

BYkids

SEEDS OF LIFE

Biodiversity and sustainability on the farms of India
27 minutes, airing on public television in 2023



DIYA PAYAL, 14, TELLS THE STORY OF SMALL FARMERS WHO FOLLOW TRADITIONAL ORGANIC PRACTICES ESSENTIAL TO ADAPTING TO CLIMATE-RELATED DISASTERS. AT RISK: HUMANKIND.

Our environment—Mother Earth and the living soil—is inextricably connected to our ongoing existence. That's the takeaway message of 14-year-old Diya Payal's film, *SEEDS OF LIFE*. This spirituality infuses the work on the fields tended on her grandparents' farm, located in the foothills of the Himalayas.

Diya tells the story of generations of farmers who live off the land and sell the surplus, and the importance of maintaining traditional organic seeds versus genetically modified seeds. Industrial-scale farming can lead to habitat loss, invasive species, pollution and global warming, which all endanger soil health and water supply and local ecosystems.

Diya's film takes us to the Navdanya Biodiversity Farm, an initiative to promote organic farming and fair trade, and to one of its community seed banks.

There, seeds of local varieties of staples like rice, millet and barley—adaptable to drought, flooding or other climate disasters—are preserved and distributed.

SEEDS OF LIFE stresses the need to educate globally about sustainable farming and food practices, with critical lessons for the preservation of humankind itself. It also illustrates the joy and warmth of family and tradition, and that we are all part of nature.

KEY SCENES FROM “SEEDS OF LIFE” INCLUDE:

- Diya at home with her family, cooking, relaxing and studying
- Interviews with Diya's grandparents in their villages in the foothills of the Himalayas
- Diya's father, an accountant with Navdanya, talking about his background in farming
- Visits with farmers who follow Navdanya's biodiversity programs
- Celebrating with Diya's family the Hindu festival Navratri Puja, which honors the goddess of strength and protection

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT—Diya Payal

India is a country with a very large population, many of whom are small farmers who grow food for their families and local communities. I decided to explore the crisis of biodiversity loss and climate change from an agricultural perspective because these things are impacting food sources in India, and across the world. I come from generations of farmers and my father is an accountant at a biodiversity research farm. While making this film I learned that the way we approach food and farming is deeply connected to our spiritual and cultural relationship with the natural world. I wanted to share these ideas with other young people, in the hope that we will choose to coexist in harmony with nature for the future of the planet and humanity too.

MENTOR'S BIO—Camilla Becket

As co-owner of Becket Films, she has produced numerous award-winning documentaries, including *Sons of Africa*, about a British group that campaigned to end slavery, and a series about environmental activists around the world. She profiles the eco-activist Vandana Shiva in her documentary *The Seeds of Vandana Shiva*.

MENTOR'S STATEMENT

It was so rewarding to witness Diya's growing interest in filmmaking, evolving clarity around the story she wanted to tell and emerging confidence in her own voice. While Diya learned things from me, I also learned things from her: She and her community live in a way we can all aspire to and could achieve in our own way. It's possible to live a modern life with a small ecological footprint and with respect to community, ancestry and the natural world on which we all depend.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

Stephanie Apt, Holly Carter and Sammy Chadwick

ABOUT BYKIDS

[BYkids](#) produces real-world films for kids, by kids. Talented young storytellers from around the world are paired with seasoned filmmakers to create powerful documentaries about their lives. In partnership with public television and education innovators, we share their films and their educational resources to help make global issues feel personal, relevant and actionable for millions of students. Our work serves as a catalyst for change, igniting important conversations and inspiring a new generation of social activists.