

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st January 2021 – HNY -2021!
Subject: Peace Building Memorial & Learning Center (PBM&LC) Monthly Update (In the Waning Times of Covid-19 or So We Hope!)

Nepal Context:

No one wants to hear any news on the political front anymore! In an unconstitutional move, the PM dissolved the house, and following protests, blame games, and court cases, continue to be our daily “daal-bhat”¹. People are coping with their day to day lives and ongoing challenges as is inevitable owing to our present times!

As of 31st January, Covid-19 update tells us we have **270,854** cases who have tested positive; out of which **266,048** patients have recovered; and **2,027** people have died so far. **No Covid-19 related deaths have been reported in the past couple of days**, and frontline health workers are beginning to be vaccinated with vaccines gifted by the Government of India. Cautioning for Covid-19 though continues!



Work with the Land:

This month a meeting was held with Prabal and Emil to discuss on the organizing the various aspects of the construction work at the PBM&LC. NA signed a contract with Shakil Regmi of the Vrikshya Foundation, for the IEE (Initial Environment Examination – as is officially required!) study of the PBM&LC which will cost us a total of Rs 490,000. Another contract has been signed with Shanta Kumar Shrestha of IFID for the project management for the

¹ The Nepali staple food of rice & lentils

Library block. Now our water management work can also begin once IFID checks their proposed contractual details and the Municipality approves all the necessary documents and the e.g. The Initial Environment Assessment report, and the soil test report (which we just received). The actual building work can only begin when these studies/reports can be submitted for their approval (taking up to 6 weeks). This may mean that we can begin the actual building work only around mid-March. Taking opportunity of Govinda's recent visit to Kathmandu, we met to assess progress and programme related aspects of the PBM&LC and to envision the foreseeable future!

We have also revised and renewed a contract with PT Architects. A separate contract is drawn with Emil Shrestha. He will be engaged with the NA, regarding all the building and technical aspects of the PBM&LC while continuing work on the design front with the PT Architects, mitigating any gaps owing to Shishak's departure.

Programme Update at the PBM&LC:

Two of the PBM&LC Peace Volunteer youths Siwa Gharti Magar (L) and Rita



Chaudhary (R) gave birth to baby girls. Now the babies join the mothers in the activities at the Center. Early this month a Meeting was also held of the PBM&LC Core Group, in order to update on the building and the programme aspects of the Center. Susan gave us the good news that they have just received a two-year extension of one of the NA ongoing programme, which covers 4 districts (one of them being Nawalpur) by the Institute for Ausland (ifa).



Govinda informs us that the dissolution of the house has brought in instability, chaos, and disruptions, at the local level increasing a

sense of hopelessness and confusion.



Susan accompanied by her husband and daughter, with Ganga visited the PBM&LC during the middle of this month to assess progress and to site-select for the launch of an additional NA programme in Nawalpur. Among other things, during this visit, the Sehari team warmly facilitated Susan for her PhD degree. Also, **Dhirendra Lamsal**, Susan's husband's session with the youth on connecting everyday outward peace with one's inner peace and quiet, was found to be very inspirational by all the youths. **Nirajan Upadhaya** has begun work as the new Accounts

Officer based in the PBM&LC. This year, the youths were themselves involved in harvesting and thrashing the mustard crop. 110 kgs of mustard has been harvested. Selling of garden/farm produce, and savings from the piggy bank, brought in Rs. 3000 this month for the PBM&LC.

According to Govinda, leadership training for 23 community women has been conducted. The youths now 20 in number, including the **2 new Peace Ambassadors**, have been involved in their first trimester planning and their regular monthly and progress assessment meeting/s. They have also conducted 5 programme related to peace/conflict, leadership, and socio-psychological healing. Govinda tells us that there is a marked difference in the growing confidence level of the youths and the way the youths are increasingly respected in their communities.

Fundraising for PBM&LC:

Local fundraising has not moved much. But Susan, Ganga, and Rita are meeting early February to develop a local fundraising strategy for 2021. However, the practice of community philanthropy at the PBM&LC continues to be inspiring.

We are saved this month by an unsolicited, **generous gift of Rs. 100,000 from Shrawan/Sushma Rana**. Please note that Shrawan/Sushma Rana, through their

travel agency, **Jaya Travels Pvt. Ltd. in Durbar Marg**, have been long time Tewa donors. In these times, this gift is precious and speak volumes of our donors! NA is in deep gratitude to both of them!

Others:



In Emil's own words, "Program activities for the year 2021 is prepared. The total expenses for the year are estimated to be around Rs.

40,250,000. Major works planned for the year include, **construction of the library building, and the underground water-tank; the revision of the masterplan; getting the IEE study; preparation of the electrical masterplan, and production of CSEB and design/drawing works for an additional new building**". The above projected cost of course, does not include contractual agreements, travels, and salaries specific to the PBM&LC.

The picture above shows the excavated area for the underground water tank to be built below the two memorial/display halls. But the excavated area for the surrounding water body where these buildings and the Library building will stand is much larger. This then of course means that the farm produce from the land, which we had been benefitting in the past 2 years, for example lentils, mustard, rice, and corn, will be much reduced in the future as can be expected!

Bank Information:

If you wish to make a gift to help build the PBM&LC, please inform us in advance so that 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 Sagar Rai, & Rita*

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 28th February 2021
Subject: Peace Building Memorial & Learning Center (PBM&LC) Monthly Update (In Waning Times of Covid-19)

Nepal Context:

The political situation is deeply worrying as the divided ruling party, each now claiming the party as rightfully theirs, since December 20th, are perpetually engaged in disparaging/disgracing each other at the cost of state resources, priorities, and minimum protocol. The Supreme Court overturning the decision of the PM, gave a verdict on 23rd February to summon a meeting of the Parliament within 13 days. Although this demonstrated that the rule of law prevails, Nepal's politics will continue to be instable for a long time to come – and risks run high. The prices of petroleum products and cooking gas has been increased twice since the 11th.

The government's new visit visa travel rule – almost announced except for the resounding uproar, for women under 40 years of age asking for parental consent and municipal ward consent, as well as an exorbitant travel insurance, was ridiculously regressive and patriarchal. Bhagirathi Bhatta, a 17-year-old high school girl from Baitadi, went missing since February 3rd, was found on the following day, and investigations revealed that she was raped and murdered. Her family claimed her body after 15 days for necessary burial rituals, after her rapist and murderer – a 16-year-old boy from the same school owned up. Really could this be true?! But this is only one representative case – each day rape, suicide, and VAW cases abound!

Work with the Land:



A planning meeting of the essential core team of the PBM&LC: Susan, Ganga, Emil, & Rita, took place on the 5th – where a projection of the utility, approach, and values of the structural aspects of the Center was envisioned. Initiated by Emil, the outcome of this meeting will be useful in the review/revision

of the masterplan drawings. In Emil's own words: "On 9th February, Structural Expert, Manohar Lal Rajbhandari, Prabal Thapa and Emil Shrestha met at Prabal Thapa Architects to discuss on the issues questioned by IFID, which they had encountered during the revisions of the BOQ. During the discussions Manohar

confirmed that the structural design for the library building complies with the requirements stated by the soil test report. He suggested having a layer of compacted stones and sand for better footing as the site may be inundated time to time during the monsoons. It was decided to ask IFID to wait for the structural revisions of design/drawings for BOQ and the specifications revision works. Meanwhile, the consultant is to continue other works that would not be affected by the revisions". Emil Shrestha made a field visit during 12-15 February. The IEE team was given a guided tour of the site and the surroundings on the 12th. The following day, the IEE team led by Shakil Regmi PhD, had a community level consultation organized by Govinda and team, where 92 representatives were present. A local engineer was met at the site to discuss the approval processes for the drawings of the library building and the underground water tank. Govinda informs us that the budget for the Library building has been already approved by the Municipality. Again, in Emil's words: "Workers were employed to mud render the walls and the floors of the metal-tin structure built for guard/tool house. This helped in learning the local vernacular building techniques and its possible application in future constructions".

Other than that, the work at PBM&LC is ongoing. The fields have been prepared and corn, soya, and other seasonal vegetables have been planted.

Programme Update at the PBM&LC:



Taking opportunity of the fact that Mitini Nepal was hosting a workshop in Chitwan, where I was invited as a resource person, we went to visit the PBM&LC which is approximately 1.45 hours drive away. Although tired, we left after dropping our bags at the hotel to return late night. Govinda and team

welcomed us warmly and after a briefing on the activities of the Center, there was a very inspiring exchange on both sides. This was followed by some refreshments which the staff had cooked for us.

According to Govinda, youths are directly engaged in their local communities with different activities in which 386 community members have participated/benefited all together just this month. The Peace Center is now fully run by the Peace Ambassadors, and their visibility and recognition are growing. Rs 5000 has been provided to children studying in Amar Siddha School in Panuti from the emergency fund created at the PBM&LC. An interaction programme on Peace Building with 28 local representatives and community stakeholders was hugely appreciated. Participants expressed that the current political instability endorsed how important such an initiative now is. Youth are also being given every opportunity to enhance

their skills. Currently out of the 10 youths who are now receiving computer training, 8 touched a computer for the first time in their life!

The NA *Women Living with Dignity Programme* at Nawalpur is in its preliminary stage of learning/fact-finding and necessary interactions at the level of the Kawasoti community/ies.

Fundraising for PBM&LC:

Once more dedicated local fundraising activities in Nepal continues to be sparse. It was lucky that this month **Mitini Nepal (the first Lesbian organization in Nepal), gifted the PBM&LC Rs. 15,000** during their visit at the Center. Although, this may seem to be a small amount, the gesture was significant. Thank you Mitini Nepal from the entire NA team – we are deeply appreciative! But in Nawalpur, people who come to gift monies spontaneously and savings Govinda and team have made has **raised Rs. 26,235** during January/February.

Others:



Following the rape and murder of 17-year-old Bhagirathi Bhatta on 3rd February, the whole country has erupted in protest against VAW and impunity. On the 13th a women's march took to the streets of Kathmandu. For the older generation of feminists, it was wonderful to note that the march was totally organized by young activist/leaders. Although there are ongoing “andolans” or demonstrations in Nepal since the dissolution of the House, this is worthy mention owing to being organized by youth women leaders, that it was able to draw everyone's attention and a very credible participation. Owing to its creativity, it is now a new measure for the future of protests and demonstrations (**Refer to hashtag Women's March**).

We have certainly not seen the last of these yet as violence against women and impunity rises and the State chooses to stay a silent spectator!

