



Earthquake Update – What we are working on

Namaste and greetings from a very hot Kathmandu

I just wanted to update everyone on what we are up to as an organisation, over and above what we have already shared.

What VSN is up to

As an organization we have been asked to work with UNICEF and Restless Development (a UK based organisation we have worked with in the past), to create 13+ Temporary Learning Centres and Child Friendly Areas/Play Areas (crèches for kids of all ages) in 6 Village Development Committees (VDCs) on the southern edge of Lalitpur District, the same district both our kids homes are in. A further 4 VDCs have also been earmarked for our team's support once round 1 has been completed.

These are pretty remote and poor areas where the majority of homes and schools were lost during the quakes. There is a big push here in Nepal to get as many kids as possible back into school, if even for a few hours a day, working on a shift basis, to not only ensure their education isn't too compromised, but to allow their parents time to make safe/rebuild, harvest and plant prior to the monsoon arriving, without having to worry about where their kids are, what they are up to and if they are safe.

VSN's role is to communicate and facilitate with our 2 partners, local communities, District Administrative Offices (DAO), District Education Offices (DEO) etc, as well as to organise on the ground coordination, logistics, purchasing & procurement and transportation of goods and materials – so not much eh?! As you can imagine this will keep all of the 'Boys', Hari, Kamaal and Jayram included, on their toes and busy, busy, busy, while Meenu and I support them with the financial management, accounts as well as communications and reporting. We have also recruited two local volunteers under this programme to specifically work on-site for the duration of the project.

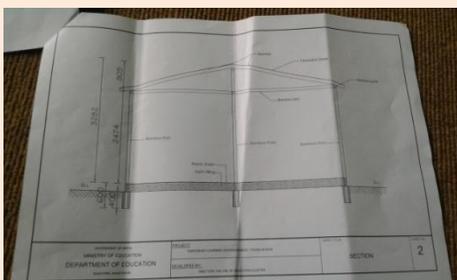
Funding for these projects is via UNICEF, fed down to Restless and then on to us. Our primary partner will be Restless and it will be them we deal with mostly on a day to day basis. BFCH & SSCH will also be used as safe and secure materials storage centres for all UNICEF funded projects within the Lalitpur District.

In summary VSN is involved in the earthquake relief and rebuild as follows:

Phase 1: Relief (tarps and tin) in our immediate communities around BFCH/SSCH – coming to an end

Phase 2: Temporary Learning Centres & Child Friendly Tents/Play Areas

Phase 3: Rebuild programme post monsoon



VSN Host Family Communities

To date we have provided tarps and tin sheets to our host family communities in Bistachhap, Mulpani and Badekhel using funds donated via GVN's fundraising page and from our volunteer Rueben's fundraising efforts.

World Vision has been working in these areas for a good many years and it is our understanding that they have taken on the commitment to help facilitate and fund the rebuild phase within these communities post monsoon – hence the reason we have been asked to help in other areas. There are also private organizations with links to our 3 villages specifically, that are looking to help with funding etc.

Fundraising \$\$

Other than an initial \$5,000 transfer from the GVN Foundation for immediate relief and shelter supplies, we haven't touched these funds as yet.

It may well be that these funds will be needed to help support our host family communities to fill any funding gaps that may occur. We will also need funds to repair the damage to both BFCH & SSCH and quite possibly to help repair some of the classrooms at the school our kids attend if funding isn't available from elsewhere.

Although initially raised to support the communities that support us, as the dust settles and things become clearer there may not be such a great need there, and thus we hope you are OK to trust us to use it where it can be most affective and without duplication. Something we are very keen to ensure is that funds, wherever they come from, are spread evenly and to those that genuinely need them, rather than ending up supporting a few families or communities that we are closely linked to, but are receiving help from elsewhere. It is not about how quickly this money is spent, but that it is spent correctly and where most needed.

If you wish to make a donation, please go to [GVN Nepal Earthquake Appeal](#). If you wish to help further and fundraise on our behalf you can also do this, Fiona at GVN can help you set up your own fundraising page – Fiona Millar fiona@gvnmail.org.

VSN's Office

We are no longer working out of our office in Chhetrapati and will be giving it up. The landlord has told us that it has been given the all clear, but working in a building full of cracks and that wobbled like a jelly during the May 12th 6.4 earthquake is not a fun prospect. Add to this its location, should something similar occur, there is very little open space to get to quickly and safely.

For the interim term we will be borrowing some space in a friendly micro finance company's office in Badegaun on the way to both BFCH & SSCH and in the right direction for the Temporary Learning Centre project. This office won't be manned every day, but as a team we will meet up once or twice a week. We all have access to internet outside of the office, although for Jaggu and D it is somewhat less regular, given that they are both living in temporary accommodation due to damage sustained to their homes, but they are close to the new office if they need it, so things can continue as normal - whatever that is!!



Volunteers & Sue, our Volunteer Coordinator

We are continuing to keep all our volunteer placements closed for the foreseeable future. This is the first time in our 12 year history that we have had to close our programmes to volunteers, but given the situation, we feel it is the right thing to do. We are still being shaken by aftershocks (more landslides and structural uncertainty etc!), and this is not an environment we believe is conducive to bringing volunteers into just yet. If you want to check out what/where we are wobbling have a look at:

<http://www.seismonepal.gov.np/index.php?action=earthquakes&show=recent>

It is our hope however, that we can open a new Rebuild Programme once the monsoon rains have gone and the situation is clear on what the laws and regulations on rebuilding damaged houses and schools are, and who is going to be responsible for what and where.

Given this, and the fact that we have no volunteers we have sadly said goodbye to our Volunteer Coordinator Sue, who although has only been our VC since November, has been working with us, specifically on our Women's Education & Empowerment project since October 2013. She is currently winging her way to Australia for a much deserved break, and we would like to thank her for all her support and work over the last 18 months or so.



Sue with some of her beloved Balaju ladies

And Finally

I know it seems like everything is happening terribly slowly, but we believe it is better not to rush – to assess, liaise and do proper research instead of just rushing off to help where perhaps help isn't really needed and spending money unwisely. We are so incredibly grateful for the kindness and generosity of our global family and all that you guys have done for us, that we need to make sure that everyone's \$s are spent properly and appropriately.

We will keep you updated as things progress.

With love and best wishes
Kate & the VSN Team



*Helping Others
To Help Themselves*

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