

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st January 2024
Subject: Padmalaya Monthly Update – January

Nepal Context:

On return from our recent visit to Padmalaya, as soon as we arrived at the Bharatpur airport, Dataram, who runs the airport coffeeshop (who I am working on to make him a PSC donor ;-)), announced: “It is beginning to show”! Looking at our puzzled faces, he explained further that over the past 4/5 days very few passengers are flying. True to his words, our plane was only one-third occupied. Govinda was saying the same – he is noting that business seemed to be dwindling, farmers are worried because there is an expected reduction in agricultural produce owing to climatic unpredictability - and everyone is worried at the deteriorating economic conditions. I am not even anymore noting the official reports!

Work With the Land:

Our weekly zoom meeting coordinated by the Project Management Consultant, Dambar began on the 2nd – and followed through every Tuesday. This is to be updated on all aspects of the building of Padmalaya. During these meetings, the Contractor is confident he can hand over the buildings earlier than the stipulated time.

Sanjeev who is more in tune with the work at Padmalaya now, informs that: “As of the current reporting time, 70% of the work has been successfully completed in both the residential blocks. Grouting/pointing on the ground floor of the two buildings have been completed, along with plastering work on the 1st floor of both dormitories. The construction of collection pits in both blocks has been accomplished, as well as the completion of wire pulling work in both dormitories. Additionally, pointing for waste (in both the bathroom and toilets), soling by bricks, and waterproofing on the 1st floor of bathrooms have all been completed. Furthermore, the installation of DB boxes, electrical pipes, and wire pulling work



is complete in both blocks. The plywood insulation work has been completed after conducting coloring work on the roofs.

Approximately 30% of the work remains, and in the coming days, the progress of construction may not be as visible due to the focus on finishing details”.

Rita and Susan made an impromptu visit to Padmalaya on the 28th to mainly ensure that a temporary kitchen could be initiated, and to also find a suitable space for the same without disturbing the soon to begin new construction works of multiple buildings as well as the

production of bricks. Taking Govinda's advise and consulting with the site engineer team present at the Padmalaya, the space has been identified and the kitchen is expected to finish by the end of February to go into operation from early March! During this visit Rita and Susan also visited the workshop of Laher Srijana who are beginning to braid the jute mats for the residential blocks.

Preparing for Padmalaya Partial Opening:



All are aiming to ensure that we partially open Padmalaya once the 2 dormitory buildings are completed by early March. In relation to this and taking the opportunity of the Padmalaya team being here for a NA review and reflection workshop, I took time to introduce the key people

Govinda, Nirajan, **Ranjeeta** (who will look into housekeeping), and **Alisha** (who will be looking after the F/B aspects), Susan, and Sanjeev on the side of NA/Padmalaya; and Deepak, Dinesh, Aruna, and Subas, from Deep Yogini/Tewa. A date has now been fixed – February 12 - for the Padmalaya team to come to Deep Yogini/Tewa to be coached and twinned in housekeeping and food production and management, over a couple of weeks or as may be needed. Simultaneously we have begun the production of necessary furniture/furnishings – as will be necessary with Mahaguthi, Laher Srijana, and Navaraj – who will be producing the bunkbeds for us as he did 10 years back for Deep Yogini/Tewa.

Programme Update:



On the 11 – 12th, Govinda with the network chairperson **Parbati Sigdel**, facilitated a reflection workshop for 21 conflict affected women. This enabled a sense of trust, ownership, and bonding between the affected women and NA. During 17 – 18th Lumbini expert and guide, **Prahlad Yadav** visited Padmalaya for a 2-day orientation workshop for the 20 youths and staff members of NA. All participants received in depth knowledge on Lord Buddha's birth place, Lumbini, other adjoining districts of significance, and the peace circuit. On the 19th the participants (above), took a guided tour to Lumbini (Buddha's birth place), accompanied by Prahlad. During 22 – 24th the Padmalaya staff team participated in a review and reflection meeting of NA in Deep Yogini of Tewa in

Kathmandu. All the staff realized and renewed their commitments to the peace-building work NA has been contributing to in the past 22 years. During this month, **Govinda** informed that all together Padmalaya conducted 19 programmes with the community/ies, schools, and community peace groups in the district. All together 760 persons benefited from these events.

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

NA with the SSN partners are continuing the 10 soup kitchens in Jajarkot and Rukum W, until mid-February while closing down in the other two districts. They are also being busy in preparing to go into a 2 year long recovery programme for the earthquake affected districts, looking into support for mental health and wellbeing; safety and security of vulnerable people; and the economic sustainability of those who are most deserving of these support. Recruitment/s, training of volunteers and personnel, and planning and reflection among the SSN network members is also ongoing.

Fundraising & Financial Update:

From the ongoing programme, sale of produce, and donations received at Padmalaya, **Rs. 38,365 was collected in the Padmalaya savings** and this has been deposited in the NA account.

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

The **Padma-Mukhis for the Padma-Sarthak Campaign** met on the 8th. This year we included a new interested Mukhi, who came on the recommendation of **Mukhi Meena Gurung**. This meeting was also a part of the ongoing induction of our Programme Coordinator, Sanjeev Singh. Riva and Neeta could not make it but Susan, Roshani, Meena, our **new mukhi Samjhana**, Sanjeev, and Rita attended this meeting. The meeting focused on our efforts and strategies for 2024 after Susan gave an overview of NA and Padmalaya. This year the Mukhis will try meet on a monthly basis, and Sanjeev will help coordinate these meetings.

Hari Dhami deposited half of his pledged amount – **Rs. 50,000**. **Krishna Karkee** also fulfilled her pledge of **Rs.100,000**. **Pratima Thapa** fulfilled her pledge of **Rs. 500,000 to the PSC, by handing over her final cheque of Rs. 100,000** this month. Thank you sincerely – Hari, Krishna, and Pratima!

On the new year day, **Sanjeev Singh**, our new staff, made a gift of **Rs. 100,000** to Padmalaya! Wow – shaking off some of the fear I had for PSC this year! Thank you immensely – Sanjeev! Likewise, Govinda announced that the Padmalaya staff would pledge **Rs. 100,000** for PSC during 2024. Not to be outdone, I also pledged **Rs. 100,000** for 2024 – I intend fulfilling this gift within April. **Susanne/Bill Jalbert** (friends/supporters since 1987 from Colorado/USA) have sent us a gift of **Rs. 200,000** – this time because I made the ask. But their untiring support over these decades, to Tewa and NA, cannot be measured in numbers. Then much to my delight, another friend equally old in years, now residing in Sydney, Australia, **Sharada Singh**, gifted a cheque of **Rs. 100,000** for the PSC. Luckily this month, we also sold the NA books worth **Rs.100,000**. Towards the end of the month, on a single ask, our colleague/activist friend, **Irada P. Gautam** (an IGFF new Steering Committee member) also pledged **Rs. 100,000**. Besides these, Sanjeev/Susan/I have made a few asks, but we have yet to hear back from them.



Even with significant efforts, we are still short of meeting our monthly goals by 2 lakhs – we will have to work much harder next month.

Others:

So much happened this month on the side! The IGFF Madhesh Province

Consultations, the CSN work of Tewa and NA, and the Tewa Gandaki Province Grantee Consultation/s are some of the significant mentions.

Kathmandu/Nepal is the venue for the **World Social Forum 2024 (WSF) during 15 – 19th February**. Taking this opportunity, **Sangat Nepal** and **Tewa** agreed to **celebrate the One Billion Rising (OBR) campaign within the WSF on the 16th during 2 – 5pm**, instead of the annual/global practice of having these events on 14th February. In preparation of this global event, some 40 representatives from over 30 organizations gathered in Patan Dhoka for a planning meeting. Unanimously agreeing to have the event within the umbrella of the WSF 2024, the participants formed thematic working groups to take lead or responsibilities in ensuring that all the aspects of the event would be taken care of. This will be an exceptional celebration of the OBR campaign - and a worthy mention!

Bank Information:

If you wish to make a gift to **help build Padmalaya**, or **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

Photo Courtesy: Govinda, Susan, Ganga, & Rita

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 29th February 2024
Subject: [Padmalaya](#) Monthly Update – February

Nepal Context:

Finally, after some 3 decades of lobbying, advocacy, and legal interventions, from civil society groups, the Nepali government declared that it would give citizenship/s to children born in Nepal from Nepali mothers without questioning them about the fathers. Govinda reports that the increasing economic downslide has deepening concerns and worries for the communities in Nawalpur. Farmers in Nawalpur are currently harvesting potatoes and mustard and are preparing their fields for sowing corn and planting early rice.

Work With the Land:

Tendering process begun end of January with 7 bids, for the remaining construction work of Padmalaya has yet to be concluded. Compliance, processes, and complications, indicate that this may conclude only after a week or so. *The new kitchen, on the side of Block B (as seen below) will be ready within the next week. An essential meeting both to look into the construction progress, and to ensure the necessary preparation for the IGFF's "Bus Yatra of the Anupam Campaign" in Padmalaya, which will be the meeting point on the 21/22 March, took place on the 21st/22nd of the month. Susan, Sanjeev, Govinda, Nirajan, and Rita met to discuss all the various aspects, as well as assign necessary delegation of tasks. The CSEB brickmaking process for the now 40,000 bricks required for the remaining buildings of Padmalaya, have also begun at Padmalaya. 8 community women and 1 male labourer/s are working to produce approximately 15 to 16,000 bricks monthly, with a revised composition of 11% cement, 89% earth, and remaining sand. Towards the end of this month architect Prabal, and PMC Dambar, visited the site with the contractor Rishi, to oversee ongoing work as well as expedite the work for the completion of the two residential buildings to enable its use with*

running water, bathrooms, and electricity! It is now up to Rishi to ensure that we can use our facility from the 2nd week of March, in preparation of the IGFF event.





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Preparing for Padmalaya Partial Opening:

Sunita Mahato, Bishnu Thanet, Sanju Mahato, and Sharmila

Mahato, led by Ranjeeta Nepal for housekeeping training; and Binita Mahato, and



Sukumaya Chaudhary, led by Alisha Sharma

Lamichhane for Food & Beverage training, arrived at Tewa to begin from the 12th of February. As seen in the picture above, Tewa's **Chef Subash** began his work with Alisha, Sukumaya, and Binita. Under the able guidance of Tewa **Executive Housekeeper, Aruna Rai** and with the supervision of Saraswoti Maharjan, Sunita, Bishnu, Sanju, Sharmila, and Ranjeeta began their training. The 3-week long multi-faceted training will conclude on the 3rd of March. Girls are feeling



confident that they will be able to execute their responsibilities satisfactorily at Padmalaya. Furthermore, the Deep Yogini (Tewa Center) team, **Dinesh, Subash, and Aruna** with **Sanjeev** meeting as necessary on a timely basis have been assisting with acquiring the necessary items for Padmalaya to ensure best items at best price, with their time tested and well proven experiences.

Programme Update:

Govinda reports that as always this has been a very busy month at Padmalaya/Nawalpur. Besides visits made in relation to the construction and management work, there have been other significant visits. On the 22nd, the **Bread for The World** Regional Director, **Oliver** visited Nawalpur to oversee their programme. CEO Susan, managing officer Hari, accompanied by two responsible project staffs, accompanied Oliver to brief and facilitate this visit. This visit made overland, also visited 2 Peace Centers and interacted with the community beneficiaries.

On the 24th February, **Laher Srijana executive and producer team** too visited Padmalaya for an exposure visit.



