

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st January 2020
Subject: Peace Building Memorial & Learning Center (PBM&LC) Monthly Update

Nepal Context:

The ruling majority Nepal Communist Party (NCP) which was formed with the unholy union of the ULM and the Maoists, nominated Agni Sapkota to the vacant seat of the Speaker of the House on the 19th and later unanimously elected him. He has a murder charge pending at the constitutional bench of the Supreme Court. A writ petition tabled by senior human rights lawyer Dinesh Tripathi enabled the Supreme Court to extend the case for 30 days since the 28th for further investigation. A young transwoman Ajita Bhujel was raped and murdered in Hetauda around this same time. The Government also finally named the Chairs for the Transitional Justice Commission and the Commission for the Forced Disappearances. Both are conveniently Brahmin men – one representing the Nepali Congress and the other the NCP! The conflict survivors and rights activists are in strong dissent and feel the peace process won't move forward in ways expected, without an independent commission/s – four reputed international agencies have publicly voiced the same.

Work with the Land:



The outdoor kitchen and bathroom facilities are almost finished. Work begins at 10am and the sun comes out after 12 noon – if at all - owing to the Tarai cold wave. Working in the open is not at all easy. The team of engineers who visited the site 24 – 26th this month concluded that we will need to first work on the library block in our master plan to ensure water planning & leveling. Emil, Ganga, Susan and Rita sat again to further discuss the master plan in detail and what it now entails for the PBM&LC. We agreed that we will stick to the zoning and adapt the building work



according to felt needs now and looking ahead. Also, while this building is being built, we will need to conduct research on the viable production and the necessary strength of the compressed bricks. We will take the help from Build Nepal with whom Ganga and Shirshak have had initial

discussions. During the field visit we shared a simple lunch with the workers, community leaders, youths, and staff and a few others who dropped in. Since our visit the thatched roofs are complete, paintings and finishing work is ongoing.

Programme Update at the PBM&LC:

Early in the month a planning meeting with the field staff was held in Patan Dhoka regarding the programme. During the field visit we had multiple meetings with the staff, engineers, community leaders and the youths. NA is expanding its youth programme in Nabalpur with the support of the Bread for the World.



It was wonderful to see how the youths had grown in confidence and in deep thinking. Like Darshan Thanet said to us: “*Earlier I was reading books, now I am turning the pages of life.*” Not only have our youths received many skills-building trainings along with their peers from other districts where NA has this programme, but they are also going directly to their communities to facilitate meetings and consultations. Likewise, the community leaders who we met, seemed like they had completely owned the PBM&LC - even those same persons who were skeptical six months back! This spoke very well of Govinda and his team in Nawalpur. Making use of the land, the lentils we had sown has been largely eaten up by a herd of deer/s, but the mustard will be ready for harvesting by early next month – now the field is yellow with ripening mustard!

Fundraising for PBM&LC:

On January 1st a [pledge of 100,000 rupees](#) came from Charat & Prativa Pratap Singh – very auspicious! This was followed by [PC’s pledge of US \\$ 300,000](#) for the [PBM&LC](#) through his Empowerment Charitable Trust in the Royal Bank of Canada!



When this news was shared with the initial group who are directly working with the initiative, the following quotes were captured: *“I am so surprised and happy! We know how tough it is to receive funds - understanding this, we will support the PBM&LC in the best way we can! Now we will be able to achieve our dream! No words will express my gratitude and I feel so relieved from the pressures of fund-*

raising! We can now plan our project as is needed! We can now afford to do the landscaping plan as we need to plan drainage, water management, and ensure green building/s & space. I could never expect such a huge amount! I am so excited that I feel like getting up and dancing! I am experiencing happy chills! I am now very optimistic about the work I am doing although the local context is not easy!”

On the 27th Rita cooked and hosted a fundraising lunch for the Core Group members and Shankar Pathak, our expert group member. 14 of them were present. Ganga made a presentation on the current update of the PBM&LC. Everyone was very pleased and impressed with all that had happened at Sehari. We also announced the large gift pledged by PC



and dwelled on the unprecedented gift of the NA Chair of the Board last month. In an inspiring conversation/moment that followed, the following members promptly gave/pledged their gifts for the PBM&LC:

- Roshani Karmacharya. Treasurer - Rs. 300,000 (already with NA as loan)
- Ava Darshan Shrestha. Trustee - Rs. 100,000
- Shobha Basnet. IPP - Rs. 100,000
- Sandhya Basnet. Member - Rs. 100,000
- Susan Risal. CEO - Rs. 50,000
- Jyotsana Shrestha. SG - Rs. 50,000 (annually until completion)
- Sukumaya Bohra. Member - Rs. 50,000 (annually until completion)

Thus, we raised Rs. 750,000 through the NA office bearers and Board members in a single day – it was a charged and a historical moment for as the practice of community philanthropy!

At the level of the local staffs, they too have enabled an environment for community philanthropy. We were given 500 pieces of “murali bamboos” (valued at Rs. 5000) and a wall clock by Hom Bahadur Thanet. But some others have made smaller gifts

and also given free transportation or lent necessary machinery. Also, other small business people, and local entrepreneurs are interested in helping while the members of the local community want to support with voluntary labour. Families of our youths are going to make an annual donation by collecting “a rupee a day for peace” and all our labourers are wanting to contribute Rs.100 a month each, for the PBM&LC starting this new year!

Through our ally Dhirendra Lamsal, who is the Founder & Executive Director of International Child Resource Institute – Nepal, Karuna Kline, the Development Coordinator and Senior Researcher of the US based International Child Resource Institute, wrote to Dhirendra saying *“we are happy to discuss how ICRI may play an on-going supportive role to the PBM&LC (they were donors to the PBM&LC in the past). Perhaps Susan can write to the team here to share a bit more about what specifically is needed and how ICRI can be of help?”* This may enable us to start earlier a children play-pen and a day care facility! This would help deepen our engagement with the local community. Susan and Ganga will work on a proposal.

Expert Group Meeting:

On the 27th the Core Group for the PBM&LC met in Patan Dhoka. The purpose of this meeting was to announce the pledge of the big gift received from PC, update on ongoing site activities and forward plans seeking feedback and inputs.

During the field visit during 24th – 26th Prabal, Narendra Dangol (water & waste management engineer, Emil (absent for past almost 3 months for health reasons), with Susan, Ganga, Shirshak, Govinda, and Rita met in several cohorts according to social, technical, and programmatic needs. On the 29th Emil came over to explain to Susan, Ganga and Rita the technical aspects of the overall masterplan. A clear understanding has now emerged that Emil will work with Prabal and will also coordinate the technical team for NA, while Shirshak will be our field engineer supervising and working and coaching local builders and labourers.

Others:

All the PBM&LC team are hugely relieved and in gratitude for the pledge that has come from PC (our earlier donor to Tewa & NA). We hope that this good beginning in January 2020, will continue! There is so much information in all aspects of the PBM&LC, but sadly we cannot share all in a brief update.

Bank Information:

If you wish to make a gift to help build the PBM&LC, please inform us in advance so we have records for follow-ups with the bank:

Name: Siddhartha Bank

Address: Satdobato, Lalitpur, Nepal

Account Name: Nagarik Aawaz

Account No: 01815090950

Swift Code: SIDDNPKA

Note: Photo Courtesy: Ganga Sagar Rai

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 29th February 2020
Subject: Peace Building Memorial & Learning Center (PBM&LC) Monthly Update

Nepal Context:

To give us just a sporadic glimpse, corruption scam listing 156 politicians and officials has been made public implicating the PM, ex-prime minister, eminent politicians to senior government officials. In another news the names of 207 representatives in the HoR and the local level parliament, who are contractors as opposed to the law, was made public.

Likewise, the organizations of the Tharu/s are agitating with the demand that if the Speaker of the House is now a man who has a pending murder case in the Supreme Court, why is one of their elected leaders to the House of Representatives (HoR), Resham Chaudhary, and eleven others in jail for similar charges!

Also a forum called [Conflict Victims' Common Platform](#) brought out a press release saying that the government has no intentions to bring the peace process to a logical end as they paid no attention to past demands of the conflict victim networks that the laws for the TRC & the Disappeared Commission be reviewed and revised as well as in their placement of political appointments of the respective officials.

Work with the Land:



After NA sent the project brief for the scope and PBM&LC's needs for water management, **Narendra Man Dongol** of Naani Associates, sent us a cost estimate for the same. The contract has now been signed with Narendra ji and his work begun with the survey of our

land during 22nd – 24th. Although it rained lightly during the survey applying a highly technical digital machine called Total Station, it did not stop the survey team led by Narendra ji. Likewise, sitting in close consultation at NA/Prabal's office, for the Library Block on the PBM&LC Master Plan, an architectural brief has also been sent to PT/Architect/s. Prabal & Emil will be working on a revision/detailing of the drawings and the work approach. We also requested if they could help us with a

rough projected cost of the master plan if money was no hinderance. They have given us a rough projection and they think that if work does not stop for a lack of funds, we could finish the PBM&LC by the end of 2025! Let us say for now that it is higher than our blind estimate at the very beginning of 2018. We are thinking that if money is not a constraint then we draw up a long-term contract with PT Architect/s renewable annually. This would allow for more commitment and stability. We have also initiated planning and work with identifying a structural engineering firm and eventually also an Electrical Engineering firm for overarching necessary design/s and plan/s which will work out much better for us in the long run.

During 26 – 27 we visited the PBM&LC. Other than the work Susan and the programme team needed to do with ongoing and expansion of the programme in the district, we had an



intense and a wonderful whole day of meetings and event related to the PBM&LC. The adjunct vernacular space and bathrooms are completed and they are in use. Even as we finally finished our work for the day, as you can see in the picture, the lights had to be on for the last leg of our work. The water is running in the taps and our food for the event was cooked in the kitchen!

It has been agreed that as a priority, we will now need a store for building raw materials, and a play shed/pen for the community children. Shirshak with the support of all and in consultation with Emil, will soon begin work.



Programme Update at the PBM&LC:

With the support of the Bread for the World/Germany, NA is expanding work to two more VDCs in Nawalpur. This visit they made a field assessment and finalized on 5 and 15 number VDC/s. This means, that there

will be 10 additional youth volunteers in the district totaling to 18 youths from the community now!



Everything that has been achieved so far was amply and clearly demonstrated during the formal inaugural event for the vernacular building. Our helper, Ain Kumari inaugurated by lighting an oil lamp; the youths wrote and sang a peace/welcome song; and also presented a Tharu dance; and representative/s of the community, Shirshak, counselor Sudha, the youths represented by Darshan and Alisha, and Govinda, spoke on the different aspects of the work/learning at the PBM&LC.

Shirshak mainly shared about the participation of women in the building of the vernacular building. That despite resistance, those who came both learned and found the work inspiring for they got to do non-

traditional work and felt they were capable of doing anything. How their traditional work paired with simple technology enhanced the building work. What they learnt and did will be retained with them and it would therefore lend to sustainability. The two representatives from the community – a woman elected leader from the community, and a man who is a social worker among other things said that they are committed to the work the PBM&LC is intending to do, and will lend it their full support at all times. They appreciate NA locating the PBM&LC here in Sehari, Nawalpur. The youths spoke of the transformation in their day to day lives and how they were beginning to be recognized in their own communities. They also shared that their confidence level had greatly increased. Most of them wanted to commit to social work even as they carried on their education and careers.

Govinda shared that so far, they had gone to all the 4 VDCs that the youths came from – working with schools, youth student clubs, local government agencies, and the communities. So far in a little 5 months 68 programmes had been conducted in partnership/s directly engaging over 1200 persons. They had had very good responses and were slowly gaining trust and credibility. There were some disturbing emerging issues e.g. increased violence against women, drug use among youths, early marriage polygamy and resulting divorce, practice of untouchability (prohibited by the law), widening intergenerational gaps, and largely the elderly seemed to be less cared for.

