

Tuesday, 12. May 2015

Today's focal point was the Shree Navin Jyoti English School in Ramkot near Kathmandu. The trip was organized by Shavitri, Jiwan, and Rajan of the Ganesh Disable New Life Center Nepal. There was also a medical student Clarissa from Dortmund. In the area of Ramkot about 20 percent of the houses have collapsed and about another 25 percent are in danger of collapsing and must be demolished.



When we arrived at around noon, the sun was very strong. Fortunately, a tarp was present, under which we could build the Health Camp.

We waited for the first patient to be treated. Today it looked quieter compared to yesterday.



Thomas, the architect took me along, as he wanted to look at a few houses from outside and also one from inside in order to calm the house owner and to confirm that there is no risk to live inside the house.

So while passing through affected houses we looked through and discussed what indicators for an unstable home were. Thomas said, if a house is plastered, one sees cracks very well and one can also see whether the pillars are affected.





These houses at first glance very good, but these needed to be definitively demolished because the stability is no longer assured and it is only a matter of time before they collapse.

I saw there were many people struggling to maintain their homes. Many had taken loans from the bank in order to build them.

The people around here felt unsafe in their own houses although newspaper and television reports were telling there would be no major earthquakes.

Then, as we just returned to school, suddenly the ground beneath our feet started to shake. We quickly ran away a few steps from the house and could already see how the houses started to wiggle around us. The earthquake seemed more intense and lasted for relative longer long. I could hardly imagine what would have happened had we been still standing in the immediate vicinity of the nearly collapsed buildings. Not far from us collapsed we could see two already damaged buildings being collapsed.



People were screaming and panicking. We were trying to calm them down. We saw them trying to call their relatives and friends, in the mean time the mobile phone network also collapsed.



Most shopkeepers immediately closed their stores and tried to reach to a safe place. Some ran simply to the open field. Others quickly collected a few things from their homes and began to build shelter of tents.

Later we came to know that, this was a huge earthquake measuring 7.2 to 7.4 and lasted for about 20 seconds. The epicenter was in Dolakha, not very far from the place where we were yesterday.

Now, as most people were afraid to go back to their homes, they camped on open spaces. Even though the earth was no longer trembling, the panic reaction of the people was not decreasing.

During the night, this fear continued. We could see people sitting on the roadside. Some lay in the corridors of their homes on mats, some had tents in front of the house or on the few open spaces that still existed.



It looked more or less like a picnic, but these people were scared, panicked and what not. They were scared that they would lose their lives, their shelters, their food supplies and to their belongings in the home.

Translator: Kritan

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