



6 MONTHS ON

Operational update on disaster response programs
in Nepal following the 2015 earthquakes

Executive Summary

Six months have passed since a 7.8 earthquake struck Nepal on 25 April 2015, with the epicenter about 80 kilometers northwest of the capital, Kathmandu. This was followed by another magnitude-7.4 earthquake to the northeast near Mount Everest on 12 May. According to the government of Nepal, more than 8,800 people were killed. The effect on housing was devastating, as the government reports more than 602,000 homes destroyed and 285,000 homes damaged. The Nepal government declared a state of emergency and requested international aid. Many international agencies responded, including Habitat for Humanity.

In the subsequent months since the earthquakes, the recovery process in Nepal has moved on from the emergency phase, and recovery and reconstruction has begun. Our donors' strong support and contributions have been instrumental in ensuring the completion of the emergency phase, which included distributing 5,065 temporary shelter kits, 20,000 water backpacks, and removing 650 tons of earthquake rubble. Surveyors have conducted safety assessments for 16,244 damaged houses, to help families determine if their homes are still safe for habitation, to facilitate demolition of unsafe homes, and to provide technical support to those able to repair or retrofit their homes.

In early July, Habitat for Humanity held a groundbreaking ceremony for the first permanent houses to be built in Pipaltar, Kavrepalanchok district. The first model house has been completed and safety assessments, demolitions of unsafe homes and site development through construction of roads were also conducted. Construction on more permanent houses was to have continued, but amid current challenges such as the fuel crisis and civil unrest and other critical factors, projects will be delayed and timelines will need to be adjusted.

While conditions prevent full implementation of projects, Habitat is pursuing additional measures in Nepal, including reworking project delivery schedules, seeking local organizations to help support technical assistance and core house programs, and supporting local communities with holistic services.

On the cover:

A woman in Pipaltar village carries fodder past a temporary shelter provided by Habitat for Humanity, after the Nepal earthquake.

On page 3:

Lalitpur Bungaamati community, located near the site of the 16th century Rato Machindranath temple, that was destroyed during the April 25th earthquake along with the majority of houses. Habitat for humanity volunteers work on clearing rubble from houses in the community.



Progress to date

With the generous support of our donors, Habitat for Humanity's emergency response programs for the Nepal earthquake have been accomplished within a five-month period.

Temporary shelter kits

Number of temporary shelter kits distributed: 5,065 as of 4 September 2015

Distributions took place in: Thulo Dhading, Pedku, Jethal and Sunkhani (Sindhupalchowk district); Paanchkhal, Kashikhanda and Lamidanda (Kavrepalanchowk district), Chapagaon and Godam Chaur (Lalitpur district), Dhunwakot (Dhading district), Gorkha district, Bidur municipality (Nuwakot district)

Number of demonstration temporary shelters built: 21

Number of families / people supported: 5,065 / 25,325

Number of volunteers involved: 142



Rubble removal

Amount of rubble removed: 650 tons

Number of locations where rubble removal has taken place: 6

Locations: Harisiddhi, Bungmati and Khokana (Lalitpur district); Pipaltar (Kavrepalanchok district); Rampur (Palpa district); Sankhu (Kathmandu district), Bhaktapur district

Number of families/people supported: 126 / 630

Number of volunteers involved in rubble removal to date: 637



Water backpacks

Number of water backpacks distributed: 20,000
Distributions took place in: Gorkha, Dolakha, Sindhupalchowk,
Ramechhap, Kavrepalanchok, Bhaktapur and Dhading
Number of families / people supported: 20,000 / 100,000
Number of volunteers involved: 64

Safety assessment project

Number of houses assessed: 16,244
Districts where houses were assessed: Kavrepalanchok,
Dolakha, Lamjung
Number of families / people supported: 16,244 / 81,220
Number of surveyors / engineers trained: 60

