

## Relief work in Sindhupalchowk

As we are tailing off our relief work to recovery and rebuilding lives, the Tewa team , Sadhana, Urmila, Anima and Kancho visited Sindhupalchowk on Thursday June 4, 2015. Sindhupalchowk has been one of the worst affected districts, receiving aftershocks almost every day for more than a month. We were visiting our grantee **Grameen Mahila Shreejanshil Pariwar** in Khadichowr. Their office in another village Lamosangu was completely destroyed as was the whole village, and they had relocated to Khadichowr , nearer the highway. After a drive on the Kathmandu-Sindhupalchowk highway for about 3 hours , with landslides and dangerous boulders on the way , bare hills cracking with dry dust and destruction of all houses on both sides of the highway, we finally reached Khadichowr. A banner/ notice saying temporary office of our grantee greeted us. I was amazed at the resilience and determination of our grantees, who had taken a space on lease and started their makeshift office in tents right on the roadside, with computers, tables, desk and chairs and work was in full swing. We met with the Founder President Devi Adhikari, President Radhika Poudyal as well as program staff, and all of them said there was too much to do in the district, villages and wards and are doing all they can especially focusing on women and children, adolescents and elderly, disabled and excluded groups since they have been most affected. Their work covers 10 villages in the district and they have mobilized volunteers in all the districts, making sure the households get relief, pregnant and lactating mothers are taken care of, rushing people to hospitals, and regularly meeting the women and adolescents in groups, to rebuild their self confidence and morale. They are doing all this while all their houses have collapsed!





As per their needs assessment in the district we took 360 maternity kits for pregnant and lactating women and 1000 sanitary pads and underwear for adolescent girls. 220 of the sanitary napkins and underwear were donated by South Asia Women's Funds. 260 Maternity kits were donated by Loom Nepal, the buckets by Gems Plasticrafts Pvt Ltd. We distributed it in Petkhu, Sindhupalchowk; the women and girls were shy but excited and happy. The rest were to be distributed in nine other villages. The girls and women were sharing about how difficult it is for them while living in tents especially when they have their periods, since they have nothing to change or wear. They have no toilets and no one has taken care of their special needs. We also handed over a packet of medicines that had been gifted to us by GMP Foundation, Germany since there is shortage of relevant medicines. We oriented the lactating mothers and adolescent girls on health and hygiene, safety and vigilance, to be aware of violence and trafficking and report it to the women leaders immediately. We oriented the men not to drink and instead be supportive of the community work.

### **Aadiwasi Janajati Mahila Utthan Kendra, Sindhupalchowk**





We rushed back to meet another grantee in Chautara, the headquarters of Sindupalchowk, which took us another one hour through treacherous road. Chautara, is completely devastated, but we saw many SUVs of UN agencies and INGOs in the district. We met with our grantee partner Adiwasi Janajati Mahila Utthan Kendra, an indigenous group working for the rights of women in Chautara, Sindhupalchowk. Meeting the 7 members, in a tent outside a monastery, we were again astonished and humbled seeing their determination and drive, resilience and positivity to make sure that the political leaders do not give in to the politics of developed countries, but rebuild Nepal ourselves! Their houses have all gone and they have nothing now, neither shops, or cattle or belongings. On April 25<sup>th</sup>, the first day of the earthquake, 45 of them were having a meeting on Redd Plus – United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries, regarding conserving the environment, when the building started to tremor. If they had gone out all of them would have been killed, they stayed indoors while they saw half the meeting hall collapse and after it stopped they climbed out through the rubble and a half open floor ! The cash support we provided to the members as well as the organization, took them completely by surprise and were so grateful to Tewa for reaching out to them during the earthquake, finding and enquiring about their well being , driving all the way to Sindhupalchowk in treacherous terrain and supporting them. They were filled with gratitude and had tears in their eyes; we were filled with humility and appreciation, and had tears in our eyes!