WHOLE FOODS MARKET
TEAM MEMBER VOLUNTEER PROGRAM
2019 SUMMARY & IMPACT REPORT: NEPAL
Whole Planet Foundation (WPF) funds microlending programs through Nirdhan Utthan Laghubitta Bittiya Sanstha, Ltd. (NULBSL) in Nepal where Allegro Coffee sourced tea 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 met microcredit clients of Whole Planet Foundation’s microlending partner Nirdhan Utthan Laghubitta Bittiya Sanstha, Ltd. (NULBSL) in Ilam in Nepal.

Team Members traveled to Kathmandu to visit the head office of NULBSL. They were introduced to Dharti Mata (Mother of the Earth) Sustainable Workshop which makes sustainable feminine products and learned about Nepalese culture and food at Ananda Treehouse.

The team worked at Hasera Farm, outside of Kathmandu, where they learned about permaculture and helped host a Seed Fair for the local community. They visited and learned about Dharti Mata Sustainable Workshop, located on Hasera Farm.
15 WFM Team Member Volunteers traveled to Kathmandu, Nepal to visit Whole Planet Foundation microlending partner Nirdhan Utthan Laghubitta Bittiya Sanstha, Ltd. (NULBSL) in Nepal. They met staff members and learned about the organization, their impact, methodology and future plans. At Ananda Treehouse the team was introduced to Nepalese culture and participated in a cooking class. Claire Lin of Dharti Mata (Mother of the Earth) Sustainable Workshop provided an introduction to their work in sustainable feminine products. The team members then traveled to Ilam where they visited several NULBSL clients whose loans were funded by Whole Planet Foundation. They learned about tea harvesting and processing with a client of NULBSL who is the owner of a tea garden. Heading back to Kathmandu, the team traveled to Hasera Farm outside of the city to learn about permaculture and help host a Seed Fair for the local community, helping to promote the preservation of seeds and biodiversity. At the farm they visited with the staff of Dharti Mata Sustainable Workshop which is located there, learning more about the process of making sustainable women’s hygiene products.

TEAM
Caroline Fougerat (Global Office)
Tres Hefter (Global Office)
Holley Blackwell (Midwest Region, Regional Office)
Kimberly Dunn (Midwest Region, West Des Moines)
Mariealena Vicari (Northeast Region, Closter Store)
Sandra Stewart (Northeast, Commack Store)
Theresa Schuller (Rocky Mountain, Frisco Store)
Emily Catron (Rocky Mountain, Frisco Store)
Carly Vaughan (United Kingdom, Regional Office)
Emma Cash (Northeast Region, Brooklyn Store)
Eric Almeida (Southwest Region, Regional Office)
Kristen Vega (Southwest Region, Las Colinas Store)
Laura Rochelle Ferguson (Southwest Region, Lakewood Store)
Kate Sremac (Northern California Region, San Mateo Store)
Trung Nguyen-Beavers (Southwest Region, Oklahoma City Store)

TRAVEL COORDINATOR
Art of Hospitality Travel
Maureen Paap
Hans Paap

NEPAL GUIDES
Abercrombie and Kent India
Rameshwor Shrestha
True Places
Barbara Joubert

PROJECT COORDINATOR
Barbara Joubert

WFM TEAM MEMBER VOLUNTEER PROGRAM MANAGER
Genie Bolduc
2019 NEPAL ITINERARY
SEPTEMBER 17 – OCTOBER 1

ITINERARY - 2 WEEKS

Day 1 - Tuesday, September 17 - Arrived in Kathmandu and lodged at Ananda Treehouse.

Day 2 - Wednesday, September 18 - Morning at leisure, and in the afternoon visited Patan Durbar Square and Thamel. Cooking session and dinner with family at Ananda Treehouse.

Day 3 - Thursday, September 19 - WFM team members visited Whole Planet Foundation microlending partner Nirdhan Uththan Laghubitta Bittiya Sanstha, Ltd. (NULBSL), at their head office in Kathmandu.

Day 4 - Friday, September 20 - The TMs enjoyed a day of culture where they visited Bhaktapur Durbar Square and Boudhanath for a private audience with the High Lama.

Day 5 - Saturday, September 21 - The team visited Pashupatinath Temple and Kirtipur and ended the day with dinner in a local Nepali restaurant with a Nepalese cultural program.