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Swift Code: SIDDNPKA

Note: Photo Courtesy: Social Media & Rita

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st March 2021
Subject: Peace Building Memorial & Learning Center (PBM&LC) Monthly Update (In the Waning Times of Covid-19)

Nepal Context:

A supposedly good news is that early this month, the Government signed a 3-point deal with the Biplav Chaudhary's party (a splinter group of the Maoists), thus officially bringing the last of the active armed outfits in Nepal into mainstream politics. But ironically, within a week, a rather impoverished explosive device went off in the **Land Revenue Office in Lahan Municipality** seriously injuring 2 out of the 6 people. The injured were 2 officials, and 4 service seekers.



On the other hand, Nepal has upped its ranking on the Happiness Index. [*The World Happiness Report*](#)

[2021](#) published by the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, showed that Nepal has received higher happiness ranking among all its South Asian peers. The Report sheds light on

the effects of COVID-19 pandemic and how people round the globe responded to the unprecedented threat posed by it. Nepal notched five positions up compared to [2020's report - now ranking 92nd in position](#) to lead the countries in South Asia with an index of 5.269! Economists here are also assessing that since Nepal is predominantly agrarian, a quicker economic recovery may happen despite negative economic impacts of Covid-19. Increased air pollution in recent days, way beyond the normal, has made the Government to shutdown schools for 4 days since the 30th. However, this did not stop the Holi festival revellers (mostly without masks as can be seen in the above picture) despite raising Covid-19 risks (photo credit from the Kathmandu Post).

Work with the Land:

A group of NA Board Office Bearers: Dr Chattra Amatya, the Chair of the NA Board included, senior programme and finance staff, and the PBM&LC representatives, were physically present to officially open the bids received from the 5 construction companies for the construction of the Library Building. Also present were Shanta Kumar Shrestha (IFID Nepal Pvt. Ltd.) and Emil Shrestha to ensure best technical advice on the bids. A meticulous process, meeting all the required official due diligence was followed. Emil has



sent detailed report/s on the entire processes finalizing on the bids, including face to face meetings with the 3 short listed companies. In Emil's own words he writes: *"Acknowledging their strong portfolio, clarity on the design and specified construction*

*procedures, their clear working/coordination/communication modality, and their commitment, we favor **Jaya Buddha Nirman Sewa – Eco Steel and Hydro Structures Pvt. Ltd.** We believe, we can have a sound venture with them, coordinating the design aspects, related technicalities and the execution of the construction works.*

*To Proceed further, we have asked **Jaya Buddha Nirman Sewa – Eco Steel and Hydro Structures Pvt. Ltd.** to present a revised reasonable quote. Additionally, we have requested them to present a quote for the construction of the underground water tank; ownership document/s for the concrete trowel machine; and a work schedule for the construction work. Further and final decisions will be taken after studying the documents they submit. Meanwhile, **IFID Nepal Pvt. Ltd.** will be working on preparing a report on the evaluation procedure of the bids for the Library Building".*

We are now getting close to beginning the construction work, but it will still take us some more time completing the internal as well as the necessary official processes.

Programme Update at the PBM&LC:



On the 3rd, taking opportunity of Govinda's Kathmandu visit, Susan, Govinda and Rita met in Patan Dhoka for a good 2-hour session. This was a review and reflection meeting of his work in almost 2 years at the PBM&LC. Govinda shared details on managing human resource; networking

with local communities and government agencies; coaching and grooming staff and youths; fund-raising; and helping and managing with the infrastructure related aspects of the PBM&LC. It is huge! We all had much to learn!

Govinda informed us that the monthly meeting with the youths took place where they all discussed progress, challenges, and upcoming opportunities. Early in March, Govinda also presented to NA, the upcoming programme at Nawalpur. A programme evaluation of the 2-year youth capacity building programme in 3 districts also took place. The youths from 2 districts (Nawalpur and Lalitpur) engaged in this programme, came for a 5-day visit to Kathmandu for the workshop. NA staffs, Hari, Govinda and Shikha facilitated this workshop.

On the occasion of the International Women's Day, 8th March, Govinda and team organized an all-inclusive programme where over **500 people from all the women's organizations and local agencies in Nawalpur participated**. On the 10th, the team



had a debriefing meeting with representation of women organizations.

According to all those who came to the meeting, this was the first of its kind event in the district. They also said that their men folk supported the women to participate by cooking for the

family and also pledged better support in the household/s activities in future. The women therefore felt that such days needed to be prioritized and observed in the future for ongoing sensitization and awareness.

A new programme, "Women Living with Dignity", for directly conflict affected women, recently introduced in Nawalpur had its first introduction programme where 14 women ranging from 25 to 60 years had participated.

Fundraising for PBM&LC:

Promptly after the February update was sent, **Marta Drury**, our regular longtime donor wrote pledging **US \$ 500** – and now the gift is in our bank. Similarly, early this month, **Lalita Thapa** sent us a cheque of **Rs. 100,000** – fulfilling her earlier pledge! Similarly, **Prativa** (daughter) & **Charat Pratap Singh** fulfilled their earlier pledge by giving us **Rs. 100,000**. This was followed by **Dr. Chhatra & Bhupendra Amatya** (she is also the Chair of the NA Executive Board), fulfilling their big pledge of 25 lac rupees for the PBM&LC, by sending NA **the last remaining Rs. 300,000!** Within the 1st week, another gift of **US \$ 200** came from my very good friend from college days, **Sarita Lohani** – now based in the USA! I have been informed by the **Global Fund for Community Foundation (GFCF)**, that the GFCF staff and my previous

Board colleagues (as I withdrew as Board Chair this February), wish as a gesture of love and care to support the PBM&LC by sending personal gifts of monies. I have been informed that the financial process may take a while to realize. It was a very moving moment for me. On behalf of the PBM&LC team, I thank all of you for the precious support we have received this month, and those whose pledge is yet to materialize at this end!

From the sale of rice grown in the PBM&LC land, Rs. 25,465 was earned, while the monthly piggy bank gifts **from the local community amounted to Rs. 6,800.**

Others:

The Tharu women from Sehari, celebrating their first IWD with NA/PBM&LC team is so sweet and special to see. While in Kathmandu, feminists and activists chose not



to do something big this women's history month. It was owing to women's ongoing demonstrations owing unabated incidents of VAW, impunity, and political transitions, which have impacted negatively on all of us. All of us have been stretched too far at all ends, and feel we are in a

perpetual coping mode. Yet how can we complain here while living so close to Myanmar and virtually witnessing all the atrocious things happening there!

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***Note:** Photo Courtesy: Ganga Sagar Rai, Govinda,*

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 30th April 2021
Subject: Peace Building Memorial & Learning Center (PBM&LC) Monthly Update (The 2nd Wave of Covid-19 in Nepal - “Lockdown” Begins on the 29th)

Nepal Context:

After a dramatic drop in Covid cases even as far as 11th April at 303, there has been a sharp rise recently crossing 5000 cases a day. The government has enforced prohibitory orders starting 29th April for 15 days (we know what this means!) yet no contact tracing or overall testing is being done. Some explicit points regarding restrictions are no public/private vehicles, food/grocery shops open during 6 - 10am, those essentially entering the valley through land and air will need to stay in quarantine, and essential service offices will restrict mobility to entitled pass holders only, to name but some. Basically, we are in lock-down without the use of the term!



Work with the Land:

On the 6th of March, Ganga, Emil, and Rita met with Er Bidur Adhikari (R) & his partner Rishi Ram Itani (L) who represent Eco Steel & Hydro Structures (ESHS) Pvt. Ltd. and “Jaya Buddha

Nirman Sewa (JBNS)”. After a time-taking and a thorough process, we arrived at awarding the bid for constructing the Library building and the water system work to JBNS. During this meeting Ganga gave them an orientation on NA/PBM&LC; Emil briefed from a technical point of view; and Rita laid clear the modality, values, and the expectations from their work with the PBM&LC. We want them to be frugal and environmentally thoughtful; to work with utmost esthetics; pay attention to details; and importantly to be just and sensitive to gender issues and overall health and wellbeing for the labourers they employ. Luckily for us, Bidur and Rajaram seem also to be in agreement with our values. This is a huge relief to us. On 20th April, as was mandated, an official letter of acceptance, signed by Dr. Chhatra Amatya, the Chair of NA Board, was dispatched to M/s. Jaya Buddha - Eco Steel & hydro Structures JV for the revised and proposed Rs. 21,954, 246 96 (in words a little over 21 million rupees) inclusive of tax. As Emil updates us: *“On April 22, 2021, a formal Letter of Acceptance was provided to the awarded contractor. Currently, they are processing for tax registration in their JV name and a bank guarantee of 5% of the bid amount as a performance security.”* So, we will require some time before work can begin as is expected by mid-May.

Ganga, Emil, and Rita met again on the 27th to discuss the work progress of the PBM&LC. *Susan, who has been in Delhi for almost 2 months now, for medical reasons regarding the health of her husband, Dhiraj, was sorely missed at this meeting.* Financial and budget overviews; fund-resource/s management in the immediate and over the coming years; and the phasing and planning of the architectural and construction for the PBM&LC were discussed. Both Ganga and Rita were appreciative in knowing that Emil was fully engaged with NA to backstop and guide us through the technical aspects of the building of the PBM&LB.

Programme Update at the PBM&LC:

Seasonal vegetables and corn are being planted now as usual - but there may not be adequate rains for a good crop of maize. In Sehari, embankment is being built along the river; inner roads are being graveled or pitched; and 4 phase electric lines are being laid out.



Under the PBM&LC/Sehari office, there are now 3 programme/s run by 9 staff members; engaging 10 peace ambassadors; 10 peace volunteers; and additionally, 15 women who have been directly affected by the armed conflict. Now there are 3 peace centers in different locations and including the Sehari PBM&LC center – there are now 4. Owing to the programme growth, it is now difficult to find large enough spaces to run collective programme/s in a convenient location Govinda informs us. NA Senior Finance Officer, Merita and Programme Manager Hari Dhami also

visited the PBM&LC during this month.

Govinda informs us of the many activities conducted at the PBM&LC this month. A one-day workshop was conducted with the peace ambassadors and the staff for a

trimester (April - June) work plan. Regular meetings for assessing the youths individual progress and issues, and monthly mapping of programme/s were also conducted. On the youth's own initiative, 4 significant programme/s in 8 different community locations have been conducted.

