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**Subject:** Post EQ Update - Our Situation/Work on the Ground - 29  
**Date:** 15 March, 2016 (bi-monthly)

**General:**



Although the India blockade ended over a month back we are still queuing for fuel (this holds for vehicles and mobikes – L), and everything is costlier and in short supply. The China - Nepal key entry point from Rasuwa district, is still not repaired post earthquake in the way that can take in any traffic. Cooking gas is available if one can pay Rs. 200 or more extra, but it is not available otherwise. So each day Nepalis continue to cope and manage what they can, queue up for basics, and try and have a life largely. Largely, the GoN relief package is yet to be felt by the affected communities. Political hurdles are ongoing and trust building is a long road yet to be travelled with confidence.

**Case Study:**

1. On the 11<sup>th</sup> Susan and Urmila led a small team to Bhaktapur for a focused group discussions with affected women. 15 & 17 women gathered in 2 groups ranging from 19 to 80 years of age. All of them had their homes completely destroyed or partially. Some had



suffered loss of lives of relatives. One of the groups with older women was run in Newari language by Urmila and the other group all understood/spoke Nepali. Although all the women who came were lack luster and had troubled faces, it was wonderful to note that instead of aggression, they were happy that they had been given some space – for the first time as they shared in their own words.

Some of the key sharing was the economic hardships had increased. The houses collapsed and that also took away the shops they ran; sons working in hotels had no jobs owing to tourists not coming, with the collapse of the houses, the family lived in a scattered



way – there was no interest to plough the field so the fields were barren, and these meant increasing economic hardship.

All this resulted in mental trauma and low nutrition owing to lack of ability to spend. Although festivals are being celebrated, they have no homes or spaces to clean with red mud and cow dung, they cannot prepare the many varieties of food and offerings, and they cannot invite their families and friends as they used to. One participant reported that her son who never drank earlier was drinking and this created tensions and quarrels. A wife of an elderly man who was refusing to come into the house said that this made her work even harder as each time she had to go out to give him food and bring back his dishes. Isolation and the lack of traditional spaces to gather were badly felt. They suffered sleeplessness, gastritis, aches and pains, and a few had even found out that they had tumors.

**Tewa/NA:**



For the BL/IH programme, regular activities of the youth in their community as interactions, orientations and counseling services are ongoing. Lalitpur Psychosocial Support Workers went to a school of Malta VDC of Lalitpur at the request of a community school teachers from Malta. They held a one-day awareness program in the government school of Malta on

4th March. The request came from the teachers of Malta, when they saw the NA youth's work in Jharuwarashi and were very impressed. Besides all the youths had events in their communities to celebrate the women's day on 8<sup>th</sup> March.

Likewise, besides ongoing work at the districts, Tewa had its annual volunteer award ceremony. This year an additional award was instituted by the renowned peace composer/singer Amrit Gurung with wife Nirmala in the name of his grandmother, Bhaimaya. On 8<sup>th</sup> March the community women's club of Dhapakhel came to greet and dance/celebrate in Tewa. This is a huge honour for Tewa.



#### **Others:**

The preparations for the building of the new Aanandi – 3 residential block is underway. Right now the boundary walls are being made built. We took time to give an orientation to the labourers on how they can look after their health and eat better. Also we explained to them what we were trying to build at Tewa and why. The labourers were very happy. They said they have never been thus spoken to. We give them water 2 times a day and every Friday afternoon we treat them to a meal cooked in our kitchen.



#### **Conclusions:**

We have little space for reflections and stock taking yet because coping with day-to-day life is challenging. But everyone is being stoic and doing the best they can. It is a humbling experience!