YOUTH-LED EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE

On the 25th April 2015, a powerful earthquake struck Nepal, resulting in significant casualties and large-scale damage. It is estimated that up to 8 million people have been directly affected, 2 million of which live in the 14 most critically hit districts. Many homes, world heritage sites and schools were badly damaged. The Government of Nepal has reported that 8,964 people have died and 21,952 injured. The quake destroyed 191,058 homes and damaged a further 175,162.

One Year Later

We are fast approaching one year since the earthquake. During this time, the Nepali people have come together to work towards recovery. Amidst the chaos, communities have worked to help themselves and those affected. Young people have led by example and have been an inspiration in supporting their communities in this effort.

Restless Development’s Youth-led Relief Response

Immediately following the earthquake, and once it was confirmed that all staff and their families were safe, Restless Development staff, volunteers and alumni sprang into action. Working closely with government, our alumni networks enabled communication with communities cut off by the earthquake, while in accessible areas we immediately supported with the delivery of relief and provided services within the hastily assembled shelters. As of March 2016, we have worked in 50% of all earthquake affected districts.

A Focus on Child Spaces and Education

Restless Development has supported the development of emergency Child Friendly Spaces and Temporary Learning Centres at schools across the country. This has meant children have been able to return to normality, fun and lessons almost immediately after the earthquake.

Recovery and Growth – reaching 120,000 students.

We are excited to be greatly expanding our work in schools across 10 districts (including 4 new districts) with a new partnership with UNICEF in 2016. The new partnership will result in an increase access to basic education for 120,000 students (including 65% girls), 5,750 peer educators, 1,600 teachers and 100 District Education Resource Persons.

In this month’s newsletter we review the response of our staff and volunteers following the earthquake, work that is reaching some of the hardest to each communities with reconstruction and education.

EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE AND IMPACT IN NUMBERS

- Working in 7 districts nationally.
- 421 Community Mobilizers deployed.
- 23 partner NGOs involved in seven districts
- 8,710 male community members reached.
- 4,290 female community members reached.
- 23,193 male children supported to return to school
- 35,346 female children supported to return to school.
- 12,000 direct and 58,539 indirect community members benefitted from WASH and psychosocial first aid trainings.
- 3,135 Child Friendly Space users.
- 27,357 Users of Temporary Learning Centres.
- 1,200 teachers trained to use of education and recreational kits.
- 948 education kits, 891 recreation kits and 1,825 school bags distributed.
- 180 Village Development Communities reached
- 36 trainings provided in Temporary Learning Centers
- 367 water tanks established.
- 214 toilets constructed.
- 231 hand wash areas constructed.
EARTHQUAKE RELIEF
First on the Ground

Restless Development staff, alumni and volunteers were able to immediately mobilise following the earthquake. The initial focus of activities was to minimise the effect of the earthquake on the lives of the people in our districts of operation. Despite being the first humanitarian situation they had ever responded to, the team understood immediately that our structures and human resource capacity would be valuable assets when immediate coordination was required.

Day 1

Following the initial earthquake, the entire day was followed by hundreds of aftershocks. Many staff and alumni started helping their own communities and hospitals with rescue operations. Despite the fear of aftershocks, Restless Development staff established an emergency base at the Country Director’s house. Staff were delegated to the earthquake affected areas in Kathmandu and Lalitpur and within two hours 42 volunteers had arrived to support in providing relief materials. Our alumni and staff saved four lives within a few hours of the quake; couple, an injured person and a five-year old girl were located and taken to temporary shelter and medical facilities.

Day 2

The day following the earthquake we started providing tents, facilitating blood and medicine delivery and also mobilised our alumni to help establish temporary camps in the national stadium. Restless Development began distributing tarpaulins in the camps operated by the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Along with our alumni, we were able to mobilise a large number of new volunteers and alumni in these camps.

Day 3

By day 3, Restless Development had established an outdoor field office and started getting directly involved in providing humanitarian relief. Working with UNICEF, Nepal Red Cross, Ministry of Youth and Sports, and partner NGOs, we began the initial stages of immediate post-earthquake response concentrating on food, temporary shelter and water at different camps.

Young People Responding

In the first 15 days following the earthquake, Restless Development provided food packages that included dry foods (rice and dal), medicines and shelter to more than 108 households with an average of four family members (432 people) and mobilised over 110 volunteers in the targeted areas.

Young people were at the forefront of the response and Restless Development Nepal was one of the first agencies to respond to the disaster. Working individually or with other organisations, young people demonstrated the best of our values and provided helping hand when it was needed most.