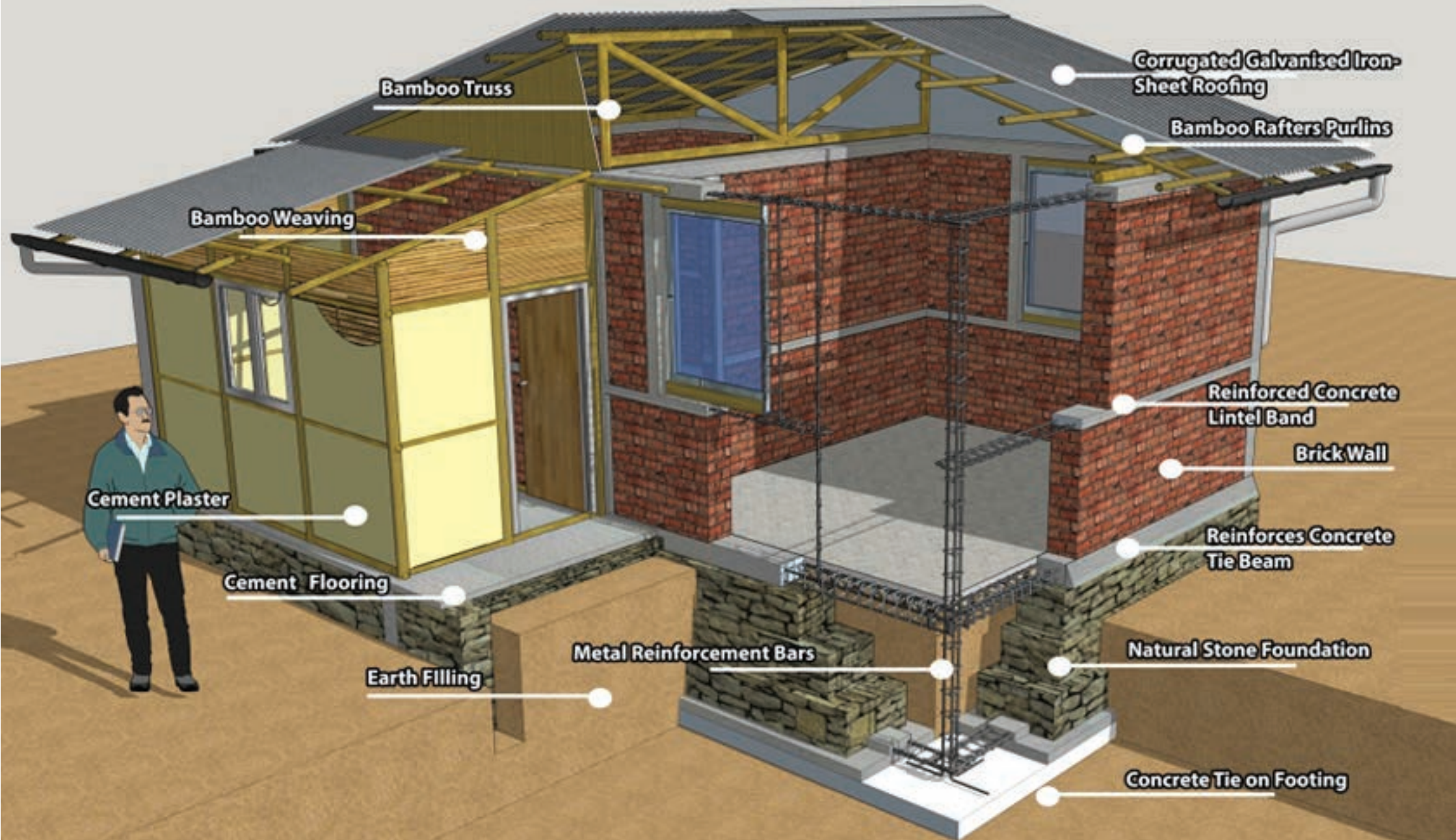
Permanent home construction

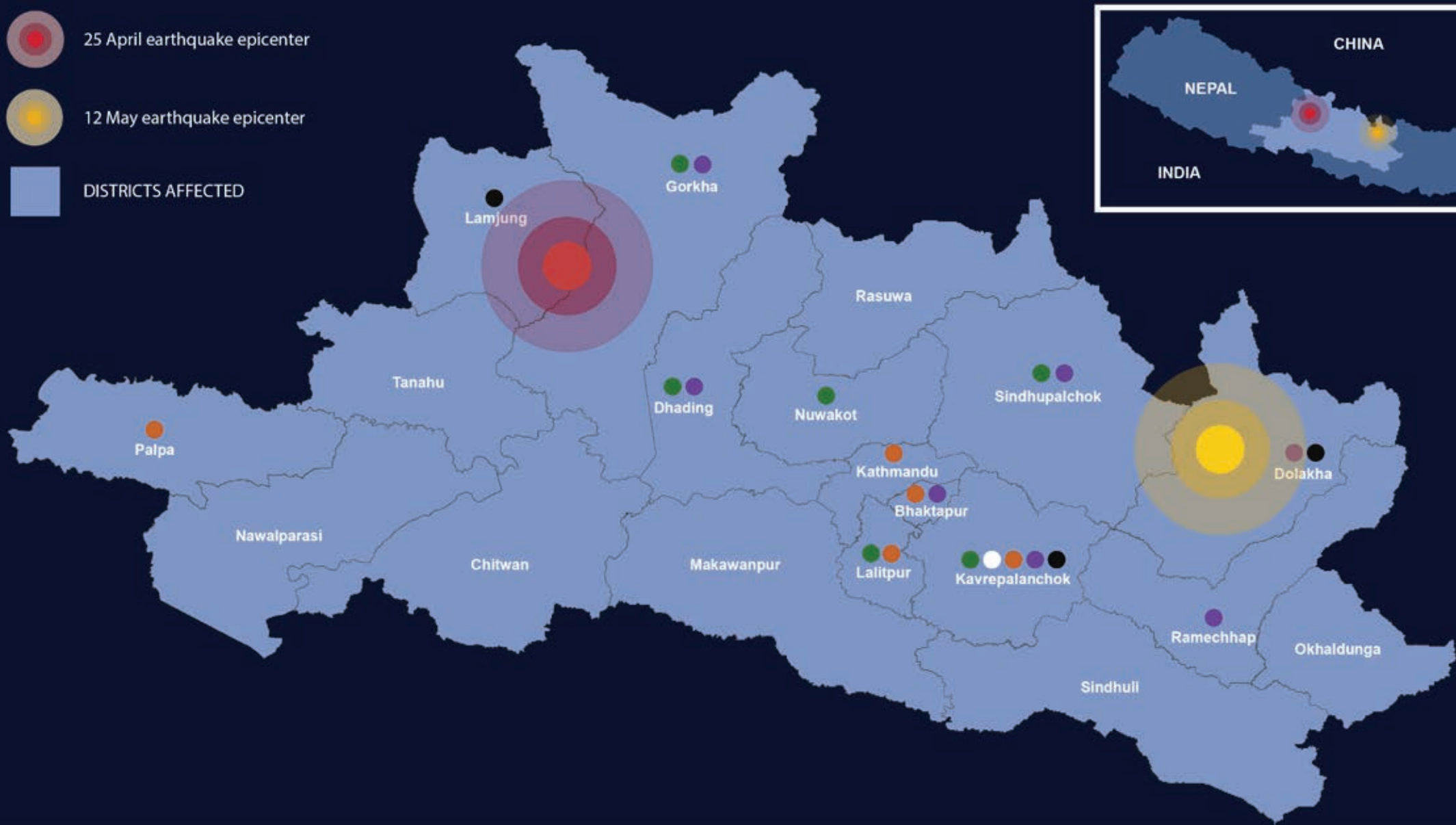
Number of demonstration permanent houses built to date: 1
Number of demonstration houses yet to build: 4
Number of core houses planned for construction: 140
Number of family partners / people that will have a permanent home: 145 / 725



