THE NEPAL EARTHQUAKES
End of program report from 2015 to 2019
On April 25 and May 12, 2015, two violent earthquakes shook Nepal, causing extensive loss of life and damage to property.

8,790 people died
22,300 people were injured
882,000 houses were damaged or destroyed
2.8 million people (10% of the population) were displaced

From 2015 to 2019, Development and Peace – Caritas Canada worked with local partners and communities to help earthquake-affected families live in safety and dignity while enhancing their capacity to face future disasters. Our action focused on the entire territory affected, including the most remote mountain villages.

Four years after the earthquakes, it is time for Development and Peace to take stock of the work we undertook with our partners and the progress made in emergency relief, reconstruction, agricultural and economic recovery and the fight against human trafficking.

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**Nepal’s history of earthquakes**

- June 7, 1255
- August 26, 1833
- July 7, 1869
- August 28, 1916
- January 15, 1934
- June 27, 1966
- July 29, 1980
- August 20, 1988
- September 18, 2011
- April 25, 2015 and May 12, 2015

On April 29, 2015, Development and Peace and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops launched an emergency campaign that collected $4.8 million for the victims of the earthquake.

**Sources of funding**

Public donations: **$4.8 million**

**Allocation of funds**

- **45%** Agricultural and economic recovery and community development
- **25%** Shelter reconstruction and legal assistance
- **9%** Fight against human trafficking
- **4%** Temporary shelters and basic necessities distribution
- **2%** Trainings for local organizations
- **15%** Administrative costs
OUR APPROACH

**Long-term commitment**
Our short-, medium- and long-term programming sought to respond to the emergency while setting benchmarks for sustained community development. To ensure that post-emergency action met the priority needs of affected communities, three additional areas of work were defined: shelter reconstruction, agricultural and economic recovery and the fight against human trafficking.

Capitalizing on the existing dynamism of Nepali civil society, we prioritized working with local organizations to implement projects. According to an independent external evaluation conducted in March 2019, these organizations believe that the knowledge and experience gained over the past four years will resonate in their communities’ decision-making in the years to come. The most appreciated impacts included the enhanced resilience and trust of beneficiary communities, improved relationships with local governments and the leadership and civic engagement of young people.

**THE FOUR AREAS OF FOCUS OF OUR PROGRAM**

- Distribution of temporary shelters, water and hygiene kits and basic necessities
  
  **241,000 people**

- Home reconstruction and legal clinics
  
  **104,000 people**

- Agricultural and economic recovery and community development
  
  **291,000 people**

- Human trafficking prevention training
  
  **7,000 people**

A total of 643,000 people were reached through programs by Development and Peace and its partners in Nepal.
The most vulnerable populations
To maximize the impact of its work, Development and Peace chose to focus on rural communities in 14 earthquake-hit districts, paying special attention to marginalized communities, the elderly, women and children.

Notable among the positive impacts observed since 2015 are the emergence of a sense of confidence among earthquake victims and the growing enthusiasm of women to participate in projects that they see as beneficial for their families and as creating opportunities for their children. The projects have also mobilized representatives from different levels of government, especially the local and neighbourhood levels.

A special focus on women
The local organizations with whom Development and Peace has worked over the last four years have focused on empowering women. This has been facilitated by, among other things, the fact that agriculture is predominantly a women’s occupation in Nepal and that with men migrating to cities for work, most of the residents of villages are women.

The 2015 earthquake had a devastating effect on economic opportunities. One of our projects therefore aimed to provide livelihoods through personalized vocational training. Forty-six young women aged 16 to 25 years from the Sindhupalchok, Kavrepalanchok and Makwanpur districts received tailoring training, which has helped them fulfill their potential, believe in themselves and generate long-term income.

“Since the cooperative was established, our community members have saved money for future projects such as an irrigation system and a water tap. Thanks to newer technologies, women have more time to care for their children. We have learnt about nutrition and our families are eating healthier food. Because of better health and higher incomes, our children are staying in school longer than before. As a community, we are very proud of our accomplishments and are inspired to continue improving. This project has shown that a cooperative run by poor farmers can make a prosperous community!”
– Baya Lakshmi, local project representative, Thulo Sirubari village, Sindhupalchok District.
Building resilience and trust in communities

Many of the communities supported in Nepal acquired new farming techniques and diversified their skills. The successful application of these new competencies instilled greater confidence in them.

For example, one project provided revolving loans to the most vulnerable women and men. Loan recipients were free to decide how to use the funds. Some invested in hen houses, while others sought training in fishpond management and beekeeping. All beneficiaries were able to repay and transfer their loans and generate new funds in the community through their small businesses. In some instances, this new money was reinvested in community-managed projects like collection centres for agricultural produce, solar power generators and composting units.

