



# Moving Mountains

A One Year Retrospective of WFP's  
Earthquake Response in Nepal



**World Food Programme**



As the lead organization in logistics, WFP uses a wide variety of transport to get assistance to people in need. Mules were put to work moving food supplies to remote quake-affected areas that could not be reached by air or road.

# Contents

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Forward	4
The Earthquake Response – A Summary	6
Emergency Food Assistance	11
Cash Support	13
Food Security Coordination	14
Earthquake Impact on Food Security	16
Accountability - Listening to People	18
Logistics Response	20
The Humanitarian Staging Area	23
Remote Access Operations – Porters and Mules	24
Temporary Medical Clinics	30
The Humanitarian Community	32
Partnership	34
Building Back Better	37

# Foreword



At this time last year, the warmth of spring was returning to the valleys to the north of Kathmandu, farmers had already begun planting maize and were preparing to sow rice. Tourism was entering the peak of its second busiest season of the year, guides and porters were busy with trekkers taking advantage of the clear skies and the warmer weather before the onset of the monsoon summer. 2015 was expected to be a good year.

However, as we know, after an 80 year lull, on a bright warm Saturday, all that changed and within a matter of minutes, along with the loss of lives came devastating losses of the simple essentials that enabled families to subsist including shelter, stores, saving, seeds, standing crops and tools of trade. The poorest and least able to withstand material losses were invariably worst affected.

The heroes of the earthquake are the courageous people across the affected valleys who risked their own lives to save lives and salvage what could be salvaged. And it was the job of those of us with resources and experience, to do our utmost to get them the help they needed as quickly as possible.

In one of the most mountainous, poorly connected and difficult terrains in the world the challenge could not have been greater. This is why we have chosen to call this retrospective Moving Mountains.

With our food assistance emergency operation, over two million people benefitted from rapid emergency food and nutrition including many involved in rebuilding hundreds of kilometers of trails and other essential community structures. Our logistics operations were carried out over land and air, by all means including truck, tractor, helicopter, porters, and mules - to get humanitarian supplies to those who needed it. Through the logistics

cluster WFP had the opportunity to provide logistics services to over 160 humanitarian and government partners. In the overall response, we have delivered almost 40,000 tons of supplies.

It is fitting in many ways that April marks the start of the **New Year in Nepal demarcating the 'year of the earthquake'**. As we look to the past year, one in which Nepal was confronted with unimaginable hardship and difficulties, we have much to be proud of. This is not the time, however, to rest – it is a time, as we know, to reinvigorate ourselves as there is much work to be done and greater challenges lie ahead. As the reconstruction response carries on and shelter remains a priority, we must continue to maintain momentum across all sectors. We must differentiate across districts and communities and ensure that the right resources go to where they are needed most – bearing in mind the correlation between poverty and loss whereby those least able to withstand the loss are those that lost the most.

In so doing we have been both heartened and humbled by the efforts of the Nepali people to rebound and respond to the effects of the earthquake. Now, as we look to the long-term recovery of the country, it is the Nepali people who will again be the cornerstone of efforts to build back better. Their involvement and ownership of rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts will be critical to improved livelihoods, greater self-sustainability and enhanced resilience moving forward. In this regard, our work will continue to be underpinned by emergency preparedness measures which better enable the people of Nepal to withstand and respond to future disasters.

Pippa Bradford,  
Representative and Country Director, WFP Nepal



A woman and her grandchild awaiting humanitarian assistance in Keraunja, Gorkha.

# The earthquake response – a summary

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On 25 April and 12 May 2015, two earthquakes of devastating magnitude struck Nepal, taking the lives of nearly 9,000 people, injuring 22,500 others and affecting the livelihoods of eight million people **across 31 of the country's 75 districts. Such was the scale of the disaster that the Government of Nepal declared a state of emergency and asked the international community to support the response, prioritising 14 of 31 affected districts for humanitarian assistance.**

Within days, WFP started to distribute immediate food relief, consisting of rice and high energy biscuits designed to meet immediate needs while the response effort ramped up, and within six weeks had reached two million people across seven of the worst-affected districts.

## Food Assistance

Between June and September 2015, WFP honed its food assistance efforts, providing food and introducing cash support for 1.1 million people. Cash support was provided to food insecure people in areas where markets were already recovering after the earthquake. In this period, which lasted from June to September, WFP expanded its coverage to a number of new districts, at the request of the Government of Nepal, providing support to those affected in Okhaldhunga and Solukhumbu.

Nutritional wellbeing was another pressing concern after the earthquake, and had been a longstanding problem, with approximately five million undernourished in Nepal. To prevent acute malnutrition, which often results from a disaster, a blanket supplementary feeding programme was rolled **out in the second phase of WFP's emergency food support response.** This ensured that pregnant **women, nursing mothers and young children's** nutrition needs were met.

Finally, at the request of the Government, the third **phase of WFP's food support operation began in** September and was dedicated to providing food and



cash assistance to earthquake-affected people who would work to improve their community.

Participants rehabilitated damaged community infrastructure such as trails and water supply systems. They worked to receive support from WFP while many also considered it an act of service to their communities.

## The Clusters

WFP, with its United Nations sister agency Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), began co-leading the Food Security Cluster working with the Government immediately after the earthquake.

The cluster was activated in line with the **Government's overall request for assistance and, with the support of WFP's vulnerability analysis and mapping unit,** began work with an initial major food security assessment two weeks after the quake. The Food Security Cluster not only ensured that all humanitarian actors were well-coordinated and informed, but contributed to the strategic planning of the Nepal Humanitarian Country Team.



Boxes of high energy-biscuits (HEBs) being offloaded in Keraunja. These biscuits, containing high-protein cereals and vegetable fat, were provided to disaster victims nationwide.

The Logistics Cluster worked primarily out of the Humanitarian Staging Area which had been established only one month before the earthquake struck and entailed a strong logistics network that include helicopters, trucks, tractors, porters and mules.

Helicopters operated by the WFP managed United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) provided access to isolated areas, including those cut off by earthquake-triggered landslides, and supported the rapid delivery of humanitarian cargo to these isolated areas.

A network of porters and mules delivered food, shelter and other humanitarian supplies to the most

remote communities where vehicles could not reach, and helicopters were not used. Using traditional transportation means, this *Remote Access Operation* (RAO) network was a logistics effort truly tailored for the landscape of Nepal.

