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Recovering from Grief

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During our stay in Kavrepalanchowk for Rapid Structural (Technical) School Assessment, our team assessed 61 schools of the three resource centres. In those two weeks, I experienced what many don't get to experience in a lifetime. We witnessed a totally flattened village, slept in barns, and heard stories of hopes. In the fourth day of our assessment, we assessed Shree Pulchowki Primary School.

Shree Pulchowki Primary School is located in Kushadevi resource centre—a remote location bordering Pulchowki hill of Lalitpur. The school was on the top of a hill and had three blocks of steel frame and walls of stone and mud. After observing the school blocks, the engineer in our team placed red flags on all the three blocks as it was not safe for conducting the classes. We also saw that one of the blocks was displaced from its foundation because of large fissure in that part of the hill. We noticed that there was no space for a temporary learning center (TLC) as the area was surrounded by steep hills and there was no flat land nearby. Most of all, we observed that the school was highly vulnerable to landslide and something had to be done urgently.



After having a conversation with the head teacher Mr. Keshav Humagain, we placed red flags in all the three blocks. This made him emotional and after a moment he shared his hardships in building that school. He said, *“We flattened the hills ourselves and had to manually carry the steel structure for hours. The cost of blocks when it was completed was almost double of the allocated budget because of poor road access”*. When our engineer advised Mr. Humagain to relocate the classes, his eyes were filled with tears. Our resource person Mr. Maheshwor Jangam also suggested him to merge the school with another lower secondary school in the same region. With confused and worried look, Mr. Humagain said, *“I have no problem with the merger but the villagers won't send their kids to that school because students have to walk more and also due to some cultural differences”*. After hearing him, I came to know that in remote Kavrepalanchok, families send their children only to those schools where most of the students are from same ethnic background. After few days, we received a call from Mr. Humagain mentioning that he had demolished the walls of the blocks with the help of villagers and Nepal Army. Though TLCs were established by District Education Office, he said that due to lack of space, they were not functional in several areas. This case might be identical to some of other schools as well so it is very imperative for District Education Offices in those districts to support such schools so that they can sustain in the coming days.