The 25 April Nepal earthquake and subsequent aftershocks destroyed transport infrastructure for already very remote communities.

This has been compounded by landslides, monsoon floods and the destruction of traditional mountain trails.

The earthquake has destroyed hundreds of thousands of homes, killed livestock, damaged crops and destroyed food storage, dramatically increasing food insecurity and affecting livelihoods.

Because of the downturn in tourism, a crucial driver for economic growth, the quake particularly affected the livelihoods of porters and donkey/mule drivers, who normally make a living carrying the luggage and equipment of trekkers.

**Approach**

WFP is utilizing the existing tourist infrastructure to ensure the delivery of food and other emergency supplies to the most remote and affected parts of the country. Employing porters and the operators of pack animals, WFP is transporting food, shelter, health kits and medical supplies to thousands of people in rural communities living in villages located far above the altitude accessible by roads and helicopters.

Experienced porters, who can carry up to 30 kgs each, and mule drivers have been hired by WFP through the Trekking Agents Association Nepal and the Nepal Mountaineering Association.

As well as expediting the delivery of short-term disaster relief, WFP is also assisting with long-term community-oriented recovery. Laborers, often from the affected villages, are being hired to re-establish safe routes and passageways. This is boosting local economies; revitalizing access to markets; restoring livelihoods destroyed by the earthquakes, and providing employment opportunities for communities living in areas where tourism has been severely interrupted.
Earthquake in Nepal
Remote Access Operation

RAO is being implemented in five of the most remote and affected districts- Gorkha, Dhading, Rasuwa, Sindhupalchok and Dolakha.

Results

- More than **9,100 porters**, mule operators, labourers and guides have been employed so far to deliver food and rehabilitate the trails. The programme will employ up to 20,000 people by the end of the operation.
- More than **US$ 500,000 in wages** has been handed out, restoring livelihoods to many communities that formerly relied on tourism.
- Almost **570 km of trails** have now been rehabilitated or are under rehabilitation. This opens up access to more than 92,800 people living in communities that were formally cut off by the earthquake.
- More than **25,400 people have been reached** with emergency food or other supplies.
- More than **162 metric tons of food** has been delivered to remote communities, along with **85 MT of non-food items**.

Total budget: **US$ 7.5 million**

Photos: James A. Giambrone and Richard Bull.

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