

nagarhope



EARTHQUAKE UPDATE 2016 / 2017

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

Namaste. Greetings one and all. It's that time of year again. It will be somewhat easier this year to write this brochure. Last year, around the same time, it was difficult to try and put into words how I felt about the situation in Nepal after the earthquakes of April and May 2015. Although there are still many years of reconstruction ahead for Nepal and its people, there has been a lot of progress in some areas. Last year's brochure had a lot of pictures of destruction and despair, whereas this year's should be a happier affair, reflecting the work that both Nagarhope Ireland and Nagarhope Nepal have achieved in the 18 months since the first quake struck.

I keep telling schools that we visit that we are a small organisation, that we cannot rebuild damaged buildings for them, that it is the work of the government and large scale donors to do so. Despite this, Nagarhope has been able to reach out to many schools and villages providing smaller, but not insignificant assistance in some shape or form. We have offered assistance so far to 85 schools in 9 different districts, 60 or so projects have been completed, 25 are on-going.

The government of Nepal's housing reconstruction grant of 200000 Rupees (\$2000) has been initiated in some regions but not in all. This assistance, provided by foreign governments and large international donors has conditions attached to it. For instance, the first instalment of 50000 Rupees is to be used for deconstruction and preparation for further building. Many affected people have demanded the money in total to build a structure that they can comfortably live in. But conditions are conditions. If not followed, the grants will not be disbursed at all.

Many large INGOs and small NGOs have been operating in the 14 hardest hit districts and the projects vary in number and size. A lack of uniformity in many areas has hampered aid and relief getting to many communities. Many mountainous communities with small populations have received very little, whereas easy to reach areas have benefitted more. Over 600,000 houses and 35,000 classrooms were destroyed by the quakes. I have seen certain resilience in the Nepali people that I couldn't have fathomed before. Homes and livelihoods as well as lives were lost, the psychological effects on affected families and communities has been colossal. I think if a disaster like this happened in a fully developed country, it would take us a lot longer to recover. In short, the Nepali people have always been used to numerous hardships; the earthquakes and their aftermath were somehow easier for them to slowly recover from.

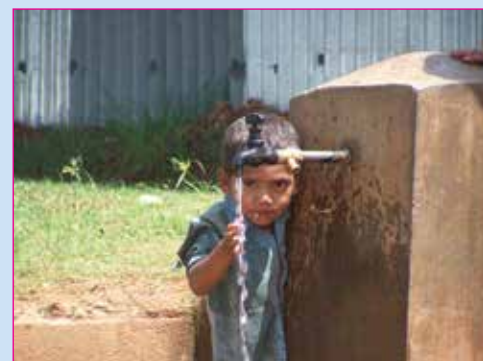
It has been a difficult 18 months. Our focus has been largely on school assistance and village water assistance projects after the initial food relief programmes. Many hundreds of thousands of families are still living in temporary shelters, many students are still studying in unfit classrooms, many water sources in many districts have completely dried up leaving whole communities with no clean drinking water and sanitation facilities. The road ahead is certainly an uphill task, and trying to accommodate the needs of those most affected is a struggle which will not disappear overnight. Friends, family, committee members, children whom we sponsor have all been affected; tens of thousands of people have been internally displaced by the earthquakes, by floods and landslides. People have had to endure two destructive rainy seasons living in deplorable conditions.

I myself and both the committees of Ireland and Nepal would like to sincerely and gratefully thank all those who donated to our cause. We have had many volunteers and well-wishers help out physically and through spreading the word on social media, radio and by other means. My own wife and children have had to bear the brunt of long hours and weeks away at a time. Before I ever left Ireland to come to Nepal, the advice "You cannot help everyone" still rings true. But the support over the last 18 months has enabled Nagarhope to reach out to thousands of people in numerous ways.

I can only say how personally indebted I am to each and every person who has been a part of our efforts. In all honesty, it has put an enormous amount of pressure on all those involved, has pushed us to the brink and pulled us all together. And it is still not over yet. Go raibh míle maith agaih go léir, ek dum dherai dhanyabad sabai lai.

Mise le Meas

Fachtna 'Doc' Clandillon September 16th 2016.



