the community and how they relate to daily life in that community.

While TEFL Volunteers focus on strengthening teacher capacity and increasing student achievement during the very first months, TEFL PCVs and their counterpart teachers and students plan and implement extracurricular and co-curricular activities that engage students and the larger community.

### TEFL Project Goal 3 Impacts and Accomplishments

During 2024, the English teacher Peace Corps Volunteers:

- Facilitated 314 community members' participation in activities that support student learning. Of the total participants, 203 were female and 111 were male.
- Out of 224 community member participants, 182 community members reported that the Volunteer-organized school involvement activities increased their ability to support students' access to learning.

### TEFL Project Complementary Activities - From Classrooms to Environmental Action

In addition to English language teaching, PCVs also incorporate ecological initiatives within schools, empowering students, teachers, and communities to tackle environmental challenges. Beyond raising awareness about weather variability and sustainable practices, they estab-

lish eco-clubs that works on different areas of environmental stewardship such as preserving natural resources, developing school gardens, and leading workshops on waste managements. These hands-on activities not only foster environmental stewardship and equip students with practical skills but also provide an opportunity for students to reflect on and embrace how green their actions truly are.

### Environment Sector : Natural Resources Management Project

Peace Corps/Nepal will be starting a new Natural Resources Management Project in the environment sector starting in 2025. In September 2024, Peace Corps and MOFE exchanged a partnership and collaboration document, thereby paving the way for PCVs to work on the Natural Resources Management project. The Environment Volunteers will work in communities to assist them sustainably manage their natural resources and generate income through forests-based micro-enterprises. Peace Corps/Nepal anticipates a total of twelve-fifteen Environment Volunteers for the first cohort in 2025 who will be placed in three districts of Gandaki and Bagmati provinces. Environment Volunteers will collaborate with



Response Volunteer orienting school staff on a new digital device

local community members, especially youth, to promote environmental stewardship, including solid-waste management, community forestry, fuel efficient cookstoves, and sustainable income generation from forest resources.

## Peace Corps Response Program

The launch of our Peace Corps Response Volunteer program in May 2024 welcomed ten experienced professionals to serve nine-twelve months in various communities throughout Nepal. PCRV positions require advanced degrees and/or a minimum of five years of relevant professional mid- or senior-level experience to address specific issues highlighted by the local government. Under the Digital Learning and Training program, Response Volunteers serve in public schools to increase the use and knowledge of technology among students and educators. Relatedly, the Eco-tourism Promotion and Business Literacy Response Volunteers work to improve the English language capabilities of business owners to assist them in developing eco-tourism and business skills. Additionally, Agriculture Education and Research Response Volunteers serve as research specialists or laboratory experts at university or government research centers. The following highlights from our inaugural cohort of PCRVs have solidified our commitment to welcome our second group of Response Volunteers in May 2025:

### Peace Corps Response Project: Digital Learning and Training

Digital Learning and Training Response Volunteers collaborate with their counterpart computer science teachers to develop the digital infrastructure of community schools and train school faculty to use digital resources in teaching at government schools in Kaski, Gorkha, Kavrepalanchowk, and Syangja districts. All four PCRVs serve for nine months with the focus to strengthen the community school's digital infrastructure, increase students' access to digital resources for learning, and co-teaching computer science to students. In the initial few months of their service, Volunteers focused on assessing the existing digital facilities and equipment sta-



tus at schools. They collaboratively worked with their respective computer science teachers and the school principal to repair and upgrade and expand the existing computer labs of all the government schools primarily supported through the small grant assistance.

To support the technology educational priorities of local-level government, two of the PCRVs from Syangja and Gorkha have applied for grants concentrating on upgrading the existing computer labs, installing solar power back-up systems, adding computers, and promoting the usage of digital technologies such as RACHEL (Remote Area Community Hotspot for Education and Learning), a self-contained wireless "database" ready to use for anyone, anytime, even in the absence of electricity and the internet. Each unit is "pre-loaded with open-source media files, including Khan Academy courses, TED Talks, Microsoft Office Tutorials, Moodle, Wiki for Kids pages, history timelines, maps, typing lessons and games, educational games and videos for students and



adults. These features make RACHEL a “self-contained” classroom that can be taken into any room and is ready to use.

### **Peace Corps Response Project: Agriculture Education and Research**

With the overall goal of enhancing the capacity of agriculture campuses in producing skilled human resources for the expansion of agriculture extension services to rural communities, and in partnership with the Institute of Agriculture and



Animal Science (IAAS) of Tribhuvan University, Peace Corps/Nepal assigned three Response Volunteers in its affiliated campuses.

Two PCRVs are working as lab technical experts on various lab-based facilities with faculty members and lab technicians to develop 1) an inventory of lab equipment and 2) standard operating guidelines for the lab equipment. During the first five months of service, Volunteers prepared the lab inventories for two agriculture labs in their respective campuses.

Volunteers have also mentored students on projects, offering technical advice on laboratory equipment use, techniques and research methods. The PCRVs are also working with students in plant breeding research. As the new semester begins, in coordination with their faculty advisor, the Volunteers will assist the students in all aspects of their research.

As a Field Research Specialist, another PCRV is working to strengthen agriculture-based research capabilities of faculty members and the students, and their capabilities to promote community-university engagement activities. Additionally, Volunteers are instructing students in agriculture statistics and research methods coursework. In the first five months of service, the Volunteer has delivered 51 hours of in-classroom teaching and advised students on their compulsory final research projects on topics like research design, data analysis, coding, English writing, and research presentation skills.

In addition to teaching, PCRVs planned and delivered a Research and Publication Ethics Seminar at their respective campuses. During the first seminar, 43 female students and ten male students attended. The students were between the ages of nineteen and twenty-three. From a pre and post seminar evaluation, attendees showed a 32% increase in comprehension after completing the seminar. Relatedly, Volunteers’ contributions to institutional improvements in their respective district include the development of a Research Inventory that documents important details of previous research projects conducted on campus and helps the university identify research

gaps for future projects.