In total over 400 community members participated for an exchange of ideas and knowledge in these programme/s. Local people and children are increasingly interested and engaged in the Peace Centers. The Peace Ambassadors and the Peace Volunteers have conducted programme/s relating to leadership development, conflict and peace, community harmony, collective heritage, and counseling, in 6 community locations of Wards number 5 and 15. Those men who participated in these programme/s expressed that it has increased their personal capacity to assess and evaluate their own conflicts and find alternative ways to manage them. 15 conflict affected women are now engaged in the "Women Living with Dignity" programme. Among these, 1 is living with physical disability and is also a survivor of direct violence; 5 have been hit by bullets during the armed conflict and have lost limbs; and 9 have lost their loved ones during the armed conflict. A one-day orientation on NA and the PBM&LC's objectives and work has been conducted for them.



This was followed by a 3-days training on various aspects of conflict and peace. The participating women at the end shared that they found a space to finally rest their trauma, pain and suffering, 15 years after the armed conflict ended. The Mayor and the Deputy Mayor both participated in the

inaugural and closing of this programme. They expressed that the Municipality needed to follow-up on the 67 directly conflict-affected persons traced and recorded by NA Sehari Office so far.

Fundraising for PBM&LC:

Marleen Iterbeke & Han Verschure wrote *"We have just this morning transferred 12.000 \$ US (Twelve Thousand) as a donation to PBM&LC. Please make sure to verify as soon as it will arrive. we paid a total of 12095,00 US \$ so as to take the full bank transfer cost on our side"*. And sure enough, we received \$ 11,975.00 (\$25 deducted as is Nepal's bank rule), at the exchange rate of Rs. 116.85, which totaled to **NRs. 13,99,278.75 from Han and Marleen**. We received many gifts from my GFCF Board/Staff Colleagues: **Euro 150** from **Wendy Richardson** is in our bank; and we have had information that the other gifts from Jenny Hodgson and Stephen Pittam are on the way!

A planned Core Group meeting towards the end of this month with the purpose of activating local fund-raising, is once more stalled. Funds collected from the community in Sehari, amounts to **Rs. 2000** this month.

Others:

Notable during these troubling times, the Inter-generational Feminist Forum, Sangat,



and Tewa managed to pull together and through, a twin workshop/s titled: **Feminist Capacity Building & Community Safety Net.**

35/36 respectively, activist leaders' women participants from over 25 districts of Nepal participated in the 6-day long workshop/s. Anuja, (Grants Manager –

Tewa) & Pooja, (Nepal Coordinator - Sangat) made the careful selections from over 200 applicants. The workshop with the key theme of feminism (introduced by the noted **South Asian Feminist Activist Kamla Bhasin**); focused on Food Security; Immunity & Holistic Health; and VAW & Movement Building. Weaving and strengthening a **Community Safety Net** (CSN) at the level of the local communities – most valuable under these times, was the other major objective of the workshop. The session on VAW culminated with the **One Billion Rising March** (seen in the picture above!). Even as these workshop/s (4th – 16th April) ended, *the second wave of Covid-19 infections began with cases rising and multiplying significantly from a low of 303 cases from throughout Nepal on a daily basis, to the current status of 5000 cases a day. Without spelling out “lock-down”, the Government announced restrictions for 15 days beginning the 29th, and the country has once more grinded to a halt excepting essential services. But with the catastrophic conditions in India, our porous southern borders, and a Government who is still into power games rather than necessary action/s, who can predict here what is yet to come...*

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To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st May 2021
Subject: Peace Building Memorial & Learning Center (PBM&LC) Monthly Update (The 2nd Wave of Covid-19 in Nepal - “Lockdown” Began on the 29th April, Indefinitely...)

Nepal Context:

What can anyone say here – although there is more to say than one can even grasp, or express! This report only tries to document a tiny glimpse of what is happening.

Average Covid report on a daily basis is approximately now halved from 8000, whereas the official daily death toll has also reduced to 109 today from over 200 on a daily basis. But this is only the tip of an iceberg as Covid randomly spreads to the hinterlands of the districts. There is little isolation and less contact-tracing. Out of those tested anything from 35 – 65% have been found infected. Hospitals had a crisis of a lack of oxygen and available beds resulting in patients being turned back two weeks back, but the situation is improving in the cities. It is still very lacking in the districts.



A strict restriction (close to curfew) has been imposed for a further week beginning 28th May (this looks like an indefinite plan...) up till 3rd June, with time allowance for buying perishables until 9 am – other food items will need to be stocked for this period. Anybody not complying will be fined up to Rs. 500,000 and jailed up to 1 year or both! What percentage of Nepalis can stock food for a family for 8 days!?

Nepal has sunk into a severe political turmoil¹ as the President, despite available constitutional options as experts say,

¹ The top picture is taken from 26th dated The Katmandu Post. The bottom picture is taken from my gate as journalists and security personnel prepare for the demonstration that will take place in the Patan

for the 2nd time within 3 months, dissolved the House and declared fresh elections during November! Shortly following this on the 23rd, the President issued an ordinance to amend the Citizenship Act which was pending in discussion in the House of Representatives (HoR) for the past over 2 years! It is now seen as an election ploy to appease the Madhesi people from the South. With the issuance of the ordinance, children of citizens by birth, who have not been able to obtain citizenship due to lack of a federal law, will now be able to obtain their citizenship by descent. The ordinance also stipulates that the children of Nepali mothers, whose fathers cannot be traced will be entitled to citizenship by descent if the children have domicile in Nepal. However, this can now put such mothers and children in more jeopardy, and in no way, does it honour women's constitutional rights.

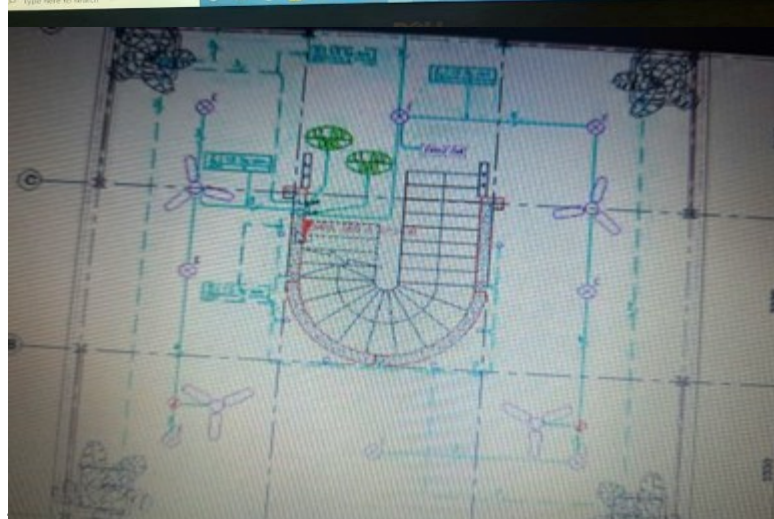
The united opposition who was all set to form the Government, as well as civil society groups are in protests. Despite the restrictions, some demonstrations have taken place following the dissolvment of the HoR. Over 25 writ petitions have been filed in the Supreme Court with the PM and the President as the defendants.

Work with the Land:

As Emil reports: *"The contracting work was awaiting the bank guarantees and taxing provisions at the contractor's end. It is still hindered. Telephone conversations were held this month with the contractor to discuss on alternative ways of proceeding with the work. But as one of the partners, Rishiram Itani and his family are Covid infected, and are just now recovering in the hospital, we will need to wait.*



Meanwhile, the contractor prepared and sent a detailed "Steel Shop Drawings", which are essential for the fabrication of the steel structures. MRB & Associates, the structural engineering firm, has approved the drawings. The drawings are being revised together with the principal architect for architectural design details.



The final revised drawings for the underground water tank have been forwarded to the contractor for review.

Multiple Campus in front of my home!

It is expected to contract out the construction of the underground water tank together with the construction of the library building. Following the completion of the IEE works the consultant presented comprehensive comments and suggestions on the 2018 PBM&LC masterplan. These will be helpful for the current revision of the masterplan works which has now begun at Prabal Thapa Architects from this week onwards. Currently, data, references collection, and programming are underway”.

Electrical engineer, Bidur Bhusal, (Surge Engineering Pvt. Ltd.), presented the electrical design/drawings for the library building on a share-screen, to the PBM&LC core team. Luckily, Susan had just returned from Delhi, and could be present along with Ganga, Rita, Prabal and Emil. Bidur, informed us that his design focusses on the three key elements of – elegance, efficiency, and safety. We gave him some feedback, whereas Prabal and Emil will also sit separately with him for in-depth detailed discussions. He will then be revising the drawings as per the inputs and feedback received.

Following this we sat for the 2nd meeting with **Santa from IFID Nepal Pvt. Ltd.** who also presented the final design/drawings and BOQ for the underground water tank. The design/drawings of underground water tank have two adjoining chambers each with a capacity of 100,000 liters. The cost of construction now will be NRs. 3,331,082 inclusive of taxes. *This timely intervention by Santa is reducing the previous estimate by Rs. 650,000.* We then sat with **Prabal & Emil** regarding ongoing construction work at the PBM&LC and the revision of the Masterplan – now that all the contractual processes are completed, and the IEE report and comments are submitted.

Owing to an escalating rise in Covid cases in Nawalpur, the restriction orders are extended up till the 7th June. So far, recorded cases show 2,717 people are Covid affected, 1,109 cases are now active, 1,570 have recovered, and 38 deaths have been recorded. Lack of awareness, stigmatization, and inadequate beds in the hospital has forced people to stay at home. Fruits and vegetables grown by local farmers have no markets owing to prolonged restrictions, which has led to economic and psychosocial problems. Daily wage workers are the hardest hit.

At the PBM&LC, Govinda lost his father on the 19th due to health complications and Devi’s mother succumbed to Covid on the 23rd. Sudha and her younger daughter are Covid infected. The PBM&LC team is working from their home districts currently. However, Ain with whom I spoke recently, and Prem are doing well and looking after PBM&LC on a daily basis. Taruna and Lamsal also visit the PBM&LC regularly for supervision and support. Frequent storms have caused some damage on the kitchen roof which will need repair with the help of 1 labourer supporting Prem and Ain.

Ain informed that the rice seedlings and fertilizers are ready for the sowing of saplings, but they are waiting for favourable weather in the near future. Remaining maize from the previous harvest was sold, while the new crop of maize will be ready

to be harvested next month. Five kg turmeric and two kg ginger have also been planted for the first time this season.

Programme Update at the PBM&LC:

Most of the programme update is written based on the information provided by Govinda for the first half, and Shikha for the second half.

