

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 October, 2011
Subject: Sampanna Campaign Update – October, 2011

Nepal Now:

October was a month of major holidays! Dasain, consisting of the 9 days of Durga Puja and the celebrations of the victory of good over evil, is celebrated by visiting senior family members and receiving their blessings, feasting and shopping! There was more rain than usual around Dasain time, and since I have not celebrated the festival in 24 years after my husband died, I celebrated it by cooking and caring for my parents and my lamas. It is a time when boys fly kites and everyone gets on a community swing that is put up in every town and village. The idea is to lift one self off the ground so as not to burden the earth. This was followed by Tihar (the festival of lights, Goddess Laxmi, animals and environment and brothers/sisters) or Deepavali as the Indians would say. Nepalis are busy scurrying around with preparations for the festival and celebrating! Little work can happen during and between these two major festivals! Forget politics and inter party bickering for once!



Tewa Board members with Hope Chigudu (seated third from left), Zimbabwe

This was also a month of visitors! Julie Shaw, Jane Barry, and Mary Jane Real came to host their women's regional network workshop in Nepal. Hope Chigudu came to work with Tewa to strengthen organization and Board governance. The most

significant news for women this month was that the noble peace prize was handed to 3 women: Ellen Jhonson the first woman President of Liberia/Africa, Leymah Gbowee also from the same place, and Tabakul Karman from Yemen. It made me reflect that since 2005 when 1000 women were proposed for the peace prize, it finally dawned on the “noble peace prize think-tank” that it is ok to award this to women collectively – because it made me wonder what was previously lacking in a 1000 strong women of the world - each of whom were no lesser than those now awarded! Still I celebrated - but I also mourned the death of Wangari Mathai (Nobel Prize in 2004).

Update on Building/s:

Despite these holidays, work moved on the dormitory building and the casting work on the second story was completed. It took 68 labourers 12 hours (from 7 am to 7 pm) of non-stop work to complete the cast! As you can see below in the picture, this was a lot of hard work since everything has to be done manually.



Dormitory Building After the Casting & Beyond - Rice Harvesting, Threshing, & Sheaving by Women

On behalf of the TLBDP, Deepak Dewan stood in attendance throughout the day in my absence, for supervision as well as moral support. Tewa also served the workers an additional nutritious snack (besides what the contractors gave them). The caste is being currently cured by water. Besides, the TLBDP committee met to discuss next steps and the best possible ways of doing further work taking into consideration, the advise previously given by Professor Han Verschure when he visited Nepal. There is much to think through and plan so that we can make the best of what we need and will serve Tewa the most.



Note labourers carrying stones and sand against the wall of the Tewa office building!



Detail of the hard work done by labourers (above), & meal served by Tewa.

Moving the Campaign:

In this regard, Tewa staff informs me that they sent off 120 letters to grantee organizations so far and have received Rs. 46,610/- from 35 organizations and remaining pledged amount is Rs. 7,000/- from 7 grantee organizations making the total amount to Rs. 53,610 so far. This is really wonderful news particularly because they report that the grantees loved that they have been asked and are eager to send/bring their gifts to Tewa.

I received an email from Dr. David Bradt early in the month saying that his friend Dr. Peter Galpin was going to visit Nepal on a clinical mission and if possible we could have him visit Tewa. On the 29th this was possible and it was wonderful that Tewa office building is wheel chair accessible. Deepak and I gave him an overview of Tewa's work and introduced our campaign to him. This month Marji Greenhut, a long time Tewa supporter sent her gift of \$1800 for Tewa to the GFW. Mary Jane Real gifted \$100 for the SC, and Chela Blitt personally introduced the campaign to a longtime supporter of Tewa Effie. For this campaign so far 12 Nepali donors have pledged Rs. 100,000 each, of which we have received a little over Rs. 400,000. Just today I received a gift of Rs. 100,000 from Kadam Arjel who made the gift in the name of his mother Afudidi (Urmila Debi Arjel).

Financial Aspects of Sampanna:

Since most of the donations from North America are sent to us via the Global Fund for Women (GFW) as donors get to make a tax deductible donation, we have not managed to have a clear sense of the gifts, which have been disbursed. Since Louise has also been travelling we have not yet managed to check in with the GFW – this will be set right next month and we will have a clear sense of how much we have raised so far.

Yesterday just as the holidays were concluding, I had a meeting with Meera Jyoti the TLBDP co-chair and Sadhana Shrestha, Chair of the Board, to think through the Sampanna Campaign. While many good thinking and strategies emerged from this meeting, we recognize that this campaign is going to require all the efforts and energies we can muster to pull it through successfully. It is a very BIG campaign after all by any standards!

Conclusions:

Today a nicely dressed woman but someone I do not know, walked into Café Cheeno, and asked for me. I was in the garden so I met her. All she wanted was some money. I gave her a cup of tea and Rs. 200. She apologized and said that times are so hard and coming from a higher caste and class, as a woman it is harder to understand what to do when one does not have an income. I believe her. I also continue to reflect how difficult this festival season must have been for more Nepalis than before with sky rocketing inflation and unabated insecurities. Yet as we walk about largely people still appear to be content and happy. During my Tihar morning walk/s by six o'clock worship and visits to the temples are beginning. Women in the houses are preparing to welcome Goddess Laxmi into their homes by creating a welcome mandala outside their main gates and a path where she is expected to tread (please see two samples I took on my i-phone) right into their homes. She is expected to come into the homes deep into the night and fill the household with wealth and abundance! This year I

completely missed on doing a Laxmi puja for the Sampanna Campaign – so will have to work extra harder now! I must remember to do one next year!