Finally, Emergency Telecommunications Cluster connectivity allowed humanitarian workers in the field to quickly communicate needs and the situation on the ground to their colleagues in Kathmandu and major centres even further away.





As well as claiming human lives and toppling homes, the quake damaged tools and farming infrastructure, affecting agricultural production.

# WFP'S NEPAL EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE



MAY



**FOOD**  
for 2 million people

JUNE TO AUG



**FOOD** for  
1.1 million people so far



**CASH** support for 110,180 in  
exchange for work such as cleaning  
debris

1.1 million  
people served

SEP - DEC



**FOOD or CASH** for  
410,000 people under food-for-work  
or cash-for-work projects



40 temporary health  
clinics built with the  
World Health  
Organization.



19,200 porters  
employed so far



35,600 young children  
and 1,670 pregnant  
women and new  
mothers given  
nutrition support



Transported 876 mt of  
food as well 1,763 mt of  
non food items across 14  
earthquakes affected  
districts



270 Village Development  
Committees in 12  
Districts



495 km of trails  
trails rehabilitated  
opening up access  
to more than  
120,000 people

## HOW?

By partnering with the  
Government of Nepal,  
local authorities,  
international and local  
non-governmental  
organizations, other  
UN agencies and donors.

# Emergency food assistance

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WFP's emergency food response was crucial as people's homes, grain storage and animal shelters were severely damaged or destroyed by the earthquake. Farmers had already begun planting maize and were preparing to sow rice, expecting 2015 to be a good year before the disaster hit. In mere minutes, families experienced devastating losses of their shelter, food stores, savings, seeds, standing crops and tools. The poorest and least able to withstand losses were among the worst affected.

WFP contributed to the food security and nutrition response of the US\$415-million Nepal Flash Appeal through the following phases:

- Immediate Relief: From April to June, 2 million people received emergency food rations and high energy biscuits, as WFP's

first priority was to deliver food as quickly and efficiently as possible to those affected by the earthquake. Helicopters and trucks helped to move rice in bulk as even then, WFP was planning for the work ahead. Anticipating the coming monsoon season, WFP rushed to purchase and pre-position food in newly-established logistics hubs throughout earthquake-affected districts.

- Structured Relief: From July, a second phase of the WFP response began, based on more detailed information on the number of people needing immediate food assistance. A more varied food basket was provided, consisting of rice, pulses and oil, while WFP cash support was offered for other recipients. A total 1.1 million people were reached.



WFP had already investigated the feasibility of cash assistance as a form of food support and found that in two earthquake-affected districts, Makwanpur and Sindhuli, markets had recovered quickly after the earthquake. Road blockages were less acute and people could move more easily and securely compared with other districts. These were important factors considered before cash support was approved as appropriate. Based on Government requests, cash support was offered in exchange for work on community structures: participants carried out 20 days of light work, which at this stage mostly involved clearing earthquake debris around the community.

To maintain the nutritional status of the most vulnerable among the affected people, WFP also introduced nutritional support, including a blanket supplementary feeding programme for children aged under two, pregnant women and nursing mothers. The nutrition component aimed to prevent acute malnutrition. WFP assisted 11,336 children aged under two with a

**specialised nutritious food called Plumpy'Doz** provided in a container with its own plastic spoon for easy use and minimal preparation.

WFP also reached 817 pregnant women and 608 nursing mothers with Super Cereal, a special nutritional corn soya porridge.

- **Emergency Early Recovery:** From September **into early 2016, this phase led into WFP's long-term recovery and resilience project**, acting as a bridge of support for those areas still needing food assistance, and still suffering from the **earthquake's effects on their food stocks and livelihoods**. In this period, food support was provided to some 450,000 people in 6 districts categorized as highly and severely food insecure in exchange for work on community infrastructure. Recipients of food *and* cash support worked in this phase to strengthen existing community assets and improve livelihoods including enhancing access to markets, repairs to storage facilities for seeds and grains for the upcoming harvest, and opening of trails.

Clearing this 32km feeder road from Balefi to Kartike in Sindupalchowk meant that people in 13 Village Development Committees, who had been completely cut off by the quake, could be reached.



# Cash support

## Preparations for recovery

Within one month of the earthquake, WFP was providing cash support to earthquake-affected communities in some areas where markets had already bounced back. To receive this support, people worked on clearing debris, and making small community repairs. Once the debris was cleared, communities needed to repair their damaged infrastructure: rehabilitating trails, creating irrigation systems, and stabilizing slopes.

## WFP SCOPE Technology

**WFP's cash assistance entailed the use of SCOPE** technology, which ensures secure collection of data over a mobile application. Here, it was used to record and manage information, create distribution cycles and to send payment instructions to banks so that beneficiaries could redeem their cash entitlements. SCOPE also recorded participant

attendance at worksites, and managed distribution cycles to make sure that everyone received their entitlements.

WFP also developed a custom mobile app to make the registration process faster while reducing the likelihood of human errors. Recipients were given a card with a unique code, or a QR code. Once the identity and eligibility of the participants were established, the new SCOPE Registration App read **the QR code on the participant's card which could be used when redeeming their WFP payment at the bank agent.** The bank performed an identity check against the information sent by SCOPE and disbursed the cash to the entitled participants. Providing this cash support not only meant WFP could assist earthquake-affected people with food security, but also encouraged spending in the local economy.

## Contributing to the Community

At 83 years, Yam Bahadur Thakuri is delighted to be working again for his community. He was one of the first to register his interest, when he discovered that WFP was carrying out a cash for assets programme, Yam lives in the village of Irkhu, Sindhupalchok, one of the districts worst affected by the Nepal earthquake. The district had been hit by a number of landslides and landslips triggered by the quake and exacerbated by the monsoon season.

WFP introduced a cash for assets programme in the area so that villagers could rehabilitate damaged community assets in exchange for cash to purchase food at markets, thus supporting the local economy.

