

# nagarhope

RELIEF & RECONSTRUCTION

## EARTHQUAKE UPDATE 2015 / 2016



### *Chairman's Address*

Each year, as I sit down to write the annual brochure, I prepare myself by going back through photos, emails and accounts to see what Nagarhope has achieved. For this particular brochure, I feel somewhat subdued and unable to evoke the right feelings. Words cannot really convey what Nepal went through in 2015, no photo can properly describe what life is like now for millions of people, many displaced and homeless following the great quake.

On Saturday April 25th 2015 (Baisakh 12th 2072) at 11.56am, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck with the centre in Barpak of Gorkha district, north-west of Kathmandu. The next day, at a similar time, another huge quake struck the nation. 17 days after the first quake on May 12th, another 7.8 quake struck in Sunkhani of Dolakha district, north-east of Kathmandu. Aftershocks have subsided now, but 10-20 per day persisted in the first couple of months.

I have lived through the fear and helplessness of these events, spending the first few nights, like everyone else, sleeping outside with my family. 800,000 homes were fully or partially destroyed, 14 districts the most severely affected. Almost 9,000 people died. Famous landmarks and World Heritage Sites were reduced to rubble. Nepal, an already poverty stricken nation was devastated, development pushed back years, millions pushed further below the poverty line.

Along with all the tales of woe, despair and heartbreak came tales of courage, solidarity and determination. The initial 3 days of total shock and alerts subsided, the aftershocks became a mere facet of daily life, and the Nepali people started to do what they have always done in the face of adversity – came together to help each other out under extra-ordinary circumstances.

The government and other organisations were overwhelmed by the sheer scale of destruction and death. The people rose up, chipping in wherever they could, assisting those in need. Hospitals were packed to the rafters inside, the dead and injured littered the ground outside.

April 25th was a Saturday. Schools and offices were closed. Had it been any other day of the week, when students sat at their school desks, or at night, when most people slept, surely hundreds of thousands would have perished. It could have been during the rainy season where many more would have succumbed to pneumonia and other diseases whilst sleeping outside. The timing was bad. But nobody had planned or prepared for something like this.

It will take Nepal many years to rebuild. It should be done slowly and carefully. The aftershocks have subsided, but the fear that such a tragedy can happen anytime, anywhere, will keep people on edge for years to come.

September 2015 saw the promulgation of Nepal's new constitution, a new prime minister sits in Baluwatar, the Presidential election is in a few days. But not all is well here. Along the border with India, in the Tarai, protests, arson, looting and vandalism have raged for 2 months. Schools remain closed. India has more or less "Unofficially Blockaded" the border, preventing the flow of petrol, cooking gas and essential daily supplies reaching the people, all while Nepal had hoped it could celebrate Dasain, their biggest festival. The newly written constitution does not please many ethnic and minority groups and they are fanning the flames of discontent.

It should have been a happy ending to a dismal, destructive and deadly 2015, but people's woes have only been compounded. As always, the common folk suffer, the daily wage earners, the migrants, the farmers. Nepali people get by on very little, and by God have they had to scrape by this year.

This is only an update on events. Keep Nepal in your hearts and minds, for there is a long uphill struggle being fought on so many fronts, endless hills to climb, mountains to move. The international media coverage may have stopped but the heartbreak of the Nepali people is still quite evident. As the motto of the masses goes . . . . .

*"We Will Rise"*

**Fachtna 'Doc' Clandillon October 26th 2015**



## THE AFTERMATH

The initial shock of 3 major quakes and thousands of intense aftershocks kept people in a constant state of fear for the lives of their families and loved ones. The first few weeks were about solidarity and community togetherness. Relief poured in from local and international groups, neighbours helped each other out, foodstuffs, tarpaulin sheets and tents were donated to those most affected. Many hard to reach or cut off areas didn't receive assistance of any kind for weeks. Helicopters from many countries were deployed to ferry the dead and injured to hospitals in Kathmandu and other urban centres.

