

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st January 2023
Subject: Padmalaya Monthly Update – January
HAPPY NEW YEAR - 2023

Nepal Context:

Don't know where to begin! The new Cabinet has Prachanda (Maoist leader) as PM. This was done eliminating Deuba (the Congress Party Chair, who won most votes), in a last-minute hattrick that established UML Party Chief Oli, as the king-maker. The Swatantra Party, who also joined the coalition, had 3 or 4 seats in the Cabinet (don't know really and can't keep up with the political happenings here!), had Rabi Lamichhane as the Deputy PM and Home Minister, together with getting leaderships in the health and education ministries. However, owing to some issues with his citizenship, within the month, the Supreme Court rulings made Lamichhane a non-citizen, meaning he was stripped of all these positions. But within 2 days, he has acquired his citizenship and is once more the party Chief – but we do not know how this will all end. The public who supports Rabi think this is all a ploy to destabilize the Swatantra Party, who fielded skilled, educated young persons who have sworn to expose and take action against corrupt office bearers.

Effects of Climate Change is on the increase with several earthquakes up to 5.9 Richter scale that has increased displacements and homelessness - as has also flooding and landslides. Worse still, on the 22nd an entrepreneur, Prem P Acharya (Illam District), set fire on himself right in front of the Constituent Assembly premise, even as the PM motorcade passed by without stopping. He succumbed to 80% burn injury on the following day. He left behind clear reasons that owing to corruption and official impediments at every step he has been pushed to take this step. He also wrote a 25-point corrective measures for the government to take heed. He leaves behind his young wife and two daughters. So far, in the past week I have heard of 7 more cases of suicides (all men), who could not pay bank loans. Not to forget the 72 people who lost their lives middle of this month in the Yeti air crash.



Work With the Land:

Construction work is moving well, and we can see progress. The casting of the 4th floor is scheduled for the coming week - for which Emil will be going to the site. **Kunga**, on our request, brought us 5 small copper 'bumpa vases'.

In his own words: *“To be buried underground at the site in the four cardinal directions and in the middle. The bumpa vases have been filled with Buddhist prayers and mantras, medical powders, incense, delicious foods, and small amounts of precious materials like gold, silver, coral, turquoise etc. before being sealed and blessed. The vases are buried in a ceremony by a qualified Lama, as an offering to the local earth-spirits who reside at the land. The vases represent beautiful palaces full of all necessities for the spirits to reside in, so they will be content and not cause obstacles or hindrances to the completion of the project. The ceremony requests the local gods and spirits of the land not to be upset by our disturbing the earth by digging, building, diverting water courses, and to serve as protectors and guardians in the future”.*

A long process had to be taken after a fall out with the present contract with the joint contractors – where, while they are still required to complete the library building, NA will make a new bid for the ongoing work beginning with the two residential buildings. Since we have observed over months that Padmalaya suffered unnecessary delays with the construction work, owing to the internal rift in the joint partnership of the contractors. Realizing this and in consultation with our architects, Prabal and Emil, NA took the process forward with the bidding and the official opening of the bids. Santa ji from IFID Nepal was in charge for making technical and financial assessments and advising NA regarding the selection of the contractor. In Emil’s own words: *“On the 27th of the month, the bid evaluating consultant, Santa ji of IFID Nepal, finally presented a recommendation letter to NA, recommending **Jaya Buddha Nirman Sewa** for the bid award. The consultant stated that the bidder is experienced, technically well equipped, and his bid amount is the lowest. A final decision is yet to be made by NA, which NA is in the process to formalize. Emil Shrestha visited the site from the 1 – 4 January. The ongoing steel formworks for the shear wall on the third floor of the library building was inspected. Also, documentation works for the municipal approvals*



for the construction of the dormitory buildings were completed. The further process at the municipality was also coordinated. On the 6th Emil visited Prabal Thapa to update on the recent construction works at the site and the bidding processes”.

Govinda reported from Nawalpur that Nawalpur farmers are now busy with the sowing of mustard seeds, planting potatoes, and vegetables. The cold wave during this month is making life difficult for the sick, elderly, and the young. Rhinos from the Chitwan National Park are attacking the farmlands and poachers recently killed 2 Rhinos. This has resulted in some official restrictions in the forest and river areas. Padmalaya this year made a gift of 100 kgs of its rice produce to 20 NA Board members and Trustees. Padmalaya is in the process of

recruiting 2 staff members, one to replace Prem, who decided to be a migrant worker, and the



other as an additional help with gardening and support services.

Programme Highlights:

Furthermore Govinda in his report said NA supported with woolen sweaters and caps 36 children of Shree Navjyoti Elementary School (whose parents are laborers working in brick kilns), and additional 30 orphan children. The Peace Centers are in good use. Each day 2 to 3 people come for counseling services. Some programme/s are completing their first 3-year terms and are entering their second extension phases, enabling the recruitment of more peace builders.



One of NA donors, Peter of Kurve Wustrow (KW), also visited Padmalaya with his team of four visitors. Susan

accompanied them to share about the outcome and achievements of the programme supported by KW.

Fundraising & Financial Update:

The savings from most of December and January, and the sale of Padmalaya produce, has accumulated to the amount of **Rs. 1,03,558**. This has been deposited in the NA account. Also remaining pledges made in the Pokhara Cross-Cultural event has been fulfilled this month. Inspired by contributions that happened during this event, **Deviram Kusari**, of Humaid in Dang District – an organization working for climate change and disaster, made an organizational gift of **Rs. 5000** to Padmalaya.

Earlier, in a meeting with Susan and Ganga, we agreed that we would also initiate a Nepali fund-raising campaign named “**Padma-Sarthak¹ Campaign**” that will enable us to gather 20 million Nepali rupees during 2023 and 2024. Phew – this will be a huge undertaking – but we are excited that we will also have wider experience and learning! Ganga is already working on the campaign flyer and a communications strategy! Merita, Financial Manager, also sent me a year-end report of Padmalaya financial position. It is here below for you to see. Please ask Merita merita@nagarikaawaz.org.np for queries if any.

Financial Position of Padmalaya Up to January 2023 Exchange rate \$ 1 = Rs. 130.30			
	Funds	Amount Nepali Rupees	US Dollars
1.	Funds received	206,875,198.45	1,587,683.79
	Total Funds	206,875,198.45	1,587,683.79
2.	Total Expenses	84,338,704.34	647,265.57
	Remaining Balance	122,536,494.11	940,418.22
	Fund Details	Amount Nepali Rupees	Amount US Dollars
1.	National Donors	8,658,403.00	66,449.75
2.	International Individual Donors	9,380,787.56	71,993.76
3.	International Institutional Donors	184,211,265.00	1,413,747.24
4.	Bank Interest Earned	4,594,242.89	35,258.96
	Total	206,844,698.45	1,587,449.72

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 Acharya & Ganga Sagar Rai*

¹ Padma-Sarthak literally means the realization of the lotuses. We will brief you on the campaign progress as we go along!

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 28 February 2023
Subject: Padmalaya Monthly Update – February

Nepal Context:

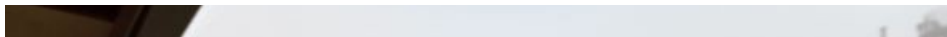
Ah! Turkey & Syria!

Here the coalition government is already looking very frail and weak, with 2 parties RSP & RPP who earlier had a combined number of 7/8 ministers (don't remember exactly how many!) who have all chosen to stay in the opposition. Currently there is a race among the parties for who will be President, as the term of office for Bidya Devi Bhandari expires soon. It is said and heard that the USA, China, and India are doing the musical chair to influence the election of the President, with their chosen one – which is beyond a lay person's understanding as to why and how! We can only wait and watch how it may turn out and what the implications are for Nepal. We hear that Nepal's fiscal health is fast declining. But from a consumer's perspective I thought we had already reached rock bottom. Now it must mean much bigger things at the level of the banks and the ministries.

Work With the Land:

Govinda in his monthly report informs us that the Nawalpur community is now busy setting up their regular weekly farmer's markets and starting the corn crop/s in their fields - suitable to the present season. In Padmalaya, he says that they are now busy harvesting the mustard crop and separating the seeds for drying. A little over 1 quintal mustard has been harvested. At Padmalaya, as per the felt need, **Sukumaya Choudhary** has been hired to assist with the work of Ain Kumari, and **Tikaram Mahato** has been recruited to replace Prem who has left

Padmalaya for work abroad.



After three years and as felt necessary, the straw roofing has been changed in the kitchen, bathroom, and the guard house. A total of Rs. 30,000 was expended for the roof work.

Preparations are being made for the concrete slab of the 5th floor, and the casting of the support walls around the staircase. Also steps up till the 4th floor is soon to be laid out after following up with the contractor – Rishi Ram Itani of Jaya Buddha to expedite

this piece of work at the library building.

The signing of the contract with Jay Buddha, following all due diligence processes was done on the 15th. Emil went on the 8th for the casting of the 4th floor of the library building, which was accomplished on the 9th of this month. He also took this opportunity to begin the process for receiving approval from the municipality for the approval of the drawings of the residential buildings.



To understand the details of what this work entails please see below in Emil's own words: *"NA made an official decision in the beginning of the month to award the bid to Jaya Buddha Nirman Sewa Pvt. Ltd. With the help of IFID Nepal Pvt. Ltd. on the 7th of the month, a letter of intent was forwarded to the bidders to notify the decision made by NA.*

Also, a letter of acceptance was forwarded to the awardee stating that the bid was awarded for the sum of NRs. 3,32,16,524, without taxes. The awardee was also requested to present a performance security of NRs. 16,60,826.20 within 15 days for the contract signing.

The awardee presented performance security, dated 9th February 2023 issued by Nabil Bank on the 13th of the month. Also, work schedule for the construction works was presented. After reviewing the documents and preparing the contract documents, contract was signed on the 15th of the month. The contract was signed for the sum of Rs. 3,75,34,672.12 with VAT and the provisional sum of NRs. 38,37,635.55. The intended completion date for the whole of construction of two units of dormitory block in the contract document is 18 months from the date of contract signing. On 23rd February, the contractor requested for release of advance sum of NRs. 66,43,000 (which is 20% of the contract sum) with bank guarantees issued by

Prime Commercial Bank. This was discussed with IFID Nepal Pvt. Ltd. As suggested by the consultant, the first installment of the advance sum amounting NRs. 33,21,652.40 is being paid on the 27th of the month. Remaining sum for the advance sum would be paid after the contractor begins work at the site". On the 28th the contractor is going to Padmalaya, to begin site works for the construction of the residential building/s – Emil will join shortly.

Programme Highlights:

In order to create awareness on mental health, awareness raising programmes have been conducted with the local communities as well as hoarding boards have been put up in 3 locations.

Bread for the World has extended its programme - for further 3 years, enabling the youth peacebuilders to continue their work up till 2025. This has enabled the selection of 10 youths from 5 and 15 number wards, through a written and an oral interview. Out of these 9 are female and 1 male. 49 youths had applied for these positions.

Even in the ongoing Women with Dignity programme, four new women have joined the 11 existing women. Just this month, from the four ongoing programmes at the 5 Peace Centers being run by Padmalaya, 20 community level interactions, advocacy

initiatives, and awareness raising programmes have been conducted. These were participated by close to 600 community members.



Of course, all the other regular Padmalaya work related to receiving visitors, reporting and planning sessions and meetings, are all ongoing. There is not a month where donors or visitors from outside are not being hosted by Govinda and his team at Padmalaya. **Govinda** does NA proud -both by his dedication and leadership. I think I have found the Mahatma Gandhi in him that we

absolutely required. Thank you very much Govinda and your team at Sehari, Nawalpur – very much!