DIFFERENT EARTHQUAKE RELATED PROJECTS

Nagarhope's work before the earthquakes was confined to Nagarkot, Bhaktapur and Kathmandu as well as a few peripheral areas. Since then, we have expanded our working area through our government schools and village water assistance projects. Many scouting trips have been made searching for schools that need some form of assistance. Of the 14 most affected districts, we have been assisting schools and water projects in 9 of those, stretching 100 kms west and east of Kathmandu. Many of these projects are off-road, some up to a six hour drive on rough mountainous and hilly terrain. But it is those areas farthest from main roads that generally receive less assistance as they are not easily accessible.

It has been a great way to see Nepal's countryside and has given us a real offering of the situation on the ground in schools and villages that were totally devastated. And with each new journey, more roads and more villages and more people that need assistance pop up, furthering our scope and our working area.



WATER PROJECTS:

The earthquakes and their various aftershocks sent ripples through Nepal, the result that tens of thousands of clean local water sources and springs shifted their course somewhere else and left millions of people without clean water. Water for drinking and cooking. Water for sanitation. Water for crops and animals. Still, 18 months on, the lack of clean water in many areas is hampering daily life and ensuring the spread of disease. Nagarhope has assisted whole villages and schools with water retrieval projects, basically buying pipes, water tanks, and assisting with transportation and labour costs involved in getting water back to the local tap. We have assisted 17 schools and 6 communities to date with water projects and more people are approaching us for similar assistance. The costs vary on the distance to the nearest fresh water source but from €300 to €1500, we have been able to reconnect people with this vital asset.



NEW NEPALI COMMITTEE:

In April 2016, Nagarhope Nepal and its general members elected a new committee with some old faces and some new. Our founding chairman, Dhurba Kumar Bhujel stepped down as chairperson after 7 productive years and Rabindra Suwal was elected as the new chairperson. The change in faces has given us a slightly new direction, but the programmes and projects remain the same. Congratulations to all those elected to each post and the executive committee, let's hope we can bring the organisation forward in the right direction during these trying times.



Annual WOMEN'S PICNIC:

Our 7th annual women's day picnic was a great day. This year it was at Bhagwati Temple, Palanchowk, Kavre District. We even had a German clown entertain over 70 women for an hour. We hope this programme continues every year giving a small bit of respite to women who work hard in the city and villages. Many thanks to Dhurba Baba, as ever, for his thorough organising and to all helpers, sponsors and volunteers.



Blood Donations PROJECTS:

On the first anniversary of the April 25th 2015 earthquake, Nagarhope Nepal, along with WE CAN, Bhaktapur and Vision Group Bhaktapur and in collaboration with Red Cross Bhaktapur, we ran a blood donation programme in Bhaktapur Durbar Square. 125 people donated blood on the day, Red Cross even whipped off a few litres that were needed for an emergency that very day. A big thanks to all involved, especially Rabindra Suwal and his teams for organising every last little detail for a highly successful operation.

Government SCHOOL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES

– TLCS (TEMPORARY LEARNING CENTRES):

To date, Nagarhope has completed 9 TLC Projects in Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Kavre and Gorkha districts. The need of the hour directly after the earthquakes was to quickly construct cheap classrooms for students to study in based on a single sized design prescribed by large INGOs and the government of Nepal. Many of these 'temporary' structures are unused and in a state of disrepair. Nagarhope and its team of workers from Godawari in Lailtput put in a little extra time and funding to each of its TLC structures to ensure that these classrooms will last between 5-7 years, ensuring schools that do not get other funding for permanent buildings can run classes for the coming years in a safe and comfortable environment. Our tailor made TLCs are designed to seat the number of children in each class according to numbers as opposed to 'prescribed' design, ensuring larger classes of students fit, and smaller classes of students have just the right amount of space. Our TLCs are also fitted with netted windows, doors and painted. A big thanks to the workers themselves for their bamboo and construction mastery and to the individual schools for accommodating us while we worked.



BEFORE



AFTER



CONSTRUCTING



COMPLETED



TOILET / SEPTIC TANK PROJECTS:

Our limited resources to single handedly fund earthquake resistant school buildings has meant that we offer schools limited assistance but in a way that has been effective in solving some of their problems. To date, we have collaborated with schools and completed over 15 toilet block installations in various districts. The majority of schools get some sort of yearly funding from the government, and projects Nagarhope undertakes are also funded in some part by the school in question. Based on the financial capabilities of individual schools, Nagarhope funds between 60 and 100% of the project. Some schools who do not have financial resources use 'shramdhan' or 'community assistance' to cover their part of the cost. For instance many schools staff, students, committees and parents have helped out at some stage of construction in order to save the school money it has not got. This may sound mean on our part, but there is a definite beauty in involving school communities directly in their children's educational environment. It is also a measure of a strong staff and management committee to be able to call on this invaluable resource. Give a man a fish . . .