### **Peace Corps Response Project: Eco-tourism Promotion and Business Literacy**

In partnership with the Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA), the Peace Corps Eco-Tourism Promotion and Business Literacy project under the Peace Corps Response Program supports small business owners and workers in tourism-dependent communities in the Gandaki Province to improve their English and business understanding to increase not only the income from eco-tourism in these communities but also to enhance the experience of tourists visiting these communities for trekking, Nepali culture, and mountain views.

Three Response Volunteers are currently serving in rural homestay communities in the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) region. Assigned for a period of twelve months, each Response Volunteer supports members of the assigned community by teaching small group and

one-on-one sessions of the English language to homestay operators, porters, trekking guides, hotel owners, restaurateurs, and other small enterprise owners involved in eco-tourism and hospitality activities. In addition to English literacy, the Response Volunteers closely work with business owners and operators to improve business operations by teaching basic business literacy and marketing skills.

Eco-Tourism Response Volunteers have been successful in establishing regular English Classes for homestay community members, including literacy classes for older women and providing digital and business literacy skills and resources for school students and business entrepreneurs. Additionally, the PCRVs are co-facilitating weekly local markets for the promotion and marketing of local handicrafts, woven items and food for tourists, and they are promoting wild honey hunting activities for tourists visiting the homestay communities. In collaboration with publication houses in the United States, Eco-Tourism PCRVs have been elevating ethnic Gurung artisans' work and





Digital literacy campaign at the community level

cultural traditions. Developing brochures, social media pages and other promotional materials to promote local tourism in the homestay communities improves the local economies of these communities in the long-term.

### Visit of the Deputy Director of Peace Corps

Peace Corps' Deputy Director, Mr. David E. White, Jr., visited Nepal for a five-day trip in May, 2024. While in Nepal, Deputy Director White met with government and civil society representatives to thank them for their long-standing support of the Peace Corps program since its founding and discussed plans to expand Peace Corps programming in Nepal. Deputy Director White also participated in the swearing-in of ten newly arrived Peace Corps Response Volunteers.



During his visit, Deputy Director White traveled to Kaski and Parbat districts to meet currently serving Volunteers, their host families, and Nepali counterparts.



# Volunteer Project Highlights

During 2024, 48 Volunteers served in communities in eight districts of Nepal. Each of the Volunteers partnered with their communities to identify solutions to locally-identified challenges. Working together and using local resources as possible, the Volunteers and community members completed many projects of varying sizes. In this section of the 2024 Annual Report, we provide Volunteer project highlights.

## **Turning Trash into Treasure: Inspiring a New Generation of Eco-Conscious Agriculture Students in Eco-Brick Trash Collection and Sustainable Development**

*Sector(s):* **Environment, Agriculture, Education**

The villages in the hills of Myagdi district are filled by vibrant colors. Everything is multi-colored, from the flowering bougainvillea to the cheerful pastel-painted mud homes. However, some of the colors in the landscape come from shiny wrappers of trash. These picturesque natural landscapes are tainted by countless pieces of shiny trash. A disregard for trash disposal is especially of concern for communities like these villages in Myagdi district where nearly the entire village relies on subsistence agriculture for their livelihoods. Trash is not only an eyesore, but a serious threat to the health and well-being of these farming communities.

While this problem is easy to recognize by looking around the community, finding a realistic solution is a far greater challenge. The issue of trash pollution runs deep – even if community members gather their single-use plastic to dispose of at home, there is no option for proper garbage disposal. All trash must be burnt, dumped in the river, or cast aside. None of these options is a sustainable choice to protect the vulnerable environment which means so much to the local farmers. Working with her community, PCV Lana

brainstormed ideas. During a Peace Corps training, a PCV teacher named Tommy shared that he implemented a project at his school where he taught students to build eco-bricks from single-use plastic scraps. The creation of an eco-brick is simple: the students collect single-use plastic scraps, rinse them, and pack them into an empty plastic bottle. When the bottle is packed tightly enough, it becomes firm enough to function as a brick and can be used in sustainable construction projects. PCV Lana now had an idea of how to address trash pollution at her assigned community to work with the students in a newly established agriculture club at the school by building eco-bricks. She invited PCV Tommy to visit her school to introduce the creation of eco-bricks to her agriculture club students.



The collaborative project was an overwhelming success. The students were energized by PCV Tommy's emphatic delivery of the eco-brick plan and started collecting trash right away in a competition to see if the boys' or girls' team could pack an eco-brick sooner. The students used the eco-bricks to build a raised garden bed in the agriculture demonstration plot of the school. This garden bed will be the final resting place for a huge amount of single-use plastic trash. The community's vision is that through the creation of eco-bricks, the trash scattered through the community will be replaced by a new multi-colored addition: vibrant flower beds and household kitchen gardens that have been built upon stacks of eco-bricks.

### **Breaking the Cycle: Educating Generations on Menstrual Health and Hygiene**

*Sector(s):* **Health, Education**

In many parts of Nepal, including the village where PCV Kindness resides in Myagdi district, menstruation is a taboo subject due to inadequate education and misconceptions. Women often face social and physical challenges during their menstrual cycle. Restrictive cultural practices prohibit them from entering the kitchen and religious places, and sometimes even from interacting with others. Furthermore, the school curriculum provides little to no information about menstruation or reproductive health, leaving girls without the knowledge to manage their periods.

In response to these challenges, PCV Kindness sought out a solution that would empower women and girls, break the stigma, and promote better health management in her village. Thanks to the support of USAID grant funding and a partnership with the organization Days for Girls Nepal, Kindness was able to host a training program that

**They learned essential topics, including how to manage menstruation, what to expect during menopause, handwashing, and overall health, equipping women with the knowledge they needed to improve their well-being.**



*Students preparing reusable pads*

brought woman and girls of her community together. Days for Girls is a nonprofit organization working to change the stigma surrounding menstruation by providing access to menstrual products and education.

