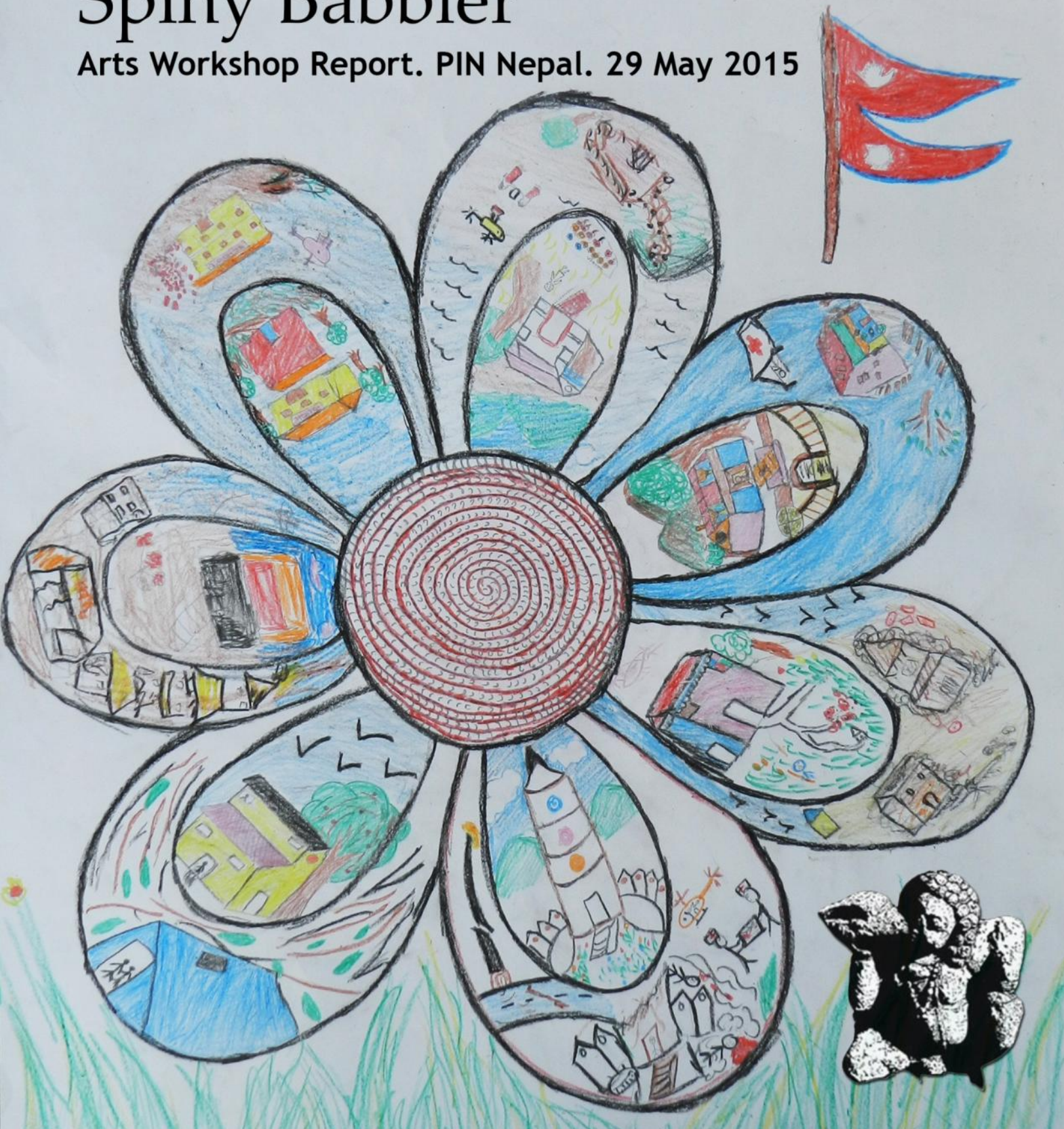


Passionate Picasso

Spiny Babbler

Arts Workshop Report. PIN Nepal. 29 May 2015



Arts Workshops

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



PIN Nepal Workshop Report that took place

for 26 young people in a shelter house for girls at risk in Kalimati, Kathmandu on 29 May 2015

"How long ago was it that we met, that we have worked together?" Kapila, in-charge of the girls-at-risk hostel and education center asks. "Must be twenty years." It has been that a long time that Sushma di introduced me to PIN Nepal where she and her friends work to improve women and girl's lives. The light green color of the building, its bunk beds are etched in my memories.

