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Subject: Post EQ Update - Our Situation/Work on the Ground - 23
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General:



Situation/s worsens as winter temperatures drops from below 0 in Kathmandu to -10 in other high hills including the earthquake hit districts. The most vulnerable are even dying there - so far 12 elderly. The Japanese government made an explicit statement against the blockade. A faction of the Maoist invaded security, doused kerosene and lighted fire, putting the TV service provider Dish Home (broadcasting Hindi channels) into flames, destroying some 20 million worth of

equipment/infrastructure and affecting over 5 million consumers. During the religious festival of Bibah Panchami at the ancient Ram/Janaki Temple in Janakpur, the anti protests for President's visit turned violent. Later they purified the temple premises saying that it was inauspicious for a widow to visit. Weird for the 21st century and where the red movement led by women has been transformatory in practice in Nepal post democracy! But she was forewarned and advised by security.

Creativity abounds in these hard times e.g. look at the street art where the demon is devouring all the cooking gas cylinders (upper -L, symbolic of ongoing corruptions where gas is available in the black market at 3 times the price but it is not available otherwise). People look haggard, tired, and cold – but are still smiling and going about life with great forbearance, diligence never stopping to celebrate the festivals and laugh at themselves – at least those who can!



Tewa/NA:

Likewise the 2 organizations convened for a reflection retreat meeting staying overnight at the Tewa Center. At TC we were thrilled. Over forty staff



members and board of both organizations participated. There was healing (music & reflexology), learning, reflection and thinking on the way forward for the post earthquake work. Presentations from Urmila (Tewa) and Hari (NA) were uplifting. To put it succinctly, it was decided that at least where the youth and volunteers are working

it will be seen that children do not fall sick or people die owing to sickness from the cold. The Madhes agitations and the undeclared India blockade has gone on now for over 4 months. All our festivals right up to New Year/Xmas and "Ughauli" have been over – yet there is no sign of a respite. Once more some of us decided to stand on vigil demanding a conclusive dialogue so that we can live in peace. From the 22nd onwards, each day we now gather at Maitighar Mandala during 4 to 4.45 pm (Upper – L). It may not appear to be a big deal, but considering commute and freezing temperatures, it is no small show for pressure – only I worry who may be heeding us? Do uncouth and self-serving politicians have the ability to listen to these non-violent messages!



TC felt lucky and honoured to host a concluding event of a 4 year long programme with 90 conflict affected women from 52 districts of Nepal

organized by Nagarik Aawaz, supported by Crea and the Oak Foundation. The 2 days programme, converged on an additional day of interactions focusing on the 33 representatives of the Tarai/Madhes young activist leaders. This additional day was supported by Tewa/NA themselves to deepen their understanding and to better support women activists of the region who are suffering from the ongoing undeclared India blockade now midway into its 4th month.

Case Study:

1. Early in the fortnight the pending meeting for the Bhaktapur Heritage research was possible. The 4 enumerators, coordinator, professor Purusottam Lochan Shrestha (PLS) our paper writer and the key Tewa/NA people gathered. PLS threw light on



his paper and highlighted how he was able to list all the partially damaged and the fully destroyed heritage sites, how most of the homes were over 500 years in the core city of Bhaktapur, and now people were only thinking that all the old buildings needed to be replaced with cement homes in order to be safe. The enumerators shared that owing to the blockade people were irritant, unavailable or not interested in talking about the earthquake with all the additional problems they were now facing about how to put a meal together for the family. Many insights and learning was shared and the research time was reassessed. It was felt that the timeline of July 2016 was still valid. We needed to gather at least another 300 filled in questionnaire for a representative sample and to promptly begin on tabulation of the data. PLS was able to advise us further on the different aspects of the research. Tewa/NA agreed that a open forum would also be organized in Bhaktapur inviting all the stakeholders of the city to further publicize and receive inputs on the research based on PLS's (front R) paper so that it is beneficial to all the affected people and responsible people for the heritage site of Bhaktapur.

Others:



Photo credit: Annapurna Post

Sumira, our activist sister working at WHR just got married! Her wedding procession has been the talk of the town! Thank you for setting new standards.

Conclusions:

We at NA/Tewa wish you a very beautiful, peaceful, happy, **New Year 2016!** May we all all over our world live in prosperous,

peaceful, and joyful communities during the coming year **2016!**