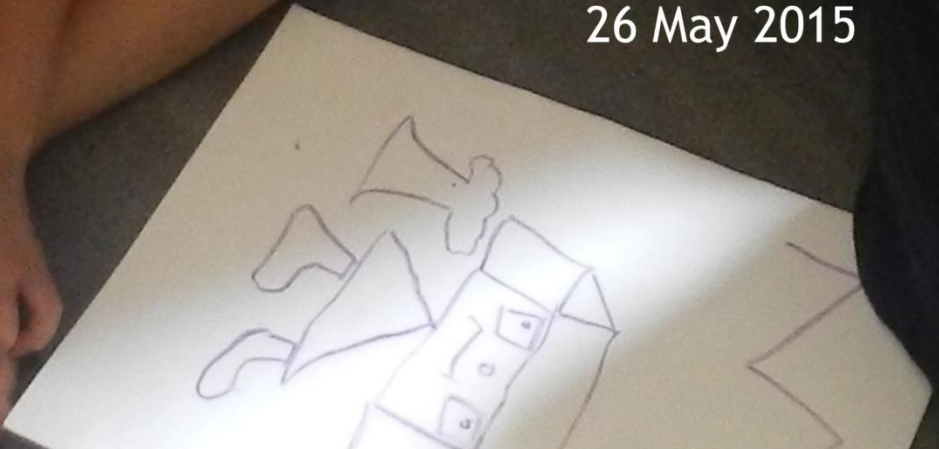


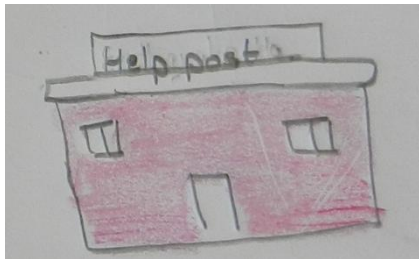


Spiny Babbler
Arts Workshop Report
KHALEY
26 May 2015



Arts Workshops

Warm your heart, Explore the minds, Share the souls.



Khaley Workshop Report on the arts workshop that took place

for 52 young people in an old Newari settlement of Lalitpur on 26 May 2015

Khaley is a traditional Newari settlement to the southeast of Kathmandu with linkages showing human settlement that may date back 1500 years. In close proximity to Harrisiddhi and Thaiba, it saw the deaths of 24 people during the quake of April 25, 2015. Built intricately with chowk squares, narrow alleys and interconnected tunnel like formations, entire areas turned into traps. Photo 1. Two religious ceremonies were taking place when the quake hit and four people died there. Photo 2. Seven more died while trying to run away from the shaking houses and were buried by falling buildings in narrow alleys. Photos 3 and 4. The rest died at home or elsewhere. During the workshop when asked if anyone had lost friends, most young people's hands went up.

From left: ways out were blocked; the collapse where religious ceremonies were ongoing; two alleys that were death traps.





Rich culture, art, and human values.

Spiny Babbler aimed to take to Khaley a therapeutic arts workshop targeted towards young people. Altogether a team of 10 people were involved in the planning, structuring, and implementation of the effort that was to last 3 hours. We reached the village at 11:30 and were guided to a one-storey purportedly earthquake resistant community house. We were expecting to work with 20-30 young people aged 6 to 12 but were faced with 56 young 1 to 14 years old.

The people of Khaley were amazing, youth, mothers, grandmothers pitched in to help us and assured that even 13 month olds got to play with balloons, paper, and color. At least 10 local volunteers got involved taking our implementation team to 20 in number. We learned with concern that the kids were not allowed to go outside the room because of the fear of another quake and the status of the Newar farming community's buildings. Over weeks, this must have been difficult for the kids to cope with.



Tents where the homeless are living, about 100 kilos of rice is cooked for every meal. The house where 52 kids stay all day. They kids are happy to see us probably expecting a break from the monotony.

The arts workshop was conducted for the young involving music, dance, art, writing (technical and creative) using the mind, body, smell, taste, sight, and touch. Lead, Gestalt therapist, Liza Wolsky coordinated and supported therapeutic aspects. Lead, Pallav Ranjan coordinated on the ground, and the effort was coordinated by Bhagawati Sapkota with support from Shital Shrestha.