Under the project the organization traveled from Kathmandu to Myagdi to collaborate with PCV Kindness, conducting two workshops for women of all ages. 71 women, ranging in age from 10 to 80 years, eagerly gathered to participate in the training. They learned essential topics, including how to manage menstruation, what to expect during menopause, handwashing, and overall health, equipping women with the knowledge they needed to improve their well-being.

One of the most impactful aspects of the project was the distribution of 31 reusable cloth menstrual pads to students. These sustainable pads offer an alternative to the single-use options that are often

unavailable or unaffordable in rural areas. By providing these pads, the training not only improved menstrual hygiene but also contributed to reducing the environmental impact of waste disposal, as most girls had previously discarded their used products in rivers or buried them in the ground. The success of the training represents the beginning of a broader initiative to empower women and girls in the Volunteer's assignment community. In the coming months, PCV Kindness plans to create a girls' group, a safe space for future generations of women to feel empowered. By providing access to menstrual products and education, these women and girls now have the tools they need to manage their menstrual health with greater knowledge.

### **Mushroom Production for Dietary Diversification and Income Generation**

#### *Sector(s): Agriculture*

PCV Tomoe is a Food Security Volunteer serving in the hills of Gandaki Province. In her community local farmers were interested to learn how to cultivate oyster mushrooms. Based on this interest, PCV Tomoe identified 31 local farmers, including three who some previous experience with mushroom cultivation, who wished to receive more in-depth training and receive starter materials.

PCV Tomoe wrote a grant application through the USAID Small Project Assistance (SPA) program. The grant funding provided materials, including mushroom bags, tarp, and four large community drums, and paid for training expertise. The farmers provided straw from their own fields and paid for the mushroom spawn needed for the project. The training occurred in the first week of April 2024. The farmers arrived with their bags of straw to learn how to cut, wash, and steam it in the drums before filling bags with alternating layers of straw and mushrooms. Following the training day, PCV Tomoe made house visits to follow up and teach after-care maintenance to all the farmers, including watering, temperature control, and harvesting. Success of the mushroom bags varied from farmer to farmer: some were very good, others were acceptable, and still others struggled





tery legume soup (daal), accompanied by a small portion of vegetables such as leafy greens, potatoes, cauliflower, or whatever might be in season. Daal bhat is consistent with the nutritional food grouping of “Go, Grow, and Glow,” however, it lacks the proper proportions. Many people within the PCVs’ villages are unfamiliar with food groups, vitamins, proper food portioning practices, and general nutrition information.

The Rural Municipality Health Coordinator identified this gap in knowledge and suggested a project with Peace Corps to address it. He requested that PCVs Lana and Emily, serving in neighboring communities, construct a nutrition corner at each of the local health posts and provide training on nutrition there. The Nutrition Corner aimed to develop conversations about diet and equip local health providers with a visual aid for teaching nutrition. The team met with the health post staff to decide on the implementation strategy, hired a local carpenter to build the nutrition corners, and purchased plastic fruit, vegetables, and oth-

to produce viable mushrooms. The farmers also experienced some variable level of contamination with bacteria, mold, and pests.

However, in the end the farmers produced 57 kilograms of mushrooms over the course of two months because of the workshops. As a result of the project, the farmers not only had increased nutritional diversity, but they also had the skills to replicate the process in the future.

## Creating Conversations about Nutrition and the Importance of Food Groups

*Sector(s): Agriculture, Health*

Adequate nutrition and dietary diversity are a serious concern in the hills of Myagdi district. Most residents are subsistence farmers eating mainly what they grow in their fields and supplementing with food items purchased from local shops that have a preponderance of pre-packaged foods. PCVs Lana’s and Emily’s neighbors eat the traditional Nepali meal, daal bhat, twice a day essentially every day. This typical meal consists of a large portion of rice, topped with the wa-





er supplies using USAID grant funding. The PCVs also created nutrition training materials in Nepali for the health post, including a poster depicting a healthy plate and one which explains what each vitamin is used for in the body and in what foods they can be found. After the nutrition corner was installed and stocked with materials, it was time to put the new resources to work by conducting training with members of the community.

With support from local teachers and all the health post staff, PCVs Lana and Emily and local health post coordinators have provided training to each ward's group of FCHVs, local mother's groups, and forty-five secondary school students. This project's success is not only that it accomplished its goals of providing a visual aid for nutrition at the health post and teaching FCHVs and students about nutrition, but it also opened up pathways for future, on-going nutrition training in the community. These initial events have created momentum for health and nutrition work, which will have positive impacts for months and years to come.

## Hand washing and Sanitation Improves School Attendance

Sector(s): **Education, Health**

PCV Henry is a TEFL Volunteer serving in the Gorkha district. The school he is assigned to had a number of challenges around hygiene and sanitation. Many hand washing taps were broken and soap was not widely available, so neither the students nor the teachers were able to regularly wash their hands or use soap even after using the bathroom. Furthermore, bathrooms were not well-maintained and the septic tank was full. Rates of digestive illness among the students were relatively high, with over 30% of students getting a digestive illness at least once in a month, which either kept them home or prevented them from paying attention in class.

In response to these challenges, Principal Saroj, PCV Henry, and a team of teachers from the school implemented a USAID-funded hygiene and sanitation improvement project. The school used grant funds to acquire cleaning supplies and soap, fixed faucets around the campus, and installed a pipe to connect the full septic tank to an empty one. To change behaviors around hand washing, the school did not limit itself to a single training. Rather, they held community outreach events in each of the surrounding villages, which both delivered important hygiene informa-



*Hand washing station in School*



*Hand washing tap in school*

tion and collected valuable feedback from parents and community members. Back at school, the team followed up these trainings with hand washing demonstrations and reminders, including the PCV washing his hands in demonstration at the morning assembly while singing “Happy Birthday.”

Now the hygiene situation is much improved. Bathrooms are cleaner, sewage is contained underground, soap is available at bathroom sinks, and most importantly, students are regularly seen washing their hands vigorously after using the bathroom. Older students can even be seen assisting younger students with applying soap and washing properly. The community trainings were perhaps the biggest success of the project. Principal Saroj was surprised at the lack of basic knowledge around personal and household hygiene practices in the community, especially in villages farther from the school, and concluded that they should have done these trainings sooner. Now Principal Saroj is keen to not only keep up a higher level of hygiene and sanitation at the school but hold further community outreach events in the future as well.

