



UNICEF Nepal: Responding to a Devastating Earthquake One Month Later

*A Progress Report
May 2015*

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“We are looking forward – but we cannot ignore the desperate situation that still faces so many children across the country. So many young lives have been torn apart and children are still in desperate need of life-saving support, including clean water, health services, nutrition and counselling.”

Karin Hulshof, UNICEF Regional Director for South Asia

One month after two major earthquakes devastated Nepal, one in six children in the country are still in urgent need of humanitarian assistance - with increasing risk of chronic physical and emotional conditions.

Food, water and shelter are still the top priorities for aid in the affected districts. In the past month, UNICEF has worked with partners to distribute tents, tarpaulins, hygiene kits, therapeutic foods, medical kits, information/education/communication materials, plastic buckets, school-in-a-box and early childhood development kits. To date, the total value of UNICEF supplies distributed amounts to \$3.8 million, with a \$17.6 million plan for more supplies while \$13 million worth of supplies have been ordered.

The need for drinking water and repair of water supply sources has also been very evident in rural villages. To address this, UNICEF has made clean water available to over 305,100 people and more than 45,200 now have access to adequate sanitation and hand washing facilities. To fight against diseases, UNICEF is also carrying out a major measles and rubella immunization campaign for more than 500,000 children.

In addition to children’s immediate physical needs, the psychological impact of experiencing two earthquakes in less than three weeks cannot be underestimated. There has been an increasing need for safe spaces for children to be together, interact and play, feel supported and receive psychosocial support. To address this, UNICEF has been working with partners to set up 65 Child Friendly Spaces for more than 10,000 children in displaced communities. To help children regain a sense of normalcy, temporary learning centers for more than 950,000 children are being established.

Although relief efforts over the past month have helped to save the lives of many children in Nepal, the enormity of the task ahead to heal both emotional and physical scars is tremendous.

Cover Photo: On May 16th, Rijesh Khati stands outside a damaged home, surrounded by rubble, in the village of Chamawati, Dolakha District, the epicentre of the 12 May earthquake. © UNICEF/NYHQ2015-1342/Panday

Situation Overview

On April 25th, 2015, twelve days after the Nepali New Year, a powerful 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck Nepal with its epicenter in Lamjung, 50 miles (80 km) west of the capital Kathmandu.

Devastatingly, a second earthquake with a magnitude of 7.3 struck on May 12, 2015. This earthquake, with its epicenter in Dolakha District (east of Kathmandu) exacerbated the destruction and worsened living conditions for people, particularly in the most severely affected districts such as Sindhupalchowk. The second earthquake also led to further destruction of educational facilities and health infrastructure.

Out of the 22 most affected districts, the Government has prioritized and classified 14 districts as severely affected. These districts have an estimated population of 2.7 million, of which an estimated 1.1 million (40 percent) are children below the age of 18 years.

Working Together to Provide Relief

On April 27th, the UNICEF Executive Director declared the situation in Nepal following the first earthquake a Level 2 humanitarian emergency situation, based on an analysis of scale, urgency, complexity, reputational risk and capacity.

Most international humanitarian efforts are being coordinated through the Humanitarian Country Team. Some donor countries are also providing substantial direct assistance to Nepal through the provision of medical teams, technical expertise, equipment and other logistical means (e.g. air assets; vehicles; warehousing capacity).

The Government of Nepal has repeatedly emphasized the importance of coordination with district level government officials (Chief District Officers) for aid delivery. Transparency is also required on data sharing pertaining to donations and relief spending.

DEVASTATION IN NUMBERS

- 8,631 total casualties (almost 25 percent were children under 10)
- 16,808 total injured
- 1,146 health facilities destroyed or damaged
- 760,000 homes destroyed or damaged
- 28,500 classrooms destroyed



UNICEF in Action

Water, Health and Sanitation (WASH)

UNICEF's target is to reach 840,000 people with WASH interventions through the government and other partners. This includes supplying people with safe water of appropriate quality for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene, providing access and use of adequate sanitation and hygiene facilities including hand washing facilities and bathing spaces as well as the provision of hygiene kits and hygiene education and materials through interpersonal communication.