According to Govinda, the PBM&LC is a much needed and a strategic location for this area. There will be so much to do and model for all related groups and agencies.

After the event at 3pm, the team served a meal to some 30 people who were gathered for the event. The food was cooked in the little kitchen - recently built. Everything cooked except rice was from our fields: lentil, vegetables, potatoe, even the mustard oil to cook with. Importantly everyone



was active in cooking and preparing food as you can see in the picture, Darshan and Lamsal chopping radish from our land. All appreciated and enjoyed the food!

Fundraising for PBM&LC:

A gift of US \$ 1000 has been made by Susanne Jalbert PhD, Tewa Ambassador Extraordinaire for the PBM&LC – she has been a long-time supporter and donor even of NA & certainly the PBM&LC. When my friend, Rupy Singh from old days visited with daughter Rina, I again had the opportunity to introduce the PBM&LC to them. Taking the opportunity of a consultation with Tewa donors, I also shared about NA PBM&LC and gave out the publications for the NA/PBM&LC. Another opportunity arose when Don & Margaret visited from Canada. Once more I shared the brochure and publications with them as an introduction to the PBM&LC. Both Susan and I sadly did not get to devote as much time as we would have liked to local fundraising – we hope to remedy this in the coming month/s.

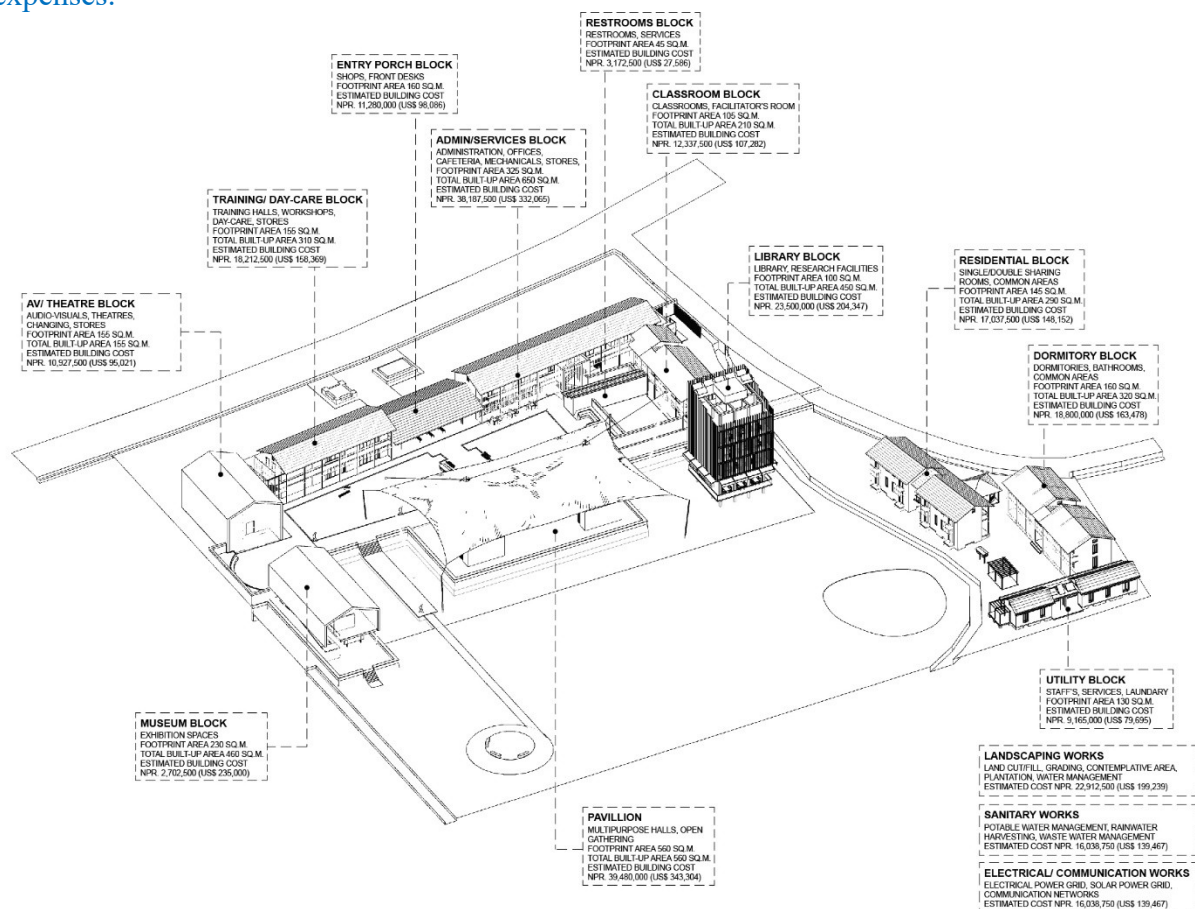
However, in Nawalpur, at the level of the local communities, youths, and the NA team, community philanthropy, is now well begun and seems like this will grow by the day. People giving bamboos, and making concessions while buying construction materials, free labour, gifting transportation costs has been going on for a while. There are 11 families, most belonging to our youths, who are committing to keeping a piggy bank in their homes to put in at least a rupee a day. Then even at the event in Sehari, Hom Bahadur (the man who has owned PBM&LC as his own, and gifted us bamboos and wall clock) announced that he had now 8 friends/acquaintances who are gifting on an annual basis to the PBM&LC! He had not told Govinda, because he wanted to share it when we were there! The staff are all into payroll giving – setting such a wonderful example.

Govinda and his team are also working to see how local resources can be mobilized at the level of the local governments – who have these discretionary funds available – if you all recall the lamp-post that was earlier given for free by the Municipality.

Expert Group Meeting/s:

These are ongoing as per the need. Emil who is doing the technical coordination for NA has also sent in a detailed report of all that has been done this month including the financial assessment for the masterplan. The following is an excerpt from Emil who has worked with the necessary technical team to arrive at the following more realistic conclusion:

“Based on the Conceptual Physical Development Plan 2018, budget projection for the physical infrastructure development of PBMLC was made. The projected budget is NRS. 295,571,250 (USD 2,570,184.78) which includes the construction costs of all the proposed buildings in the document, landscaping works, sanitary works, electrical and communication works. This cost does not include any logistics and management expenses.



The yearly projection is made with the target to complete the PBMLC by the end of 2025, where a total sum of NPR. 346,928,506 (USD 3,016,769) is estimated. The projected amount also includes the expenses of NPR. 36,570,210 (USD 318,001) made in 2017 to 2019 for the tasks completed like land purchase, utility building construction and others. **The total projected sum for 2020 to 2025 is hence, NPR. 310,358,296 (USD 2,698,768).** This includes the construction of all the proposed buildings in the masterplan, all the landscaping works, electrical and communication works and logistics. The estimated average yearly cost is NPR. 51,726,380 (USD 449,794) for the six years of project execution. 5% logistics expenses of yearly projected infrastructure budget are calculated for human resources, monitoring, field visits and others in every yearly projected budget”.

It does look a little daunting to us now – but this is over some six years! what we can commit each day of this “project” is that we will do our utmost best at each step, and work hard at all levels!

Others:

This month too NA received very good news! NA received an affirmation for two longer term projects working with conflict affected women/communities – one, from the **Bread for the World** (BFW/Germany), and the other, from the **Institute for**



Ausland

(Ifa/Germany) – to work in 5 districts including Nawalpur. This means that not only will the Nawalpur programme be further strengthened, but that the knowledge and learning generated from these programmes

over time, will also greatly help in the learning and memorial aspects of the PBM&LC. Susan's and the team's hard work is paying off! The worry for programme funding, I can see, is also greatly lifted off Susan and the NA programme team. Thank goodness - for there is enough to worry about and do here, without this perpetual search and fear of adequate funding!

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Account Name: Nagarik Aawaz
Account No: 01815090950
Swift Code: SIDDNPKA

Note: Photo Courtesy: Ganga Sagar Rai

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st March 2020
Subject: Peace Building Memorial & Learning Center (PBM&LC) Monthly Update (In the times of Corona...)

Nepal Context:

The entire country is under “lockdown” – now on the 9th day of the announced 14 days so far! Just as well - with very vulnerable borders, migrant workers & students returning home from all over, and very limited infrastructure to support such a pandemic we are in a very high-risk zone. We are still in stage1 – only 5 in hospitals so far, but who knows for how long! Like all other countries, there are many issues and challenges in relation to such a condition. But there are those who are demonstrating compassion, courage, and generosity as are also those who see how to fish in muddy waters.

On the morning of the 20th – the four accused young men of the notorious 2012 Delhi bus rape case, Nirvaya - were finally hanged – it took 8 years for justice to prevail.



Work with the Land:

Using local skills, Shirshak & the team in Sehari had weave/install the rope and bamboo railing in the service block at Sehari (above L). This may not be as durable, but we felt that this will enable those who have the skills to practice it in an ongoing

way. Earlier in the month, the team was collecting necessary bamboo/s (above R) and other raw materials for the store and the children's play shed which will be built.

Ganga and Susan also visited Prabal's office to speak about the contract that needs to be drawn. Largely we have come to a mutual understanding that NA/PBM&LC would like to have a long-term contract with Prabal, which can be renewed annually after review and necessary revision/s as may be necessary (this is now possible with the pledge we received last month!). On Prabal's side he will do all the designing with Emil and take responsibility for technical coordination and all oversight and supervision of the building/s work at the PBM&LC.

Programme Update at the PBM&LC:



This was the women's month and the - 110th International Women's Day was celebrated for the first time in Sehari. Govinda and his team had several community centered activities related to conflict transformation, transitional justice and socio-psychological counselling. All

were followed by the sharing of simple refreshments. However, panic took over from the middle of March and fear of the COVID 19, and panic buying food and groceries was all pervasive.

After a whole week of nationwide lockdown, when Govinda spoke to the youths, he reported that they were in fear and felt dejected. They were mostly watching the COVID 19 updates constantly. Govinda advised them to engage in other activities and watch news only once a day at a given time. He has also been in consultation with the Counselor in NA, Sudip to ensure that they can make it as easy as possible for the youths and their communities. Programmatically Susan has been holding the team/s (including at Sehari) together doing as much work as is possible and reaching out for special and present needs.

Fundraising for PBM&LC:

I need to report to all of you that other than local level community philanthropy (individual contributions from the community are coming in for building the children's shed) – which is ongoing now. We did not manage to do any local fundraising as we planned, because although the “lockdown” was imposed from the 24th early morning, the panic began after the 1st week of March!