Govinda reports that 22 programmes in the local schools and communities have been conducted this month! More than 880 community members and children have participated. He shares that there is definitely a marked change

that one can observe - where the community is showing heightened interest, awareness, and an increased sense of responsibility. It never stops to astound me as to how much continues to happen in Nawalpur despite mounting pressures related to construction work, visitors, and all the regular ongoing official work that that needs to be accomplished! **Hats off to Govinda and his team!**

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

This month **Anjeela** reported on the NA led CSN/SSN activities. The comprehensive report for the month-long activities is heartwarming. But in gist, I primarily wish to share and bring a conclusion to the earthquake related emergency relief and recovery work that the CSN/SSN team is continuing, as well as draw a conclusion of this particular topic from this report from now on. All the 18 community soup kitchens serving some 600 persons in the affected 4 Far Western hill districts, were concluded since mid-February. The soup kitchens helped save lives and the communities have assimilated this practice into their daily lives. Additionally, CSN partner **NEBPN/Rupendehi** successfully mobilized and distributed 250 warm blankets gathered with the help of local youth group, for the most affected community families. All the skills and resilience-building capability strengthening workshop and trainings; coordination with local government/s; responding to emerging needs in the districts where CSN/SSN partners are working is ongoing. Everyone is feeling that the learning has been tremendous at the personal and the organizational levels – how much has been benefited with prompt responses serving most essential needs of the affected communities! Finally, the government is distributing the 1st installment of Rs. 25,000 for rebuilding shelters of the affected population as warmer weather eases in.

Fundraising & Financial Update:

Govinda reports that Rs 9,920 has been deposited in the NA account from the sale of produce and some savings.

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

Meera Jyoti and Irada Parajuli Gautam, both fulfilled their pledge of Rs. 100,000 this month – **as did Rita** (earlier than what she thought was possible;-)!

Tewa's Past President, academic/activist **Nirmala KC** has pledged **Rs. 100,000**! She kindly also said that she would do her best to find other donors for such a worthy cause as the PSC of Padmalaya. My friend from school, **Madhulika & Dr. (Med) Sarveshwar Puri**, pledged **Rs. 100,000**. Likewise, earlier in the month **Dr. (Med) Arjun Karki**, another old friend also pledged **Rs. 100,000** to the PSC. On Losar day, my dharma sister, **Anu Dahal** pledged her minimum of **Rs. 100,000** for the PSC as we met in our Rinpoche's place. Soon after **Sucheta Pyakuryal** also pledged **Rs. 100,000** for the PSC!

In a most surprising and an effortless way, **Suman Pant & Leslie Melnyk** jointly gifted the PSC **Rs 200,000** this month (the money is in our bank already)! **Biraj Patnaik**, a friend from New Delhi also pledged **Rs. 100,000** during his brief visit at the World Social Forum 2024, held here in Kathmandu.

Nirmala, Madhu, Arjun, Anu, Sucheta, Suman & Leslie, Biraj, and Hari we so value your support and say a heartfelt "thank you" to each of you!

Hari Devkota, one of NA's early conflict-affected youth volunteer/ambassador, who later founded and now heads the UN Nepal NGO in Gorkha, also pursuing his PhD on social development from TU currently, wrote early morning on the 2nd and made a gift of Rs. 10,000 to the PSC (which we will count as a full gift).

Despite some good efforts at fundraising and the unexpected generosity of some friends, we are short of meeting our monthly goal by 1 lakh. We will all need to work harder at fundraising next month!

Others:



All kinds of unprecedented events happened here this month. Kathmandu was the venue for the **World Social Forum (WSF)** in 23rd year since it began; the **One Billion Rising** celebrations took place within the WSF venue; and the **IGFF nationwide bus tour**, is happening in

March, engaging all of us. It will converge in Padmalaya as a host venue. But I feel this picture above that is taken at Padmalaya of the harvested potatoes with NA youths working at grading

them, is the most precious of all. I hope it will give us all the joy and hope we need. Through this photo we have a moment to honour our earth, and be grateful for all that we receive from her as we do from each one of you – particularly through the PSC. In gratitude each moment!

Bank Information:

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Photo Courtesy: Govinda, Sanjeev, & Rita

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st March 2024
Subject: **Padmalaya** Monthly Update – March

Nepal Context:

Change of government once more, unholy alliances, and political time share. All I can say is I foresee more political turbulences foreboding ill for us all. In the meantime, I only experience inflation and growing instability. Not to say good things are not happening. In every field the Nepalis are doing their best to innovate, excel, and sustain – hats off to fellow citizens!

Work With the Land:



Preparing to host the IGFF event at Padmalaya this month was one of the most intense experiences of our lives. We had to finish one of the residential buildings, **Padmini** – for women, and we came close to it. All meetings and residential work were to be held here. Govinda took charge of creating a whole new kitchen that could enable the partial opening of the Padmalaya – and it was done! As is seen in the L picture our newly trained cooks with support from NA staff pulled through cooking for over 200 people for the 2 days of the IGFF event. The other significant happening with

regarding the constructions, was as Sanjeev says: *“the tendering process for the remaining 8 buildings of Padmalaya was successfully finalized after a grueling process ensuring government rules and NA constitution. Following extensive discussions with the potential 8 bidders, NA awarded the Bid to the **Buddha Construction Pvt. Ltd.** with the remaining construction – who is aligned with the previous contractor as a best possible option. The selection was based on their proven expertise in working with CSEB blocks, Ferro Cement walls, and their innovative approach in combining RCC and steel structures. Additionally, their re-proposed cost was reasonable. This decision marks a significant step forward in advancing the construction efforts for Padmalaya, ensuring quality workmanship and timely completion of the remaining buildings”.*

Frequent visits by Rita and Susan, at times with Sanjeev, were inevitable for the necessary Padmalaya preparations, management, and directions; these entailed at least 3 visits during 6/7, 12/13, and 19/20th of March!

Programme Update:



This month **Govinda** while leading/doing all ongoing work at Padmalaya Nawalpur, was extremely busy ensuring all the preparations for the IGFF event on the 21/22nd were duly completed and managed. All this Govinda and his team accomplished – which is no surprise to any of us anymore. This

being the women’s month, events happened across Nawalpur to mark the IWD as seen in the picture above! So much happened this month from Govinda’s report, but we will focus mainly on the IGFF event at Padmalaya!

Partial Opening of Padmalaya & the Hosting of IGFF Bus Tour/Anupam Abhiyan!

The IGFF planned an ambitious campaign namely the Anupam Abhiyan - AA (2023 – 2027) from the previous elections to the upcoming one November 2027. In 2024 we began by a nationwide feminist song competition and a bus tour across the east-west highway interacting with activist leaders along the way and picking them up as they arrived from the far-flung districts. The 2 buses arrived on the 21st at Padmalaya after a 4-day and a 3-day euphoric journey. The buses were led by **Stella Tamang & Laxmi Ghalan (IGFF co-coordinators)** and supported by IGFF leaders. **Freedom Studio** was our art and activism partner – documenting this journey and all we do of the Anupam Abhiyan. Over 200 activists from 37



districts arrived at the destination. These included those who rode the buses and those who arrived from all over Nepal at their own expenses. There were 7 and 8 stops along the highway respectively on the East and the West routes, interacting, welcoming, singing and dancing.

In an unprecedented show of strength by women across all divides, women in all diversity mobilized local governments, communities, to collaborate, connect, and give the message that feminists are united, and will no longer accept being treated as second class citizens or being used merely as vote banks.

This bus tour is the beginning of many tours across the nation inter and intra districts and VDCs,



throughout this year. It is Gathering momentum to enable more to join the AA, and to support IGFF's initiatives as one's own. Learning from the previous elections, women are saying "No More!" this will no doubt be a historical marker for the women's movement in Nepal!

At Padmalaya activists arrived in the 2 busses, they trooped in from central hills, the far western hills, and the capital city. Invitees arrived – who were boards, academics, Volunteers, and associates! Preparation for this event begun since January and even before that, was still a challenge! Accommodating all residentially, and cooking for almost 250 persons on the 21st and 22nd. But the trained youths of Padmalaya proved their mettle with further support from the NA team. Every vegetarian meal was appreciated.

Women slept on the floor of the meeting hall without a complain. There was unspeakable

solidarity and ownership. A traditional musical band – **naumati baja** - played by women enabled dancing and laughter. There were formal welcome/s, blessings of the earth and Padmalaya led by Stella Tamang, small group-works to pin-down IGFF's multi-faceted work. Research, to benefit the movement, was also lurking on the side of this event by the visiting activist/academics.

The partial opening of Padmalaya happened. The East-West Bus Tour of the AA was a roaring success – even beyond my anticipation! Too many to name here, contributed financially, morally, and in spirit, to make all these possible – enabling the least expenditure of the IGFF resources at only Rs 5,500 although the total expenditure would have otherwise cost 20 laks.

Fundraising & Financial Update:

At Padmalaya, Govinda reports that Rs. 31,860 was collected from the sale of rice, potato, and the soap and washing powder produced during the training period. All participants arriving at the IGFF/AA event also received a packet of rice as a going home gift from Padmalaya!

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

Beginning of this month, we invited **one more Padmamukhi to the Padma Sarthak Campaign – Irina Shrestha!** Rama Shrestha and Nirmala KC, PhD, current and past presidents of Tewa respectively, gave us a cheque of Rs. 100,000 each and fulfilled their pledges for the PSC!

Also early in the month, we received a pledge of **Rs. 100,000 from Prakash Mani Ghimire** – an old-time friend or family friend rather. **Sisters Irina, Sameena, and Shobhana Shrestha honouring their parents, Shambhuman and Mridula Shrestha pledged Rs. 100,000.** Susan's Friend **Pratiksha Giri** also pledged **Rs. 100,000.** **Ganga Gurung**, through our Padmamukhi, Meena Gurung, pledged **Rs. 100,000 to honour her late father** (details to arrive). Our new Padmamukhi, **Samjhana Sharma**, also pledged **Rs. 100,000** in the name of her two children - contributing to their education in philanthropy. Past President Tewa, **Sadhana Shrestha** pledged **Rs. 100,000** honouring her three grandchildren. Sanjeev Singh, our new staff at NA for Padmalaya, raised **Rs. 100,000 from his aunt, Sangita Malla.** **Sita Rupakheti – to honour the wedding of her daughter & son-in-law pledged Rs. 100,000.**

To top all of these, this month, **Arvind & Neeta P Joshi**, again - one of our Padmamukhis, pledged **Rs. 500,000.** Thanks to this significant gift from Arvind & Neeta, we made our 10 lakhs this month and have made up for the lapses during the past two months 2024!

Others:

There could be nothing else other than the East-West Bus Tour of the Anupam Abhiyan this month. The bags you see in the picture below, have 3 Nepali words: 1. **Swabhiman** meaning self-reliance and dignity; 2. **Sashakta** meaning vibrant; and 3. **Samata** meaning equitable. That is the feminist movement we are now walking – with dignity and self-reliance; equitably across all divides; and vibrantly rich, beautiful, and peaceful! This is the turnabout for the course of development women will help initiate and enforce!



At the IGFF event, these bags were on everyone's shoulders.

These bags also hold our feminist song book – all the 17 songs there selected from some 45 submissions written by our IGFF associates

from all over Nepal, during the IGFF song competition earlier this year. There is an additional song in the book, written for IGFF, by poet/lyricist **Srawan Mukarang** and composer/musician **Aaavaas**, who were two of the judges among a team of three including folk music researcher/promoter singer, **Jhuma Limbu**. We had access to them through our all-time supporter Suman S Thapa.

Bank Information:

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

Photo Courtesy: Govinda, Freedom Studio, Yajaswi Rai, Riva Thapa, & Rita

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 30th April 2024
Subject: **Padmalaya** Monthly Update – April

Nepal Context:

Everything paled to insignificance this month when tragedy struck in the form of pre-monsoon forest fire/s that in places gutted homes - over 110 homes in 1 village in Siraha District alone. Nepal suffers forest fires in recent years in unprecedented ways – owing to an indifferent and inept state, and lack of awareness on the part of communities used to traditional “slash and burn” farming techniques, which has becoming increasingly hazardous owing to increasing dryness, lack of timely rains, and inadequate preparedness measures on all sides. Deteriorating air quality, flight disruptions, loss of lives, homes, and forest coverage is worrying and sad.

