



PIPAL
TREE

Impact Statement 2025

www.pipaltree.org.uk

To the casual visitor – or even to regular ones – life in Nepal might seem fairly normal; charming, intriguing, often breathtaking, the people ever friendly and hospitable. However, beneath this veneer of normalcy, the nation grapples with three overwhelming global crises: climate change, loss of nature, and soaring poverty and inequality.

Nepal in the grip of global crises

Nepal ranks as the tenth most affected country in the world by climate change. The evidence of this is stark: melting glaciers, droughts, floods, landslides, and wildfires ravage the landscape. The rapid urbanisation of Kathmandu has exacerbated these issues, stripping the city of its already limited biodiversity and resulting in one of the world's worst air quality indices. The situation is equally dire in the rural south where erratic weather patterns wreak havoc on agriculture, compounding the existing hardships of daily life.

The plight of the people in the rural south is made worse by these rapidly changing and increasingly unpredictable weather patterns. These changes have made life unbearably tough, particularly for women and girls. Gender-based violence (GBV) has always been endemic in south Nepal, and the evidence suggests that the growing hardships associated with climate change could be forcing more girls than ever into child marriage. This deeply disturbing trend highlights the urgent need for intervention through education and skills programmes for women and girls.

Pipal Tree is leading the way in addressing these crises. Our innovative projects, implemented by outstanding local partner organisations, are meeting the challenges of environmental restoration and

community upliftment for some of the country's most marginalised people. We are transforming crises into opportunities for rapid change. For example, one of our key initiatives is the planting of rapid-growth forests, which grow ten times faster than those planted conventionally. We have also established community learning centres that provide access to education for hundreds of the poorest children for the very first time. These centres are a beacon of hope, offering opportunities for learning and growth in communities that have long been deprived of such facilities. Our education and skills programmes for women and girls are crucial in pushing back against the trend of child marriage and GBV. By empowering women and girls with education and skills, we are helping them to rise above their circumstances and lead better lives.

While the challenges facing Nepal are immense, the efforts of Pipal Tree and its partners are making a significant impact. By addressing the crises of climate change, loss of nature and poverty, we are helping to create a brighter future for Nepal and its people.

Will you join us?



Founder's statement

I am very pleased and proud to introduce this Impact Statement that shares with you our remarkable project work in Nepal. My philosophy of life is to never be overawed by the scale of a challenge. Just like running a marathon, it's all about taking the first steps and not giving up. We are taking those steps in Nepal and already the impact is proving to be dramatic, both in terms of environmental restoration and community upliftment.

Thankfully, our project achievements have been matched by equally spectacular fundraising success. Our 2024 income and expenditure soared by 62% and 72% respectively compared to 2023. This was in large part due to our strategic use of the Big Give matched fundraising platform, which allows grants and gifts to automatically double in value. Increased use of The Big Give in 2025, alongside anticipated income from Wills (as a new revenue stream) and new, exciting partnerships will ensure that we have the resources we need to make an even greater transformative impact in the coming years.

Please get in touch if you'd like to us to advise and help you in your charitable giving towards our Nepal projects at any level – philip@pipaltree.org.uk. I'd love to hear from you!

Philip Holmes OBE MSc
Lt Col (retd)
Founder/CEO Pipal Tree



The Rome Marathon 2024



Our background

Philip and Beverley Holmes founded Pipal Tree to support projects exclusively in Nepal. Philip began his charity work in Nepal in 1999, following the tragic death of his first wife, and he and Bev lived and worked there between 2004 and 2012. It is a country close to their hearts. The Pipal Tree

is revered by both Hindus and Buddhists in Nepal and typically a tree serves as a community meeting place in Nepalese towns and villages. The charity's name reflects our focus on community-based environmental initiatives, that include activities in the areas of education, healthcare and livelihoods.

Where we operate

Pipal Tree works with three local partners in Nepal. These are: the social enterprise, Lily's Leaves, centred on Kathmandu (Bagmati Province) but with projects also in Madhesh Province, and the NGOs Mithila Wildlife Trust (MWT) and Our Sansar, which are both based and operating in Madhesh Province.