Fundraising & Financial Update:

Even as I sent the previous update, I received this message from our (Nepal's and many of ours) **old friends Karl and Regina Muller**, appreciating the updates and the teamwork at Padmalaya, and informing us that they sent *"our tiny donation"*. Yes, that tiny donation is now Rs. 193,540 (almost 2 laks) in our bank! We can only say a humble "namaste" – for we have received many a gift from you in the past as well! Likewise, **Professor Han Verschure** wrote to pledge: *"donations from family and friends now require a tax form with a Belgian recognized NGO this is at present not possible for Padmalaya. Nevertheless, I will make a donation of around US \$ 2000 from my personal savings"*. Han & Marleen, we at NA, hope to see you in Nepal soon – we have much to learn from your experiences and learning/s.

This month, from the sale of the produce from Padmalaya, and the savings and donations collected, **a total of Rs. 17080** have been deposited in the Siddharth Bank Account in Kathmandu.

The Padma-Sarthak Campaign (PSC) - 2023- 2024:

As I announced earlier, we agreed that we would run this significant PSC **to raise 2 corer rupees from key Nepali donors who can gift any amount from 20, 15, 10, 5, and 1 lakh rupees each to either honour a loved one, in memory of someone, or to simply support the peacebuilding work NA is doing.** Although we have sat together as the Padmalaya core team at various times to have more in-depth reflections on the nature of this campaign, we still have more work to do even in terms of finalizing details. January was spent in thinking through the campaign, and we agreed that we would only aim for gifts above Rs. 100,000 –

or it will be next to impossible to raise the desired amount within 2 years. We also agreed on the name of the fundraising campaign as the **Padma-Sarthak Campaign** (PSC) which can be literally translated as the *actualization or the realization of the lotus/es*.

Ganga initiated the work on the campaign flyer, which he and I later thought through and refined. I was ready to send off request letters from the 7th. Also, I felt that as far as possible, we would not send off letters without first introducing or making a request for the campaign personally.

However, learning about the campaign, **PC feeling partly Nepali, sent us a gift of Rs. 100,000** this month in support of the campaign. We will count this gift as coming from a Nepali donor! Likewise on the last day of the month **on ONE single ask, Doma Bajracharya promptly gifted Rs. 100,000** to PSC! Our first **pledge of Rs 500,000 for this campaign came from General/Dr. Geeta & Dr. Buddha Basnyat** - promptly after I sent out the letter on the 7th. This helped us move forward with confidence and hope! Better still, this gift was followed by my other cousin, **Jitendra Basnyat with his wife Usha, who said they commit to the pledge of Rs. 500,000** and that it would honour his **father, Late Upendra Bahadur Basnyat, mother, Sushila Devi Basnyat, and his older brother, Late Dr. Rabindra Kishor Basnyat**. Well, not to be outdone by my two generous cousins, but as has also been my personal practice, **I scurried to fulfill a gift of Rs. 500,000** to Padma-Sarthak! Doing this was personally both scary and exhilarating at the same time – giving me firmer grounds to make the asks from now on!

Just want to express heartfelt gratitude to all the PSC donors. Buddha/Geeta, Jitendra/Usha, cousins - I feel honoured and loved – may you all stay blessed and in good health! PC you are helping Padmalaya come true, but your gesture for this campaign and aligning yourself with Nepal is an honour we will cherish! Doma – your generosity is exemplary! All these gifts this **first month, enabled us to get 17 lakh rupees in gifts and pledges for the PSC!**

Others:



Significant this month was the One Billion Rising (OBR) campaign where we all organized and participated. This was accomplished in 19 districts by the focal persons of Inter-Generational Feminist Forum (IGFF), with Sangat Nepal and Tewa in lead organizing beginning 14th February and the remaining days of this month.

Bank Information:

If you wish to make a gift to **help build Padmalaya** or make a gift to the **Padma-Sarthak Campaign (PSC) – 2023/24**, please inform us in advance so that we have records for follow-ups with you and the bank:

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

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

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st March 2023
Subject: **Padmalaya** Monthly Update – March

Nepal Context:

This month, the price of 500ml milk went up to Rs. 42.50 – more than Rs. 5 for half a liter. I have NO understanding! Also, we got our incoming President – a Congress Party veteran, Ram Chandra Poudel – who is not necessarily known for decisiveness and leadership. Hither thou Nepal?! The Population Census 2021 report is launched at 29,164,578 – with a shrinking below 14 years old and growing 15 years old and above, signifying an aging population. The 2 Transitional Justice Commissions have an amended Bill, which if passed will do little justice to the conflict victims even after over 15 years! Protests and disgruntles follows on!



Work With the Land:

The most important doing this month was that on the 8th we visited Padmalaya with **Khenpo Tashi & Lama Kalsang, from the Monastery of Ven. Karma Thinley Rinpoche** – one of my root Gurus - to do puja and lay the **5 bompos** in

the land. This was well accomplished taking a good half morning and leaving all of us present at the site with good energy and renewed enthusiasm!





During this visit
we had NA

collaborator/partner over 2 decades, **Gyanu Poudel** and **Sita Bhattarai** - the ED and Chair of **Namuna Integrated Development Council** respectively, also accompany us from Bhairahawa.

This March, **Govinda** reported from the fields that Nawalpur's political engagement was



with the election
of the President,
and in the
educational world,
with the Student
Union elections.
At the level of the
communities,
people are busy
harvesting wheat,
mustard, and
lentils, and
preparing to sow
corn. At
Padmalaya, wheat

and mustard have been harvested and the fields are being readied for corn.

Regarding construction work, we are now going in full speed. The 5000 liters water tank on the top of the library building is begun, the stacked bricks produced at Padmalaya are being sorted according to size, and the staircase is being completed. The foundation pillars are being readied for casting in one of the residential buildings and to comprehend the details of the building work, here is an excerpt from Architect Emil Shrestha's technical report: *"In the beginning of the month, sample CSEB blocks were produced from the earth excavated from*

the dormitory building pit. The blocks after curing for 28 days would be taken to lab to test for compressive strength. If the tests are good, CSEB production using the earth from the premises would be continued. This would lower the production cost and also resolve the issues related to raw materials procurement.

Excavation for the residential building is begun, preparing the base for the foundation. Excavation revealed sand gravel layer at the specified foundation depth of around 1.7meter from the ground level. This helped to avoid adding a layer of sand gravel compaction for the foundation base, saving both time and expenses for the specified work. The excavated foundation pit was manually levelled and on the 10th of the month, ready mixed concrete was employed to cast a lean concrete for the foundation base. The excavated earth is piled nearby which would be again used to refill the foundation pit. The second half of the month, reinforcement laying for the footing begun. This was followed by reinforcement works for the



footing beams and footing columns. By the end of the month, all the footing reinforcement works are completed and formworks for foundation are being prepared. The construction team is scheduling the concrete casting for the foundation on the 31st of the month”.

Programme Highlights:

A major event that took place in Nawalpur was the Peace Circle. This took place in the municipal hall. All the local officials, women representatives, and other officials were present. The discussions highlighted on the existing realities of the conflict affected women who have still no access to transitional justice and reparations from the State. It laid bare the minimum duty and investment the local government can make to this community.

Padmalaya celebrated the **113th International Women's Day**, participated by over 750 government officials, party representatives, community people and women leaders. This inspiring event enabled all to feel that women and men have different roles, but they can be shared equally and there needs to be no discriminations. The wonderful thing about this event was that the women owned Padmalaya's space, cooked their own food - totally vegetarian (most unusual in the Tharu communities), and invited Padmalaya staff to partake and share food – high ownership!



All the four programme/s now being run at Padmalaya, are carrying out their necessary activities in the local communities. All the meetings, reflections, and workshops with the staff, and youths are also being carried out as necessary as **Govinda** reports.

Fundraising & Financial Update:

Hope's friends **Dr. Joy Mbaabu** and her husband **Professor Mbaabu Mathiu** from Kenya, during their recent stay at Tewa, gifted Padmalaya **US \$ 100** saying that they wished to add a brick to the building of Padmalaya. Govinda shares that this month **we got Rs. 3250** from the sale of produce and gifts from the Nawalpur community.

The Padma-Sarthak Campaign (PSC) - 2023- 2024:

Oh dear – we have undertaken a very challenging task. Raising rupees two corer in 2 years from Nepali donors in Nepal, is no mean task! Take off 2 months each year for dasain holidays et all. If we count only 20 months in 2 years and calculate, we need to raise 10 lakhs each month!

It was our lucky day on the 7th! **Meera Arjyal** (donor NA/Tewa & past President Tewa), and **Dr. Arina Arjyal** (donor NA/Tewa & member Tewa), promptly responded to say that they will gift Padmalaya **Rs. 100,000 each** during the campaign period. Likewise, responding also very quickly to our request, **Meena Gurung** (NA/Tewa donor & member NA), said that she *“felt this is the right space and it's a big opportunity to be involved in this campaign, so I want to contribute a gift of Rs. 100,000 in the memory of my late father, Amar Bahadur Gurung”*! On the 10th, **Prabal S. Thapa**, our Architect, pledged **Rs. 200,000** for the PSC during the campaign duration. During our visit to Padmalaya 17th – 19th, as we shared about the PSC, **our contractor, Rishi Ram Itani**, promptly gave us a cheque of **Rs. 100,000**.

Susan Risal, our own CEO, announced a pledge of **Rs. 200,000 + 300,000**, along with her 3 sisters **Deepa Pokharel, Rupa Aryal, and Subha Pandey**, in memory of **Susan's Late husband, Dhiraj Lamsal and their Late mother, Jhunu Risal (Ma as she was popularly called even by us)**, during the campaign period! This is a **cumulative total combined gift of Rs. 500,000** for the Padma-Sarthak Campaign! Honouring our request, **Senior Advocate Tulasi Bhatta & Sandhya Bhatta** (NA Board member), who have both been our all-time donors/supporters of NA & now Padmalaya, also gifted/pledged **Rs. 100,000** for our campaign.

Dr. Buddha Basnyat visited on the 12th to bring in **Rs. 100,000** of his 5 lakhs pledge to the Padma-Sarthak pledge. I am happy to announce that we fulfilled the campaign goal and beyond - for this month, by raising a total of gifts and pledges of **12 lakh rupees!**

Others:

From this picture that Emil marked, one can see the buildings coming up around the first residential block now well begun. I think the most exciting thing this month is that the



building work at the Padmalaya is now going to progress fast. This has been a relief! Emil has made several visits as necessary to guide the contractors, oversee details, and coordinate with Prabal (our lead Architect) and other technical persons. This will be necessary from his side now, in an ongoing way.

All the necessary work with local municipalities, is also going on in a timely manner with Emil and the Nawalpur team working together. From April 2023, Nawalpur Finance Officer **Nirajan Kumar Upadhyay** will work closely with Ganga, to learn Ganga's partial role at Padmalaya, and also strengthen the financial oversight and the Padma-Sarthak Campaign's financial tracking. As soon as his replacement's overlap period is completed, Nirajan's focus of work will shift on Padmalaya, from overseeing all of NA Nawalpur's financial work. Ganga, bid farewell to NA end of March, but luckily for us, he will continue as a Padmalaya team member while focusing also on documentation work. This way we think Padmalaya can benefit even more from Ganga's technical and creative skills!

Bank Information:

If you wish to make a gift to **help build Padmalaya**, or if our **Nepali friends, who wish to make a minimum gift of Rs. 100,000** to the **Padma-Sarthak Campaign (PSC) – 2023/24**, please inform us in advance so that we have records for follow-ups with you and the bank:

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

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

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 30 April 2023
Subject: Padmalaya Monthly Update – April

Nepal Context:

The 14th was the Nepali New Year 2080! Scanning the past year there was not much to celebrate since escalating inflation, instable economy, and political mayhem, continued to rule – it is just always astounding how Nepalis (except those who absolutely fall through safety net cracks) continue to bounce back and lead their lives with resilience and innovation! Some of us even manage to give and gift for a larger cause! In deep respect – a bow! Repeat voting/s in three districts have once again demonstrated that Nepalis are fed up now of the - “business as usual” style of outdated politicians and political parties. They voted back Rabi Lamichhane of the new independent party – RSP, with a huge margin, despite all ploys to defame and outs him.

