



Good Shepherd Relief Work for the Victims of the Earthquake in Nepal

Report of Activity April – September 2015

Background

On April 25, 2015, a few minutes before noon, a massive earthquake struck Nepal. The epicenter of the quake, which registered 7.8 on the Richter Scale, was approximately halfway between Kathmandu and the town of Pokhara in Central Nepal. Thirty-nine of Nepal's seventy-five districts were seriously affected. The day after the quake, an aftershock registering 6.6 shook the country again. Significant tremors continue to occur repeatedly till date.

The quake resulted in death, destruction of infrastructures and displacement. People lost family and friends, housing and livelihood. The local government and other groups in the affected areas were unable to address the gravity of the crisis for they themselves were traumatized and rendered helpless by the extent of damage.



1 Destruction in the villages

A brief summary of the after-effects of the earthquake:

Dead	8,346
Injured	14,556
Homes completely destroyed	1,60,786
Homes partially damaged	1,43,673
Population of districts affected	1,36,52,804
Pregnant women affected	1,26,000
Women and girls of reproductive age affected	20,00,000
Women who may be affected by obstetric complications	2,100
Women and girls who may face gender based violence	40,000
Worth of crops and livestock destroyed	3.58 million USD
No. of schools damaged	1,383



2 Sister rudging along on dilapidated roads

In collaboration with UNICEF, Caritas Nepal, other Catholic and lay NGOs and the Departments of Social Welfare, Health, and Women & Child, the Good Shepherd sisters of Nepal have promptly offered relief assistance with the support of dedicated lay partners and volunteers working under the Good Shepherd banner.

In the days following the earthquake and its aftershocks, all of these teams collaborated in providing relief to the remotest villages in Nepal that were cut off from mainland and buried in rubble.

Immediate Relief efforts



- Sr. Taskila distributed 500 food packets in Bhaktapur district along with Caritas-Nepal;
- Through the Children's Home Network in Pokhara, they bought rice, dhal and tents for 50 families. These were supplied to Koplaan village in Gorkha district;
- Sr. Lucy and the team set off on a first aid mission with mobile clinic to administer medical help in Swara village;
- The district Health Department allotted Swara village (comprising 9 wards).

Relief work in Swara Village



3 Battered roads

- Braving an 8-hour road trip with two breakdowns, multiple roadblocks caused by landslides, broken bridges, overflowing rivers and an hour's slippery and dangerous trek, the Medical Assistance Team comprising of three sisters and five volunteers carried medical supplies and hygiene kits to Swara village, a village that was till then cut off from relief supplies, 7 days after the earthquake;
- In the next four days, over **900 patients** were attended to. Apart from medical treatment, trauma relief counseling was also offered. Water purification tablets were distributed;
- Sr. Taskila, Sashirekha, Sr. Jyothi from Congregation of Jesus, Mr. Mauro (INTERSOS) set out on an arduous journey to Swara village to distribute 875 blankets and 3 tents;
- Sr. Thomasy worked with the residents of Dalchowki VDC, Khursanibari Village, Ward no. 1;
- Sr. Anjali with the local parishioners of Pokhara distributed blankets, tents and food to 60 families in Ward no. 4 of Saurpani village;
- In meeting with the District Women and Children Welfare Officer, the Good Shepherd sisters' "Opportunity Village" was registered as a foster home for abandoned and orphaned children who have been victimized due to the devastation caused by the earthquake;

- In the meanwhile, Sr. Amala and Mr. Dibyak Kapali visit Bhaktapur from Freedom Center, Nakhipot for assessment and providing psycho-social support.
- Sr. Thomasy along with Caritas Nepal distributed food items in Dalchowk VDC to 30 families. Each family was given 30 kgs of rice, dhal, sugar, salt, beaten rice, biscuits, tea leaves, oil and blankets;
- Relief materials were distributed to three villages: Ranchowk, Simbu and Saurpani. 24 multipurpose tent for the classrooms and health centres, blankets, water cans and tarpaulin sheets. Nearly 1000 children could benefit from these tents which will serve as temporary school facilities.