**Yam's team has repaired a community road so local farmers can take their vegetables to the market and essential ambulance services can resume..**

Yam leaves the heavy labour to the younger members of the community and instead serves water **to the other workers and clears drains.** "I never thought I would work again for my village, and now I'm working and earning some money. With what I

**get from WFP, I can buy and rear goats. It's something I've always wanted to do.."**

## Tulasi's Story

Tulasi Kumari Thakuri is a 52-year-old single woman from the same village of Irkhu, Sindhupalchok. She has a physical disability which affects her ability to walk. In spite of this, she still wanted to contribute to rehabilitating the assets in her community and join the team working on the community road. To contribute to the effort, Tulasi does the light work of cutting the grass bordering the road. As for what she will do with the money she receives in exchange for the work that she is **doing, Tulasi has a number of ideas.** "I would love to make a small poultry farm and keep chickens. I also need to buy rice and some new clothes to wear".



# Food security coordination

Throughout the earthquake response, WFP relied on coordination provided by the Food Security Cluster **and on the Government of Nepal's Food Security Monitoring System NeKSAP.**



## Food Security Cluster

This cluster, led by the Ministry of Agricultural Development (MOAD) with the support of WFP and FAO, helped from the earliest days of the disaster to coordinate the complex food security response operation. Led by the Government of Nepal, the cluster was involved in two major food security assessments which have informed the entire humanitarian response.

The cluster produced information to improve coordination, including a set of gap analysis maps that were regularly updated to allow partners to see **each other's plans. It was also vital in providing a platform for the information provided by NeKSAP.** This allowed cluster partners to carry out an evidence-based food assistance programmes which met the needs of those people affected by the earthquakes.

NeKSAP, which demonstrated its versatility in conducting critical and wide ranging assessments, undertook a detailed sectoral assessment in support

of the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA), just two weeks after the earthquake together with WFP and the Food Security Cluster, focusing on food security, agriculture and livelihoods in 11 of the 14 priority districts. The assessment informed the immediate relief response and established a baseline against which recovery could be measured across time. The information showed to what extent **people's levels of food security had changed, before and after the earthquake.**

A second assessment, conducted in September and October 2015, was designed to complement, update and expand on information on key thematic areas in the PDNA. The view here was to inform a multi-cluster and governmental recovery response related to food security, livelihoods, agriculture, service provision and infrastructure while mainstreaming protection and gender concerns. This NeKSAP data provided WFP with vital information on how food security levels had improved, in no small part due to the overall humanitarian response. It also showed where pockets of food insecurity remained and what were residual humanitarian needs.

**Further, its food security monitoring wasn't only in earthquake-affected areas, but was conducted throughout Nepal.** Most recently, NeKSAP has provided the Government, WFP and other stakeholders with data on flooding in mid-western Nepal, and has monitored the effects of drought on the food security situation in the Karnali.

WFP is a proud, longstanding partner to NeKSAP. Now jointly operated by the Ministry of Agricultural Development and WFP under the strategic guidance of the National Planning Commission, it is truly one **of WFP's shining examples of successful partnership.**