Work With the Land:

On the 10th the full team of Padmalaya – both the architects, Prabal & Emil; Contractors, Rishi



Ram and Anagat; Padmalaya Team Govinda and Nirajan; and Ganga, Susan and I, met over the morning. Some of the key discussions, updates, and ways forward were the following: ensure the smooth transition of work from Ganga to Nirajan, over this year; ensure ongoing technical supervision by Emil and Prabal; and ensure that the construction work progresses unhindered despite incoming snags. This meeting helped all to be on the same page and work towards the smooth building of the Padmalaya. On the 22nd on our way to Bhairawa for work related with IGFF, Susan and I with our



guest/donor, **Ching Lamu Sherpa (Lamu)**, visited Nawalpur. We were warmly met by Govinda, Nirajan, and the NA Nawalpur team, Emil, Rishi Ram & Anagat – from our contracting team, despite this being a Saturday. We showed Lamu around and also caught up with the work and were brought up to date by Emil, on the construction aspects of the work. The foundation for the second residential building has been laid and work seemed to be progressing in good speed.

On the 21st Prabal and Emil visited with the contractors to review the library building and



ensure that any shortcomings need to be rectified soonest within a deadline of 2 months. The CSBS bricks being produced at the Padmalaya are of 5 kinds necessary for the two dormitory buildings. It is estimated that in the next two weeks all the necessary bricks for the two buildings will be ready, with 5 women and 1 male labourers now involved in producing the bricks. Govinda shared that the Padmalaya team hosted a home cooked mid-day snack to the labourers and shared about the importance of a nutritious and a balanced diet for their wellbeing and good health.

Now there are 12 labourers involved and the site is more organized. The remaining work on the staircase of the library building is being completed. The 5000 liters water tank resting on the

5th floor of the library building has also been completed. Govinda informs us that the foundation work in the two dormitory buildings is now going on smoothly. Govinda reports that overall in Nawalpur, inhabitants are busy with farming - sowing corn and weeding and planting seasonable vegetables. Similarly, in Padmalaya the weeding of the corn in both the



places have been completed, and seasonal vegetables have been planted in suitable available land. Owing to reelections in some neighbouring districts, there was a lot of discussions and speculations until the results came out recently. Summer has picked up steam, and there are forest fires nearby which is creating an unhealthy atmospheric haze.

Programme Update:

This month, Ganga worked at Padmalaya during 21 – 23rd in relation to the production of video documentaries necessary for documentation and academic training support tools. All the four programmes now running in Nawalpur through Padmalaya are meeting their work goals. The peace ambassadors and volunteers are engaged in the local communities in counseling services, awareness raising

programmes, and composite heritage programmes. The local communities have further owned the programmes of NA and their participation has increased. During 24 – 26th Shikha Bhattarai and Govinda Acharya conducted a training on composite heritage to 40 youth peace volunteers of NA partner organizations from Siraha, Kanchanpur, and Nawalpur. Govinda says that the youths who came from other districts expressed that when they visited Padmalaya, they could feel an inexplicable sense of inner peace and joy! This month Govinda and team also organized 3 meetings with the local stakeholder and the community. Besides all these, Govinda says that all the necessary ongoing work related with Padmalaya is going smoothly – thank you Govinda for your leadership at Padmalaya!

Emil's Technical Coordination Update:

This time, I am keeping a portion of Emil's technical coordination report separately to give you



a glimpse of the kind of background work that is ongoing: “On the 31st of March, concrete casting works for the footing of the dormitory building-B was disturbed by torrential rain. The first day of the month began with completing the

concrete casting for the footing. In the following days, formworks for concreting the lower tie beams on the foundation were prepared and by the 5th of the month, the tie beams were casted. This was followed by casting of 26 foundation columns. By mid-month, construction of brick footing walls had already begun. Till now, half of the brick footing walls for the building have been constructed. Noting the nearing monsoon season, works for the next dormitory building-A was initiated this month. On the 7th and 8th of the month, the building lay out was carried out using theodolite (survey equipment). In the following days, excavations to prepare the foundation pit was carried out. The excavated earth is piled nearby which will be used to refill the foundation pit. As sand gravel layer was found on the bottom of the excavated pit, adding a compacted course of sand gravel was avoided, saving both time and expenses for the specified work. On the 18th of the month, ready mixed concrete was used to cast a lean concrete for the foundation base. From the 21st of the month, in the presence of contractor Rishi Ram, reinforcement works for the foundation begun. By the end of the month, reinforcements for the columns have been erected and tied to the footing reinforcements and the formworks for the footing has been completed. With everything ready, the construction team is scheduling to complete the concrete casting for the footing by the end of this month. The depth of the foundation from the top of the plinth level to the bottom of the PCC (lean concrete) layer would be 2.31 meters. The team is aiming to complete all the footing works before the monsoon season. On the 6th the municipality finally granted permission to construct both the dormitory buildings from the ground up till the plinth levels. Once the construction till the plinth levels is completed, legal permit to build the superstructures are to be acquired again”. Phew! Are we glad that so much more expertise, coordination, and supervision is in such good hands!

Thankyou Prabal and Emil! There is much more than meets the eye in Emil's report, but I think this is enough for us to better comprehend the building of the Padmalaya from all aspects.

Fundraising & Financial Update:

This month Govinda and team managed to save Rs. 13,500 from the sale of produce, donations from the community, and some programmes that Padmalaya managed to do. Govinda with the Padmalaya team are also collecting donations amongst themselves, trying to make a collective gift of Rs. 200,000 to Padmalaya. We hope to hear some good news soon!

The Padma-Sarthak Campaign (PSC) - 2023- 2024:

Already in the previous month, we received two confirmations of pledges of **Rs. 100,000 each from Dr. Priti Mandal/Dr. Ganesh Mandal, and Merina Shah/Dr. Binod P. Gupta**. Both Priti and Merina are volunteer/staff respectively at the Inter-Generational Feminist Forum (IGFF). That they promptly responded affirmatively to my ask was amazing, and we can say a humble thank you to both the couples! Thank you very much! Similarly, **Sarita KC** (ED of Mitini Nepal) and **Laxmi Ghalan** (Founder/Chair Mitini Nepal) **with her partner Meri Bajracharya** also each pledged **Rs. 100,000** for the PSC. Likewise, even as the month began, we were lucky and most happy to hear a pledge of **Rs. 100,000 from Srijana Pandey with husband Arun Rana**. **Rama** (Chair Executive Board of Tewa) with her husband **Ravi Shrestha** also pledged **Rs. 100,000**.

As the month rolled on, we were lucky that **Anagat Ratna Kansakar**, MD Jaya Buddha, also pledged **Rs.100,000**. **Kiran Singh** (our longtimNawale donor/supporter), sent us a gift of **Rs.100,000** on the occasion of the Nepali New Year 2080! Susan announced that all the children of her siblings, **Aabhas & Sadiccha Pokharel, Ayushma & Anannya Pandey, Anusha Lamsal, and Aakankshya Aryal, together are contributing Rs. 100,000** to the Padma-Sarthak campaign to support their parents honouring of Late Dhiraj Lamsal and their maternal grandmother. This month, **Ching Lamu Shrepa** (past president of Tewa and a fellow feminist activist), also pledged **Rs. 100,000**. These gifts have helped us reach our monthly goal of 10 lakhs rupees!

Others:



Early this month, following a counseling refresher training and finance management training by NA, 40 representatives of leaders, counselors, and admin/finance officers of the 10 organizations of Sahakarya Shanti ko partners of NA met at Tewa's Deep Yogini to think

through and to further strengthen and enable the work of the **Community Safety Net (CSN)** being now implemented in Nawalpur, Dhading, Gorkha, Bajura, Rupendehi, Siraha, Kanchanpur, Dang, Bardiya, Lalitpur, and Banke. The implementation of the CSN is in preparation of any kind of disasters (climatic or human made) that may befall and how to respond in terms of relief and long-term support for the same. All participating organizations felt encouraged in knowing that their strengths in this work is/can be multiplied 10 times more!

Bank Information:

If you wish to make a gift to **help build Padmalaya**, or if our **Nepali friends, who wish to make a minimum gift of Rs. 100,000 to the Padma-Sarthak Campaign (PSC) – 2023/24**, please inform us in advance so that we have records for follow-ups with you and the bank:

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

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

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st May 2023
Subject: Padmalaya Monthly Update – May

Nepal Context:

The first day of the month began with a headline that read “Nepal plunges into its first economic recession in 6 decades” -TKP. This was seen to be building up since last year – but an official announcement now may forebode worse to come. The budget is out – where grants shrink, and loans has increased by over 4 times! This month, the Doctors Association has hiked up their consultation fees citing inflation – making it difficult for many to access health care. However, the most scandalous Bhutanese refugee scam surfaced out in public view, where 875 Nepali people had been skimmed of millions of rupees to be sent off as Bhutanese Refugees to the USA since mid-2022. The former Deputy PM and Home Minister were arrested with 29 others who will be charged with fraud, organized crime, and treason!

Work With the Land:



On the 7th, the Padmalaya backstopping Core Group along with all relevant staff including Govinda and Nirajan from Nawalpur met together, for all to be updated and see how we can strengthen the **Padma-Sarthak Campaign**.

Susan opened and facilitated the meeting and after all the presentations, made by Govinda, Emil, Ganga, Merita, and Nirajan and the following Q&A session, everyone got a good overview of the **Padma-**

Sarthak Campaign. Moving stories of why Staff, Board, and Members, were making their gifts came out in what proved to be a very inspiring and an uplifting session. In that meeting alone we counted over Rs 1200,000 in gifts – some of these donors to the **Padma-Sarthak Campaign** specifically for this month, are listed here below, under the campaign heading.



During 19-20th Susan, Neeta Pradhan Joshi (NA Life Member), Iih, and I visited Padmalaya. As we stood atop one of the residential buildings, it was heartening to note that **Rishi Ram & Anagat, our contractors,** have a good group of labourers at the site led by **Khem Tharu**, the site is better organized, and the work progress seemed to be satisfactory.

Govinda shared that at this stage the two residential buildings have come up to the plinth level, where in one the DPC has been

completed, and the in the other, the foundation filling of earth is near completion. The CSEB blocks necessary for the two buildings are well stored and there are daily productions of 350/400 bricks by 5 community labourers who are now engaged in this work.

In his technical coordination role Emil has been liaising with the architects and necessary contractor/s regarding our ongoing construction work – providing guidance and supervision as necessary. In his own words: *“Following a technical meeting held on the 3rd of this month with Er. Dambar Bahadur Basnet (IFID Nepal Pvt. Ltd.), Ar. Prabal Thapa and Ar. Emil Shrestha, a final report on the recommended rectification works for the building was prepared and*

presented to the contractor. Around the mid of the month, all the chemicals, materials to be used by the contractor for rectification works were approved by the consultants. From the 27th rectification works on the library building is ongoing. This mainly includes repairing damages and honeycombs on the concrete walls and cleaning them for final finishes. My final site visit this month on the 26th, focused on supervising the rectification works for the library building and other construction works for the dormitory buildings. The sloped edges and bottoms for the wetland/pond are also being realigned and cleaned to prepare for the nearing monsoons.”

This month **Ganga Sagar Rai** in his new role as a story telling documentary producer, and as a Padmalaya NA coordinator – produced this short video that can give you all a glimpse of the way construction work is approached through the eyes of our lead architect, Prabal: https://youtu.be/ndliO9u1_3E.

Programme Update:



In his monthly update, **Govinda** shared that the corruption case of the Bhutanese refugees at the central level, has affected Nawalpur people deeply - where trust in their leaders has further corroded and has created dejection and despondency.

Local farmers are now busy harvesting corn and the early rice crops and are now also preparing their fields sowing rice saplings for the planting of rice during the end of June. At Sehari, the recent rains have been helpful for the corn, while



planting of seasonable vegetables, ginger, and additional maize in the available land is being done.

During our visit, a consultative circle with the peace youths, allowed us to learn, that their work in their respective

communities is going deep and exposing all the complexities of how marginalization and disengagements is brewing alcohol and drugs intake among the youth. Govinda also shared that during 23 – 26th Susan and the entire NA team met in Sehari, for a team review and



reflection meeting - both at the personal and the organizational level. This was led by Susan. While enabling all to delve deep into lives and work, this also helped in further strengthening of the NA team.

