

Dear Friends,

Your continued support has helped us to carry on with our projects for earthquake-affected communities in Nepal. In the immediate aftermath of the devastating event we began working with our local project coordinators to undertake relief efforts, including the assistance of groups working with children, women, and elderly victims of the tremors. We secured donations of tarps, tents, foodstuffs, and medicine, and have been supporting initiatives that help individuals deprived of their homes to cope with their traumatic experience.

Over the past year we have expanded – but also finalized – some of our activities to include partnerships with local nongovernmental organizations that serve communities facing ruinous conditions to build their way back to a sustainable future. Our new, ongoing, and completed projects all bear testimony to our attempt to enhance confidence in the people of Nepal by furthering education, supporting traditional craftsmanship, and preserving the architectural heritage.

New and on-going projects

The **Restoration of a traditional pavilion (*phalcha / pati*) in the old city of Patan** is the latest of the restoration projects undertaken by SAI Help Nepal. It has been generously funded by the Barbara and Wilfried Mohr Foundation in Hamburg. Work on this damaged pavilion in Old Patan began in September 2016, under the competent supervision of architect Padma Sundar Maharjan from Rich Architectures. The pavilion had previously been used by a group of local musicians belonging to the community of Maharjans (farmers). The earthquake damaged the building to such an extent that it could not be used anymore. Since then the devotional music (*bhajan*) has stopped. One aim in restoring the *pati*, therefore, is to see to it that the musicians can return and carry on their tradition. Collaboration with the neighborhood is ongoing, with the community typically doing selected demolition and reconstruction work. Craftsmen and masons have been called in to attend to specific demands raised by architects and building requirements. Drawings and consultation support have come from Bijay Basukala, Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust (KVPT). Most of the bricks could be salvaged from the demolition of the building. Pillars were



Construction on the *pati* in Old Patan continues.



Pillars for the traditional pavilion are carved by craftsmen from Bhaktapur.

were carved by craftsmen from Bhaktapur, whose elaborate woodwork represents a sustained Newar tradition. The second floor was designed exactly as it was so that the musical instruments and other objects relevant to the devotional practice could be stored in a safe space. The foundation-laying ceremony was conducted in November, and it is hoped that the building will be completed by January 2017. The project is being documented as a subject of research by Sanjeep Maharjan, an artist and faculty member of Kathmandu University's Art and Design Department.



A facade door is being inspected for repairing the Char Narayan Temple.



Assessment of the Manimandapa Temple at Patan Durbar Square.



The former prime minister is visiting the construction site in April 2016.

In summer 2015 three carpenters were engaged to restore the inner doorframes on the ground floor level of **Char Narayan Temple** on Patan Durbar Square. One of the four portals with triple openings was laid out at the workshop in November. For the time being two carpenters are working on the replacement of missing parts and the repair of parts that have suffered damage, both minor and major. Another two carpenters began to work on the repair of the tympana that crowned the portals. Unfortunately one tympanum is beyond repair and has to be replaced. The remaining ones will be repaired, with small missing parts being replaced to achieve the intended effect. The completion of the rebuilding of the temple is expected for early 2019 if the Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust succeeds in raising the projected shortfall of 350,000 euros.

In October 2015 the damage suffered by the twelve columns of the **Manimandapa Temple** (the Platform of Jewels) on Patan Durbar Square was assessed. Subsequently a copy of one totally destroyed column was ordered, and by early April the careful repair and restoration of the remaining eleven columns had been achieved by four carpenters. On April 25, 2016, the first anniversary of the earthquake, the former prime minister Prachanda Dahal, visited the Durbar Square in the company of a few ministers. On that occasion he laid the foundation stone for the rebuilding of the Mandapa. The cornice above the columns has also been repaired in the meantime. New rafters are being prepared, and roof tiles are being acquired from demolished houses, and by the end of December the restored building will be in place. It thus represents the first rebuilding of a collapsed monument in the Kathmandu Valley.