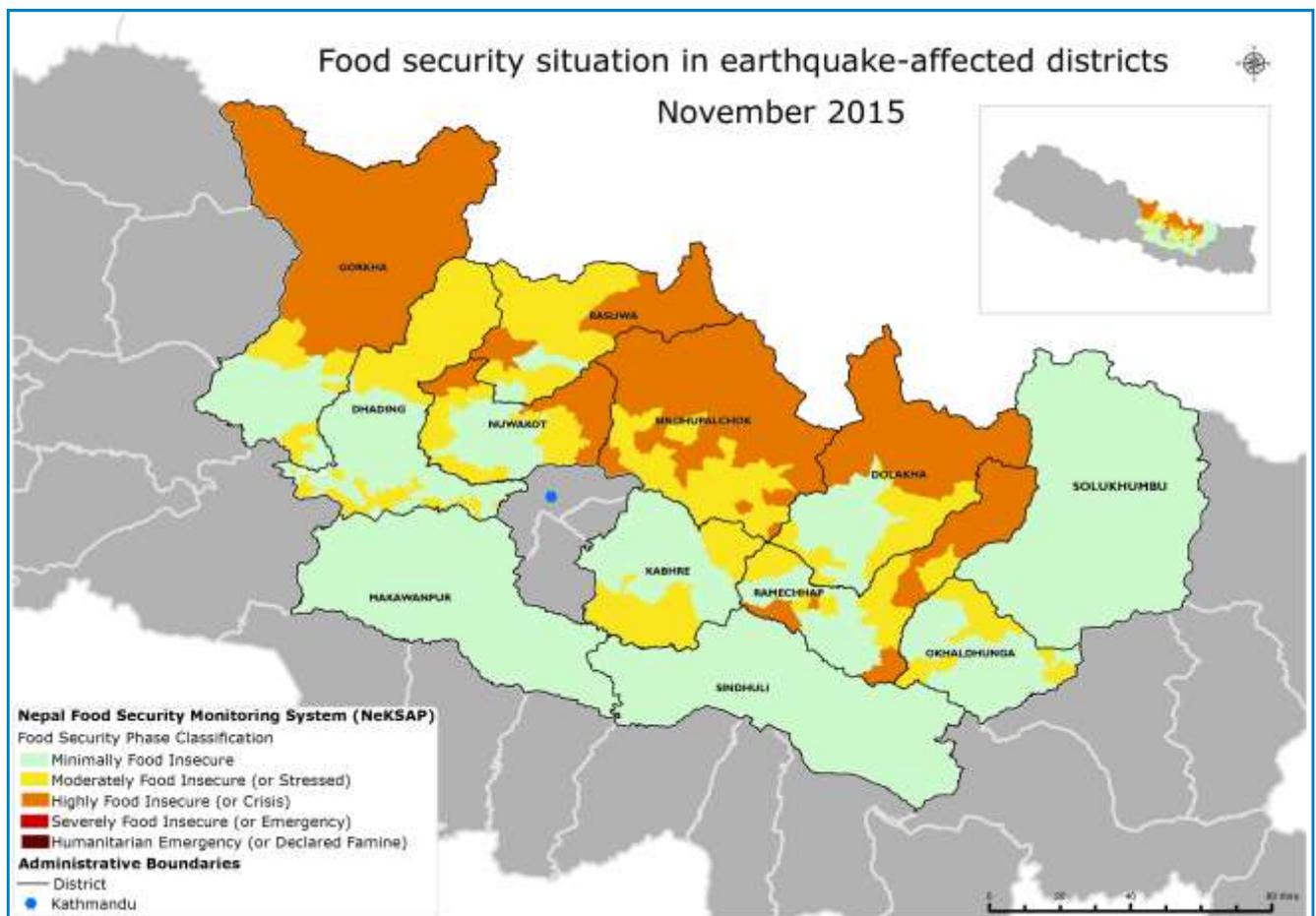
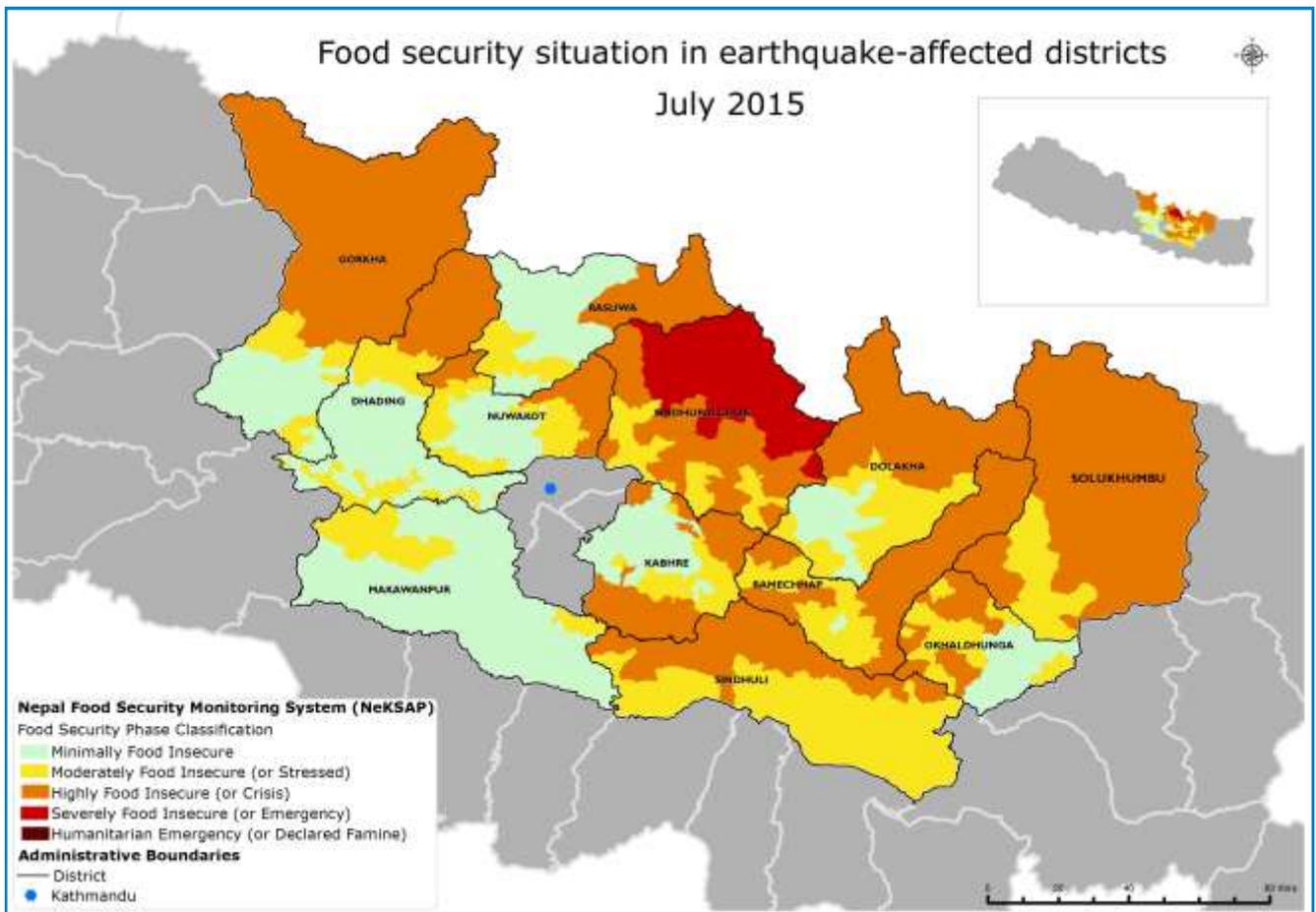


**नेपाल खाद्य सुरक्षा अनुगमन प्रणाली**  
Nepal Khadhyo Surokshya Anugaman Pranali (NeKSAP)  
Nepal Food Security Monitoring System



A Nepalese woman returns to her makeshift shelter after labouring in the fields, Gorkha.





# Accountability - listening to people

To improve accountability, WFP established a toll-free line called “*Namaste WFP*” in September 2015 to provide earthquake-affected people with an opportunity to seek information and provide feedback on WFP assistance through a centralised and confidential call system. At peak periods, such as when WFP was registering populations or conducting food and cash distributions, calls averaged 20 per day. The phone line became an integral part of WFP’s programming, promoting adjustments, alerting WFP to possible disturbances at distribution centres and adding an extra layer of monitoring. Also, in the period where people were frequently moving around after the quake, as well as during the harvesting and holiday seasons, when some people happened to miss some information sessions, *Namaste WFP* proved a critical service in enabling people to stay informed.

*Namaste WFP*, at both field and central level, provided WFP with an insight into areas of the food support operation that needed more attention and care. Issues reported over this toll-free services, led WFP to conduct additional sensitization sessions with targeted communities when it became clear that there was some initial confusion over cash support entitlements, as well as to monitor our own overall performance, as well as that of its partners, including cooperating partners.

WFP will expand this toll-free line to its other operations in Nepal in 2016.





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# Logistics response

In an emergency, clusters may be activated in many sectors to streamline coordination and communication among humanitarian actors – and this happened very quickly after the earthquake for the WFP-led Logistics Cluster. It rapidly brought together the humanitarian community to share information, highlighting where roads had been cut off, and monitoring access changes during the monsoon. It coordinated with the Government of Nepal to ensure the entry of humanitarian supplies into the Humanitarian Staging Area and worked with the Humanitarian Country Team to ensure that particular supplies were prioritised for distribution. And of course, transporting humanitarian cargo to the people who needed it, in whatever way possible.