"Your daughter is now..." Kapila lets her voice trail. "19 months," I say. "My daughter is in Virginia, studying community health. She used to say that I am not her real daughter, my real daughters are the girls at PIN Nepal. In a lot of ways, that is true, and that became true because of the support I received at home. Waking up my husband in the middle of the night, at three or four in the morning, to look for girls who had run away from the shelter, I used to think of how much support I have."

Of the 40 girls at PIN Nepal, 21 are in residence, the rest have gone home to be with families and guardians in the aftermath of the earthquake. It is mid-day, 29 May 2015, we are in Kalimati, Kathmandu.



PIN Nepal makes a difference

PIN is a nonprofit organization that provides basic needs of girls at risk and women for whom they carry out skill oriented workshops required to run an independent life themselves. Kapila ji talks about how things are easier now. There is boarding facility as well as day facilities for girls at risk. Many have graduated and grown up and are back to help over the years.

In the kitchen, xxx xxx is completing her master's studies and is here to help prepare the afternoon's snack, chiura rice with spicy potatoes. Others too provide counseling to new girls and "everything has become a little easier due to our experience and their involvement." The women's skill development sector is also working out and also has its own property and building as well as set programs where as many as 60 come together for months' long skill and income generation training.



Four groups are formed: 1. Passionate Picassos, 2. Devkota's Eagles, 3. Da Vinci Dynamites, and 4. Sama's Serpents.

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 2-5 yrs	Anita Raut	Outside art	African, Aboriginal artists, Pallav Ranjan	Personal life experience narration
Da Vinci Dynamites 6-8 yrs	Monalisa Maharjan	Expressionism	Bangdel, Monet, and Oriental samples	Fantasy based on quake experience
Devkota's Eagles 9-10 yrs	Sunita Dangol	Surrealism	Shashi Shah, Dali, De Goya, and South American artists	Poetry, free verse
Sama's Serpents 11-12 yrs	Shital Shrestha	Impressionism	Shashi Kala Tiwari, O'Keefe, Van Gogh and others	Essay on local issues related to the quake
Extreme Van Goghs 13 onwards	Aseem Shrestha	Baroque	Amar Chitrakar and Muslim samples	National-social commentary

Format adapted as per ground situation. Artwork styles, writing processes selected based on age group comfort. All art styles booklets shared collectively and selective styles by individual anchors in specific groups.

WORKSHOP SESSIONS

1. Something different

It was important to introduce ideas and concepts that would help the young think and process. Plant pigment based art is something practiced at Spiny Babbler Evolution by our young. Flowers and leaves in the garden provide ample art material when they are used as art material. Colors of different flowers provide yellow, purple, pink, red, blue and other shades while leaves provide various greens. Instructors need to keep in mind which plants are edible, usable and which may be toxic when integrating this type of art material.



Above, holding up a world cracked and injured.

2. Preparing mind-set (30 minutes)

Life opportunities, science experiments, story

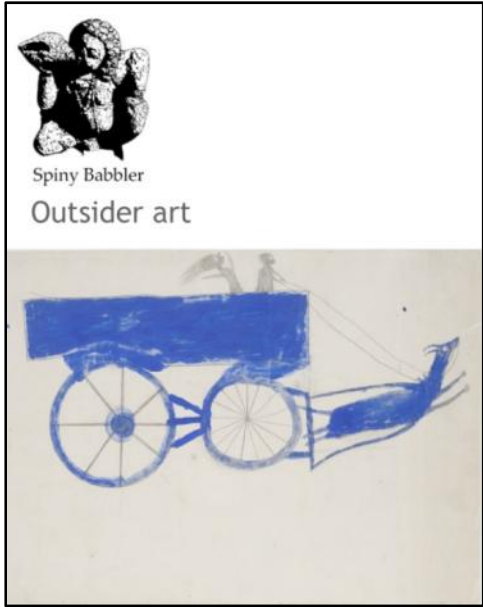
For decades Spiny Babbler events have started with live music. Aural and mental sensitization through live music is easier achieved and influences the audience throughout the entire working session. 7 year old Abhikshya Shrestha got up to play the flute. Peace settled in the room. Singing started. By the time the flute playing and singing was over, everyone was more focused.

A leaflet containing Spiny Babbler life opportunities leaflet for the young people such as rafting, music, treks, campfires, computer lessons was given to the Passionate Picassos. They were excited seeing what other kids their age are doing.

Sama's Serpents got a leaflet featuring science experiments that have been taken place at Spiny Babbler Evolution and physics, chemistry, and biology work. They were surprised that Zairah, now 5, was already involved in practical science work at the age of 22 months.