From the four project supported activities at Nawalpur, this month the Peace Ambassadors and youths conducted 17 interactive and orientation programmes related with socio-psychological health and wellbeing; 11 interactions of community composite heritage; and 6 interactions with the local officials and elected leaders. Over 15,000 persons participated collectively, and their equitable and representative participation has been increasing.

Govinda and his team's programmes and work at Sehari are also not only ongoing but are creating hope and increasing trust in the local communities! It is amazing that all this has happened in just over 3 years!

Fundraising & Financial Update:

At Padmalaya, this month Rs. 50,000 was collected through the sale of produce, donations, and savings. This has been already deposited in the NA account.

The Padma-Sarthak Campaign (PSC) - 2023- 2024:

Lamu fulfilled her pledge of Rs. 100,000, Meena Gurung fulfilled her pledge of Rs. 100,000 and so did Prabal fulfill his partial pledge of Rs. 200,000, by handing over a cheque of Rs. 100,000.

At the Padmalaya Core Group meeting of the 7th, **Hari (NA Programme Manager)** and **Prasansa (NA Learning and Knowledge Building Manager)**, made a commitment of **Rs. 100,000 each**, to honour their mothers, **Jaukala Dhami** and **Nita Karki**, respectively. **Chattra diju** gave us good news that very day that her sister-in-law, **Bina Pradhan** has already gifted **Rs. 100,000**. **Riva (Tewa Board Member & NA member)** with her husband **Dr. Suman S Thapa** (Ophthalmologist – Blue Fret Band & Ek Ek Paila <https://m.facebook.com>), pledged **Rs. 200,000**. **Sukumaya, (NA Board Member)** pledged **Rs. 200,000** of which NA has already received **Rs.100,000**. Susan's first cousin **Jagdish Bhattarai** also pledged **Rs. 100,000** to honour Susan's mother, **Jhunu Risal**. **Pragati Luitel (NA Programme Associate)**, pledged **Rs. 50,000** in memory of her father **Late Guru Prasad Raj Luitel**, who was killed in his hometown in Okhaldhunga District during the armed conflict. We are counting this as a full gift – inspirational for us all - from a conflict affected person/family! **Neeta Pradhan Joshi** with husband, **Arvind Joshi** also pledged **Rs. 100,000** to be fulfilled by 2024, as did **Roshani Karmacharya**, who pledged **Rs. 100,000** for 2024.

At Susan's request our ex-colleague at NA, **Bikram Bajracharya (Australia)**, sent this email: *"would love to be part of this campaign and would like to contribute 1 lakh in 2 years. I will start saving now :). would like to dedicate this to **Bhumika's sister "Prapti"** who lost her life in 2019 battling vasculitis. She was a fighter and at the same time had abundance of love and care to share."*

Importantly, the Padma Sarthak Campaign has received a collective gift of Rs. 16,860 from 15 conflict affected women. So, this month too, we made it over the target in terms of gifts and pledges for the Padma-Sarthak at Rs. 11,50000+!

We also have a small team of members, **Neeta Pradhan, Meena Gurung**, and **Riva Thapa**, who on our request, agreed to be **"Padma-Mukhi/s"** – to support us in the Padma-Sarthak Campaign. This month, Susan and I tried fundraising by approaching some individuals – where we have already met with some partial success. But as we can all imagine fundraising is a time-consuming activity since it is about building long term trust and relationships!

Others:

This month there is so much to share in terms of activities and happenings, but I will keep it simple by emphasizing the NA Core Group meeting for Padmalaya! Over these years, it is remarkable, and for Nepal quite exceptional, how the NA Board, Members, and staff have generously supported NA's work and now the building of the Padmalaya!

Bank Information:

If you wish to make a gift to **help build Padmalaya**, or if our [Nepali friends, who wish to make a minimum gift of Rs. 100,000 to the Padma-Sarthak Campaign \(PSC\) – 2023/24](#), please inform us in advance so that we have records for follow-ups with you and the bank:

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

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 30th June 2023
Subject: [Padmalaya](#) Monthly Update – June

Nepal Context:

Nine ex-child combatants **led by Lenin Bista**, filed in a case in the Supreme Court against the PM for recruiting child soldiers (a crime against humanity), saying the PM needed to be suspended until the verdict. On a happier note, on the 22nd the Supreme Court cleared the way for the implementation of the new amendments of the Citizenship Act, and later opened the way which may enable legal same sex marriages. Now, it will enable some 400,000 Nepalis awaiting to get their citizenships by descent or birth. Other than these – there is ongoing skyrocketing inflation and owing to the start of the monsoons – everyday there is news of landslides, floods, displacements, and loss of lives – and it has only begun!

Work With the Land:





This month some significant rearrangements have been made in the management of the construction work of Padmalaya. After a series of discussions going on among the technical team, it has been agreed that **Dambar Basnet** (in yellow shirt) will be hired as a management consultant for Padmalaya; Emil will work for a minimum of 5 days in consulting capacity as is required by Prabal, Santa from IFID will continue his work, and the contractors will all the more need to do their best to maintain adequate speed of work, both for saving time and money, in the completion of Padmalaya. Emil made substantive field visits this month which was helpful in smoothing out all the ruffles related to ongoing construction

work, and in his handing over to Dambar Basnet. In his technical coordination June report,

Emil in his own words shared: *“On the second day of the month, with the readied upper tie*



beams, line layouts for the ground floor walls for the block – B was prepared. First course of the CSEB layer was laid with necessary vertical reinforcements and electrical conduit provisions. By the mid of the month, a few courses of the blocks had already been laid. The site inspection in the mid of the month noted that a few of the walls were not

*in vertical alignment and were also off in horizontal levels. The contractor team was instructed to correct the walls. Whereas, for the block – A, from the start of the month, preparations began to cast the upper tie beams. By the second week, the tie beams were all casted. This was followed by earth compaction and brick soling. Around the end of the month, line layouts for the ground floor walls were prepared. On the 26th of the month, **Mr. Santosh Raj Neupane**, a mason trainer from **Build Up Nepal** (who train and use CSEB blocks) visited the site to review the CSEB wall works. Around the mid of the month, certification from the municipality for the completion of plinth level construction and permit to build superstructures for both the buildings were processed. The rectification works on the building continued this month. The overhead water tank was completed with waterproofing works from inside. The concrete shear walls were grinded, cleaned, rendered, and injected with concrete and chemical slurries. The steel members in the buildings were being buffed, cleaned, and painted. The workers also evacuated the ground floor of the building”. Phew – most of what Emil says sounds Greek to me – but this is just for you all to have a glimpse of how serious this work is - thank you, Emil! The July technical reporting will be written by **Dambar Basnet**. **Govinda** in his report, added that the construction work is moving forward under the daily supervision of the new **site engineer, Roshan Godar**, placed by the management consultant Dambar Basnet. We now have more than adequate CSEB bricks for both the residential blocks, therefore the brick-making work is stalled for a while.*

Programme Update:



Govinda further shared that in Nawalpur, owing to the new government budget, the completion of work under the old budget and the planning of new work is being done at the ward and the VDC levels. In Sehari, the farming community is busy harvesting corn and preparing for the planting of rice. Owing to a lack of rains earlier, the corn planted in Padmalaya did not do too well, but preparations for rice planting is going well and soon, rice will be planted in all the lands we have at Nawalpur.

Some of the important initiatives that took place this month, at the programme level, as Govinda shares, is the transfer of responsibilities and skills in the local

communities - for the kind of work that is possible at their level owing to the eminent closure of some programme at Padmalaya. In relation to this, the 22 conflict affected women have received various life skills such as soap/detergent making, which will enable them to generate some income even while being home-bound. To arrive at this stage for these women, it has taken several years of ongoing support, deep-work, and follow-ups, on the part of NA. Similarly, for the **Guras Women's Cooperative Group** (the women's group located closest to Padmalaya), a six-day long capability building training was conducted at their request. This training focused on their individual, institutional, and leadership, development. Besides, when we were in Padmalaya, we spoke to **Alisha**, and **Ranjeeta** (picture above) our first batch of ace volunteers, now turned NA staff, and looked into the possibilities of them willing to take the responsibilities to manage different areas of Padmalaya such as housekeeping, and food

management. They will be mulling over this – and will inform us when they are ready so that their training can begin. Early this month, Padmalaya had international visitors - **Jenny Hodgson (ED of GFCE)** who has supported Tewa and NA in an ongoing way), her son **Alex**, and **Severus Hama-Owamparo**, psychologist/writer, and **the ED of Taala Foundation, from Uganda**, also visited Padmalaya. They were accompanied by Susan and Rita.

Fundraising & Financial Update:

This month from the sale of the produce at Padmalaya, and some gifts, a collection of Rs. 5200 has been already deposited in the NA bank. Soon after the May update was sent, our friend **Sonia Minns says she will make a cumulative gift of 300 pounds** this year by contributing 25 pounds from her salary each month! Thank you very much Sonia for your commitments!

The Padma-Sarthak Campaign (PSC) - 2023- 2024:

A meeting of the **Padma-Mukhis (PMs** - those who will support the campaign) took place on the 22nd. **PM Meena Gurung** was out of station, but **PMs Neeta P. Joshi, Riva Thapa**, Susan Risal and Rita Thapa, sat together to mull over the Padma-Sarthak fundraising strategies. Needing to expand the PM group, we reached out to **Roshani Karmacharya the NA Treasurer** – who on our request, accepted. Many good ideas surfaced, and the PM group will meet every month now onwards, to track progress and strategize.

This month Susan fulfilled her pledge of Rs. 200,000, as did Laxmi Ghalan & Mary Bajracharya by depositing Rs.100,000.

Early this month **NA Secretary, Jyotsana Shrestha** pledged **Rs. 100,000** for Padmalaya. **Bina Pradhan PhD, NA life member and a feminist/economist** committed to the women's movement, also pledged **Rs. 100,000**. During the middle of the month, longtime friends - **supporters/donors to Tewa and NA, Kamal Rupakheti and Rabi Raj Thapa each pledged Rs. 100,000. Prativa with husband Charat Pratap Singh pledged Rs. 200,000**. Even just as I began to panic, **Meera Jyoti, Past President, Tewa, Meera Bhattarai, Trustee/Advisor Tewa, and Kamala, Tewa Member, with her Mahesh Lal Pradhan each pledged Rs. 100,000 each!** Despite these gifts, this month we ran short of 1 lakh to meet this month's goal of 10 lakhs. We will need to ensure that we make up for this in the coming months!

Others:

This month NA produced a most important video for Nepal – especially for its women regarding Nepal's graduation from a Least Developed Country (LDC). Out of the 6 other countries graduating in 2026, Nepal is the only country where there is no improvement in its economic indicators, but its social and humanitarian indicators show marked improvement. **Bina Pradhan PhD, feminist economist and an IGFF member**, tells us that it is all thanks to the Nepali women and the efforts at the individual household levels. But looking ahead, what are the implications for us here and what needs doing can be found in Bina's video, which can be shared accordingly: 1) donors/INGs at Rs. 35,000; national NGOs at Rs. 20,000; and community-based organizations at Rs. 5000 – it's a one-time buy for multiple uses. Bina wishes to contribute the income generated from this video, as her gift to the Women's Empowerment Fund of the Inter-Generational Feminist Forum (IGFF). If any of you wishes to share this at a wider level – especially those in Nepal, please make a deposit of Rs. 5000 to the

Joint Account No. 08007011317970 of the Global IME Bank, Pulchowk branch. On your notice, I will be happy to send you the link in Nepali & English!

Bank Information:

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

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st July 2023
Subject: Padmalaya Monthly Update – July

Nepal Context:

Early this month, the price of petroleum products was reduced by Rs. 5 per a liter of petrol, but despite this inflation continues to soar, at this rate soon we may have to consider ourselves lucky if we get to eat rice soup! There are tens of deaths and 100s disappeared and displaced owing to the floods and landslides in different parts of the country – this monsoon. Drug peddling in Kanchanpur – Indian boarder town/s revealed, and over 100 kgs of gold has been confiscated from the Tribhuvan International Airport more recently! Rackets of illegal

transactions and corruptions with sheer abandon is our daily news – so what is new!