Transporting bulky cargo, such as food and shelter supplies, through the monsoon and later in winter, is no small endeavour. Wherever roads were clear of landslides, the Logistics Cluster activated its fleet of trucks, including large-load carriers. Where the terrain was more difficult, off-road trucks and tractors were deployed. For this work, a strong understanding of **Nepal's topography was necessary. The Logistics Cluster worked with local trucking companies, hiring truck drivers with a sound knowledge of Nepal's terrain to transport humanitarian cargo from one of WFP's logistics hubs to the affected areas or to satellite hubs for the final leg of the journey by porters.**

**UNHAS**  
(United Nations Humanitarian Air Service)  
The United Nations Humanitarian Air Services, or UNHAS, also began its operations immediately after the earthquake. UNHAS worked alongside the

Logistics Cluster, carrying WFP food and other humanitarian cargo by helicopter to isolated and inaccessible areas. In the first months of the emergency, this was a free common service, available for use to the entire humanitarian community. UNHAS cargo, as with that of the Logistics Cluster, followed a strict prioritization process, set out by the UN Humanitarian Country Team. Items were prioritized according to sector; for example, at the beginning of the emergency, medical items were a priority; in winter, shelter cargo was the priority to be loaded on the helicopters. This system ensured transparency and a clear order, which was much needed throughout the emergency.

Navigating the mountainous areas of Nepal is not easy, and pilots often had to execute difficult manoeuvres in challenging landscapes. Safety was always a first consideration, with UNHAS strictly following UN Aviation Safety Standards. This was especially important as UNHAS was also tasked to carry out medical evacuations of humanitarian workers.

In August, there was a very real possibility that UNHAS would have to cease operations, as it faced a severe funding pipeline break. However, thanks to generous support from government donors and a move to a cost-recovery funding model, this was narrowly avoided.

UNHAS helicopter services scaled down and came to a close in December 2015. In its service to the Nepal earthquake emergency, UNHAS carried out 4,848 sorties to 187 different locations.



# NEPAL EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE

as of 29 February 2016

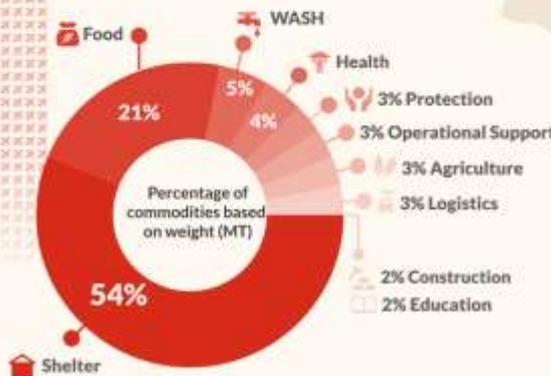
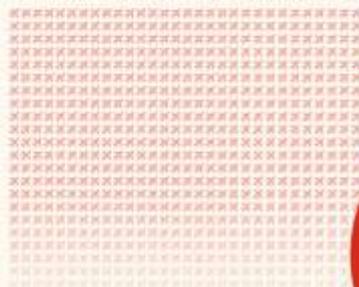


## RESPONSE TO DATE

CARGO HANDLING

● **88,807 m<sup>3</sup>**  
**38,375 MT**

OF CARGO HANDLED  
equivalent to **2,198 C130 cargo planes**



● **164** **ORGANISATIONS**



**5,680 m<sup>2</sup>**

CURRENT STORAGE CAPACITY



18 large storage tents

Trucks and tractors available within the six affected districts.

ROAD

**10,336**  
truckloads

Transported to the districts of

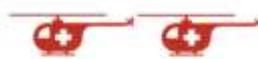
Bhaktapur, Dhading, Dolakha, Gorkha, Kabhrepalanchok, Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Makawanpur, Nuwakot, Okhaldhunga, Ramechhap, Rasuwa, Sindhuli and Sindhupalchok.

UNHAS MISSION ENDED ON 31ST DECEMBER, 2015

AIR



4 Mi8 cargo helicopters



2 AS350 smaller helicopter  
FOR ASSESSMENT MISSIONS  
AND EVACUATIONS

**187**

destinations

**140**

organisations

**2,704** MT of cargo

**4,848** sorties

**3,636** passengers

## REMOTE ACCESS OPERATION (RAO)

Covering 5 districts: Gorkha, Sindhupalchok, Dolakha, Dhading and Rasuwa

214 trails rehabilitated  
(888 Km)

Delivery mechanism through  
pack animals & 25,881 porters

1378.33 MT food &  
774.79 MT NFIs delivered



आशी

वालि

शांति लखा

WFP  
World Food Programme  
विश्व खाद्य कार्यक्रम

मरुज

TATA



ROAD

KING

ना. २२४  
४८२७



## The humanitarian staging area

Only one month before the earthquake hit, WFP established the Humanitarian Staging Area (HSA) at Tribhuvan Airport in Kathmandu, together with the Government of Nepal and the United Kingdom. The HSA was part of a wider emergency preparedness and response strategy, and was intended as a hub from which to manage a humanitarian emergency.

The hub itself began quite humbly, as WFP's Executive Director Ertharin Cousin described it: a collection of shipping containers, offices and a few mobile storage units at the airport. However, the HSA proved its worth when the earthquake struck. As humanitarian relief poured into the airport, it was quickly funnelled to the HSA, preventing blockages and bottlenecks at the airport. Staff at the HSA quickly organized the cargo and pushed it to the earthquake-affected districts, and the Logistics and Emergency Telecommunications Clusters based their operations from there.

**"There was cargo all over the** grounds of the HSA, in those first days we worked well into the night,

thankfully we had just installed floodlights so we could at least see **what we were doing,"** recalled WFP's Government Liaison Officer, Ratindra Khatri.

Within about two months, mainly from equipment prepositioned prior to the earthquake at the HSA, WFP had set up a network of nine logistics hubs and satellite hubs in some of **Nepal's most earthquake-**affected districts. This was part of a rapid scale-up of operations to support the logistics response. These logistics hubs, serving mountainous, isolated areas, were storage and processing points for humanitarian cargo, holding a capacity of over 9,300 square metres.

Moving forward, WFP plans to reinforce its initial emergency preparedness efforts and enhance **the country's state of readiness for** future natural disasters.

As part of these efforts, the HSA will remain an established emergency response base from which the Government of Nepal and its partners can immediately respond in the wake of such an event.

# Remote access operations – porters and mules

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Sometimes humanitarian cargo needed to go to high-altitude areas, where even off-road vehicles **couldn't reach, so Remote Access Operation (RAO)** was set up to provide transport by a network of porters and mules.