## Beekeeping Improves Household Food Security

### Sector(s): *Agriculture*

PCV Jeff serves in a small farming community in the high hills of Gandaki Province. Beekeeping hives are a common sight in PCV Jeff’s village, and honey can provide a valuable addition to household nutrition and income. Many of the local hives are empty, having been abandoned by the bees. One farmer who had lost her bees reported not having given the hives any food. Most farmers know they need to feed their hives, but overall, there is not a high level of beekeeping expertise.

During a community meeting organized by the PCV, farmers affirmed that growing the local beekeeping industry is a high priority. They formed a farmers’ group for this purpose and developed a plan to conduct a beekeeping training and distribute box hives, bees, and beekeeping hats. The group was composed of 24 men and women from the community. Working with the farmers’ group, PCV Jeff then developed and received approval for a grant supported by the USAID SPA fund. Based on the budget, the group held a lottery to award twelve random members with a hive and

hat. The PCV organized a presentation from a retired government agriculture officer who provided the group with the scientific background of beekeeping, which was followed by another presentation delivered by a local bee vendor. The second training was more focused on hands-on and the day-to-day practical aspects of beekeeping.

At the end of the grant, twelve households received a beehive, six of which were new beekeepers. All 24 members of the farmers’ group received beekeeping training from experts. The relationships formed between bee experts and the newly formed farmers’ group have established social resources to ensure that the hives will be maintained



**Bathrooms are now cleaner, sewage is contained underground, soap is available at bathroom sinks, and most importantly, students are regularly seen washing their hands vigorously after using the bathroom.**





Beekeeping project

with a high level of expertise. The support of the USAID funded SPA grant allowed more farmers to take on the economic risk of a new venture by subsidizing the costs and serving as a resource for the community to organize around. After the training, the village was subjected to an intense hailstorm which devastated the local crops. The beehives, however, were unharmed by the storm, demonstrating an advantage to beekeeping that may become more crucial as farmer's anticipate the ramifications of a changing climate. Looking ahead one farmer reflected, "We are getting older, someday we can sell the buffalos and focus on bees because it's easier on the body." Her bees are currently on track to expand into another hive in a few months.

### Collaborating Across Myagdi District to Increase Honey Production

#### Sector(s): Agriculture

A group of Food Security PCVs serving in Myagdi district but living and working in different communities heard similar interest from their community members to increase honey production. The PCVs observed that farmers were motivated to raise bees but struggled to maintain proper care or didn't have the means to purchase a beehive. Many smallholder farmers raise one to two beehives but often do not have foundational infor-

mation on the management of bees thus resulting in failing hives. Beekeeping is very important not only for pollination of essential crops but it also provides an economic opportunity for communities through honey sales.



Based on the desire to learn, the PCVs worked with community counterparts to organize a training that would provide education on beekeeping as well as distribute beehives to participants.

“Before the training I was scared of my bees and never opened the hive. Now I know how to inspect the hive,” exclaimed a smallholder farmer after the training. This scenario was the case for many farmers who attended the three-day-long introductory beekeeping course.

To make the training a success, each PCV worked within their wards finding farmers who had bees and were motivated to learn about beekeeping. Working with their ward chairmen PCVs then assessed common beekeeping issues/challenges in the community. The result of this process was a guide used to develop the training topics. The PCVs contacted the municipality’s Agricultural Knowledge Center to lead the training. Volunteers worked with the community to find demonstration beehives for training participants to gain practical hands-on experience. Communicating with different organizations built a network of resources that training participants could rely upon following for the foreseeable future.

The trainings consisted of two three-day trainings during which 39 individual farmers increased their knowledge and skill in beekeeping. Many participants were eager to ask the trainer questions on common problems they were facing; one farmer asked, “I split my bees but both hives failed, why?” which opened a discussion on proper splitting techniques and seasonal management. Twenty participants received a beehive with bees, a bee veil, gloves, and a hive stand. These resources ensured people had all the necessary tools to properly care for their bees. In the month following training, Volunteers conducted home visits to all participants to monitor grant success. At this time 85% of participants implemented improved management practices and technologies within a month of training. With beaming smiles farmers open their hives with pride and confidence, a community once plagued by failures welcomes new hope one hive at a time.

## Training Teachers and Students for the Digital Economy

### Sector: Education

PCV Tommy serves as an TEFL Volunteer at a school with about 191 students in a rural community in Gandaki province. On the first day of school, one of his partner teachers showed PCV Tommy the computer lab. The desks and the computers were covered in a visible line of dust, and the few computers didn’t turn on. Out of the ten computers in the lab, only four were working. The computer laboratory was not able to provide students or faculty with a critical tool for learning – the internet.

PCV Tommy asked the school’s principal, Principal Govinda, about the computer lab. Principal Govinda said that it wasn’t used at the school and had fallen into disrepair. Principal Govinda expressed interest in repairing the lab. “The internet is the best teacher,” recounted the principal humorously. “You can learn anything from it,” he continued. Some of the teachers who had been at the school for nearly a decade had never used a computer before but were excited to learn.

The principal contacted a local alumnus of the school named Raju who is a computer operator and social worker who had donated playground equipment to the school in the past. Initially, Prin-



*Teachers Learning to Use the Computers to Build Lesson Plans*



*Students Using the Newly Refurbished Computers*

Principal Govinda and PCV Tommy had only planned to repair the computers that weren't functional. After examining the laboratory, Raju had a better idea. He proposed upgrading the entire lab to Windows 10 with hardware to match. While the school managed technical resources from locally available resources, PCV Tommy applied for grant funding through the USAID SPA Program to cover software, hard disks, RAM, CPU processors, and cables.

