

Representatives of *RfP* International, *RfP* Asia (ACRP) and *RfP* Nepal visit Saptari, Biratnagar in Nepal where the final phase of *RfP* project in Nepal is being carried out.

On 18 February, 2018, Ms. Deepika Singh of *Religions for Peace (RfP)* International, Rev. Masamichi Kamiya of *RfP* Asia (ACRP) and Mr. Lokmanya Golchha of *RfP* Nepal visited the Saptari District, which is located approximately 300 kilometers west of Kathmandu. The town is one of the 75 districts of Nepal. The *RfP* team flew to the Biratnagar Airport by a domestic airplane for approximately 40 minutes and drove for about 135 minutes to the village called Mainakaderi in the Saptari District.

In the summer of 2017, severe floods and landslides hit the eastern part of Nepal. Due to continuous rainfall, approximately 100,000 people in 31 districts have been affected by the natural disasters. According to the Nepal Red Cross Initial Rapid Assessment (IRA) reports received from the affected districts as of 13 August 2017, a total of 27,861 families (139,300 people) have been affected, of which 6,247 families (47,350 people) are displaced. The Saptari District is one of the most damaged districts in the devastated area.



(Source: online khabar)

Responding to this natural calamity, *RfP* International, *RfP* Asia and *RfP* Nepal all agreed with the further extension of the term of the *RfP* joint project named as “Supporting Earthquake Survivors and Advancing Social Cohesion through Multi-Religious Cooperation” through 31 March 2018 to provide humanitarian assistance for about 300 families who reside in the Mainakaderi village.



On the way to the village, we saw from the automobile window the remnants caused by severe floods. A gray-colored sandy field shown in the left photo used to be a bright green paddy field, the members of the team learned. They witnessed a wide range of devastated sceneries.

On behalf of the *RfP* family, *RfP* Nepal has constructed 18 houses in the Mainakaderi village

where about 300 families live. Out of those 300 families, a half of them lost their houses, according to an information given to the *RfP* team. The families, who were lucky enough to be able to live in the newly built houses were democratically and fairly selected¹.

The counterpart of the *RfP* project in Saptari is Mr. Kashinath Joshi (*right photo*). He was born in Saptari and later became a local official of the Saptari District. Then, he immigrated to Australia and worked as a social worker there. He has finally returned to Saptari, leaving his family in Australia. Mr. Joshi is so determined to do something good for the villagers of Saptari, where he was grown up, until his life ends. He thinks that he is destined to contribute to the well-fare of the people living in his hometown. He has already built 5 houses for the victims caused by the floods before he established a partnership with *RfP* Nepal. Besides the *RfP* project, he runs an NGO which operates a primary schools in Saptari.



Led by Mr. Joshi with some villagers together, the *RfP* team visited several houses newly built in partnership with *RfP*.



(A newly-built house)



(A toilet adjacent to the house)

¹ In the process of implementing the *RfP* project in Saptari, an *RfP* interfaith sub-committee was formed, which consists of 10 individuals, representing four religions in Nepal. This sub-committee selected 18 families in a democratic manner.

After that, the team joined a symbolic gathering of over 200 villagers, who welcomed the *RfP* representatives. In this program, a couple of municipal representatives also participated as well. Some of the villagers, who participated in this program, raised placards showing such words as “WE R FLOOD VICTIMS”, “WE NEED HOME”, “WELCOME” and “THANK U.”



In the final phase of the *RfP* project in Nepal, it ought to be noted that the offering of school supplies for children living in Sankhu, a town in the northeastern corner of Kathmandu Valley in about 17 km from the Capital City Kathmandu, is another *RfP*'s undertaking as well as its project in Saptari. These projects will be completed by the end of March 2018.



(Far Right: Mr. Lokmanya Golchha, a Board member of *RfP* Nepal.)

On the morning of 20 February, Ms. Deepika Singh, Rev. Masamichi Kamiya and Mrs. Indira Manandhar reflected the visit of *RfP* team to Saptari and discussed informally what would be required as the next step as far as a project in Nepal is concerned at Mrs. Manandhar's residence. As a result, they all came to agree that:

1. The *RfP* project in Nepal for the earthquake survivors will be completed on 31 March 2018,
2. Mrs. Manandhar on behalf of *RfP* Nepal will present the final report of *RfP* project, which contains not only all the undertakings but also the financial statement from May 2015 to March 2018 at the upcoming EC meeting to be held in India in April 2018.
3. A Board meeting of *RfP* Nepal is to be held, in which its members discuss the feasibility in carrying out another project (or other projects), focusing upon children or/and women.

In concluding this brief report, it should be stressed that: *first*, an interfaith sub-committee under *RfP* Nepal has been formed to carry out the project in Saptari, which consists of 10 individuals representing four religions in Nepal; *second*, the project in Saptari has genuinely assisted in advancing social cohesion in Nepal through multi-religious cooperation, not necessarily targeted the earthquake victims and *third*, after completing the current *RfP* project in Nepal, it may embark upon a project for the protection of children in Saptari such as early child marriage *or/and* a project for women's empowerment in Thanapatti such as a vocational training.

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