With the undeclared lockdown starting 29th the NA team adopted the "**Work from Home**" policy and closed all its Peace Centers temporarily. The Social Welfare Council (SWC) gave directives to use 25% of all organizational budget for programme/s related to Covid. NA is now therefore busy requesting donors for permission to carry out relief work from their previously approved budget/s. However, not all donors have approved, so NA is carrying out the relief work from only those projects where donors approved. NA also had to secure permission for online transactions, to mobilize the NA funds as necessary, and for the financial operation for the Nawalpur Office.

The NA Board met online on the 14th to understand the NA condition/s and plan. Susan returned from Delhi (Dhiraj, her husband is still under treatment) on the 21st after over 2.5 months. Despite this NA worked to learn and identify the actual conditions of the youths engaged in their programmes and the communities they serve. In relation to this writing proposals for relief support and outreach was being done. over 25% of the NA central level staff, spouses, parents, and families tested Covid positive - and are under isolation or treatments. **Out of whom, Prasansa, and Immediate Past President, Shobha have had to be hospitalized for complications and lack of oxygen.**



NA counselors, Sudip and Antina are conducting online healing programmes and with the support of Ganga and Nisha at the communications unit, are posting information on mental health regularly.

NA is using its emergency fund the "Sahara Kosh", to help people who reach out from many districts. Even NA volunteers from batches as far back as 2006, have called asking for food support. Due to growing requests from conflict affected women and vulnerable people NA works with, NA is launching a campaign to raise funds from its members and allies. **Proposals have also been sent to the Urgent Action Fund, the Global Fund for Community**

Foundation and the RBC for relief outreach. The desperation among people is rising as the restriction is now over a month and the fear of being infected is very real!

Even in the absence of Govinda, the Nawalpur team is doing regular follow ups with the youth peace ambassadors and volunteers to be updated and provide moral support as needed. The elected representatives of the Municipality requested NA/Nawalpur for help build their isolation facility only recently. In response, NA provided support of materials worth Rs. 50,000. Three families of the conflict affected women, who are struggling economically, affiliated with NA through 'Women Living with Dignity' program have been provided with food ration. Otherwise, they were using the monthly stipend they receive from NA for their essential medicine, to buy food. Budget has been set aside to support the urgent most 50 vulnerable families with food relief packages and hygiene materials in the communities where NA works. Some youths and their family members were infected, but now everyone is recovering. Until she lost her mother, Devi Pun, who lives in a nearby district, Butwal, was providing regular tele-counseling to the Women Peace Facilitators of the 'Women Living with Dignity' program.

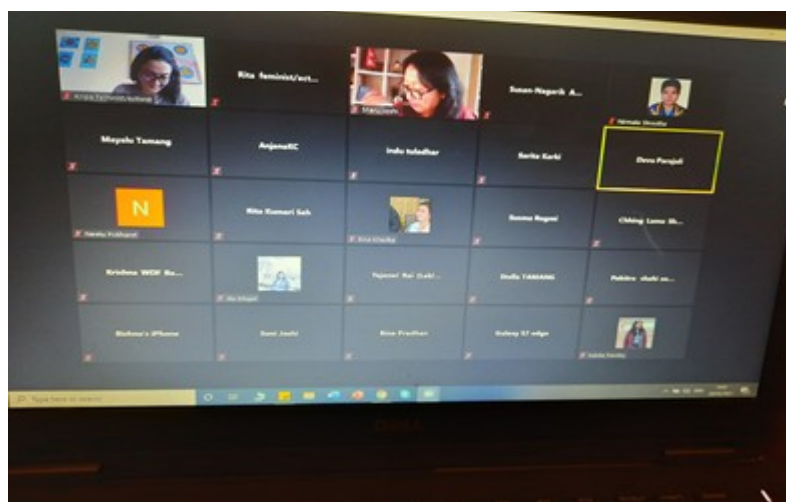
Local resident staff, new Programme Officer, Puman, and Finance Assistant, Taruna, are taking forward the relief activities in Nawalpur.

Fundraising for PBM&LC:

As informed and gifted by **Jenny Hodgson** last month, PBM&LC received **Rs. 47862 (300 UK pounds)**. This gift is our saving grace this month – thank you hugely Jenny from all of us! This gift is most precious in these times!

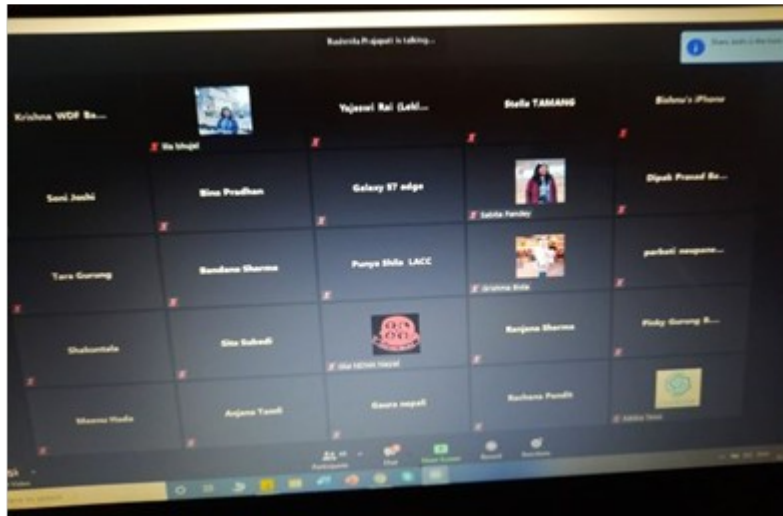
Others:

IGFF (the Inter-Generational Feminist Forum), met several times in big groups and small, to put out an appeal/statement in relation to the Citizenship Bill ordinance. But what I wanted to share is the learning that came while checking in with each other. All have had bad experiences in finding oxygen or hospital beds for



themselves or their near or dear ones! Almost all have lost their loved ones; gender discriminations are experienced; those who have disability have it much harder; some are risking not going to hospital owing to escalated costs and corruption; and all the activists/leaders are finding it hard to cope

Also, even a lay person can logically figure out that on the 29th the Government announced an unrealistically grandiose, pro-election budget by ordinance. It is simply pathetic!



If you wish to make a gift to help build the PBM&LC, please inform us in advance so that 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, Rita, Govinda, Shikha, The Kathmandu Post*

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 30th June 2021
Subject: Peace Building Memorial & Learning Center (PBM&LC) Monthly Update (The 2nd Wave of Covid-19 in Nepal - “Lockdown” Began on the 29th April, it was relaxed since 22 June incrementally. Not fully open yet and not certainly free of risks...)

Nepal Context:

Nepal is reeling from flooding & landslides from the 15th June (at the very start of the monsoons) causing huge losses of life, property, and infrastructures – motorable roads, suspension bridges, concrete bridges, and drinking water tunnels etc. – throughout the country, but it has been most violent in Sindhupalchowk, Manang, parts of Tarai, and the high hills areas in the far west & eastern hills. In Sehari/Nawalpur the floods were threatening, but the timely lifting of floodgates saved major damages.

Heightened political instability and occasional demonstrations took place even during times of lockdown. On the 22nd, 20 newly appointed Ministers were annulled by the Supreme Court saying that a care-taker government had no right to make such appointments. Owing to heightened political instability, everything is affected and the hardly ever-present Nepali Government, can do but little to respond to time urgent issues like flood disasters, Covid vaccination, and other pressing issues like timely fertilizers for the planting season.

The Covid cases have come down from almost 9000 a day to slightly higher than 1000 cases a day. After two whole months, the lockdown is relaxed: odd/even private vehicles; public transport following strict Covid precautions, take-away food in those restaurants that can still supply, and longer opening hours for shops are allowed since the 28th. Black fungus cases among especially diabetic Covid patients is on the rise, but doctors say there is no availability of all the primary drugs needed for the often deadly mucormycosis, because India, the main source for the drug has banned its export. One can see the rising tensions all around as cases of hospital doctors/staff are getting attacked, and is beginning to happen more frequently. **So far in total, 9070 people have lost their lives owing to Covid as of today.**

Work with the Land:

On 16th June, the water levels in the Narayani River, and other nearby rivulets rose dangerously high. In Gaidakot 40 families needed to be relocated to a nearby school and 5 resorts were badly inundated. Even the rivulets damaged the paddy saplings just at the time of plantation and damaged vegetables and corn. Farmers are worried as to how they can ward off an eminent famine this coming year. Finally, in Nawalpur a major disaster was stalled off after 36 floodgates of the Gandak Barriage were opened on the nick of time. owing to being alert no major damage occurred in the PBM&LC office either.

Owing to the heavy rains of the 16th, PBM&LC too suffered minor damages, in terms of the temporary kitchen, vegetables, and plants. Local staff had to be engaged in shifting/re-shifting furniture and office equipment in anticipation of a major disaster. But the corn, almost ready to be harvested was fine and the first lot has been harvested. There is more corn in the lower land which will be ready to harvest by late July. The rice saplings have been planted for the upcoming paddy plantation/s.

Finally, on the 24th the PBM&LC core group, Susan, Ganga, Govinda, Emil, and Rita met on the zoom platform. We discussed three main things:

1. COVID & floods relief work/support
2. Moving the construction work at the earliest, and
3. The revision of the masterplan.

Moving on from our discussions and decisions, Emil sent his technical reports which will also inform on what has been happening here. In Emil's own words:

1. **Library Building** – *It has been already 10 weeks since contracting out the work and the letter of acceptance was provided. The imposed lockdown and Covid infection of contractor/family has pushed back the contracting procedures. On 2nd June, an online meeting was held with Bidur Adhikari (contractor) and Prabal Thapa, to discuss on the shop's drawings which was provided at the end of the last month. Feedback and suggestions were provided to the contractor. On 28th June, an online meeting was held on request of Bidur Adhikari with Manohar Raj Bhandari (structural engineer), and Prabal Thapa, to discuss and review the design considerations for the library building foundation. With the recent catastrophic flooding at Melamchi and Manang engineers are concerned and feel they need to be a little more thoughtful on the foundational structures of the building. Manohar Raj Bhandari is reviewing the foundation structures to enhance structural integrity while equally considering cost implications. Meanwhile, the contractor is preparing quantity-cost estimates (costs of materials have increased 25-40% in the recent 2 months), schedule of works and reviewing the contract documents to sign the agreements, in the coming week.*
2. **Preparation of Electrical Design** - *for the drawings & Bill of Quantity (BoQ) for the Library Building, Bidur Bhusal, from Surge Engineering Pvt. Ltd. submitted a digital copy of the final electrical design report and drawings for the Library Building on June 17, 2021. The report and drawings elucidate electrical circuits, power backup, fire safety and lightning protection system design. As per the BOQ presented, the estimated amount for execution of the work is Rs. 947,505.00 inclusive of taxes. Payments for the contracted amount of Rs. 28,250 has been already processed.*
3. **Masterplan Revision** - *Data and references are collected and analyzed to prepare inferences for planning/design considerations. An inception report is under preparation to establish a common understanding between the planners and NA”.*

Work moved very slow owing to a 2-month lockdown. We will be soon sitting with the contractors to see how work can now move unabated even during lockdown if worse comes to worse.