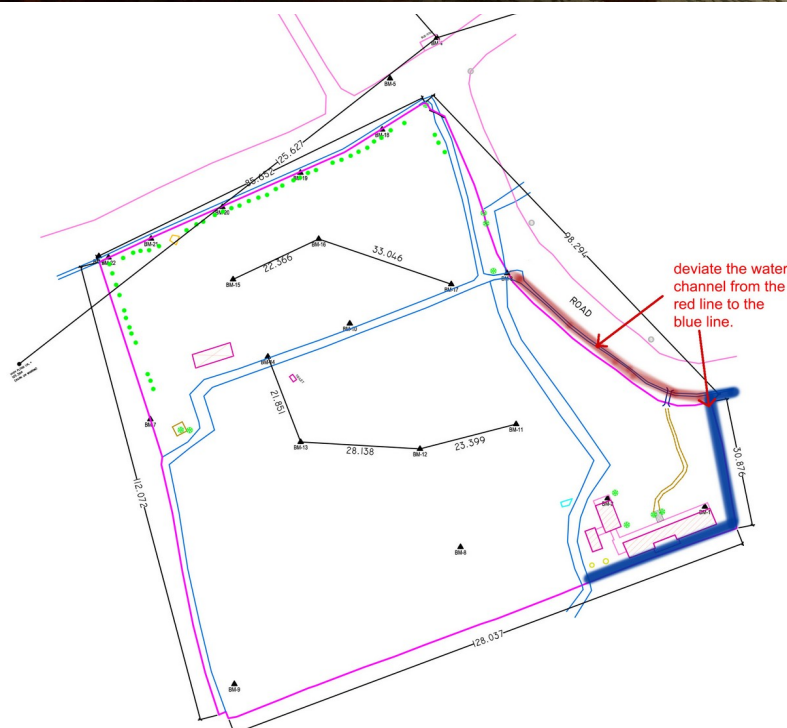
Expert Group Meeting/s:

We met as and when needed – Ganga with Prabal, Emil with Prabal & Narendra ji our team at NA & with Rita to brief her on the overall discussions of where we are now heading in relation to the masterplan and the coordination of the technical



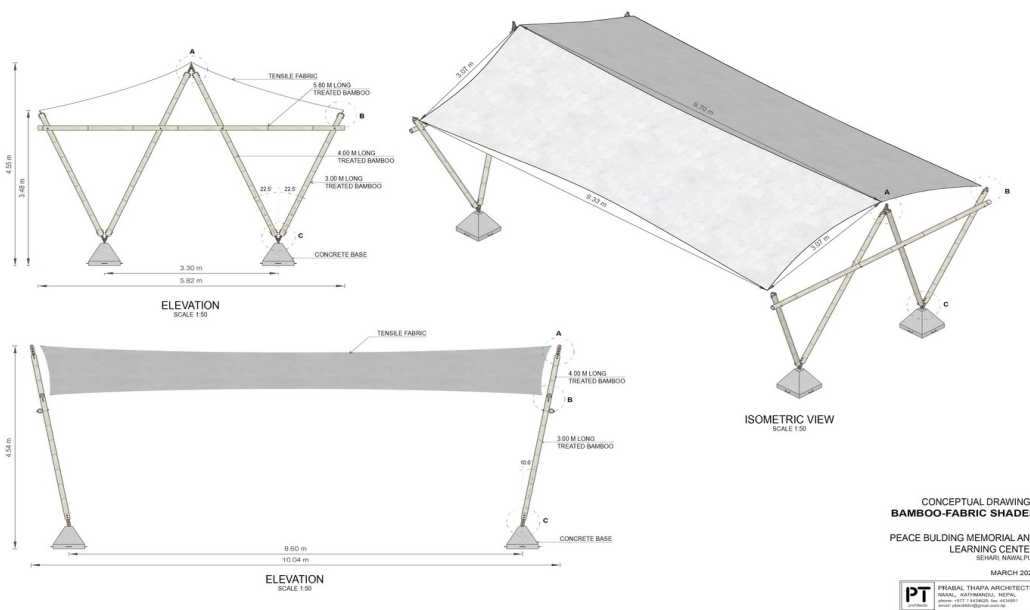
people/firm. Emil also managed to provide some backstopping to Shirshak at the site. For instance, he sent the following after discussions with PBM&LC team:

“The water channel flowing along the road on the east of the site is to be diverted along the south of the property and end in another water canal. An image is attached to illustrate the new flow of water channel. Please execute the work to divert the water channel. The design and drawings for the shade and the storehouses are currently being



reviewed and the design, drawings will be provided as early as possible”. Later in the month, Emil again sent the design for the dismantlable children shed to Shirshak. He said: “I have attached the detailed drawings for the mobile bamboo shades. Detailing are

to be worked out during the fabrication process. Continue the fabrication at your convenience, once the situation normalizes.” But as we all know we are at present far from the execution of our work owing to the global pandemic”.



When the technical group met in Prabal's office – they also agreed that all the water tanks will be dug under the buildings, so they don't take concrete space/land outside. This will mean that now the drawings will need to be designed and the foundations of necessary buildings will need to be dug earlier than later.

Others:

Before the shutdown, Govinda and his team with the 8 youth peace volunteers went to all the communities, raising awareness on the Covid 19 – on the prevention and necessary care regarding the pandemic nature of the virus.



This is a time of great uncertainty. The world does not know what is coming our way or how it will all unfold. But what we all know is that we can no longer live business as usual. How the government/s & leadership/s will act/react/respond is not largely under our control (May they be guided to provide wise and smart leadership!). Although with most of our past experiences, with the exception of some – we cannot be too optimistic. But as individuals as people committed as pacifists here at NA/PBM&LC, we have all the reasons and affirmation to count on the intelligence and goodness of individuals. Connected in tiny dots – we have the power to influence and impact positive change

in over-riding ways – for our communities and for planet earth. Today we stand poised on the cusp of such a transformation!

Together as ONE!

**We wish each of you safety and good health
to live and walk in love and compassion!**

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***Note:** Photo Courtesy: Ganga Sagar Rai, Shirshak Bania, & Govinda Acharya*

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 30th April 2020
Subject: Peace Building Memorial & Learning Center (PBM&LC) Monthly Update (In the lockdown times of Covid-19...)

Nepal Context:

We had 4 significant celebrations in April. The Nepali new year was on the 13th April. The famous 8 days/9 nights long Bisket Jatra of Bhaktapur also falls during the Nepali New Year. Mothers-day fell on the 23rd April. The Red Machindra Nath Jatra began at the end of this month (Please find this short clip of this for your interest: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=bmgia-h1qNg>). There were other innumerable festivals and marked days e.g. the Sindhoor Jatra, Bode Jatra, the Acche Tritiya and some others in the month of April.



Just to give you a glimpse of the significant Bisket Jatra, I gleaned a few highlights from a recent article (photo L – taken from the same article) written by **Dr./Professor Purushottam Lochan Shrestha**, who trained in history, anthropology, and sociology

grounding his research and practice in his place of birth – Bhaktapur. Dr. Shrestha has innumerable books and published articles to his credit. According to the article he wrote, the 5000-year-old Bisket Jatra culminates on the Nepali New Year day in a chariot pulling event in the square in front of the Bhairavnath Temple in Baktapur. Over all these years, different rulers added different dimensions to the celebration and rituals to the Jatra or carnival. During these days of the festival, all the local deities, all the Ganesh temples, and the Ashtamatrikas (8 female deities), are worshiped and their tantric dances preserved over the centuries are performed for public viewing. The Bisket Jatra has a co-relation to the celebration of victory be it territorial or be it overcoming disasters including pandemics. The Jatras are celebrated also to ensure the immunity of all the citizens by boosting their morale, and is also dedicated to the overall wellbeing, prosperity, and peace of the nation and its citizenry. The chariot of Bhairavnath and his consort Bhadrakali, is pulled through the streets of Bhaktapur to ensure all (including the sick and the old) can witness the divine from their windows, and in doing that, everyone is making a transition from me and mine to us and ours – strengthening community and national unity. This year although the Bisket Jatra

could not be celebrated, the tantric worships took place in its full rituals with symbolic gods/chariot made from gold.

Just this month in Nepal, so much has been lost just in religious socio-cultural practices – Easter, Ramzan, Bisket Jatra, and the Red Machindranath Jatra to name some. We cannot even imagine the loss we have suffered globally! Today we have completed 5 weeks of the lockdown which is now extended up till the 7th of May. **As of today, Nepal only has recorded 57 cases of coronavirus out of which 16 have been already discharged and the rest are said to be in stable conditions.**

Work with the Land:

In my conversations with Ain Kumari our support staff at the PBM&LC, who lives 5 minutes-walk from our land, she said she is visiting and doing all the work she can each day. She said she had finished doing necessary weeding and giving manure to all the trees we have planted in the land. She continues to plant vegetables as soon as there are empty spaces. In consultations with Govinda, she is distributing the surplus vegetables to every household in Sehari and to others in the neighbourhood who is asking for them or those who may be needing them. Right now, she has brinjal, lady's finger, green leafy vegetables, beans, and coriander. Also, her routine cleaning is ongoing. Shirshak Bania, our field engineer, wrote saying: *"During lockdown the city dwellers suffer more. Life in villages like Sehari is always sustainable due to inherent skills of production of crops and seeds. There is no lack of food grains, and vegetables at Sehari since every household has its annual stock of food grains and kitchen garden. The traditional housing style in Sehari has adequate courtyard/s and space to move around. In the city where I live, I have only one terrace to walk. Cities have compact planning for movement, thus social distancing is challenging now."*

I contacted our inhouse construction team who were part of our vernacular kitchen/toilet project to learn how they are living during the lockdown. Prior to lockdown they were all involved full time in the PBM&LC construction work where they were earning Rs 16000 per month. With this income they paid the installment for the loan taken from their local cooperative/s. Speaking with artisans Prem, Lok, and Kesari, I learned that all of them are investing their time on agriculture production e.g. the planting of maize.

During 5 weeks of lockdown I used my time for the documentation of PBM&LC construction. Earlier, owing to time pressure at the site and internet unavailability, the archiving and documentation work was not possible. This time working from my home in Hetauda and with the help of the city internet facility, I documented the five months of PBM&LC work/journey. I have also reviewed portable bamboo frame shade drawings by Emil. As soon as the lockdown ends, I am eager to begin work on the bamboo shed construction for the children's play space. Recently I also had a talk with Lamsal ji and learnt that he with Sudha ji are visiting the local municipality office to help initiate some possible relief distribution".

In the latter days Govinda reported that with the help of a tractor they have managed to plough the land and have planted maize, beans, and pumpkin. Other than this there is little else happening in the land during the lockdown. According to Ain Kumari, the close neighbours are also keeping an eye on the property for us!

Furthermore, the good news is that Prabal and Emil will be beginning the work on the design of the library building and the residential buildings; they will review the entire land development and the pavilion base; they will oversee, coordinate and advise on the water management strategic design (being almost completed by Narendraji); and initiate the consultant for the electrical/communications management plan. Besides this they will make at least 6 site visits as required during May – December 2020. A contract will be signed with Prabal Thapa Architects as soon as the lockdown lifts-up. But the design work is already beginning as of tomorrow! Our water management expert, Narendra ji, is also ready to handover the detailed drawings – however he would like to have one physical meeting with Prabal and Emil before finalizing his design.

Programme Update at the PBM&LC:

Govinda reported that as per the consultations with the PBM&LC team, he has been regularly in touch with the youths. Also, ongoing socio counseling has been provided to the youths by Sudha who is based at PBM&LC, and the NA counselors Sudip & Antina. These have enabled to strengthen the confidence and will power of the youths. The youths are also sharing their knowledge and tips to those needing support in their immediate communities. To support the relief programme of the government, in consultation with the NA team, the PBM&LC team contributed 500 kgs of rice worth Rs. 22000 to the Municipality relief coordination committee.

A week back Rita also personally made a check-in call with each of the youths and the PBM&LC staff. A tagline that she shared at the very beginning via Govinda: ***Build Immunity; Grow Food & Save Seeds; Spread Social Security Nets*** seems to be put in practice and it was heartening to find the youths sounding good and doing well.

Fundraising for PBM&LC:

Not applicable!

Expert Group Meeting/s:

Not applicable!

Others:

An important task NA took up was an initial mapping exercise to understand the conditions and needs of the partners and their communities. They also prepared a **Code of Conduct** for the NA team & volunteers so that all could work with a clear guideline for a modus operandi under the changed conditions.

NA has been conducting ongoing online meetings and continuing with relief work as the need has emerged in the districts where they have partners working. These have varied from cash for food to other essential items as felt by the communities. NA member Bina Pradhan's additional cash support for Covid-19 was available to use for this. There is ongoing relief outreach as the need arises. Proactively, Susan and her

team are conducting online trainings, preparing IEC materials, and socio-psychological preparedness and coping materials, so that as soon as the country opens up these related activities can be rolled out at the community level by the partner organizations. Besides, the NA team have also agreed that all future activities will focus on food security, health & hygiene, and mental health and wellbeing.