GROUP	Anchor	MOVEMENT	Samples	WRITING STYLE
Passionate Picassos	Anita Raut Spiny Babbler, instructor	Baroque	Amar Chitrakar and Muslim samples	Poetry, free verse
Da Vinci Dynamites	Monalisha Maharjan Spiny Babbler, instructor	Impressionism	Lain Singh Bangdel, Monet, and Oriental samples	Fantasy based on quake experience
Sama's Serpents	Kanti Kumal Spiny Babbler, instructor	Surrealism	Shashi Shah, Salvador Dali, De Goya, South American samples	Personal life quake experience narration
Devkota's Eagles	Asim Shrestha, volunteer Management student	Expressionism	Shashi Kala Tiwari, Georgia O'Keefe, Van Gogh and others	Essay on local issue related to quake
Extreme Van Goghs	Sujan Shrestha, volunteer Information tech student	Outside art	Pallav Ranjan, African, and Aboriginal artists	National-social commentary

WORKSHOP SESSIONS

1. Welcome, Group division, warm up game: "Don't drop the balloon!"

This session was held for about 15 minutes. Four groups were formed and their names introduced. Participants played the balloon game and the hall was ringing with merriment as everyone touched the balloon, keep it in their space, and stopped it from touching the ground. From one year olds to the grandmothers who were volunteering, each seemed to enjoy the experience.



2. Prepare mind-set (30 minutes) Listen to the flute and take joy in singing

There was much laughter and noise as Spiny Babbler Evolution student, 7 year old Abiksha Shrestha, got up to play the flute. She started with short streams of ऋत and it was amazing how peace settled into the room. After offering to play many popular Nepali and English rhymes, she settled on "Happy Birthday" as it was the only ditty universally sung by the young people of Khaley. By the time the flute playing and singing was over, everyone was focused.

PART II: Our Activities Last Week (Oct 18, 2008)



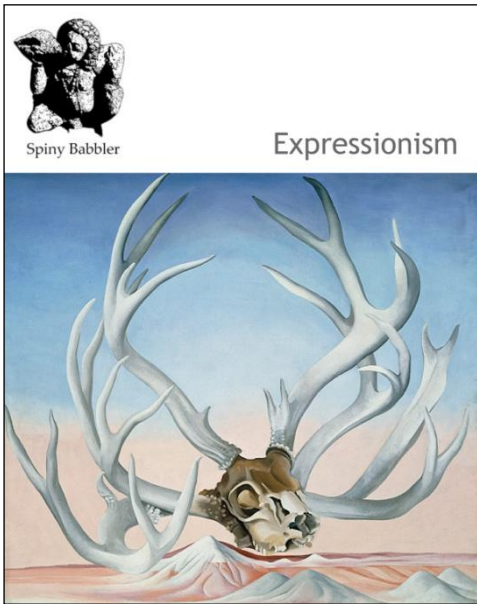
Cave painting... wall painting... we will also be working on this art form as Kathmandu Medical College has asked for help in painting their new children's section brighter, just like we did at Kanti Children's Hospital and Lagankhel Mental Hospital. Avi looking at some oil painting samples. Sraddheya's home is in Pokhara from where she loves to see the Machhapuchre mountain.



The group got different sharing packages. Spiny Babbler activities leaflet for young people such as rafting, music, treks, campfires, computer lessons made the Khaley young excited seeing what other kids their age were doing. The second group got a leaflet featuring science experiments that have taken place at Spiny Babbler Evolution including physics, chemistry, and biology work. This was a super hit as they saw Zairah who was in the leaflet and could



identify with what they were seeing on print. The third and fourth groups were older so a reading of story "The Electricity Thief" in Nepali and English took place with the Nepali version attracting extra interest. One child surprisingly said that his favorite subject was Nepali so they must indeed have a good teacher because usually, young people in Nepal tend to find studying their native language cumbersome. By the end of the session, young people were relaxed and ready to move on to the next challenge and share their own feelings and experiences.



3. Sharing session: tell your tales (30 minutes)

Malshree dhoon by Abiksha on the transverse bamboo flute set the mood, Zairah sang and danced "Tala Tuli Batuli" adding joy to the environment.

After introducing themselves to their groups, the young people shared what they felt after tasting a cold Halls candy and smelling fresh mint leaves. They attempted to associate their feelings and experiences with the taste and smell. Safal Maharjan, aged 10, said, "My mother makes me eat this plant when I have stomach ache." Annie Maharjan aged 9 added, "We have this herb plenty in our field and we make chutney from it." She identified her experience of the earthquake with the farmland (Khely meaning a place to dry the grains) and indicated that she was in the fields during the quake and they were the safest place to be during the quake. We learned that she has a makeshift tent in her own fields and she has lived there for about a week with her family. Eight-year-old Ritima Dangol said, "During the earthquake I was in a shop to buy noodles, my mother and brother were inside the house and they got injured while running out. I was so scared."