Work With the Land:

Govinda reports that this month rice planting was completed in all our land at Nawalpur. In Sehari within Padmalaya, the peace ambassadors planted the rice saplings as shown in the picture - L.



The Nawalpur community according to Govinda, was largely busy in planting rice, but like in the previous years, getting manure and seeds on time has been challenging. Since the budget has been out, the community is also alert and engaged in seeing how infrastructural budget is going to be prioritized and expended at the levels of their VDCs (village development committees).



On the 13th I had a private meeting with **Dambar Basnet**, our technical management consultant. I felt that as I communicated our vision and approach, that I was reassured in feeling that Dambar is a good man, he is sound in his experiences, and intentions. His weekly reporting has been helpful, but there have been transitioning setbacks, and although there is nothing to worry, I wish progress could be faster than what is now!

Govinda sounded pleased about the visit of Prabal, Dambar & Rishi to Padmalaya recently. On his part he will do all that is needed from the side of the Padmalaya team, but the reporting of course will be done by Dambar.

Dambar, the project management consultant, reported that on the 20th the technical team consisting of Prabal, Dambar, and Rishi Ram – the contractor, met at Prabal's office to sort out many things related with the construction of the 2 residential building and the remaining work with the library building. They decided to visit the site during 25th - 27th to monitor the progress, manage human resources at the site, speak about the finishings of the

library building in all aspects, and about the upcoming activities and the work sequencing. The design of electrical and sanitary works for the other remaining buildings at Padmalaya, are also in progress.

The good thing to know as reported by Dambar Basnet, is that the contractors have mobilized all together 19 labourers now, and we are only a week behind our estimated revised schedule, despite some big glitches that came up as well as this being the monsoon seasons. This is good to know, and I can see why Govinda sounded so pleased! Owing to the monsoons, the library building now stands on water as it was intended, and even though now it is structurally still so bare, it looks beautiful, and I couldn't help posting the picture for your viewing pleasure. In the photo below of course, is our lead Architect Prabal, during the recent site visit!

Programme Update:



Out of the 5 Peace Centers based in Nawalpur district, 4 of them now have community representation and leadership. Their first meeting/s in these roles is being planned. It is clear that the community stakeholders want to learn from NA and want to make this their ongoing practice. **This speaks highly of the work Govinda and his team are doing in Nawalpur!**



Devi Pun and Kendra Kumari Chaudhari, the two counselors at Sehari, gave a two-day refreshers capability-building training to all the peace volunteers.

On the 28th an orientation on the topic, “enabling to stop suicide” was given at the ward level - so that the local level officials also understand their roles and the part they can play help stop this growing phenomenon in their district.

With the government approval for the Community Safety Net (CSN) program in 4 village development committees, a baseline study is being conducted. But simultaneously, affected families with suicidal cases, house-fires, and mental illnesses, are being given free of cost

treatments, financial support, and nutritious food. Among these, four families were led by single mothers – meaning more vulnerabilities.

At Padmalaya, Govinda is focusing on all the prevalent and emerging issues in the communities, making linkages with the government agencies to ensure that conflict affected women and others can have access to government support and services. They are engaging government officials to ensure that in future the linkages are made, and the community can access and demand for what is due to them.

On The 29 - 31 July, NA Sehari organized an orientation program for the barefoot health workers, government counselors, and related community people. There were 30 participants all together. Antina, Ashmita, from the Kathmandu NA office, and Bhumika from the Sehari Office (all counselors), were the resource persons.

Fundraising & Financial Update:

Rs 3320 were collected from gifts and sale of produce at Padmalaya and as always has been deposited in the NA bank account.

The Padma-Sarthak Campaign (PSC) - 2023- 2024:

We received the pledged **Rs. 100,000** cheque from **Meera Bhattarai** early this month. Also, **Navanita Sinha** and our anonymous donor couple promptly fulfilled their pledge of **Rs. 100,000** each to Padmalaya.

On the 4th Susan and I visited **Pratima Thapa (my samdhini)**, a long time NA supporter, to solicit her support for the Padma-Sarthak Campaign. **We were lucky to receive her pledge of Rs. 500,000 in honour of her late father, Rana Someshwar Singh.** Out of this, **she handed over a cheque of Rs. 200,000** to Susan promptly. A pledge of **Rs. 100,000** was made to Susan by NA ex-staff member, **Swagat Raj Pandey** of which **Rs. 50,000** has been already fulfilled. Likewise, soon after, the acting CR of UNW, **Navanita Sinha**, sent her deposit slip of **Rs. 100,000** for the PSC. Anonymous donors and supporters of Tewa/NA also deposited **Rs. 100,000** to honour mother late **Prabha Adhikari**.

A gift of Rs. 100,000 (already deposited in the bank) came from **Dr. (med) Bhawani Narsingh Rana**, who with his spouse **Renata Rana** while being based in Freiberg, Germany, have over decades supported Nepal – for health, children, and education. Although NA's work is not directly related, **through the kind coordination of Kamal Rupakheti**, we have always received gifts from Dr/Mrs. Rana – both Tewa and NA. It is an honour for us to have Dr. Rana's support for the PSC/Padmalaya. Likewise, our new donor and old friend, **Krishna Karkee** pledged **Rs. 100,505** for the PSC in memory of her late parents **Karna Kumari & Dirgha Badhadur Karkee**.

This does add up to **Rs 10,00,000** for this month as is our campaign goal for the **Padma-Sarthak Campaign!** But we won't forget that we have a carry over from the previous month.

Others:



Something worth mentioning here, although not directly related to Padmalaya, is the workshop titled: **“Graduating from a Least Developed Country (LDC) & the Care Economy Implications & Opportunities for Nepali Women”**, which was held in Tewa with the support of the UN Women. Sharu Joshi, Yamuna

Ghale, PhD, and I, had the privilege of making this workshop happen over two months. The workshop truly gave us all the time to think, to strategize, and plan collectively for the work that lies ahead. Attended by 48 activist women in all intersectional diversity from all the seven provinces in Nepal, the 2-day workshop was an eye-opener as to how much we all need to do now in order to prepare and cope during this transition time until Nepal graduates in November 2026 and after. Until this workshop, only a few of us knew about the LDC graduation and even fewer of us knew it fully!



Here is a little peek into the devastation/s caused by floods in Rautahat district, where **our IGFF focal persons, Debaki Nepal is responding to immediate needs**. It is so good to know

that the community safety nets (CSN) is working on its own – as immediate relief! Hats off to each one of you who are working as a CSN volunteer/s!

Bank Information:

If you wish to make a gift to **help build Padmalaya**, or if our **Nepali friends, who wish to make a minimum gift of Rs. 100,000 to the Padma-Sarthak Campaign (PSC) – 2023/24**, please inform us in advance so that we have records for follow-ups with you and the bank:

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

***Note:** Photo Courtesy: Govinda Acharya, Debaki Nepal & IGFF archive*

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st August 2023
Subject: Padmalaya Monthly Update – August

Nepal Context:

On 7th August, according to newspaper headlines, all the parties were preparing for the **upcoming elections in 2027!** Unheard of before! Owing to the new Swatantra Party, all other parties are being driven to strengthen their bases/centers. It may mean well for Nepal! But corruption scams continue engaging top brass of Nepali politics. Will they be called to the books?! The one constant is the ever-rising inflation! Recently, the price of diesel went up by Rs. 14 per liter, and petrol went up by Rs. 5 per liter. Tomatoes were Rs. 200 per kgs and rice will soon be a delicacy even for middle income households! This monsoon took 81 lives, 21 are missing, 109 hurt, and the floods/landslides damaged property worth Rs. 32 crores (Source Monsoon 2023, MDRRMA). Escalating violence against women and girls are also noted.



Work With the Land:



मध्यबिन्दु नगरपालिका

नगर कार्यपालिकाको कार्यालय

चौरमारा, नवलपरासी (बर्दघाट सुस्ता पूर्व)

भवन निर्माण स्थायी इजाजत पत्र (Superstructure को लागि)

श्री/श्रीमती राजेश्वर भुवन Block 18

नं. २ टोल निर्देश मा रहेको साविक नाथेडा

किता नं. ३२-५३-५५-११३.११४-१.११४ क्षेत्रफल २-०-३

मध्यबिन्दु नगरपालिका वडा नं. ५

को नम्बरमा

स्थानीय स्वायत्त शासन ऐन, विधेम अनुसार नक्सा पास प्रक्रिया पूरा भैसकेको हुँदा बसको पछिल्लो प्लानमा उल्लेखित शर्तहरू र यसै साथ दिइएको प्रमाण-पत्र दिइएको छ । "भवन निर्माण नक्साङ्क, ग-उपयोग, सडक सीमा मापदण्ड निर्देशिका, २०७०" प्रथम संशोधन, २०७१ तथा बस्ती विकास शहरी योजना तथा भवन निर्माण सम्बन्धी आधारभूत मार्ग निर्देशिका, २०७२ बमोजिम निर्माण कार्य गर्नुहोला । स्वीकृत भएको नक्सा बमोजिम निर्माण कार्य गरिसकेपछि "निर्माण सम्पन्न प्रमाण-पत्र" अनिवार्य लिनुपर्नेछ ।

निर्माण स्वीकृत भएको विवरण

क्र.सं.	विवरण	स्वीकृत अनुसार
१	लम्बाई (रमिड फिट)	<u>७५' १०"</u>
२	चौडाई (रमिड फिट)	<u>५०' ३"</u>
३	कुल उचाई (रमिड फिट)	<u>२६' ३"</u>
४	सेट व्याक	<u>५'</u>
५	सडकको चौडाई (मिटरमा)	<u>१०</u>
६	भवनको प्रयोग	
७	अन्य कुनै विवरण :	

क्र.सं.	विवरण	स्वीकृत अनुसार
१	लिफ्ट पुरिचा (वर्ग फिट)	<u>२२५१-८८ ६५</u>
(क)	जर्मन तला	<u>२२५१-८८ ६५</u>
(ख)	प्रथम तला	<u>२२५१-८८ ६५</u>
(ग)	दोश्रो तला	
(घ)	तेस्रो तला	
(ङ)	चौथो तला	
(च)	बेसमेन्ट	
(छ)	अन्य	

क्र.सं.	विवरण	स्वीकृत अनुसार -
१	भवनको बर्गिकरण	क ☒ ग ☐ घ ☐
२	तल्ला संख्या	<u>२</u>
३	भवनको स्ट्रक्चर सिस्टम	☐ फ्रेम ☒ वाल

क्र.सं.	विवरण	स्वीकृत अनुसार
४	चिलरको साईज (टनमा)	<u>१६ १/२ टन</u>
५	पिलरमा प्रयोग गर्ने ड्रफ्टीको साईज र संख्या	<u>१६ १/२ टन</u>
६	कन्क्रिट ब्याण्डहरू	लिन्टल ब्याण्ड / सिल्ट ब्याण्ड / RCC ब्याण्ड

☐ नक्सा पासको थालनी हुनु अगावै बनेको भवन / संरचना

☐ नक्सा पासको थालनी पछि बनेको भवन / संरचना

घरधर्मीको नक्सा उपस्थापना दर्ता नम्बर ३२/१८८/१७१ १०

घर नं. ३२/१८८/१७१ १०

सिमाको नक्सा ३२/१८८/१७१ १०

सिमाको नक्सा ३२/१८८/१७१ १०

Both **Dambar** and **Govinda** report that regarding the construction of the two residential buildings, 19 laborers have been continuing work at the site. This has enabled the completion of the casting for the first floor and the building of the walls for the second floor is ongoing for one of the residential blocks. While in the other, the preparations for

the casting work are now being done to ensure that the casting can be accomplished within the coming week. The weekly technical zoom meetings have resumed after Dambar's 10-day retreat. Work progress at the construction site is monitored in a timely manner by the site supervising engineer Roshan and the Construction Company's team – who have ensured good progress of work and availability of raw materials. Prabal assures us that he is now much more pleased with the quality of the brick work. Some other things which require prompt attention will be taken care of as they have been flagged, reassures Dambar.