Newfound confidence was also evident in the participants’ increased interest in assuming responsibility for their future well-being. For example, Development and Peace and one of its local partners helped farming communities recover after the earthquake by providing an initial contribution of seeds and equipment. This project also helped producers establish direct contact with local traders. Emboldened by early successes, the community pooled its resources to buy a milk cooler and is now planning to open a bakery.

Several other positive impacts of the projects were noted in the communities. For instance, on-site training has encouraged young people to remain in their communities instead of migrating to cities in search of jobs. As future leaders of diverse local economies, these aspiring entrepreneurs are hopeful about new prospects of prosperity for themselves, their families and their villages.
1. Distribution of temporary shelters and basic necessities

In the days following the earthquake, Development and Peace, in collaboration with Caritas Nepal and other Caritas organizations, provided materials for emergency shelters, water and hygiene kits and other basic necessities. Based on needs, 50,115 of the most vulnerable families in the worst-hit areas received tents, tarpaulins, construction equipment, temporary shelters, blankets, plastic mats and water purification kits.

Subsequently, loans and construction materials were distributed to help reinforce housing and provide other basic necessities during the monsoon season.

- **206,920 people** received temporary shelters
- **110,225 people** received water purification kits and hygiene and sanitary products
- **65,152 people** received construction materials
- **2,718 people** participated in debris removal and waste management in exchange for cash

A total of **241,000 people** received temporary shelters and basic necessities. They included **128,200 women** and **45,540 children under five years of age**.
2. Reconstruction of houses and legal aid

In addition to claiming thousands of lives, the earthquakes that struck Nepal destroyed nearly 900,000 houses and buildings. Faced with the urgent need to rebuild, Development and Peace and its partners offered training on earthquake-resistant construction techniques to skilled and unskilled workers.

Women and men selected by the communities received financial assistance and the technical training to rebuild 8,884 damaged homes in accordance with earthquake resistance standards. In addition to covering the basics of earthquake-resistant building, the training provided construction tools and introduced measures and techniques that privilege the use of local materials like stone, earth, concrete and bamboo that reduce the costs and environmental impact of construction.

Our support enabled communities to rebuild by:
- Supplying building materials;
- Providing training and technical support for the construction of earthquake-resistant structures;
- Disbursing loans;
- Helping people secure promised government compensations; and
- Helping people retrieve official legal documents.

One of our local partners set up 90 mobile legal clinics whose staff accompanied people seeking government compensation for homes damaged by the earthquake and advise community representatives on how best to navigate the bureaucracy. Priority was accorded to the most vulnerable, such as lower-caste and landless people, who face additional difficulties because of discrimination.

Thanks to this project, more than 500 cases were resolved.

Over the past four years, more than 15,000 earthquake-affected people, including 6,400 women, have availed the services of mobile legal clinics. Most cases involved government grants and loans, property sharing, omission from lists of government grantees, lost documents, etc.

- 15,700 people received information and support from 90 mobile legal clinics;
- 200 training manuals and 8,000 brochures on legal aid to earthquake victims were distributed;
- 60,000 people benefited from literacy and awareness campaigns through local social media;
- 114 lawyers, law students, social workers, paralegals and project staff received legal training; and
- 665 people were referred to the local district legal aid office.

House reconstruction and legal aid services benefited a total of 104,000 people.

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Earthquake survivor Kalpana Shrestha at an earthquake-resistant construction training program for unskilled workers.
3. Agricultural and economic recovery and community development

In Nepal, the rural population comprises mostly women, children and the elderly because most men migrate to urban areas and abroad for work (in the seven years preceding the earthquake, men accounted for 95.7% of Nepali labour migrants). Consequently, women play a very important role in agriculture in addition to bearing the burden of domestic chores. Women therefore participated extensively in our agricultural, economic and community development projects.

With most rural families having lost their houses, agricultural tools, food and seed stocks, Development and Peace focused on helping communities diversify their sources of income, restore their productive assets and acquire complementary skills through trainings.

Development and Peace helped earthquake-affected farmers resume production by:
- Distributing 3,000 bags of local vegetable seeds (leafy vegetables, beans, peas, cucumbers, tomatoes);
- Providing agricultural tools to 500 farmers;
- Offering 10 training programs on value-chain management and commercial linkages to approximately 1,800 farmers;
- Building 3 produce collection centres and 3 points of sale;
- Creating 3 retention ponds in areas badly affected by water shortages; and
- Building 1 community food bank and 1 seed bank.

A total of 291,000 people participated in agricultural and economic recovery and community development activities.
We own a clothes store called Samtia and Kabita Tailors in Shiva Pokhari Village in Sindhupalchok District. Having our own business is something we had never imagined possible! After the earthquake in 2015, our homes were destroyed and we had to leave school to help our family resettle. Later, we learnt that we could sign up for a six-month professional tailoring course provided by Development and Peace and its local partner. We applied and were accepted in 2017.

