

# Field Innovation Team and Women LEAD Nepal **AFTER ACTION REPORT**

A FIT and Women LEAD Nepal project following the Gorkha Earthquake, April 2015 - June 2015



*{FIT, Women LEAD, and volunteers, Kathmandu, Nepal, June 2015}*

**Empowering survivors to create cutting-edge disaster solutions. Solutions that FIT.**

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# Introduction

The Field Innovation Team (FIT) and Women LEAD Nepal (WLEAD) began collaborating following the April 25 2015 Gorkha earthquake which killed more than 9,000 and left more than 23,000 injured. FIT began by using

telepresence to train young women from WLEAD's leadership institute in two areas: 1) earthquake preparedness: to be ready for continuous aftershocks and help those around them to be safer, and 2) FIT's Youth Empowerment

Curriculum, to enable the young women to begin

building back community with Nepal's young people.

On June 1, after 4 weeks of virtual trainings, a small team of FIT members flew to Nepal to continue training and support

WLEAD trainees in carrying out the curriculum in Kathmandu and surrounding communities. This report takes you through

the on-the-ground deployment and outcomes.

Thank you for reading and Namaste!

**Why focus on women?** Because their empowerment will change the country. According to the United Nations, large numbers of Nepalese women are marginalized in society by caste designations and entrenched harmful traditional practices. UN WOMEN Gender Alert, May 2015, notes that of the over 2 million people living in the 11 most critically hit districts in the Central and Western Region, including the Kathmandu Valley districts, there are 284,144 female headed households, 31,609 women with disabilities, 138,032 women over the age of 65, 609,247 girls aged 14 or under and 630,678 illiterate women and girls [1]. When these women successfully empower themselves, they'll be instrumental in the building of a better Nepal.



# On the Ground

## Day 1, June 3

FIT team assembles & receives introductions & integration with the WLEAD staff and board members at the WLEAD HQ.

WLEAD trainees have been trained virtually to facilitate and have been carrying out FIT's Youth Empowerment Curriculum in communities and at home. We hear stories from the field, WLEAD trainees giving us the details on what it's like to teach concepts and play games after participating in virtual training. One team of WLEADers, Anjali and Sujata, ran activities with 30 - 40 kids in temporary living shelters. The rest of the day is spent gathering supplies and planning out the next week of work on the ground.





## Day 2, June 4

FIT connects local and international organizations focused on to look at how we can bring our (wo)man power to work on temporary learning centers to build for youth empowerment and community building, and to discuss how to utilize performing arts to address the growing human trafficking issues.

June 4 is also a training day, with FIT preparing WLEAD trainees to carry out Youth Empowerment activities in the coming days.

**USAID** reports that over 50,000 classrooms were destroyed or damaged following the earthquakes [2].

The **International Labor Organization** estimated that prior to the earthquake ~ 12,000 children were trafficked to India each year. The **United Nations** fears a surge will happen this year, given the state of the post-earthquake country [3].





**Day 3, June 5**

FIT works with All Hands in the community of Kavre to source supplies (bamboo) and construct temporary learning shelters

alongside WLEAD trainees. While building shelters, the area experiences a 4.5 magnitude aftershock but the team is so engrossed that it's not even felt. Constant aftershocks are the norm for the Nepalese FIT's working with here.

While working on construction, WLEAD trainees spontaneously begin to play games with the surrounding youth,

demonstrating an incredible ability at adapting to difficult facilitating situations and teaching on the fly.







**Day 4, June 6**

FIT works with WLEAD trainees on more advanced programming and iterates to shape the most relevant activities.

One of the areas where programming is added is health and sanitation, with FIT member Sweta Basnet

crafting games and activities focused on public health, specifically proper hygiene. Evidence below for how much fun teaching

about diarrhea prevention can be! Public health education is important in Nepal at this time of the year due to

to the onset of monsoon season. It's now critically important given the disheveled post-disaster state of the country.





**Day 5, June 7**

WLEAD has a day off, so the rest of the team seizes the opportunity to explore beautiful Nepal.





## Day 6, June 8

The team travels to Khokana where 6 - 8 WLEAD trainees run the Youth Empowerment

Curriculum with 300+ kids, aged 5 - 17. The trainees demonstrate incredible leadership, adapting games

that don't work, and helping each other out in running programming. Games include arts, engineering

science, improv theater, dance, and storytelling.

WLEAD trainee **Anjali** in action !! ->  
{Anjali organized this session  
in her home village}







Day 7, June 9

The team travels to Harisiddhi where trainees run programming. All support Circus Kathmandu in their community-wide performance. It would be difficult to say whether the kids like watching the performers or playing games better.





**Day 8, June 10**

After Action Day!! FIT and WLEAD spend the day exploring technology that FIT brought, telling stories, and celebrating a fantastic time over the last week. Also discuss plans to check with

WLEAD trainees on their successes and needs as they continue to take the Youth Empowerment Curriculum out into a recovering Nepal. Namaste!

ENERGY in disasters! FIT demonstrates how dirty power from car engines, etc., can be converted into clean power for laptops, mobile devices, and even for electricity. Solar power can be critical in disasters, and FIT's Smart Battery, a solar powered system energy system can provide power when it is needed most.







**Then on June 15...**

As a result of all the schools visited during FIT's visit, the principal of Kanti Ishowri Rajyalaxhmi

Madhyamik School in Basantapur, Kathmandu, invites WLEAD to come run activities with students.