Madhesh Province is Nepal's most populous province and arguably its most overlooked, where grinding rural poverty and a range of social issues exist against the backdrop of environmental degradation. And Kathmandu has become an over-populated urban jungle, to the detriment of its poorest people and the natural environment. Its air quality is one of the worst of any world city, a situation accentuated by the failure of seasonal rains, a consequence of climate change.



Who we work with

Mithila Wildlife Trust

MWT was founded in 2013 by passionate conservationist Dev Narayan Mandal whose philosophy is that conservation and environmental regeneration should go hand-in-hand with the upliftment of the poorest communities. He is as passionate about helping the most marginalised people through livelihoods and education as he is about protecting wildlife. This protection includes rescuing snakes that stray into villages - Dev is Nepal's leading expert on snake rescue and on snakebite mortality mitigation.

Our Sansar

Our third local partner is the NGO Our Sansar, which operates a refuge for rape survivors in Janakpur, the principal town of Madhesh Province. We funded the setup of the refuge in March 2021, covering its monthly operating costs ever since on a 50:50 basis with its eponymous UK registered charity that takes the lead in operational support to the project from the UK.

Lily's Leaves

In October 2020, we helped entrepreneur philanthropist Lily Katuwal KC to set up a Kathmandu-based social enterprise called Lily's Leaves to support vulnerable young women. These include a group of deaf women (disability is highly stigmatised in Nepal) and women from marginalised communities in rural south Nepal (Madhesh Province). The women receive training and employment and are also involved in delivering social benefits to the poorest community schools in south Nepal through the delivery of free school rucksacks and reusable menstrual pads that they have made themselves. And, since 2023, they have been trained in the planting of urban rapid-growth forests on waste ground in Kathmandu valley.



Dev Narayan Mandal, Mithila Wildlife Trust



Lily Katuwal, Lily's Leaves



Projects in Madhesh Province, south Nepal

Through MWT and Lily's Leaves working in collaboration, in 2024 we have continued to implement overlapping environmental, educational, healthcare and livelihoods projects. These have included the empowerment of women and outreach to marginalised communities.

Environmental projects

The main thrust of our environmental project work involves reforestation and especially our pioneering use in Nepal of the rapid-growth 'Miyawaki Method'. This method encourages forests to grow ten times faster, twenty times more biodiverse, thirty times denser and with forty times the carbon sequestration potential of those planted conventionally. We have been planting these high impact forests since December 2021 in three project locations:

- We have applied the method to create the important **Dhanusha Wildlife Corridor** that will connect the wooded Chure Hills that cross central Nepal with the isolated virgin forest of the 'Dhanushadham Protected Forest'. This umbilical cord will include thirteen

Miyawaki forest clusters in a stepping-stone arrangement that will allow safe passage of wildlife while mitigating the risk of human-wildlife conflict. Collectively, these Miyawaki forests double up as a 'Gurkha Memorial Forest' (GMF) with the forests planted in honour of the individually named thirteen Gurkha Victoria Cross winners since the start of the Second World War.

In 2024, MWT planted 5,960 saplings at two GMF forests and purchased sites for eight out of thirteen forests. In 2025, we plan to acquire the remaining five sites and plant them by 2026, weather permitting. Additionally, we will collaborate with the Nepal-based Dutch company Green Intelligence to support farmers in Nepal in planting fruit and nut saplings between the Miyawaki clusters. Engaging farmers and women's cooperatives ensures community ownership and sustainability of the wildlife corridor. We are seeking major donors and grant-makers for 2025 to support this project, with donations potentially doubling through our Big Give campaigns in April and December.



December 2021



Dhanushadham Bird Park

Our immediate objectives for 2025 include constructing a hide and clubroom for the young birdwatchers at an estimated cost of £15,000, purchasing and restoring a large pond in the centre of the Park for £24,700, and acquiring an additional field to be restored to forest at a cost of £7,900.



August 2024

- Our second project location is the **Dhanushadham Bird Park**, where since December 2021 we have been establishing Nepal's first community-managed haven for endangered birds and other vulnerable flora and fauna. This initiative has included the planting of Miyawaki forests and conducting earthmoving to restore the natural course of a small river and its adjacent wetland.