CSN network with Hari is once more active with providing relief in terms of community kitchen/s and counseling care as required where needed and possible.

Work With the Land:



On the 5th - NA in the presence of Susan and Board Chair, Dr. Chhatra Amatya successfully signed the contract for the remaining additional building work at Padmalaya awarding it to Buddha Construction Pvt. Ltd. The technical team visited Padmalaya on the 8/9th to minutely see all that was needed. Following that the technical team met with Rita, Susan, Govinda, Merita, and Sanjeev on the 19th. This was a very valuable meeting in order to see how to move forward and how to improve on all the shortfalls of the past. Rita and Susan then headed out to Padmalaya on the 23 and returned 24th. During their visit they focused on all that was necessary to ensure the smooth partial running of Padmalaya from the middle of May. In a debriefing meeting after the IGFF East-West Bus Tour, listening to the

housekeeping and the kitchen teams led by Ranjeeta and Alisha respectively, and all present at



this meeting, it was heartwarming to see how the event provided learning, confidence-building, and raising the bar for the Padmalaya Team. Susan and Rita spent time in reorganizing, closing in existing gaps in operation, and planning at every level of construction and

forward management of Padmalaya. We appreciated the delicious lunch we were served and happily noted that everything was spick and span at Padmalaya – thanks to our trained youth staff.

Govinda informs us that work has taken up speed at the site. Sambod, representing our contractor, is spending considerable days at the site. Visits are more frequent from Dambar ji – the PMC. Work on redoing some things as suggested by Prabal regarding finishings and quality is being carried out. The excavation work for 3 additional buildings at the site has begun. The library building and the large community hall parallel to the library building is expected to finish within December – so that the hosting of the next IGFF convening in March 2025 can happen!

Despite the dryness and increasing heat as temperatures soar, at Padmalaya we could take comfort in the coolness and greenness provided by the growing corn crop at Padmalaya!

Programme Update:

There is never a dearth of ongoing programme at Padmalaya. They conducted some 16-9 interactive programmes and some 5 service delivery programmes over the month from community level to district office bearers. Most of the community level programmes are now delivered by the new staff members, who graduated from being peace ambassadors. End of the month response to fire victims is ongoing. This month, Rs. 15,000 has been collected from gifts and sale of produce.

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

On the 22nd the Padma-Mukhis sat for their monthly meeting. Although Irina and Riva were not present, Meena brought in 2 donor friends for which we gave a presentation sharing on the work of NA and the significance of Padmalaya.

Padma-Mukhi Samjhana has notified that she is making her pledge in the name of her two children, **Ojaswi and Ojas Ojha**.

Pledges of **Rs. 100,000 each** have been fulfilled by **Manoj Pandey**, and **Sita Rupakheti**. Thank you both hugely!

Early this month on one ask, **Bulu Gyawali** and **Sangeeta Gyawali** came home, with a bundle of **Rs. 200,000**



cash for Padmalaya – this was one of the most trusting of gifts, since they were both not informed earlier about NA’s work. **Madhuri Singh**, PhD pledged **Rs. 100,000**. **Jyoti Gyawali** committed **Rs. 100,000** by the end of the campaign duration. **Bhim Kumari Itani** and **Sambodh Itani** (son, and Padmalaya contractor) have each pledged **Rs. 100,000**.



Susan’s friends **Shiva/Udaya Pokhrel** and **Baral** pledged **Rs. 100,000** in honour of their parents and

parents-in-law – **Kanti/Dwarika P. Pokhrel** and **Radha Devi/Jagdish R. Baral**. Susan’s sibling’s children: **Anusha Lamsal**, **Akankshya Aryal**, **Aavas Pokharel**, **Sadichchha Pokharel**, **Ayushma Pandey**, and **Ananya Pandey**, have together made a gift of **Rs. 140,000**

to the Padma-Sarthak Campaign. This is a very special gift since they are all students! **Rita Pariyar** pledged **Rs. 100,000** via padma-mukhi Meena Gurung. Also, via Meena, **Renuka Gurung** gifted **Rs. 100,000** to honour the memory of her sister-in-law, **Late Chandra Kumari Gurung**.

Wonderful to count that we have gone a little over our monthly mark of 10 lakh rupees this month! Thank you all very much!

Others:

There is nothing more important for us all at IGFF now, than moving forward with the **Anupam Abhiyan's** "yatras" – during 2024. To kickstart the first yatra in the valley, Tewa took initiative to coordinate with IGFF, for the Lalitpur yatra – where over 250 of us gathered to walk through a marked route starting in Lagankhel and ending at Patan Dhoka, where the Freedom Studio had also put up a beautiful photo exhibition. Led by the IGFF co-coordinators, **Stella (top R), and Laxmi (below R corner)** the walk began at 6 am including 2 stops and ended at 9 am. The timing was chosen to avoid heat and to ensure everyone's work would not be disrupted. Led by the "**naumati baja**", supported and documented by the **Freedom Studio**, we danced, sang feminist songs, distributed flyers reaching out to hundreds more people, and had another memorable wonderful yatra!



Bank Information:

If you wish to make a gift to help build **Padmalaya**, or 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

Photo Courtesy: Govinda, Freedom Studio, Rita

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st May 2024
Subject: **Padmalaya** Monthly Update – May



Our Context:

Govinda informs us that changes in weather with rising temperatures, storms, and lashing rains, have caused some damage to farmers, felling trees and branches, and taking off roofs from some homes. But our corn fields at Padmalaya are doing very well.



Work With the Land:



This month, despite the unbearable heat, we made more progress in terms of our work with the land. The regular weekly briefing meetings by Dambar ji meant business and was followed up with prompt actions. As a follow-up to some of the decisions made by Rita, Susan, and Govinda during their earlier visit, Rita/Susan with interior designer **Tejita Amatya Vaidya**, and our Logo designer **Keshar Joshi** visited Padmalaya on the 3rd – and also met with Dambar ji, the PMC, and the field engineers who were busy with new excavation and finishing up work on the two residential blocks – now named **Padmini** and **Padmadhar** for women and men respectively. On the 14/15th our lead Architect, **Prabal**, veteran structural engineer **Manohar L. Rajbhandari**, PMC **Dambar Basnet** visited the site and did all that was required to ensure quality work. On the 19/20th, Rita, Susan, and Hari accompanied **PC, Hope Chigudu**, and

Sheena for a visit to Padmalaya. For the first time, PC and our guests slept in Padmini (women's dormitory) and ate from our new kitchen!



The highlight of this trip was the official introduction of **Padmavati and her calf** by PC. **Padmavati** (our buffalo) – *picture taken by Sheena*) is expected to give us 7 liters of milk two times a day. She will ensure milk, ghee, curd, and importantly manure for Padmalaya. Now, some 35 labourers are already benefitting from a cool yogurt drink to beat the heat. **Ain Kumari** who lost her buffalo owing to lightening last year is overjoyed! She is now the principal caretaker of **Padmavati** along with Nim, and others who are very adept at this job from their childhood. The entire team at Padmalaya is happy and is welcoming **Padmavati** and her calf.



At Padmalaya, construction have begun for 3 more infrastructures: the multi-purpose community hall; a residential building, and the cafeteria kitchen block. Since there are adequate bricks for 4 buildings

at present, the production of bricks has been temporarily stopped - also owing to storage place



until the ones we now have are used up. There are 4 site engineers and overseers present at the site. Even the second-generation Contractor, **Sambad Itani**, who is also a civil engineer, has based himself at the site. This is a big relief to all of us as he personally oversees the construction work. In the picture on the left, you can see the foundation for the multi-purpose hall being laid out. This shows but one part out of the three parts that will make up the entire foundation. Since the center part is over the existing water tank, and the other part is on the other side of the water tank.



Programme Update:

Our leader at Padmalaya, **Govinda**, informs us that there have been 37 community/youth related programs that have been conducted this month. altogether 1200 persons have benefited from these. The peace ambassadors and the staff of Padmalaya

have been able to accomplish them successfully. This has heightened the level of awareness, sense of responsibility, cooperation and mutual support at the community level/s and increased the overall harmony at the local levels.

Also, alongside these, there is the running of the day-to-day kitchen and overall increased housekeeping jobs at Padmalaya. For instance, each day vegetables are plucked, cleaned, and cooked daily for staff, visitors, and the day-long workshops that are beginning to be held at Padmalaya. the upkeep of Padmavati and calf, and the production and management of milk, yogurt, and ghee is a daily routine. overall cleaning and upkeep while everything are still being built is both time taking and labour intensive, particularly until all the construction work finishes completely!

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

Sita Rupakheti's earlier gift of Rs. 100,000 was to honour and bless the wedding of her daughter **Shriya Rupakheti & Mr. Jason Rosenthal**. This month, Madhuri Singh and Sucheta Pyakuryal fulfilled their pledge of Rs. 100,000 each. Likewise, Sambod Itani and his mother both fulfilled their joint pledge of Rs. 200,000. Thank you - Madhuri, Sucheta, Sita, and Sambod – very much!

The most precious gift this month for me, of **Rs. 500,000**, was made by **one of my root Gurus, Chokyi Nimya Rinpoche**. Rinpoche la fulfilled this gift promptly.

Sanjeev Singh's aunt, **Bijaya Singh Shah** pledged **Rs. 100,000**. Similarly, **Dambar Bahadur Basnet**, our Project Management Consultant, and **Santa Kumar Shrestha/IFID**, kindly pledged **Rs. 100,000 each**, for the Padma-Sarthak Campaign. From the NA Office itself, 3 senior staff members pledged **Rs. 100,000 each**: **Trishna Thapa**, Deputy CEO to honour her father, **Bachu Ram Thapa**; **Merita Kansakar**, Finance Manager, to honour her parents: **Rup Shova & Yogendra Bir Singh Kansakar**; and **Smriti Karki Thapa**, for honouring her son, **Sarthak Jung Thapa**.

I offer my deepest gratitude to my Guru for his unending kindness and teachings. We are very thankful to each of you who have made contributions and pledges to the Padma-Sarthak Campaign. We went a little over 10 lakhs goal for this month too. Thank you all very much again!

Others:

The most exciting thing that is ongoing and well begun are the IGFF “yatras” for 2024 – the walks, the bus tours, and the cycle tours throughout Nepal as a part of the **Anupam Abhiyan!** Our feminist sisters are fundraising, planning, and demonstrating – all on their own!

*Another highlight of this month was a talk event organized by the IGFF in collaboration with Tewa. **Hope Chigudu** delivered a thought-provoking talk entitled **Well-Being & How it Utterly Strengthens Feminist Movements**. The event held at the garden venue of Café Cheeno, was well attended by over 70 IGFF associates/academics/activists.*

Bank Information:

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Name: Siddhartha Bank,

Address: Satdobato, Lalitpur, Nepal

Account Name: Nagarik Aawaz,

Account No: 01815090950

Swift Code: SIDDNPKA

Photo Courtesy: Govinda, Freedom Studio, Sheena, Rita

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 30th June 2024
Subject: Padmalaya Monthly Update – June

Our Context:

According to **Govinda**, everything remained more or less normal in the Nawalpur communities this month. Except that owing to climate change issues, temperatures rose so much that even the schools closed, for a whole week. All the farming work, e.g. the harvesting of corn, and the planting of rice has been difficult for the local farmers, owing to the intensity of heat. This month, because it is the end of the Nepali fiscal year, the local budget and the plans have been made public and are now being discussed at the level of related communities.

Work With the Land:



Govinda says, Padmalaya harvested 350 kgs of corn and the land is being prepared for rice planting within the next two weeks. The planting of Gul mohar trees and nigalo (thin bamboos) has been accomplished along the eastern border of the compound - by our support staffs **Nim** and **Shikha**. The remaining 300 plants received free of cost from the Forest Department, have been kept in the Padmalaya nursery.