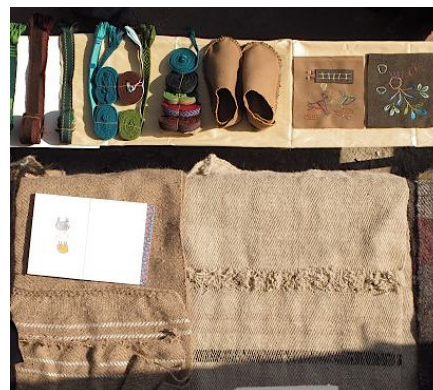
Glimpses of KVPT's hard work to restore the historic architectural monuments at Patan Darbar Square, one of Nepal's most important historic urban centers, can be seen in the lavishly illustrated publication "Nepal Patan Darbar. Earthquake Response Campaign. Documentation of Work to Date" (September, 2016) alongside an audio-visual journey at kvptstories.org.



A Tamang woman embroiders images of household activities.

One of our new projects, **Working with Earthquake-Affected Weavers in Rasuwa: Exploring Tamang Livelihood and Education Opportunities**, focuses on a marginalized Tamang community in Gatlang Village in Rasuwa, a district north of the Kathmandu Valley. Located west of the Bhotekosi River and reached after a two-hour drive along a dirt turn-off, Gatlang is the first stop on the Tamang Heritage Trail. It is known for its tight-knit web of houses featuring carved wooden facades and roofs laid with wooden shingles. Structures built up over years – homes, the secondary school, the cultural center where people gathered, guest houses and home stays – were destroyed in the earthquake. Over five hundred households have been displaced; people are now living in scattered tents on the outskirts of the village.

In Gatlang, SAI Help Nepal began to support Srijanalaya, a nonprofit nongovernmental organization with a mission to create safe spaces for learning through the arts in Nepal. Srijanalaya has been exploring the weaving tradition among Tamang women in Gatlang both as a creative livelihood and with an eye to its educational value. In the first phase of this project, which lasted one month, local women in Gatlang together with two visual artists, a designer, and an educator from Kathmandu experimented with traditional weaves and textiles to create an array of products and product ideas. When not attending to crops and animals, these women, who lost their homes, dye and weave locally produced sheep wool. The process of producing creative pieces has led Srijanalaya to a wealth of knowledge and stories that is being kept alive in this Tamang community. The artwork is strongly tied to the place of origin. The one-month artist-in-residency program ended with a small exhibition for Gatlang residents. In a further step, the organization has been searching for an outside market for raw materials and for products that can be made in collaboration with the women of Gatlang village.



Some of the works made over the one-month residency.



Completed projects

The road network that connects the Kathmandu Valley, which is home to approximately 2.5 million people, to rural Nepal is poorly maintained and unreliable even under normal circumstances. With roads and trails regularly severed by even small landslides during the rainy season, rebuilding in remote areas is a daunting task. We are therefore strongly committed to reaching out to mountain communities.

One of our projects situated in an area difficult to access is **Jharlang Learning Centers** in Dhading District. Jharlang VDC is inhabited by 825 families, and all of them lost homes and belongings (including livestock, crops, and seeds) during the earthquake. All ten primary schools were destroyed. Even months after the tremor had struck, classes were being conducted under tarps. In partnership with Apeiron, a nongovernmental organization working in the country since 1996, and the District Disaster Relief Committee (DDRC), SAI Help Nepal succeeded in rebuilding two classrooms at Shree Jharlang Primary School. Drawings for the buildings were provided by the engineer Shreesan Tamang, who designed classrooms suitable for the harsh climate in mountainous regions. Construction was especially difficult due to the complete lack of electricity in the area. The earthquake damaged the village's electrical system, which has not been repaired to date. A total of 62 students are benefiting from the new learning center, along with their teachers and other staff, who are now able to regularly resume holding classes. With the reopening of the school, life is gradually getting back to normal after the disaster.



Classes are held on the floor while building the new classrooms.



Children of Shree Jharlang Primary School posing for a photo after the reconstruction.