The results have been transformative: the forests have grown so rapidly and densely that by 2024, we were able to grant controlled access to villagers with their livestock. This benefits both the community and the local wildlife since the livestock introduce droppings and control grasses and invasive weeds. Each weekend, 45 young birdwatchers visit the site, a small subset of the 2,400 children we engage with across eight secondary schools in the area, fostering the next generation of conservationists. Our vision is for the Park to evolve into a vital hub within a much larger community conservation area, encompassing a variety of habitats while generating local incomes through agroforestry and ecotourism.

- Our third Miyawaki forest location lies on the banks of the Kamala River that marks the boundary between Dhanusha District and Siraha District. The River has burst its banks in the past, claiming lives and homes in disastrous floods. We have sited two forests that act as fast-growing natural flood barriers while providing badly needed shelter for waterbirds and other wildlife in what is

otherwise a very open and exposed area. In 2025, we will continue to plant these forests, with each strip forest costing £20,000.



Miyawaki forest on the banks of the Kamala River



A new CLC under construction, the land raised to avoid future flooding



Bursary students at Sarlahi CLC



A snake rescue taking place

Educational projects

Our goal is to offer equal educational opportunities to boys and girls from marginalised communities that gives them the chance to achieve their full potential and to break out of the poverty trap. Since 2020 we have been supporting schools through both capital and revenue projects, improving the learning environment for staff and pupils alike. But our main activity has been the construction and operation of 'Community Learning Centres' (CLCs) that act as a gentle entry point to mainstream education for little children who lack the confidence to join mainstream education. The CLCs also provide the extra tuition and help with homework that cannot be offered by parents, many of whom are illiterate. The children's tutors are themselves college students from the same low-caste groups, their tutor salaries allowing them to cover the cost of completing their own education.

In 2024, we constructed two new CLCs; in 2025, we aim to create three more CLCs, raising the £92,600 we need for construction and operation through a special Big Give summer appeal, from grant application and from a gift in a Will. In October 2025, we will take part again in the Big Give Women and Girls campaign to raise £30,000 towards the costs of female tutors and provide bursaries to younger girls.

Healthcare projects

Our major healthcare project that is directly linked to wildlife conservation is our work towards reducing mortality from snakebite, a cause of over 1,000 needless deaths per year in Madhesh Province. In

2024, we received a £10,000 grant that has allowed us to train snake rescuers who can not only catch snakes that stray into the villages (returning them humanely to the forests) but also teach villagers about the importance of 'The Golden Hour'. This is the vital hour after the bite of a venomous snake during which time administration of anti-venom can be life-saving. Delay beyond the hour can be fatal. In 2025, we are seeking grant funding of £60,000 to which we will aim to add income of £30,000 from grants and Wills to roll out our programme intensively to Dhanusha District and more generally within the Province.

Livelihoods projects

We continue to be involved in two areas of livelihoods; empowering women as individuals and in groups through training and in the set-up of small businesses and supporting farmers in agroforestry. For the former, in 2024 Lily's Leaves trained 30 women in basic tailoring and opened five associated sales outlets. The training of farmers will begin in 2025.





Projects in Kathmandu valley

Since Lily's Leaves was founded with our help in 2020, the social enterprise has been operating a training and production centre in Kathmandu. This centre has offered training in tailoring skills at both basic and advanced levels, as well as in silversmithing. In 2024, the tailoring training was extended to southern Nepal, making it more accessible and reducing our local operating costs.

Our Urban Nature Project began in July 2023 with the planting of the first Miyawaki forest on the banks of the Bishnumati River within Kathmandu. In 2024, we added two more forests to our portfolio. Moving forward into 2025, we plan to establish two sapling nurseries and an associated restoration seedbank to cultivate our own saplings, rather than continuing to purchase these from private nurseries. We will be planting at least two additional forests in the Kathmandu valley, particularly focusing on the Swayambhu area, and including endangered species in our plantations.

Our activities extend beyond rapid reforestation. We are collaborating with the Millennium Seed Bank at Kew to support and complement the work of the conservation seedbank at the Botanic Gardens in Kathmandu. To sustain and grow the Urban Nature Project, we will be seeking grant

and major donation support through our Big Give campaigns in April and December.