BURNT BRICK MASONRY HOUSE MODEL

1 of 6 house designs made for Nepal





PROGRAM ACTIVITIES



Temporary shelter kit distribution



Rubble removal



Water backpack distribution



Safety assessments of homes



Permanent home construction



Challenges

While Habitat for Humanity Nepal has made progress in the emergency phase since the earthquakes, the country is currently enduring a time of turmoil and instability, with the situation changing daily and unpredictably. As reported by news media, Nepal has been experiencing continual unrest due to the country's announcement of its new constitution in September and blockages at the border with India. Throughout September and into October, Nepal experienced a series of strikes and protests that restricted the movement of goods, people and organizations, including Habitat.

Currently, many vital goods and materials that normally would be coming into the country—including fuel and cooking gas, as well as food and medical supplies – have been halted or slowed to a critical point, indefinitely delaying the delivery of much of the building materials which are needed by Habitat for the construction of permanent housing. The lack of fuel prevents local suppliers from adequately producing goods and delivering them to Habitat work sites, and hinders Habitat's and its partner organizations' capacity to travel to work sites to perform work. In addition, critical machinery such as generators often cannot be operated at work sites due to fuel shortages.

At present, while Nepal's government is going through changes and legal channels are being reformed, the spending of any of the US\$4.1 billion pledged by foreign governments and donor agencies for reconstruction has stagnated.

While the government of Nepal has been working to resolve this crisis, Habitat for Humanity has reduced operations in order to safeguard staff and programs. As soon as security is restored and the situation is stabilized with regard to the fuel crisis and other challenges, reconstruction efforts will resume.

Looking forward

Based on our many years of experience, Habitat for Humanity is engaging our partners and stakeholders to explore all avenues to mitigate the current situation in Nepal. The measures include coordination with the shelter cluster for disaster reconstruction; meeting with government ministers and representatives; supporting other agency efforts to transport fuel; adjusting construction project schedules; constant communications, check-ins and deployment of staff.

We remain committed to the recovery of Nepal and its people from the earthquakes. We will resume construction on the remaining 144 permanent houses in the earthquake-affected village of Pipaltar, Kavre district as soon as current critical conditions have eased, where the supply of construction materials is available and staff safety is not compromised.

At the same time, we are actively pursuing additional measures in support of Nepal's earthquake recovery, including:

- Meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister, Parliament members and other agencies to discuss solutions for recovery and reconstruction efforts.
- Strengthening the capacity to resume recovery and reconstruction efforts with the hiring of more engineers and architects. International Habitat staff will also be deployed to boost the HFH Nepal team's efforts in rebuilding.
- Continuing to work closely with the National Society for Earthquake Technology (NSET), a local nongovernmental organization that aims to



Sangeeta Danuwar in Pipaltar used a Habitat for Humanity shelter kit to build a temporary home.

reduce earthquake risk and increase preparedness in Nepal as well as other earthquake-prone countries through seismic technology and technical training. We are looking to NSET for assistance in developing house designs, to support the technical training curriculum for reconstruction work.

- Participating in the Recovery and Reconstruction Working Group, a shelter cluster formed by NGO partners. Habitat has been appointed to lead the work group's Participatory Approach for Safe Shelter Awareness.
- Habitat for Humanity will continue to look for innovation in housing designs. To this point, Habitat has developed six seismic resilient house designs for Nepal. We are also working to introduce these models to financial institutions as viable housing finance products.
- Exploring partnerships with additional local organizations that could help implement our technical assistance and core house programs in severely affected municipalities.