Furthermore, Govinda gave the good news that they have now received the government approval certificate for both the residential building blocks, after required necessary site monitoring visits. Just towards the end of the month, Padmalaya has also been connected to a 3-

phase electric line that will better help facilitate all the necessary work at Padmalaya.

Programme Update:

Govinda reports that this month the local community has been busy weeding the





rice fields. Also, because it is the monsoon season, the community members go to collect mushrooms and bamboo-shoots from the nearby forests.

Government agencies are likewise engaged in discussing the allocation of budgets for new projects while ensuring the completion of the old. At Padmalaya and the lands held by NA, weeding of the rice has been all finished and all are reveling in the lush green magnificence of the rice fields.

From the five projects now running at/from Padmalaya, 13 community-level psychosocial interactions; 4 gender equity programmes; 6 programmes related to the prevention of child marriages; 2 composite heritage interactions; and 2 programmes related to peace and conflict have been conducted.

All these community level programmes have increased awareness, built confidence, and preparedness at the level of the communities, and their trust in NA has grown even more. This month 13 Padmalaya youths with preparations of cultural items, went to participate in the “Sowing Hope in Times of Conflict”, book launch programme held on the 18th by NA/Kathmandu at Deep Yogini of Tewa. The Padmalaya youths also celebrated the International Youth Day on the 11th. The programme focused on the sale and abuse of tobacco and alcohol by youths under 18 years of age.

Necessary support for the continuation of education as well as those who have been displaced as far as 20 years back, as well as those who were displaced owing to disasters in the past 3/4 years, is being looked into in order to ease their lives. Especially the little children, sick and the elderly, pregnant and new mothers are going through harder times. NA/Padmalaya has also initiated a conversation with the government regarding this condition.

A good outcome at Nawalpur has been that the Peace Centers transferred to the community leadership/s are doing very well. They are organizing their own programmes to end social disharmony and disenfranchisement, while engaging a maximum number of community people. Padmalaya saw some staff transitions this month, but notable among them is the recruitment of a counselor - **Mohan Pokhrel**, who is expected to join office from 1st September.

Fundraising & Financial Update:

This month from the sale of produce and the gifts received, **Padmalaya saved Rs 12,824** - which is now in the NA account. The annual audit of Padmalaya has begun with the help of **NA Finance Manager Merita** and two auditors from 27th August onwards.

The Padma-Sarthak Campaign (PSC) - 2023- 2024:

On the eve of August, **Meera Arjel**, and **Dr. Arina Arjel** deposited their pledged **Rs. 100,000 each for the PSC**.

Suman S. Thapa, on our request and the reminders of one of our Padma-Mukhis and his spouse, **Riva**, raised **Rs. 300,000 for the PSC** at the very beginning of this month from his supporter for Ek Ek Paila, who wishes to remain anonymous. Around the middle of the month, my board colleague at Mahaguthi, **Krishna Gurung**, with his spouse **Leela** wrote: *“It pleases us both to be able to be a part of your work. So, we would like to confirm a pledge of **Rs. 100,000 within 2024**”!* Thereabouts, **Susan** gave the good news that **Mohit Pant** with wife **Chhaya**, NA ex-staff member, now based in Australia and working with the Australian Government, also pledged **Rs. 100,000 for Padmalaya!** We have many altruistic friends/supporters wanting to remain anonymous – this month we received **Rs. 100,000 from one such donor**. Susan again informed that **Bishnu Thapa**, brother of our staff dear late **Nirmala Thapa** also deposited **Rs. 100,000** in the NA account for Padmalaya to honour his late mother and sister. **Manoj Karkee**, a colleague of our Secretary General, **Jyotsana**, pledged **Rs. 100,000** for Padmalaya.

The wonderful thing is that the **Padma-Mukhis have something cooking up their sleeves!** Well **Riva** encouraged **Suman** to raise money for us; **Neeta** and **Meena** are working at something, and who knows what **Roshni** will tell us when we meet as planned on the 8th September. So, we managed to raise **only 8 lakh rupees this month** – but we think we will



make up for it. We need to raise 1 crore rupees within 2023 for PSC – we most probably will meet this goal in pledges and gifts. But we will only count in December!

Others:

A significant event for NA this month on the 18th was the launch of the book entitled: **Sowing Hope in Times of Conflict & Transitions**, showcasing NA's feminist peace building work. **Janet Wong** labouriously, meticulously, and voluntarily, pulled together our history over 20 years! There were those who voluntarily edited, wrote introductions, proof-read, and read final copies – too many to

name here, but we bow to all of them – most to **Janet Wong**. This book would not have seen the light of day without her! We are deeply indebted to Janet!

The Community Safety Net (CSN) programme being run with 10 NA partner organizations in 12 districts of Nepal, is working for preparedness, rapid response, and post trauma relief/support, in disaster and conflict related situations as well as when community people fall through life's safety nets. The above picture shows NA partner, **Focus Nepal in Dhading District**, in consultations with the displaced community members. Hari who coordinates this initiative for NA, reports in his own words: *"while dealing with the cultural and operational differences that exist between NA partner organizations, it was challenging to bring uniformity in these CSN collaborative work. We had to monitor closely and keep reassuring all our partners that we are on the same page in relation to this project. It was very significant to bring balance and integration to ensure a smooth collaboration. But*

in thinking how many arising urgent needs were met, and the many places that they covered in a short period, NA feels it was worth it! The places covered by our partners responding to various needs as they arose and as existed were: Benighat, Rorang, in Dhading; Madhuban, Ghorai – Dang; Dodhara, Chadani, Bhimdatta VDC, Birendranagar; Barahataal, Nilkantha, in Gulariya; Kohalpur – Nepalgunj; Barpak in Gorkha; Siddharthanagar and Satya in Rupandehi; Birendranagar, Barahataal, Dodhara, Chadani, Bhimdatta VDCs; and in Kalyanpur, Karjanha, Golbazar, Municipalities of Siraha District”.

Bank Information:

If you wish to make a gift to **help build Padmalaya**, or if our **Nepali friends**, wish to make a **minimum gift of Rs. 100,000 to the Padma-Sarthak Campaign (PSC) – 2023/24**, please inform us in advance so that we have records for follow-ups with you and the bank:

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

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

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 30th September 2023
Subject: Padmalaya Monthly Update – September

Nepal Context:

It was a rude awakening on the 1st of this month with a price hike in all petroleum products – when LPG cooking gas went up from Rs. 1660 to Rs. 1895 – simply speechless! Guess what – the price went up 2 times more after that, and I am not even counting anymore! Teachers strike and doctors/medical staff strike asking for security from the State against enraged relatives of patients, bringing education and health services to a stop for Nepalis are sad conditions. While the festival of Indra Jatra among others like Krishna Janmashtami was celebrated with the same State pomp and show, and fervor.

Work With the Land:

At the beginning of the month Ganga coordinated two sets of meetings regarding the contractual work of Padmalaya. In his words: *“The bidding documents for the planning of Padmalaya were officially opened. The procurement committee of NA diligently scrutinized all the submitted documents, seeking guidance from technical advisors Santa Kumar Shrestha and Dambar Basnet. After careful evaluation, the procurement committee took the decision to cancel all the bids received for the planning of the Padmalaya since it was evident that the majority of bidders could not meet the sustainable requirements and sensitivity to prevailing site conditions. This could potentially hinder the achievement of NA's expected design intent*



outputs. Moreover, we were not satisfied with all the bids because the follow-up strategy of the planning were not clear. It was felt necessary to recall the tenders and issue a new tender notice with a revised scope of work that clearly defines what NA has envisioned”. We met again on the 22nd to have an

overview of what this may entail until the end of 2024 – to assess entire workload; required funds; and any other thing requiring prompt attention such as management work. Prabal, Dambar, Ganga, Merita, and Susan were present.



During the same time the technical team accompanied by Ganga also went to primarily review the work done and looking into various aspects of the structural work.

While we were at the launch of the book, the technical team coordinated by Ganga, architect Prabal, and technical management consultant, Dambar Basnet, were also at the site to look into the necessary details. It was decided to strengthen the quality of the CSEB blocks (after re-testing them) in our ongoing production.

These technical meetings including the contractors and other persons as suitable, in Kathmandu at Prabal's office, NA, and at the site has been ongoing this month. At present the labourers at the site has been



reduced to 9 from 19 and while the slack in the construction work has been made up, it will require careful follow-up to ensure NA's targets of partial opening by September 2024 is met.

On the 27th, Rita made a 1-day trip to the site with the management consultant of Padmalaya - Dambar Basnet, to talk through and understand the various aspects of the detailing work of the two residential buildings and the library building. Since we would need to look into the eventual all-rounded management aspects of running the facilities. Tentatively we spoke that we could have a soft opening of Padmalaya by the beginning of September 2024. But this requires more thinking and commitments from all sides. Following this visit, on the 30th, Rita also met with the contractor Rishi Ram Itani and his son, Sambod (a civil engineer, who also supervises the site) to ensure the smooth running of all the work at the site.

Programme Update:

In his report for September from Sehari, Govinda says the month was also riddled with teacher's strike bringing a closure of all schools from the district to the central level, for uncertain times. For some time, the strike closing all but emergency services, of doctors and medical staff asking for security, also had an impact in Nawalpur. All the paddy planted by Padmalaya is doing well and the rice is coming out, giving the same pleasure to the Padmalaya-team as it would to a local farmer. For the rest, the local community is busy with farming and preparations for the upcoming festivals like cleaning and organizing their homes.



NA Board members: Sukumaya, Sandhya, Jyotsana, Sharad Babu; Member: Riva; senior staff: Hari, Prasansa, and Merita, and life member and donor/s, Pratima Thapa and Prativa Thapa, along with PC, and Founder Rita were also present at the book launch on the 16th. In the absence of

Chair Chhatra diju, and Susan, Sukumaya presided over the event, and the Mayor of Madhyabindu, Bhimlal Adhikari was the Chief Guest for the event. Many local office-bearers and elected representatives were present. They witnessed and applauded NA's 22 years of peace building work. The following day, PC, Prativa, Riva, and Rita stayed back to further interact with the Padmalaya team and visit and update themselves on the progress of the Padmalaya construction site.



Govinda reports that significant this month, is the news that four of the youth peace ambassadors from the 1st batch, Sangita, Alisha, Ranjeeta, and Sumitra are now recruited as staff at Padmalaya. Likewise, during 28-30th, a 3-day training on planning and institutional strengthening was conducted for the local office bearers & representatives. The resource person for the 3-day training of the Godavari, Lalitpur, and Madhyabindu municipalities, was **Joint Secretary of the Nepal Government, Jaya Narayan Acharya**. He was invited on popular demand owing to his



skills and knowledge. Besides the ongoing programme work - marking of the international days for suicide and peace, and other educational events have continued to happen at Padmalaya engaging the communities and the local stakeholders.

Fundraising & Financial Update:

This month, **Rs. 56,457** has been collected in the piggy bank and deposited in the NA account. Additionally, PC during his visit to Padmalaya, gifted **Rs. 200,000** to Govinda for the emergency relief fund.

The Padma-Sarthak Campaign (PSC) - 2023- 2024:

On the 8th, we had a meeting of the **Padma-Mukhis (PMs): Meena Gurung, Neeta Pradhan Joshi, Roshani Karmacharya, Riva Thapa, Susan Risal, Rita Thapa, & PC** who was in Nepal too joined for the latter half. This meeting enabled us all to feel that all the Padma-Mukhis volunteered according to their evolved realization/s (still growing) in the field of personal philanthropy and altruism. Each member was doing their best to engage and get their possible friends and family/ies interested to support the PSC. It was heartening to know how the PSC was owned by each of the PMs. Rita also shared that **up till August, we had raised over Rs. 78,67,365 lakhs** in pledges and gifts – of which Rs. 36,01,860 is already in the NA account. But it would be hard to predict now, if all the pledges would be honored. Therefore, taking no risks of a shortfall in the PSC goal, the PMs felt that it will be wise to push fundraising to beyond 1 crore rupees during the last quarter of 2023!