4 Distribution of Hygiene kits

Medical Mobile Team

- The medical team coordinated by the Good Shepherd sisters and consisting of Dr. Rakesh (Manipal Hospital), Sr. Lucy, Pushpa and Smitha from the Congregation of Jesus, Mr Santosh and Mr Kamal Sakya set out from Pokhara and reached out to the following areas:
- *Shimbu*: The Medical Mobile team reached Shimbu after braving miserable weather, taking help from the army for carrying medical supplies, and trekking for seven long hours. 60 patients were treated and more offered trauma counseling;

- *Ranchowk*: The next stop for the Medical Mobile team was Ranchowk, where the earthquake had claimed 17 lives – all women and children. In the course of the next two days, over 325 patients were treated;
- *Jakiraswara*: At the request of the villagers who offered to carry medicines, the team went to Jakiraswara village, where 126 patients were treated;
- *Bhuvani*: At Bhuvani village, 55 patients were treated. A detailed report of all the medical camps was submitted to the District Health Office, whose personnel were very appreciative of Good Shepherd's efforts in reaching remote areas that were cut off from relief supplies and help.
- The Medical mobile clinic was assigned to examine and treat gynecological issues and pay special attention to women and reproductive care. UNICEF offered their support in this venture;
- Sr. Taskila and Sr. Pushpa approached Manipal Hospital and organized visiting doctors, ultrasound equipment and technician to join in this relief outreach;
- Sr. Taskila along with the INTERSOS staff and Mr Marcelo (Chief Officer, INTERSOS, Italy) travelled to Hansapur and Simjung VDCs in Gorkha, and distributed tarpaulin, tents and plastic sheets;
- In the first week of June 2015, the Good Shepherd sisters identified and rented a house in Gorkha for them to live in and operate out of during relief and rehabilitation work. The distance between Pokhara and Gorkha being 115 km coupled with weather conditions and the extensive damage caused by the earthquake, commuting on a daily basis was becoming difficult, and it seemed wise to find a place to stay locally in Gorkha;
- Ms. Ethelvina Martins, lay partner from Mumbai was a great asset to the psychological rehabilitation of girls at the Shelters, especially at a time when the sisters were very busy with rehabilitation work;
- To support the education of the affected school going children, Good Shepherd has supported 38 schools in 5 VDCs and provided tin sheets to build 240 classrooms. Thanks to this, the schools have been able to resume functioning;
- Valuable medical attention continues to be provided in the remote unexplored villages thanks to the tireless sacrifice of the Medical team;
- Psycho-social first aid has been provided in some villages where the sisters work and special attempt has been made to empower the youth and train them in this skill so that the self-support group may help their respective villages;
- 20 tents were distributed in Hanspur VDC for school and health posts.



5 Medical Camp at Swara

Relief efforts by GS volunteers from Chennai

A group of 13 members led by Sr. Mercy George, Principal of the Good Shepherd school in Chennai, including teachers, volunteers, students and their parents embarked on a journey to Nepal for a week in the end of June.

- It was decided that a team would go to the affected villages and help them in their mammoth task of rebuilding their homes, while another team would conduct an empowerment camp for the children who had suffered the trauma of the earthquake. A group of 5 members joined the mobile clinic team led by Sr. Lucy and Sr. Mary at Gorkha;
- The team that set out to accompany the mobile clinic had to change the plan as the vehicle in which they travelled broke down. They instead travelled to Doreni, a small village set in the valley of Gorkha District, which had been razed to the ground, where helping hands were needed;
- The team explored the village and made a study of the help that could be reached out to the villagers. For the next four days the team engaged in clearing the debris, rebuilding houses, teaching the children and enriching their own personal lives in the process of reaching out. By the time they left the

village, they had successfully rebuilt three houses and cleared the debris for two more;

- The other team accompanied by Sr. Taskila went to “Opportunity Village” at Pokhra and spent two fruitful days with the young girls in the residential care and the children of vicinity. They conducted a team building and empowerment camp for the girls and boys from three institutions in Pokhra which accommodate children from challenged backgrounds and broken homes;
- This team also conducted a one-day camp for over 100 children at St. Mary’s School in Gorkha, for class 8,9 and 10 girls;
- The two teams joined at Doreni and held a similar programme for over 45 children from 3 neighboring villages. Language was no bar. The 13 member team also cooked and served a meal for all of them and gave each child a gift;
- The team continued building more lives and confidence in children till the last hour before they left for India. In Kathmandu they conducted a programme in a small school called “Good Shepherd School” for over 120 children from economically challenged backgrounds;
- The Good Shepherd Sisters have been continuing with the mobile clinic with the support of UNICEF in 7 VDCs. In these VDCs they are also providing community based psycho social support training in collaboration with Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Disaster Management Department) and Nepal School of Social Works.



6 A brighter future for the Opportunity Village

Next steps

- Thanks to grants from UNICEF, Caritas and other donations, Good Shepherd Sisters of Nepal intend to rebuild quake affected health posts in Taklung and Tanglichok VDC and to hire a program officer who will help the sisters and the people they serve in preparing a three-years Strategic Plan for reconstruction and development of the affected communities.



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