



CRS emergency teams are assessing rural areas affected by the quake. Photo by Jake Lyell for CRS



May 6, 2015

Context

CRS distributions and relief activities are underway after a 7.8-magnitude earthquake struck Nepal on April 25 just 50 miles northwest of the capital, Kathmandu. The quake, which toppled buildings and homes, caused widespread devastation and claimed more than 7,000 lives. The level of impact is in the more densely populated areas of Gorkha and Sindhupalchowk, but still becoming clear as rescue workers gain access to more remote areas. It remains difficult to get information from some areas as remote villages are accessible only by foot or helicopter.

An estimated 160,000 homes are destroyed, another 143,642 damaged and 1.5 million people are in need of immediate relief. These figures continue to rise. Many families are still living outside or in crowded evacuation centers. Local markets are starting to reopen. The airport in Kathmandu is functioning, but flights continue to be delayed by the number of commercial, charter and military flights. Boarder access from India is clogged with aid convoys.

Emergency shelter is an urgent priority, as is medical care. Remote communities are showing signs of trauma and, as time passes without relief, increased desperation.

“To get to our distribution site, we had to drive 2 hours over a rugged dirt road—families had to walk 3 hours to meet us. The dirt roads are so bad we had to hire tractors to get up the roads,” says CRS Regional Information Officer Jennifer Hardy, who is in the rural Gorkha district. “You can see on people’s faces that they’re stressed and exhausted, and don’t know how to move forward. Many worry about not being able to afford to rebuild their houses.”

CRS Response

CRS has committed \$10 million to our emergency response. We are working with our Caritas partners to provide an initial 15,000 families—75,000 people—with shelter materials, blankets, and water treatment and hygiene kits. Alongside Caritas Nepal, we are focusing our emergency response in the hardest-hit districts of Gorkha, Lamjung, and Sindhupalchok. We are purchasing critical supplies in India that will be trucked in to avoid the backlog at the airport.

Impact to Date

- Distributing shelter, water and hygiene kits for 2,000 families in Gorkha; 430 families (2,000 ppl) reached to date
- Trucked in 13,000 blankets; flying in 3,000 additional tarps from our hub in Dubai for immediate distribution
- Procuring critical supplies in neighboring Indian markets to meet urgent needs of at least 15,000 families
- Deployed 25 CRS emergency specialists from India, the emergency response team, and elsewhere to Nepal

Priorities

- Shelter and living supplies
- Water, sanitation and hygiene—from family hygiene kits to construction of communal latrines and bathing spaces
- Livelihoods recovery
- Counseling and psychosocial support for traumatized families

NEPAL EARTHQUAKE: EMERGENCY RELIEF ACTIVITIES

“The situation is getting critical with the rain and cold winds. It slows down the rescue and relief operation, and makes life difficult for those living on the street or in open fields.”

- Kushal Neogy, a CRS India staffer helping with relief efforts

The timeliness of humanitarian assistance is critical. In addition to catastrophic loss of life, a singular event like an earthquake, especially for those in impoverished parts of our world, can derail a family’s stability, deplete a lifetime of savings and push them over the edge into poverty. For communities, the devastation to infrastructure, economy and reserves can set back a generation.

CRS has launched the following activities and will expand our efforts as needs are identified. These activities will serve as a foundation for a more comprehensive recovery effort. We will update this information as our teams gain greater access to affected communities, and can determine the most urgent needs and appropriate support.

Emergency Shelter

With major devastation to people’s homes, it is imperative that families have protection. Living without shelter is particularly challenging for women and girls. CRS/Caritas Nepal will target heavily affected areas, and distribute tarps and shelter materials to families living outdoors. We will help families construct structures with emergency shelter kits that contain one durable tarp measuring 258 square feet, and nails for fastening it in an A-frame design. The frame can be made from salvaged materials or lumber, and the tarps are durable, long-lasting and suitable for all climates. During recovery, we expect to support access to permanent housing solutions.

Emergency Living Supplies

People face critical needs for essential living supplies. Priorities include blankets, soap, buckets, towels, toothpaste, cooking sets and other items. CRS is sourcing key supplies largely from India because markets are closed in Kathmandu. Families lost their possessions in their homes—their essential living supplies are buried under rubble—and need the basics just to get by with a semblance of dignity and privacy.

Water, Hygiene and Sanitation

Families have limited access to clean drinking water because of damage to pipes, contamination of water sources and the loss of electricity. Hygiene and sanitation assistance is critical to preventing waterborne diseases that often occur in crises. CRS will distribute hygiene kits that include a water jug, a pail with a cover and water-purifying treatments. Distributions will be accompanied with information about the practices and benefits of hand-washing, and proper handling and storage of water.

YOUR IMPACT

Your support helps provide immediate relief. The following costs for relief items are estimates based on similar emergency relief efforts in the region:

\$8 provides a **water kit** for a family. This includes a jerry can, a pail and aqua tabs for water purification.

\$15 provides an **emergency shelter kit**. This includes tarps and nails to use with local materials to build shelters.

\$22 provides **household living supplies**. This includes sleeping mats, blankets, utensils, plastics, and a cooking pot.

\$28 provides **hygiene kits**. This includes soap, laundry detergent, a toothbrush, toothpaste and towels.

OUR THANKS: Thank you for your prayers and support. Gifts can be made online at www.crs.org or by phone at 877-435-7277. Checks may be sent to: CRS, P.O. Box 17090, Baltimore, MD 21297-0303 (“Nepal Earthquake” in memo line). Thank you!