EMERGENCY APPEAL

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Nepal Earthquake: One Month On

"We must do everything we can to provide people with the assistance they need before the monsoon hits. There is no time to waste. Thanks to our long standing partners in Nepal, we were able to deliver relief to people immediately after the first earthquake. We have not stopped since, despite the second earthquake and the strong aftershocks."

Orla Murphy, Head of Oxfam's Nepal Earthquake Response

On 25 April the biggest earthquake in 80 years struck Nepal, destroying towns and villages. The 7.8 magnitude earthquake left the country reeling, killing over 8,000 people, injuring more than 18,000 and leaving 2.8 million people without homes. In the weeks that followed the country was rocked by powerful aftershocks and on 12 May, a second earthquake measuring 7.3 on the Richter scale hit the country. The sense of disbelief is palpable, but so too is the unstinting bravery and resilience of the Nepalese people.

With water supplies and sewage systems damaged and people living in overcrowded evacuation sites, there is a risk that people will become sick due to poor hygiene and exposure to cold, wet weather. This is likely to be exacerbated by the monsoon rains, due to start in June, bringing the threat of waterborne diseases. It is now a race against time to ensure people have shelter, food, clean water and sanitation before the rains begin in earnest.

Oxfam is working in seven districts; three in the Kathmandu Valley (Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur) and four in rural areas (Gorkha, Sindhupalchok, Nuwakot and Dhading). To date we have helped more than 102,300 people by:

- Providing clean chlorinated water for drinking, cooking and household use to 17,200 people
- Distributing 8,500 hygiene kits including buckets, soap, towels and oral rehydration salts to families
- Building community sanitation facilities with hand washing points and installing 419 latrines
- Distributing shelter materials - foam mats, solar lamps and 6,850 tarpaulins
- Providing 2,430 emergency relief kits and food baskets, including rice, lentils and cooking oil

Saim, 45, fled her home with her family when the earthquake began. She finds shelter in the Tundikhel IDP camp in Kathmandu, where Oxfam is providing water to 15.000 people, and has constructed 20 pit latrines. *Photo: Pablo Tosco / Oxfam*

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Oxfam in Nepal

Oxfam has been in Nepal for more than 20 years, working with the Nepalese Government, other aid agencies and local partners to prepare for emergencies. We've been supporting community-level disaster management committees, and providing training on hazards.

Indramaya Shrestha (63) stands in the remains of the collapsed building in which she lived with her brother-in-law and his family when the earthquake struck. Her brother-in-law was killed and the family left homeless. *Photo: Aubrey Wade / Oxfam*

Oxfam's response

In the initial phase of our response we aim to reach up to 400,000 people. We have recruited a team of more than two hundred national and international staff and volunteers, as well as working with local partners. We have used stock pre-positioned in warehouses in Kathmandu and India, including latrine slabs, water tanks and buckets, and flown in equipment from our warehouses in Spain and the United Kingdom. Thanks to these plans, and to our experienced team on the ground, we have been able to respond quickly to begin meeting people's immediate needs.

In Kathmandu, families are now living in basic tents erected in the green spaces of the city centre, sharing with friends and neighbours. Across the wider Kathmandu Valley region, we are providing clean chlorinated water, have built 293 latrines and distributed 3,335 hygiene kits, to make sure people are able to survive the immediate aftermath, and minimise the threat of disease.

The hospital in Chautara, in the worst-affected Sindhupalchok region, was badly damaged, and a sports field has been turned into a field hospital with huge tents doubling as operating theatres and children's wards. Our team for the district have set up a 10,000-litre bladder tank to supply the hospital with clean water, and dug emergency pit toilets. We have also distributed 343 water filters, 875 water purification bottles and 6,000 aqua tabs across the Sindhupalchok region,

In Gorkha and Nuwakot regions, we are providing emergency shelter materials (tarpaulin, blankets, ground sheets, solar lamps and foam mattresses), and distributing emergency relief kits and food baskets. This is a lifeline for thousands left homeless and without the basics to survive.

Anu* (7) helps other community volunteers to prepare materials during an Oxfam distribution of hygiene kits in Sankhu. The kits contain a bucket for clean water, a bar of soap, oral rehydration salts, and towels, helping people to meet their basic sanitation needs.
*name changed *Photo: Aubrey Wade / Oxfam*

Oxfam is planning to work with a farmers' cooperative in Dhading to source and distribute rice seeds to five village development committees. This will enable communities to plant as planned, following a significant loss of seed for the new season.

As the rainy season approaches, we urgently need to reach more people with clean water, toilets, emergency shelter materials and support to buy food and essentials. And when the immediate danger has passed, we will stay on for as long as it takes to help people rebuild their lives and livelihoods.

Thank you for your support

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