The difficulties experienced by all in these challenging times varies case by case. Largely there is some level of food security for all those who own land. Yet there are those who have depended on migrant work, others who do not have sizable land, and the sick & the ailing, who cannot bring in cash incomes in these times. Special attention is also being paid to the gendered aspects of the Covid-19.

During our zoom meeting, we discussed that we want you all to know that we are holding up and seem to be lower at risks in Nepal at least as of now. We send our prayers and thoughts to all of you especially where conditions and risks are so much higher. Please take care and look after yourselves. We send our love and virtual support to each one of you!

Bank Information:

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Name: Siddhartha Bank
Address: Satdobato, Lalitpur, Nepal
Account Name: Nagarik Aawaz
Account No: 01815090950
Swift Code: SIDDNPKA

Note: Photo Courtesy:

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st May 2020
Subject: Peace Building Memorial & Learning Center (PBM&LC) Monthly Update (In the lockdown times of Covid-19...)

Nepal Context:

On a daily basis, I am personally witnessing the increasing feminization of poverty as I go to buy milk, fruits, and vegetables each morning; I hear of growing cases of violence against women; and the insanely increasing cases of suicides during the lockdown period – majority of whom are women!

An article written by a health reporter Arjun Poudel, in Kathmandu Post reports: *“Thirty-two-year-old Ganga Karki died on Friday due to postpartum complications. She had delivered a stillborn baby about two weeks ago and her health had steadily deteriorated since, leading her to be airlifted to Kathmandu from Sankhuwasabha. She died at the Paropakar Maternity and Women’s Hospital in Thapathali after failing to be admitted to a hospital with a functioning ventilator. Alongside Karki, at least 24 women have died due to birth-related complications in the last two months, according to the Family Welfare Division of the Department of Health Services. This is an almost 200 percent increase in maternal mortality rate since the lockdown was enforced on March 24.”*

<https://kathmandupost.com/national/2020/05/27/a-200-percent-increase-in-maternal-mortality-since-the-lockdown-began>. If you can/wish to, do please read this other one – I couldn’t!

Just too painful!

<https://kathmandupost.com/national/2020/05/26/thousands-of-nepalis-without-food-or-shelter-await-entrance-at-the-karnali-border>. There is too much going on here that is beginning to border on desperation, and impeding disaster greater than what the Covid 19 can bring. *As of today, Nepal has recorded 1,401 cases of coronavirus out of which 219 have been already discharged and there have been 6 deaths (but earlier the PM was himself saying that those deaths were not specifically related to Covid 19!). The rest are said to be in stable conditions. The lock-down in Nepal is now extended up to the 15th June.*

Work with the Land:



A tractor was rented to prepare the field for the sowing of corn and some ten women/men from the community worked to weed out the corn field. Lamsal ji visits when he can every week.

Darshan, one



of the youths in the PBM&LC

programme, lives close by and he is also keeping an eye on the center. This ensures Ain Kumari has some moral support.

Ain Kumari, who is the main caretaker of our PBM&LC land, since she lives only a seven minutes-walk away, reports that they have completed weeding the corn which is now about one foot high. She has planted many varieties of summer gourds and vegetables. In the picture you can see okra and how she has used every piece of land. In the picture below we can see the tree/s we planted and how they have grown in 1.5 years. Most importantly she has sown the paddy seeds to prepare for rice planting in June. She is also saving seeds from all that she grows. She was feeling sad that she could not send all the abundance of vegetables she grows on the land for us all to taste! Ain is also having

from home and coordinated via online meetings. On the 15th of May, the first draft of the conceptual design was presented to NA and few changes on the design were suggested. The design team is currently, reviewing the structural components of the design and simulating the sun shading (vertical fins) for better sun shading options in the design. The design team intends to complete the design work by next month and have the engineers follow the work for the structural designs.

The proposed design for the library building follows the Conceptual Physical Development Plan 2018 and presents the building as a “tower of knowledge”. The building stands four and a half stories tall in the designed wetlands and holds an overhead water tank (5,000 ltr. capacity) which centrally serves potable water for the whole facility of PBM&LC. The building standing tall in the flat terrains would be visible from far distances.

A bridge over the constructed wetlands connects the ground floor of the building with the pathway. The ground floor is an open reading/gathering area for the local community with newspapers and periodicals. The first floor can host seminars, conferences, and meetings for around 40/50 people at a time. The second floor is a library with a reading area. The library can accommodate about 4000 books. Spaces for resident researchers, and co-working are planned on the third floor. The terrace floor is a roof garden with a panoramic view. It will have a small pantry and comfortable seating for lounges and small meetings.

A combination of steel frames and RCC (reinforced cement concrete) central core is designed for the structural framework of the building. This is to lower the embodied carbon footprint of the building by reducing the amount of concrete work. The steel structures are recyclable. Provisions for cross ventilation and sun shading devices like vertical fins are simulated on the façade to create comfortable interior spaces against the hot tropical climatic conditions of the region. The design emphasizes on simplifying the construction processes and have the local community involved in the construction. The design intends to promote holistic sustainability”.

Programme Update at the PBM&LC:

When I talked to the youths in Sehari this month, they reported that they were all doing good. In Sehari, the lockdown was strict in the initial days, but now shops are opening in the mornings and the evenings and people are going about their daily businesses. They are not attempting to go to far off villages, but everything else about their lives is normal. Mostly, everyone is busy in their fields weeding corn, preparing, and sowing seeds for rice planting, or working in their kitchen garden. Everyone seems to be self sufficient in food, they are very busy with the farm work, and live in close-knit communities of extended families and neighbours.

Govinda reports for the PBM&LC saying that the youths are taking in virtual classes with the NA counselors Sudip and Antina along with the youths in the other districts where NA programme exists. In the Sehari Peace Center, Sudha the field counselor (who lives in Kathmandu) is now located there, so the youths have an anchor in the Peace Center and since movement is quite open, they assemble together frequently and share the skills they learn with their families and neighbours. Two conditions are emerging in the Sehari communities – 1) since there is no market for the vegetables and milk (which means no cash flow), the villagers are getting frustrated; and 2) cases of violence against women and domestic violence is reported to be on the rise, and substance abuse among local youths is also increasing and this has resulted in increased theft.

Hari who oversees the entire NA programme with the youths and women reports that: “One training has been successfully completed on Women, Peace & Security for the partners organisation of Bardiya & Dang. Another training on Composite Heritage

has been given to our team members by Shruti of ISD, India. The trainings and orientations are ongoing for youths as well as NA partner organizations on psychosocial well-being by our Counselors (Sudip & Antina) who are also doing regular follow-ups. NA has provided relief support in collaboration with municipalities, as well as directly, at the request of the partner organizations”.

Fundraising for PBM&LC:

Promptly after receiving the April update **Marta Drury** who has supported Tewa since its inception and now NA, pledged us a gift of US \$ 500. We were slow in providing necessary information for her bank. But it has now been sent! Several friends wrote with words of encouragement or support. This is hugely helpful for our wellbeing – for none of us are feeling our best right now! But it is remarkable that these kind words of care and encouragements are coming our way at all, for no one in our world, is not in a difficult situation these days!

A typical example of such a support came from **Lynne Brennen! Madelaine Gilchrist**, one of Canada’s noted pacifist sent Lynne \$500 to sent us. Lynne rallied her friends, some of whom know me – others who do not, and rounded up the following amount: **Paula Nieuwstraten – 250, Lyn Gaetz – 100, Janet Haddock – 150, Bob Luker – 200, Patrick Flanagan – 50, Ron Sluser – 50**, and 200 came from Lynne herself, thus **totalling the amount to make it Can. \$ 15,000!** For me, this journey of engaging to help do the PBM&LC, has been deeply humbling and magical owing to these happenings! Thank you, Marta, Madeline, and Lynne, and all of you who have gifted in many ways! With Susan I do hope to do some fundraising at the local level after the lockdown – but let us see how it all unfolds for us and our possible donors here!

Expert Group Meeting/s:

Somewhere around the middle of the month, the PBM&LC technical team met over zoom. Prabal, Emil, and Ganga, Susan & Rita discussed in detail the initial detailed drawing for the library block. NA provided necessary feedback to the architects and also had queries for clarifications. The most important thing being that Prabal/Emil are moving the design work without a formal contract or payments! Similarly, Narendra ji, our water expert is waiting for the lockdown to end so that he can finalize his drawings which was already completed sometime back. But he wants to consult face to face with Prabal, before he can finalize it to move the work on the ground.

Others:

During this month Ganga in consultation with his NA team is working on a series of podcasts regarding the Covid 19 situation with NA’s peace building work. Anchored for NA by Shikha Bhattarai, NA Admin/Finance Manager, they are in Nepali but for those who can understand please find the attached links:

Episode 1 titled Peace Building & COVID 19 : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ZXaJzliTz0> &

Episode 2 titled Gender Dimensions in Working from Home : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oObVLRkuSDE&t=667s>

This update could not be possible without the timely support of Susan, Ganga, Govinda, Sudha, Hari, Emil & Prabal. I am very grateful and appreciative.

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Name: Siddhartha Bank

Address: Satdobato, Lalitpur, Nepal

Account Name: Nagarik Aawaz

Account No: 01815090950

Swift Code: SIDDNPKA

Note: Photo Courtesy: Emil, Govinda, Sudha

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 30th June 2020
Subject: Peace Building Memorial & Learning Center (PBM&LC) Monthly Update (In the partial lockdown times of Covid-19...)

Nepal Context:

Watching all that this happening in the USA owing the uncovering of George Floyd homicidal case is both painful and deeply valuable to uncover, feel, and watch! Reminds us that our world has much to heal – both humanely and environmentally!

Kathmandu Post – a daily newspaper’s editorial on the 9th was very disturbing. With a sub-title that said, “Quarantines and Isolation Centers are turning into Covid-19 Death traps” – it writes about the Municipality very close to the PBM&LC saying “151 infected patients staying in isolation centers have failed to receive medical attention and are in unrestrained contact with the outside world.” What it continued to write was even more disturbing and worrying. It was also said that the majority of the 29 persons who have died up till this date, had tested positive posthumously.

Finally, after 72 days of lockdown the first load of migrant workers arrived on the 5th of June and the process continues to bring in more at varying intervals but not quickly enough. The Inter-Generational Feminist Forum (IGFF), was engaged in policy advocacy especially on migrant workers at large with a focus on migrant women, and on a controversial Citizenship Amendment Bill that discriminates Nepali women marrying foreigners and their children - making it virtually impossible for them to get a citizenship in the mother’s name, in contrary to Nepali men. Please see link for your interest. <https://kathmandupost.com/national/2019/03/07/debate-over-nepali-womens-right-to-pass-on-citizenship-to-children-reignites-as-house-committee-holds-discussions-on-controversial-provisions>.

Youth-led demonstrations against the government handling of Covid-19 (corruption, negligence in official quarantines, and wider PCR tests) since the 9th and which was picked up in over 100 cities in Nepal, initially met with State retaliation and suppression using water jets, tear gas, and batten charge. The youths not to be deterred, continue to find creative means of protests and Ishaan with a few others, even as of now, are on “satyagraha” – no food or drop of water – tomorrow will be the 5th day!

Amidst big pressures, the government announced the 1st phase of the easing of the lockdown from the 11th, where essential businesses and private vehicles can now run on even/odd numbers. Fed up and finding no economic respite, people are pushing it further while taking risks. Latest Covid-19 update, tells us we have 13,248 who have tested positive; 3,134 patients recovered; and so far 29 people have died.

