

Vegetation to reduce risk of soil erosion, Nepal

Nepal Vetiver Network

In June-July 2019 I got the opportunity to visit Kathmandu and take part of the work of Nepal Vetiver Network, NVNT, a network gathering people interested in using vegetation for preventing soil erosion and landslides. My contact person, environmental consultant and engineer Ramjee Shrestha, was an active member of the network and highly engaged in the project of introducing the technique on a national level in Nepal. Below is a summary of the work that I took part of during my stay.

Tasks and experiences

I got to see the everyday work at the office in Kathmandu and to do field trips to sites where the grass vetiver has been introduced to reduce the risk of soil erosion, such as agricultural field, close to roads and for cleaning of water in small agricultural systems. The second part of the internship took place in Gaunshahar, a mountain community in North-central Nepal, west of Kathmandu. The district has several active hydropower projects and the network is working at the site of Dordi Khola Hydro power plant, to introduce vetiver along the river banks in order to minimize the risk of soil erosion and to reduce the sediment load passing the power plant.

How I got the internship

The internship came through as a combination of my contact with Ramjee Shrestha, as I found the website of Nepal Vetiver Network, and a separate organization called Workaway. Workaway connects volunteers with projects that need workers, which gave me a contact in the village where I did the thesis work.

To conclude, the internship gave me practical experience of several topics related to Physical Geography: soil erosion prevention, landslides and climate change adaptation. It also gave me insights of environmental work in a low-income country and meaningful contacts both in the private sector and at the university.

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