At first, we were nervous about leaving our village and living in Kathmandu, away from our families. But we quickly made many friends and were happy to learn new skills — not only tailoring but also things like business management and public speaking. These new skills boosted our confidence and our pride in ourselves. We realized that it was possible to be more independent and lead productive lives. Had Development and Peace and its local partner not offered this opportunity, we would have been working in the fields all day and doing household chores. Now, we believe that our future is full of possibilities!

We were fortunate because Development and Peace and its partner gave each of us a sewing machine upon completing our training. We use those machines in our business. We have rented a small space and customers come to us with fabric to order tailor-made dresses. The wedding season is very busy, but at other times, business can be slow. For now, we are earning enough to support ourselves and to pay the rent for the shop.

To expand the business, we want to learn more about design and stock our own fabrics to sell to customers. If we can increase our revenues, we could give some money to our families. Our families were initially unsure about the training, but now they are proud of us!

We hope that in future our shop will expand and that we will be able train other young girls in the village. We would especially like to help our community’s orphans secure a livelihood. We also hope that Development and Peace will offer loans or start-up grants to help their trainees establish their businesses.

“Now, we believe that our future is full of possibilities!”

Tailoring program trainees Kabita Rokka, 19, and Samita Roka, 22, Shiva Pokhari Village, Sindhupalchok District
4. The fight against human trafficking

In the aftermath of the earthquake, women and children were at increased risk of being trafficked for the sex trade or forced labour to Africa, China and India. This was because of the destruction of traditional safe spaces like homes and schools and the erosion of protective social networks comprising parents and teachers. Women’s and children’s search for safety also made them more vulnerable to abuses of trust, especially in the context of internal displacement exacerbated by the earthquake.

Given that over 40% of Nepal’s population is under the age of 18, it was deemed important from the outset to instill a sense of hope in communities and help them see that a better future is attainable.

Accordingly, Development and Peace focused on:

- Training communities and enhancing awareness on the risks of human trafficking;
- Strengthening village surveillance committees;
- Providing psychosocial support to victims of human trafficking; and
- Advocating for the enforcement of national regulations.

Development and Peace and its local partners worked to help reduce the risks of human trafficking, violence and abuse that the most vulnerable people face. Awareness sessions were organized to provide practical information and to help organize community vigilance groups.

Some examples of the activities implemented include:

- Psychosocial support to people rescued from trafficking: **110 women** and **35 men**
- Basic paralegal training: **52 women** and **74 men**
- Training in business management and tailoring and the provision of sewing machines and materials to help people set up tailoring businesses: **47 girls**
- Production of information booklets and posters: **2,500 people involved**
- Group discussions and skits to raise awareness about and prevent the trafficking of women and girls: **500 participants**

A total of **7,000 people** were informed on the risks of human trafficking.

With the destruction of safe spaces like homes and schools, traffickers took advantage of increased internal mobility and would hijack local means of transportation. Within mere months after the earthquake, by August 2015, as many as 682 women and children had been intercepted.

(Source: Unicef)
I served as the liaison officer for the anti-trafficking surveillance groups supported by Development and Peace in Makawanpur District. In this district, many people migrate to other countries for employment and this has encouraged traffickers to take advantage of people who do not fully understand the risks. Young girls are particularly at risk. After the earthquake, many young girls left school because their schools were destroyed or because their families were displaced. People needed money urgently while awaiting the reestablishment of agriculture. That is why the risk of human trafficking risk rose in the months following the earthquake.

As a liaison officer, part of my job involved convening monthly meetings of the surveillance groups in Makawanpur and reporting on their activities to Development and Peace’s local partner. I am proud to say that our vigilance groups prevented several young women from being trafficked.

In one case, we received a citizen report that someone had arrived in the village and was reaching out to young women, promising them well-paid jobs in foreign countries. Through our local network group established by the project, we learnt that four young women were planning to leave town with the recruiter’s help. Group members investigated the recruiter’s background and found that the organization she claimed to work for did not actually exist. We realized that the girls would likely be taken to India and sold. Our team rushed to intercept them at the bus stop. The trafficker is now in police custody, awaiting trial. The four girls are safely back home with their families.

I am proud that our surveillance groups have achieved such notable successes. We have been able to work with local officials and the police to protect vulnerable young women in our community. My paralegal training as part of the project has enhanced my capacity to advocate for human rights and my understanding of the national laws that govern international migration. Although the project has ended, I intend to continue volunteering to raise awareness about human trafficking.
Thank you for your generosity!

Development and Peace’s and reconstruction program in Nepal could not have been undertaken without the support of our donors and the commitment of our partners, in Kathmandu and other remote mountainous regions in Nepal.

Donors across Canada showed exceptional generosity to the Nepali people after the earthquakes. We thank you from the bottom of our heart for your trust in us. Whether you represent a religious community, a school group or a parish or whether you are a member of Development and Peace, your support is invaluable!

We also thank our institutional partners, especially the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB), for their precious support.

*Thank you in Nepali