Work with the Land:



There is a lot happening with the land & the PBM&LC. The best thing was that a contract has been just signed with Prabal Thapa & Architects (PTA). Yes, designing work was ongoing, but this makes it formal now. A final draft for the Library Building Conceptual was presented in the middle of this month by Prabal Thapa Architects (PTA). The architect remarks, *"The 'Tower of Books' (or Knowledge) is actually a water tower. The typical Water tower*

archetype can be a rather annoying sight, thus the suggestion of an alternative use as a library, enveloped by a climate responsive outer shell. The shading-fins made of indigenous reed and cane camouflage into the local landscape. The building is expected to stay cool during the hot summer months with minimal mechanical help of ceiling fans. Dehumidifiers might be added if need prevails. The tower is deliberately kept free of bathrooms for aesthetic and obvious practical purposes. Relief is not far away. Sanitary blocks are located only meters away."

For the **Water Management Strategies Design** Emil visited Mr. Narendra Dangol in his office, to discuss the progress of the work. Earlier the work was expected to be completed by the end of March, but it has been prolonged until the middle of July. He will be consulting PTA before the final submission of the work.

Emil also submitted a well-researched feasibility study for production setup of Compressed Stabilized Earth Blocks (CSEB) and its adaptation at the PBM&LC.

According to the report, *“The study shows that more than 153,444 numbers of CSEB (300mm x 150mm x 100mm) will be required for the construction of estimated 690 cubic meters of solid walls at PBM&LC. The adaptation of CSEB construction technology in place of the traditional fired burnt bricks masonry at PBM&LC will conserve around 119,556 Kg of CO₂ emissions (about 75%). A production setup with the use of a single 'Multi Mold Machine' can produce the required numbers of CSEB for PBM&LC within a year. A temporary production setup is suggested to be built at the north-east corner of the site in the setback area. The initial investment for the production setup is estimated to be less than Rs. 1,000,000. The estimated actual production cost of CSEB (300mm x 150mm x 100mm) is Rs. 41.50 per piece and CSEB (240mm x 240mm x 100mm) is Rs. 63.63 per piece. It is estimated that the required number of CSEBs for PBM&LC will cost about Rs. 6,000,000, to Rs. 8,000,000. At least 13 people from the local community can be employed in the production process. At least an amount of Rs. 2,457,000 will be annually funneled into the local community from the production of CSEB at PBM&LC.*

Finally, NA also signed a contract with PTA enabling the work to be official and finally, making long due payments to PTA possible.

Programme Update at the PBM&LC:



Govinda managed to come back in a government vehicle and that is a huge relief – he is now in self quarantine in our Service Block. Govinda reports that incidences of violence against women, drugs, and theft and brawls are on the increase in the local communities.

Although owing to receiving necessary support, our youths are doing well, they report of cash crunch in their families and community. In all this, the good news is that one of our youths, Rita Chaudhary has delivered a baby girl! There will be time to rejoice over the birth of a new baby. Govinda conducted the regular monthly meeting with the staff and youths after his return. Shirshak is still stranded in his home and is trying to find a vehicle to get to the PBM&LC.

On the 26th, I chatted with the PBM&LC team in Sehari, Nawalpur. The youths reported that all continue to be well with them. They are very busy in the farmlands for the rice planting season has begun. They also shared that their morale continues to be high since they are meeting in the office regularly and are learning new things. Among our field staff Taruna, the finance officer, whose husband is a migrant worker, reported that he stayed back, and in this last week has started work. So, all is well with him. Ain Kumari says that the corn is growing well, and the land has been ploughed for rice planting which is planned during the 1st week of July.

Fundraising for PBM&LC:

Gifts from Marta and Lynne have both arrived in our bank. After the May update, Melissa Grudin promptly responded saying she will send something.

Expert Group Meeting/s:

After the lockdown eased a little Susan, Ganga, and Rita met to discuss the final draft for the Library Building: Conceptual. This enable us to send out a concerted feedback to PTA promptly. Ganga has been in close communication with the PTA. Emil has also been doing necessary technical coordination work as well as preparing necessary technical/architectural support with/for PTA.

Others:

NA produced a very valuable Podcast on: **Mental Health & Lockdown** with the socio psychological counselor Jyotsana Shrestha, and the Chair of NA Board, Dr. Chhatra Amatya who is also a Psychiatrist by training. Owing to the present conditions, NA conducted its first physical Board Meeting in Rita's home which she hosted. On the picture on the left, NA is also running community kitchens. Ganga writes: *"Over 500 people come daily to eat in three locations in Lalitpur. The women from the community themselves prepare the food and the meals serve the urban poor. It is a 8 week program, supported by the UN Women"*.

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Account Name: Nagarik Aawaz
Account No: 01815090950
Swift Code: SIDDNPKA

Note: Photo Courtesy: Ganga, Govinda, PTA



To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st July 2020
Subject: Peace Building Memorial & Learning Center (PBM&LC) Monthly Update (In the partial open times of Covid-19...)

Nepal Context:

An estimated 8 million locusts entered southern Nepal and spread to over 28 districts including the mid hills devouring 100s of hectares of farm produce, but luckily, they soon disappeared, even just as they flew in. Floods and landslides took over 125 lives, significant loss of property, and caused much infrastructural damages.

Early this month, youth led “Enough is Enough” nationwide protests for COVID-19 regarding funds transparency, testing, and quarantine, on the streets - including a hunger strike was called off after the PM/political leaders visited the hospital agreeing to the logical demands. However, with the Government not complying with the agreement, the activists led/inspired by Iih with others is once more fasting without food or water already now for the 13th day today – they say “no food, no water, no government”!

Lockdown is eased except for long distance transportation and air travels. Latest Covid-19 update tells us we have 19,547 who have tested positive; 14,248 patients recovered; and 52 people have died.



Work with the Land:

Rice planting was completed on the 3rd with over 40 people from the community & the PBM&LC team. It took them 4 hours in the morning and luckily, the weather was on their side. After the hard work everyone enjoyed the traditional yogurt & beaten rice meal. We have planted rice in a little more than half of our land at Sehari. Likewise, we have a crop of corn that is





being taken care of. However, towards the end of this month we had a flood at Sehari which was quite damaging – but luckily the paddy, corn, has not been damaged. If adequate number of gates at the Gandak Barrage, which is a few kilometers downstream at the India/Nepal border had been opened, the damage in the area would be minimal. This geopolitical issue between the two neighboring countries have been a topic of discussion only every time the region gets flooded!

On Emil's suggestion, Shirshak has begun to fabricate the necessary metal joints for the bamboo shade at his hometown, Hetauda. This was done to save time and because Sehari does not have the required necessary skill/s. Shirshak will bring it into Sehari early August. He is then also expected to work on the earlier planned Children Shed and compound fencing.

On 23 July 2020, a consultation was held at the PT Architects between Prabal, Emil and Narendra Dangol (water management expert), to discuss on the draft for sustainable water management and survey drawings for the PBM&LC, prepared by the Nanni Associates. The key highlights of this meeting were that it was agreed to increase the capacity of the overhead tank to 15,000 liters. The total collection

capacity of clean water at the PBM&LC might exceed the need, and it was agreed to look into possible distribution of clean water to the local community.

The discussions were mainly focused on the draft document prepared by Nanni Associates for Sustainable Water Management Strategies Design and survey drawings for PBM&LC. At this meeting, the architects made the following suggestions to Narendra ji as Emil wrote in a minute of their meeting *“Rapid sand filter as an alternative for the proposed sky filters in the rainwater harvesting system was suggested. The water tank for collection of treated waste-water was seen unnecessary. It was suggested to directly collect the treated water into the wetland. The pipeline from the river to the north of the site, to fill the wetland during winter was seen unnecessary and it was suggested to omit this”*. Narendra ji has been requested to submit a revised proposal.

The technical experts discussed that the water management design needs to minimize possible damages owing to future possible flooding/s. Along with the suggestions here below, Emil submitted minutes, reports and he also presented a detailed workplan suggestion for 2020. In Emil’s words: ***Library Building:** Hardcopies of the architecture design for the Library Building are submitted. A detailed work brief for the structural design drawings has been sent to Manohar Raj Bhandari’s (MRB) firm. Their response with the costing of Rs. 200,000 exclusives of taxes have been received. It was suggested to formally contract the MRB’s firm to begin the work as soon as possible and NA has already done this. The construction of the building is estimated to begin sometime in September. The preliminary estimate for the building consists of Rs. 25,500,000. The BOQ that will be prepared during contracting process later, may project approximate costs. **Electrical and Communication Planning:** PBM&LC requires electrical and communication planning. As discussed, it is agreed to prepare the work brief by the end of July by Emil Shrestha.* This Emil has submitted, but the process to engage a suitable electrical engineering firm/expert as well as the necessary details is yet to be completed.

From the 9th evening the PBM&LC is wired – facilitating 24/7 communications with internet!



Programme Update at the PBM&LC:

The piggy bank savings gathered from local donors, staff, volunteers, and even our labourers at Sehari from February to June is now Rs. 7710 which has been deposited in the local account of Siddharth Bank.

PBM&LC recently hired a helper/guard from the local community after all the

process of selection and consultations were duly completed. His name is **Prem Mahato** – Prem is seen in the picture above – he has been warmly inducted into the Sehari team!

One of our youths, Rabina Mahato had to leave owing to her personal work, and in her place **Rini Pariyar** from the same location has been selected to replace her. Rini is married. Similarly, our youth **Siwa Gharti Magar got married** with a young man working in the Armed Police Force. From Nawalpur Ward No. 5 & 15, NA selected another 10 youths from 15 applications in total. These youths (3 men and 7 women) under a programme entitled Peace Volunteers for Sustainable Change, will work in close collaboration with our youths in the Nawalpur district. The monthly meetings of the youths and some capacity building on para counseling are now being held in Sehari while their on the job training is also ongoing.

Fundraising for PBM&LC:

Meena Gurung who is on the NA membership, had made a loan to the PBM&LC 2 years back. She wrote NA to say that she wished to have her soft loan returned, while retaining Rs. 100,000 as her donation for the PBM&LC. Early this month, Michael Cooke wrote saying – *“We hope to send a new donation this summer”*. Janet Wong who just completed writing the book with the NA story, also wrote to NA saying, *“... and may I also offer USD 1,000 to PBM&LC, as my humble contribution”*. We are filled with gratitude for the gifts made by Meena and Janet. Thank you both!

Both Susan and I feel we have made little efforts in fund-raising – being in coping mode and the present Covid-19 times have also not been enabling. Whereas PC – our significant donor for the PBM&LC assures us that he is dedicated and committed to our work at the PBM&LC.



Others:

After seriously mulling over the thought of a NA's story book since 2016, last year we met **Janet Wong**, now based in Kathmandu, who offered to voluntarily write the book for NA. Over the course of exactly 1 year,

Janet has submitted her final draft and the manuscript is now with the two **volunteer editors Dr. Jennifer Fish & Dr. Jennifer Rothchild** (some of you may recall that they also edited our post-earthquake research based in Bhaktapur). **Dr. Emma Leslie** (who is also one of our expert group members) is writing the introductory chapter for the book. It is even now being read by some 10 women and men who are experts in

various fields and know of NA's work from its founding days. In the above picture Susan and I made a preliminary token of appreciation to Janet – just to create a small impromptu space to celebrate and honour her, as we worked quite intensely with her sharing information and answering her questions these past months. We hope in 2021 we will be able to hold a hard copy of this book in our hands!

PS: We are still on the lookout for a publisher – if any of you know of someone who may be interested in peace building work, leadership, and institutional building, please do connect us.