Programme Update at the PBM&LC:

NA Central office opened from the 22nd with 5/6 staff to ensure facilitation of work as well as safety. But during the lockdown, the staff were very busy with relief outreach. RBC gave a flexible relief gift of US \$ 50,000 of which \$ 25,000 was deposited in the fast depleted NA Emergency Fund and the other half is being used for COVID relief work (food/cash/medicine), but with the major flooding since the 15th, NA in collaboration with its network partners like Sankalpa and IGFF, is also working on flood relief in Sindhupalchok and Manang. NA was lucky to receive additional Emergency Relief support from: Peace Women Across the Globe/Switzerland - 5000 Swiss Franc; Kurve Wustrow/ Germany: 13125 Euros (from private individual donors); Global Fund for Community Foundation - 15000 dollars (pledged); Global Fund for Women - considering support to NA; Miserere/Germany allowed NA to use Rs. 928000 for the relief support: and Bread for the World allowed NA to use Rs. 39,00,000 in the working area Nawalpur and Lalitpur.



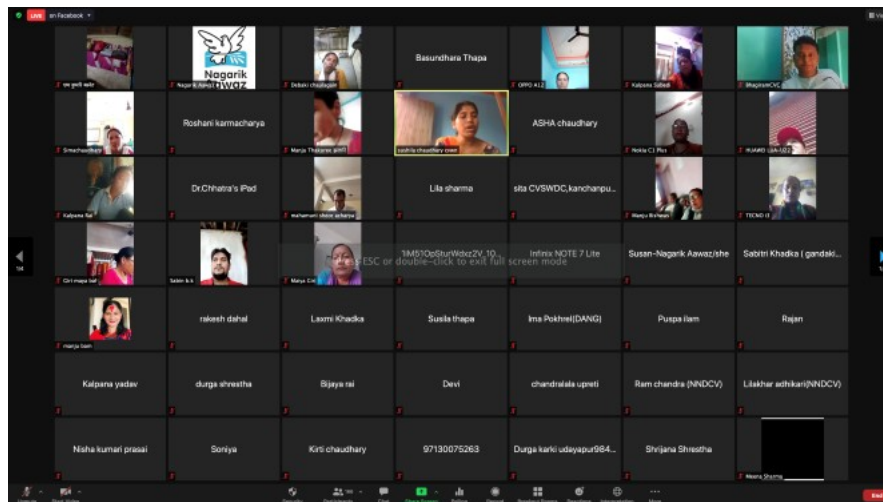
The entire Nawalpur staff too worked from home during the lockdown but with the announcement of some relaxation in the lockdown the office has been opened maintaining safety protocol. In the top picture Peace Ambassadors Ranjita & Sujata work with staff Taruna, to prepare relief packages. The picture below, is the distribution of the relief packages. Thus, the relief work has been carried out through the local staff/s. In cooperation with the local Darpan FM, raising awareness on the safety aspects of Covid, a jingle is being played daily 8 times a day. 57

households led by most disadvantaged women, have been supplied with rice, lentils, and other food supplies. Counselor/s Devi is counseling the 15 conflict -affected women in the programme, and Sudha is regularly counseling the youths in the two programmes, in Nawalpur. Almost half of the youth facilitators and their families had Covid. The Nawalpur staff team gave them constant support to keep up their morale and provide other necessary support. In the 4 health centers in Nawalpur, NA is supporting with Rs. 700,000 the building of 4 isolation centers. this is expected to ensure that there will be adequate facilities for the Covid sick needing hospitalization. The staff and the youths under the Nawalpur programme/s also raised funds personally to the tune of Rs. 18,631, to gift the IGFF working with other 2 women's disaster related networks, to provide relief to the flood affected people in Sindhupalchowk District.

From all the relief support that NA received, they supported food and medical supplies to Municipalities, ward offices, and the local communities of these areas. The above picture shows a sum of Rs. 50,000 being handed over to the Nawalpur Municipality for medical support. NA also helped in conducting Covid related awareness program through Radio jingles through community FM's radio stations. Furthermore, the NA team was also busy in developing proposal for the American Bureau for strengthening transitional justice advocacy in Nepal. In the leadership of Ganga, Prasansa, Hari and Merita the proposal has been developed and sent. NA is broadcasting information/awareness on mental health regularly through the podcast developed in the leadership of Shikha, Ganga, Antina and Sudip. Counselors, Sudip and Antina conducted an online counseling training for the Women Peace Facilitator from Lalitpur (19 - 21 June). So as you can all see most of our energies not just in NA, have been focused in all kinds of relief work.

Fundraising for PBM&LC:

Earlier in June during our conversations, Louise Davis said that she too would eventually gift the PBM&LC as she can. On the 10th June, we received an email from Wendy Richardson at the GFCF: *"One of our board members, Stephen Pittam, has*



made a donation of £500 GBP (to honour Rita's time on the GFCF Board). We just made the transfer on his behalf, so the funds will arrive from the GFCF account". At an exchange

rate of Rs. 164.75 this will be over Rs 82,000. Thanks Wendy/Stephen very much for this moving gift!

Others:

Just today NA in collaboration with the **Women Conflict Victims National Network** organized the annual **National Women's Peace Table – 2021** on the zoom platform. This platform attended by over 175 participants who were representatives of all stakeholders, besides the 110 conflict affected women who came from 70 districts of all the 7 provinces, had done work the previous day to pull in up to date experiences. After over 16 years of the peace process, to hear the suffering and the powerful remarks of those who have suffered for so long was a very moving experience. The screen shot above is just for validation – the participants were too numerous to cover.

This update is dedicated to the passing away of **Mohamadi Siddiqui** (Political/Social Activist/Leader), **Ujwal Thapa** (activist/ally) on 1st June, and to **Nirjan Sakya** (a colleague I recruited for the Tewa Center several months before I handed over end of 2017) on 6th June owing to Covid.

Bank Information:

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

***Note:** Photo Courtesy: Ganga Sagar Rai, Rita, Govinda*

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31 July 2021
Subject: Peace Building Memorial & Learning Center (PBM&LC) Monthly Update (2nd Wave of Covid-19 “Lockdown” began on 29 April, it was relaxed 22 June, incrementally, bringing it to some normalcy by 10 July – however, cases are beginning to rise now...)

Nepal Context:

In what was considered as victory of the rule of law, the Supreme Court on the 12th, overturned the dissolution of the House once more, and ordered Nepali Congress President, Sher Bahadur Deuba to be appointed as Prime Minister within 28 hours – this was materialized on the 13th evening, creating political turmoil and inevitable instability at its wake. He secured the vote of confidence which meant that he has the possibility of running the remaining 15 months of the government before the next elections. But in these past 20 days, he has yet to give full form to his Cabinet. We can expect more intra-party struggles for power, bickering, and negotiations, until the chosen ones (not necessarily because they qualify for the job), are appointed ministers. In the meantime, work is stalled, and the people will fend for themselves as always!

There is so much to say here – covid, disaster, and vaccine management (to name but a few), but I will leave it at this – it may be more interesting for our imaginations!

Work with the Land:

On the 12th, we had a presentation by Prabal & Emil on the conceptual revision of the masterplan according to all the environmental/physical/social learnings we have had



in the past two years. This was followed by our own internal (Susan, Ganga, Rita) meeting. This was basically to think through all the variables and the present implications as we can best assess now. We wished to do this before Susan headed out to Delhi on the 16th

in relation to her husband's ongoing medical treatment. Ganga and I also needed to separately meet with Prabal, and we did that on the 19th - just being on the same page

and planning as we move ahead. This was an enjoyable meeting that cleared many a thing in our heads and allowed us to move forward better with the PBM&LC.

Rice plantation on half of the unoccupied PBM&LC land was done on the 5th, with the volunteer participation of the entire PBM&LC team. The official work for the approval of the library building has been done from the ward office, and the papers are now in the municipality office. Owing to many pressures in the Municipality Office, it may take a longer time before Govinda gets the necessary approval.

To give you a tiny glimpse of the process of/for construction work, I have a little excerpt from Emil's technical report: *"An online meeting was organized on the 11th with Rishiram Itani & Bidur Adhikari (the contractors), and Shanta Kumar Shrestha (IFID Nepal) to discuss contractual proceedings with revisions, as required. Following the discussion, a revised BOQ and a revised contract documents were received from the contractor on July 13, 2021. The revision works oversaw an increment of Rs. 703,382.28 on the previous contract amount of Rs. 21,954,246.96 summing to the final estimates of Rs. 22,657,629.24 for the construction of the Library Building. The increment was due to the market price hike on steel works from Rs. 165 per kg to Rs. 200 per kg. To avoid another cumbersome tendering process for the construction of the underground water tank (200,000 liters capacity), the construction of the water tank for the estimated amount of Rs. 3,331,082.69 was also added in the contract. This illustrated the final contract sum to be Rs. 25,988,711.90. Additionally, the contract duration was revised for 10 months with the start date for the construction at the site 1st September 2021 and the intended completion date as 30th June 2022. The changes in the contract conditions required approval from the NA Board for the further contractual proceedings. Also, a new Letter of Acceptance was to be provided to the contractor as the validity of the letter provided April, had expired. The NA Board has now just approved the revised contract."* Prabal and Emil are also revising the masterplan according to all the learning (technical, social, and environmental) we have received during this lag time. We are eager to begin construction work early September ensuring that when work begins this time there will be no stopping.



Programme Update at the PBM&LC:

Covid positive cases are on the increase in Nawalpur – up to 70/80 new cases per day. Right now, there are 770 patients in the isolation centers in Nawalpur. People are

scared to go for a check-up. Even our **Ain Kumari** was sick for over 3 weeks and is only just recovering - but she refused to go for a Covid test. Owing to Covid and the



busy plantation season, carrying out ongoing work while maintaining physical distancing has been difficult. Despite these, **Govinda** informs us that a daylong workshop with the youths on enhancing their capacities for local peace building has been accomplished. **Counselor Devi Pun,** and **Programme Officer Poonam GC,** also completed a week-long programme on individual and para counseling.

