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Subject: **Post EQ Update - Our Situation/Work on the Ground - 26**
Date: **31st January, 2016 (bi-monthly)**

General:

Nepalis are still not getting gas and petrol easily. It is now 4 full months and 10 days. It is beyond comprehension and reasoning. There is some easing out in terms of goods coming in from some of the border entry points – but the black marketers (many claim promoted by the State) prevail. At such a time, Tewa grantees gathered firewood in their community forest and we brought it 2 busloads! These have been the coldest weeks. The State continues to be absent except in hollow words, but fellow Nepalis are doing all they can – in the earthquake affected districts, in far-flung villages, and where help is needed – just as the firewood Tewa received! But we note that the world is largely silent and unaware that a country is in such suffering, taken hostage by its own politicians and states"men"!

Case Study:

In Jharuwarashi, Lalitpur, Tewa led **HTG** volunteers have been busy in the reconstruction activities. They have supported Yosodha Khadka, who is a single woman neglected by her family, by helping her build a temporary shelter. There is high interest and demand from the

community women for tailoring training so that they can earn something to support themselves and their families. Thus, 15 women were trained on tailoring cloth shopping bags. Similarly, training on incense sticks making and tailoring training is ongoing with active participation from the local women.

The Building Lives/Inspiring Hopes **BL/IH** programme led by NA, went about its follow-up work to provide ongoing mentoring and backstopping support to the youths, in the earthquake affected districts (L – follow-up visit in Barpak, Gorkha). It is noted that the first aid youth counselors are providing counseling where needed and they have given orientation classes from a point of awareness raising and prevention. Although they are facing challenges owing to high expectations from their community/s, the 20 youths who are engaged currently, are happy for having gained the trust and confidence from the local community members. They feel the need for regular skills building and follow-ups. They have also been sending in regular reports and updates on their regular work at the district level. The NA team from the CEO, Board Chair has gone on these follow-up and monitoring visits. They have been going on the local bus due to the ongoing fuel scarcity and the sky rocketing cost for hiring vehicle now, meaning that these visits have cost more time and efforts.

Tewa/NA:

It is remarkable that work with HTG and BL/IH went unhindered despite growing cold and hardships owing to the undeclared India blockade. Regarding HTG, in Sindhupalchok, under the leadership of Tewa grantee group, women's groups were formed in all the 9 wards of the VDC. These groups worked on women issues and strengthening women's agency including voice, choice, and independent thinking. It also worked towards economic empowerment of women in the community through different skills based training like bangle and hair clip making. A cooking training was conducted for 27 mothers with support from health center volunteers where they were trained on preparing tradition porridge for infants (lito). Likewise, there is sewing training, which is ongoing with the involvement of 18 women who are making warm clothes for the winter. Apart from these plans are underway to contribute finically towards purchasing land for two community schools - Bhagbati Nimna Madhemik Bidhalaya at Mandre, and Narad Pokhari School in Gojay at Ward no 2 and 3 respectively. These schools, which have 200 students, were completely destroyed by the earthquake of 25th April 2015. In addition to helping and supporting

the women in the community/s, at large the volunteers are supporting to buy materials for the construction of the community clinic. Likewise the most needy 210 individuals have been distributed with warm clothes to cope with the winter.

In all the districts of engagements the HTG volunteers and the BL/IH youths are doing seemingly small everyday work but all of it is helping the communities stay strong improvising and rebuilding their lives. Warm clothes, nutritious food, moral support, and love – all our pictures (R – Panmaya in Sindhupalchok) tell us that the volunteers have been one of the most reassuring and motivating factors. As envisioned this has also enabled women's ongoing agency both in ensuring rights and in any advocacy necessary or required.

Others:

These simple banner vigils are ongoing although it feels like they fall on "deaf ears" so to say! The mood of the moment can be captured as citizens feeling very stretched, unheard and a growing sense that there is no one to turn to.

Conclusions:

Looking at just the Tewa & NA PEQ related work in the forthcoming month, there is no time to waste or worry. It is heartening to note that such good efforts are happening at many levels by many many groups of people, both far and near!