**The refurbished computer lab created a digital learning environment for teachers and students.**

For four days, Raju, his brother who has technical skills, Principal Govinda, and PCV Tommy worked to upgrade the lab. When complete, all ten computers were fast, connected to the internet, and running Windows 10. The school was able to hold two training courses, giving instructions to fifteen teachers on the basics of Microsoft office and web browsing. Some of the teachers attending had never used a computer before. Balu, one of the teachers who had worked at the school for over a decade, talked about using a computer for the first time. "I want to learn computers. Now is the time."

The students have used these computers to create graphs in Microsoft Excel and letters in Microsoft Word. They ask every day to go back to the computer lab. The school has set up a system for those students who study hard and have discipline to use the computers. The computers have become a teacher and a reward.

## **Bringing Mushrooms from Cultivation to Market**

### *Sector(s): Agriculture*

PCV Pearl serves in a small farming community in the hills of Gandaki Province as a Volunteer focused on food security. Many households in this community practice mushroom farming and include mushrooms in their daily diet. These farmers were interested to improve their knowledge and therefore productivity of their mushroom farming. To do so, the community approached PCV Pearl to request training to increase their mushroom farming skills.

The PCV along with the counterpart from the local government municipality collaborated to plan a training program that best suited the needs of the participants. They reached out to Peace Corps to apply for a grant from the USAID-funded SPA program.

In March, 2024, ten farmers participated in the training which provided them with the tools and knowledge to grow their own oyster mushrooms.



As a result, these farmers were able to produce 55 bags of prepared oyster mushroom spore which each yielded, on average, 4-5 kilograms of mushrooms.

One farmer named Susila in particular caught the PCV's attention. She put so much work into preparing her space and bags that her mushrooms were free from contamination. Contamination during the bag-making process is one of the biggest challenges of this type of work. One misplaced, unsanitized hand can infect a whole bag of straw and spore with mold. Her focused attention to preparation paid off in that none of her mushroom bags was lost due to contamination. As a result, her bags were used to demonstrate to other farmers how vital the cleaning process is.

Encouraged by the success of the training, farmer Susila began experimenting with other substrates to grow the mushrooms on, such as the dried husks of peas and straw from wheat. When the weather is cold again, she and the PCV will work together, and she plans to begin growing these mushrooms at a large scale for commercial sale. Without the help of USAID funding, the success of all ten participants, especially this leader farmer, would not have been possible.

## Kiwi Orchard Management for Farmer Prosperity

### Sector(s): Agriculture

In a rural community in the district of Parbat, a group of sixteen smallholder farmers recently planted 35 kiwi saplings for the purpose of kiwi production with the future goal of selling the fruit and generating family income. These sixteen farmers all belong to a farmers' group. PCV Pearl who serves in the community learned that the farmers' group would be receiving subsidized saplings from the local Agriculture Knowledge Center. However, the center would be providing no training or further supplies. The Volunteer and her local counterpart, Tara, president of the farmers' group, applied for a microgrant to fund the purchase of additional saplings, pay for a training, and buy a few other supplies necessary for successful kiwi cultivation.



Making a trellis for kiwi production

At about the same time, PCV Pearl had also begun developing a working relationship with a skilled local kiwi farmer, Mr. Hom Bahadur Thapa, from a neighboring village who had previously worked with PCVs to establish a kiwi orchard. His kiwi orchard is now extremely productive, and Mr. Thapa has become a local source of knowledge for kiwi farming. After getting to know Mr. Thapa, PCV Pearl and the farmers' group president decided to invite Mr. Thapa to provide a training to the group of farmers planting kiwi saplings. The group followed the training with a visit to Mr. Thapa's village where all the aspiring kiwi farmers were able to see his orchard and learn about technical maintenance practices such as pruning and applying Bordeaux paste.

The money received from this microgrant was provided by USAID and has allowed these farmers to significantly increase their knowledge of kiwi cultivation and intercultural practices and successfully plant 35 kiwi saplings. Next year, PCV Pearl and counterpart Tara plan to apply for a second microgrant which will allow them to conduct a follow-up training and purchase trellising, which is necessary for productive kiwi cultivation. The volunteer and the farmers' group members will continue working towards their goal of income

generation through collaboration and improved farming fruit tree cultivation practices.

Since the initial training and kiwi planting, the farmers' group has also invested in sixteen 50-litre drums that they purchased with the remaining microgrant funding. With these drums the group intends to make "Organic Waste Decomposer Compost" (OWDC) which is a solution that breaks down organic waste into compost. This solution aids in soil fertility and can lead to stronger plant growth. Kiwi farmer and collaborator, Mr. Thapa, makes and uses this solution on his kiwis with good results. He taught the farmers' group how to make it and continues to act as a resource person for both OWDC and kiwis.

## Oyster Mushrooms for Income Generation

### Sector(s): Agriculture

Communities in Mygadi district often struggle to generate profits from their crops and maintain year-round diet diversity. PCVs serving in the district saw an opportunity to work with women of reproductive age in local women's groups to facilitate training that would increase their ability to generate agricultural-related income and increase dietary diversity in their households. The goal of the grant activities was for the PCVs to co-facilitate training with a community counterpart for WRA and smallholder farmers on a high-value, low-volume crop - oyster mushrooms.

The local government supports initiatives to increase household income generation through agricultural activities and products and has identified that mushroom cultivation is an equitable, accessible crop to cultivate for this purpose. Before the arrival of Volunteers in their communities, smallholder farmers practiced primarily subsistence farming of vegetables and staple crops such as corn, rice, and potatoes. Recognizing the availability of straw from rice harvests and the potential to recycle local wood shavings, the PCVs saw the opportunity of sustainable substrate sources for mushroom farming. Volunteers then identified project counterparts who had experience growing mushrooms. Volunteers attended local women's and farmers' group meetings to

assess the interest/capacity of WRA and smallholder farmers in mushroom cultivation. Met with great enthusiasm from community members, the PCVs and counterparts planned, organized, and administered two mushroom training sessions to a total of 43 participants and planted 41 bags of oyster mushrooms in two small communities.