The NA Nawalpur team has agreed to continue working by primarily focusing on home visits, so that the multiple affected (conflict, covid, disasters) women don't feel further isolated and depressed (as has been the case). The youths have been mobilized to address the educational needs of the community children in small safe clusters.

NA Nawalpur has also been supporting the local health centers with equipment's, like beds, PPC, masks, stethoscopes, and other necessary items that were requested. Patients from disadvantaged backgrounds, were supported with food and fruits (adequate for an entire month) and as seemed to be of most value - periodic counseling. This month alone, NA Nawalpur provided relief support to 355 households (in the picture above, Sudha (Counselor) & Ranjita (peace volunteer) help the community woman carry a bag of relief grains on her head).

Fundraising for PBM&LC:

This month, the PBM&LC collected Rs. 10,595 in its piggy bank. This amount was duly sent to the NA PBM&LC account in Kathmandu. Once again, our in-country fundraising as planned, could not happen. Susan was here briefly from her husband's ongoing medical treatment in New Delhi, but there was so much for her to do and there were many State imposed restrictions owing to Covid which made mobility very limited. It still is!

Others:

After the 15th June devastating flash flood in the Melamchi River, Sindhupalchok district, 3 women's networks, the **Inter-Generational Feminist Forum (IGFF)**, **Women Friendly Disaster Management Group (WFDMG)**, and the **Women Humanitarian & Disaster Risk Reduction Platform (WHDRRP)**, have come together to work in the relief/recovery aspects. Since the 17th June we have worked voluntarily to raise funds primarily from Nepali individuals and close friends and allies internationally, and provide relief support primarily to women who are most at



risk in the affected districts where we have access. According to the mid-June – mid July, report of the **National Disaster Risk Reduction & Management Authority (NDRRMA)**, 61 persons have died and 35 are missing; 62 persons are injured; and there are 908 displaced families owing to the floods, landslides, and heavy rainfall. There are 560 fully damaged

and 155 partially damaged homes. There are 37 government/community schools; 25 suspension bridges; 25 concrete bridges; and 25 hydropower project that have also been severely damaged. The monsoons have also caused serious road damages in 8 districts, and 44 districts (that is half of Nepal and more) are severely affected. The implications are very big in terms of human, social, and infrastructural costs! The good thing is that we **ACTED!** However small, with the support of so many supporters who have stepped in, (some of whom are listed here!), we are doing what we can – we have collected over 5 million Nepali rupees, in a little less than 45 days,

from primarily individual Nepalis and international friends/family; and will have accomplished 8 relief outreaches within a week from now!

Why it became necessary for us to take on this initiative are for 2 key reasons: 1) impacts of climate change in countries like ours, as I am only now learning, is going to only intensify with each coming year – and the vulnerable will bear the most costs; and 2) the Nepali state hardly exists – and owing to ongoing political instability, systemic corruption, and weakening community safety nets, we all need to do all we can to hold together what we still can!

I wanted to share this initiative with you as a “feel good” experience, to learn how we can be comforted by the good work we all do! In the picture above at the bottom, the two women are carrying their little babies in the baskets they are carrying – as they live so close to this landslide in Lapilang, Dolakha district where I visited on a relief mission, less than a week back.

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Swift Code: SIDDNPKA

Note: Photo Courtesy: Govinda, Rita

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31 August 2021
Subject: Peace Building Memorial & Learning Center (PBM&LC) Monthly Update (In expectations of the 3rd wave of Covid-19, but now the country is coping with disasters. Situation continues to be challenging, complex, but contained so far...)

Nepal Context:

Even after 3 weeks of being in office, the PM is still officiating for 17 Ministries for being unable to negotiate with other parties of the coalition government. The disaster situation at present owing to floods and landslides is frightening – severely affecting 68 districts as of today. Human and infrastructural loss will take its toll on the social and economic aspects, as inflation remains unabated. Covid-conditions are beyond monitoring because the government/s (Province and local levels), are simply not equipped to do their jobs in many remote districts! But who can complain in front of what has just happened in Afghanistan! Many of us feel crippled to immobility, and others remain silent because it is so hard to comprehend the local and the global impacts of what has happened there. TV is a no-no – at least for me! Anxiety and uncertainty are now the new normal!

Work with the Land:



Emil sent us a field visit report after visiting the PBM&LC during the 5 – 8th with the purpose of overseeing and facilitating the CSEB (Compressed Stabilized Earth Bricks) training during the 6 – 8th. He informs us that the trainer, Niranjan Upadhyay, from **Build UP Nepal** was very experienced and skilled. He interacted with all with attention and ease. Although the community were

unwilling to undertake it as a joint venture with NA as was initially hoped, owing to the necessary investment of money, lack of adequate skills, and their not wanting unnecessary legal hassles involved with registration/taxation procedures. They expressed that they would be willing to undertake it on their sole individual ownership/s. However, Govinda and his Team enabled the training to be carried out smoothly by mobilizing 16 labourers (9 men and 7 women); by readying the necessary raw materials; and organizing all other logistics. The 3-day training was preceded by a religious puja to Lord Biswokarma, who oversees all building and machinery initiatives as being the builder of the Universe! The labourers, divided in two groups, learnt all the necessary skills to produce different sized bricks from the same mold, keep necessary records, and the building of walls with the newly produced CSEB bricks. All of these were an essential part of this training. Govinda conducted a post training debriefing with the labourers weighing future pros and cons.

During Emil's site visit he provided illustrations and guidelines to carry out the fencing on the eastern boundary of the PBM&LC for necessary security. Although the earlier planted trees are doing well on the northern boundary, we need to plant new trees on the eastern/western boundary. It will be seen which will be the most suitable trees to plant coming winter season. Likewise, as Govinda was realizing, Emil also suggested to build a low-cost temporary hall - so that the Sehari NA team will not be spending unnecessary money on the renting out of expensive hotel venues. A construction supervisor on the site is seen to be necessary, and a TOR has been drafted by Emil according to which the hiring process can be begun. According to Govinda, the additional pending approval work for the library building at the Municipality office has moved and is in the process of being approved within the coming week.



Taking the opportunity of Govinda being in Kathmandu on account of his work at NA, Susan, Ganga, and Rita, were able to have an impromptu meeting with him. He further briefed us about the training and other PBM&LC programme

updates. It became obvious in our conversations that we buy a suitable vehicle (like apick-up mini truck) for the field use at Nawalpur. Necessary legal/fiscal due diligence work for this has been initiated. This will also greatly save transportation costs, while facilitating work in Sehari.

On the 9th Monday, signing of the contract with the Contractors was accomplished who will soon begin work at the site. At this stage, I felt I needed to have a



conversation with Bidur & Rishi Ram (co-contractors) which we did. Being open and transparent, we helped them understand that: 1) there can be no compromise on quality & aesthetics; 2) to make prior arrangements to

ensure continuity to the work once it was begun; and 3) to ensure the wellbeing of their labourers from a gender perspective, e.g., nutrition, cleanliness, parity in wages as far as possible, and childcare where needed. We felt that they were well experienced and understood where we were coming from.

On the 27th Prabal and Emil requested a meeting with us to share concepts of their revised master plan. Sadly, Ganga could not participate in this briefing owing to other NA deadlines (explains why there are no photos). A revised master plan was presented by Prabal and Emil. It was philosophically wonderful and well thought out. It would enable interactive spaces for environmental and community coherence, but owing to certain decisions that needed to be made by NA looking into annual flooding possibilities even as of now, - the need to ensure sustainability, minimum ongoing maintenance and upkeep, and to avoid the ongoing toll on costs, both human and financial, we requested them to revise the plan according to some parameters we offered. After an animated discussions the engineers offered to present what will be the final plan in 2 weeks from now. We were all in appreciations.

Programme Update at the PBM&LC:

In half of the PBM&LC land, the paddy crop has just been weeded. The harvested corn has also been shelled out and NA has 4 quintals of corn from this year's harvest. NA also still has some rice remaining from the previous harvest. A youth training programme has been completed, and now the Peace Ambassadors are taking turns to come and learn at the peace center itself. In the Panauti Peace Center, 8 of the youths are taking turns to provide leadership in running the Peace Center. The Covid-19 related awareness-raising programme in the communities is also ongoing and so far 65 disadvantaged households from 4 wards, have benefited. Staying within the parameters of Covid-19 safety measures, Govinda and team benefited 58 school children who were in need, through psychological and creative support. 12 Peace Ambassadors are engaged in supporting school children with ongoing health and hygiene related learning in relation to Covid-19 and are supporting them in their school studies. This month, Govinda and team, gave a 3-days training on counseling to 15 women who were interested and eager, from among the conflict affected



women. These women felt and expressed that even after 15 years of the armed conflict, it was good to feel that someone was helping ease and heal their mental wounds which were still festering owing unfulfilled

promises by the State!

Fundraising

This month, Nawalpur local fundraising, and what was collected in the piggy bank at Sehari, totaled to Rs. 34,313. None at the center! This was partly because most of our energies have been diverted to relief work, and on the other hand partly owing to this we have been over-stretched fatigued beyond a coping mode.

Others:

On the 13th July, Sher B. Deuba was named PM after a two thirds majority government of K P Oli fell.



The three humanitarian women's networks, who had come together to work on flood relief, also promptly visited the PM to lobby that he fulfill his constitutional mandate of equal and equitable

representation of women in all the government structures. In the picture are seen feminist/activist leaders with the PM on the right. They have been doing this with all other parties and those who can influence decision-making.

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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 Sagar Rai, Emil Shrestha, Govinda Acharya

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 30th September 2021
Subject: Peace Building Memorial & Learning Center (PBM&LC) Monthly Update (3rd wave of Covid-19 has not happened so far! The country is coping with disasters & political unrest. Situation continues to be challenging & complex, but receding so far...)

Nepal Context:

Nepal appears to have avoided the dreaded third wave. Daily cases have been falling steadily since mid-August. A sample seroprevalence study done by the Health Ministry showed that over 68% had developed antibodies. Although health professionals advise caution, they say it is unlikely that there will be an explosion of Covid-19 cases. In fact, Nepal is slowly reopening its doors for tourism!

The USA supported Nepal Millennium Challenge Cooperation (MCC), met with wide level of opposition and protests – for the right reasons I personally think, making the visit of the VP/MCC unfruitful. For over 2 months, the new government has been in a limbo, the PM continues to oversee many ministries; the House has been taken hostage by political parties – a revised budget is yet to be passed; and the Supreme Court is in constitutional tangles – of “to do or not to do”! For the citizens, the frontpage news is the high price of mustard greens – depicting soaring inflation!

