



Nepal Earthquake

FIVE YEARS LATER



Lutheran Disaster Response
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Paul Jeffrey/ACT

In April 2015, a **7.8 magnitude earthquake** hit Nepal, causing more than **8,000 deaths** and **22,000 injuries**. Nearly **1 million homes** were destroyed.

Lutheran Disaster Response supported relief and recovery for people in Nepal whose lives had been harmed by this disaster. Immediate relief was provided to people within days. Immediate distribution of blankets, hygiene kits and ready-to-eat food were provided to households. Water filtration units and personal care kits were also a priority in the beginning stages of recovery. Immediate relief also included shelter, health care and education.

For long-term recovery, from rebuilding houses and school buildings to providing farm training, your gifts helped support earthquake survivors. Many projects were led by the community, which engaged local workers and reused local materials. In addition to practical support, empowerment training for women and Dalits led to long-term improvements in equality in communities. Dalits are a certain section of people termed "outcasts" in the Hindu religion. Caste-based discrimination includes exclusion and is rooted in the ancient concept of untouchability.

Thanks to your support, people whose lives were interrupted by this disaster were able to recover.

Thank you.

Powerful partnerships

Lutheran Disaster Response works through a powerful network of ELCA companion churches and other partners around the world. Partners in the Nepal response included Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran World Federation Nepal, United Mission to Nepal, Shanti Nepal, Center for Dalit Women, Dalit Welfare Association and other community-based organizations.

Housing and shelter

More than 200 earthquake-resilient, low-cost houses were built for those living in makeshift or damaged homes. Special attention was paid to marginalized people such as Dalits, women, women-headed households and people with disabilities in remote areas. People who received new houses reported that they now had more privacy, security and safety. Local workers participated in the building.





Water and sanitation

The earthquake caused many water collection sites to dry up or otherwise become damaged, which forced women and girls to spend additional hours collecting water. Thanks in part to your gifts, nearly 200 households gained access to clean, safe drinking water. Women now have more time to engage in income-generating activities, do chores, study and socialize.

Your gifts also helped build hundreds of home toilets and brick latrines, providing safer hygiene, more privacy and protection from wild animals, and dignity for families. Education programs gave participants an opportunity to learn about handwashing, sanitation, and how to monitor water sources and pipelines.



When she was a teenager, Ratna Maya Bishwokarma, now 73, never imagined a day would come when she could fetch water from her doorstep. In her village, women had to walk for four hours to fill and carry home a bucket of drinking water.

With untouchability rampant, Dalits of Suri were not allowed to fetch the water from a tap fixed for upper castes.

“We collected the water from the lowest parts of the springs or leftover water from the upper parts of the springs where the higher castes had a monopoly,” Bishwokarma said. However, the construction of water taps by Lutheran World Federation Nepal, thanks in part to your gifts, has changed things for these women. Now, Bishwokarma has drinking water right outside. Many things have changed for women in the once water-starved Dalit settlement of Suri. Now, they don’t have to walk more than five minutes to get drinking water.

Destroyed by the earthquake in 2015, Bishwokarma’s community is now in recovery following the reconstruction of houses and infrastructure such as irrigation and drinking-water taps, which provide water to nearly 300 people. The availability of water has also allowed the community to grow vegetables and raise more livestock such as cows and goats.

Although the earthquake left destruction, the recovery has brought positive changes in the lives of the Dalit community, particularly women. “Water is a gauge to decide untouchability,” stated Moti Lal Nepali, chairperson of the Dalit Welfare Association. “The supply of water through water taps to Dalit settlements was the first step to end the discrimination against Dalits in society.”

Thanks to your gifts, people such as Bishwokarma have shelter and access to water and can work to promote empowerment and reduce discrimination.

Livelihoods

For people who already had low incomes, did not own land, or were part of marginalized communities, the earthquake was especially devastating. Your gifts supported more than 5,000 families as they worked to rebuild their livelihoods. Training in goat rearing, vegetable farming, cardamom cultivation and running small grocery shops helped entrepreneurs get a fresh start. People also received beehives and training for beekeeping. These programs have led to more food security and less reliance on private moneylenders for the women and men who were trained.



Y. Franklin Ishida/ELCA

School and hospital construction

More than 2,500 children now have better access to education. Your gifts supported the construction of 23 school blocks with 53 rooms and five bathrooms, which have increased girls' school attendance. These buildings are also resilient to future earthquakes and more accessible for people with disabilities.



Paul Jeffrey/ACT

You also helped a primary health care center that was damaged in the earthquake to expand, adding a new building for an outpatient department and an additional floor to an existing maternity building. Patients and staff are now more confident about the building's stability in case of future disasters. The health care center was upgraded to a hospital in 2017.

Dalit empowerment

For people in this group, your gifts helped provide not only practical support such as home building but also transformative education programs that included literacy training and information about their rights and access to government services. Two participants won local elections, which led to greater representation in local government and helped reduce discrimination. Two Dalit students received scholarship assistance to complete their college education.

Women's empowerment

Dalit women received training on legal matters, health and education, gaining confidence to become more active members of their communities and bring their concerns to local government. Easy loans at low interest rates helped women with small businesses.



Your gifts also helped women's groups form, which became the center of community building: Women engaged in income-generating activities together and formed co-ops. These activities can decrease human trafficking, teen pregnancy, child labor and early marriage. By working together, women became more empowered to improve their own lives and the lives of their communities.

Thank you.

Ways to support this ongoing response and others like it:

ONLINE

ELCA.org/disaster

BY MAIL

Make a check out to Lutheran Disaster Response and send to:

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
ELCA Gift Processing Center
P.O. Box 1809
Merrifield, VA 22116-8009

BY PHONE

Call 800-638-3522 to make a donation with a credit card. Operators are ready to assist you Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Central Time.



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