Prativa & Charat Pratap Singh deposited their pledged 2 lakh rupees! Soon after her pledge Urmila Pandey deposited her 1 lakh pledge in our bank.

At the very beginning of the month, **one of NA's leaders** (who wishes to remain anonymous), **pledged to gift the PSC Rs. 500,000** of which half is already deposited and the other half will come to us within 2024 – this gave all the Padma-Mukhis, a wonderful head start, into the month! **Govinda happily informed that Padmalaya/Nawalpur staff and volunteers also collected Rs. 200,000 in gifts and pledges for the PSC which will soon be deposited.** Our **Padma-Mukhi Neeta and husband Arvind Joshi have also pledged Rs. 200,000** this month. Susan's friend, **Ranjan Subedi has also pledged Rs. 100,000** to Susan. My college friends, **Urmila Pandey, Neenu Satyal, and Mukta Shrestha, all pledged Rs. 100,000 each.** We are feeling on top of the world this month with a cumulative gift of Rs. 13,00,000+!

To top this off, Susan gave the good news that Peter's friends from Germany have already transferred 5694.22 euros **equivalent to Rs. 796507.49**, in support of Padmalaya. Peter our long-term friend from Kurve Wustrow, tells us that they would like to remain anonymous as **"friends of Padmalaya in Germany"**.

Others:

Please follow **lihgram** on Instagram to understand some of the many kinds of happenings and protests that is happening in Nepal. One man's activism that has enabled the survival possibility for street vendors who would otherwise be wiped out of Kathmandu metropolis.

Bank Information:

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Account Name: Nagarik Aawaz,

Account No: 01815090950

Swift Code: SIDDNPKA

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

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st October 2023
Subject: Padmalaya Monthly Update – October

Nepal Context:

I need to pinch myself to remind that this is the October update. But like in September, on the 1st itself all petroleum product prices rose up. A gas cylinder now costs Rs. 2,115 and petrol Rs. 185 per litre – its getting harder by the day for most of us!

Bajhang district in the Far-West Nepal, experienced a 5.3 Richter scale earthquake followed by a 6.3 earthquake in the 3rd mid-afternoon. Just on the 3rd and the 4th, some 40 aftershocks of which 12 were higher than 4 Richter scale followed. Although Bajhang was the epicenter for the multiple earthquakes and aftershocks, surrounding districts also suffered some damage and loss. In total there were only 1 loss of life and 27 hurt, but almost all the homes are unlivable in Bajhang. Before the end of the month, Dhading district has also been hit by a similar strength earthquake, luckily with comparatively less damage.

But although we live in a global village, we will not speak here of the genocide happening now in Gaza; we will not speak of the 7 October Hamas attack on a musical festival in Israel; and we will not speak of the US role in all this. But I feel none of our lives will ever be the same again with deepening holes in all our hearts – most owing to our helplessness!

Work With the Land:



This month **Dambar** could engage us in two technical coordination meetings out of the five Tuesdays of the month owing to the holidays and other work pressures. So, we met on the 3rd and the 10th. Human resource at the site has been reduced and workers released for the festival.

Instead, five persons are working for the steelworks which was begun before the Dasain holidays. Soon the laying of the truss for the roof will begin once labourers return to work. The contractors submitted the running bill which is being reviewed by IFID. But in the meantime, a partial payment was paid by NA before the holidays began, so that Jay Buddha could make outstanding payments to labourers and other expenditures. The work at the site is expected to resume from the 1st of November. We were also informed by Dambar at the festival lunch NA hosted, that the work progress at the site has now made up the earlier lapse in time. It is now according to the plan. The process for the official approval for the other buildings in the masterplan is also well underway. Local government approval is expected within November. This will also enable the smooth continuation of the site work.



The Padmalaya Technical team in Kathmandu, met over a festival lunch on the 10th. Dambar also gave us a brief update during lunch on our current state. Chair of NA Board Dr. Chhatra Amatya, Susan, Merita, Ganga, and I, besides the architects, Dambar - the management consultant, Rishi and

Sambodh the contractors, and our ace structural engineer Manohar ji were all happy to have this little break in our busy lives.

Programme Update:



Govinda reports that this month, that the local Tharu community/s celebrated Dasain, Jitiya, and Chaturdashi - which enabled a spirit of joy and mutual harmony. They were also busy in harvesting paddy, and sowing mustard seeds. Padmalaya too has begun to harvest its rice, which was

halted for Dasain, but will resume in the coming week. So far 13 quintals of rice have been already harvested. The Jitiya dance, indigenous to the Tharus, was conducted at Padmalaya. All the community women participated by dancing, singing, and having their typical food at the end of the celebrations.

This month the International Day of the Elderly was celebrated by bringing all the elderly people in the community and honoring them. All together 10 different programmes were conducted and collectively over 700 persons participated. Other ongoing official meetings and work have been ongoing at Padmalaya. The Peace Centers have also been offering their



services of counseling, support, and other services to the community people.

The IGFF prepared LDC graduation memorandum was submitted to the local officials in Nawalpur district by youths who are associates of IGFF.

Under the Community Safety Net program, a consultation

engaging local representatives of 3 VDCs of Hupsekot and Kawasoti was conducted. The discussions were on environmental peace and food security. There were 46 participants who participated in this program.

Fundraising & Financial Update:

This month Padmalaya collected **Rs. 61,000 from the sale of produce, and from gifts of money that were gifted from the community.** An additional **Rs. 3,500** was collected from the sale of the NA books.

The Padma-Sarthak Campaign (PSC) - 2023- 2024:

Out of her pledge, Sita Bohra deposited Rs. 50,000 in the NA account.

It was simply mind-blowing for us at NA, that the **Daya Foundation Family (DFF), gifted the PSC Rs. 10,00,000 honouring their two mothers Krishna Pyari Mathema and Indrakala Mathema!** Needless to mention that one of our Padma-Mukhis associated with the DFF, had been at work! This is making us all starry-eyed in our gratitude – our biggest gift for PSC yet – and that too, hand delivered!

We count our blessings as more pledges for gifts to PSC came in this month. During my travel to Dhangadhi in the Far West Nepal, a NA network member **Sita Bohra** (who founded the Conflict Victim and Single Women Development Center) said that she would like to honour the memory of her late husband Police Constable Raghu Bir Bohra (who achieved martyrdom during the armed conflict) **by gifting the PSC Rs. 100,000.** Susan also informed that NA former Programme Manager, **Manoj Panday** and former Senior Programme Officer, **Shikha Bhattarai** pledged the PSC **Rs. 100,000 each.** Susan in the last week, again informed me that **Anita Gautam**, another NA staff now based in Boston/USA, also pledged the PSC Rs. 100,000. We are lucky **to have collected Rs. 14,00,000** this month!

Others:

On the 3/4 the IGFF had its Koshi Province Consultations, where 56 women leaders and activists from all the 14 provinces were present in Itahari's modest facilities. The levels of awareness, and urgency has greatly heightened among all whose age ranged from 25 – 75 years, and who came from all diversity. They spoke of newly emerging challenges, but they also spoke of hope, that women too one day can be equal citizens in this country.



A remarkable event this month was the annual sale **Lynne Brennen (R) and Elizabeth Wickwire (L)** put up in Lynne's home in Toronto. This is the 18th annual sale they have been running. Owing to their dedicated support in rallying friends and volunteers, Lynne informs us that NA this year will receive over 8000 Can dollars! Out of these gifts and sale money is also included the gift/s made by **Madeline Gilchrist - \$ 500, and Angela Miles - \$ 2000.** I am going to request NA Board/Susan if we can put this up for PSC, so that NA can also honour Lynne's and Elizabeth's tireless work for almost 2 decades! On behalf of the NA team,

"Thankyou" so very much – we send our love and gratitude to both of you! This picture of Lynne and Elizabeth is so heartwarming and gives us all so much hope for all the good work being done all around!



Worthy of mention here is the NA led community safety net (CSN) community peace kitchens and counseling work going on in Bajhang and Bajura – now for 21 days. The team held meetings with the local government/s as well as with the local community persons. The community kitchens could not happen without the participation and the ownership of the local community. Soon enough, the children and their mothers found real support and solace in knowing their children were safe as they went to do harvesting work in their fields.

The visiting office bearers and relief workers are saying that this is the way to go about disaster related relief work, which has further increased

the confidence of the NA led relief team. Three community peace kitchens each catering to over 150 persons are being run – two in Bajhang and one in Bajura districts in the most disadvantaged communities of all.

This month is the beginning of the festival time Dasain and Tihar – with Dasain over, Tihar is around the corner in mid-November. Warm greetings to each and every one of you – stay blessed with the blessings of the Nava Durgas – for good over evil, and the Goddess Laxmi – for bounty, abundance, and lights!

Our best wishes for a very happy Tihar – the festival of love, light, and universal life!

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Name: Siddhartha Bank,

Address: Satdobato, Lalitpur, Nepal

Account Name: Nagarik Aawaz,

Account No: 01815090950

Swift Code: SIDDNPKA

***Note:** Photo Courtesy: Govinda Acharya, Sudip, Rita, Dambar Basnet,*

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 30th November 2023
Subject: Padmalaya Monthly Update – November

Nepal Context:

Following the previous month earthquakes affecting **Bajhang and Bajura districts** in the Far West, a 6.4 Richter scale earthquake hit **Jajarkot and Rukum East districts** (in the same province), in the middle of the night. In the Jajarkot and Rukum earthquakes, 175 people lost lives, 375 persons were injured, 26556 homes have been fully damaged, and 35455 homes were partially damaged and unlivable. The rising cold temperatures and the conditions post-earthquake has made life very difficult and challenging – there is news each day of the sick/ailing, old, and babies dying. This Padmalaya update will focus on the earthquake affected districts and NA attempting to contribute to relief recovery work, to the extent it could/can.

Work With the Land:



Govinda reports that at the level of the local communities, farming work of harvesting and sowing, and celebrating the festivals to increase community harmony was carried out as always. Similarly, at Padmalaya overall 5,500 kgs of rice has been harvested. The new crops being planted are mustard, lentils, potatoes, and seasonal vegetables.

The technical team has been meeting promptly after the holidays to do all that is necessary. In his own words, Sanjeev reports



that: “On November 27th the technical team comprising **Prabal Thapa, Dambar Basnet, Ganga Sagar Rai, and Sanjeev Singh** embarked on a site visit for monitoring and supervision purposes. Subsequently, contractor, **Rishi Ram Itani** joined the team at the construction site. Construction work slowed down during the holidays but is now back on track. The team is working hard to make up for lost time and finish the project on schedule. Although the sanitation, electrical, roofing, and truss work, are currently behind

schedule, the contractors remain committed to completing these tasks within the agreed-upon timeframe. During the site visit, eleven skilled laborers all together were working at the construction site. The ring-beams have been completed in both the dormitory blocks. The steel framework for the deck area has been completed in one of the dormitories and the painting of steel structures have been also completed. Under the leadership of Prabal, the team engaged in a comprehensive discussion regarding various technical aspects of the construction project, including railings, doors, windows, ceilings, ramps, and toilets. These discussions will help address any potential issues and ensure that the project complies with all necessary standards and specifications”.

I too recognize that as the finishing work on the buildings begin, we need closer supervision from our side – and I am personally committed to going to the site more frequently to ensure the choice of right materials as we may wish to have in the Padmalaya, taking advise from the architect and the technical team.

