

## Post EQ Update - Our Situation/Work on the Ground - 16 15 September, 2015 (bi-monthly)

### General:

After some super intense times regarding the district level strikes and closures, slowly things are evening out to some level of normalcy and the constitution is expected to be promulgated within the coming week on a majority vote. The worrying thing continues to be that Madhesh parties are not willing to come to talks and both sides have grievances. Most of the schools are open and high alert removed. Tarai/Madhesh is still turbulent. Also we are so relieved that Dr Govind KC who went on his 6<sup>th</sup> fast-unto-death hunger strike against corruption in the health sector opened his fast on 6<sup>th</sup> September, the 14<sup>th</sup> day but is warning that he may go into another, if demands are not addressed within 2 weeks. We Nepalis seem to have been celebrating all the festivals, Krishna's birthday, the every-once-in 12-year Godavari Mela, father's day and are preparing for the forthcoming Teej (women's day of fast).



On the other hand everyone is closely watching the constituent assembly process. The women are not at all happy. It is still muddled, unclear and regressive regarding some key issues like citizenship in the name of the mother, women's reproductive rights, and women's identity and representation, women

have been struggling for – for years now! On the 9<sup>th</sup> over 7000 strong women walked the streets peacefully, alerting the government to ensure their rights are addressed in the constitution. Besides their protest is ongoing in terms of relay hunger strike, quiet diplomacy, and street demonstrations – now for PEACE as a mandate.

### Tewa/NA:

Tewa/NA have been working, organizing, and participating in all the aspects of the women's collective campaign. This entailed many impromptu meetings, organizing and doings. At the same time, the ongoing work of both organizations have also been ongoing. Regarding



NA Youth For Change Program a peace and harmony-raising program was held in 5 VDCs of Lalitpur. September 15<sup>th</sup> community level peace initiatives were

taken to create awareness on community harmony. Activities like essay and art competition in local schools and youth groups were conducted. Women's Group Song Competition was organized by the Peace Volunteers. 7 women groups participated, showing exceptional talent and zeal. More than 200 women and some men came to sing and dance in this program, they expressed this kind of activity was first after the earthquake, and helped them heal in some level. The NA psychosocial counselor is very busy in providing orientation of psychosocial problems in women and youth groups of working area. Likewise, Tewa



organized its regular grantee capacity building workshop. Overlapping with the HTG volunteers, this helped all other grantee organizations to learn about the work being done post EQ, and also open doors for rapid response women teams when such disasters strike. This

workshop was lucky to have poet/writer/singer Manjul himself come and sing for the grantee/HTG participants.

### 1. Case Study:



Prizaa, a young woman of 24 years was 8 months pregnant when the earthquake hit. She ran out of her home with her 4-year old daughter, but got caught in between two houses that collapsed. She was fully buried under the rubble with only four fingers showing. She could hear voices outside since she was conscious. Finally about half an hour later, the community saw her fingers and rescue her alive. But she lost her 4-year old daughter. In three weeks, she delivered a baby boy now 3 months old. When the HTG shadow barefoot volunteers met her she

was still in trauma. She said that unless she goes out of the house for 3-4 hours and does something to occupy her, she couldn't survive. That is when the HTG volunteers in Dharmasthali organized the sewing training by reaching



out to local donors for support. They have started a 3 month-long training for 28 participants. Prizaa is one of them. She brings her 3-month old baby to the class. An earlier Tewa staff/donor contributed enabling to buy a bamboo crib for the baby while she trains. Prizza is now hopeful. She has self-confidence and is striving to live her life anew. (*Courtesy – Sadhana, ED Tewa*)

### **Others:**



These pictures speak for themselves! Although our tallest building at the Tewa Center, Aadhar was not structurally damaged we were advised to take off and redo most of the walls on the lower three floors. For these months Nagarik Aawaz operated totally from the library room at Tewa. Now they are back happily in their office. As technically advised, allowing time for the aftershock tremors to stop, in less than 45 days we rebuild from scratch to finish. In the next three days the SANGAT month long feminist course for South Asian activists will begin and it will be hosted in the ground floor hall, which is now beautiful! We await to welcome all participants to the TC and on reflection, we note that it is our shared pain and loss this earthquake - but we have been inspired, moved with the collective resilience and hard work of fellow Nepalis, and the cooperation and support of all our friends.

### **Conclusions:**

What we share here is just a tiny glimpse! So much good work is going on at the level of both the organizations. The recovery work, the ongoing work, the leadership and the participation at all the rally and vigils of the women's collective campaign for a women friendly constitution, and the insurgence of violence in the eastern and southern Nepal with issues related to the constitution making in the process. Yes, a schizophrenic fortnight – not without achievements and fulfilling experiences!