EARTHQUAKE RELATED EXPENDITURE:

EARTHQUAKE RELATED SPENDING TIL DATE (SEPTEMBER 20TH 2016)			
	Nepali Rupees	€ Euros	% of Total
A1 EARTHQUAKE RELIEF- GENERAL (Including Food Relief, Water Projects, Nagarkot office reconstruction, Blood Donation Programme and other projects)	3067292	25560	31.80%
A2 TEKU CENTRE RELOCATION - Construction of Tuition Centre for Teku Sponsorship Programme	128271	1069	1.33%
A3 SCHOOLS ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME (Includes all costs related to over 70 Schools Assistance Projects)	6259297	52161	64.86%
A4 SATHIKURYA SCHOOL REBUILDING - Semi-Permanent Reconstruction of our School in Sathikurya	194353	1619	2.01%
A5 TOTAL EARTHQUAKE EXPENDITURE	9649213	80410	100.00%

EARTHQUAKE RELATED SPENDING TIL DATE (SEPTEMBER 20TH 2016)			
	Nepali Rupees	€ Euros	
A1 EARTHQUAKE RELIEF- GENERAL	3067292	25560	
A2 TEKU CENTRE RELOCATION	128271	1069	
A3 SCHOOLS ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME			
1 BIRCHULI	523500	4362	
2 DOLAKHA	865260	7210	
3 RAMCHHAP	295669	2464	
4 KATHMANDU	274546	2288	
5 DHADING	324700	2705	
6 GORKHA	526611	4388	
7 KATLE	2098535	17488	
8 BHAKTAPUR	594013	4950	
9 SINDUPALCHOWK	651563	5430	
SINDUPALCHOWK RESOURCE CENTRES	96900	807	
OTHER RELATED COSTS	8000	67	
A4 SATHIKURYA SCHOOL REBUILDING	194353	1619	
A5 TOTAL EARTHQUAKE EXPENDITURE	9649213	80410	

NAGARHOPE SATHIKURYA SCHOOL RECONSTRUCTION:

Our own school in Sathikurya was irreparably damaged by the April and May 2015 quakes and left us without any building to conduct classes. A group of both Nepali and foreign volunteers, over the space of a month collected materials and assisted our workmen in constructing 2 classrooms, a kitchen, toilet and septic tank. In early 2016, we added another classroom, an outdoor covered eating area for the students and reinforced the existing structure. The damaged building still needs to be deconstructed from the top down to the foundation, as well as at the same time using the materials (stone, doors, windows, wood, tin roof sheeting) for other buildings or put into storage temporarily. It is a massive job, and will require a few months of on-going work to complete. At present, we have almost 50 students in attendance in three pre-primary classes. Three teachers and a caretaker look after the day to day running of the school. The parents and guardians have requested us to upgrade our school and start running primary classes as well as the existing pre-primary.



TEKU CENTRE RELOCATION:

Due to damage to other schools in the Teku, Kalimati area of Kathmandu, our Teku tuition centre was uprooted, a facility we had been using for 6 years. The 2 small rooms we had rented were rented on to another school. We moved twice before deciding to find a small plot of land on which to build our own centre. In August, September 2015, we completed a single room bamboo and tin shelter for the 45 or so kids we support in the Teku area. Our full-time teacher Rupa Miss has been looking after the centre along with the help of our two volunteers Menuka and Barsha, both college students we are supporting. Here, we run day classes for up to 10 kids who have not had the chance to go to school for various reasons. Many of the families of children we sponsor are living hand-to-mouth, working menial daily jobs for less than €50 per month, barely enough to put food on the table. Rural poor and urban poor are worlds apart; Kathmandu is a tough, rough and filthy city where the downtrodden keep getting trodden on. A massive thanks to all those who were there during the construction and painting stages, at a time when Nepal was reeling under a 5-month long 'unofficial' blockade imposed by India. Petrol was so hard to come by that we slept in tents on site for 2 weeks just to get the centre built.