Family members tried desperately to contact loved ones to see if they were ok. Schools closed for 1 month after the first quake and a further month after the second one. Very slowly, life got back to some form of normality for most. Others, to this day, are still living in substandard housing and makeshift shelters; many still lack the basic health and sanitation facilities. Hundreds of rural health facilities suffered irreparable damage to infrastructure and equipment. The reconstruction, although underway, will take years to complete. The loss of lives and livelihoods will never be reclaimed; the damage to property and belongings will never be replaced.

Heroes emerged from nowhere and everywhere. Many people have profited from the aid money that flowed into the country during the aftermath. But, as usual, the most downtrodden in society have been left to fend largely for themselves, especially those in hard to reach rural areas and mountainous areas, cut off by roads and electricity. The availability of clean drinking water sources have been, and continue to be a massive problem, many natural springs simply vanished along with the villages and livelihoods.



## Immediate RELIEF

Nagarhope's ability to work during this period has been impeded somewhat by the fact that many of our Nepali committee's own houses have been destroyed or badly damaged. Where our committee members are normally involved in running programmes to uplift people through education or community based projects, they found themselves on the receiving end of the devastation that struck so many.

Despite this, we managed to deliver immediate relief to villages and people, mainly in the Nagarkot area. Over 1000 houses in 7 different villages benefitted from our immediate relief programme with essential supplies such as rice, dal, tarpaulin sheets and other food items being distributed from a central area in each affected village.

Our committee also distributed a package of rice (15 kilos), a blanket, a mosquito net and a tarpaulin sheet to about 200 families of children whom we sponsor in the immediate Nagarkot area from 6 different schools as well as to 35 families in Teku from our education centre.



## HOUSE Visits

The Nagarhope Nepal committee members teamed up to visit the house of each child we sponsor in the Nagarkot and surrounding areas. Information was



collected by each team, with the intention of finding those most in need of immediate assistance. Unfortunately, our findings discovered that pretty much all families, the majority of them living in stone and clay houses, were all in the same boat. Whether a house was fully destroyed or partially damaged (like our school in Sathikurya), all are unfit to live in. Over the next few months, people would move from sleeping outside under tarpaulin sheets or tents to constructing temporary shelters made from materials salvaged from their damaged homes or items such as galvanized zinc sheeting donated by various organisations as relief. At the forefront of people's minds was the onset of the annual monsoon and the extra dangers and havoc it could cause on top of an already very volatile and desperate situation.

## Committee Relief PROJECTS

At the request of our own Nepali committee, and due to the sometimes lethargic pace that an organisation can actually produce results based on decisions taken at sporadic and delayed meetings, each committee member was given a certain amount of funding to utilise as they saw fit and help uplift the communities in their own immediate vicinity. This widened Nagarhope's reach, brought relief and aid to those who may not have benefitted otherwise and involved the committee as a whole, individually and as teams, taking pressure off the core few who are always present at the helm on any given working week.

Some distributed mosquito nets and blankets; others gave out emergency lights to electricity affected villages. Raju and Badri chose to invest the money into reconnecting their villages with a clean drinking water source that had been lost as a result of the quakes.

Rabindra (pictured right) initiated 'WE CAN', a collective in his native Bhaktapur, a city 15km east of Kathmandu that was utterly devastated. A team of 50 tireless men and women spent 2 hours every day and all day Saturday demolishing damaged houses and transporting the rubble to an area where the Municipality would take it away. Dhurba, our Nepali chairman has been a hero since the moment the 1st quake struck, whether through the direct involvement of Nagarhope or through the mobilization of volunteers distributing relief and demolishing houses for single mothers and older couples who otherwise would have been unable to salvage belongings from their homes. My endless thanks to our hard working committee for their ability to cope under extreme circumstances.



## Damage

### TO NAGARHOPE PROJECTS

With the completion of our own Sathikurya Community School in 2014, Nagarhope had in total constructed classroom blocks for 4 different schools. Our own school was damaged beyond repair, and still needs to be fully demolished. The 3-roomed school building of Mahakali SS in Nagarkot, Kavre and Terse SS in Talamarang, Sindupalchowk were totally destroyed. Our rented office in Nagarkot is cracked and unfit to use. Nirvana, Dhurba's home, and where Nagarhope started 10 years ago was reduced to rubble on three sides. Our education support centre in Teku, Kathmandu, although undamaged had to be shifted three times this year due to another damaged school moving in and taking the rent on the premises. All in all, Nagarhope's operations were 90% disrupted by the quakes and their aftermath. Many displaced students who were on our sponsorship programme have left for various reasons.