All of us were shocked to hear the experience of a 7 year old Tisa Maharjan, "I was watching TV with my mother, suddenly earthquake came and my house got destroyed. We both were buried and pull out of the wreck later." During the earthquake two best friends Aayush and Rijan were playing computer games in a cyber café and as they felt the earth move beneath their feet they immediately ran out and while running both of them tumbled down the field as they lost their balance however no serious injuries occurred. Infants, the old, the young died, friends too were taken or injured. All these memories flooded the groups even as the youngest, one to four year olds were busy playing with the colors and were oblivious to everything that had happened. Stories of areas that were now unreachable, toys that were lost, and faces that would never be seen were shared.



4. Creative session: draw, write, perform (60 minutes)

Om Shanti Dhoon composed by Jeevan Ale set the creative session as the shock, fear, gladness of the survivors were put to rest and artwork, essay, conversation based writing took over.



A3 sized drawings sheets, crayons, pencils, eraser and sharpeners were distributed. The memories of the dreadful quakes and the ongoing shakes were still fresh in the children's minds. They drew the picture of destroyed houses, people living in tents, chaotic environments as well as what they remembered was a happy community and how they would now want the community to be shaped. This session was about reviewing the past, realizing the present situation, and having hope and happiness for the future. In order to strengthen human bonding, groups were asked to discuss the incidents, plan, and draw on the same paper containing ideas that were

integrated. This allowed for further conversation and realization of things that were around them and what their aspirations were as individuals and as friends and a group.

5. Sharing session: so what do we feel? (60 minutes)

As this was the last session of the workshop young people were interested in music and dancing. Three layer circle was formed. Abiksha played phul ko akha ma on the flute from the center. After the melody ended, bubbly tingly magic pop candy was distributed and they were really excited and enthusiastic. It was completely different candy experience for them. Tanuj said in an excited voice, "I feel like firecrackers are going off in my mouth."



We asked him to associate the taste with his experiences and he replied, "This reminds me of the falling walls of my house." We could see happiness evolving and innocence in faces. They wanted to share what they looked forward to in the future. We got to know that many young kids were also injured during the quake by falling houses in the narrow alleys. We asked them what they wanted to do after the quakes end, Umang Shrestha said, "It is so hot these days that I want to go to the river and swim, I get so bored whole day sitting over here." Smaran Maharjan added, "I want to go to the cyber cafe and play computer games."

"I want to go to school, meet my friends and have normal life," said Saurav Maharjan aged 7 years quietly. Some wanted to write poetry, some wanted to help rebuild their

community. Everyone sought hope and distraction and an end to the fear and danger. Utkrista and Abiksha danced to a popular Nepali song as the participants seemed to know all the words. This most exciting session ended in a perfect manner with no need for instruments as the kids were clapping in tune and singing with great joy. And with this happiness, we ended our session in Khaley and bid the young people goodbye and came back to Spiny Babblers.





What did we get out of it?

Upon reviewing the workshop report, its images and what the young people created, this is what Liza Wolsky, Gestalt therapist and associate professor at New York State University, had to say to Pallav Ranjan:

Wow – I'm really impressed. What a well-put together and beautiful program.

I hadn't really grasped how young a lot of the kids would be.

The combinations of skills and experiences in the present with story-telling is great.

I am really liking what you are doing.

I saw you in the background of one of the pics. You look really happy.

I humbly await the next phase!

:)



These were young people of a diverse age. Young people who had been through serious risk that has not yet gone away. 52 young lives as well as the 20 of us who worked with them spent three hours together. It was a great passage of time. The sound of laughter, the silences of thought, the acts of creation, and the sharing of difficulty that still exists in the mind and in the body, some of which are starting to heal.

We were able to understand more of the horror that the earthquake had meted out to this farming community. Kids playing computer games, working in the fields with their parents, grandmothers and infants that there were caring for, kids watching tv or falling asleep in the mid day... some made it, some did not. The community is afraid. There are areas that no one goes to, they say there is the sound of weeping coming out of the ground in the night.

Staying in tents, staying at the safer homes in fear, staying at the shelter where the workshop took place, the children are playing, imagining, thinking, making friends, sharing time with some people like us and seeking to heal. Perhaps we contributed something to the young who wanted to write poetry, read Nepali, go to school and find out if the rest of their friends are safe. Life goes on, on from these young people, we can draw the inspiration to continue doing what we do.

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