Child Friendly Spaces

The team also quickly established two Child Friendly Spaces and resourced them with 15 volunteers. Restless Development was successful in reaching over 100 children in just 2 days. Based on the success of the initial response, Restless Development continued Child Friendly Space program for 2 months (see page 3), with the aim of reaching as many children as possible in the targeted areas.
CHILD FRIENDLY SPACES
Ensuring Post-Earthquake Education

Children at the Centre
During an emergency, children are often disproportionately affected and require targeted support. While urgent life-saving assistance like clean water and shelter is a first priority, school and a safe space for play and education are also vital. Along with supporting immediate relief work, Restless Development activated a pool of alumni to run ‘child friendly spaces’ in partnership with UNICEF, NSET and other organisations from the NGO community.

Mobilising Our Community Networks
Our experienced volunteers provided temporary learning spaces for children affected by the earthquake. These spaces provided psycho-social counselling, non-formal education classes, recreation and sports relieving parents. The main objective of the Child Friendly Spaces is to provide some normality and structure to children and to minimise the disturbance to children’s education and provide them with counselling keep them safe and healthy.

Access to Child Friendly Spaces also gave parents, during a critical period, the time to seek relatives and friends, get their homes in order, re-establish their livelihoods and assist their neighbours and the community in recovering – knowing that their children are in safe, competent hands.

CHILD FRIENDLY SPACES—HOW THEY WORK
Child Friendly Spaces are a temporary support to children’s needs in affected communities. Child Friendly Spaces give children a safe place where they are protected from harm and can get meals and clean water, health services, counselling, and the opportunity to simply play and forget their troubles.

At Restless Development Child Friendly Spaces children also got the chance to sing and draw and express their feelings about what they have seen and experienced. UNICEF provided Recreational Kits (puzzles, football, handball, soft-toys) and Learning Kits (poem and story books) through which our volunteers engaged the children throughout the day.

Child Friendly Spaces were an effective form of early support for children in supporting with trauma recovery, especially as they were run and monitored by Restless Development alumni and volunteers who are experienced in working with children in interactive teaching and learning environments.

Volunteer Prekshya Ghimire said that “the Child Friendly Spaces have been a great aid to keep children distracted from all the bad experiences and helping them to move on. It’s really a sight of great relief to see them not crying but smiling and having fun at the same time” says our

Rekha Tri Khatri found the learning a two-way process; “Playing with children is always fun. Bringing them out of their fear of earthquake by playing with them, making them distracted with interactive learning sessions was satisfying. Moreover it was a learning experience for me as well, as handling children at different age groups was challenging”
TEMPORARY LEARNING CENTERS
Ensuring Post-Earthquake Education

Building and Supporting Temporary Schools
In the 11 months since the earthquake, the concept of Child Friendly Spaces has been expanded to address the needs of children returning to school in communities where schools were destroyed. Together with UNICEF and 10 partners at district level, Restless Development has constructed and supported temporary school buildings—called “Temporary Learning Centres” (TLC). TLCs are constructed within existing schools' grounds where safe or in another place accessible to the community.

In a first for Restless Development, we have been involved in the design and construction of 440 TLCs, and these have been constructed in all 7 districts (Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Dolakha, Rasuwa, Ramechap, Sinduli, and Makwanpur), with an anticipated total of 500 TLCs to be soon completed.

Reaching Hard Remote Communities
During this period Restless Development has reached communities where there is limited access to infrastructure (such as Bijulikot—Ramechhap, Arunthakur—Sindhuli), which is a huge achievement for us. If the TLCs were not constructed in these areas, communities would have to wait for the government program to reach them. But in the meantime, with TLCs constructed, the children are getting education on a regular basis without having their studies hampered.

A School Is Not Just a Building
Although new to building temporary schools, our team used their previous experience and expertise in providing learning spaces for children to support principals and teachers to provide improved psychosocial welfare. For each new school, our trained volunteers have been providing training to teachers on the provision of psycho-social support and sharing skills on the use of new recreational and educational materials provided to each school.

In addition, in each TLC we developed “back to school” campaigns to encourage both children and their parents that it is safe to return to school.

Building the Capacity of Partner Organisations.
Just as for Restless Development, the experience of emergency programming was new for our partner organisations. Despite limited capacity and resources to execute their activities at first, Restless Development supported local partners to build their capacity to both engage communities and access the information and resources to implement their work. Timely reporting and documentation was a challenge in the beginning due to the scale of work, but as the capacity of the partner organisation started developing through the implementation process these challenges were overcome.