Despite all our ongoing challenges everywhere, the good news is that on the 26th, Iceland put 52% women in its Parliament! This is an unprecedented global moment and may set precedence for the world women in governance – it could!



Work with the Land:

Contractors paid a visit to the site accompanied by one of our architects Emil who will orient them on the site features and construction proceedings. Taking this opportunity, he will also provide technical inputs to Govinda to build a temporary hall, for which necessary approval has been given. Although the costs will be a little higher, it was agreed to use the newly produced CSEB bricks.



During 9 - 19, Emil was in the site with Bidur Adhikari and Rishiram Itani who are the awarded contractors for the PBM&LC. Emil was there to brief them and to oversee necessary engineering work at the site, importantly the building of a temporary community hall. The contractors also needed to identify suitable area for the worker's shed, site office and the storage of their construction materials and equipment. As an essential urgent need felt at the PBM&LC, a temporary hall, 30' in length and 22' in width is being built with the inhouse produced CSEB bricks. The hall will have a seating capacity of up to 30/35 persons, and it is being built with the locally available human resource while ensuring safety from flooding. Emil estimates that it will be completed before the Dashain holidays in less than 2 weeks. Emil also was able to advise on the ongoing production of the CSEB bricks both in terms of its composition and the speed of the production entailing storage space. Right now, 5 men and 3 women are working in the construction of the hall, where 75% work has been accomplished. The production of CBES bricks too has begun. 2 men and 4 women are working, and the daily production is approximately 400 bricks.

On the 22nd we had another review, assessment meeting

with Prabal and Emil. New conditions had emerged in the recent weeks that required prompt decision-making with the masterplan and the approach. We agreed on a couple of important things – we have to yet draw conclusions when we meet again on the 1st - as was agreed.

A good crop of corn has just been harvested from the PBM&LC and rice will be ready for harvesting in about 3 weeks. Govinda is speculating a bumper crop!

Programme Update at the PBM&LC:



The youths in the ongoing programme/s have received an inhouse 3-day refresher's training on para counseling which was given by Sudha and Devi. This has enabled the youths to provide ongoing services at the community level as well as it has helped increase their self-confidence. Taking the opportunity of the Children's Day, NA organized an essay competition on The impacts of Covid-19 & Necessary Safety Measures, where 18 children participated. over 300 community members came for the presentation event.

The programme with the conflict affected women called **"Women Living with Dignity"** is conducting its ongoing meetings and reflections. The 15 women who are engaged in this programme are saying that their lives have been changed with the love and support they have received from NA in the past 2 years. According to their needs some are receiving support for their children's education, some are receiving health related support, and yet others are receiving support in the form of income generating activities such as procurement of seeds, and raising ducks, chicken, or goats.

Similarly, all the peace centers are doing their ongoing meetings, interactions in the local communities, and raising increasing and pertinent issues of suicide, VAW, child marriage, and peace and conflict.



On the occasion of the key festival of **Jitiya** celebrated by the **Tharu** community, 14 women groups, came together to celebrate by practicing and performing the **Jhamata** dance. The celebration participated by over 200 people helped in further increasing goodwill and a sense of community. We have good news that PC (our donor for the PBM&LC) will be visiting Nepal in October. This will be the first time he will visit our PBM&LC at Sehari, Nawalpur. The Nawalpur team is excited to welcome PC.

Fundraising

Soon after the August update, Chela Blitt, a Tewa dodor over many years, wrote: “Rita you really persevere! I will donate US \$ 5000.” Rs. 9,900 collected in the piggy bank in Sehari, has been deposited in the NA account.

Others:

In the early morning of 25th September 2021, our **Kamla Basin** transcended her mortal body. She was 75 years old. Although she was detected with cancer less than 3 months back, she went too soon, too fast. The feminist/development world in South Asia, in particular, is in mourning – celebrating her life and work and vowing that her work will continue to live in, and through each of us. In the recent years, annually, she spent over a month in Deep Yogini (Tewa Center), facilitating and running the month-long feminist capacity building workshop/s for feminists/activists largely of the region.

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Account Name: Nagarik Aawaz; Account No: 01815090950

Swift Code: SIDDNPKA

Note: Photo Courtesy: Ganga Sagar Rai, Emil Shrestha, & Govinda Acharya

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st October 2021
Subject: Peace Building Memorial & Learning Center (PBM&LC) Monthly Update

Nepal Context:

The most untimely and unexpected flooding this month took away over 100 lives, and damaged metric tons of rice just ready to be harvested. After two years many families left the valley during the festival of Dashain to reunite with their loved ones in villages all over Nepal. For today, Worldometer reported that the official Covid-19 deaths are 8, and infected are 376 (<https://covid19.mohp.gov.np/>).

Work with the Land:



On the 3rd, our architects, Prabal & Emil presented the revised masterplan! Susan, Ganga, and I knew that we had arrived – the minute we saw their 3-D presentation! The revision prepares for floods – if need be; will use local human resource and our CSEB bricks produced in the PBM&LC; and will cut down on cost almost by a third! On the 10th the Core Group met and were briefed regarding the revised masterplan; PC's upcoming visit; and solicitations for annual gifts of money for the PBM&LC were made. **A vehicle (Mahendra Bolero pick-up) worth 32 laks rupees**

approximately, purchased for the PBM&LC, which was earlier approved by the Core Group/Board of NA also arrived for us all to witness before being driven to Sehari, Nawalpur on the 23rd just in time to fetch PC from the airport on the 24th!

On the 22nd the architects, Prabal and Emil met PC with the revised masterplan. After



a comprehensive briefing, and questions for clarifications, PC said that he felt better prepared for the visit to the PBM&LC in Sehari, Nawalpur. PC's 2.5 days visit on the 24th, (cancelled a year and a half ago) was much awaited by the NA staff and the youth/s in Sehari, PBM&LC. The contractors too have begun to

fabricate the steel columns and beams for the library building as reported by Emil who visited their workshop.

Following PC's visit, Govinda reports that a bumper harvest of rice has been collected at the PBM&LC. The fields are being readied for mustard, lentils, and other suitable crops.

Programme Update at the PBM&LC:

At Sehari, Govinda and team celebrated the day of the elderly on the 1st. 42 elderlies



(both men and women) gathered with additional representatives from the local community. Songs, stories, and sharing marked the event. This was the first time that the elders in the communities had anyone celebrate or honour



them. Later the NA staff and youth all shared that the elders have now begun to take a keen interest in the work of NA. Likewise, throughout the second half of this month, Govinda and his team have held events and workshops marking various days, to educate and engage the wider

communities in the district, engaging the NA peace ambassadors.

On the 26th - 27th a series of meetings took place in the newly built vernacular styled hall at the PBM&LC welcoming, briefing, and interacting with our **visitor/donor PC**. There was open sharing and **PC** expressed that he had a fairly good idea and experience of the peace-building work of NA, especially in the Nawalpur district.

Fundraising

Sukumaya and **Shobha**, NA Board/Core Group members, gifted **Rs. 100,000 each**, and **Jyotsana**, NA Board Secretary, and **Rita** made a pledge of **Rs. 50,000 each** for 2021. Others like **Chhatra diju** (Board Chair), **Roshani** (Treasurer), who were present at the core group meeting, abstained as they had made substantive gifts of **Rs. 25,00,000 & Rs. 500,000 respectively**, the previous year. **Rs. 2000** was collected in the **PBM&LC in Sehari**, and **PC** during his visit to the **PBM&LC**, also gifted **US \$ 500** for local community work at Sehari.

Others:



A new temporary hall built at the PBM&LC has the vernacular Tharu-styled flooring. Bamboos, covered in elephant grass, plastered by mud (in picture). The revised masterplan will enable as many buildings as possible in this style with CSEB bricks

produced at the PBM&LC. Since the costs of buildings will be greatly reduced as per the revised masterplan, the **NA Board/Core Group are also looking into buying a centrally located piece of land**, where some of the PBM&LC/NA Nawalpur's activities and services can be moved – for the sake of not putting all the eggs in one basket. Given time and experience in the recent past 2 years – this thinking emerged given our recent experiences in flooding and distant probabilities if and when the Narayani river should decide to change its course. **Govinda is looking into buying some suitable land in the key central areas of the district!**

We wish to share with you information about a sale **Lynne & Elizabeth have been hosting for NA in TORONTO for the past 16 years:**

“ABOUT THE SALE

For 16 years now, Lynne Brennan and Elizabeth Wickwire have organized an annual event to raise funds to benefit communities in Nepal. Proceeds from the sale help support **Nagarik Aawaz**, a peacebuilding organization inspiring youth and women leaders and helping communities sustain peace.

The hand-picked items in our sale make wonderful gifts for others, or for yourself. Hand-made paper, greeting cards, baskets, bags, playful children's toys. and ofcourse elegant scarves and a range of jewelry.

The sale will run online beginning Monday, November 15th at 6pm until Friday, November 26th at midnight. Items will be available for preview soon!

Following the sale, curbside pickup will take place in Cabbagetown, on Sunday, November 28th, and the evening of Monday, November 29 if required.

Visit the sale webpage now! **Feel free to share this link with a friend!**

<https://747flea.us7.listmanage.com/track/click?u=36746e3f524e7478b122f2583&id=d6f47d4c9b&e=a44fe927df>

**With gratitude for your friendship,
Lynne Brennan (lbrennan.ca@gmail.com) & Elizabeth Wickwire”**

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

Note: Photo Courtesy: Ganga Sagar Rai, Rita, & Govinda Acharya

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 30th November 2021
Subject: Peace Building Memorial & Learning Center (PBM&LC) Monthly Update

Nepal Context:

The month opened with the Tihar celebrations/holidays – precious after Covid-19 years. The worship of the goddess of wealth - Laxmi, festival of lights, and “bhai-tika



and for some “mah puja” could all take place. Around the 1st week, word got around that there would be another hike of petroleum products and sure it did! Petrol, diesel, kerosene, cooking and heating gas! Protests from student groups followed – but to no avail. This 21st

November, Nepal completed 15 years of signing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, but conflict victims have yet to receive justice or compensations for extrajudicial murders, rapes, disappearances, kidnappings, and torture. 15 full years! The ULM party convention in Chitwan will choose its party Chair**Man** (we can expect nothing else!) this year and is boasting of an attendance of 500,000 party loyal/s (although news reports less than 200000) streaming in from throughout Nepal. While political turmoil over the ongoing Chief Justice's case, and recently Ramdev (Indian yoga guru) is ongoing, - life goes on in Nepal. Those suffering grievances - will just have to cope as prices soar. We will all have to choose carefully what we can or cannot afford to consume, and who has time to worry about Covid-19!



