

**To:** Louise, Kaare, Meera, Gaylord, Chela, Paula, Nicky, Edwina, Jenny, Laurie, Anne, Tracy, Mary Ann, Hemant, Dorothy, Susanne, Sashank, Penny/Lee, Cindy, Marji, Sarita, Janaki, Riva  
**From:** Rita  
**Date:** 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2012  
**Subject:** Sampanna Campaign Update – January, 2012

### **Nepal Now:**

I noted 3 days of strike or “bandh” in the valley (on 5<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>) – but there were innumerable ones in the country! The present 14 hours of power cut is being extended to 19 hours – yes you heard me right – **nineteen!** The hike in price of cooking gas, petrol, diesel from a “back-breaking” 15% and 10% respectively has been slightly lowered owing to united students (which is notable) protests still ongoing. An Ex-Minister and CA member was arrested for abduction for a ransom case and senior police officer admitted to murdering his wife and both are in custody – but these are just samples! We had an impromptu 5 hours visit from the Chinese PM – doubling Chinese aid on security and infrastructure. Of course this has a direct negative impact on the Tibetan community here and there have been ongoing arrests and intimidations - as I read in the paper 65 Tibetans arrested at one time, who were coming into Kathmandu from New Delhi.



**Audience gathering for Tewa Musical Night - Sadhana Board Chair & Advisor Mohan M. Sainju Ph D**

Women CA members are reaching out for solidarity and help with civil society activists (and this is mutual) for they are warning it is going to be 1 step forward and 3 steps backwards for women – since they see no commitments in the

patriarchal men leaders regarding changing discriminatory citizenship laws or making commitments in the electoral process. Despite all of these, Sankalpa held a retreat for institutional strengthening, I went Berlin for a GIZ peace & security workshop where amazing women from the world shared their incredible work and reiterated their commitments for peace. As a part of its regular fund-raising Tewa organized a musical fund raising event and a walk-a-thon on the 29<sup>th</sup> the day of “Sri Panchami” – of the goddess of learning, Saraswati, an auspicious day when nature begins to sprout new leaves/buds and humanity creativity.

Impacted by all this, in my personal life this month Sashank and I decided to keep the café closed in the night owing to no lights and petrol and - ooh the cold!

### **Update on the Building/s:**

The TLBDP Backstopping Committee met on the 4<sup>th</sup> January which was essential for keeping everyone updated and abreast, and for making important decisions. The workers are working so hard – it is not funny inspite of the cold. Despite this there is a big shortage of human resource (owing to migration for work abroad) when I push for increasing human resource. They tell me “hundreds go to Malaysia each day and 1 or 2 boxes (implying corpse) arrive at the cremation “ghats”. A loud rattling generator is full on perpetually, and there is a shortage of bricks and stones, and anything that we might need. Luckily the construction company had stored most of what we needed and have been so helpful is making sure that we use materials with thoughtfulness giving me the choice to assess practical use while keeping costs to minimal. The pictures below will tell you the progress – workers vouch all will be done on time for the opening – and I feel like they have taken full responsibility!



**Dormitory Now – Please Note the Roof Top Terrace Wall, the Veranda Wall & Tiles on the Eaves!**



Common Bathroom – Fixtures, Floor, & Painting remains



Details - Walls, Windows & Doors Completed. Many Details Remain! A leveling Bulldozer Reflected.

Our landscape architect visited the site on the 20<sup>th</sup> and has given us a concept, which she will detail out during February. This will ensure that we have a sense of what we need to do before the March event – all the rest will be ongoing work.

### **Moving the Campaign:**

This month we wrote a request letter inviting 20 Ambassadors to visit Tewa – all declined. The US Ambassador wrote a nice email saying his programme clashed, the Indian Ambassador wrote an official response saying he will be in New Delhi at the time, and the Israel Ambassador wrote to say he could not give money to Tewa (we had not asked!). I feel we learned so much here and so much was reiterated. We were not necessarily asking for money in the letter – it was just to say that we would like to share our work with them. Still we tried and now we have an experience!

This month we received Rs. 100,000 for the campaign from four long time donors, Pratima Thapa, Meera/Hemant Arjel, Rama Pant and Riva/Suman Thapa. We also received a pledge from our new member Irina Shrestha and her husband, while Janaki Durga confirmed the earlier pledge from Ankit Pradhan and another new one from volunteer Janaki/Dinesh Shrestha! Yasmin Rana completed her gift of Rs. 100,000 by making the remaining gift of \$ 150. Moved by the campaign, we received a gift of Rs. 5000 from Tewa long time volunteer, Tara Thapa. Memorable was the visit of Tewa supporter Narayan Pradhan Picton and her commitment to support the campaign. So far I think we have over 20 Nepalis who have pledged or gifted Rs. 100,000 to the SC! I will have an exact count in my next update.