Earlier in the month, 5 - 6th



Susan and Rita made a visit to Padmalaya to take stock, plan, and learn about all that may need doing in Padmalaya. It was noted that owing to the heat, workers start work early at 6 am and break to rest during the day. They are enjoying the yogurt drink Govinda and Team offer some 35 labourers, on a daily basis.

PC and his nephew **Kenrick Lui** who visited Nepal this month, along with Susan, Sanjeev, and Rita, also visited Padmalaya during 18th – 19th of this month. This was Kenrick's first visit to Nepal and subsequently Padmalaya.

This month all construction related work in **Padmini** has been completed, and work on the

other residential building the **Padmadhar**, is estimated to be completed by mid-August. On the 12th – 13th the technical team led by **Prabal** with **PMC Dambar** also visited the site. During this visit all snag work requiring adjustments and improvements were pointed out for necessary

actions as well as detailed discussions related to the 3 other buildings which are now under construction. Dambar will look into all these matters to expedite work to meet the stated deadlines.

Towards the second half of this month, the technical team coordinated by **Sanjeev**, met several times as was seen to be the need in order to particularly ensure that necessary adjustments to the building designs, adaptations for their use as seen by NA, and meeting deadlines were discussed. **Susan** participated in these meetings as and when necessary. The interior designer, **Tejita** and her team too have been working with Prabal and Dambar to ensure that their best advice and designs are incorporated. Her concept has been twice revised and is awaiting final submission, so that the contractual and financial work can move ahead from NA's side, and work can proceed on the **Sukarma** building earlier designated as the Library building on the



architectural Master Plan. It is now agreed that this building will house all of Padmalaya's offices thus freeing the present office space and the building assigned as the office block for residential purposes.



On the 28th - just before PC's departure, the technical team: Prabal, Dambar, Rishi & Sambod – the contractor/s, Santa & Biraj from IFID, Tejita, and the NA related persons met over lunch to meet, greet, and share. It proved to be a very rich insightful sharing session from the past, as

well as seeing where and how we need to plan to ensure a smooth process. Prabal also shared

about the City Office NA will be building as a part of Padmalaya which is closer to the new expanded highway.

Programme Update:



Govinda reports that this month he and his team conducted some 26 programmes related to mental health, health and wellbeing, family cooperation and engendering, child marriage, food security, hygiene and cleanliness, and inclusive and engendered development. In these programs, over 775 persons participated. Additionally,

Govinda and the team conducted a 2-day workshop for the 24 women community health workers on socio-psychological health (see above picture). Also, a new peace center has been established to make it more convenient for a new group of conflict affected women who have been selected under an ongoing program related to this issue.

Fund-raising & Financial Update:

This month Govinda reports that from the sale of soap, corn, and rice, as well as some gifts from the local community, **Rs 10,175 have been collected** and duly deposited in the NA account.

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

On the initiative taken by one of our Padma-Mukhis, **Meena Gurung**, a meeting to orient new members was held on the 17th. Here **Ganga Gurung fulfilled her pledge of Rs. 100,000**. Meena's friend, **Janaki Shrestha pledged Rs. 100,000**, and Meena's "Chyama" (aunt), **Neelam Gurung pledged Rs. 50,000** for now.

The month began with our dear friend and a colleague in the movement, **Uma Shah gifting us Rs. 100,000**. As she said: *"This contribution is in memory of my late mother (Bishnu Kumari Rana) who raised me to be a decent human being and face any situation with resilience and self-confidence. She also loved greenery. Hope my meagre contribution will be of use diju"*. The money is deposited in our bank! Soon after, **Subha Pandey, one of Susan's sisters, gifted us Rs. 100,000** (now in our bank account) – it is to be noted that this is Subha's second gift for the PSC. Padma Mukhi Meena Gurung was able to invite **Renuka**

Gurung as a Rs. 100,000 donor to the PSC – the amount had been duly transferred to the NA account.

Then I received this email from **Professor Han Verschure, our friend, supporter, and expert group member:** *“I would again like to make a gift. I was hoping to be able to donate 2000,00 Euros from my own (and Marleen's if she agrees), savings”.* Yes – this will be **Rs. 300,000 approximately Han.** Sadly we donot have a registered not for profit in Belgium – so you may have to make a direct transfer. Thank you so very much for your ongoing support and I hope we see you in Nepal soon!

Around mid-June, I requested Gyanu Poudel from Bhairawa, an IGFF colleague among others, to please support the PSC. **Gyanu promptly pledged Rs. 100,000, with her husband Dinesh Poudel.** At this point on my request, **PC**, who was sitting with us also agreed to make another symbolic gift **to the PSC of Rs. 100,000** (considering that he is advising the Trust he advises, to support the building of our entire infrastructure/s!). These were wonderful moments for the PSC! Since Renuka’s was an earlier pledge, this month we came close to our goal – by being gifted Rs. 950,000!

We thank each of you from the depth of our hearts – thank you all!

Others:

The wonderful thing happening in an ongoing way is the call for “Yatras” by the IGFF (see Facebook page)! So far after the end of March and particularly in the past 2 months, 20 yatras in 15 districts have been undertaken spontaneously - from remote Bajura to Lalitpur! There are 5 more yatras that have already been planned. 15 women’s organizations engaging some 200 plus organizational representatives have participated so far in these yatras. Nagarik Aawaz’s two yatras under the



Anupam Abhiyan one in Nawalpur and the other in Ghusel/Lalitpur, are represented in the above photos! IGFF's movement building work has kicked off well. And the goal to ensure women's equitable and representative participation in the 2027 elections, as well as self-reliant development in true sense of the word is not too far in the horizon!

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

Photo Courtesy: Govinda, Dawa, Rita

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st July 2024
Subject: Padmalaya Monthly Update – July

Our Context:

Even before the 1st week ended there was much fear owing the flooding and landslides in many parts of Nepal, causing over 200 losses of life and significant loss of property. Padmalaya, while taking some anticipated precautions, did not suffer any damage from the flooding. Although during those same first days, Nepalis suffered some over 50 lives in just one disaster when two buses were washed down from a roadside cliff in a landslide accident coupled with the chaos of a sudden change of government. A plane crash in recent days in Kathmandu airport, even just as it took off, is raising many questions and concerns regarding safety owing to technical carelessness, and mismanagement. With 18 persons dead out of 19, it has been both sickening and fearful this last week. The trauma of all these lives on...



Govinda reported that Nawalpur too worried for flooding and therefore precautions were taken individually and collectively as far as possible. Rising temperatures did not make it easy for the seasonal work of harvesting corn and planting rice. The bus/air crash he said created a sense of fear and trauma among all its community members.

Work With the Land:

This month has been filled with planting rice – in the whole country. The official data shows that rice planting increased

compared to last year. The 15th of the Nepali month (approximately the first or second of July) is marked as a national rice festival, where people throughout Nepal (in fact even those not planting rice like me), primarily eat beaten rice and yogurt in celebration, on this day, while the planting work is done with mirth and abandonment, splashing wet earth at each other, and singing!

Padmalaya too finished planting rice in its lands. To ensure the saplings are ready and healthy; that there is enough rain or irrigation required for the young rice plants; that there is adequate skilled human resource for plantation; and to correctly pull out the saplings for plantation - is not easy in these times. Equally invaluable, is the intrinsically integrated honouring and the worshipping of mother earth before the planting, for an insect and disease free bountiful harvest



for all. But Govinda using all our youths/staff at Nawalpur – that too on a Saturday, accomplished all these beautifully. Our planters told us that they were used to this in their own farms, and that they enjoyed doing this as a team, and did not at all mind foregoing a holiday!



Susan and Rita visited Padmalaya on the 14/15th. As always, there was much to plan and understand with Govinda, both on the construction aspects as well as on the management aspects of Padmalaya. Padmalaya is now being prepared so that a major workshop for about 35 NA staffs can be held by 21st August. But even as of

now, Govinda has already managed to conduct two inhouse workshops. In relation with this, it is agreed that Govinda's office space will be shifted to **Padmadhar**, and that space – the first building we built in Padmalaya now named **Samjana**, will be readied as a residential facility. We have had an artist from **Laher Srijana – Durga**, assisted by our inhouse housekeeping staff Sanju, paint some traditional Tharu art in **Padmini** and **Padmadhar** buildings.

In **Sanjeev's** report this month he gives a glimpse of the construction work progress in the 4 buildings: *"The second phase of construction progress has reached up to 18% where the **Private Residence** substructure work is complete and the CSEB block work for the superstructure is ongoing. In the **Kitchen & Dining Block**, the substructure is done, and CSEB block work has reached halfway up the superstructure. For the **Exhibition Hall**, the substructure is nearing completion, and rebar work for the plinth beam is underway. In the **Multipurpose Hall**, all substructure work is finished, and steel metal posts have been ordered, with delivery expected on the 1st of August. Fabrication of the steel structure will start after the posts arrive, and the contractor is updating the drawings following architectural changes to the metal sections on NA's request".* Now the construction group is busy working with some 40 labourers at the site and two site engineers.

This month, much work in relation with assignments, checking of BOQs, and signing of contracts also happened in relation to the **Sukarma** building (the earlier so-called library). Simultaneously, the preparation of beds/furnishings and all else that is needed is underway.



**Programme
Update:**



Padmalaya accomplished its **first residential training** for 15 women, who were housed in Padmini, the other 10 participants came daily, along with the staff, who too, came from their homes. Following this experience and encouraged by the successful hosting, Govinda and team, conducted another non-residential

workshop at Padmalaya with 35 participants in the Padmini Hall, during the 25th - 27th. The workshop participants expressed that they learned so much from the way Padmalaya was running. The homely hospitality, the comfort and cleanliness, and the nutritious food, made all participants express that they would take the learnings to apply it in their own lives and homes. The Padmalaya team are now more confident in running programs from Padmalaya - thus there has been another landmark in the partial opening of Padmalaya, and much sooner than we thought possible!

Govinda reported that 19 programs where all together 525 people participated/benefited were conducted this month. Additionally, there were four interactions conducted among the local office bearers and the local community people. Here too the participants expressed that the work NA has done through the peace centers, and Padmalaya have directly benefited the local community people in multiple ways - most of all, those people who are most needing of support through the counseling services, immediate relief, income generation activities, or awareness raising and learning. Padmalaya also continues to daily serve, some 65 persons (laborers, staff, and overseers), the yogurt drink made from **Padmavati's** milk at Padmalaya. This month lending to the women's movement, the Padmalaya team, helped in making 44 IGFF associates,



who come from 7 VDCs of Nawalpur District. They have also committed to assisting in any way they can with the ongoing Anupam Abhiyan's 2024 yatras!

Fund-raising & Financial Update:

Rs. 5655 came from the sale of corn,



soap, surf, and others and some precious gifts of money from the local community members!

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

On the 8th, the Padma Mukhis along with Susan, Rita, Sanjeev sat for a reflective meeting to assess the fund-raising done so far; to have a timeline and a shared

responsibility to enable donors to PSC to fulfill their pledged amount, ideally by the end of November; and to take stock of the PSC and each of our own learning in this process. **Neeta, Meena, Janaki, Roshani, Sanjeev, Susan, and Rita** were present. An update on the status of PSC was shared; some sharing and insights were pulled together by the Mukhis; and cheques against their pledges were handed over by Neeta and Janaki! It proved to be a very inspiring meeting for us all who participated.

Early on, **Anita Gautam**, a NA staff, now settled in the USA, send her pledged gift of Rs. 100,000. **Neeta Pradhan Joshi**, NA member and one of our Padma Mukhis fulfilled her pledge of **Rs. 500,000!** Via **Meena Gurung, Janaki Shrestha** also handed over her cheque of **Rs. 100,000** (above). On the same day **Riva & Suman S. Thapa** fulfilled their pledge of **Rs. 200,000** for the PSC. Likewise, **Swagat Raj Pandey** fulfilled his pledge of **Rs. 100,000**. **Srijana Pandey** too deposited her pledged amount of **Rs. 100,000**. Thus, ensuring an additional 11 lakhs in the PSC. Thank you all so much for doing this without a single reminder from our part.

