

## NEPAL EARTHQUAKE

### One Year On

“After the earthquake people didn’t know what they would do or how they would earn. Oxfam came in and now the women in the village know they can provide for their families.”

**Bimala Balami, participant in Oxfam’s cash-for-work programme in Kathmandu Valley**

On the 25 April 2015, an earthquake measuring 7.8 on the Richter scale hit Nepal. Just over two weeks later a second powerful earthquake struck. Almost 9,000 people were killed, and over 850,000 homes were destroyed or damaged. There have been over 400 aftershocks of varying scale since the earthquake, which continue to be a constant worry to communities living in some of the most affected areas.

Within hours of the first earthquake, Oxfam’s local teams were delivering vital supplies to the worst affected people. Contingency stocks, existing relationships with local partners and strong disaster planning all contributed to the rapid response. Because of your generosity and that of many others, we were able to say that we had **reached over 300,000 of the country’s poorest people with life-saving essentials in the first three months**. Clean water, hygiene kits, toilets, emergency shelters and food – basic necessities that saved and changed lives. Six months after the earthquake, and as a brutal winter approached, your support was still playing a critical role in helping vulnerable families to rebuild their lives.

As well as destroying and damaging homes, the earthquake also severely impacted employment, with shops and business heavily affected by the disaster; many people are still struggling to find work one year on, while those who are working often report that their incomes are below pre-earthquake levels. In the last six months, Oxfam has continued to meet people’s immediate needs, while also helping to provide income generating opportunities to individuals and families, helping to boost the local economy and rebuild communities. We’re also repairing and restoring longer-term water and sanitation facilities in schools, with separate toilets and wash areas for girls to encourage attendance.

In the twelve months since the earthquake, **over 480,000 people have benefitted as a result of Oxfam’s response** in seven of Nepal’s worst affected districts; giving warmth and shelter, rebuilding communities, getting girls back to school and restoring livelihoods are just a few of the areas in which we have made real progress. Throughout the response we have also been working with the government of Nepal to ensure that the needs of women, elderly people and other vulnerable groups are included in national recovery plans.

A distribution of winter and shelter kits takes place in a school to 807 people who live in Madanpur, 37km outside of Kathmandu. Madanpur is one of the places that suffered a number of severe aftershocks.

Oxfam wasn’t working in the area before the earthquake, but the programme now includes the installation of latrines and water points, and hygiene kit distributions. Cash for work schemes are also ongoing - debris clearing and constructing irrigation channels, and distributions of vegetable and rice seeds.

Photo: Kieran Doherty / Oxfam



# EMERGENCY RESPONSE



## A quick response

Working with and alongside the government, other local agencies, and our existing partners in Nepal, we started providing shelter kits just three days after the earthquake. The immediate priority was to provide a roof for families before the rainy season, then – with a focus on the approaching winter – to provide items to insulate shelter such as thermal mats, blankets, mattresses and hot water bottles. Close to **50,000 emergency shelters** and around **9,000 improved shelters** were constructed and over **12,000 people received supplies to help them cope with the harsh winter.**

In the 14 most affected districts, almost half of the existing water supplies were either partially damaged or fully destroyed. Approximately 220,000 toilets sustained damage. Together with our partners **we supported 40,000 families with hygiene kits and constructed close to 5,000 latrines.** A total of **159 water systems were rebuilt or newly installed.**

**Oxfam's response has benefitted 481,900\* people, including:**

- **49,978** emergency shelters distributed
- **40,027** people received hygiene kits
- **14,104** households involved in cash for work programmes
- **4,941** latrines constructed
- **12,045** kits distributed to help people cope with the winter

(\* correct as of 29 February 2016)

Mamata Karki says: 'At first it felt like a plane was falling down from the sky. I looked up and saw that all the trees were shaking and I realised that the ground was shaking.

'I looked back towards my village and it looked like the entire village was falling down, there was just dust everywhere. The only thing I could think of was my child. I couldn't stop thinking about what had happened to him.

'I wanted to get back to the other side of the river but I couldn't walk because the earth was shaking so much.

'Finally I saw my father-in-law holding onto my child and I felt like I could breathe again.

'Even though I am telling you all these things about that day it's like I can't really remember it at all. It all feels like a dream to me. Actually, it feels like a nightmare.'