WFP established this unique Nepal-tailored logistics **plan to ensure that the humanitarian community's** cargo arrived in even the most inaccessible areas. During monsoon season, the terrain - already degraded by earthquakes and subsequent landslides - became ever more impassable. Roads could be blocked from one day to the next, and helicopters were often grounded due to weather

To set up this strong network of porters, WFP and the Logistics Cluster worked with partners who knew the terrain well. Local mountaineering associations, expert mountaineers and geologists **worked with WFP to rehabilitate Nepal's damaged** trekking trails. These trails, once repaired, were then used as a cargo passage for porters and mules, delivering to isolated populations high up in the mountains.

The rehabilitation of these trails provided 130,000 people with access to markets, and facilitated the delivery of over 2,100 tons of humanitarian cargo.

The pay provided to the porters and rehabilitation workers totalled about US\$1.4 million and provided a much-needed lifeline, as their livelihoods were badly affected by the post-quake failure of the tourist industry.

## Road Access

### Access Infrastructure

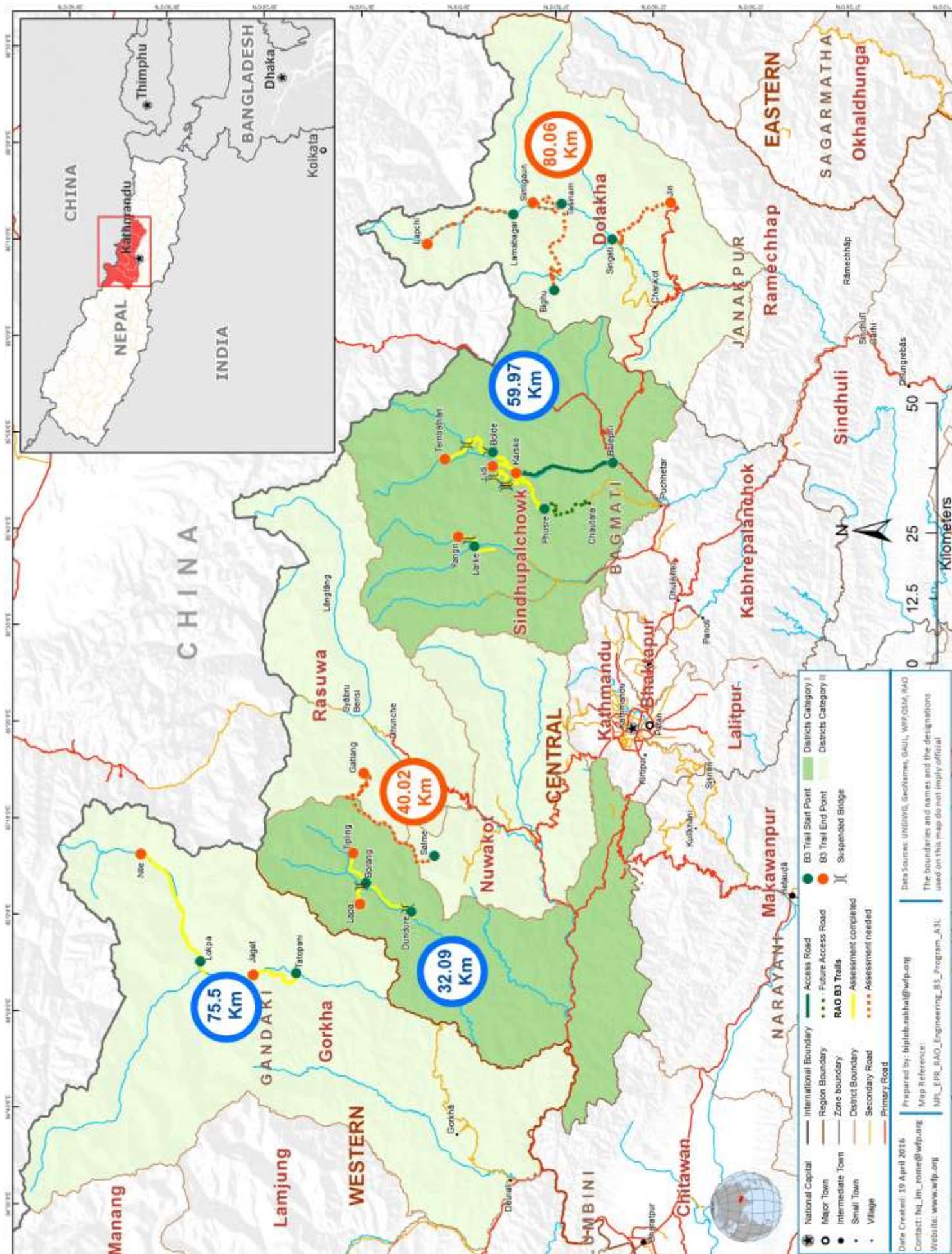
The Remote Access operation assessed 1341 km of trail supported by WFP engineers, Trail experts and Geophysical Engineers provided by Swiss Agency for Co-operation. With the data collated WFP GIS specialists have plotted hundreds of settlements, all of which has been shared with the OSM platform. The technical assessments combined with GIS mapping has enabled detailed plans for trail and bridge upgrade in our build back better project.

A significant accomplishment, especially considering the access issues and fuel shortages towards the end of 2015, was the opening of the Belefi-to-Kartike road in Sindhupalchok. This meant that food, shelter and relief supplies could reach the furthest northern point of the valley. From here, communities could transport supplies to their remote villages.

The route is a central part of the tertiary road system, connecting rural trails to the highway, and its re-opening ensured that porters could work efficiently, and that local people were connected to market, health facilities and the rest of the country.

The open road also meant that WFP could provide vital services to people living in rural areas who are isolated due to frequent road blockages in the steep and landslide-prone valleys of Nepal.

Opposite: The WFP Engineers tasks included establishing 40 WHO Health Clinics, reopening Trails in remote areas, and upgrading the Humanitarian Staging Area next to Kathmandu airport. Recently they initiated detailed assessments of remote trails in order to **"Build Back Better"**. **The map shows 168 km of trails have been assessed**, a further 120 km are scheduled to be assessed in the next two months, and a 32 km remote access road has been completed with a detailed assessment of another road to be undertaken in the near future. Construction work on a number of the assessed trails is scheduled to commence during May.