This month **Rita** pledged **Rs. 10,00,000** to honour her late parents **Jibeshwori & Bajendra B. Basnyat** – this pledge, while easing our ongoing worries to secure the monthly 10 lakhs for the PSC, did not diminish all our efforts to fundraise when given an opportunity. **Urmila Shrestha (ED/Tewa)** with her husband **Ratna Prasad Amatya**, pledged **Rs. 100,000** in the loving memory of her **Late mother Madan Devi Shrestha**. Through the efforts Sanjeev made with his NA colleagues, NA programme staff, **Smriti Thapa's** friends **Suresh Man Singh**, made a generous gift of **Rs. 1,00,000** to the PSC, in memory of his late parents, **Laxmi & Chandra Man Singh**, as well as **Karma Tamang** gifted **Rs. 50,000** in memory of his late parents **Tolma & Kanang Tamang**. Both the amounts have been already deposited in our bank by our newest donors as we thank **Smriti** for her efforts for the PSC.

We are lucky to have all your support as our 2 year campaign draws to a close in the next few months! Please fulfill your pledges as you can, and make gifts to the PSC now - if you wish!

Bank Information:

If you wish to make a gift to **help build Padmalaya**, or 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

Photo Courtesy: Govinda, Rita

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st August 2024
Subject: Padmalaya Monthly Update – August

Our Context:

Nawalpur, did not remain untouched from this year's monsoon rage although less severe in comparison to some of the other districts of our country. Overall, according to official records some 250 persons lost their lives, as did 1000 livestock, and another almost 300 were injured. Thousands have been displaced and some lost their homes and everything that they had. On the brighter side, we can expect a bumper paddy harvest, which is very good news for most Nepali families relying on agriculture.

Work With the Land:

Similarly, Padmalaya is expecting a very good harvest of rice this year. The weeding of the rice saplings, feeding them manure, and ensuring that they are not affected by flooding was what the



farmers throughout Nawalpur including the Padmalaya team worked at this month.



On the 14/15th, our architect **Prabal**, and PMC **Dambar**, visited Padmalaya with the Electric Engineer for necessary supervision and to give instructions. Contractor Sambod, informs us that he has now received all the necessary drawing with requested revisions. Following on their heels, Susan, Sanjeev, and Rita visited Padmalaya on the 15th – with Manish and Nisha from the communications unit of NA. The

primary purpose of this visit was to look into the communications aspect of/for Padmalaya with a short-term goal until March 2025, and an ongoing longer-term communication and documentation goals. Construction work is now moving at various stages for 6 building at Padmalaya. At present work is in full swing despite the rains and the heat – at present 6 buildings are at various stages of being built: 3 residential blocks; kitchen/dining block; exhibition hall, and the multi-purpose community hall.





Preparations of **Samjhana** as a residential facility included Ain Kumari and others mud plastering the walls, Navaraj making the iron-rod beds, Sanjeev ordering mattresses and linens, and buying towels, blankets, and

other necessary items. Importantly, it was agreed to plaster the inside walls with Tharu style mud-plaster after the temporary office set up there, was moved over at mid-month to **Padmadhar** – the newly built men’s residential building. Now since the 20th, **Samjhana** has been converted to a residential space each room housing 4 persons on 2 bunk beds. Thus, with some adjustments no doubt, NA successfully completed their Composite Heritage residential training housing in Padmalaya, during 21 – 23rd.

Susan, Rita and Sanjeev visited again during 16/17th to ensure that all remaining necessary construction and logistical requirements would be completed before a workshop scheduled for all NA staff during 21/23rd. As was planned and we had all worked towards, the **Composite Heritage Workshop conducted by the Institute for Social Democracy, New Delhi** led by



Shruti Chaturvedi was accomplished. It was wonderful that this could be done at Padmalaya for 42 NA team members!

As Padmalaya is coming to be partially used, we with Prabal’s guidance, also focused on

accessibility issues to ensure disability accessible toilets and locally built lifts for **Padmini** and **Padmadhar** – the residential buildings. For a good part of this month, the leadership lay with **Nirajan**, and the staff team, since on account of unavoidable personal reasons, Govinda was in a remote management mode as far as communications allowed! Kudos to all of them and Nirajan, who helped make it all possible at Padmalaya!

Programme Update:

Govinda reports that the temporary office which will eventually move in March 2025, to **Sukarma** (aka the library building), is now running from Padmadhar – the staff have settled in their new spaces. This month, in Nawalpur, Padmalaya accomplished 26 programme/s and events that were demanded by the local communities as well as those that they would find useful. Over 900 community members participated in these programme/s. It is now clear that the community has heightened awareness and are taking more individual responsibilities to ensure that they can take care of one another or those that need more support. Counseling is now felt to be a valuable service in the community, and even this month, there were over 23



persons who benefited from these services.

At the construction site, over 55 persons continue to benefit from the yogurt drink from the milk Padmavati gives. The 6 youths trained in housekeeping and food management

at Tewa are currently based at Padmalaya. This also helped in the logistical management of the 3-day residential workshop that was conducted at Padmalaya this month!

Needless to say, that Govinda and his team continue with regular and ongoing work, despite the many kinds of adjustments that need to be made owing to frequent visitors, related to programme and construction work; and the constant moving, shifting, and managing of spaces



as may be necessary in a construction site as it evolves.

Fund-raising & Financial Update:

Padmalaya saved Rs. 3000 in the bank through the sale of produce/products, and the contributions made by

individuals.

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

This month **Rita** deposited **Rs. 900,000** to complete her pledge of **10 lakhs** honouring her late parents. Without an ask **Prakash Mani Ghimire** also made a deposit of his **Rs. 100,000** pledge for the PSC. One of the sweetest gifts we have received came from Kanchanpur. **Sita Bohra** our activist leader wrote: “*We the **Conflict Victim & Single Women Development Center**, have deposited **Rs. 50,000** (remaining) to help build **Padmalaya Nawalpur** and we are so happy to join you in this wonderful work and we hope for its early completion.*” We thank you ALL!

At the very beginning **Susan** announced that she would like to **honour and express gratitude to all her life Gurus** with a gift of **Rs. 200,000** to the PSC. Bless Susan and her honouring of her Gurus! **Roopa Khadka**, my grandniece pledged **Rs. 100,000** for the PSC. Of this she already deposited Rs. 30,000. Again, via Sanjeev, Smriti’s father, **Ram Sharan Karki**, gifted the PSC **Rs. 100,000**, honouring his late parents - **Padma Kumari & Bhupa Dhwoj Karki**. A welcome gift came from **Chanda Thapa** – our long-time colleague and friend in the movement. Chanda promptly gifted a sum of **Rs. 100,000** to honour her late parents, **Uma Devi & Som Bahadur Thapa Magar**. **Jyoti & Biswash Gauchan** pledged **Rs. 100,000** to the PSC and it will be remitted in September to the NA account, marking a significant occasion in the couple’s life! We are honoured to be thus supported by the new PSC donors – we sincerely thank each of you!

Now that we have come to the last quarter of our 2-year **Padma Sarthak Campaign**, we are happy to share with you that till this month, we have raised in pledges, **Rs. 1,84,73,058**; out of which we **have received Rs. 1,25,37,873 in cash**. This means that if we were to fulfill our goal of 2 corer rupees during this 2-year campaign, we still need to raise Rs. 16,00,000 or 16 lakhs. This will mean that at least 4 lakhs needs to be raised each month until December 2024. Of course, this will mean we also fully receive all the amount/s pledged to the PSC!

Here is an opportunity for each of us. Padmalaya will bear yours’s/loved one’s names on its wall! But the count-down begins! **Padma Mukhis** – hope you have all perked up your ears!

This is my earnest request and a gentle reminder to each of you who have given us the inspiration to go on through this campaign by your gifts and pledges, to **kindly please fulfill your pledges** as is convenient to you - within 2024. Our colleague, **Sanjeev Singh** will send each of you, a personal reminder in the coming month/s – but certainly with no pressures. For we already feel the PSC has been successful, and we will have our walls plastered with individual names – mostly Nepali!

Others:

The yatras of the IGFF are beginning to pick up as the monsoon tapers off. Siddhicharan VDC in **Okhaldhunga District** led by CSN partner/s of Tewa, and the consultation in Saina Maina VDC in **Butwal District** organized by the DWA with Namuna, are but two such examples. Even as of now **Dharan, Dang, Nawalpur, Lalitpur, and Nepalganj** are rising through the Anupam Abhiyan of the IGFF!

Bank Information:

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Name: Siddhartha Bank,

Address: Satdobato, Lalitpur, Nepal,

Account Name: Nagarik Aawaz,

Account No: 01815090950,

Swift Code: SIDDNPKA

Photo Courtesy: Govinda, Sanjeev, Rita, Rupa, Nirajan



To: All
From: Rita
Date: 30th September 2024
Subject: Padmalaya Monthly Update – September

Our Context:

This month of September, with the 21st being dedicated as the International Peace Day, we count 23 years of work NA has done and continues to do! We mourn and stand up against war and genocide happening in Gaza and Ukraine, and in many other places. We stand up against any forms of violence, in the private or public domains – here and in our world. At NA we know love and care for each other and the planet is the only way – we share this in solidarity and send assurances to each of you that we are committed to peace – it is the only way for NA.



Padmaraj being united with mother Padmavati after 24 hours. They had to be relocated in safe places during the inundation.

Owing to incessant rains for two days/nights the highest rainfall ever experienced in 54 years since measuring of rainfalls began, disaster struck – in Kathmandu, and the East and Central Nepal. The Home Ministry reports 99 dead, 68 missing, and 100 injured (TKP – 29th). In the Kathmandu valley itself 37 people died. All roads and highways linking Kathmandu is disconnected for now. Bridges, and other infrastructures have been washed away. Hundreds of homes are submerged, and thousands are left without food, a change of clothing, or beds to sleep in.

Shockingly for us the Narayani River swelled like never

before inundating two villages – one of them Sehari. In Padmalaya, the waters rose to the level of the ground floor. This happened overnight and on the 28th. Even as this was happening, we were in a NA Community Safety Net – Post Disaster with 12 partner organizations. A rapid response team has been sent by Gyanu Poudel of Namuna (CSN partner organization based in Bhairawa), and our lead person in the CSN, Hari has also mobilized an outreach team to help clean and cook – not just for the Padmalaya team but also neighbouring community people needing support. On the 29th the water began to recede and cleaning up work has begun – it is painstaking work. Early this morning, in consultation with the local Municipality, a peace kitchen is already being organized in a Ward no 15, as was designated, where one of our Peace Ambassadors come from.

This past month and now, the country has been and needs to be celebrating the big one like the Dasain and Tihar festivals beginning early October. But the multiple effects of the recent disaster are going to make it very difficult to have a celebratory mood or many festive doings. Although Tewa, our friends at NA and Tewa's homes, and my home has stayed high and dry, I realize I am still in shock. As such, I am abstaining from news and media to stay focused and sane. But as seen in the past, we are resilient – and the larger community is rising to support and help. This report is lacking in substance – but hope you understand.

Work With the Land:



Now during our visit to Padmalaya (3/4 and 20/21st), it is always useful to think through the minute details of how we are going to be using these facilities in the long run, and what we need to accomplish for the forthcoming annual IGFF meet during 22 – 24th March 2025. We are expecting a minimum of 250 – 300 persons. So how do we plan a

reasonably comfortable community stay for all the participants! This is our main concern at present times.

The weekly zoom meetings organized by PMC Dambar is ongoing and very useful in coordination and feedback for all the parties – and it is incredible how many details there are that each of us need to pay attention to. Susan, Sanjeev, and Rita's visit 20/21st as always was valuable. We witnessed the casting of 2 roofs – the Sukarma's top roof covering and a residential block's first floor; and we also had a detailed and a through update on the buildings we will be finishing for the IGFF March 2025 event.

