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Subject: Post EQ Update - Our Situation/Work on the Ground - 25
Date: 15 January, 2016 (bi-monthly)

General:

Although there were multiple messages and much noise/s from politicians regarding the end of the blockade, it has yet to happen. The loosening of some of the entry points, which means something somewhere are easing out intermittently but we have not been able to go to the gas dealer and get a cylinder of gas or go to a gas station and fill up the car. Power cuts have increased to over 14 hours a day, which means the batteries do not charge on the inverters and our communications/internet capacity have certainly deteriorated. FNCCI spokesperson says business is down by 31% and GDP growth at minus 0.9%, the nearing 5 months blockade has done so much more damage than the earthquake.

Yet Nepalis continue to make ends meet industriously and with a smile on their lips. We know that completing 4 months of the blockade, things are wearing thin on us. We intuitively make less conversations other than the ones related to accomplishments of work and managements of homes, shying away from getting into



areas where anger or excitement may not bring us solutions, but may rather leave us with expended energies and shift us to non-creative ways of being. It is truly remarkable how we intuitively know what we need to do – when we listen! Earlier times fellow Nepalis were on the streets for democracy movement, for ousting Monarchy, for the new constitution.

But this time when "leaders" one trusted fail you and demonstrate that they do not even have the intentions and abilities who does one shout at? Who does one march against? Yet vigils now organically led by NA as an organization with peace as its main agenda, continues braving the cold, dust, and yes, general apathy.

Mahmood Hasan a former ambassador/secretary writes about current Nepal *"Inflation has risen from 6.9 percent (July, 2015) to 8.3 percent (September, 2015) with the food sector being badly hit. Imports have declined to Rs 130 billion (July-September 2015) compared to Rs 191 billion of the corresponding period of the last fiscal year. Exports dropped from Rs 22.53 billion to Rs 16.81 billion in the same period. The debt burden has risen to Rs 539 billion, which is 24.5 percent of Nepal's*

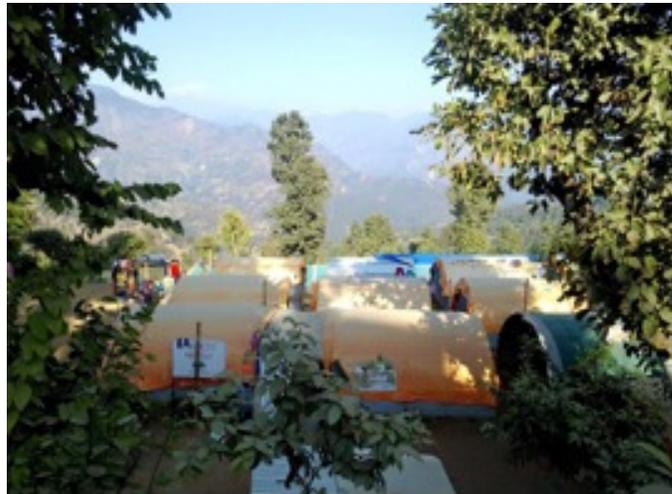
GDP. Agricultural production will go down by 10 percent, with a risk of food insecurity. Around 2,200 industries have shutdown, with more than 200,000 employees rendered jobless. Demurrage piling up on stranded trucks and containers in Kolkata have surged to Rs 5 billion. Situation is grim. Four whole months since the blockade – how can it be endured without huge costs some of which are irreparable?

Tewa/NA:

NA recently welcomed a external volunteer Soumya into its fold who will also work to help strengthen the counseling work with the peace volunteers deployed in the PEQ affected districts and in helping in the conceptualization of the district level peace centers – as an architect and a counselor. They have been consistent with the vigils when many others have been unable to do so. Tewa has recently had an intensive monitoring training for its related programme staff with the help of an external consultant Puja Roy. They have had practical sessions in the PEQ affected districts to ensure Tewa/NA work is monitored. Both organizations are busy with follow-up activities and ongoing support, a little example of which is the case study here below.

Case Study:

1. Tewa team went to Sindhupalchowk for a monitoring visit of Hamro Tewa Gaungharma (HTG). The team visited Sangachowk-Ranathok where Tewa barefoot volunteers helped in dismantling 47 homes of a mixed community of Rai, Tamang and



Khattris. Next Tewa visited Sangachowk-Saithok village of Rana Magars where all forty homes were affected by the earthquake with a human causality of 10. Here the HTG volunteers helped local women groups clean water tanks and reconstruct the road. Finally, Tewa visited Chautara-Gairigaun where the HTG volunteers are now residing. Here they met with the youth counselors of Building Lives/Inspiring Hopes programme led by Nagarik Aawaz. In Gairegoan Tewa helped construct and furnish the temporary office of its grantee Adibasi Janajati Mahila Uthan Kendra and 15 igloo style tin homes for a disability organization along with the support of some other agencies. Lumari Bahadur Poudel who is himself, visually impaired, is the community teacher of abandoned differently abled children who are now being looked after and are getting an opportunity to study in this wonderful space that has been created via the connections of Tewa grantee Panmaya Tamang, and the initiative taken by Lumari Bahadur. The NA youth counselors and the Tewa

HTG volunteers were greatly appreciated by the community people and especially the local women who said that their support was invaluable in helping them recover. Warm clothes, and food for the children (supported by the Sai Kendra via Tewa member Janaki Shah) was also distributed in all the 3 villages on the occasion. PEQ work continues adapting to shifting needs and is greatly valued.

Others:

On the 11th Tewa Board Chair Nirmala KC, Ph D inaugurated the Tewa Boardroom - making organizational history. The Aadhar floor untouched so far after the earthquake, is now repaired and reorganized by the TC team and is now open for use as the Tewa Boardroom. It took Tewa 20 years to have a dedicated space for its Board meetings and work. In a beautiful surprise ceremony, there were celebrations, reflections, and a growing sense of further responsibilities.



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Conclusions:

We pray that political resolve is made and the blockade is lifted, ending unnecessary hardships and economic collapse for Nepal, and for the peace and happiness of everyone on our planet earth, this new year 2016!