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Account Name: Nagarik Aawaz
Account No: 01815090950
Swift Code: SIDDNPKA

***Note:** Photo Courtesy: Govinda Acharya, Ganga Sagar Rai, Shirshak Bania*

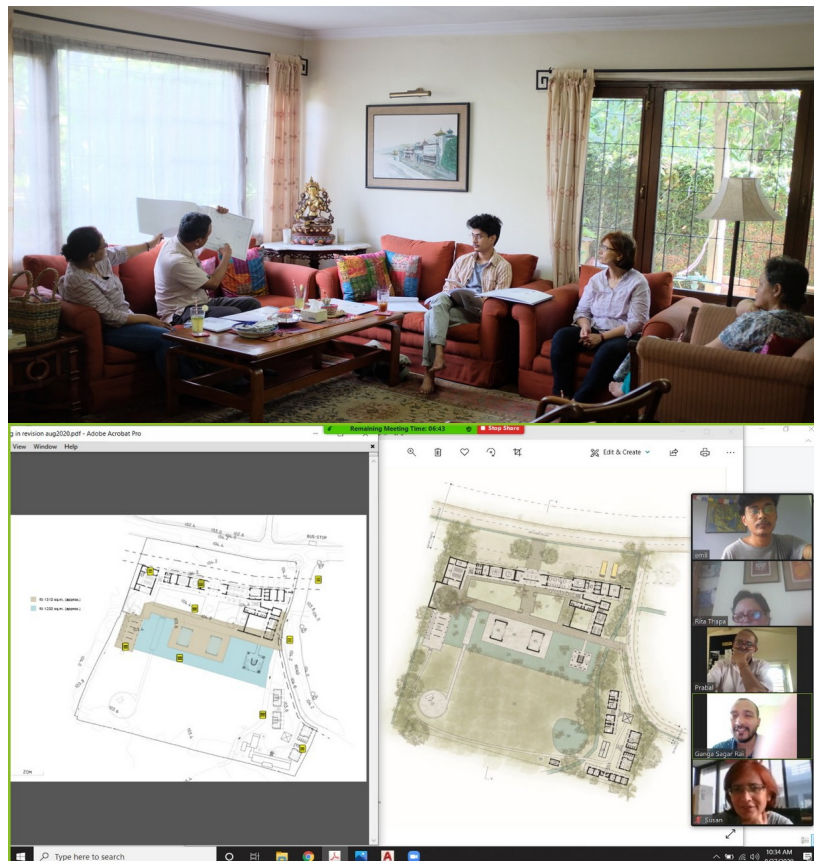
To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st August 2020
Subject: Peace Building Memorial & Learning Center (PBM&LC) Monthly Update (In the “lockdown” times of Covid-19...)

Nepal Context:

After barely a month of partial opening, a “lockdown” (although they are not officially using the word) began from the 20th. At this moment, it is indefinite when it may be called off – because it is being prolonged by the week. Even earlier some tightening of the partial open times did happen – impacting further on any entrepreneurial efforts to open small businesses. Latest Covid-19 update tells us we have **38,561** cases who have tested positive; out of which **20,822** patients have recovered; **17, 518** are active; and **221** people have died. This is a marked jump from the last month. But if there is little foresight, strategic planning, and worthy management required for identification, contact tracing, and quarantine - from the government – what can one expect!

Among so much disruption and hardship that must have happened for all the people, Tewa was not able to do a few planned 25th celebrations broken into smaller pieces. Personally, having taken the risk to open Café Cheeno from the 20th July – we had to again close Café Cheeno from the 19th August.

Work with the Land:



On 1st August, a MOU for the structural and electrical design/drawing was officially signed with the **MRB & Associates**. On their submission of the necessary municipal drawings and BOQ preparation of the library building later this month, comments and queries are already given by the

architects and the drafts has been revised by the MRB & Associates. But owing to the



ongoing lockdown, the contract signing with NA has been delayed.



Likewise, after receiving final feedback from PT Architects, Narendra ji our water management expert for the PBM&LC presented a final revised plan on the 4th August. In the picture (Top-pg.1) he is being assisted by his wife Sunita. The whole idea is that now using only rain water and may be some ground water, it is estimated that for a daily use of about 400 persons of which 100 persons may be residential, there will be adequate water to not only sustain the PBM&LC, but we may be able to put a community tap which can make water available to the local community. This will be done by the treatment of black, gray, and available clean water.

On 13th of August, Prabal Thapa, Emil Shrestha, Dr. Sakil Regmi (expert on environment psychology) and Apekshya Dhungana (participatory action research PhD candidate) gathered at PT Architects. Their major discussions focused on the following in Emil's own words:

- “The need now of an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) as a guiding document for the development of PBM&LC approaches for possible future flood risks management at Sehari.

- Documentation/s of PBM&LC processes as it develops for future research, learning, and modeling, &
- Possibility of International Standard Certification for PBM&LC based on the documentation of the development processes”.

Later in the month during the zoom meeting with NA, it was agreed that PT Architects would probe deeper with the experts on the EIA, and NA would also think through these based on their larger plan for the PBM&LC. The architects also informed NA that in line with the latest survey, they had to reduce a few building sizes, opening up new spaces, and proposed to reroute the canal flowing through the site to prevent water logging problems and ease other developments in the lower land. All the earth dug out from the planned wetland area where the library building and pavilions will stand, will be used to develop the upper land for future constructions.

Among other things, it has been agreed according to felt needs that a temporary store house (for storage of harvested produce from the land), will be constructed soon as PT Architects can give in the design to the field architect, Shirshak. It was also agreed that soon as it opens-up, Shirshak and Govinda will research with BUILD UP Nepal for the production of the CSEB (earth blocks). They will then begin to interact with the suitable people in the local community ensuring long-term use and sustainability.

A zoom meeting with the NA team in Nawalpur informed us that a very good harvest of corn and soon to be harvested rice is to be expected at Sehari! Ain Kumari also informed us that the trees we planted are doing well despite the brief spell of flooding. After harvesting the corn, she has already sown black lentils like in the previous year. A wonderful news was shared by Lamsal ji, who said that his daughter gave birth to triplet (two girls and one boy). This news gave us all cause for rejoicing despite the difficult times we all now live in! Congratulations Lamsal ji & family!

Programme Update at the PBM&LC:



When Govinda managed to return from his home in Surkhet, the PBM&LC team had many planning meetings in relation to all the 3 NA programmes in Nawalpur. It was felt that the youth/s could be best

engaged in practical and useful activities around the farm/s and where their skills could be utilized in the communities, they had access to. Programme with the youth

is ongoing. Various orientations/interactions on health issues related to Covid-19 were given. Our youths also went to 5 homes where returnee migrant workers are in self quarantine, providing counseling services. Besides, in their communities our youths are also assisting with active listening and, encouraging, as well as counseling those who have issues of fear owing to Covid-19; suffering abuse/violence; or stressed out owing to economic worries. Youths are also learning household and farming skills by being engaged in weeding the PBM&LC corn and paddy fields.



With the supervision and technical support of Shirshak, a tent house with bamboos and iron knots and bolts has been built which is being used for running classes for 16 children of Sehari as government schools remain closed. Besides, our peace volunteer Darshan,

is being coached to run an educational and a recreational class for the local children in the space now created at the PBM&LC.

There has been many learning during this period for everyone around the Center. The youths have learnt some practical agricultural skills; skills related to the maintenance of community physical infrastructures; and how everyday work is not different from peace-building work at large. Owing to all the difficulties and challenges of these lockdown periods owing to Covid-19, the art of living life peacefully in a changed context itself has provided learning for all of us.

Owing to the flooding in the earlier month and ongoing monsoon rains this month, fear still lurks among the community people. The local government is building an embankment with the support of the local people. Owing to increased cases of Covid-19 there is a lockdown in Nawalpur as well. Despite this, local people are engaged in their own farming activities and personal repair and construction work.

Fundraising for PBM&LC:

Prolonged periods of uncertainty and “lockdown” have not facilitated our local fundraising. As such we are sad, but hopeful that we will not stop trying when the environment is more enabling. You can see that planning and design work for the

PBM&LC has not stopped. This has meant drawing up contracts with the structural & electrical engineering firms. Now it is imperative that we also do an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) study which will also cost money. Besides construction work is expected to begin end of September. So as our funds are quickly depleting at NA, we are counting on our main donor. PC reassures us that his earlier commitments to supporting the PBM&LC has not lessened!

Others:



It is amazing how many good things moved on this month despite further restrictions on our movement and functioning.

Starting August, Tewa Board decided they would host the Inter-Generational Feminist Forum (IGFF) by providing them a space (above Café

Cheeno), a volunteer support staff – Bandana, and managing some operational running costs. Likewise, NA also committed to support some logistic costs for the IGFF. These will enable the IGFF to stay a loose and an open network without having to rely on external donors and maintain their autonomous and independent status until IGFF fulfills its stated goals. Earlier in the month, the IGFF met physically several times to move its agenda forward.

Tewa also managed to have celebratory events to commemorate its 25th Anniversary which was postponed since earlier in April this year owing to the lockdown. But had to further postpone other smaller events which are planned.

PS: At NA, we are still **on the lookout for a publisher** for our NA story – if any of you know of publishers interested in peace building work, feminist leadership, and institution building, please do kindly connect us.

Bank Information:

If you wish to make a gift to help build the PBM&LC, please inform us in advance so we have records for follow-ups with the bank:

Name: Siddhartha Bank; **Address:** Satdobato, Lalitpur, Nepal; **Account Name:** Nagarik Aawaz; **Account No:** 01815090950; **Swift Code:** SIDDNPKA

***Note:** Photo Courtesy: Govinda, Ganga, Emil, Shirshak, Rita*

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 30th September 2020
Subject: Peace Building Memorial & Learning Center (PBM&LC) Monthly Update (In the partial restricted times of Covid-19...)

Nepal Context:

The lockdown imposed on the 19th August was lifted on the 9th of September. All of us (or those who dared) scrambled back to work, businesses, enterprises. Unusual and incessant monsoon rains left a trail of landslides and flooding that caused many damages to infrastructures and caused the loss of many a life.

Having had time to interact virtually with women throughout Nepal, we know that all difficulties have been further exacerbated. Shortage of food, gender-based violence and abuse, suicides, and even child marriages now, are on the increase. But the remarkable thing is that all are doing their best to sustain themselves.

Latest Covid-19 update tells us we have **77394** cases who have tested positive; out of which **56428** patients have recovered; **20468** are active; and **498** people have died.

Work with the Land:

This month Emil received information that Build UP Nepal inquired if we were ready to purchase a CSEB producing machine which would cost us Rs. 465,000 including an additional mould. This was perfect timing just as the PBM&LC team was preparing to present the concept to the local community. The CSEB production equipment (Rs. 465,000 for a double mold) has been purchased and the necessary masonry training is being planned for soon.



On the 28th, Architects Prabal and Emil, Ganga, Hari, and I arrived at the PBM&LC fearing another possible lockdown. This visit was very valuable – particularly because Prabal came along. Early this month, Sehari experienced flooding that had not happened in

the past 55 years. Later in the month a milder one followed. Although no major damage occurred at the PBM&LC, we agreed that we would need to review, revise, and strategize holistically for the PBM&LC.

While at the site Emil worked with Shirshak and the labourers to put up the play-shade for the children (seen at the far-left corner in the picture above. A seesaw a slide and a swing, will be installed inside the tent besides other things. With Prabal, they also discussed the details for storage for grains, and other necessities at the PBM&LC.

The trees we planted are growing well. Our paddy harvest is estimated to feed a family of 15 for a whole year. It will be ready to harvest end of October. After this the building work for the library block will begin. Necessary maintenance work at the PBM&LC is ongoing.