Programme Update:



It is only to Govinda's credit and leadership, that despite the festivals and the earthquake relief work, where the **Govinda and the Padmalaya team** too were heavily involved, that all the

other regular work at Padmalaya continued to happen. During November,

Govinda reports that 7 peace activities were conducted at the level of the schools and the local communities where over 350 persons participated and benefited. Under the local CSN initiatives, from 2 schools in high-risk areas 100 class 11/12 students and teachers were inducted in para counseling regarding socio psychological health and the value of spreading community safety nets. This year with the 16 days campaign with the theme of **UNITE: INVEST TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS** (25 November - 10 December), Padmalaya in collaborations with multiple stakeholders is conducting street theaters, interactions, and demonstrations of which 6 events have already been conducted.

During November, **Sudha Koirala** (counselor and community mobilizer) who was key in helping setup work in Nawalpur in the early days resigned owing to personal reasons. She has been replaced by **Sujata Kumal** who was in the first batch of the peace youths, graduating now to be a peace ambassador. We say best wishes and heartfelt thanks to Sudha for all her tireless work over the years at NA – and congratulations to Sujata.



The NA led Sahakarya Shantiko Network (SSN) Earthquake/s Relief Outreach:

When the earthquake struck in Jajarkot and Rukum, the government enforced a one door policy without adequate planning and system in place, thus while food, blankets, and tents lay all over the

available storage/s the affected people began dying of cold after the initial shock and the mourning period was over and reality sunk in



As immediate relief work, in NA's leadership some of its collaborating partners of the SSN (Sahakarya Shantiko Network), began the **community peace kitchens (CPK)** engaging 2 to 5 local volunteers (who were provided a small daily stipend) in each of the 9 kitchens. A total of **37 volunteers were mobilized;** in running **9 CPKs;** feeding in total **26,310 hot meals** to **1007 persons twice daily** from anything between **12 to 37 days** as per the stated need/s of the given communities. Needless to say that the CPKs were run in communities which needed them the most and were the most disadvantaged.

In a geographically challenging environment, the Padmalaya Bolero pick-up vehicle became extremely helpful in ensuring ready help to the local communities and in groceries delivery on a twice

daily basis to the peace kitchens in difficult locations. The vehicle was used in the affected districts for 18 days.

Additional to the CPKs **Hari Dhami**, who personally went to guide and lead the relief team before the Tihar holidays, reports that they were able to provide other additional support:

- providing transportation and related support to the sick/pregnant mothers for check-ups and treatments
- door-to-door services of counselling, motivation, and other necessary support, for those unable to come to the peace kitchens.
- mobilizing and ensuring that fear, suspicions, were reduced of the affected children, helping them to come back to some level of normalcy.
- other agencies and NGOs who came to provide relief support also received orientation and coordination support from the NA team and they also



ate in the NA CPKs as convenient.

The communities were most moved by the NA led SSN's work owing to the following reasons:

- promptness in response
- continuation during the time of two big festivals like Dasani and Tihar

- creative and frugal approach in operations which was most meaningful to the community/s served, as repeatedly expressed by them.
- positivity, readiness, community-led approach, and inspirational behaviours of all the SSN members.
- engaging with the affected communities, consulting with them, and engaging local youths and women who were ready to serve in the CPKs.
- NA's use of its vehicle and human resource for the benefit of the communities was also greatly appreciated.
- Additionally enabling a Tihar celebration with lights and some traditional sweetmeats, enabled a conducive environment for both sides to emote and heal, where tears of loss and appreciations mingled as one. This was said was a life changing experience for all who went to these districts to serve.
- The local authorities lauded the work of NA and acknowledged that this is what relief work needed to be like.

NA as a whole, will always be in gratitude for the opportunity that the CSN initiative, supported by PC, enabled the entire team to light the path of the community safety nets in disaster prone situations.

Fundraising & Financial Update:

NONE THAT COULD BE COUNTED THIS MONTH!

The Padma-Sarthak Campaign (PSC) - 2023- 2024:

Early in the month **Pratima Thapa gave a cheque of another Rs. 200,000** for the PSC out of her 5 lakh pledge and there is now an outstanding amount of only Rs. 100,000 from her. **Ava Darshan Shrestha, NA's past president**, true to her pledge earlier also **deposited Rs. 250,000** this month.

We collected **Rs. 200,000 from the sale of the NA's newly published book: Sowing Peace in Times of Conflict** which we deposited for the PSC. Travel, festivals, and two major earthquakes in the Far West Nepal, did not enable us to raise more funds for the PSC this month.

Bank Information:

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

Note: I want to acknowledge that this update was the briefest consolidation of reports that was sent by Govinda Acharya, who leads Padmalaya and more; Hari Dhami, who manages and coordinates NA's programmes; and newly recruited, Sanjeev Singh.

Photo Courtesy: Govinda, Dawa, Hari, Ganga, & Sanjeev

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st December 2023
Subject: Padmalaya Monthly Update – December

Nepal Context:

I will not indulge in anything negative during this festive season and new year 2024! **On behalf of our Padmalaya/NA team led by Dr. Chhatra Amatya, Dr. Susan Risal, and Govinda Acharya, let me begin by wishing each one of you, Season's Best Greetings & a Very Happy New Year – 2024!** It is a time to look back and be in gratitude for all that we received and managed to do at Padmalaya, in our lives, and around. Not everyone in our world has been as lucky – we can be in prayers and do our small bits always. This new year, may we all **as a community of Padmalaya well-wishers, donors, and doers, work together to help enable more peaceful communities wherever we are, and work towards a more balanced planet earth – our home!**

Work With the Land:



During 26th – 27th Susan, our new programme staff dedicated to Padmalaya - Sanjeev, and Rita visited Padmalaya. On return a meeting was held promptly among the above-mentioned persons along with our architect – Prabal, PMC – Dambar, and contractor Rishi and his partner Anagat. During this meeting, we agreed on the construction details related to the railing, flooring, and walls of the library building; details regarding the finishing and fixtures of the bathrooms of the residential blocks; as well as all the remaining details in relation to electrical fittings, differently abled accessibility, and the flooring and walls of the same, were finalized. Prabal gave instructions, cleared doubts, and I feel

we are in the making of a truly beautiful space! Earlier in the month, the technical team had also made a visit to Padmalaya to do all that was necessary, supervise the ongoing work and give necessary instructions/advice. Dambar has reported in the weekly zoom meetings that the speed of work has come up to mark and the contractors are anticipating finishing the work earlier than scheduled. I sincerely hope that will come true, for we can then begin to ground Padmalaya in the peacebuilding work it intends doing even more.

Besides these, the total number of remaining buildings – 9 in number, need to be cleared by the municipality (for which there is much work remaining), a new tender needs to be called as per the government rules, and the bricks (now it will be revised in composition of proportion as per the engineer's suggestions) also needs to go into production. For proper submission to the municipality for approval, engineer Arjun Choudhary of a local consulting firm called Kawasoti Consultancy has been hired.

Parallel to this we need to also prepare and see how we can begin our first partial opening/use of the infrastructures we now have, around the time of the first set of infrastructural completion. Simultaneously housekeeping, gardening, kitchen related work, and all other details need to begin by first training the necessary human resource. Simultaneously, furniture and furnishing

work needs to be prepared. Here we have agreed that we will do all of this with the help from **Deep Yogini** – the Tewa Center, the **Mahaguthi** – a fairtrade shop, and **Lehar Srijana** – the Tharu women's collective that is indigenous to the space Padmalaya is located in. But now the work needs to begin and Govinda and team at Padmalaya are bracing to accomplish this in a timely manner.





Govinda's team have helped maintained the overall cleanliness of the construction site as well. Padmalaya lands have mustard, potatoes, and red lentils growing. Besides, many varieties of green leafy vegetables are being farmed. Govinda informed that our recent guard/helper recruit, **Nim Bahadur Mahato**, is proving to be a very dedicated and a handy addition. While meeting with the team it was also wonderful to learn that **Taruna Mahato** (our first admin and finance assistant) at Padmalaya, is back from her maternity leave. Her 4 months old baby **Sreesha** is being looked after by her husband at Padmalaya! Govinda informed us that his office team now comprises of 15 staff members – many of whom are from our first batch of youth volunteers!

We were happy to note that despite the state of the country, Padmalaya is doing good work under the leadership of Govinda and his team of young people who are inspired to do all the needed work that they can do in the communities they come

from.



Programme Update:

During our recent visit we also took time to induct Sanjeev in the various aspects of Padmalaya e.g.: construction and all related work therein; coordination with Rita and the NA team; Padmalaya's financial coordination with Merita and all of us involved in overseeing this work, and the Padma-Sarthak Campaign or the PSC. Govinda and Nirajan, Susan and Rita, sat with Sanjeev (second from R) to talk through the PSC and what it is all about. How and why the gift tracking needs to be updated and the follow-ups that will be required this coming year. When we met our youths during this recent visit, we listened to what they were doing, experiencing, and learning – it was inspiring to see how they have all grown to become the confident young women they now are!



There is no dearth of activities in Padmalaya as usual. The ongoing work in each of the Peace Centers, regular staff meetings, and the various programme related work is ongoing. Twenty-six teachers from community schools are being given an



orientation training on counseling and others at Padmalaya, and below in the picture is counselor **Bhumika**, giving an orientation on counseling to the community people from Hupsekot VDC. The 16 Days of VAW Campaign was conducted with many events such as street demonstrations; community gatherings under “**End VAW – Invest/Commit to Women and Girls**” in Nawalpur; and street dramas on ending child marriages, use of drugs, discriminations against women and girls. This message was communicated to over 2000 participants who took part in these events. Fifteen conflict affected persons were given support for income

generating activities such as raising buffalos or goats, soap making, poultry raising, and teashops. **We can humbly say hats off to our Govinda and the entire Padmalaya Team! Thank you all!**



The NA led Sahakarya Shantiko Network (SSN) Earthquake/s Relief Outreach:

The NA/CSN followup Earthquake Recovery Initiative for **Bajhang, Bajura, Jajarkot & Rukum-West** was finalized early this month. Accordingly two of the SSN member

organizations, **Upahaar Nepal** and **Nepal Women Community Service Center (NWCSC)** have been mobilized to run soup kitchens in the same areas of the affected districts where NA had worked earlier for relief. For the past 8 days 16 Community Soup Kitchen (6 in Bajhang & 10 in Jajarkot & Rukum-West) have been running twice daily. Everyday each kitchen, feeds on an average 40/45 persons who benefit from the hot nutritious soups laced with healing herbs, cooked and served by local community volunteers who have been mobilized. Children, pregnant and lactating mothers, and the elderly are benefiting from these kitchens. They are appreciating this additional nutrition in their diet and are saying how this has helped save their lives from the freezing cold.

NA has now rented 2 office/resting spaces for their staff and volunteers who work at the site. Coordination and cooperation with the local government and district level stakeholders is ongoing. A slogan for CSN disaster related work in Nepali has been finalized and the process of designing of the slogan and printing of the bags for all deployed at the field level is now being carried out and will be ready within the first half of January 2024. A training package for CSN volunteers is soon being organized in Nepalgunj during the first half of January 2024. This will be a basic psychosocial counseling support training, clarifying concepts of the CSN as well as gender/peacebuilding.

Fundraising & Financial Update:

Govinda reports that from all the gifts, savings, and the sale of produce at Padmalaya, there is a collection of **Rs. 1,80,790** in the month of December.

The Padma-Sarthak Campaign (PSC) - 2023- 2024:

Shikha Bhattarai fulfilled her pledge of **Rs. 100,000** this month. Thank you very much Shikha!

Maaïke van Vliet, an old friend and a supporter of Padmalaya, made a gift to PSC saying “*I am considering sending Padmalaya a gift of **1000 Euros**. Quite a big amount - but it is part of my “legacy” to all who work tirelessly for the Peace Building Center. I fully support your initiative!*” This gift worth **Rs. 145,300** is now in the NA bank account – indeed a big amount for us! Thank you very much **Maaïke**!

Although we did not manage to raise funds for the PSC this month, we are pleased to inform you that we have managed to **exceed our fundraising goal for the year 2023 for the PSC by raising 1 corer 5 lakhs altogether**. The challenge now will be to raise the other 1 corer we have committed to in 2024 to complete the Padma-Sarthak Campaign!

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Photo Courtesy: Govinda, Rita, & Sanjay