Da Vinci Dynamites and Devkota's Eagles listened to the "Electricity Thief" from Spiny Babbler publication *I Learn to Trust*. Asim told them of a real incident related to mischief and its consequences for a family in the Nepal Terai and how a young child was involved by his father.





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

Abikhshya played the Malshree Dhoon on the transverse flute and set the mood. Mint candies were shared and the children closed their eyes as they explored the taste and associated it with their feelings. It was a cold fresh taste. Shova said that the taste, "reminds me of water and how the water from the filter had spilled all over the floor when earthquake hit."

It was a Saturday noon. Everyone was home at PIN Nepal. "I was dancing when the earthquake struck. I along with my friends ran out to the clearing."

Then cumin (jeera) and thyme (jwano) were handed to the groups and the heady and warm smells were explored and connected to feelings. Jamuna felt excitement when smelling the spices, she shared her experience of the earthquake "I ran down the stairs and fell." Thankfully she was not hurt.

Three of the girls were upstairs and chose to stay calm. "It was scary but it did not make sense to panic. Besides running down, we could have injured ourselves. After the shake was over, we went to the kitchen, turned off the gas, checked to see if anything could lead to further damage and walked down." What an amazingly brave thing to do, [the word "mature" was removed here because many "mature" people did not have the presence of mind to do what the girls did].

"Some were in the bedroom, some downstairs washing clothes, everyone was relaxed. We were pleased that our building was fine. Our neighborhood did not suffer as much as other areas but still the experience was traumatizing. Many of the children are still scared and there are earthquakes going everyday even after a month has gone by."

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



Art, poetry, essays, music, dance and conversations would be a great way to share experiences and process the feelings of panic, fear, anxiety, hope, and ideas. "Om Shanti Dhoon" composed by Jeevan Ale set a meditative and peaceful environment. A0 sized drawing sheets (23"x26"), crayons, pencils, eraser and sharpeners were distributed. Memories of the quakes were still fresh in the girls' minds.

They talked a lot with each other. Since the purpose of the exercise was sharing and exploring and healing, groups drew pictures of destroyed houses and monuments, people living in tents, chaotic environment as well as the new Nepal that they pictured in their minds.

Though this was a group with similar quake experience that had personally experienced relatively minor damage the mental impact was huge nonetheless.

In order to strengthen human bonding, they discussed the incidents, plans, and drew on the same paper and integrated ideas. This allowed for further conversation and realization of things that were around them and what their aspirations as individuals, as friends, and as a group were.

A New Purpose

by Rabina and Angura



Sparkles that symbolize
(those monuments) are no more.
They shouldn't all have swung,
the good and along with our erroneous traditions.

We will save them yet
we will work hard to do so.
They shall again call people from around the world
to Nepal once we have finished our rebuilding.

They are important, our heritage, our monuments.
They represent us, our cultures.
Remaking them once more, rebuilding,
we will reintroduce who we are and our nation.

We will save Nepal
together. We will understand
why they are important
that which we protect.

We will reintroduce Nepal
across the world again.
We will remake Nepal
into a beautiful, peaceful garden.

Translated by Pallav Ranjan



The great earthquake

by Roshani Mahat

On April 25, the greatest cost was that of human life. The quake submerged our nation in tears. Importantly, World Heritage Sites of Patan, Hanuman Dhoka [Kathmandu Durbar Square] and other places such as Dharahara now only remain in our memories.

If I had superpowers, I would have used my abilities to stop the homes of people from falling down and would have worked to minimize human and infrastructural costs. If I had the power to foretell natural disasters such as earthquakes, I would have convinced everyone of the danger and would not have allowed human cost to take place.

In case I could not stop this disaster from happening and if I could not save all the houses from going down, then I would use my superpowers to pull out people who were crushed within houses and other construction and I would not let people die.



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

The taste of spicy Hajmolla played on the tongue as we asked the young ladies to share what they felt. Fifteen-year-old Sangita said that the school canteen came into her mind and the classes and friends and teachers there. It had been a while since she had been able to attend school.

Magic pop was more explosive on the tongue, Swastika said that, it reminded her of "panic in herself and the people around her." Sabnam Sekh also expressed fear and panic and said she put very little magic pop powder in her mouth at first because she wanted to feel the least number of people screaming during earthquake. Then she put in a generous amount of magic pop in her mouth and felt the screaming and panic of people increase significantly.