Programme Update:



During the visit of Susan, Sanjeev, and Rita, during 3/4th - we took time with housekeeping, and the kitchen team to listen to their experiences in managing the first significant residential workshop at Padmalaya, and then applauding them for their hard work and time managing skills, we gave them some tips based on what could be further improved. They were all very happy that coming to work early, and taking turns to accomplish tasks, they could also participate and learn from the Composite Heritage Workshop. In the initial days, it is a lot of moving, shifting, and adjustments – but the youths and take these in their happy and confident strides!

During our second visit on the 20/21st Govinda had planned a meeting with the local people who could be possible donors so that we introduce to them to the Padma Sarthank Campaign (PSC) and allow them to participate as donors if they so wished. We met 15 such community leaders and social workers. They were all happy that over time they found NA to be a “*different kind of NGO*” – doing substantive work and investing in their communities. Their ownership for Padmalaya had greatly increased overtime and some of them said that they would consider our requests and inform Govinda accordingly. It was wonderful for us to see their respect and ownership for Padmalaya! Sanjeev is coordinating as usual with the locally made lift for Padmini and Padmadhar to make the residential building disability accessible, Tejita our interior decorator

for the Sukarma building, and all the other technical experts for all that is needed in an ongoing way.

It is always astounding that just in 25 days this September, before disaster struck, the following workshop & Training took place in Padmalaya.

- A 10-days Psychosocial Training for 17 participants who came from all the NA partner organizations in different districts,
- A 5-days Psychosocial Training for 25 conflict affected women participants who are



receiving holistic support over some years – in helping heal, and have a reasonable life, and

- A 2-days Peace Table for local stakeholders holders who were 30 in numbers.



All the logistics were managed in Padmalaya, generating income for Padmalaya. Youths managing housekeeping and kitchen have risen up to the occasion and Govinda tells us, are doing a fantastic job! Besides these, there were 18 community peace initiatives that took place in the local communities. These were managed by

Padmalaya staff and the youth Peace Ambassadors.

Also, Padmalaya had 7 orientations on the Yatras (walks/demonstrations) of the IGFF initiated nationwide women's movement "Anupam Abhiyan"! These yatras are to gain the movement visibility, build associateship/s, and to garner support for the Women's Empowerment Fund the IGFF has initiated to enable them to support women candidates for canvassing in the 2027

election. These yatras were all managed by our youth staff and volunteers – and were a visual delight (with local costumes and music), where the community joyfully participated!

Fund-raising & Financial Update:

Once more from the sale of produce, gifts/and donations, and savings Padmalaya collected Rs. 11700.00 which was duly deposited in the NA bank.

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

This month the pledge of Rs. 100,000 from Smriti & Sarthak Jung Thapa was fulfilled. They expressed that they wished to make their gift in memory of **their grandfather, Late Surya Bahadur Thapa**. Kamal Rupakheta fulfilled his pledge of Rs. 100,000 to the PSC. As he said a couple of months back, **Biswas Gauchan**, fulfilling his pledge deposited Rs. 100,000 **honouring his wife Jyoti**, on her birthday on the 29th!

This month opened with a pledge of **Rs. 100,000 each from Govinda Acharya** - leader, Padmalaya/Nawalpur, and **Nirajan Upadhyay who is the Administrative/Finance Officer!** Not to be outdone, NA Kathmandu staffs, **Nisha Thapa and Kaushila Thapa too pledged Rs. 100,000 each** for the PSC. Furthermore, Govinda announced that **all the staff of Padmalaya/NA have made a cumulative gift of Rs. 200,000** to the PSC! Following that **Deepa Panth** (my grandniece) also **deposited Rs. 100,000** for the PSC **to honour her parents Mithu Devi/Tara Bahadur Khadka**. Following that on the heel, at one ask, our valued friend, **Patricia Fernandez-Pacheco Estrada with her two young daughters Candela & Olivia too gifted us Rs. 100,000**. NA Past Senior Communications Officer, **Ganga Sagar Rai pledged Rs. 100,000** in honour of his daughter **Gauri Rai**, for the PSC. On Susan's request, our friend, **Janaki Shah**, Tewa Board Member **pledged Rs. 100,000**. Soon after, (Saraswoti) **Saru Subedi, Bishnu Maya Magar**, NA programme staffs pledged **Rs. 100,000 each**. **Bishnu** wishes her gift to honour her mother **Jamuna Gharti Magar** and in memory of her father **Late Pima Ram Gharti Magar**. Inspired by colleagues, **Ashmita Dawadi** - NA Counselor wishes to honour mother, **Kalpna Devi** and father, **Bishnu Prasad Dawadi** with her gift of **Rs. 100,000**; and Finance Officer **Sangita Maharjan** too pledged **Rs. 100,000** honouring her parents, **Ishwori/Mangal Das Maharjan**. NA PO **Sushil Shahi**, honouring parents **Sushila/Ram Shahi**, and Senior Counselor **Sudip Sigdel**, honouring Parents **Ganga Devi/Lila Kumar Sigdel**, too jumped in to pledge **Rs. 100,000 each**, closely followed by **Antina Ranjit**, Counselor who **pledged Rs. 100,000** in honour of her parents, **Puspa Ratna/Suloman Laxmi Ranjit**.

On the 18th the Padma-Mukhis had their closure meeting, and luckily all the Mukhis were present: Neeta, Meena, Riva, Erina, Roshani, and Samjhana. Taking this opportunity, Riva Thapa **pledged and additional Rs. 100,000 for the PSC**. This meeting was to give an update and inform all that owing to most NA programme staff pledging 1 lakh each, we will have met our goals if we receive all the remaining pledged amounts. Sanjeev is beginning to send out a reminder letter to those who need to fulfil their pledges. Susan and Rita thanked all the Mukhis for their support so far, and especially thanked Meena Gurung for her consistent and devoted efforts. As a token of appreciation, as festivals arrive, all the Mukhis received a hand-crafted brass spice-box from Susan.

Just **this month we have received pledges and gifts of 18 lakhs!** It was agreed that there was no need to meet physically as Padma-Mukhis anymore! Also, the very good news is that the 2

year-long Padma-Sarthak Campaign will be fully realized within December 2024! A big “thankyou” to each one of our **Padma-Mukhis**, who helped us in making it possible for NA to realize the PSC goals! Thank you ALL!



Others:

I have so much to share about the yatras – happening all over Nepal but will refrain for now. We/IGFF have done 53 yatras in 24 districts; 20 orientations on the Anupam Abhiyan’s yatras; we now have over 2000 associates all over Nepal; and have raised little

over 70 lakhs for the Women’s Empowerment Fund! We are happy!

Participants of the IGFF SC Committee Meeting on the 29th!

On the 27th of October, Lynne

Brennan and Elizabeth Wickwire are hosting the annual fundraiser sale at Lynne’s home in Cabbagetown, Toronto. What can we say! This will be the 21st annual tea – starting with the 1st fundraising event for NA in 2004. Lynne tells us that: *“Over those years we have sent \$ 116646 Canadian from the sales (including selling things and generous donations made). In addition to that we have done social appeals three times, for the earthquake, for COVID and for the flood. We raised \$ 17615 through those appeals totalling up to \$ 134,261 Canadian”*. Wow – allow us to let this sink in! over 21 years of unflinching service and love for what we do Lynne Brennan and Elizabeth Wickwire have done this work with love and dedication, pulling together their friends and family in their extended generosity! Consider all the required work of - buying, stuffing suitcases, storing, pulling out, ironing, setting up, opening up Lynne’s home, preparing refreshments, and counting up and transferring money to Nepal! I can only say that I/we at NA feel so lucky, and deeply humbled!

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Account Name: Nagarik Aawaz,
Account No: 01815090950,

Swift Code: SIDDNPKA

Photo Courtesy: Govinda, Sanjeev, Rita, Rupa, Nirajan

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st October 2024
Subject: Padmalaya Monthly Update – October

Our Context:

Taking stock of the late September floods/landslides according to the Home Ministry, there were 224 deaths, 155 injured, and 24 went missing. 700+ home was fully damaged, 500+ partially damaged, 43 schools and 41 health centers were also damaged, besides highways, hydro power stations, suspension and other bridges, and other major infrastructures causing losses in billions. Livestock, paddy fields, fishponds, fruit/vegetable farms, and cardamoms and sugarcane fields were lost in billions of rupees. The capital city experienced a combination of climate change (incessant rains), and human-made (flooding and landslides) disasters that occurred primarily owing to unstoppable infrastructure building, felling of trees, plotting of farmlands for residential purposes, and opening up of tracks/roads without proper



environmental studies/explorations.



Quoting Susan's report to the NA Board and team on the 4th: *"As you are all aware, the recent torrential rains, floods, and landslides (which continue in many areas), have significantly impacted our working areas, including Lalitpur and Padmalaya. In Lalitpur, in coordination with the Godawari Municipality, we sent 100 sacks each of rice, beans, lentils, and masura, which were distributed in Lele and Chhampi by our team/s of Lalitpur – staff, peace ambassadors, and peace volunteers. We are still awaiting the reopening of the road in Ghusel to deliver relief support and are in constant communication with our Peace Ambassador Dawa".*

"At Padmalaya, under the leadership of Govinda, Hari Ji, and the Padmalaya team, along with Nagarik Aawaz volunteers and the team of Namuna, Bhairawa (In the leadership of Rajesh ji) we have been running a Peace Kitchen since September 30, which will continue until the 5th. Rita Dijju and I

visited Padmalaya on October 2nd and returned on October 3. We first spent time with Govinda, Nirajan, and Hari Ji, listening to them as they shared the current situation. Afterward, we sat in a circle with the entire Padmalaya team and volunteers. It became a deeply emotional moment, weeping as release and bonding in love. The sense of ownership and love for Padmalaya was huge in everyone's expressions. Despite the challenges, they were able to save many things. Thanks to the way we designed the infrastructure — there was no severe damage". The peace kitchen feeding some 250 persons, two times a day ran for 6 days, until the 5th. After cleaning up and salvaging all they could at Padmalaya, Govinda's team could celebrate the Dasain festival with their families.

Overall, in such an environment in Nabalpur, owing to the previous month's floods, **Govinda** reports that there seems to be little interest and energy to celebrate the festivals. The farmers have been busy in harvesting rice and looking for mustard and potatoes seeds (since many lost their seeds in the floods), for the winter crop. Prices all over everywhere since the floods has



doubled! Despite these Padmalaya has given continuity to participating at the local government's activities in the respective communities and is also working to bring back Padmalaya to its normal condition.

Work With the Land:

After Susan and mine visit to Padmalaya on the 2nd, Govinda and his team worked hard at salvaging and cleaning up the place before breaking up for the Dasain holidays. Everything slowed down until now — although about 10 labourers continued to do the minimum they could — one being the scaffolding and preparing a cement ledge in the Sukarma Building in preparation for fixing in the full length window glass. On the 23rd **Dambar** resumed his weekly



zoom meetings. **Sanjeev**, on return from an extended holiday on the 20th has done a good job of follow-up/s and coordination work. There is just so much that needs to be followed up to bring the work up to speed!

Dambar submitted all the technical reports required for the remaining 8 buildings under construction to the Madhyabindu Municipality. The approval from the Municipality is necessary for seeking approval from the Social Welfare Council (SWC). Only then the SWC will notify the release of funds from the NA bank account. Not easy! But we did receive the approval on the 24th and NA has initiated the process with the SWC! This official approval has



been received for the plinth level work and after 2 months Govinda informs us that the follow-up approval for the buildings needs to be acquired. Dambar is also continuing with the weekly zoom meetings where all technical persons meet with NA responsible people. This enables all to be updated, give suggestions, and act.