## SATHIKURYA SCHOOL *Rebuilding*

In May and June 2015, with a group of Nepali and foreign volunteers, we rebuilt a temporary building for our Sathikurya Community School (see pictures below of old and new buildings). This was our priority after the quakes, to get the school opened on time for classes on June 1st. Two classrooms and a kitchen were constructed over the space of a month. The volunteers involved laboured hard, chopping trees, and ferrying wood and bamboo to the site, sometimes walking 3 or 4 kilometers in the process. We also constructed a toilet and septic tank. This could not have been completed without the generous help of volunteers and locals. Those who did help stayed in tents the whole time and we cooked and ate out of a temporary kitchen. Some days, we used our volunteer 'Commandoes' to assist the locals in demolishing their broken homes, trying to salvage much needed materials. A big thanks to Dhurba, Raju, Sodha, all the volunteers and our staff Laxmi, Jaya, Sunita & Binda. A big thanks to our Chinese friends Dada, Julie, Rain and Aska of Sangha Adventure Travel and the Chinese Temple in Lumbini for donating all the tin to complete our school, as well as parents who came and gave time to put the clay finishing on to the walls.



## TEKU EDUCATION CENTRE *Relocation*

Completed in October 2015, our Teku centre relocation was necessary, as we had been shifted around three times since the quake. As opposed to renting a room as before, we have taken a small plot of land on a 5 year lease. Due to the petrol shortage at the time, we camped on site for 2 weeks to complete the building and painting. A special thanks to Ram Lal, Durga & Co. for the bamboo artistry, Thea for her ceaseless will to paint and Rupa Miss and Sijan for their rainbows. Also to all the kids who came during exam time to colour the walls and paint alphabets and butterflies, and to parents for helping us lug carpets and cement around tricky alleyways. It was open the day after the Dasain holidays started and we had a special 'puja' and party for the kids to initiate the opening. A big special thanks also to Raman Nepali, a motivational speaker who came to our old centre to give the kids an uplift and to Sushil Babu for his movies on the same day. It's amazing what yoga can do to bring a bit of peace to troubled minds.



## GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS ASSISTANCE *Programme*

As I write, 31 schools in 8 of the worst affected districts have received needs based assistance to improve their situation temporarily. In late July a team of us left on a 4 day scouting trip to find schools in need of help. After assessing schools in Sindhuli, Ramechhap and Dolakha districts, each school then had to submit a proposal including costs, and approval from both the school management committee and the local Village Development Committee before we deposit 75-80% of the total to the school's bank account. It would not be possible to physically undertake each project for Nagarhope, so the schools are entrusted to carry out the works and we monitor by visiting every couple of weeks or so. Projects range from reconstructing toilets or bringing drinking water to the school to building temporary classrooms, from remaking damaged desks, benches and furniture to providing uniforms and bags to students. We hope to extend this programme to involve more schools we have come across since the programme started. Of the 31 separate projects, 10 have been fully completed and another 14 are nearing completion. This programme has given us the chance to visit some of the worst affected districts and assist schools based on their needs.



## TLC's

### TEMPORARY LEARNING CENTRES

Temporary Learning Centres or TLCs were introduced into Nepal after the quake ravaged over 50000 classrooms in the affected districts. Schools were inspected by government appointed engineers and were given either RED (Safe- Surachhit) or GREEN (Unsafe- Asurachhit) stickers. Any classrooms or blocks with a red sticker were to be vacated and ordered to be deconstructed. Since then, many schools, NGOs, INGOs and community groups have been busy constructing TLCs to facilitate getting affected students back into schools.

