WHOLE FOODS MARKET
TEAM MEMBER VOLUNTEER PROGRAM
2019 SUMMARY & IMPACT REPORT: INDIA
Whole Planet Foundation (WPF) funds microlending programs through Sampurna Training and Entrepreneurship Programme (STEP) in India where Numi Organic Tea sources tea, which is sold in Whole Foods Market (WFM) stores. WPF is a WFM non-profit whose mission is to alleviate poverty by funding microlending programs where WFM sources products as a way to alleviate poverty and give back to our global communities.

Through the Whole Foods Market Team Member Volunteer Program, WFM gives Team Members the unique opportunity to travel abroad with WPF to learn about WPF, see where and how WFM products are grown, provide community service, experience and learn from other cultures and challenge themselves by exploring exciting countries around the globe.
Team Member Volunteers learned about tea production and provided community service with WFM and WPF supplier partner Numi Organic Tea in Darjeeling.

Some Team Members participated in optional trips to Jodhpur in Rajasthan and to the Taj Mahal in Agra.

Team Members visited WPF microlending partner Sampurna Training and Entrepreneurship Programme (STEP) in Kolkata.

WFM funded equipment for, and the refurbishment of, a hospital in Assam where WPF supplier partner Numi Organic Tea sources tea.
14 WFM Team Member Volunteers traveled to Kolkata, India to visit WPF microlending partner Sampurna Training and Entrepreneurship Programme (STEP), one of Whole Planet Foundation’s microlending partners in India. They met staff members and microcredit clients whose loans were funded by Whole Planet Foundation. The team members traveled to Darjeeling where they learned about organic tea production and processing with Numi Organic Tea, which is for sale in WFM stores. They painted murals, taught hygiene classes, ran an engineering competition with teams of students and learned about Indian culture, food, traditions and dance.

TEAM

Ginger Lovett (Florida Region, Destin Store)
Joanne Hatgi (Mid-Atlantic Region, Exton Store)
Leah Flucke (Midwest Region, River Forest Store)
Janice Folzman (Northern California Region, Sonoma Store)
Kerry Gatt (Northern California Region, Sebastopol Store)
Monica Torres (Northern California Region, Ocean Store)
Laura Navarro Santana (Pacific Northwest, Cambie Store)
Emily Clarke (Rocky Mountain Region, Canyon Corners Store)
Mary F de la Fuente (South Region, West Cary Store)
Jennifer Ruth (Southern Pacific Region, Torrance Store)
Lorena Garsed (Southwest Region, Vineyard Store)
Beth Lebwohl (Southwest Region, Lamar Store)
Lauren Omara (Florida Region, Regional Office)
Stephanie Patruno (Northeast Region, Spring Lake - Wall Store)

GROUP COORDINATOR
Barbara Joubert

INDIA GUIDES
True Places
Barbara Joubert
Ashvin Kumar

PROJECT COORDINATOR
Barbara Joubert

WFM TEAM MEMBER VOLUNTEER PROGRAM MANAGER
Genie Bolduc
2019 INDIA ITINERARY
OCTOBER 15 - 28

ITINERARY- 2 WEEKS

Day 1 - Tuesday October 15 - Arrived in Kolkata.

Day 2 - Wednesday October 16 - Team Members saw the sights, museums, learned about Mother Theresa’s contributions and ate delicious Indian food.

Day 3 - Thursday October 17 - The team visited with Whole Planet Foundation microlending partner Sampurna Training and Entrepreneurship Programme (STEP), observing regularly scheduled field activities such as repayment collections, loan appraisal and loan utilization checks and visiting with individual microcredit clients whose loans were funded by Whole Planet Foundation through STEP.

Day 4 - Friday October 18 - The team flew to Darjeeling and drove to Chamong Tea Garden where WPF partner Numi Organic Tea sources tea and team member volunteers learned about tea and provide community service.

Day 5 - Saturday October 19 - This day was a day in the Tea Garden for picking, weighing, planting and processing tea.

Day 6 - Sunday October 20 - Team Members went to Darjeeling to visit markets and other sights.

Day 7 - Monday October 21- The team worked with the children at the Nagri Elementary School, on science/engineering project and sports showcase with village after school.