UNICEF Achievements:

- WASH interventions are taking place in 206 Village Development Committees (VDCs) in 15 districts. Two sub-national WASH clusters have been established in Gorkha (Gorkha district) and Chautara (Sindupalchowk district).
- UNICEF has reached approximately 305,100 people with water interventions; approximately 45,200 people were provided with access to adequate sanitation and hand washing facilities and more than 225,600 people benefited from hygiene education and materials through interpersonal communication.

Education

The Education cluster is mobilizing to restore access to education as soon as possible. Temporary Learning Centers (TLCs) for children 3-18 with gender-sensitive WASH facilities have been set up. Teachers have been oriented to provide psychosocial support and key life-saving messages. UNICEF and partners are also aiming to reach more than 1.5 million children with education supplies, and are supporting the government-led "Back to School" campaign to re-start interrupted schooling, assess damaged school structures, and prepare for the monsoon.

To help restore the education system and to build back better, UNICEF will support the government to undertake data collection and analysis to feed into a Post Disaster Needs Assessment to ensure a targeted needs-based reconstruction, supporting the government's Annual Strategic Implementation Plan and the next multi-year Education Sector Plan from 2016 onwards.

UNICEF Achievements:

- 105 Temporary Learning Centers (TLC) have been supported by UNICEF, benefitting 10,500 children.
- 30 school structural assessment teams deployed throughout the affected districts.
- 1,142 teachers oriented on psychosocial support to children.
- Continued monitoring of child-friendly spaces in the Kathmandu Valley to identify additional support as needed.
- Agreement for an inter-sectoral rapid response mechanism with UNICEF and Plan International includes coverage of 50 TLCs through provision of key education supplies.
- National guidelines on use of schools as shelter during emergencies prepared.
- 28 percent of \$8 million worth of planned emergency education supplies ordered.

Nutrition

The Nutrition cluster was set up to assess the situation and respond to immediate needs. Based on assessments, the cluster focused its efforts on protecting and supporting breastfeeding, impeding the arrival/use of unsolicited donations of breast milk substitutes, promoting life-saving feeding practices for infants and young children, improving the quality of complementary foods for children under-two, distributing supplements of essential micronutrients to children, pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers, and preventing and treating severe acute malnutrition.

In the next few months, focus will shift towards ensuring that district level governments, communities and families can provide for the long term nutritional needs of the most vulnerable children and women in the worst affected areas.

UNICEF Achievements:

- Communication strategy on the benefits of breastfeeding and the risks of artificial feeding reaching 380,000 families with a child under two years of age.
- Multiple micronutrient powders and infant feeding counselling sessions to improve the quality of foods for 126,000 children 6-23 months old in 14 worst affected districts.
- Large scale community-based screening campaign to identify children with severe acute malnutrition in 14 worst affected districts.
- Ready to use therapeutic foods to treat over 3,000 children with severe acute malnutrition in 14 hard-hit districts.
- Essential supplies and anthropometric material to reach out to over 500,000 children under-5, pregnant women, and breastfeeding mothers for the initial three month response.
- Child Nutrition Week by mid-June to provide a package of 6 essential nutrition interventions - including vitamin A supplements and deworming prophylaxis - to over 350,000 children before the onset of the Monsoon rains.



On 21 May 2015, two female community health volunteers (FCHVs) use a MUAC tape to measure the mid upper arm circumference of Anish Tamang during a nutrition orientation at the Mulkharka Health Post in Sundarjial, Kathmandu. © UNICEF/PFPG2015-3070/Karki

Child Protection

The vision of the Child Protection sub- cluster response is to make sure vulnerable children do not fall victim to trafficking and violence, and that they properly recover from the emotional shock of the earthquake.

The response to date has focused on preserving families, identifying unaccompanied and separated children, responding to psychosocial distress through community based support services and specialized care, and preventing children and women from being trafficked. Working with government and other partners, the cluster has given particular attention to marginalized groups, such as children with disabilities.