WLEAD trains 12-14 new leaders to carry out activities. These WLEADers run activities with 80-100 students.

**Program sustainability in action!**



# Lessons Learned

- 1** **M & E:** Need to have a monitoring and evaluation plan in place prior to the deployment for next time - important for tracking progress and reporting back to supporters and donors.
- 2** **GOALS:** Crucial to set goals before the deployment - how many people to reach, what to accomplish, what to sustainable tools, systems to leave behind, etc.
- 3** **LANGUAGE & CULTURE & CONTEXT:** Importance of having an in-country partner can not be understated. Also critical to have language and culture experts on every team.
- 4** **BUILDING TRUST:** Incredible value in connecting deeply with community rapidly, as we saw was the result of the Story of You activity. This fosters trust and makes for an incredibly driven and cohesive mission-driven team, despite different backgrounds.
- 5** **LOVE IS LOVE:** in a post-disaster setting, we need to focus on survivors including youth using empathy tools to help them empower themselves to create cutting edge disaster solutions.



# Lessons Learned continued ...

- 6 **NEEDS ASSESSMENT:** Need for an open source, accessible-by-all needs assessment tool - whether an app, text-based, web-based or other, need a way for all groups to access this data on a collectively created database.
- 7 **COMMUNICATION:** Work on creating good communications systems early on to avoid duplication of efforts, e.g. with bamboo acquisition.
- 8 **ACCLIMATIZING:** Ensure some time to acclimatize when time zone change is dramatic - this makes a large difference for those jumping into a nonstop recovery deployment.
- 9 **TIME MAXIMIZATION:** Create tasks and activities for long rides to ensure that all the "spare" time on short deployments is utilized as best as possible.
- 10 **POST-DEPLOYMENT CHECK INS:** build into the schedule check ins with those who deployed to ensure emotional and psychological support is given if needed.
- 11 Be open to the synchronicity of unexpected additive connections. It was purely by chance that we connected with Circus Kathmandu who jumped onto the FIT Team to provide the amazingly talented performers with whom we collaborated.
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# Highlights

- 1 WOMEN MENTORS:** Incredible for young girls to see young women in leadership positions teaching FUN activities.
- 2 INVESTMENT IN NEPAL:** While a lot of young people leave Nepal as soon as they're able for job opportunities elsewhere, we witnessed many young people working hard on-the-ground, invested in helping their country.
- 3 OWNERSHIP:** We saw proof that the true sustainability of this project is with the Nepalese WLEADers who have taken FIT's curriculum, adapted it to their needs, and are currently running with it in and around Kathmandu, coming soon to a community near you!
- 4 IMPROVISATION & ADAPTATION:** WLEADers shaped and reshaped the activities based on their preferences, needs of students they were working with, and other constraints, improving dramatically at this skill throughout trainings and implementation. They rock.





# Wrap Up

Earthquakes and continued aftershocks with monsoon season just weeks away while dealing with drinking water scarcity, an up-tick in human trafficking, and infrastructure that was crumbling. That was the situation in Nepal after disaster struck on April 25th, and again on May 12, with many aftershocks. One might want to throw in the towel. That was NOT the case with these ladies - they rolled up their sleeves, hiked up mountains to negotiate bamboo sales, built foundations of a temporary learning center, and brought smiles to 100s of youth while educating communities in and around the Kathmandu Valley. This is a tribute to the women survivors and heroes of Nepal. Thank you for your dedication & work with FIT- you are incredible & I am proud to be on your team & always thinking of you.

Namaste, Desi Matel-Anderson, FIT Chief Wrangler

## TEACHING **RESILIENCE** in TRAUMATICALLY STRESSFUL SITUATIONS

**STABLE ROLE MODEL**  
within the FAMILY &/or  
COMMUNITY who can provide  
support

**SOCIAL SUPPORT**  
Understanding the  
experience through  
collaboration &  
self-expression, e.g.,  
art, theater,  
storytelling,  
& writing

**RITUALS**  
For community  
healing & empowerment,  
prayer, meditation, vigils,  
or community gatherings  
for grieving

**RESILIENCE**  
A COPING skill for STRESS.

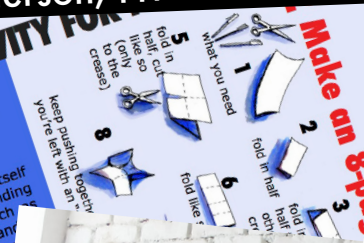
YOU have CONTROL over how you  
& those around you RESPOND to  
controllable events.

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### YOU - ACTIVITY FOR TRAUMATIC EVENTS

Storytelling has proven itself  
as a means for understanding  
traumatic events, such  
as forced migration, and  
trauma. Collective  
storytelling is a means for  
empowerment, and  
enabling individuals to  
share their experiences  
with others.

It's a simple  
way to help  
others who  
have experienced  
traumatic





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Basantapur District, Kanti Ishwari Rajya Lakshmi Secondary School

Khokana District, Zing Boarding School

Kavre District, Shree Jagriti Lower Secondary School

Harisiddhi District, Bright Star Higher Secondary School





# Sources

[1] UN, 2015. Nepal: In Earthquakes' Wake, UNICEF Speeds Up Response to Prevent Child Trafficking

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[2] USAID, 2015. Education Can't Wait. Accessed online 7/24/2015 at <http://bit.ly/1FiGLTc>

[3] UN Women, 2015. Humanitarian Crisis in Nepal: Gender Alert. Accessed online 7/24/2015 at <http://bit.ly/1SbHMqk>