Committed to fostering children's education, SAI Help Nepal supported the restoration of another **Public School in Dolakha District**. Kalidevi Primary School in Mirgetar has 150 students enrolled from kindergarten to grade eight. The earthquake caused at least partial damage to all blocks, and one block collapsed completely. The students first resumed classes in tents while temporary classrooms were being built with bamboo strips. Even though the school management tried hard to conduct classes, the poor condition of such structures impeded regular education. Given the remoteness of the area, no efforts were made by the government to adequately rebuild the school. After an assessment by local partners on the ground, SAI Help Nepal decided to support the construction of two classrooms, with further help from the school administration. A team of volunteers worked in cooperation with the school authorities to complete the project.



Stones support the mountain slope where the new classrooms will be.

After a string of successes, support on our project in a high Himalayan valley, **Rebuilding Tsum**, is being phased out. 27 workers from the Helambu region leveled the grounds of the classrooms, nuns' accommodation, and kitchen at Gompa Lungtang, and laid the foundation for the main assembly hall. Stones were crushed, and wood cut. During the harsh monsoon, when frequent landslides triggered by heavy rains limited movement within and access to the area, construction was halted until autumn, when work on the main assembly hall could begin in earnest. Due to the sheer size of the project, the construction on the remaining buildings will be funded by a private foundation.

All of our projects have revealed that amidst the destruction and waves of despair, life continues on. As people recover from the loss and pain of the tragic event, we have been hearing many of their stories of survival and hope. In November a 4.3 magnitude aftershock rattled Rasuwa District. Two days later a 5.3 magnitude tremor sent people running out of their houses in Kathmandu in the early morning hours. While international media has stopped reporting about such events, we feel a sense of closeness to the country, which many of us call a second home, and to its people, who have become families and friends.

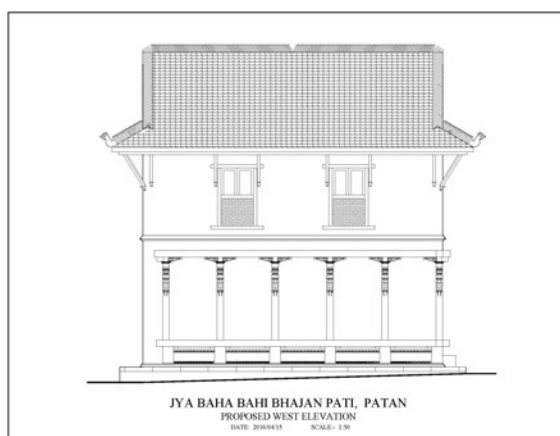
This is all the more reason to shed light on the aftermath of the earthquake in academic terms. In an afternoon session entitled "Heritage in Times of Crisis: Transcultural Approaches to Reconstruction and Revaluation in Post-Earthquake Nepal" during the Annual Conference of the Cluster of Excellence "Asia and Europe in a Global Context" in October, senior researchers of Heidelberg University talked about their experiences in being directly involved in reconstruction efforts. The proceedings will now be compiled for publication.

In Kathmandu, the branch office of the South Asia Institute dedicated a lecture to this topic. In November Prof. Jeremy Spoon from Portland State University was invited to give a presentation on "Disaster Transformation: Socio-Ecological Transitions Following the 2015 Earthquakes." And in December, Nadine Plachta spoke about "Changing Linkages at Nepal's Himalayan Border: Exploring Livelihoods in the Earthquake-Affected Region of Lapchi" during the Fifth Asian Borderlands Research Network Conference held in Nepal's capital city.

We once more ask you to continue supporting those who need your helping hands in Nepal.
Your donations enable us to reach out to selected projects and initiatives on the ground.

*With kind regards for the festive season, and our best wishes for the new year!
Thank you again for all your trust and support.*

Nadine Plachta, with Manik and Ritu Bajracharya, Christoph Bergmann, Christiane Brosius, Niels Gutschow, Rajan Khatiwoda, Roberta Mandoki, Axel Michaels, Marcus Nüsser, Nike-Ann Schröder, and Davide Torri



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