UNICEF Achievements:

- Family Preservation and identification of unaccompanied and separated children is ongoing in all 14 affected districts.
- 65 Child Friendly Spaces set up for displaced communities, benefitting nearly 10,000 children.
- 1,027 children in Child Care Homes provided with food and shelter.
- 2,187 parents provided with Psychological First Aid.
- 200 Recreational Kits for Child Friendly Spaces distributed.
- 40,000 flyers on trafficking awareness produced and being distributed.



A young girl, Monika, enjoys the chance to skip rope and play outside a UNICEF child friendly space set up at the Pipal Danda School in Sindhupalchowk, Nepal. Sindhupalchowk was extensively damaged – and the Pipal Danda School (shown in the background) was completely destroyed - by the two Nepal Earthquakes which occurred during a period of just over two weeks. Schools in Nepal have been closed since the 25 April earthquake with the aim to get children back into classrooms assessed as safe, or temporary learning spaces where schools are damaged/destroyed - commencing 31 May. In the meantime, children like Monika at the Pipal Danda School are enjoying their time at UNICEF child friendly space, where under adult supervision, they are able to play with other children, participate in learning activities and have a sense of normalcy in a completely abnormal situation. © UNICEF Nepal/Kpage

“This month may have been one of the worst for most Nepalese children. But UNICEF is working hard to relieve their difficulties as much as possible. For as long as it takes, UNICEF will be there helping Nepal’s children recover and rebuild their futures.”

Tomoo Hozumi, UNICEF Nepal Representative

The Way Forward: Rebuilding for Future Generations

UNICEF envisions a brighter future for children in Nepal – healthier, better educated, adequately nourished and more resilient to future disasters. To do this, UNICEF is working with partners to:

Forge grassroots networks: To reach the most vulnerable children, UNICEF will open a few new zonal offices and strengthen a network of partners at the village level, ensuring sustainable and long-term programming in hard to reach areas.

Apply an integrated approach: In leading and co-leading humanitarian clusters in Education, Nutrition, WASH and Child Protection, UNICEF’s strategies apply a holistic programmatic approach. For example, in Dolakha, UNICEF and government partners employed a rapid integrated response where all the programs came together to implement holistic rebuilding and response interventions.

Link relief with recovery: UNICEF is working with the government to ensure that permanent solutions are found. It is working to build the resilience of communities in this area by incorporating Disaster Risk Reduction across all programmatic sections. To further facilitate recovery, UNICEF is implementing a cash transfer system to revive the market economy, especially at the village level.

Innovate for the long term: UNICEF will continue to apply creative solutions in its long term response, for example by using real time reporting for immediate and effective solutions, SMS and bar coding for logistics tracking, using national and community radios to provide psycho social support to children, and implementing the U-report system, enabling people in severely affected districts to provide feedback on the response.

UNICEF is committed to ensuring that children grow up with access to the full range of services they need, allowing them to reach their full potential to contribute to the development of their nation.

A Message of Thanks

UNICEF has received generous support from Governments, corporations and individual donors to respond to the devastating earthquake in Nepal. We are grateful for the rapid and very generous support received thus far, without which the immediate phase of the response would not have been possible and support to recovery initiatives could not have been initiated.

UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child in everything we do. In emergencies, UNICEF is there before, during and after a crisis. Building on its over 50-year presence in Nepal and a strong relationship with the government and people, UNICEF is well positioned to continue to support those in need over the long-term. In the difficult days ahead, UNICEF will continue to focus on maintaining and increasing its emergency response to the earthquake, reaching children that are the most vulnerable and hardest to reach, and ensuring that the needs of children remain a top priority. We are grateful for your support in helping us to achieve success – a success that can be measured in the number of children who have and continue to receive life-saving supplies, clean water, education and a slow return to normalcy.

On behalf of the many lives affected by this disaster, we extend our most heartfelt thanks!



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The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) works in 190 countries and territories to put children first. UNICEF has helped save more children's lives than any other humanitarian organization, by providing health care and immunizations, clean water and sanitation, nutrition, education, emergency relief and more. The U.S. Fund for UNICEF supports UNICEF's work through fundraising, advocacy and education in the United States. Together, we are working toward the day when no children die from preventable causes and every child has a safe and healthy childhood. For more information, visit www.unicefusa.org.