We have begun to harvest rice, and it is accomplished both at Padmalaya and in our land designated for the city center office using our own team at Padmalaya. Potato seeds have been acquired and are being prepared for their shoots to come out ready for planting. Padmavati our buffalo, now gives milk only one times a day, after the trauma of displacement, and of familiar nutritious food (green grass) during the floods and in the following days.

Keeping the **upcoming IGFF annual convening during 22nd – 24th March 2025**, in mind we



are now beginning to order all the necessary logistical items and furnishings to house approximately 300+ IGFF associates. The selection of the best items for durability, but not paying the market prices quoted – has enabled us to improvise to produce our own goods through skilled people e.g. folding beds, straw mats, and stacking chairs.



affected by the floods, the Padmalaya team assessed the needs and has been providing necessary stationery and books destroyed by the floods.

Programme Update:

The peace kitchen in Ward No. 15 – Chisapani, of Nawalpur begun with the post disaster CSN rapid response teams from Namuna/Rupendehi, and NA/Lalitpur went on for 6 full days feeding over 250 persons a meal twice a day. In solidarity with our team who suffered the trauma of the floods, Susan and Rita visited Padmalaya on the 2nd – just to express our love and assess the situation in Padmalaya and neighbouring areas to see what may be required and how everyone was coping. This timely visit and support for the directly effected team members was highly felt and appreciated.

Govinda in his report informs us that despite the disruptions caused by the floods, Padmalaya, conducted 15 different programmes as per the community/ies requests mostly for the school children of 15 local schools. Over 450 children and teachers participated and benefited from these. In a local school

As requested by the local government, a training on UN SCR 1325 and 1820 has been given to 25 women who have been directly affected by the armed conflict. This has become a government requirement to ensure the 2nd National Plan for UN SCR 1325/1820 is enacted – not that I can understand why after 18 years of laying down arms and an ineffective TJ process!

Fund-raising & Financial Update:

As we can imagine Govinda and team did not manage to raise anything this month dealing with the devastating floods that took place just at the very end of September.

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

Sanjeev's aunt, **Sangita Malla** deposited her cheque according to her pledge of **Rs. 100,000**. **Urmila Shrestha** too deposited her pledged amount of **Rs. 100,000** honouring the memory of her mother. **Bikram Bajracharya**, visiting his home from Australia, also deposited his pledged amount of **Rs. 100,000**. **Janaki Shah** fulfilled half her pledge this month – **Rs. 50,000**.



On the wee hours of the 28th, long time friend **Tracy Gary** organized a zoom space for family and friends of late **Cindy, (LUCINDA BUCK EWING) 1941 – 2024**, in order for us to celebrate her life and work. During this zoom meeting, it was agreed to send gifts honouring **Cindy** made on that occasion, to Padmalaya. Although at this moment I do not know what that amount may be, I hope to hear from **Tracy** in the near future. In this way, **Cindy's** memory will live in Padmalaya!

*Our Chair of the Board, **Dr. Chhatra Amatya's** Batch mates **Dr. Dhana Sharma Kaushik & Dr. Vidya Sagar Kaushik** at the All India Institute of Medicine, donated **Rs 200,000** to honour their father **Late Shree Indra Prasad Sharma**. We thank*

Dr/s Kaushiks with deepest gratitude, and importantly Chattra diju for getting the PSC words out to her medical school friends.

On the 28th, our friend **Lynne Brennan** from Toronto sent us very good news! The Tea for Peace that **Elizabeth Wickwire** and Lynne set up annually in Lynne's home in Cabbage Town, Toronto, this year has made **Can \$ 6000 – counting sales and gifts**. Lynne said this well exceeded the goals she had set for the sale. This is one of the most humbling gifts for the PSC and NA. Thank you all, from all of us at NA!

Dear friends, the two year **Padma Sarthak Campaign (PSC)** is coming to a close in the following two months at the end of December. We still have 2 more months! We will so appreciate if all of you can, fulfill your pledges within November if possible. This will be very helpful – for us to count, organize and report to you by the December update. But if not, we do understand, and your gifts are welcome anytime within December too. We are just so grateful that u have lent us your good names and your funds.

Thank you all sincerely - very much!

Others:

The **IGFF Anupam Abhiyan campaign** continues. Oritentations and yatras, are happening



and are planned for the forthcoming months. The monthly zoom meetings (knowledge building, sharing informations on yatras, and reflections on women in politics and all it entails) are ongoing. Also things are in preparation for the forthcoming convening of the IGFF associates in Padmalaya! the picture above is of the Baglung Yatra with the help of CSN Tewa.

Furthermore, **Hari Dhami** responsible for the NA Community Safety Net work post-disasters, reports of such good work! All the partners and NA are doing this in terms of relief and long-term support enabling many affected people and communities to get back on their feet. Their regular meetings and reflections are helping expand their own individual and organizational learning and preparedness as well.

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Photo Courtesy: Govinda, Rita, Rupa, Hari, Nirajan

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 30th November 2024
Subject: **Padmalaya** Monthly Update – November

Our Context:

This month in Nawalpur, the local communities primarily are busy harvesting rice and preparing their fields for planting potato and sowing mustard. This time onwards, owing to the fog, animals from the adjoining **Chitwan National Park**, mostly - elephants, wild boar, deer, and rhinos wander into villages. This month, a rhino attacked and killed a man planting potatoes in his fields while the other three in the same field managed to escape. There is always increased fear for safety during these months, for this reason.

A happy occasion at Padmalaya this month was the wedding of **NA staff Sumitra Chaudhary** in Kawasoti where all participated! Congratulations and best wishes to Sumitra and her husband for their nuptial life.



Work With the Land:

Padmalaya has planted potato and mustard in all its available land. Despite the floods **Padmalaya harvested 31 quintals of fine rice** from its farmed lands. Padmalaya continues to work on the cleaning up and repair work from the last unprecedented floods. The earth had come back after the floods – it was plowed, manured, and readied for potatoes planting; **Padmavati**, our buffalo had begun to give milk twice daily as earlier; and the harvest of rice was being dried for several days before

storage and as necessary milling to take off husks. How nature rejuvenates and showers us its bounties – we can only be in gratitude in humility!



After Tihar holidays, **Rita with Sanjeev**, visited **Padmalaya** on the 4th. This had two purposes, 1) to catch up with our **contractor Sambed** (2nd from L) about picking up construction work to ensure we meet our targets in preparation for the **IGFF convening 22 – 24 March 2025**; and 2) to take 6 of our youths

trained in Tewa and Padmalaya to the **Temple of the 1000 Buddhas in Lumbini**, for **placement as home makers**. This still being the last day of holiday, we sat with Sambed and the team available, detailing all the work we needed to accomplish and how. Sambed was confident he could manage what was required, Sanjeev noted all he needed to follow-up with the technical team, and so did the Padmalaya team represented by **Nirajan** (who just returned from his holidays) at Padmalaya.



During 10/11 **Prabal and PMC, Dambar** visited **Padmalaya**. With our contractor **Rishi Ram Itani** and the contractor site engineer **Sambed**, they looked into what needed to be reviewed and revised post the floods, gave instructions on the work that needed to be accomplished for the March 2025 event, and tackled some of the issues

that needed to be addressed. The following are the key outputs of their visit as reported by Sambed:



- They looked at the details in the

Multipurpose Hall, Exhibition Hall, the Mechanical and Utility Block and the Sukarma Building (as a priority in preparation for the March event),

- They also detailed out the paving blocks, levelling the grounds and the pathways work, the boundary wall/s, the drainage slopes for the whole area, and
- They looked for a favourable place and positioning of the generator and the required capacity and concluded on what would work best.

This visit of our technical experts will ensure that work will move rapidly without confusion, since the Contractors have clear instructions now, and as of 15th November (post holidays), the



required labourers are at the site – and work picked up speed. **Dambar's weekly meetings** have also has helped bring everyone to speed with the required detailing work. This month **Prabal gave the design of the main entrance and the boundary walls** and **Tejita has done necessary revision work for the interior design of the**



Sukarma building. Now that all the formal processes have been completed, **Iron Touch, will fit the scissor style lifts (built locally) in Padmadhar and Padmini blocks by mid February 2025 to make the** dormitories

disability accessible.

Sanjeev informs us that incrementally and eventually now, **23 labourers are working full-**

time at the construction site and work has picked up full speed just before the month ended. Out of them 10 are working on the iron works for the multipurpose community hall, and the exhibition hall. Sanjeev has been coordinating with all the technical and the refurbishing people; NA with all the legal/fiscal processing of contractual documents and payments; Govinda/Nirajan with all the preparatory work that needs to happen at Padmalaya; and IGFF/Tewa/NA with all the necessary work here in preparation



for the significant March 2025 IGFF convening! Everyone is just busy, busy, busy - and happily so!

Programme Update:

Govinda informs us that the Padmalaya team is also engaged in the various ward level activities of the local government where NA's work is also being shared. This month Padmalaya hosted 4 residential training/workshops. From these the Padmalaya team benefited from having the experience in management of various aspects of running a center such as Padmalaya. This enabled Govinda and his team to assess their own strengths and improve on any aspects of housekeeping, food, and management, which were weak. Padmalaya was able to serve organically grown food (rice, lentils, potato, oil, and vegetables) in Padmalaya and the participating 95 participants in total, all expressed that their health benefitted from the same.

As informed by **Govinda in his monthly report**, during November, mobilizing the peace centers in Nawalpur, Padmalaya conducted **18 programmes in the local communities and schools. Over 650 persons benefited directly from these programmes.** Govinda pointed out that all this has helped in fostering community harmony, cooperation, and a sense of solidarity among one another. This month 5 persons requiring counseling services are also receiving necessary services in an ongoing way. All the staff and members of sub-committee of the Madhyabindu Municipality received an orientation on the UN SCR 1325/1820, as per their request. On the occasion of the **16 Days Campaign Against Violence Against Women**, street plays and rallies are being conducted where local level officials are also participating as informed and invited. Also, the **Anupam Abhiyan Yatras** are being conducted in the inner communities in various parts of Nawalpur. There will be 5 such Yatras during December, and a major District level Yatra is being planned for December 10

Fundraising & Financial Update:

Govinda miraculously in this challenging time post floods, has managed to **save Rs. 4,920** the monies gifted by the local community members and savings!

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

Early this month, it began with our Project Management Consultatant, **Dambar B. Basnet depositing his pledge of Rs. 100,011.30** (*additional rupees for auspiciousness of not leaving a 0 at the end*) in our bank. Susan's friends, **Shiva Pokhrel Baral & Uday Baral** also deposited their pledge of Rs. 100,000. Susan Risal honouring her Gurus pledge of Rs. 200,000 has also been deposited in our bank. NA Senior Finance Officer, **Merita** too deposited her pledge of Rs 100,000. **Rama/Ravi Shrestha** deposited Rs. 100,000.

All NA and Padmalaya team, Susan/Merita inform me, will deposite their pledge within December 2024. There are a significant number of staff who have pledged in both office/s – their names will go on record in our last update for the Padma-Sarthak campaign. **Tara Gurung, via our colleague/friend, Ching Lamu Sherpa** also deposited Rs. 100,108 in honour of her parents, **Chitra Kumari & Late Durga Bahadur Gurung.**

One last time I take the privilege of informing you all that December is still available for you to fulfill your pledges. This is also an additional month to gift and honour someone you love and respect. Their names will no doubt will speak of local philanthropy and self reliant and

sustainable development in Nepal – providing a model for others to follow! We sincerely thank you all who have participated and continue to do so here from.



Others:

After nine months of training and grooming, our six youths from Padmalaya were handed over to **Lama Buchung, the Manager for the White Monastery** in order to take care of the **1000 Buddha Temple in Lumbini**, built by my Guru, **Venerable Chokyi Nimya Rinpoche**.



