

From: Tewa (www.tewa.org.np)
Nagarik Aawaz (www.nagarikaawaz.org.np)
Subject: Post EQ Update - Our Situation/Work on the Ground - 32
Date: 30 April, 2016 EQ Anniversary (final bi-monthly)

General:

On the 25th April 2015, Nepal was hit by an earthquake with a magnitude of 7.8 Richter scale, which critically affected 20 districts, damaging infrastructures and heritage sites, taking over 9000 lives and injuring 100s of thousands of people. On this 24th the President flew in a helicopter to Barpak in Gorkha district, the epicenter, to inaugurate the foundation of a memorial monument. So did other "leaders" in other places to initiate rebuilding of heritage sites. Groups of people/organizations recalled and commemorated the day by praying, writing, speaking and conducting healing activities through art, worships, music and other activities. Some even saw relief in flying off 1000s of balloons in memory of those who died!

Daily papers reported that according to the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA):

- detailed damage assessments is nearing completion now in 11 out of critically affected some 17 districts
- 319,912 household have been identified as beneficiaries, but agreements with them have yet to be signed by the NRA
- 24,000 engineers have been deployed to affected districts for the assessments
- Out of the 770,000 families rendered homeless, only 700 have so far received the government pledged Rs 200,000 cash grant for rebuilding their homes. (so far the affected people have themselves built 31,000 houses in various districts, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics).

Even on a logical basis, it is clear that the GoN¹ has been inefficient and ineffective in providing relief or on working on recovery; though the NRA has not yet sounded out the number, it is evident that assessment work has been cost heavy; and surely from a gender and an equity lens, the most disadvantaged in this are the vulnerable groups, women, elderly, children, sick, or those who have no access to remittance from family members working out of the country.

Youth volunteers (from Nepal and all over the world) who earlier engaged in relief work in an unprecedented manner, civil society groups, and many others, like little ants, have enabled to hold the affected populations hands and hearts together. And the affected people themselves have once more have demonstrated the ingenuity, the resilience, and the unbelievable patience and fortitude of the Nepali people. Picture books, commemoration books, and articles have come out to mark the event. But the lack of GoN response and early action remains appalling a year after the disaster, and thousands of children and vulnerable families are need in urgent support. This has not rubbed off well with anyone, especially the affected communities.

Case Study/s:

¹ Government of Nepal

1. Tewa/NA commemorated the earthquake anniversary by cooking "kheer²" and feeding all who came, particularly the children and the old in all the 6 districts they are engaged in. It was reported that the activity engaged the communities and allowed a dedicated space for all to vent out and appreciate life. All the pictures below are from different districts and are of poor quality being sent by the volunteers from their phones.



Tewa/NA:

NA is ensuring regular activities of psychosocial support youth workers in the affected communities. In Lalitpur, the NA youths are given a questionnaire to fill out for livelihood support activities (which are beneficial for the community). On May 2, 2016 NA counselors and staff will go on a field visit of Ramechhap to supervise

² traditional rice pudding

PSWs and consultation meeting with concerned stakeholder of Ramechhap regarding the livelihood activities.

The commemoration event of making "kheer" fed over 1000 community members in the 5 affected districts. Children, elderly people, women and men from survivor communities partook in having lunch with appreciations and joy. This idea proved to give a little respite, space for reflection, and some healing space in the community/ies.

Similarly the Tewa/HTG volunteers along with the community members gathered with the most affected communities to mourn the dead; to hold together the vulnerable communities like the physically challenged community still living in makeshift tin roof homes in Sindhupalchok; lighting of candles; and reflect over a meal of "kheer" communities cooked and shared in all the districts of HTG work. The



day was commemorated entailing little economic costs but lots of heart, and those who participated reported that they felt a sense of relief and hope.

Conclusions:

Tewa & NA in the coming month will review with the volunteers and the youths as to how to continue this programme in the most beneficial ways. It is clear that the communities need the support – there is no short cut to trauma healing.

This update will now continue on a monthly basis.