In the next month, 100% of the participants' mushroom bags bloomed with mycelium. The PCVs frequently visited participants to assess proper care and disease/pest management. Community members took pride in their mushroom bags excitedly pointing out new growth and deep concern for mushroom health. There were challenges of green mold and fly eggs in participants' bags, but every participant very studiously asked to be trained in how to treat these issues instead of giving up. The sense of agency was beneficial for many WRA participants because it empowered them to make their own decisions and to provide food and/or income to their families. 90% of participants' bags produced fruiting bodies (mushrooms). Participants harvested a total of 43 kg of mushrooms of which 82% was consumed within the household and 17% were given to family or neighbors. There were a total of 188 indirect beneficiaries that consumed mushrooms produced



*Smallholder farmers plant oyster mushroom spawn in recycled wood shavings.*

by training participants. Many community members expressed interest in planting more mushrooms in the coming months, hoping to expand production into tunnel cultivation.

## Creating Space for Success: English Clubs are Inspiring Students

*Sector(s): Education*

A secondary school in Kavrepalanchowk district has long aspired to be a center of excellence. With half the school operating in English medium, students have won English competitions at the municipality, district, and even national levels, lending credibility to the school's aspirations. However, beneath these successes lay a critical challenge: while a few students thrived in English, the majority struggled to develop proficiency. Recognizing this disparity, the school management declared 2081 "The Year of English Improvement." Initiatives included conducting assemblies in English, publishing monthly student-made English magazines, and holding regular English department meetings to enhance English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching methods.

When TEFL PCV Steven arrived to begin service at the school, he found a motivated management team eager to build on these efforts. Collaborating with his counterpart, Teacher Rakesh, PCV Steven established an English Club for grades 9–12 and a Junior English Club for grades 6–8. The school dedicated a classroom as an English Club room, and with support from PCRV Jeffery, they transformed the room into a vibrant space filled with donated books, world maps, flags, and English games. With this foundation in place, PCV Steven introduced innovative programs to immerse students in English learning. Virtual exchanges with students in the Philippines and Mongolia allowed club members to connect with peers abroad using English as their shared



*PCV Steven Working with English Club Members*

language. A pen-pal program with 70 students in Detroit, Michigan, added another dimension, giving students real-world opportunities to practice English while fostering cross-cultural friendships. Weekly club meetings, led by students encouraged leadership and fluency through games, discussions, and activities.



**"I now have a friend in the Philippines that I talk to in English almost everyday."**

**– Senior English Club Member**



The impact has been transformative. The English Clubs have become hubs of active learning, where over 100 students participate in some capacity to improve their speaking, reading, and writing skills. Students eagerly draft letters to their pen pals, carefully refining their grammar and vocabulary with an enthusiasm that has energized their teachers. Virtual exchanges have sparked friendships that continue beyond school, and the dedicated club space serves as a gathering point for English-related activities during breaks. Through these efforts, the school has created a thriving English learning environment that reaches beyond the

classroom. By empowering students and fostering cross-cultural connections, the school is making significant strides toward achieving its vision of excellence.

# Government of Nepal Relations

Peace Corps/Nepal believes strongly that we accomplish our mission and goals only through partnership with many organizations, communities, individuals and most importantly with the Government of Nepal. We are thankful for the close partnership Peace Corps/Nepal has with multiple ministries and provincial and municipal government officials.

During 2024, Peace Corps/Nepal collaborated with the Government of Nepal on some key activities as follows:

## Collaborating to Launch an Environment Project

At the request of Government of Nepal and as a result of Peace Corps' commitment to secure a resilient global future, Peace Corps/Nepal collaborated with the Government of Nepal for approval of an Environment Project. Starting in 2023, Peace Corps/Nepal worked with Nepali officials to complete a needs assessment of environmental issues and looked for intersections in which PCVs could serve and provide meaningful support to address the environmental challenges Nepal faces.

The results of this collaboration were an approved Environment Project logical project framework approved by Peace Corps' technical staff in 2024. On September 3, 2024, MOFE Joint Secretary, Mr. Badri Raj Dhungana, and the Peace Corps Country Director, Mr. Troy Kofroth, signed the Partnership and Collaboration document to initiate the Environment Project. Under this Environment Project Peace Corps will provide PCVs to serve in the areas of forestry and environmental stewardship. The very first group of PCVs focused on the environment sector is expected to arrive in the country in January 2025.

**Peace Corps/Nepal regularly completes joint site visits to Volunteer sites to view their project progress, meet with community members, and receive feedback from local government officials.**

## Completing Joint Monitoring Visits

A core value of Peace Corps is collaborating with host governments and communities where Volunteers serve. As part of this value, Peace Corps/Nepal regularly completes joint site visits to Volunteer sites to view their project progress, meet with community members, and receive feedback from local government officials.

In 2024, counterparts from Nepal's Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD), Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA) and USAID accompanied Peace Corps staff on a joint monitoring field visit to see the amazing work being done by Food Security Volunteers in Myagdi and Parbat districts. Volunteers are collaborating with their municipal officials and communities to improve agriculture output and the nutritional health of their assigned communities.



# Reimagining Peace Corps/Nepal's Small Projects Grants Program

Peace Corps/Nepal operates a small projects grant program which is an excellent tool for Volunteers and their communities to access support for small-scale development projects. The overarching objective of the program is to provide funds for projects which are locally prioritized, to hone transferrable skills, and to make lasting and measurable impacts in the community. Volunteers collaborate with communities to design and implement small-scale, community-driven projects during their service. All Volunteers are encouraged to collaborate with their counterparts and community members to design projects and if needed, apply for small projects grants assistance. All small project grants require a community counterpart's commitment to participate, and all grants also require a minimum of 25% community contribution either in cash or in-kind contributions.