Nineteen-year-old Pinky she felt the movement and shaking and popping on her tongue indicated in her mind the shaking of buildings during the terrifying quake. Sushma "the feeling reminds me of the noise of show pieces falling off my bed rack." For eight year old Sila, memories came back of the low crying of crows and their screaming in the skies after the quake. Dipa said that she could see walls falling in her mind.

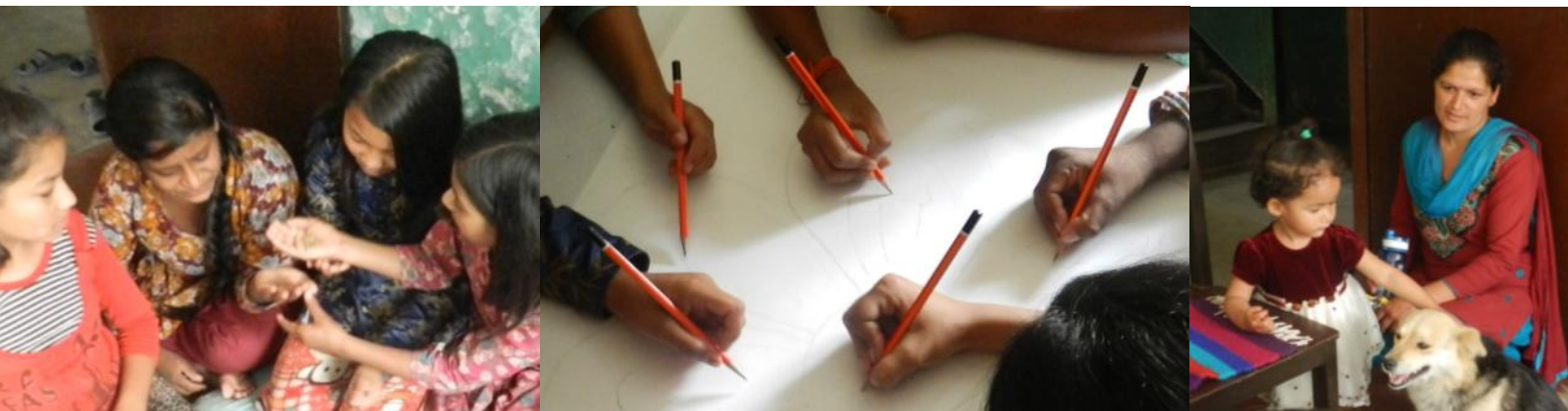
The children shared ideas on how to rebuild a nation that was broken and most wanted culture and history to be preserved, monuments rebuilt, and the people taken care of. They felt they could contribute in many ways to help Nepal recover as "it would take many decades" and they would have grown up already and would be ready to work as volunteers and professionals.



Some wanted to contribute as doctors, some as engineers, some as writers, and one as a scientist who would try and come up with the device that would allow for the fore-warning of earthquakes to take place. After juice and biscuits, a group photo session took place and it was time to say farewell for this time. Spiny Babbler would be back at PIN Nepal again.

What did we get out of it?


Being back at PIN Nepal was a pleasure. The green walls are as they are. The girls are comfortable and happy and that is what the shelter home is about, as one of their guiding lights Sushma Bajracharya put it, " to make things better than it would for the children if the home was not there."



There were children of a diverse group that had lived through the same experience. Some were scared, some panicked and fell from stairs and hurt themselves as they ran, some were incredibly brave and stopped dancing, put water filters back up, stood up racks that had fallen, closed the gas cylinders before calmly taking their friends and young ones to a safe location. There examples to learn on how different people in the same circumstances react and need each other. Some needed support while others needed to support those who needed help.

Coming from a homogenous environment, the ideas for the future were unified, the poetry had a similar string of comments, the artwork was marked by – Dharahara a major landmark of the Kathmandu Valley destroyed by the earthquake. The fear was deep amongst most of the girls though the PIN Nepal building itself and the neighborhood did not suffer. Whether the old or the young, the events would leave a mark in the mind that will possibly remain a lifetime just as the quakes of 1934 are impressed upon the minds of its survivors.

The important thing was the hope for things to get better than they were for people, communities, and the nation. Their recognition that this was an opportunity for a people to show their character, courage, and ability. The wish to do something for a people hurt and struggling in the aftermath of a disaster. We who met these children and shared their hopes, recognitions, and desires; saw them write and read poems and stories; enjoyed the artwork as they shaped came away with the desire to do more, to spend more hours with similar young people and to take joy in their spirit and courage.



On the front cover artwork
by the group Passionate Picassos.
On this page artwork on paper
by Khushi Singh, crayon, pencil
and vegetable pigments.



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