TEMPORARY LEARNING CENTERS—HOW THEY WORK
Temporary Learning Centers are replacement school building on or close to the site of government primary and secondary schools. The process of getting children safely and comfortably back to school works like this:
1. Working with the Ministry of Education and our local NGO partners, a mapping activity was undertaken in each district to identify schools and school buildings that have received a “red sticker” from government engineers identifying them as unsafe.
2. Construction of schools is community-led. Prior to building, consultations are held with communities to determine location, source local materials (such as bamboo) and volunteer labor.
3. For each new building, Restless Development engineers ensure that each new construction passes quality and safety standards and make recommendations for improvements.
4. Along with the school building, WASH facilities (latrines and hand washing stations) are also constructed.
5. In addition to buildings, each school receives:
   - Education kits including educational games, stationary and teaching materials;
   - Recreation kits consisting of sporting goods and outdoor games;
   - Youth volunteers provide training on the use of educational and training kits and providing psychosocial support.
6. Following construction, schools receive ongoing monitoring and support from Restless Development and those of our partner NGOs.
RAMECHHAP DISTRICT AND DHobi COMMUNITY

Restless Development’s work has expanded into 4 new districts since the earthquake. One of those districts is Ramechhap in eastern Nepal, where many schools were damaged. In Ramechhap we work with three partners – Community Development Society, Shreejanshil Youth Society and Youth Partnership for Peace and Development – to work with communities on peer education and the construction Temporary Learning Centers.

Dhobi – A School Community in Recovery

The community of Dhobi in Ramechhap District is a 10 hour drive from Kathmandu and 4 hours up a rough gravel and stone road from the district headquarter town of Manthali.

Jhattleshwar Higher Secondary School is a large school of 700 students and 22 teachers. The majority of permanent school structures were damaged by the earthquake (receiving a “red sticker” from government inspectors deeming them too dangerous to use), with only one permanent structure able to be used for classes.

Working closely with the community, Restless Development and Shrijansheel Yuwa Samaj built 4 new temporary structures and distributed games and educational materials. Teachers were trained by Restless Development volunteers on psychosocial support and new teaching methods for utilising education materials.

Enthusiasm for Learning

While seating is tight in the Temporary Learning Centres – between 75 and 95 students sit shoulder to shoulder in each classroom – the enthusiasm for learning and excitement of being back at school has meant lessons are able to function as usual.

Thanks to a dedicated Principal, Mr. Kebaleshwor Timilsina, and his staff, (including some who have taught at Dhobi for more than 20 years) the children and teachers have been able to catch up after the earthquake enforced school closures by shortening holiday periods and not taking public holiday.

Looking to the Future

With school back on track, Principal Timilsina, teachers and students are looking forward to the opportunity to make repairs or construct new permanent buildings to get things back to normal.
RUPANTARAN: Transforming Youth

The recently launched National Plan of Action for Adolescents in Nepal (NPA) was a result of consultation between government, non-government agencies and communities. It resulted in the identification of 6 thematic areas for holistic development of the adolescents in Nepal.

Restless Development, with the support from UNICEF and partner organisations, has prepared a comprehensive skills training for adolescent development – RUPANTARAN – based on the 6 thematic areas of climate change, livelihoods, education, nutrition, gender-based violence and employment. Along with these issues the package includes health, agriculture, income generation, and family planning components.

Transforming Young People’s Lives

“Rupantaran”, means transformation in Nepali. The goal of the program is to improve learning opportunities for adolescents and transform them into social change agents within their families, communities and society, and to realise their rights and responsibilities. The program aims to strengthen the social and financial knowledge and skills through interactive sessions that use learning methods that includes games, discussions, group work, storytelling and case analysis.

Provision of knowledge and skills to adolescents is only half the work; parents need to be engaged with the process. For that, a special package for parents was also developed in order to support parents to create a protective and enabling environment for adolescents to realise their full potential.

The Capacity of Partners to Deliver.

Restless Development has been taking the lead in the capacity development of facilitators from UNICEF’s partner organisations such as the Department of Women and Children, Ministry of Youth and Sports (Nepal Scouts), Nepal Red Cross Society and other civil society organisations, along with staff members of District Women and Children office, as they lead implementation of the RUPANTARAN package in their communities.