Looking at the successes of these projects as well as some of the barriers to more Volunteers participating, in 2024 Peace Corps/Nepal revisited our small projects grants program. After a thorough review, Peace Corps/Nepal updated the program by implementing a microgrant category that allows for smaller-value grants to move through the approval process more quickly and have faster impact in the community. Similarly,



School staff presenting their project ideas

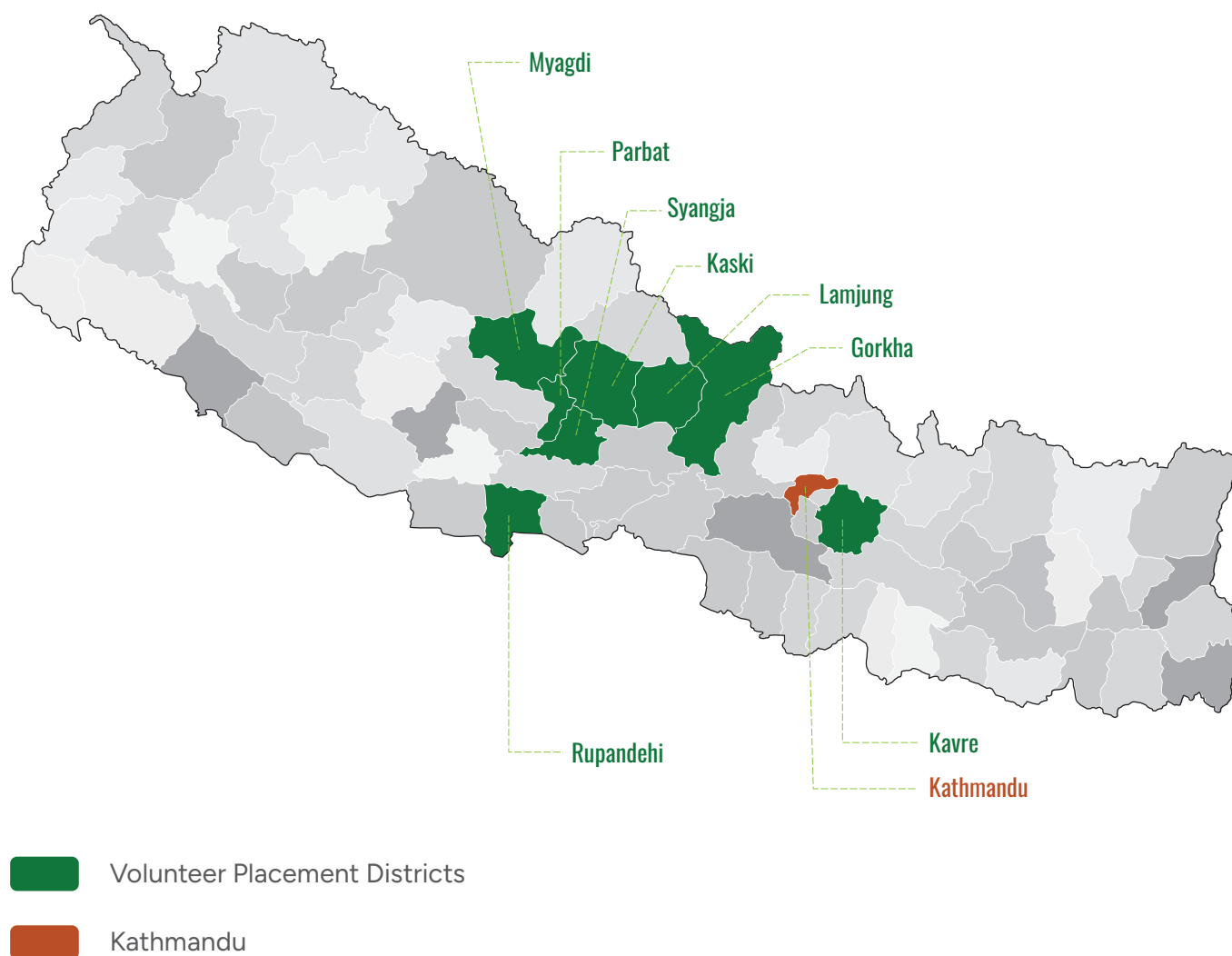
Peace Corps increased the threshold for the traditional grant category up to \$10,000 USD per project, an amount that, while less frequently requested, has the potential to support more ambitious projects in communities.

To support the implementation of this revised program, Peace Corps hosted trainings for counterparts which helped them to understand the grants program and the new categories, enabling them to collaborate with Volunteers to implement projects in their communities. In total in 2024, Peace Corps/Nepal funded 31 projects and eight trainings totaling approximately USD \$97,000.



# Volunteer Placement Districts

Throughout 2024, 48 Volunteers served in communities in rural mid-hill communities across eight districts in Nepal. A total of twenty-four TEFL Volunteers have served or are serving in the government schools of Kavrepalanchowk, Gorkha, Kaski, and Syangja districts, while fourteen Food Security Volunteers have worked or are working alongside rural farming communities in Myagdi, Parbat, and Lamjung districts. In addition, ten Response Volunteers served or are serving in Syangja, Rupandehi, Lamjung, Kavrepalanchowk, Kaski, and Gorkha districts. We are anticipating approximately 45 two-year Volunteers — the 210th group — to arrive in the country in January 2025, followed by approximately ten Response Volunteers in May 2025.



\* The boundaries and names used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the US Government.

# Training Highlights

## Who are the Volunteers?

PCVs are U.S. citizens who commit to serving 27 months in a partner country, living and working directly with members of their assigned communities. PCRVs similarly are U.S. citizens with more specialized experience who commit to between three to twelve months of service. Collectively PCVs and PCRVs are called "Volunteers." Volunteers do not receive a salary, but instead receive a very modest living allowance that approximates the local standard of living. Volunteers come from a variety of cultural, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds, and all possess appropriate education and experience related to their project work. PCVs and PCRVs 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.



## Pre-Service Training for Group N209

In January 2024, Group N209 arrived in Nepal to begin their Pre-Service Training (PST). Trainees spent their first eleven weeks of PST in Nepal at the completion of which they officially became PCVs. During PST, Trainees lived with Nepali host families for ten weeks and were completely immersed in Nepali culture. They received formal training in the Nepali language, and they learned strategies and tips to stay safe and healthy for the duration of their service. Trainees also received technical trainings for assisting their communities in identifying, prioritizing, and addressing challenges related to food security and education.