Photo: Kieran Doherty / Oxfam



## A voice for the voiceless

As well as supporting the earthquake survivors directly, we have worked hard to protect the rights of those affected. In October 2015 we published key recommendations for reconstruction and recovery in a policy paper 'Rebuilding a More Resilient Nepal', which was well-received by politicians, the media, and community representatives. A number of important advocacy meetings were arranged as a result.

A month later, when Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the UK, Oxfam warned that its humanitarian programme in Nepal was just two weeks away from a complete standstill due to a fuel crisis caused by disruptions at the border with India. Oxfam urged the governments of Nepal and India to resolve the crisis to avoid a further emergency. Imports of petroleum products through the Indian border have begun to increase, with regular fuel distributions to all petrol stations.

## Building back stronger

Over the last six months, Oxfam has been working to rebuild communities, restore livelihoods and help people return to normality, stronger and better prepared than before. The stories of Bimala, Netra and Sangita are powerful examples of how your support has made this possible.

## Rebuilding communities

Bimala Balami's life was devastated by the earthquake, which destroyed her home in Dachi Nkali municipality, in the Kathmandu valley. Bimala (pictured right) recalls: "My mind went completely numb. I couldn't think. I only cared about my baby. I just wanted to protect my child."

On the hillside fields, where the local community grow rice, wheat, mustard, peas, cucumber and other vegetables, the existing irrigation channel was badly damaged, as a result of a landslide triggered by the earthquake. Without a functioning channel, it has not been possible for the community to cultivate their crops, so Oxfam has been paying groups of 30 women to work for 15 days building a new irrigation channel. Some of the women own the land that the channel will irrigate.



Photo: Kieran Doherty / Oxfam

Bimala is part of the group working on the new channel. "I like the job that I am doing because I know it is for the welfare of my entire village. People do need proper irrigation for their fields and I know that. If I don't do this work people won't even be able to eat."

For people like Bimala, trying to piece their lives back together after the earthquake, cash for work projects such as this can make the difference between hope and despair. It gives them a chance to rebuild their communities and their lives at the same time. There are a total of **25 cash for work programs in the area, reaching 600 people directly**, including debris clearing and road repairs. Across our response, **over 15,000 households have benefitted from such schemes**.

## Restoring livelihoods

Oxfam is distributing vouchers so people can buy what they need to restart their farms, businesses and kitchen gardens – which is good news for traders like Netra Parajuli. Before the earthquake, Netra ran a thriving shop in Lamosanhu, but like thousands of others, his livelihood was destroyed in the disaster.

With the stock he salvaged, Netra (pictured below) has managed to set up a temporary shop, and thanks to Oxfam's voucher scheme, business is now booming.

"I've had almost 900 people come to my shop because of the vouchers being distributed. The most popular items have been the spade, then hoe and then the watering can. If people's tools are damaged, I repair them. I make the hoes myself."

Photo: Kieran Doherty / Oxfam



Oxfam has **distributed over 6,000 vouchers** to help people buy agricultural tools and supplies, with each voucher worth 2,000 rupees (around £13). The distribution supports not only the people receiving the vouchers, enabling them to restart their kitchen gardens and farms, they also support local traders and store owners like Netra and reignite the local economy.

A further distribution is planned to commence soon, supporting local communities with livestock and grain storage through cash grants.

## Getting girls back to school

As well as devastating homes, water systems and other vital infrastructure, the earthquake also destroyed schools, leaving many children without access to education. The good news for Sangita Pariyar (pictured below) and her classmates is that they are now able to attend a temporary school where Oxfam has provided water and sanitation facilities. This includes separate toilets and wash areas for girls, as well as hygiene classes where they can discuss personal issues openly for the first time. Girls feel much happier coming to school as a result.

“After the earthquake everything was destroyed or damaged but we needed to continue with our classes so we moved our school to this new place,” says Sangita. “I like this school more than the old school, because there were no doors on the toilets there. I really appreciate that there are separate toilets for the boys and girls.”

Oxfam has provided water and sanitation facilities in temporary schools across Gorkha District. Sangita’s temporary school for 300 children in Chapabhangyang has received latrines for both boys and girls with soap and buckets, a new water supply and regular hygiene classes, after the original school was completely destroyed.

As more permanent schools are rebuilt, Oxfam will be working to make sure girls’ needs are taken into account – and they get the education they deserve.

**Thank you – as a result of your generous support, we can continue to work with local people, our partners and the government to ensure that Nepal builds back stronger than before.**

Photo: Kieran Doherty / Oxfam