Day 8 - Tuesday October 22 - The volunteers drove to Darjeeling for a culture walk.

Day 9 - Wednesday October 23 - The team had a day in Darjeeling and surroundings, seeing the sunrise over the Himalayas and the toy train.

Day 10 - Thursday October 24 - TMs returned to Chamong Tea Garden to start the hospital mural painting project.

Day 11 - Friday October 25 - The volunteers hosted a medical camp for young children, painting, hygiene camp for toddlers

Day 12 - Saturday October 26 - The team helped prepare for Diwali, a huge day of celebration with locals, decorated temples, dressed in traditional Indian clothing and prepared food.

Day 13 - Sunday October 27 - Volunteers departed for Kolkata and home.

Day 14 - Monday October 28 - Team Members arrived home.

ITINERARY ADJUSTMENT

Originally the team was to travel from Kolkata to Assam to learn about tea production and provide community service with Numi Organic Tea and on to Darjeeling to experience a tea garden where Numi has been working for many years. Due to an incident in Assam and with the team’s safety in mind, the program was adjusted to travel from Kolkata directly to Darjeeling for the tea education and community service. We salute Numi and Chamong for their flexibility, professionalism and hospitality and Barbara Joubert and Ash Kumar for their outstanding ability to pivot while providing the utmost in service, safety and hospitality.
The WFM team met individual clients and observed regularly scheduled field activities such as repayment collections, loan appraisal and loan utilization checks with Whole Planet Foundation microlending partner Sampurna Training and Entrepreneurship Programme (STEP). They learned from STEP staff about their microlending methodology, goals, challenges and successes. They met clients, like Anamika, whose microloan was funded by WPF through STEP. The team observed the lending and collecting process.
Team Member Volunteers visited clients of WPF microlending partner STEP to learn about their businesses, successes and challenges.

They observed and learned about the process of receiving and repaying a microloan.

Whole Planet Foundation has supported Sampurna Training and Entrepreneurship Programme (STEP) since March of 2018, funding $247,721 to date of the $350,000 authorized. Though a small organization, STEP has a 99% repayment rate and 14,042 active borrowers with 1,286 whose loans are funded by WPF.*

*As of 09/30/2019

TMs met microcredit clients like Arshida who makes and sells saris, and asked questions to learn more.
NUMI ORGANIC TEA HAS DONATED $50,000 TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY THROUGH WHOLE PLANET FOUNDATION. Numi pledged $50,000 in 2019 as a supplier partner to Whole Planet Foundation in empowering entrepreneurs through microcredit, funding 270 microloans to create 1,416 opportunities. Numi sources tea in Darjeeling and Assam in India. Numi shares: “We blend premium organic teas and herbs with only 100% real fruits, flowers and spices – and never any ‘natural’ or artificial flavorings.” To learn more about Numi, their tea and their positive impact visit their website at https://numitea.com.

LEARNING ABOUT NUMI ORGANIC TEA PRODUCTION
The Whole Foods Market volunteers traveled to Darjeeling with Numi Organic Tea to learn about the production of their tea at a local tea garden called Nagri. The team was partnered with “Tea Mates” who helped them learn how to pick tea properly. They picked tea, finding out how difficult it is while carrying a basket for collection and standing on an incline. They learned how green and black tea is produced and about the high standards that Numi employs as well as Numi’s commitment to improving the community for the tea growers and their families.

A POWERFUL EXPERIENCE
“Our day working the tea farm and planting trees left such an impression. I was thankful to my tea plucking tutor, who was extremely patient with me! Her hands would brush the top of the tea bushes like buzzsaws, trimming off the freshest leaves in the most precise way. (I believe the young shoots are the highest quality part of the plant, and they’re what’s collected for tea production by all the workers, here.) I understood, way down in my bones, the difficult nature of this work. It was hard just to balance on the inclines of the fields. It was challenging to carry a giant basket on my back, supporting most of its weight with my forehead. It took effort to move with any degree of speed through the maze of tea shrubs, which were planted closely together. (I sang The Sound of Music as I plucked, because it helped me to keep breathing. ) And, lastly, it wasn’t easy to master the rapid-fire visual discernment required for this job. Which leaves are the right leaves to pluck? I now have a better idea, but I still could use some tutoring!”

