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Subject: Post EQ Update - Our Situation/Work on the Ground - 37
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General:



Not much has moved forward officially – be it the post earthquake recovery work, development initiatives, or the actualization of the Constitution. But despite an extended monsoon and all others disasters accompanying it in terms of floods and landslides and road accidents, the weather is beautiful and trust the Nepalis to largely innovate and improvise! At Tewa, hosting the entire process and the launch of the OBR on the 19th during the 21st month-long Sangat Feminist Capacity Building Course was an invigorating process culminating in an exhilarating

and a super satisfying experience with over 500 feminist activists participating exuberantly. Kamla Bhasin and prominent feminists from the region, 33 course participants from 12 countries, and several awards interspersed with slam poetry, singing and dancing had everyone on the floor at the closing number. The Tewa Rangamanch was a perfect venue and the rain god was kind to us all on the occasion!

Case Study¹:

¹This case study is an excerpt from a field report written for Nagarik Aawaz by intern Daniela Bachi, who is a graduate student in Human Rights and Humanitarian Action at Sciences Po Paris. Case study photo credit is also Daniela's.

1. "Our next and last stop would be Rampur — Chainpur VDC (Village Development Committee) — where a community awareness program was to be held in cooperation with Focus Nepal, the local partner organization for NA in Dhading district. Being a small rural village, Rampur is accessible only by foot. After driving for five hours through narrow roads carved out of a mountainside with hairpin curves; walking across green fields and farmlands for more than two hours; crossing suspension bridges over wild rivers; climbing muddy trails; dipping our feet at the creek and hear the water flow; and being invited to drink porcelain-white buffalo milk at the home of the local villager who kindly helped us to find our way, we finally reached our final destination at the top of a hidden hill.

Slowly, a group of over 150 women began to fill the room. In occasion of the Teej festival, all of them were wearing their finest attire: beautiful red and green saris, as well as springs of greenery and intertwined blossoms in their hair.

NA's youth volunteer for BL-IH program in Chainpur, Ms. Saru Sunuwar, conducted the opening along with representatives of the community and both NGOs. After an evocative lighting ceremony, a group of women featured a choreography inspired by Nepali folk dance. Mesmerized by the powerful drum sound and the swift dance movements, I observed their eyes gleaming with admiration with every move.

...Antina, conducted her session on psychosocial awareness under the title *Psychosocial problems, its causes, symptoms and the coping mechanism.*



Antina highlights the importance of

preventing stigmatization and social marginalization against anyone presenting this kind of malaise. As many women share their experiences, they realize that they might be suffering from the same problem. Amongst the causes of distress they mention primarily family conflict and uneasiness as a result of the earthquake. Many of them are concerned about going back to their homes because the memories of those terrible days after the earthquake are still fresh and vivid in their minds. As they progressively understand the meaning of mental health, Antina encourages those undergoing frustration and stress situations to seek additional help. According to NA's counselor, before this workshop many women seemed unconscious of mental problems. Before closing the session Antina shares with her audience a number of actions that can easily contribute to their wellbeing, including breathing and exercising techniques. Additionally, Saru offers to refer special cases to partner NGOs

providing complementary psychosocial care and support. Despite the initial difficulties faced to reach the community, the program focus was highly appreciated among the participants. By the end of the workshop everyone indulged in good food and dance".

Tewa/NA:



Tewa HTG Volunteers of Dharmasthali continued to work with the marginalized community members where they have planned to provide basic tailoring training to 10 differently abled (3 women and 10 men) individuals for six months. Some of the participants will be using foot machines while others will be using hand machines - according to their abilities. Training on hygienic and homemade snacks was

conducted for 30 earthquake survivor women. During this period, two local organizations were registered. Similarly in Gorkha, tailoring training is ongoing with an aim to equip the earthquake women survivors to open new businesses for economic empowerment. Out of the 28 women who attended the basic course training, 19 moved on to get an advanced tailoring course.

In Dhading, activities including rubble clearing, dismantling of houses, tree plantation, tuition class for financially weak children, cleaning activities, awareness on violence against women, domestic violence and awareness activities on issues like women rights are being conducted by the HTG volunteers. A monitoring visit to remote and precarious Salyantar led by Shova Shakya (Gender Consultant) with Smita Sharma (Communication & Documentation Officer of Tewa) was conducted during the first week of September. The roads were so poor that the monitoring team had to take one night shelter before continuing the journey. But Tewa learnt that the community women greatly appreciated the work done by the volunteers and informed about the tuition class, which turned out to be most beneficial.

In Jharuwarashi, Lalitpur literacy classes are ongoing with 13 women, including 2 youth and 2 indigenous people participating in it. These women are now able to read and write, and are also able to send message from their mobile phones. Likewise, a one-day awareness on personal hygiene and reproductive health was conducted. Twenty local women were trained in making dream-catchers, which has high market value; and 10 women are engaged in incense stick making.



NA organized psychosocial awareness classes for the +2 students of Bajra Barahi School at Chapagaun, Lalitpur District in coordination with a school run by our youths on August 20 September, 2016. A total of 40 students participated in this session facilitated by Antina Ranjit the psychosocial counselor. In all the 5 districts, the youths are providing counseling services to the local community clients and are also following up with them. Youths are also providing psychosocial awareness and coordinating with other stakeholders as per their need.

NA Team went on a field visit to Gorkha and Dhading districts in early September. Total of 4 team members Hari B. Dhami, Pingala Basnet, Antina Ranjit and Daniela Bachi (Intern from Mexico) went on this field trip.

During the field visit, the following activities were conducted:

- An introductory meeting and discussion completed between the team of Unification Nepal and Psychosocial Supporters (PS) youths who are working previously about effective implementation of BL:IH activities in Gorkha.
- Visit to HADC, Gorkha and their working areas for monitoring of "Equal Power Equal Rights" program
- Psychosocial awareness class has been successfully completed in Chainpur VDC, Dhading with the coordination of Focus Nepal, Dhading. More than 150 participants participated from local community for the session (we can see how this was appreciated from the look of the participants). One of the NA youths, Saru Sunar facilitated the overall program with confidence and ease.

NA published a reference booklet for the program areas of BL/IH as the information, education and communication (IEC) materials. It is hoped that this booklet will help community people in raising awareness and in dealing with challenges. NA Team went on a second field visit to Sindhupalchock and Ramechhap districts, during September 27 - 30, 2016. Two team members, Hari B. Dhami & Antina Ranjit from NA went on this visit. Similar to the above activities - of mentoring, capacity building, and monitoring were conducted during this visit as well.

Conclusions:

Time flew for all at the two organizations and the HTG volunteers and the BL/IH youths, being busy at all fronts! Often there is a realization that Nepalis are living in a coping mode caught between the social obligations of daily lives, and living in deteriorating support infrastructures where inflation and impunity continues to be on the rise. Other than the change of State leaderships, no visible improvement is being felt by its larger population - leave alone the survivors of the 25 April 2015 earthquake.