What a relief it was to hear from the GFW that they would soon send a quarter disbursement of donations accumulated between October to December 2011 to the tune of US \$ 54900 (but some of this money is from the Tewa Teas and goes directly to Dhaka Weaves, Nagarik Aawaz, and Tewa grant-making purposes). Gifts from Susanne Jalbert's Tewa Teas including Susanne/Bill Jalbert's personal gift of US \$1000, Marji Greenhut's \$1800, and the Gaea Foundation of Gaylord durga's \$5000 were among the other gifts which arrived! Notable here was the donation of US \$ 25,000 from donor activist Effie E. Westervelt, and the unsolicited \$ 5000 from Tewa Tea supporter and a Tewa donor Galen Wood! What a relief this was!!! Please know that they will be used in the best way possible for the ultimate well being of the Nepali women in an ongoing way.

Request letters sent to Makwanpur cluster workshop Grantee participants and Dang grantee groups who are responding promptly and joyfully! The enthusiasms of the grantees are heart warming. But importantly they are also being empowered by the learning from this campaign!

I also received an inspirational email from Penny and Lee Stevens from New Zealand who are friends of GFW Founder President Anne Firth Murray! They say: "As Lee and I will not be able to be there with you all for the opening, we have agreed that we will organize a fundraiser dinner here on March 8 International Women's Day to go towards the Sampanna Fund Raiser. With all your updates we will be able to share your story with the participants"! There is no lack of inspiration – this I can say!

A revised Tewa website: [www.tewa.org.np](http://www.tewa.org.np) is activated from today – it is not perfect but it is a huge improvement (the earlier one was totally neglected for a long time!). I hope you will all take time to view the site and give us feed back!

### **Inaugural Event on the Occasion of IWD March 2012:**

Meeting of the IWD Celebration Committee/s was held on the 18<sup>th</sup> to move work forward. The Celebrations Committee has 6 sub-committees who will all work (during January 15 – 15 March) in close coordination with each other to ensure a successful opening event and celebrations. Three key events are finalized among other events and activities: a) a formal event on the 7<sup>th</sup> afternoon, b) a peace IWD walk on the morning of the 8<sup>th</sup> and a inaugural opening event late morning of the 8<sup>th</sup>. A wonderful decision we made was to honour all the workers and labourers involved in the building with a token gift of cash amounting to Rs. 2500 (\$ 30) each – when we are speaking of some 30 workers, the amount required will mean some \$ 900 in total!

We have met in groups and individually as we can, to detail out the best possible ways of doing things. We will try fund raising and get sponsorship for the event and event dinners! We already have two members Meera Jyoti & Pratima who are hosting dinners on 2 evenings! There will be about 10/12 volunteers, donors, and members who will accompany the visitors in the complementary stay to share stories, and yes, party!!!

So far we may have 12 people who will arrive from Canada, Norway, USA, Germany, and India – Lynne, Ann & Joseph, Marji and two friends, Vanita, Louise, and Hope. Kare may find time to join us, and Filia may be represented as Deepak just tells me that he has heard from them that someone from their office will be here in early March.

### **Financial Aspects of Sampanna:**

Well funds are low right now. We have approximately \$ 10,000 in the banks. But when the GFW disburses the grants we will manage the event and all the incurring costs. Also we will need to pay our Contractors the pending 20<sup>th</sup> running bill soon after the event as we promised. But right now we are buying time and we will have to continuously work at fund-raising! Yes, it is a very big campaign – for us here!

### **Conclusions:**

First, of all I will do my personal best, and I know all our members, staff and engaged volunteers will do the same. But being in Nepal, we will see what we can actually accomplish! Still for those of you who are coming please know that you will find comfortable beds, food (even salads) you can eat with ease, and a community who is welcoming! I will write an extra update on the 14<sup>th</sup> February accompanied by any further information you may need so that you are better informed and updated. You do not know how excited we all are! Please send in your arrival times so that we can receive you at the airport, and please let us know if you have special needs we need to be mindful of regarding food or others, for all who are coming to the March event in Tewa. It will be our pleasure!