Programme Update at the PBM&LC:

Govinda and team informed us about the many events that took place in Sehari. Notable among them was the planning meeting for the last quarter of the year; the worship of Lord Biswokarma (who is said to be the main technical might behind the creation of Lord Brahma); the Jitiya festival where our children celebrated and



VID-20200911-WA0007.mp4

performed at the PBM&LC (pls find a video clip attached for your interest) ; the National Children Day celebrations; the International Peace Day; and



an orientation was given to the peace volunteers so that they could begin a survey on the returnee migrant workers in wards of Nawalpur. One of the volunteers Darshan, is taking charge of running morning tutorial class for 33 local children. Children visit the center

frequently and enjoy their time there.

During our visit we had a 4-hour interaction programme with the 2 groups of youths. It was amazing to see how confident and articulate the older volunteers had become and it was good to see the interest and energy among the second group of 10 youths out of whom 7 are women.



This is only a little glimpse of all that happened with the programme aspects of the PBM&LC according to the report Govinda has sent. I could not do justice to all of it in this report – still we can have a sense of the range of

activities/events.

Fundraising for PBM&LC:

True to his words earlier, Michael Cooke wrote *“Today is my birthday and I want to celebrate by sending a donation of \$1,000.00 CDN to you --- I will add enough to make sure the transfer equals 100,000 rupees. I will organize the transaction in the coming week.”* This gift is so extraordinary during Covid-19 times and we know how special this is. *The NA/PBM&LC also received US \$ 1000 from the Global Fund for Women via Tewa!*



Early in January this year we had sent a proposal to PC, our key donor for the PBM&LC. We requested for US \$ 300,000 anticipating our work during 2020/2021 which was the completion of 2 residential buildings and the water management master plan as was

then perceived. But overtime with surveys and the water management plan, it was clear that the library block (for being the tallest building) needed to be built first in order to ensure that the overhead tank could be located on its roof-top. Overtime, an environmental assessment study was seen to be required owing to threats of flooding. Structural and electrical drawings were required. We investigated the possibility of using the CSEB blocks. All of these had cost implications. Then Covid-19 took over

our lives. We had a 4-month lockdown since late March followed by another this 19th August lasting 3 weeks! Work halted – but what could go on was kept up.

Just at a time when we will begin work on the library block, **PC's Trust informed us that they have been advised to sent us US \$ 400,000** to the PBM&LC bank account! The above picture taken with key staff of NA, and the Core Group for the PBM&LC, is to inform the arrival of the money in our bank. To rejoice and to send our best wishes and gratitude to our donor! We are overjoyed our work can go on without any hinderances! Thank you PC & thank you Juliet/Michael & the GFW!

There is more! Louise Davis wrote on the 30th saying *"I am happy to tell you I am able to make a donation of \$3000 to the PBM&LC and will be wiring it shortly to the bank info at the bottom of the report."* Louise has been a dear friend and a donor over many years – but in times of Corona – her gift too is precious! Thank you, Louise!

Others:

Both Emil and Govinda have sent detailed reports. This month, having just returned from the field I could not do justice. I will try to do a better job next month!



We had many zoom meetings with the women activists and leaders throughout Nepal. Tewa is organizing a series of meeting at the level of each of the 7 provinces and therefore we have had a great opportunity to be updated on the conditions of the

women and the impacts of Covid-19. This has helped in understanding the constantly changing ground reality, respond, advocate as we can both individually and collectively.

Susan could not make the field visit with us owing to personal reasons, and we missed her presence and wisdom during this visit.

Bank Information:

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Name: Siddhartha Bank; Address: Satdobato, Lalitpur, Nepal; Account Name: Nagarik Aawaz; Account No: 01815090950; Swift Code: SIDDNPKA

Note: Photo Courtesy: Ganga, Govinda, & Rita

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st October 2020
Subject: Peace Building Memorial & Learning Center (PBM&LC) Monthly Update (In Times of NO-Risk Communication Strategy (Government) Despite Rising Covid-19 Cases)

Nepal Context:

Nepal's biggest festival, Dasain took place during the second half of October. But there were little festivities – none or meager shopping for new clothes/goats; no visiting relatives; few kites in the October skies; and NO shopping! Although infection rates are rising, recovery rates too are higher; but there is no government no-risk communications strategy yet. Latest Covid-19 update tells us we have **168,235** cases who have tested positive; out of which **128,958** patients have recovered (this is a recovery rate of 76.7%); and **920** people have died so far.

Work with the Land:



There has been much work at the PBM&LC since our visit end of October. The repair of the rope railing and the fixing of ventilation in the service block; building of 2 temporary storages for the grains; a temporary guard house & storage; and temporary structures for larger meetings and for the children to play have all been completed.

Susan, Ganga, Hari, and Rita met on the 19th to further chew over all arising issues and the shifting context/s. A series of meetings and consultations are being planned both at the level of the NA programme staff and the Core Group members for the PBM&LC.

In relation with initiating the construction work, Emil informs us that: *“A centrally regulated drinking water and sanitary service infrastructures for the whole facility of the PBM&LC is outlined in the masterplan presented in the Conceptual Physical Development Plan 2018. Further reshaping the conceptual schematics, a detailed studied proposal for various*

infrastructures to facilitate drinking water and sanitary services are presented in the “Sustainable Water Management System for PBM&LC”. Referring to the document, a piecemeal work to construct underground water reservoirs and a deep-boring with aeration filter tower is to be carried out. The work is estimated to cost around Rs. 6,500,000. Two underground reinforced cement concrete (RCC) water tanks, each of 100,000 liters are to be constructed with the internal dimensions of around 10.22 m in length, 6.22m in breadth and 1.60 meters in height. Detailed engineering drawings are to be prepared and presented by the contractors, along with the bill of quantity (BOQ) and the construction estimates. The construction needs to be done in the designated site locations. Necessary site setting and lay-out drawings will be provided as per the presented drawings.

A deep boring with an aeration water filter tower is to be installed in the designated site location. Detailed bill of quantity (BOQ) and installation estimates are to be presented to Nagarik Aawaz. A water outlet is also to be installed at the boring location.

We are expecting that after the Tihar holidays in mid-November, the construction work will begin. Since Shirshak is on a 2-months leave up till mid-December, Emil is planning to be on the site during this time to ensure that everything moves smoothly. Farming work on the land is ongoing – we have sown mustard where corn was earlier harvested. We had a very good harvest of rice which is now being thrashed to separate the grains from the straw for storage.

Programme Update at the PBM&LC:

Govinda reported that all the regular meetings, trainings and capacity building of the 18 youths (older batch of eight and the new batch of 10 youths) have been conducted until the Dasain holidays during the last week of October. Significant among these was the three monthly planning meeting of programme work until December, and a programme for the elderly persons in the community on the



“social security for the elderly” day. 32 elderly persons (equitably inclusive of gender and diversity) from the community participated. Overall, Govinda reports that some of the recent learning at the PBM&LC and NA’s work with the youths in Nawalpur has been the following:

- *“The first batch of youths have all around increased capacities and leadership capabilities*

- *The youths are now self-motivated to do peacebuilding work in their local communities.*
- *They are gaining confidence and trust of the local communities*
- *Parents and guardians of the youths are very happy to see the changes in their children/youths*
- *The youths feel that owing to their affiliation with NA, they are able to better understand and appreciate their lives; and it has also helped them to cope with the Covid-19 situation on a daily basis.*
- *NA is becoming more visible among local stakeholders owing to ongoing all around coordination and cooperation*
- *Local community/ies have increased trust and interest in the work of the PBM&LC.”*



Not to say that these have also been challenging times with fear, confusion, lockdown/s, flooding, and initial mistrust and guardedness towards NA/PBM&LC. It is expected that now onwards, things

will move more smoothly owing to increased and established trust.

A meeting took place on the 13th among Emil, Ganga, and Rita to think through to review and look into a possible/necessary revision of the masterplan from the point of NA. This is being followed-up by consultations and reflections at various levels to ensure the best possible outcome for the PBM&LC as it unfolds.

Fundraising for PBM&LC:

The significant gift of US \$ 399, 975 (US \$ 25 being deducted as bank charges) equivalent to **Rs. 46,677,082.5** (four corers, sixty-six lakhs, and seventy-seven thousand and eighty-two rupees according to the then exchange rates) **from PC arrived in our bank. This gave NA an added value of 67,00,000 rupees owing to the exchange rate.**

NA received an official letter signed by Ching Lamu Sherpa, President and Urmila Shrestha, ED of Tewa that read: *“we are excited to share that our grants making committee and Board members selected NA for awarding Rs. 500,000 on the occasion of Tewa’s 25th Anniversary celebrations this year. Over the years, we have*

been impressed by your work for peace and positive change in Nepal. We succeeded in raising this money from individual Nepali donors for a special honouring publication published to mark Tewa's 25th celebrations"! I do not feel good in sharing that we have not yet initiated any local fundraising work. It does not simply feel right or appropriate yet. Some funds were collected in Sehari from the sale of mustard oil and corn from our land, and the collection from the piggy bank, amounting to a total of Rs. 10,050.



Others:

Tewa held its Annual General Meeting despite all the difficulties of restricted times. More than half the Board and general members met over zoom. Tewa's partial 25th celebrations with the staff also took place on this occasion. As a co-convenor of the Tewa 25th Year Celebrations, I was happy to attend physically. On this occasion the AGM was followed by certificate distribution for the staff and a momento for all the support staff. The Tewa Center served a wonderful lunch where we could all relax and reminisce about current times. In the picture on the left you will note Lamu (on my left),

Chair of the Tewa Executive Board, and Urmila (in white third on my left), the Executive Director of Tewa. Of course, NA also conducted its AGM this month, but Tewa's coverage is here because the NA/PBM&LC was chosen to be awarded their 25th year celebratory grant! I feel Susan and the NA team are being recognized!

Bank Information:

If you wish to make a gift to help build the PBM&LC, please inform us in advance so we have records for follow-ups with the bank: **Name: Siddhartha Bank; Address: Satdobato, Lalitpur, Nepal; Account Name: Nagarik Aawaz; Account No: 01815090950; Swift Code: SIDDNPKA**

Note: Photo Courtesy: Shirshak, Govinda, & Srishti Jayana at Tewa

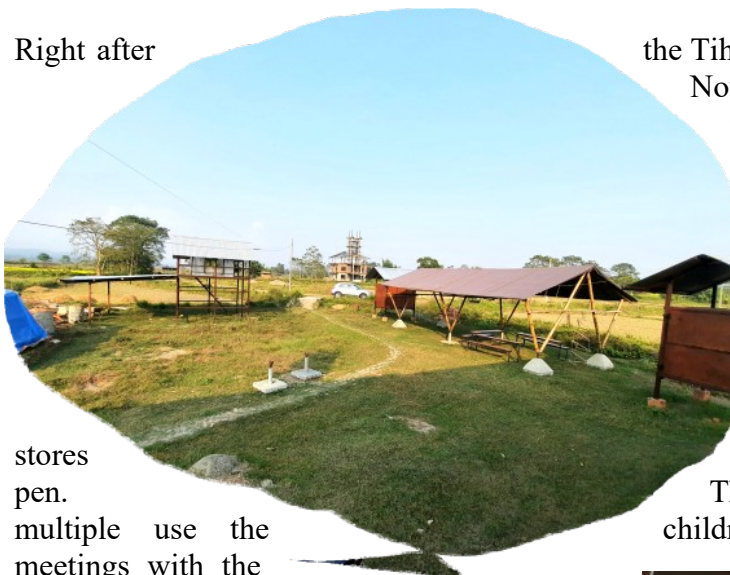
To: All
From: Rita
Date: 30th November 2020
Subject: Peace Building Memorial & Learning Center (PBM&LC) Monthly Update (In Times of Rising Covid-19 Cases)

Nepal Context:

This month I sent for my usual brand of tea, which since Covid-19 I had restrained from drinking in order to cutdown on monthly expenses. Well, the price went up by 50%! This is true to varying degrees for other consumer goods. I for one no longer can cope with the madness of political news, so nothing to report there. I did follow with bated breath, the US Presidential elections, and was hugely relieved when the results were finally affirmed! Life goes on in a coping mode for many! As of 30th November, Covid-19 update tells us we have 233,452 cases who have tested positive; out of which 214,521 patients have recovered; and 1,508 people have died so far.