Day 5 - Sunday, September 22 - The volunteers flew to Ilam and drove for 3 hours to hotel and settled in.

Day 6 - Monday, September 23 - TM volunteers visited Whole Planet Foundation microlending partner NULBSL, their clients and staff in a branch that is funded by Whole Planet Foundation. In the afternoon, they visited microcredit clients in their villages and attended center meetings. The team had lunch en route at a restaurant run by a woman and her daughter who were recipients of NULBSL microloans.

Day 7 - Tuesday, September 24 - The team learned about tea, the product that Allegro Coffee sourced from Nepal which inspired WPF to fund NULBSL. They visited a tea garden owned by a client of Whole Planet Foundation microlending partner NULBSL, learned to pick tea and how it is processed and the client shared her story.

Day 8 - Wednesday, September 25 - The team flew from Ilam to Kathmandu to Hasera Farm.

Day 9 - Thursday, September 26 - The volunteers were at Hasera Farm to host a Seed Fair for their community service project and to learn about permaculture. There they visited Dharti Mata Sustainable Workshop to learn about the production of sustainable women’s hygiene products.

Day 10 - Friday, September 27 - The volunteers were at Hasera Farm to host a Seed Fair for their community service project and to learn about permaculture.

Day 11 - Saturday, September 28 - The volunteers were at Hasera Farm to host a Seed Fair for their community service project and to learn about permaculture.

Day 12 - Sunday, September 29 - The volunteers were at Hasera Farm to host a Seed Fair for their community service project and to learn about permaculture.

Day 13 - Monday, September 30 - The team left Hasera Farm for Kathmandu and returned to visit Passang at Ananda Treehouse

Day 15 - Tuesday, October 1 - Team Members departed from Tribhuvan International Airport for home.
TM Volunteers attended a center meeting to see NULBSL microcredit methodology in action, learned from microcredit clients and from Claire Kelly, (holding coffee cup in photo on right) WPF’s regional Director for Asia and the Pacific.

Whole Planet Foundation has supported Nirdhan Utthan Laghubitta Bittiya Sanstha, Ltd. (NULBSL) since 2008, funding $1,211,925 so far of the $1,535,414 authorized. NULBSL has a 98% repayment rate and 224,805 active borrowers with 13,566 active borrowers across the 14 branches which WPF has supported.*

*As of 09/30/2019

The WFM team visited the with WPF microlending partner Whole Planet Foundation’s microlending partner Nirdhan Utthan Laghubitta Bittiya Sanstha, Ltd. (NULBSL), learning from NULBSL staff about their microlending methodology, goals, challenges and successes.

http://www.nirdhan.com
Team Member Volunteers visited with clients and staff of Whole Planet Foundation’s microlending partner Nirdhan Utthan Laghubitta Bittiya Sanstha, Ltd. (NULBSL) to learn about their businesses, their successes and their challenges.

TMs attended a center meeting, learned about the methodology and the lending and collection processes, and spoke with microcredit clients.

They visited Marita, a microcredit client who received a cash gift from NULBSL at the center meeting because she had just given birth and then visited her home/business and baby.
One of the highlights of the trip was in Ilam where the team went to learn about tea production and to meet microcredit clients of NULBSL, Whole Planet Foundation’s microlending partner in Nepal. WPF funds microcredit in Nepal because Allegro Coffee sourced tea from Ilam that was sold in Whole Foods Market stores. The team learned about tea harvesting and production from a NULBSL microcredit client who has a tea farm.

**INCREDIIBLY COOL!**

“The tea farm in Ilam was also incredibly cool! I LOVE tea, so it was quite magical to go see how it’s grown, harvested, processed, and of course, shared with everyone, which was a bonding & educational experience every tea time we had!”

TM Volunteer Laura
THE VOLUNTEER PROJECT AT HASERA FARM
HOSTING A COMMUNITY SEED FAIR
INCREIBLE EXPERIENCE

"We worked a seed fair for Hasera Farm, and it was the most incredible experience ever. It was such a team building and bonding experience for all of us. We had a project planning meeting and delegated jobs based on the needs of the project and the vision that Mr Govinda had. We all worked together to create an absolutely stellar experience. The farmers that all came to share were women and were judged on multiple different categories such as variety and knowledge of the crops themselves. It was so inspiring to hear and see what they all brought and to see the support for their mission to keep GMOs out of Nepal. Mr. Govinda’s education of the farmers on how to grow sustainable agriculture by utilizing the land and the seasons is such an important lesson for the human race in general. The amount of heirloom seeds that he has collected in his seed bank was incredible to see and completely relevant to what we do here at WFM on a daily basis. This project, the education it provided me with, the bonding experience we shared by building, creating and working it together was an absolutely priceless experience that I will cherish for the rest of my life and will continue to utilize as an educational tool to friends, family and coworkers forever.”