Nepal | RAO Engineering: Trail build back better (B3) Programme





## An Engineer with a mission

### Challenging work

Yudhir Khadka is a WFP engineer overseeing the rehabilitation of community and tourist trails in Sindhupalchok. He is working under **WFP's Remote Access Operation**, which delivers food and shelter material to people in isolated areas. In order to safely get these supplies to those who need it, he must ensure that the trails are robust enough to support the safe passage of people and load-bearing animals. He must also ensure that threats like landslides are avoided at all costs, even if it means stopping work.

**One of Yudhir's longest field missions lasted two and a half weeks, in the village of Golche, Sindhupalchok district. This was one of the worst-affected districts due to the earthquakes and monsoon-triggered landslides. Yudhir recruited labourers to clear stretches of trail so that porters could safely pass soon after. "We made a very good trail road for connecting eight wards within Golche village, hiring 300 people to work on it." Once the trail was open, the porter operation could deliver food and supplies to the villagers.**

### A passion for the outdoors

Growing up in the district of Surkhet, in midwestern Nepal, Yudhir was always interested in nature and adventure. As an adult he still maintains these passions, which is necessary for long stays in the outdoors. This

is not a job for just anyone. Besides the monsoon rains and threat of landslide, there are other discomforts. Once the rainfall starts, small streams swell, hindering the rehabilitation work. Leeches come with the floodwaters, attaching themselves to legs and hands. A comfortable night's sleep is a luxury.

***"Seeing the smiles on the villagers' faces when we cleared the trail road, opening it up for porters, mules and access to market – this really motivates me to do my work with WFP"***

**"Eating was one of the biggest challenges. In one of the places I stayed, I ate porcupine meat. Another time, we ate a buffalo which was the victim of the previous night's landslide."**

### Support from colleagues

Yudhir counts on his WFP network of **colleagues for support: "I can really depend on my team of fellow engineers, they have helped me in so many ways."** Yudhir does not lose sight of his overall purpose: to open trails so that earthquake-affected people can receive food and travel freely and safely to the nearest markets. Yudhir and his team cleared a 28 kilometre trail route across five villages in Sindhupalchok in late 2015.

## Empowering women in the mountains of Bigu

Just behind the village of Bigu, Dolokha district, lies the evidence of a recent landslide. The people in this village are constantly aware of how precarious their lives are on this unstable terrain.

Here, WFP's Remote Access Operation (RAO) is at work, using porters and mules to get humanitarian supplies to people cut off by landslides. In Dolokha, around half of the porters are women. Most of them were alone the day the earthquake struck as the majority of the men of the village had gone abroad in the hopes of sending money home.

After a hard day's work, Sachi Maya Thamir and Sushila Kami reflect on how they began working as porters. **'Both our houses collapsed in the earthquake but luckily we were outside in the fields when it happened,'** recounts Sachi Maya. For two days afterwards they had no food—their stocks were lost along with clothes, dishes and other belongings.

Their husbands regularly sent money home, which Sachi Maya and Sushila would collect from the remittance agents. However, after the earthquake, they were afraid of moving, for fear of landslides and safe access along trails, so it became increasingly difficult to get to these offices to collect the money.

When the opportunity came to work on the RAO project Sachi Maya and Sushila registered



*"Now that I have food, I can spend the money on my children's exam fees and notebooks for school,"* said Sushila.

with the Nepal Mountaineering Association, one of WFP's expert partners. This enabled them to gain some financial independence and continue supporting their children.

RAO is an innovative approach to getting relief supplies to isolated communities in mountainous areas of Nepal. The earthquakes and subsequent landslides, compounded by the rainy season, ensured that the terrain of earthquake-hit Nepal was always precarious. Workers and porters clear debris to ensure that trekking and community trails are re-opened, access to market is easier and the tourist industry is restored.

RAO does not just create lifelines by rehabilitating trails and delivering vital emergency supplies, it also affects people like Sushila and Sachi Maya. By earning an income, these women achieve financial independence and support their families.





Community members working on trail rehabilitation in Keraunja, Gorkha. Through WFP's Remote Access Operation 459 kms of trails were rehabilitated, providing access to more than 120,000 people.



# Temporary medical clinics: collaborating to restore health care

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**In Nepal's earthquake**-affected areas, over 900 public health facilities were damaged or destroyed. In response, the World Health Organization (WHO) and WFP collaborated **with Nepal's Ministry of Health in the** construction of medical clinics in Nepal. WHO worked to ensure the safety of clinic workers and patients while WFP mobilised its engineering expertise to assess the terrain and construct 40 temporary clinics. These offered immediate medical support to those whose local medical services had been disrupted, or who had been cut off from the major hospitals by landslides and damaged roads.

The camps were set up in just a few days, and had very little reliance on machinery. The camps could also quickly be dismantled when the time came to construct a permanent healthcare facility. WFP, through the Logistics Cluster, also helped move the temporary medical structures to the project sites, sometimes via road transport, but very often using the Remote Access Operation network of porters and mules which carried medical camp kits and other supplies over the mountainous terrain. UNHAS helicopters transported large electrical generators for the medical centres.



## The first WFP/WHO clinic in Dhading

Usha Basnet quietly inspects the medical tents that sprang up in her village in Gajuri, Dhading district over the previous week. Carrying her granddaughter on her hip, Usha contemplates what this new facility means for her family and her village.

Even after the trauma of the earthquakes, the loss of property and the inevitable problems associated with the oncoming monsoon, her smile is unwavering.

Usha had spent the previous weeks living in a camp with her neighbours. After the first earthquake, she escaped from her home with her 27-month-old granddaughter, Sabina, and the rest of her family. **Some of her neighbours' houses crumbled to the ground. "Soldiers from the barracks made us a tent and the whole night they kept carrying in injured people. It got so crowded. The next day we bought a tarpaulin and set up a shelter."**

Usha is thankful for the arrival of the medical camp. **"It takes two hours to get to Kathmandu, I usually only go once a year for bigger procedures, but little Sabina needs regular medical checks. This medical camp means that we will not have to travel so much, or spend so much money on medical expenses."**

WFP set up the first medical clinic in Usha's village, located in one of Nepal's worst affected districts. Many buildings in Gajuri were damaged outright and the local healthcare centre was structurally unsafe for patients.