Lily Katuwal KC (centre), Founder of Lily's Leaves, with six young trainees who are deaf. In 2024 Lily's Leaves planted 4,000 saplings at this and one other urban forest site. In due course, an estimated 200,000 people will benefit from the environmental enhancement and improvement in air quality.



Three things you can do

Donate through The Big Give

In 2024, 72% of our income was channelled through The Big Give. This is a digital fundraising platform that allows online donations to automatically double in value through matching pledges that we identify beforehand from major donors, corporates, and grant-making Trusts. The Big Give was first launched in 2008 and is going from strength to strength, raising almost £45 million in its Christmas 2024 appeal. In terms of funds raised in this appeal, Pipal Tree was placed 16th out of the 1,267 participating charities, raising £135,235. But we know that we can do even better in 2025, aiming to raise £590k compared with the £398k we secured in total in 2024. **So, for 2025 we are inviting pledgers for our following Big Give campaigns: the environment (April), education (July), women and girls (October), and the 2025 Christmas Campaign that will support 2026 projects in all areas.**

Make a gift in your Will

In 2024, after nine years of our existence, we received our first legacy donation. We used that £500 gift to plant 50m² of urban forest in Kathmandu. A further, much larger, bequest is awaiting probate at the time of writing. As we see it, legacy giving is not a subject to tiptoe around. Through a gift in your Will, you can make a hugely transformative impact long into the future, whilst making a very clear and specific final statement

about your passions and interests. **As a charity, and uniquely within the sector, we make three pledges to you and to all our legators:**

- We will aim to use your bequest as quickly as possible and certainly within three years of receipt.
- It goes without saying that we will follow your wishes as closely as possible; however, we will apply the funds to our Nepal project work rather than to covering UK costs (apart from directly related project support costs).
- The Trustees will keep your gift, along with other legacy income, in a special designated fund that can be used to match and incentivise gifts from other donors and grant-makers or to underwrite projects through to timely and successful outcomes.

To find out more about gifts in Wills see pipaltree.info/wills or, if reading this online, watch the short film by clicking on the image alongside.

Get in touch

Do you have a support suggestion? Can you introduce us to someone who can help? Are you planning to visit Nepal and interested in seeing our work? If you would like to discuss possibilities or anything you have read in this statement then please feel free to contact Philip directly on philip@pipaltree.org.uk. He'd be very happy to chat or meet with you either online or in person.

Our finances

Pipal Tree’s operational successes are matched by our strengthening financial position. We have navigated the setbacks associated with COVID and, more recently, a cost-of-living crisis to show a 62% increase in income and 72% increase in expenditure in 2024 compared with 2023. This, while still maintaining a very modest operating surplus that sustains our reserves levels. Putting that another way, in 2024 we had two thirds more impact than in the previous year.

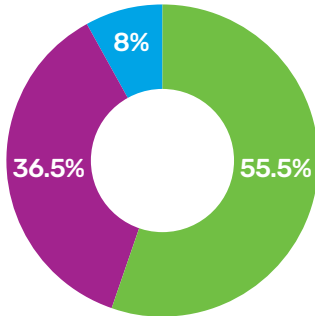
Of our total income of £547,826 in 2024 (2023: £338,678), £388,151 arose from Big Give campaigns – that’s 71% of our income raised through this very strategic form of fundraising. We spent £27,731 on fundraising which is just 5% of what we raised. This is well below the sector average. We spent £443,037 on our Nepal projects as shown below:

We entered 2025 with available charity funds totalling £283,836, an increase of £21,767 on the year. 71% of these funds (£202,232) are earmarked for future use in Nepal, and 29% (£81,604) are available for unrestricted use – for example, we hold £25,792 of our funds in reserve for use in the event of a natural disaster such as an earthquake.

Our full accounts were submitted to the Charity Commission just six weeks after the end of our financial year (charities are allowed ten months for submission) and are available through this link: <https://pipaltree.info/2024accounts> or by scanning the adjacent QR code.