The Yatras under the aegis of the Anupam Abhiyan led by IGFF is ongoing! To name a few districts, this month they have happened in **Nepalganj, Udayapur, Nawalpur, Humla**, and only

yesterday in **Kathmandu**! I personally went to **Humla** – the remotest district on the western end, close to the the Chinese border – close to Mount Kailash! **Dichen Dolker Lama (on far R)**, a Tewa grantee and an IGFF focal person, with her team enabled a historic moment for Humla. It was the first time the women of Humla came out on the streets shouting slogans and singing feminist songs! It was one of my lifetime most iconic day on the 18th to walk with them, despite signs of mild altitude sickness! It was no short of a miracle!

Bank Information:

If you 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**

Photo Courtesy: Govinda, Rita, Sanjeev, Sambod

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st December 2024
Subject: **Padmalaya** Monthly Update – December

Our Context:



Owing to the morning fog, animals from the **Chitwan National Park** are wandering in the buffer zone villages - causing fear and sometimes destruction of crops. Even Susan during our recent visit to Padmalaya on the 29th saw wandering rhinos! The Nawalpur lands are yellow with the flowering mustard plants. The Padmalaya farm is green with potatoes! It is just amazing to note that so close after the devastating floods – the earth is so generous and gifting as we all continue to be nurtured by this generosity while we begin 2025!



Work With the Land:

Rita, Susan and Sanjeev with PC visited **Padmalaya** during 14 - 16th. As always, this proved to a very beneficial trip. It was very good to show PC the progress of the construction site and also brief him on the financial status and the use of RBC's generous donations over time. We satisfactorily noted that the work progress



was very good picking up speed. Also, Rita and Susan with Sanjeev had multiple meetings – the major ones being as cited here below:

- Meeting Govinda and Nirajan to prepare for the IGFF event 22-24 March 2025,
- Meeting with Sambod, Contractor and Civil Engineer, to assess progress and see how work is planned out to finish 3 major buildings for the March 2025 event,
- We met at the site our interior designer **Tejita** with her husband Kundal Amatya, who has started

work. We also had a good meeting with her, and

- On our way to the airport we met with **Laher Srijana**'s production team and **Pratima, the Founder**, placing orders for what we would need by March 2025.
- Govinda/Nirajan had been recommended a caterer for the March 2025 event. So we met with **Bhabi Bhattarai** the owner of **Nawalpur Tent Catering (NTC)** and his friend, Tolanath Kandel, and we also met with...
- **Ganga Sagar Rai** who is consulting with NA to produce 2 seminal videos to showcase the peacebuilding work at Padmalaya with the youths, and the historical evidence of building and enabling Padmalaya so far. Both the videos are also to be showcased at the March 2025 IGFF event.

Dambar ji's weekly meetings are ongoing and very useful to work out necessary details for the technical teams. **Sanjeev** has been following through on many related technical fronts: e.g.



lifts, the glass windows for the Sukarma building, Tejita our interior designer for Sukarma, for the detailing of the furbishing & furnishings, and on all things NA needs to prepare in advance for the March event.

Once more Susan, Sanjeev, and Rita visited Padmalaya on the 29 – 30th. It is impressive how work had moved forward, especially on the 3 structures we need to finish for the IGFF March event: 1) exhibition hall, 2) multi-purpose community building, and the 3) **Sukarma** building, which is more complex owing to multiple pieces of work that need to happen in a complimentary way. Besides this we are aiming to pave the front yard which is 4300 sq ft in size. The pavers, concrete squares, are being casted and cured at the site, as instructed by Prabal. So far we have approximately 1000 pavers, but Sambed

tells me that we will be needing at least twice that number. We were happy to note that the steel and brick work in relation to partitions, and the woodworks (shelves etc), for Sukarma are going on well from Tejita's side. There is also a residential block, of which we are requesting Sambed to try finsh the 3 individual rooms on the first floor. This would enable us to provide rooms to a few of our special attendees, and we would not have to have them stay in a nearby hotel. But of course this may be wishful thinking for now. There is so much interdependent work on the Sukarma building that if one falls short, we know that we are all are at a risk of being stranded.

I for one am not even facing it right now for my own survival! Of course we can only pray and bite our nails in the meantime. We are also reminded that the flooding this fall was no help in finishing the work that is needed. **But the countdown has begun!**



During our visit to Padmalaya this time we also tested out the caterer who will be preparing food for the IGFF March event. We had NA programme people, staff, youths, and all the labourers at the site – all together 110 of us who ate lunch to taste the food. All of us unanimously agreed that **Bhabi Bhattarai of the Nawalpur Tent Caterers** could be trusted with the responsibility of doing our food during the IGFF March event. Of course we will work more with him during these upcoming months to ensure that the food is not only tasty, but also nutritious and healthy.



Programme Update:



Govinda and team organized 4 residential training workshops successfully in Padmalaya this month where cumulatively 180 participants participated. Besides these, the Padmalaya staff team along with the peace ambassadors have conducted 26

orientations in schools located at the Ward levels. These orientations were conducted on popular demands from the teachers and the students at these schools alike. Padmalaya is also engaged in collaborative activities with not only the local government and the municipality but also conducted a few joint collaborative activities with the private sector organizations e.g. Caritas Nepal and the Nawalpur Nursery Development Center. During the latter period of the 16 days campaign, Padmalaya youths also conducted 3 awareness rising street-dramas on the occasion of the 16 Days Campaign to end Violence Against Women. We are always astounded and appreciative of all **Govinda and his team** manage at Padmalaya!

Fundraising & Financial Update:

Rs. 4800 was the savings this month through the sale of farm produce, and a few donations received from individuals from the local community. At Padmalaya, this seemingly small sum of money is of great significance for 2 reasons: 1) its community philanthropy, and because the money is largely generated from the sale of our own produce.

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

A surprise gift came from my long term friend and supporter, **Galen Wood, USA** - who has sent us **US \$ 750, equivalent to Rs. 102,300**. A friend wishing to remain anonymous, sent



us a gift of **600 Pounds equivalent to Rs. 102240**. **Janaki Shah** fulfilled her pledge of Rs. 100,000 for Padmalaya. Surprising us, **Arjun Karki** not only fulfilled his pledge, but additionally gave us Rs. 50,000 thus giving the PSC a sum of **Rs. 150,000!** **Gyanu/Dinesh Poudel** fulfilled their

pledge of Rs.100,000. **Priti/Ganesh Mandal** fulfilled their pledge of Rs. 100,000. **Laxmi Ghalan** too fulfilled her pledge of Rs. 100,000. We express our deep appreciations to Galen, my dear anonymous friend, Janaki, Arjun, Gyanu/Dinesh, Priti, and Laxmi. Importantly, Lynne Brennen's and Elizabeth Wickwire's support from the house tea they host annually, **grew to be CAD 8,584, equivalent to Rs. 812,905** at the current conversion rate. We are so moved by this increased amount by an additional over CAD 2000, because it is owing to the gifts from many of our longtime friends in Canada! **Han Verschure and Marleen Iterbeke**, who are in our expert backstopping group, we say a humble thank you for your generous gift of 3000 Euro equivalent to Rs. 268,800. How can we say a "thank-you" to each of you – except do our work at NA and Padmalaya with more fervour!

Trishna Thapa, Hari Dhimi, and Pragati Luintel from NA, and Ganga Sagar Rai who earlier also worked with NA, fulfilled their pledges of Rs. 100,000 each. All **other NA staff members in Padmalaya and Kathmandu who have pledged 1 lakh rupees numbering in total are 41** and their names are as follows:

Sajan K.C. - Sanjay Pantha - Keshab Sharma - Manjana Dakal - Pramila Thapa - Shyam Kadel - Binod Maharjan - Susan Kathayat - Manish Pokhrel - Anjila Rayamaji - Nim Bahadur Tharu - Shikha Ram Mahato - Yan Kmari Kumal - Sunita Pariyar - Rasila Kumal Bote - SukMaya Chaudhary - Sunita Mahato Kathariya. Sarmila Mahato - Binita Mahato - Sanju Mahato - Ranjeeta Nepal - Taruna Mahato - Sangita Poudel - Sumitra Chaudhary - Alisha Sharma Lamichhane - Bhumika Pant - Bishnu Thanet - Sumitra Devkota - Rem Bahadur Kumal - Shovakant Sharma Lamsal - Sujata Kumal - Govinda Prasad Acharya - Nirajan Kumar Upadhyay - Kaushila Thapa - Sushil Shahi - Sudip Sigdel - Bishnu Maya Gharti - Nisha Thapa - Saru Subedi (Saraswati) - Asmita Dawadi - Sangita Maharjan - Antina Ranjit

This means that **PSC now has 42 lakh additional rupees**. Out of these, an understanding at NA is that all the junior and support staffs' salary will be slowly deducted until the end of December 2025. This enables all of them to be equal donors without the pressure of time, and they too will now be proud donors to the PSC – the NA team felt that this was an essential positive affirmation action from an equitable approach for the support staff of NA! I continue to be impressed with the way NA enables an inclusive organization.

On the day of closure, Susan informed me that the **Chair of Nawalpur Ward Number 1, Tilak Ram Neupane, and Dandi Ram Sapkota, Principal of Shree Shanti Prathamik Bidyalaya**, each committed to giving the PSC **Rs. 100,000 each** within 2025. We will honour their gifts - since they will set very good examples of local philanthropy in Nawalpur.

Since we are closing the campaign this December 2024 on the completion of the 2 year Padma-Sarthak Campaign, we thank all those who pledged and boosted our morale initially, and all our donors; all those who supported us for the PSC - importantly our Padma-Mukhis; NA staff who worked especially for keeping records, for soliciting/thanking our donors. Thank you ALL! The credit is all yours that we went beyond our goals by accruing **Rs. 21,114,613 in numbers and 105.57 % in percentage!** Meaning we **exceeded our PSC goal of 2 croer rupees!** Let us all celebrate this new year – 2025, the **successful completion of the Padma Sarthak Campaign (2023 – 2024)** with gratitude and appreciations all around!

Others:

A **5.2 richter scale earthquake hit Jagganath VDC of Bajura** district in far-west Nepal on the 21st December, Saturday at 4.14 hours. Over 125 homes are uninhabitable owing to the damage caused. Other than the local government, and **NA CSN partner, Gift Nepal** (who could only reach the affected VDC after a 6 hour motor ride and 30 minutes walk), no one else is available nearby to assist. Owing to persistent minor earthquakes and after shocks in the past year, being a VDC inhabited by very underprivileged community, and this being the winter months in the high hills (temperatures being at **low -1/-3** and high being 12/15 degrees as of now), the risks are higher for the elderly, neo-natal mothers, and little children who are living in shabby plastic tents without warm clothes. **Hari Dhami** programme manager NA, is coordinating for NA to ensure that there is some comfort and relief for the affected people in Bajura. He informs us that **a peace kitchen, two times a day ran for the first 7 days where 105/110 persons participated**. After that, owing to the extreme cold, **a twice a day soup kitchen is ongoing for the next 15 days**.



After this, assessing needs, the soup kitchen may continue as decided by the community people. Thank you Gift Nepal and volunteers, thank you Hari for your leadership in making this possible.

The IGFF Anupam Abhiyan's Yatras

from March this year to 20th March 2025, so far have covered **47 districts** out of 76 districts, **with 131 Yatras**! In the remaining 2.5 months, IGFF plans to cover all the districts where IGFF has its associations meaning 29 remaining districts! Leaving out only one other district of Nepal – out of a total of 77 districts.



Our entire **team at NA and Padmalaya with Susan and Govinda at the helm**, wishes each of you seasons best greetings! **Happy New Year – 2025!**

As my gurus say, **“may we stay in discipline, in quietude, for our innate wisdoms to arise”!**

We thank each one of you for your support in enabling Padmalaya! Susan, Govinda and I with all, invite you to visit us this new year, as may be convenient to you!

Photo Courtesy: Govinda Acharya, Rita Thapa, Ganga Sagar Rai, Samed Itani

