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**Subject:** Post EQ Update - Our Situation/Work on the Ground - 31  
**Date:** 15 April, 2016 (bi-monthly)

**General:**

Our general conditions have not necessarily improved in terms of fuel or electricity cuts in supply. But there is a lilt even in the dusty dry air as people move with purpose and zeal, trees are filled with tender leaves, and flowers bloom in abundance.

**Case Study/s:**

1. On 7<sup>th</sup> April, the NA and Tewa (staff, Board/members) working for the past 9 months in the PEQ work met for a reflection meeting. Looking into a SWOT analysis, and the summing up of the work so far, the joint team decided that



this work could not be time/resource bound.

Considering the huge impact on the affected communities, the engaged youths and the grantee volunteers, there was little doubt as to whether if

the programme could be continued owing to a lack of assured funding. But it would mean that the need to advocate for necessary financial support was essential. Hopefully, when the GoN decided to move its recovery work, Tewa/NA would be considered worthy partners. However it was acknowledged that in Nepal, owing to heightened politicization on all fronts it could be tricky. But there was no doubt that Tewa/NA needed to build on the invaluable work that had been already done with the affected communities primarily in the areas of:

- Moral support and healing
- Infrastructural support, and
- In enabling women's agencies to continue despite the traumas and challenges.

On the other hand the joint team felt the lack of proper documentation, the need for further strategic directions given context and priorities, and the value of the community owned Center for Peace and Philanthropy; and to commit to these for the next 3 years.

2. Margaret Young, Grant making officer and Eva Kolodner Regional Fund Raising Manager from the Global Fund for Women, USA arrived at the Tewa Center, on April 10<sup>th</sup> with an objective of meeting with grantee partners in

Nepal to learn of their work, particularly on post earthquake relief and recovery. NA & Tewa took the visitors to Chautara in Sindhupalchowk District. A meeting was held at the newly constructed office of the Tewa grantee partner Adibasi Janjati Mahila Utthan



Kendra (AJMUK). After a round of introductions with the HTC and the BL/IH volunteers, the visitors from GFW inquired what had changed PEQ for them, and how they were managing personally and professionally with recovery work that they are now engaged in led by Tewa and NA.

The HTG volunteers shared the following key experiences and thoughts:

- Tewa/NA were the first organizations who called on them PEQ to learn about their status and provided relief support not just to them but their entire communities.
- All those whose homes were destroyed received Rs. 10,000 each.
- AJMUK members with destroyed homes also received support and additional support to rebuild organization's collapsed office building with corrugated sheets, without this it would be difficult to continue.
- HTG volunteers started working from Irkhu VDC supporting household work, fieldwork for planting millets and rice, interacting with the community – the elderly, women, and their children. In the initial days, they faced challenges because the community focused on the material relief support asking them for tangible relief materials. But over time, people were recognizing the importance of HTG's work.
- Tewa/NA were the first organization/s that assessed the need of the community prior to implementation. All others were only interested in completing their projects and providing handouts.
- With the tools provided by Tewa, the HTG coordinated with the local communities of Saithok and Ranathok to dismantle 47 and 40 houses, and cleaning rubbles respectively, by forming groups of 10 people who came from each household. Since most able-bodied men had migrated for foreign employment, women did these work/s, although a gender-biased mentality continues to be all pervasive.

- After the earthquake, VAW and child trafficking had increased in Sindhupalchowk. So far 64 cases for VAW and child trafficking have been already recorded since January 2016. Since the closure of the FWLD help desk it was now difficult for activists and police to track the trafficking cases.
- Despite these situations, they reported and they celebrated the IWD with over 150 women coming from villages where AJMUK have been working.

Visiting Saithok VDC, the community women expressed their appreciations to the HTG volunteers and how precious their participation has been in enabling them to get back on their feet.

Similarly, the BL/IH volunteers reported the following.

- They have realized that social work is not about acquiring accolades and fame but ongoing dedicated work which in turn has given them expanded learning inspiring them to be dedicated social workers or continue their work in psychosocial counseling.
- Affected people felt relief even when they were listened to, even if an immediate solution was not yet to be found.
- It has built up the self-confidence of the BL/IH youths and despite their young age they have managed to gain trust/confidence in the communities.
- The timely reflection workshops organized by NA has enabled them to continue their work with better focus and skills and there are more clients who report their problems.

The GFW visitors, Eva and Margaret, were impressed by how dedicated the HTG and the BL/IH volunteers were, and how within a brief time period they have managed to emerge as trusted leaders in their communities by their hard work and commitments.

#### **Tewa/NA:**

On April 1<sup>st</sup>, a team building exercise for the peace youth volunteers of NA was conducted in Godavari. A peace center was inaugurated in Lubu VDC on 6<sup>th</sup> April. NA board members Jyotshna, VP Chhatra, and Board Chair Shobha, also attended the ceremony. This is followed by a weeklong campaign to familiarize parents and to inform them about the importance of a peace center/s in the community. The peace center is already becoming a safe space for the community children to feel secure and learn. The same children earlier went to nearby jungle to smoke and drink alcohol.

The NA youths are also being given a questionnaire to be filled out by the community representatives for preferred livelihood activities, which are beneficial as per their felt needs. A consultation meeting was conducted in Dhading district, with community representatives in order to understand the conditions for livelihood activities in the community. Goat raising poultry farming and milk production were felt to be the most successful, owing to market proximity.



Tewa held a grantee capacity building during 4 - 6 April. Altogether 25 participants from 12 organizations representing 11 districts, benefited. The objectives were to have a glimpse into women's development - globally and nationally, deeper understanding on feminist leadership, organizational sustainability and good

governance. Furthermore, participants were also given the tools on learning, monitoring and evaluation process, and there was peer learning as well as linkage between grantee partners. All the grantee representatives were very excited and happy at the end of the three days. A few of the grantees donated to Tewa. They said that they would all go back to their districts and share what they learnt with members of their organizations. The learning and evaluation tools encouraged them to track changes in their ongoing work in the communities.

**Others:**

In relation to the ongoing research in Bhaktapur, 2 Focus Group Discussions (FGD) led by Urmila (Tewa) and Susan (NA), among affected men of ages ranging from 25 to 50 years, were conducted on 8<sup>th</sup> April. The participants all of who were indigenous Newars of Bhaktapur were diverse and of low-income groups.



Some of the findings from the discussion were as follows: gender roles and social, cultural and financial status was challenged by the current situation. The findings of the male focus group discussion were similar with the findings from women groups. Financial condition has weakened the status of families and they were forced to remove their children



from private boarding schools to government schools. Likewise, to cut costs, they were changing their eating habits and not celebrating festivals or rituals in the same way. Frustrations and disinterest is now visible in their communities. They were losing hope on the Government, which has left the community people full of worries. Furthermore, the blockade helped aggravate difficulties all around. Most of their time is now spent in trying to arrange for essential basic needs. Water scarcity has made matters even worse. Regular verbal fights among women trying to grab what is available, has triggered anger and conflicts in the community and has left with little options other than for men to engage in house work.

**Conclusions:**

It is now almost a whole year since the ill-fated 25<sup>th</sup> April 2015. As such Tewa/NA have agreed during their joint reflection meeting that this is the last but one bimonthly update. But recognizing the importance of informing supporters and documenting this work as it moves, a monthly update will be continued into 2016.