The design for TLCs was agreed upon by the government and different organisations and this blueprint has been widely used for rebuilding. Nagarhope has constructed or put the finishing touches to 5 TLCs for various government schools in Kavre and Kathmandu districts. Some initial TLCs were constructed poorly and in haste in the race to get schools open on time. Nagarhope used specially trained bamboo artisans to construct using a special type of bamboo from the Tarai, that has a long life and is specially treated with waterproof paints to withstand the adverse weather conditions.

We like to call them semi-permanent as opposed to temporary, as schools can use these facilities for 5 years and beyond due to their longevity. A big thanks to Sudam and his team from Godavari for providing the expertise and training whilst constructing these TLCs.



## FUNDRAISERS FOR Earthquake

Fundraising in Ireland has been the mainstay of Nagarhope's funding over the years, but since the earthquake, other friends of Nagarhope who had visited Nepal or heard of our work have chipped in. A special thanks to Alexandra from Sweden, Luis from Spain, Thea from Romania, Antoine and Chez from France, Joe from the UK, Paraic, Orla and Graham from Ireland, Daryan and Annette from USA, some of whom have run fundraisers back home or donated in Nepal. Also a big thank you to all sponsors and donors who responded kindly to our earthquake appeal. Thanks to Elizabeth and Shahadad from Bangladesh for kindly putting together the earthquake appeal video.

### A special thanks to those who ran FUNDRAISERS in IRELAND :

St. Joseph's Girls Secondary School, Lucan; Lucan BNS; Parents' Assoc, Lucan BNS; Ms. Maguire's 6th Class, Lucan BNS; St. Thomas' NS, Lucan; Coláiste Cois Life, Lucan; Scoil Mhuire, Woodview, Lucan; St. Mary's School for Deaf Girls, Cabra; St. Joseph's School for Deaf Boys, Cabra; Kilkerrin NS, Co. Galway; Presentation Convent NS, Maynooth; Parents' Assoc. Scoil Mhuire, Howth; Camogie Girls, Lucan Sarsfields; Staff at St. Edmundsbury's, Lucan; Cronin's Café, Gougane Barra; Marcilla Café, Barcelona; "The Kube", Lucan Sarsfields; Hillcrest Blitz, Lucan; Everest Language School; Padraig Brady's Quiz; Claytons' Open Garden; Killiney / Ballybrack Parish; St. John's NS, Ballybrack; St. Dominic's, Ballyfermot; SAS Institute; CAMHS; AEGON; Lucan Justice & Peace Group; Lucan Lions' Club; Castleknock Lions' Club; Justyna's Art Exhibition, Night with Tim & Declan organised by Mary Conlon. Finian's Community College, Swords; Thornton's Recycling.

Usually the last paragraph on the front page is reserved for the thank yous. It is impossible to name each and every individual who has helped us in any way. Having been here in Nepal 10 years as a social worker, and having lived through the panic of the earthquakes and aftershocks, I can only extend my heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you who have helped us in your own way. The words of support and encouragement have been needed at times. To sponsors and donors, those who spread the word and sent people our way, I simply say Dherai, Dherai Dhanyabad. Your kindness and generosity has helped us from the beginning, the love and support since April 25th really has been overwhelming at times. You are all making a huge and meaningful difference to the lives of people who have gone through so many difficulties and unexpected tragedies. Go raibh míle maith agaibh mo cháirde go léir.

Mise le Meas.

Fachtna 'Doc' Clandillon October 26th 2015

On behalf of both the Nagarhope Ireland and Nagarhope Nepal Teams.



## CONTACT DETAILS

**Sponsor a child (Niamh):** niamhclandillon@hotmail.com 01 624 1328 / 087 066 6891  
**Fundraising (Tadhg):** tclandillon@hotmail.com 087 922 5103  
**Volunteering (Doc):** bilijoni@hotmail.com + 977 984 11 29063 (Nepal)

### Bank Account Details:

Nagarhope Ireland  
Ulster Bank, Lucan Branch  
**BIC: ULSBIE2D**  
**IBAN: IE30ULSB98604010122317**



### Nagarhope Ireland

191 Beech Park, Lucan, Co. Dublin  
**Charity Number: CHY18004**  
**Facebook Group: nagarhope**  
**Website: www.nagarhope.com**