Work with the Land:

Right after



stores
pen.
multiple use the
meetings with the
community people, the Sehari team, and the youth take place under the shade. This month when rice was harvested, the PBM&LC made Rs. 15,400 just from selling straw. Jyotsana, the NA Board Secretary General, also visited the PBM&LC with her family and got an update from Govinda and the NA team at Sehari!

the Tihar (bhai-tika) holidays, on 20th

November, I had a chance to make a private visit to the PBM&LC accompanying NA longtime donor/supporter Pratima Thapa. This provided me an opportunity to take this picture that allowed me to show you all the completion of the 2 granary and the children's open play

This picture shows you the children's play pen. All the



Programme Update at the PBM&LC:

On the 6th the programme team of NA met with the key PBM&LC leaders. Govinda was in Kathmandu at the time so he too was present. The NA team had an “Outcome



Impact Orientation Workshop” to review all of their programme/s, and PBM&LC was one of these. They also assessed the foreseeable needs of the Center in the coming years and we met to see how it could best fit with how the PBM&LC would be built to accommodate the expected needs. Based on this and the recent floods in Sehari, we have sent our needs in writing to the PT Architects, so that they can make the necessary revisions as is best from a technical and architectural point of view, on the Master Plan. On the 3rd we had an initial meeting with Shakil Regmi and Apekshya Dhungel, experts for the possible PBM&LC environmental assessment study. Emil, Ganga, Susan, and I were present.

Pratima Thapa’s (far R), visit to PBM&LC was the first one from any outside donor (other than the NA team who are all donors to the PBM&LC)! Since this visit was just as the holidays ended, only the staff team gathered to give her a warm welcome and took the opportunity to brief her on the PBM&LC progress!

Fundraising for PBM&LC:

Pratima Thapa’s visit (very exceptional owing to these times,) inspired her once more to make a generous gift of **Rs. 200,000** to the PBM&LC. This was much needed for the team’s motivation as well – since even our initiatives at local fund-raising has been very weak for months now, owing to the restrictions of the Covid-19

times. The gift will also be well used to jump-start once again local donors, considering that the new year is around the bend!

Similarly, the annual fund-raising that [Lynne Brennen](#) (seen in the picture) and [Elizabeth Wickwire](#) host in Lynne's home in Toronto, is expected to bring in (according to Lynne) a whopping amount of a little over Can. \$ 10,000. Double the



amount of what has been previously raised! Lynne is surprised that this has happened despite Covid-19 times! Included in this amount was a gift of Can \$ 500 from [Madeline Gilchrist](#) who is a pacifist supporting NA's work for many years – among other such donations! This year on

the 21st Lynne and Elizabeth conducted an extended virtual sale as well as a zoom interactive session with Susan and Rita from Nagarik Aawaz in conversation with [Michael Cooke](#), facilitated by [Ann Holmes](#). [Salil Subedi](#), an educator musician opened/ended the conversation with live music from Nepal, [Jeff Myers & Andrew Jehan](#) were the technical experts, and Lynne's niece [Erin](#) voluntarily made the promotional video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J7GVoyO0vog> **It is the 16th annual fundraising tea** that Lynne and Elizabeth have hosted for NA! This is the kind of globalization we all need – supporting and gifting each other and sending messages of love and peace! It is most humbling to be doing the PBM&LC work with such allies and supporters as Lynne and Elizabeth! Our huge “thank you” to both of you!



The donation piggy bank at Sehari, locally collected Rs. 6000 this month.

Others:

We have some wonderful big news this month. [Susan](#) had her PhD defense on the 18th of this month and was awarded her PhD degree from the Panasastra University of Cambodia in association with the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, Cambodia! **Dr. Susan Risal's PhD research was on the topic of “Understanding the definition of justice and dignity through the perspectives of sexually and physically tortured women in the conflict era of Nepal”!** Also, [Prasansa KC](#), the **Programme Development Coordinator at NA**,

was awarded her MA degree in Peace & Conflict Studies from the same academic institution (Both are seen in the picture above with Prasansa on the R). On behalf of Dr. Chhatra Amatya, Chair of the Executive Board & the entire Team of NA, it is my pleasure to inform our wider circle of allies and donors about the double good news, while heartily congratulating Susan and Prasansa! No doubt that Susan's and Prasansa's achievements will further enhance the work of NA at large, as well as that of the PBM&LC!

This month I had more pictures and more information than I could fit in a brief update. Next month as the 2020 comes to a close, after a whole year of the Covid-19 global scare, we all can hope for better times!

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Note: Photo Courtesy: Angela Miles, Ganga Sagar Rai, Govinda & Rita

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st December 2020
Subject: Peace Building Memorial & Learning Center (PBM&LC) Monthly Update (In Times of Covid-19)

Nepal Context:

In an unprecedented political impasse, on the 20th - in an unconstitutional move, the PM with endorsement from the President, dissolved the House of Parliament and announced mid-term elections. A state of confusion, insecurity, and instability has ensued. At a time when the people are expecting vaccines, an inevitable election is hardly the answer! Following this, many fissures from the central to the local level governments, consolidation of power by each split-up parties, discontentment and outrage, protests/rallies, now envelope us. Further inflation, prolonged power outage, and many disruptions in daily lives have already begun!

As of 30th November, Covid-19 update tells us we have **260,059** cases who have tested positive; out of which **251,912** patients have recovered; and **1,847** people have died so far. In my recent trip of the valley I noted that people are living life as they best can – so the roads are busy and some efforts at wearing masks in city centers can be seen. But largely Covid-19 is not largely on people's minds!

Work with the Land:



Susan, Ganga, Emil, and Rita met on the 4th, to discuss on initiating construction work at the PBM&LC. After a thoughtful and a reflective meeting, we reinforced ourselves on how we are all in this for the long haul and for greater good! Emil is in Sehari since the 6th and the excavation work for the wetland

surrounding the Library Building began from the 10th and ground leveling has been completed. Taking this opportunity, an irrigation canal channeled through the PBM&LC, has now been diverted so that it does not disturb our master plan construction work. The labour works for land grading is being carried on.

Needing prior Municipal approval, for the Master Plan and consecutive approvals for each of the buildings and the water management system put Emil and Govinda to work. For now, the 'Conceptual Physical Development Plan 2018' will be presented as a requirement of the masterplan to be replaced by the revised master plan later.

On 8th December, Emil & Govinda made a presentation to the local government officials at the Municipal office. In Emil's words, "Chandra Bahadur Rana (Mayor), Om Kumari Mahato (Deputy Mayor), Narayan Poudel (Ward 2 Chairman), Bholanath Sharma Paudel (Planning Department), and Tarapati Mahato (Engineer) attended the presentation. The first section of the presentation introduced Nagarik Aawaz, its vision, scope of works and working modality. The second section introduced the PBM&LC - its scope, the masterplan, and the sustainability concepts. The benefits to the local community and the support expected from the local government were discussed. **All the officials present, paid keen attention to the presentation. The Mayor enthusiastically enquired on the various sustainable aspects of the project. All appreciated the endeavors for the PBM&LC** and suggested official processes to endorse the masterplan and the project as a whole.

Besides, the head of Architectural department and Urban Infrastructure Development in the municipality were visited. The official process will require the masterplan document to be approved for which a recommendation from the local Ward office is required. As the site lies in the buffer zone of the Chitwan National Park, an Initial Environment Examination (IEE) study report has to be approved before beginning the construction. The IEE report approval jurisdiction falls under the municipality office but needs consents from the National Park Office, local Ward office and local community gatherings. A soil test report is mandatory for the construction of buildings with more than four story. Before beginning the construction of the underground water tank, the drawings are to be approved from the municipality".

Emil and Govinda also learned that the road to the north of the site, under a category of Feeder Road 'A' Municipal Transport Master Plan (MTMP) meaning the right of way (R.O.W.) is 24 meters. This means a setback of 6 meters for the PBM&LC, as against the 11 meters we had previously assumed.

Also, as per the requirement of the Municipality, we will need to do soil test of the PBM&LC for which Ganga has drawn up a contract as advised by Emil after assessing the 3 proposals that were submitted. Emil informs us that the proposal from **Narayani Training & Engineering Pvt. Ltd.** fulfills all requirements at a reduced comparative cost of Rs. 253,685. Likewise, **Niva Construction** has been preferred for the water management system while **IFID Nepal Pvt. Ltd.** will oversee the bidding processes and amounts to oversee the proposed cost aspects of the construction of the Library building as well. The proposal from **Vrikshya Foundation** for the Environment Assessment Study is being revised by them on our request, as per the initial environmental examination.

Programme Update at the PBM&LC:



Govinda reports that with the addition of 2 more peace ambassadors in Nawalpur, the number of youths engaged in the NA programme numbers 20. The effects of the political upheaval resulting in the dissolution of the House of Representatives on the 20th by the

PM/President is resulting in groupism for accumulating power among the local level parties as well. Proactively, in order to ensure that the youths do not get affected negatively, Govinda and the Sehari team conducted a 2-days workshop for the youths on leadership and facilitation skills. Review meetings were also held for the groups of older youths, and the latter group of youths. These meetings have also helped in making necessary revisions and adjusting the programme/s to make it most beneficial for the youths and the local communities.



This month the local fundraising at Sehari exceeded Rs. 20,000. Govinda informed that the mustard crop will be harvested soon. Owing to the levelling of the land, they will not sow black lentils like they did in the previous year. After making a major field trips to Rolpa, Dang,

Bardia and Kailali districts, for programme monitoring after one year of implementation of its programme focusing on conflict affected women, NA had a programme team reflection and review meeting.

Fundraising for PBM&LC:

In a beautiful ceremony at Patan Dhoka, Tewa celebrated another one of its 5 events celebrating its 25th Anniversary! Here **Tewa handed over a cheque of Rs 500,000 as a silver jubilee gift to a chosen organization – Nagarik Aawaz!** Although there was no direct fundraising involved for NA, still the gift is invaluable coming from within Nepal, and as a recognition dedicated to the PBM&LC! Thanks to these Tewa 25th Celebration events, where our longtime donor supporter, **Lalita Thapa**



announced a pledge of an annual donation of Rs 100,000 to the PBM&LC! These gifts and spontaneous generosity in these times do so much for our spirits and energy! Thank you hugely from the NA team Lalita ji! Also, a gift of Can \$ 14,200 arrived

from Lynne Brennan and Elizabeth Wickwire from their annual sale for NA! Their hard work for the annual sale in Lynne's home certainly paid off well! We can be in deep gratitude this season of gifting and love!

Others:



The event for handing over the cheque to NA, was an intimate affair where symbolically, one representative each was invited from Tewa's circles of donors, grantees, volunteers, and staff. Similarly, NA was represented by the Chair of the Board, the CEO, and the

Communications/Documentation Manager, as well as Rita being Founder of both organizations, and the Co-convenor of the Tewa's 25th Anniversary Celebrations.

Season's Best Greetings Everyone, & all our Best Wishes for 2021!
We at NA & the PBM&LC, commit to helping heal our earth and all of us who are hurting, to the best of our abilities this new year!

Bank Information:

If you wish to make a gift to help build the PBM&LC, please inform us in advance so we have records for follow-ups with the bank:

Name: Siddhartha Bank

Address: Satdobato, Lalitpur, Nepal

Account Name: Nagarik Aawaz

Account No: 01815090950

Swift Code: SIDDNPKA *Note: Photo Courtesy: Ganga Sagar Rai, Govinda, Emil*