The main purpose of the PST was to help Trainees become equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to live and work effectively in Nepal for two years. The community-based training model provided Trainees with an experience with similar characteristics as Trainees' eventual permanent sites. During PST and also in service, they eat the food their host family eats and are





also involved in household activities such as cooking food, cutting grass, milking cows, and taking part in festivals and family events. Host families provided each Food Security Trainee with a small gardening space at their homes to allow them to practice gardening skills, and TEFL Trainees interacted with and taught in government schools to learn how to effectively teach within the context of Nepali government schools. Trainees were assessed throughout their training, and upon successful completion of PST, they were officially sworn in as PCVs.

## Peace Corps Response Volunteer Trainings for Group 1

Peace Corps/Nepal received its first PCR/V group called NR1 on May 5, 2024. NR1 was comprised of ten Volunteers. The Peace Corps Response program in Nepal currently works in three sectors: Digital Learning and Training, Agriculture Laboratory and Research at the University-Level, and Eco-tourism Promotion and Business Literacy. The PCR/Vs began their service with a comprehensive orientation for two weeks in May 2024,

equipping them with the language, skills, and knowledge essential for their permanent sites. On May 17, they were officially sworn in as PCR/Vs. Midway through their placement, on September 5-6, the group participated in a Reconnect workshop. This event provided a platform to reflect on their experiences, share site-specific insights, and develop action plans to enhance their impact moving forward. They are currently serving across six districts in Nepal.



## In-Service Training

After a few months of service, N209 PCVs participated in an In-Service Training (IST). In 2024, Peace Corps/Nepal organized two ISTs; one for Food Security PCVs and the second for TEFL Volunteers. The IST sessions for Food Security Volunteers took place from July 22 to August 2, and sessions focused on soil management, mushroom cultivation, beekeeping, fruit tree cultivation, and nutrition education. Food Security Volunteers invited Agriculture and Health Section Chiefs from their municipalities for three days in the IST, and together they developed collaborative action plans for the next nine months of service.



Similarly, TEFL Volunteers participated in a seven-day IST from July 9 -15, 2024 to help enhance their knowledge and skills in teaching English and working with school stakeholders and local partners to further positive education outcomes in their classrooms.



### **Mid-Service Training for Group N208**

After one year of service, PCVs participate in a Mid-Service Training (MST) to reflect on their service and share their successes, challenges, and

best practices. This is also a time for Volunteers to assess the extent to which they are meeting project goals and core expectations for Peace Corps service. In 2024, Peace Corps/Nepal organized a three-day MST for Group N208 who arrived in June 2023. Upon completing MST, Volunteers returned to their communities with clear action plans for their second year of service.

### **Project Design and Management Workshop**

Peace Corps/Nepal facilitated two separate three-day Project Design and Management (PDM) workshops in 2024, one each for Groups N208 and N209 . The PDM workshop for N208 took place from January 16-19, 2024 while a similar workshop for N209 PCVs was held from September 15-19, 2024. The workshops aimed to prepare Food Security Volunteers, along with their Agriculture and Health Section Chiefs, and community counterparts, to collaborate with village stakeholders in developing community-driven projects that align with community strengths, interests, and needs. Similarly, the workshop helped TEFL Volunteers in designing projects that would contribute to build positive changes within their classrooms.



# Looking Ahead to 2025



Peace Corps staff visit to Volunteers' sites

Peace Corps/Nepal is excited for continued collaboration and partnership with the Government and people of Nepal in 2025. The new year will bring continued focus to meet Peace Corps' global mission of promoting world peace and friendship. In 2025, we are looking forward to implementing several new initiatives and to continue important standing ones. Examples of our focus areas in 2025 include the following:

**Launch of the Two-Year Volunteer Environment Program:** In January 2025, Peace Corps/Nepal expects the first group of environment Volunteers to arrive and begin training. They are expected to serve from 2025 to 2027 and will implement the newly approved environment logical project

framework that seeks to support Nepali communities to sustainably manage their natural resources and increase their livelihood opportunities.

**Building the Peace Corps Response Program in Nepal:** In May 2025, we are expecting a second group of talented experts to support Nepal's higher-impact, shorter-term Peace Corps Response program. These second generation PCRVs will build on the work completed by NR1.

As we work on these new initiatives, we will also remain focused on implementing the current Food Security and TEFL projects to support new Volunteers on these projects to partner with their assigned communities and create lasting change.



Orienting community members on the upcoming Environment project

# Thank you to our Host Country Counterparts and Host Families

Thank you to our host country counterparts and host families. Without your support, Volunteer success would not be possible!





# Acknowledgements

## PROJECT PARTNERS

Ministry of Finance

Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development

Ministry of Health and Population

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

Ministry of Home Affairs

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Federal Affairs & General Administration

Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation

Ministry of Forest and Environment

Institute of Agriculture and Animal Science

Municipality / Rural Municipality

Division Forest Office

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🌐 [www.peacecorps.gov/nepal](http://www.peacecorps.gov/nepal)

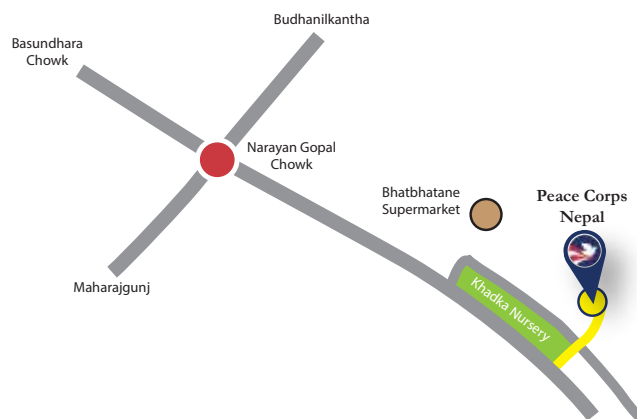
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