TM Volunteer Beth
THE VOLUNTEER PROJECTS WITH NUMI AT CHAMONG TEA GARDEN

PLANTING TEA

PAINTING Murals

WHOLE PLANET FOUNDATION
THE VOLUNTEER PROJECTS

HOSTING A HYGIENE CAMP

LEADING TEAMS OF SCHOOLCHILDREN IN ENGINEERING COMPETITION

The team helped share science in a suitcase at the schools. This was important to challenge the students to use their creativity as this seems to be lacking in the education system. The students were given 4 life savers, 1 sheet of paper, 4 paperclips, 4 rubber bands, 3 Popsicle sticks, 1 piece of string and 1 piece of tape. They worked in groups to create a vehicle that they could use their breath to propel.
Whole Foods Market funded new equipment for, and the refurbishment of a hospital at a tea garden in Assam where Numi Organic Tea sources tea. The goal was to improve the sanitary conditions of the hospital and provide refrigeration for medications.

TONGANAGOAN HOSPITAL PROJECT

Above is before the work began and below, once the work begins.
Though the team was unable to visit Assam to help with the work, Whole Foods Market funded the refurbishment of a hospital that serves 6,000 people in a rural community where Numi Organic Tea sources tea sold in WFM stores. The floors and walls were refinished and a new refrigeration unit was installed to preserve medications.
STEphanie
“Spending time with Numi tea in their tea estate in Darjeeling was life changing. I did not realize what an impact sourcing tea from those communities has, and how it effects the lives of not only the people living and working there, but the generations to come. Numi Tea’s mission to improve the quality of life in their communities is evident.”

Janice
“The Whole Foods Market Team Member Volunteer Program is a go to opportunity for all team members! Volunteering with Whole Planet Foundation is an opportunity of a lifetime! I'm grateful for the opportunity to volunteer with WPF. I look at life differently as a result of my experience in India, having seen a different way of life that works so well in a heavily populated country. I've learned that I need to not be so concerned with what I have, more concerned on my effect on others, through my actions.”

Beth
“I was elated to learn that STEP offers conjunctive services in addition to microloans. For example, our local guide Arati is also trained as a social worker. This is invaluable because, if you can offer a cash infusion, but, at the same time, offer counseling and/or medical services, then you can really, really empower a family to break out of poverty.”

Kerry
“Our visit to STEP in Sheakhala was very inspiring. It was so great to see that the Whole Planet Foundation funding is going to a terrific organization that empowers woman and their families to move above the poverty line. We visited 3 recipients of the microloans and all have been successful in paying back their loans and growing their businesses.”

Lorena
“I loved when we went to STEP and went to the communities and saw first hand where Whole Planet Foundation has directly impacted people’s lives. One at the time. Seeing those women's smiles and how proud and empowered they felt was one of the best experiences.”

Leah
“It is important that the story of Numi Tea becomes more well known so that people will choose to buy from ethical and socially responsible companies that are involved so deeply in changing the world. I saw what a clean, safe and all-around wonderful work environment and community Chamong Tea Estate is. This trip solidified my message to buy fair trade and from ethical companies because their impact is transforming the quality of life for so many people and the next generation.”

Lauren
“I have an entirely new appreciation for tea! The process is painstaking and meticulous, but every member of the Chamong team is so dedicated to the tea’s success. Chamong truly values their employees and understands they are what make their company strong and successful. It’s so invigorating to know the places we source product from care that much not only about their product but also about their team members and their families.”

Monica
“I am so happy that I took a chance in applying for the volunteer program. It went above and beyond my expectations. I think sometimes we get stuck living (and working) in a bubble and it was such an eye-opening and mind-opening experience.”
2019 INDIA WFM TM VOLUNTEER PROGRAM IMPACT

- 14 TEAM MEMBERS TRAVELED TO INDIA
- 20 MICROCREDIT CLIENTS MET
- 1 HOSPITAL REFURBISHED IN ASSAM
- HYGIENE CAMP GIVEN FOR 75 SMALL CHILDREN
- 2 MURALS PAINTED IN HOSPITAL
- 600 CHILDREN ENGAGED IN ENGINEERING PROJECT
- 150 TEA PLANTS PLANTED
- 20 POUNDS OF TEA PICKED