Work with the Land:

The Jay Buddha Construction Company, our contractors, have already downloaded all the necessary raw materials for the library building e.g., cement, iron



rods, and stones. The underground water tank too is being dug out. While, as previously agreed, Emil has sent the design for the extension of the roof on the newly built hall at the PBM&LC.

Over 1800 kgs rice was harvested this year, and PBM&LC has

already sold out Rs. 53,000 worth of rice, corn, mustard oil, potato, and straw. Vegetables, mustard, and potatoes have been planted in the cleared land.

As agreed earlier by the Core Group for the PBM&LC, the search for a centrally located land in Danda, Kawasoti is ongoing in areas close to the highway far from the threats of flooding. Govinda thinks that we can strike a suitable deal in the following two weeks.

Above all these as an SOS call from the site engineer assigned by the contractors, Emil visited the site on the 26th – he reports: *“Excavation works for the library building footing has begun. At 1700mm depth from the ground level (pond bottom), ground water table has been found, and it has become challenging to dig further down. Likewise, below 1900mm, the earth is found to be layers of sand. The recommended depth for the footing bottom in the structural drawing is 2200mm. The site engineer suggests for a footing design review. Owing to the unstable sandy soil and water levels at the footing depth, the site engineer suggests for a flat raft footing. The structural drawings present thinner footing in the middle with cranked bars. The site engineer asks for details on mixtures for the concrete to prevent the corrosion of the rebars for the footing, as the footing structure is in water”*. All Greek to many of us, but some of our expert backstopping group members will understand about the necessary following work. Meetings with the structural engineers are due at the earliest before work can resume. These unforeseen glitches happen!

Programme Update at the PBM&LC:

The 16 days campaign against VAW, has begun and community activities such as street theatre, discussion forums, and awareness raising initiatives are ongoing in Nawalpur, with the active participation of the peace volunteers/ambassadors and the local communities. 35 Youths from Lalitpur and Nawalpur were given a 3-day training on gender and inclusion. This was followed by an added day of study visit to



the local communities and peace centers in Nawalpur.

Divya Gurung and NA's Bishnu Gharti Magar were the key resource persons. During the 18 - 19th a youth programme assessment workshop was

held at the Tewa Center in Kathmandu. The learnings therefrom will be assimilated to further strengthen the ongoing programme/s. Susan and Shikha from NA office facilitated the 2-day workshop. Likewise on the 29 - 30th a reflection and strategy building workshop on peace was held at the Tewa Center for the 30 women from Lalitpur and Nawalpur who are direct survivors of the armed conflict. Susan was the lead facilitator for this workshop.

Fundraising

Kunga took some precious moments to visit and bring NA **Rs. 100,000 that Kunga and Barbara (both long-time supporters of NA) had collected for us from their friends in Vienna. Lynne and Elizabeth are winding down the week-long "Peace in Nepal" annual sale in Toronto.** The amount of time and effort they personally dedicate for these events over these years, cannot be anything else but labour of love!

Others:



The PBM&LC supporter and friend, PC, had a debriefing session with the office bearers of NA, L to R Jyotsana, Susan, Chhatra and Rita the PBM&LC Coordinator, before he left Nepal. In the picture PC is making a parting

gift to honour Chhatra diju, NA's President. PC reassured us that he is committed to the PBM&LC. He expressed that he had a memorable visit to Nepal, a better understanding of what peacebuilding work meant, and how development work done right, could have a positively transformative impact on the lives of all it engages with! Thank you PC for your visit – we at the PBM&LC appreciate your time and interest!

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Swift Code: SIDDNPKA

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

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st December 2021
Subject: The “Padmalaya” Family Wishes You ALL Season’s Best Greetings & a Very Happy New Year – 2022!

Nepal Context:

It is very cold here as temperatures drop to 3 - 2 centigrade. But more than the cold, economic dearthness is biting into us – as most Nepalis struggle to make ends meet with rising prices of kerosene, cooking/heating gas, and petrol - impacting on all consumable goods. What’s there to say – and where is that Omicron in our lives! Government makes precautionary rules, but as usual, few of us know of them until we are confronted with it. Life goes on for most - either in sweet oblivion or reckless abandonment! “Jai hos!” – may all prosper into the New Year 2022!

Work with the Land:

On the 7th Susan, Ganga, and Rita sat together to reflect on the PBM&LC – to see overall where we had arrived and what would be of priority importance to think through. We agreed to think through the following 3 things:

1. A name for the PBM&LC
2. What and how would we be needing to build **in the new land we are soon hoping to acquire!** Govinda is already hard at work on this.
3. Developing the first peace training course at the PBM&LC & preparing our interested and qualifying youth/s with necessary training to run the PBM&LC as infrastructure work is completed hopefully within 2024/25 e.g., management, housekeeping, tour-guiding (nature/cultural), and others as may be consultatively prioritized.

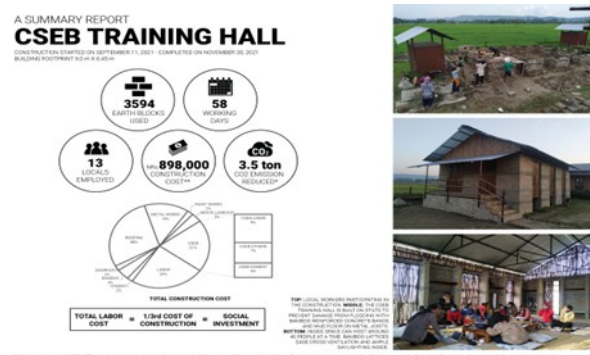
After some thinking, we finalized on a name which we sounded out to key board members and staff – who loved what we suggested. It has also as of the Board meeting on the 31st has been formally endorsed. So, we will now be writing:

PADMALAYA

The NA Peace Center

(Meaning in Sanskrit - the home of the lotus – symbolic of how at the peace center, we can all emerge above the muddy waters of confusion/conflict and bloom like a lotus!)

We will soon be



finalizing a design for the logo. But we hope you all do like the name!

Emil sent us this succinct report (L) demonstrating how 1/3 the cost of the building is a social investment going into the hands of the local labourers in in the production of the CSEB brick and in the building of the hall, in a vernacular way. As far as possible, **Padmalaya** will hold many these kinds of buildings. The bricks are already being produced.

Emil visited the site during 21st – 29th December and reports the following:



“Construction works for the library building and water tank started at the end of the last month. There were few concerns from the contractor regarding the execution of the foundation works on the sandy layer of earth with high

*ground water table in the trench. **Manohar ji** (our expert structural engineer) was consulted at the beginning of the month for solutions and the contractors were instructed likewise. The work could not move during the first half of the month due to some hiccups in the site management from the contractor/s. During the second half of the month, in the presence of Mr. Rishiram Itani, the footing works for the underground water tank and the boulder soling works for the library building was completed. At present around 10 workers are employed in the site. The footing works for the library building are carried out with continuous dewatering processes to keep the trench dry as much as possible”.*

Emil also reports that: “This month, a land surveyor from the municipality and an engineer from the ward office visited the site to verify the drawings and documents presented for the municipal approval processes. Both the engineers approved the presented drawings with the site contexts. This month, IFID Pvt. Ltd. was contracted to oversee the bill verification works for the ongoing construction works and provide an advisory role for the site supervision. The consultant was contracted for the amount of Rs. 15,000 per month exclusive of taxes. The contract



will last until the construction works are completed by the present contractors”.

Programme Update at the PBM&LC:

Govinda and the team in Nawalpur have been very busy – farming,

programme work, and for some of them related construction work! Some of the highlights are during the 16 days of anti VAW campaign was accomplished with awareness raising via street theatre/s, songs, and by demonstrating awareness raising slogans. On the occasion of the International Human Rights Day - the 10th of December, an interaction programme on the current human rights condition and the role of the peace builders was discussed. This was participated by 40 persons. A 2-day workshop on gender and inclusion was held at the **Padmalaya** where 18 youths participated and concluded that in order for this to be internalized at the community level they need to work more deeply with even more understanding and compassion.

A day long counseling session revealed that out of the 36 participants, 70% were suffering from one or the other form of mental health issues, but they thought it was too personal or family problem to share with others. On the 17th, a collaborative one day workshop on drugs abuse and rehabilitation was conducted with the **Navajiwan Rehabilitation Center** located at Chormara. The founder, **Keshab Khatri** (who was previously an addict himself) was the resource person. There were 45 youths from the community who participated in this programme. At Nawalpur, ongoing relief support on education and counseling for those most in need is ongoing. A day-long interactive workshop was organized with the local representatives and intergenerational women, some of whom had suffered violence for over 20 years.

Ganga too visited the **Padmalaya** in the last week of this month to see possible land to buy for **Padmalaya** as well as initiate work on the video documentation in relation to **Padmalaya**'s work.

Fundraising:

The pledges of **Rs. 100,000 each** made by **Shobha & Sukumaya** have been fulfilled. As well as the pledge of **Rs. 50,000 each** made by **Jyotsana** and **Rita** have also been

fulfilled within this year. Govinda informed that the local **fundraising from the community** amounted to a **total of Rs. 8,846** – and this has already been deposited in the bank. From the sale and equally from generous donations received in Toronto by **Lynne & Elizabeth**, Lynne has wired us a total of **CDN \$ 10,400!** This is the highest amount that the both have managed to collect in any given year! Through days/months of gathering items, planning, and hands on work mobilizing many volunteers. This is always a labour of love and a commitment to global peace. We will never have the words, but our hearts are full & **Padmalaya** will thrive because of all these support and goodness shared. Everyone in Toronto, we send you our deepest appreciations and gratitude! **THANK YOU** all!

Others:



After conducting several district and province level “Peace Tables”, NA conducted a National level Peace Table in Kathmandu on the 27th. 70 conflict affected women participating from 4 districts of Rolpa, Bardiya, Dang,

and Kailali. They participated to seek State accountability regarding the stalled transitional justice process for over 15 years now since the peace accord was signed!

As you could imagine – there is so much more to write. But this is just a glimpse of what is happening at and with Padmalaya as we begin the new year. We send you warm greetings and wish you can visit us this new year – 2022 as we say a humble “thank you” to each of you here!

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