As a result, the sick, injured and healthy alike were sleeping alongside displaced villagers in tarpaulin-covered camps.

This was a very serious situation, says Lalita Bista, a nurse who has worked in Gajuri for sixteen years, **"Our patients need to be in a comfortable, clean environment. The monsoon season brings flooding, not to mention the possibility of insects and snakes washed into tents with the floodwaters. Thankfully the medical tents\_***keep these things outside"*.

Radha Pandey, another nurse working in the area, felt a great sense of relief at the arrival of the medical camp.

***"Patient safety is a big priority, and these camps will mean that our patients will escape the negative effects of the monsoon."***

# The humanitarian community

## International humanitarian partnership camps

After the earthquakes, it was difficult to find safe accommodation for humanitarian workers in the field. In areas like Charikot (Dolakha district) and Chautara (Sindhupalchok district) many buildings were either damaged or destroyed. As the humanitarian community did not want to burden local people whose lives were already disrupted, temporary accommodation was constructed at the request of the Humanitarian Coordinator in Nepal and the International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP), a voluntary multinational network of seven governmental emergency management agencies in Europe.

WFP, as service provider to the humanitarian community, mobilised its administrative and engineering expertise to construct two residential **camps for humanitarian workers in two of Nepal's** most affected districts, Dolakha and Sindhupalchok. The camps accommodated 63 people and each camp contained a medical room, office, laundry, kitchen, dining room and reception area. Local staff, employing local cleaners, general service staff and kitchen staff, managed the camps.

## Connecting humanitarian workers

The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) was activated to provide humanitarian workers with shared internet connectivity and security telecommunications services – vital, when staff needed to rapidly react to a constantly evolving situation and manage operations over a vast and extreme landscape. During the response, more than 1,550 humanitarian workers from over 250 organizations had been using ETC services in Nepal. The ETC deployed and shared internet connectivity services in 24 places across Nepal, including Gorkha, Charikot and Chautara, the major hubs for response operations.

The ETC, based at the HAS, worked closely with government authorities, humanitarian organizations and national internet and mobile service providers to ensure smooth transition of communications services to local providers such as the hand-over of the VHF radio communication network to United Nations Department of Safety and Security to ensure continuity of long-term services.

Almost five months after the earthquake, the ETC operation had completed its mission and local telecommunications services were restored.



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# Partnerships

## Partnerships

Throughout the earthquake response, WFP worked with such partners as the Government of Nepal, local and international NGOs, and trekking companies – partners that brought expertise, local knowledge of the earthquake-affected areas, and dedication to a common goal of achieving food security and providing livelihood support to affected people of Nepal.

This was valuable as partners helped WFP with the rapid distribution of emergency rations of rice and high-energy biscuits in the affected districts right after the earthquakes.

When cash assistance started just two months after the earthquake response began, in the districts of Makwanpur and Sindhuli, WFP worked with Nepal Investment Bank Limited to securely transfer cash entitlements, together with local NGOs, who knew the area and, most importantly, the people.

WFP worked with the Government, FAO, OCHA, Nepal Red Cross Society, REACH, UNDP and three clusters (Food Security, Early Recovery and Protection) on the Joint Assessment of Food Security, Livelihoods and Early Recovery in September and October.

With a focus on re-establishing livelihoods in the reconstruction phase, WFP partnered primarily with national NGOs with excellent local knowledge and experience not just in cash and food distribution, but also in work on community infrastructure.

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) worked closely with WFP to assist in the preparation of a strategy that would

## Top Donors to WFP Earthquake Response

1. USA
2. Private-sector donors
3. United Kingdom

## Top 3 corporate donors

1. Thai Television Channel TV3 through public appeals
2. **Italy's RAI broadcasters plus other Italian media** in a joint public appeal campaign with UNICEF (Italy)
3. YUM brands

continue livelihood and food security support to vulnerable earthquake-affected populations into 2018.

**Finally, none of WFP's work would have been possible without the support of its donor partners:** governments and private citizens who generously supported the WFP food assistance and logistics responses. Donors not only contributed through direct funding, but also offered in-kind contributions of food and equipment, as well as local support, cooperation and consultation. Donors provided expert staff in the field of logistics, food security and cash transfers – these people became a very special part of the WFP team.

# Thank you!

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# Building back better

Despite an overall improvement in food security in the earthquake-affected areas, a long road to recovery still lies ahead. In partnership with the Government of Nepal, WFP will continue to provide livelihood and reconstruction-orientated assistance to the vulnerable earthquake-affected people of Nepal.

Through a three-year recovery programme, WFP will support immediate food and nutrition needs and help communities restore their livelihoods in the districts where food insecurity needs are the highest and where the greatest damage to community infrastructure was found.

WFP will focus its resources on supporting earthquake-affected communities in remote rural and mountainous areas, while continuing to restore access to remote areas as part of a more holistic approach to improving food security.

WFP has found a continued need for food assistance to vulnerable populations, many of which were the hardest-hit by the earthquake disaster.

A Joint Assessment of Food Security Livelihoods and Early Recovery by a group of UN Agencies and NGOs, in conjunction with the Government, found a significant improvement in the food security situation in the earthquake-affected districts.

The entire humanitarian community, both national and international, should be proud of this finding from an assessment in September and October. The improvement was due in no small part to their response, as well as the re-establishment of market access after the earthquake, the harvest of winter and summer crops, and the flow of remittances to affected populations.

But the assessment also found that pockets of food insecurity and vulnerability persist. Elevation was an important factor - living at high altitudes was **found to significantly impact a person's level of vulnerability**.

Further vulnerabilities based around caste, gender, and chronic illness, were identified as important factors in the area of food security and must not be overlooked. Inadequate food consumption was found to be highest among Dalit households, for example, with over one-third of the Dalit population in earthquake-affected areas falling below the acceptable threshold for food consumption.

As the reconstruction effort continues, WFP and its humanitarian partners must strive to ensure that the most vulnerable populations are not left behind.





A birds-eye view: these tiny figures are porters carrying corrugated iron sheets across terraced fields in Borlang, Dhadhing district.

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[www.wfp.org/countries/nepal](http://www.wfp.org/countries/nepal)

Email us at:  
[KTM.Nepal@wfp.org](mailto:KTM.Nepal@wfp.org)