

Volunteers in Nepal Survey 120 Families Ahead of Prefab Housing Program

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation

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In Nepal, 19 young local volunteers surveyed 124 families to prepare for construction of pre-fabricated homes to replace those destroyed or damaged by the earthquake in April. This is part of the Tzu Chi Foundation's medium- and long-term relief to the victims of the earthquake, which killed 9,000 people and displaced more than 450,000.

On November 20, the 19 Nepali volunteers went to Bungamati, a village famous for its agriculture, livestock and fishing. They visited the homes of families to evaluate the conditions of each household and their requirements. Since June this year, the young volunteers have been helping aid distributions and with translation, during the early stage of relief.

Before they went to Bungamati, the volunteers held a group discussion. During this, Dr. Sarvesh Gyawali shared his experience on hospitalization and participating in the annual conference of the Tzu Chi International Medical Association (TIMA) in Taiwan; it gave him a new perspective on the relationship between the doctor and the patient. In addition, the volunteers prepared for the home visits by learning what they should pay attention to.



While they were doing the survey, they found roads still blocked by bricks that had fallen from damaged houses. Doctors also participated in the visits and provided free medical service to those they visited. One local resident, Mrs. Maya shared her story with the volunteers. "My husband passed away one year ago," she said. "My father-in-law has cancer and I have two sons to raise. But I earn least money. My house is damaged and I do not know what to do."

The wife of another resident, Mr. Shakya, is ill. His family is living in a rented house; they have only a single space for studying, cooking and sleeping. Because of the strike in Nepal, he cannot work nor afford the cost of an operation for his wife to have surgery.

In total, the volunteers surveyed 131 houses; they were unable to enter seven because the families were absent. After the survey, the young volunteers felt full of enlightenment. One of them, Anina, said: "I want to thank everyone and also our Tzu Chi and Master Cheng Yen for giving us the opportunity to handle such a big program." Monica, Tzu Chi volunteer from Taiwan, said: "The local volunteers could accomplish such a big mission in unity and harmony in their early years. We are very grateful for that."

More and more young Nepalis are joining Tzu Chi's charity mission. These young Nepalese will continue to spread the seeds of love and help underprivileged people in Nepal. In addition, now that they know the needs and hopes of the local residents after the survey, the volunteers will make a full assessment and construct the pre-fabricated houses soon.

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Article by Suman Prajapati, documentary volunteer