

"Youth Taking Action"

Hello my name is Sud Dahal, I come from Biratnager in Nepal. My country has been in the news a lot in the past weeks, but I want to tell you a different story, a story about Nepalese youth working towards a more sustainable future.

Toward the end of 2003, while some students had left Nepal for better opportunities, my fellow students and I met to discuss what we could do to bring those 'better opportunities' to Nepal?

We have seen development projects not working in Nepal, including projects funded by well-meaning donors that unfortunately inflated the price of electricity rather than making it more available. So what would be a viable option for Nepal? We concluded that small-scale hydropower would be best suited to our energy resources and our needs. Not only is it a clean form of energy but by using the run-off river technique, we would be able to collect the power without building a dam that would displace people. Furthermore, it would contribute to the GDP and provide consistently inexpensive energy. For health, livelihood, and sustainability this is a great option for Nepal.

Because we were engaging local resources, we thought it was important to give back to the communities where the hydropower projects were located. By partnering with a private company, we ensured that the project was self-sustaining. Through this partnership, the company agreed to reinvest some of the profits into the community.

Obviously, we are thrilled with this progress and are using this momentum to channel electricity back to the local communities. Thousands of households can benefit from such mini-hydropower projects. This would replace kerosene and wood as the primary sources of fuel, leaving the community with cleaner air and greener forests and reducing the incidence of acute respiratory syndrome. Also, by educating and supporting the community in end-use diversification of electric energy, they can develop the infrastructure for viable economies. And all this can be accomplished with a little funding, education, and development of local infrastructure.

My project is but one example. Here at CSD I have learned about many amazing youth-led initiatives toward a more sustainable future. Through the Campus Climate Challenge in North America, for example, over 300 universities are now investing in renewable energy, energy efficiency and green transportation. They are engaging in campus-wide education and empowerment.

In Ghana my friend Emmanuel Edudzie is working through the Youth Employment Network to improve agricultural development. The use of new machinery for irrigation has increased efficiency and production for individual farmers, thus increasing employment opportunities for young people in the surrounding area.

In Namibia, youth working with EduVentures are offering environmental education to

address the issues of biodiversity education. They provide opportunities to disadvantaged children to visit and learn more about nature areas.

There are other fine examples in the MDGYouth paper and the Children and Youth Discussion paper. (*Wave wave wave—DO IT, Sud!*)

Clearly there are solutions that already exist, in both North and South. The challenge is to capture the potential of these solutions and invest in them. On the occasion of this review year, we commit to working with you to strengthen support for these and other initiatives.

The decisions made today will have a significant impact on our lives in the future. We will live the consequences. We will breathe the air and drink the water you leave us. Let the support you lend these projects be the legacy you leave to us.