TBS Visit to Dhading: 25th May 2015

On Monday 25th May, TBS representatives visited Dhading Besi. Mr. Steve Priest, Mr. Rohit Sigdel, Ms Gemma Caines and our contracted civil engineer visited local Education Ministry officials and government engineers to seek approval for our plans to rebuild the three primary schools that have been the focus of our Sixth Form Dhading Project for the last five years.

Government officials have given us the full go-ahead to complete our rebuilding plans, subject to submission of our engineer’s plans to fulfill the government’s own safety specifications before approval. They were appreciative and actively welcome the involvement of TBS in their efforts to help them rebuild Dhading’s schools.

As well as our meeting at the Ministry, we met the Principal and community leaders at each of the three schools. We reviewed the existing sites again, as our previous visit had taken place before the 12th May earthquake. We also shared our plans and discussed additional issues that arose such as the relocation of toilet blocks, exact position of new buildings and additional action required to strengthen surrounding earthworks.

One school has already created the basic structures for school to re-open in a few days, using their own local materials and tarpaulins donated by TBS. The other two schools have much more constrained space making it difficult for lessons to recommence on what will be dangerous building sites for the next few months. We discussed suitable locations for temporary structures with the Principals and found a solution for each school.
We were particularly impressed by the village representative for Shree Rudrakanya Primary School. An elderly man, he had already donated part of two farm terraces for the building of a new school. Despite his home being subsequently destroyed on 25th April, he willingly offered additional land for a temporary classroom to be erected, once he understood the dangers presented by the existing school site until works are completed.

It was with great satisfaction that we took another step forward in our plans, secure in the knowledge that we were working closely with each school, their community and the government to realise our shared objectives.

Indeed, the Ministry’s only plea was that we work with more schools in the region if we are able. We reiterated our commitment to our existing three schools, but talked at some length about the possibilities of working with others if we have the necessary budget to do so.

We ended the day by surveying two potential new partner schools. At one we were met on the road by the local community who begged us to help. At the other, we were given a guided tour by some very bored students from that school, who proudly showed us their library, the one building that had not been condemned as unsafe. At the moment our future plans are as follows:
Our engineer, having got the go-ahead for his plans from our three school Principals, will prepare final plans for submission to the government for approval. Local Ministry officials assure us that, once plans are checked against their own standards, they will assist us in the swift processing of the remaining paperwork needed for us to begin work as soon as possible. The schools themselves will provide what resources and manpower they can, for example one school will provide the timber required, another has already secured the gift of land needed for the new building and has completed the process of leveling it.

Once the rebuilding process has begun, under the supervision of a TBS employed Project Manager, we can review our budget and meet with our engineers to discuss plans for additional projects. We will then return to Dhading Besi and repeat the process for other schools if we consider at that stage that we are able to help.