TM Volunteer Laura
At Hasera Farm Team Member Volunteers worked with community members to host a Seed Fair, a festival of seed sharing and conservation.

THE EXPERIENCE

The team visited Bhaktapur Durbar Square and Boudhanath for a private audience with the High Lama, learned about permaculture from Mr. Govinda Sharma at Hasera Farm while working on the organic farm.

They hosted a Seed Fair at Hasera Farm, visited with Claire Lin and staff at Dharti Mata Sustainable Workshop and shared PACT socks with staff.
Passang and his team at Ananda Treehouse in Kathmandu taught the team about Nepalese culture and food, including a cooking class and invited the team to participate in a local farmer’s market where they tasted local delicacies like “Yak Blue” cheese.
EMMA
“The opportunity to go on this trip is something I am incredibly grateful for. I walked into this trip very excited, but not really understanding what a life-changing experience it would be. The kindness and sense of community I had the chance to experience caused me to come back more open to world and the people around me. I will always treasure the connections I made with the different people I met over the course of the trip.”

SANDY
“I could have spent every day meeting and learning about our microcredit clients. They are such incredible special people. Every client was so proud, as they should be, of what their hard work had done for the lives of their family. The most impactful for me was a client that used her loan for a restaurant, her food was the best we had the entire trip. Not only does her restaurant serve hundreds of people a week, it has also allowed her to send her daughter to school and she is currently building a hotel and expanding her restaurant. So impressive.”

ERIC
“i would love to see more people go to Nepal. I feel like my life has changed since traveling there. I want more people to experience what I had the opportunity to experience.”

TRUNG
“Meeting our microcredit clients was one of the best moments and highlight of the trip for me actually. They are hard-working and fearless business owners who happen to be woman. The impact of the loans funded by WPF have indeed changed their lives in the most positive ways. I got to witness it with not only by my eyes but with my heart. I learned that with just a little, the donation money from every Team Member and our customers will help them to achieve more and more better things in life.”

CAROLANNE
“For me it was really that the Whole Foods Market brand, which is high touch, high quality, high impact, high accountability and high regard for all stake-holders, truly was evident, embodied, living and breathing in everything WFM does. As a 20 year team member, it was the best, most memorable, moving way I could think of to spend my anniversary at this company I so love.”

TRES
“Hasera Farm...what can I say? Govinda teaches organic and permaculture farming to thousands of Nepali farmers. The best thing I can relate to is reading about Eli Whitney inventing the cotton gin when I was in elementary school, an individual who revolutionized agriculture for an entire nation - you feel like Govinda is someone who is capable of being that for Nepal. A figure who will have a wide impact upon thousands and thousands when all is said and done, simply by educating local farmers about better ways to treat the environment.”

EMILY
“Thinking back to when I elected yes to donate to Whole Planet through my paycheck, I was probably thinking just a dollar why not. Now when I tell my family, friends, and coworkers about my trip, my one dollar takes on a whole different perspective. It is a new cow or farm. It is an expansion of a business, or addition to a house, an opportunity to learn and grow one’s knowledge to create a better life for oneself and one’s family, and in turn lift up whole communities.”

HOLLEY
“The 2019 TMVP trip to Nepal has helped me regain a sense of purpose and connection with other humans on our shared planet. I loved the experience of a new perspective and wouldn't trade it for anything!”
2019 NEPAL WFM TM VOLUNTEER PROGRAM IMPACT

15 TEAM MEMBERS TRAVELED TO NEPAL

100 MICROCREST CLIENTS MET

1 SEED FAIR HOSTED

300+ SEED & PLANT VARIETIES EXCHANGED

200 PAIR OF PACT SOCKS DONATED

20 POUNDS OF TEA PICKED

WHOLE PLANET FOUNDATION