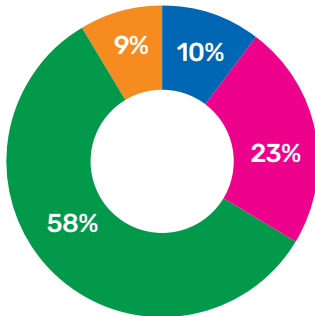


Spent on Nepal projects: £443,037

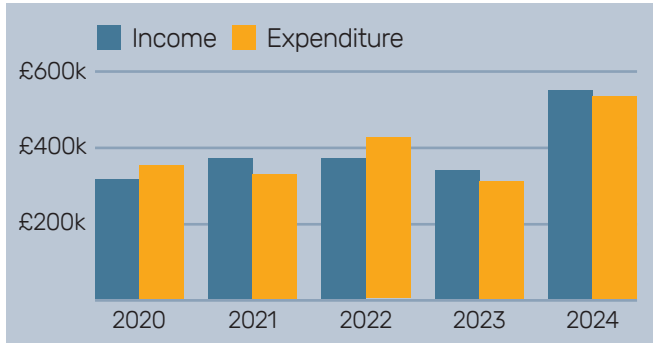


Mithila Wildlife Trust
£246,081
Lily's Leaves
£162,162
Our Sansar
£19,629

Spent on Nepal projects: £406,098



Education & community support
£41,684
Empowering women and girls
£95,042
Environment & reforestation
£234,578
Vulnerable & abused children
£34,794



Tangible impact in figures

Here are some examples of what we achieved in 2024:

- **The Mithila Wildlife Trust planted 5,960 saplings at two new Gurkha Memorial Forests** that lie within our future Dhanusha Wildlife Corridor. These will ultimately benefit 2,500 villagers and 40 farmers who live in the vicinity. Additionally, 354 households will be assisted through livelihoods training and investment.
- **Lily’s Leaves planted 4,000 saplings at two urban forests in Kathmandu**, to the potential benefit of 200,000 people who live within a 10km radius of these locations.
- **Lily’s Leaves and Mithila Wildlife Trust each built a Community Learning Centre for non-formal education of children from the ‘Dalit’ (‘untouchable’) community**, providing extra tuition to a total of 450 children. This is in addition to the 224 children that Mithila Wildlife Trust has been supporting at Bhatighadi community school and 357 children at other CLCs.
- **A new Mithila Wildlife Trust bursary scheme provided bursaries to 17 students from very poor families**, allowing them to attend college (‘Higher Secondary Education’) after successful completion of their Class 10 examinations.
- **Lily’s Leaves trained ten vulnerable young women (six of them deaf) and employed ten others at its Kathmandu production and training centre**. It also provided training in basic tailoring to 30 women in Sarlahi District, south Nepal, creating five sales outlets in the process. In total, these women made 1,898 school rucksacks, 3,037 packs of menstrual pads and 122 school uniforms. These were distributed free to 4,500 low-caste children at 16 schools in Sarlahi and Dhanusha Districts.
- **This year, Our Sansar provided direct assistance to 217 girls at the refuge for rape survivors and in the community, and 78 girls were trained in basic tailoring skills**. In addition, 1,537 members of the community took part in awareness training and workshops on domestic violence and child marriage.



Testimonials

"Although we do not currently have a direct project partnership with Pipal Tree, we are very impressed with the work that they are undertaking and deem the approach to be professional, scientifically appropriate, successful and inspiring."

Kirsty Shaw

Head of Conservation Planning and Action,
Botanic Gardens Conservation International

"We have worked with Pipal Tree for three years. During that time we have been impressed by the value that has been achieved by Pipal Tree for the small sums that we have been able to gift to them. Their reporting has been exemplary and we have at all times known exactly how our money has been spent."

Mike Stammers

Chairman of the Penycommin Trust
for Wildlife Conservation

"We have been consistently impressed at the way in which Pipal Tree communicates, and the degree to which they evidence the outstanding impact that has been created through the sums we have been able to grant."

Matthew Goddard

Chairman of Paradigm Norton Trust

"Pipal Tree successfully brings together significant environmental benefits, community resilience and local education in their work. Our trustees are particularly impressed with their partnership work with local Nepalese NGOs."

Bruce Warnes

Trustee, The Shears Foundation



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