Restless Development is empowering adolescents at risk by building the capacity our 4 HIV Network partners to deliver RUPANTARAN, including Recovering Nepal, Federation of Sexual and Gender Minorities in Nepal (FSGMN), Jagriti Mahila Maha Sangh (JMMS) and National Federation of Women Living with HIV/AIDs (NFWLHA).

SAVE THE DATE

Restless Development is the national concept owner in Nepal for our long-standing partner dance4life. The Save the Date program utilises dance4life to work with young people and empower them to make safe sexual choices and also works towards ending child marriage in Nepal.

Dancing Their Way To Knowledge.

We do this through dance4life’s innovative model of sex education in schools, using music and dance to involve and inspire young people. Dance4life volunteers motivate young people to take action to improve their sexual and reproductive health and rights and reduce stigma, leading to a reduction of HIV, unplanned pregnancies and sexual violence. We also conduct youth–led research and consultations with girls to identify and take action on issues affecting young people’s sexual and reproductive health.

Ending Child Marriage

Restless Development was actively involved in developing the National Strategy to End Child Marriage with the Government of Nepal. We produced and launched a popular child marriage song and had the opportunity to work with dance4life International to produce a documentary on our what to end child marriage.

Reaching Young People in Schools

Restless Development has trained peer educators and facilitators in Kathmandu Valley, Dolkha, Kailali and Sunsari districts. We have directly reached 40 schools and 7781 school students. In the coming year, our ambition is to expand to three more districts– Parsa, Dang and Bardiya and scale up the work in current districts to reach more schools, stakeholders, young people and communities.
MANDIRA KARKI – BECOMING A BUILDER

The earthquake devastated schools in Ramechhap. In several communities, Restless Development supported the construction Temporary Learning Centers in coordination with Youth Partnership for Development and Peace (YSP). To support in the construction work, young people from different ethnic groups came together to work as a team.

**Learning New Skills**

Mandira Karki was one of the young people that joined Restless Development as a volunteer and was involved in construction of TLCs. Of her experience, the 21 year old said that:

“At the beginning I felt shy and found out that the work was challenging. I had difficulty while constructing the first TLC, but after its completion I adapted to the work and it became easier as I learned new skills. I think that if youth work hard together, then the reconstruction work be completed quickly.

**Breaking Down Stereotypes**

The number of females working to build TLCs is only small. My male colleagues said that females can’t work in building TLCs, and that woman can only perform small jobs, but I disagree with this and worked just like them and proved their stereotypical thinking was wrong. I came back to my home after working in three schools each day, and was involved in constructing 22 TLCs altogether.

Working in this sector has taught me many technical skills of building construction and has changed my personality. I think, I am now more confident in front of my peers and my community. As a female in the construction sector, I believe that I have showed everybody that we are equally eligible as men in terms of work.

My confidence level has also climbed swiftly after working here, and now I feel like I can perform most of the work confidently. I also believe that I have motivated many females who are discouraged by our male dominated society to come out and contribute to the community. Most importantly, I feel very close to the community after working with them.”

GANGA JOSHI – LEARNING LEADERSHIP

“Getting involved with the youth leadership subcommittee gave me an immense number of opportunities to get involved in various trainings through which I have developed my personality, skills and career. The trainings that I have acquired have moulded me into a public speaker and a facilitator, for which I’m grateful.”

**Overcoming Fears**

Ganga Joshi says she was shy and introverted in her class. Unable to express her opinions and views in front of others, she felt this limited her learning. Although she had knowledge about the issues being discussed by her peer groups, she felt very self-conscious.

At the library in her village, Ganga discovered an opportunity to participate in a life skills training in coordination with the Library Management Committee. Ganga was proactive and she had a drive to learn and was chosen as a sub-coordinator of the Youth Leadership Subcommittee in Tikapur, along with 14 other young people. In her role, Ganga received training from Restless Development on Life Skill Training of Trainers, Sustaining and Fundraising Training, Motivational Seminars and Career Guidance.

“The training I’ve received have been meaningful and very rewarding. I feel confident to talk in front of an audience and can facilitate trainings in an effective and efficient manner.”

Ganga has facilitated trainings for young people on Life Skills and Health and Sexual Reproductive and Health Rights. She believes her new confidence has impacted her studies as she can now interact with her teachers without any hesitation. She is now able to identify issues and challenges and can discuss about it with the focal person in the community library. She is able to mobilise local resources in her community and run activities to help address youth issues.

As a youth leader, Ganga is an inspiration to other young people in her community. She has a clear vision on working in a team for her community and says “I hope the trainings that I have received will further come in Tikapur as it brings positive changes in life of other people like mine”.

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