PAINTING PROJECTS:

Colour is therapeutic and soothing. Pictures on an otherwise grey wall bring a room to life. Different painting projects on bamboo Temporary Learning Centres (TLCs), ECD (Early Childhood Development) Classrooms walls or windows have been undertaken over the last year or so. Usually, when a group of volunteers is ready, we set off and spend as many days as is needed to get a painting project done. There are way too many people to thank who helped us out while painting but a special thanks to Thea from Romania, Nabina and her crew, Dhurba and his endless line of volunteers and Sanjay and his team. A team of 15 Chinese helped us in Bhaktapur on one of the larger assignments. Other schools have contacted us simply to come and paint their temporary bamboo rooms to brighten up the environment.



CLASSROOM CONSTRUCTION ASSISTANCE:

Many schools we have visited had been given limited resources to complete some semi-permanent classroom buildings from the respective District Education Office or other sources. Very often, the budget allocated is not enough to fully complete the project. So, Nagarhope assisted schools in different districts with a 'financial supplement' in order to complete a project. We cannot fully take credit for these projects, in some cases our input amounted to 15-25% of the total budget needed. But without our support, schools would not have been able to complete the project in question.



Furniture ASSISTANCE:

As opposed to a need for temporary classrooms in 2072, many schools have benefitted from extra furniture assistance this year. Schools constructed mainly of stone and clay walls were obliterated in the worst hit areas, along with them furniture of all sorts from desks and benches, to tables and chairs, cupboards and computers. Nagarhope has assisted over 20 schools with such goods, many projects involve ECD (Early Childhood Development) Classroom assistance. The ECD and younger classes we have supported mainly involved carpet, low tables and cushions, creating a simple and effective teaching and learning environment for both teachers and students alike. Desks and benches have been in big demand for those schools that had already benefitted from reconstructed classrooms.



Education OFFICE UPDATES:

To work in any given district, and assist any given school, permission (Sifaris) has to be given from the respective District Education Office. While having to repeatedly go to each office takes time, often 2 or 3 visits, the benefit of repeat visits and numerous hours spent with officials and engineers is an education in itself. The rules and regulations of what organisations can and cannot do have changed rapidly, classroom and toilet sizes have particular designs that should be adhered to, and even desks have a certain design that enables students to get out quickly should another large scale disaster occur. Ignoring the rules sends you on a bureaucratic roundabout that never ceases. In short, district education office engineers are under strict orders from above to make sure organisations are not wasting money on projects that have a short shelf life or may be damaged easily bringing harm to students. And rightly so. Hand in hand with Nagarhope being let work in certain areas comes terms and conditions. The district education office of Sindupalchowk asked us if we could donate 4/5 laptops to Resource Centres, each of which looks after between 30 and 60 schools. Many computers and buildings were damaged by the quakes. We donated 3 laptops to Resource Centres in Sangachowk, Sipapokhari and Tokarpur. Giving a laptop to a government official and taking that photo isn't half as effective as photos of groups of happy children (see below) in their new classroom.



PROGRESSION:

Nagarhope's Sathikurya School has now been running 2½ years. The work we do, especially now, in many schools, both rural and urban, has only emboldened us to provide a quality of education that will benefit the children attending. We have plans to give teachers extra training both onsite and at institutions that provide such facilities. Education is empowerment.



Reflection;

Where to start, where to sign off? How to convey? We are just a 'little drop in the ocean', our work, having brought joy and bits of development and assistance to others, has been a ride not to forget. Some large schools we visit offering nominal assistance seem to scorn at our simplicity. And every now and then, so many times in fact, have we experienced momentary joy and elation, a single mother crying when her son received a uniform worth €6 that was beyond her €25 per month reach, a whole village telling us after we had visited them and donated rice and other foodstuffs that we were the first to visit there, a party atmosphere when students receive simple little things like a school bag, 2 pencils and 4 copies each. Not everybody that we have helped needs our help. Every line has people who habitually have their hand out though they have the numbers and resources to fend for themselves. That notwithstanding, we hope we can look back and say that we have altered a fair amount of peoples situations with that 'little drop'. We are on a constant learning curve, those most down and out have always the most to teach. Children are the best teachers of all- no bias, mind still flowering, always honest. WE CAN do a lot more good work with YOUR support. But the time of the hour has come for a different sort of help. Schools need permanent classrooms. Nagarhope has infiltrated many unreachable areas where schools are not being given needed support, but only been able to offer limited resources. Now, rather than regular donations, we could do with a few big fundraisers to assist a single school(s) in a big way.

Out and about...



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