



## Namaste



This year, the news from Nepal has been dominated by the earthquake disasters.

The first major earthquake was on 25th April (magnitude 7.9) and killed thousands of people especially in the Sindhupalchowk district (NW of Kathmandu) and damaged many buildings. The second on 12th May (magnitude 7.4) caused further damage and the collapse of buildings already weakened from the first earthquake. Over 9,000 lives have been lost with more than

25,000 people injured. The earthquakes have directly affected over 8 million people and completely destroyed many villages. Smaller earthquakes or aftershocks have continued since and there is still the continual fear of the next "big one".

Although the Nepalese government has been pledged over 2.5 billion pounds sadly, there has been little reconstruction or distribution of the promised funds.

*A Nepali friend recently wrote . . . "However, nothing has been done till date. The government is busy in politics. Though 6 months have elapsed since the earthquake, the procedure for rebuilding is still not yet defined (and hence, not even started). The Rebuilding Authority was established through ordinance few months back (just to show the donor countries). Later, the validity of that ordinance expired since the political parties could not come to consensus. Upon expiry of the ordinance there is no Rebuilding Authority at present. Hence, nothing is being done. Whatever is being done at the ground level is being done by INGO and NGO (Non Government Organisations)."*



Nepal continues to have political problems. The most serious is the blockade of the Indian border, effectively cutting off fuel supplies to Nepal, by the Madhesi (the plains people of the Terai) who are unhappy about the new constitution, which was finally created in September. The discontent lies in the way the provinces have been drawn up, especially on the Terai. The Madhesi, many of who are ethnically of Indian origin, feel they are being disempowered. They want the boundaries defined on ethnic lines so they would be sure of having representation in government, but the new constitution divides the country on geographical features splitting the Madhesi and their voting power. Recent positive news is that fuel can come in from China. The road from China was damaged by the earthquake and has been reopened in October.



The earthquakes and now fuel shortages are affecting tourism, an important part of the Nepalese economy. Although many trekking areas are 'open for business' and the foreign office has lifted its advice on travel to Nepal, transport is now a problem and this is going to further damage the fragile economy.

Many NGO's have now shifted their work from development to disaster relief. It seems there are many high profile organisations working to reconstruct the country especially in Kathmandu and tourist areas but the more remote regions and lower caste communities are being neglected.

Following the earthquake WMT supporters have been very generous in donating money and we have held a number of special events to raise funds. WMT has sent all the money that has been raised immediately to support our projects working in the earthquake areas.

**ECCA** has worked tirelessly in Southern Lalitpur and Sindhupalchowk to support the communities and get children back to school.

In Sindhupalchowk **Aparna** and **SRC** provided free medical care, emergency food and temporary shelter to many people in the district affected especially those around Bhotechaur. She is now conducting health camps and has been seeking out injured people in the more remote areas who need follow up treatments and support.

**VLTA** is working with the Sarki communities (low caste) in villages in Sindhupalchowk to restore their leather working businesses.

**CBRS** is continuing its valuable work with disabled children and supporting those families whose homes were damaged by the earthquake.

### **ECCA** (Environmental Camps for Conservation Awareness)



WMT has been supporting ECCA's work with school children in Southern Lalitpur (south of Kathmandu) since 1994. A mountainous region where the PIA plane crashed in 1992. Lalitpur was badly hit by the earthquakes with 177 people losing their lives, nearly a quarter of houses rendered uninhabitable, and 149 of 200 government schools seriously damaged or destroyed.

Immediately after the earthquake, ECCA provided immediate relief to villagers who had lost everything. Emergency drums were distributed containing a tent, food and cooking equipment. Chlorine for safe drinking water was also distributed along with medical supplies. Due to the mountainous terrain and damage to the roads and paths, some communities were not reached until 10 days after the first earthquake.



After a month of emergency relief, the emphasis moved to giving children's lives a sense of normality and to re-open schools. Sponsored drums for schools containing educational and recreational materials were sent to the region and WMT funded stationary materials for all 3,000 students at our ECCA project schools. As many school buildings were destroyed or unsafe, temporary shelters have been made of bamboo and tin sheets. With help from teachers, ECCA designed school focused earthquake recovery activities for the schools in Lalipur and Sindhupalchowk.



In a recent report, ECCA commented on the cracks and fissures in the land and the many landslides that occurred after the earthquake made worse by the recent monsoon. The damage in places is so bad that a team of geologists sent by the government have recommended relocating some of the villages

### **APARNA and SRC** (Self Reliant Centre)

For many years, Aparna and her team from SRC have been running health and dental camps for poor communities in Nepal and, more recently, education and training in women's reproductive health. A number of years ago, Aparna had raised funds to build a substantial medical centre at Bhotechaur, a village in the Sindhupalchowk district in the hills about 40km north-east of Kathmandu. Sadly, this building has been destroyed by the earthquake.



Sindhupalchowk suffered the most severe damage from the earthquakes; about 3,500 people died, many thousands were injured, almost all homes were damaged or destroyed and all government schools unsafe to use. In the north of the district, whole villages have been destroyed and the land split by massive fissures. One of the main trekking destinations, Langtang Himal, was devastated by the earthquakes with massive landslides burying whole villages in Langtang valley.

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Immediately after the earthquake, Aparna walked to Bhotechaur (the road was impassable) to assess the damage. She found total devastation but in the weeks that followed she set up an emergency clinic from one small room and an emergency shelter. Once the road was open SRC sent tents, tarpaulins, medical supplies and food to the region and held numerous health camps providing free medical care and medicines. When the monsoons began, the tents and tarpaulins had to be replaced by corrugated tin as a more robust roofing material. SRC also provided blankets and clothing to those who had lost everything. Mental health is also an issue with both Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and the continual fear of another big earthquake especially as the aftershocks are still continuing, albeit on a decreasing frequency and magnitude.

Many of those injured by the earthquakes received initial medical care from mobile clinics but no follow-up care. For example, those with broken limbs had plaster casts applied but no arrangements were made to have these casts monitored or removed. Aparna and her team are visiting the more remote villages where there are no health facilities to find and help those that still need medical care. The elderly, women and children suffered the most from the earthquakes and the emotional effects will be felt long after homes and livelihoods are rebuilt.



## CBRS (Community Based Rehabilitation Service)



WMT works with CBRS to help children and families with disability in Western Nepal. We support field workers who visit families, income generation projects, child clubs, family self help groups and awareness raising in schools and communities.

In addition to this on-going, long-term support, we have also helped CBRS with earthquake relief work. This aid has been possible by the generosity of WMT's supporters with their responses to our appeals.

The area in which CBRS are working, was designated a moderately affected zone. Initially CBRS were able to identify 50 families in extreme need and could help with wall repairs, provision of clothes and cooking utensils and also emergency food. In a second phase, 25 families are being helped with food supplies, clothing, income generation (goat rearing) and money loans. The latter are offered at fair rates to avoid the need for very poor families to take on further crippling debt.



There was a plan for the government to give 15,000 Nepali Rupees to families in the moderately affected areas. Identity cards were issued with this in mind but as soon as the government was changed, all plans were shelved and no money has been distributed. It appears that there is a very sizable sum of aid being held by central government, but bureaucracy and political issues are holding up its distribution.

In contrast, money donated to WMT has been rapidly sent to CBRS and permission to use the money has been quickly granted by local government.

A further recent problem for CBRS has been the blockade of the Nepal/India border resulting in fuel shortages, both for cooking and transport, and medicines. CBRS field workers have continued to visit their clients using very crowded buses or by walking very long distances.

*Your kindness and generosity is helping families now  
Thank you so much*



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