Family Stories



Ram stands with his wife Apsara and one of their sons Rahul by their temporary shelter in Pipaltar Village, which they built with the help of a temporary shelter kit provided by Habitat for Humanity. The temporary shelter kit contained roofing materials, wiring and steel rebar.

From overcrowded dwelling, to shelter of their own

On 25 April 2015, a strong earthquake sent Ram Danuwar hurrying home from work to check on his family. His initial relief at finding his two-story home intact turned to shock. “I saw that my house was still standing. But after a few seconds, the top floor collapsed.” Thankfully, his wife Apsara, 25, and two sons, Rahul, 8, and Rukesh, 5, were safe.

Ram, a 33-year-old farmer and construction laborer, found out later that only one out of the 93 houses in Pipaltar, his village, survived the disaster with minor damage. The remaining houses were either destroyed or badly damaged by the magnitude-7.8 earthquake.

Like the nearly 390 villagers in Pipaltar, Ram and his family were homeless. “We were sleeping under a tarp, with other families for a month,” he said. “Rainfall was a problem, as was the wind. We didn’t have enough tarps, so sometimes we slept outside when the skies were clear.”

In early May, a Habitat for Humanity team arrived in Pipaltar to assess the shelter needs of affected families. By the end of the month, distributions had begun by Habitat staff and volunteers to eventually bring 92 temporary shelter kits to Pipaltar. Each of the affected families, including Ram’s, received the kits that contained materials such as corrugated iron sheeting for roofing, wiring, and steel rebar.

These materials could later be reused to repair homes or to support permanent home construction. Some families like Ram’s salvaged bricks from the rubble of their collapsed houses for use in their new temporary shelters.

**“This shelter protects us
from rain, storms and wind.”
– Ram Danuwar**

In addition to distributing the temporary shelter kits, Habitat for Humanity also built demonstration temporary shelters to pass on building techniques to local communities.

“I learned the techniques from Habitat for Humanity when they were here, and then I built my own shelter, with the help of my neighbors,” Ram continued. “We were happy to receive the temporary shelter kit. Now we no longer have to live under a tarp. This shelter protects us from rain, storms and wind.”

While the temporary shelters are an improvement over the tarps that families used to live in, they still wish to rebuild. Ram shares their sentiment and hopes to rebuild his home with the help of Habitat for Humanity. In preparation, Ram and his fellow villagers started clearing rubble from the affected areas.

In early July, Habitat for Humanity held a groundbreaking ceremony for the first permanent houses to be built in Pipaltar, and the first demonstration permanent house has been constructed.



Sajan and his wife Niru pose with their baby Samrat and daughter Sonu. Their new shelter gives them better protection from the weather.

Better shelter for the baby

Samrat is a special child to Niru Danuwar. He was in her womb when the 25 April 2015 earthquake struck Nepal which affected her village Pipaltar in Kavrepalanchok district. Niru, 25, and her husband Sajan Danuwar, 27, together with their daughter Sonu, 4, had just stepped out of the house to work in their field when the ground suddenly shook violently. Carrying their daughter, the couple quickly ran to a more open area. They stayed huddled for four to five hours before returning to find their house totally destroyed.

They went back to the open area and stayed in a tent, provided by a relief organization for a month. The organization also provided food and water to affected families such as Niru's. Being heavily pregnant, Niru found it very uncomfortable to live in a tent. In the day, the tent was shared with three other families who were her neighbors. Sajan built a temporary toilet nearby out of salvaged materials.

On 26 May, relief came in the form of temporary shelter kits that Habitat for Humanity Nepal distributed in Pipaltar. Each kit contained items such as

corrugated iron sheeting for roofing, wiring, and steel rebar which enabled the affected families to have a temporary roof over their head. Parts of the temporary shelter can also be re-used in the construction of a permanent house.

A day after receiving the kit, Sajan built a temporary shelter with the help of a neighbor. Niru's family then moved in with a few of their salvaged possessions such as their bed, clothing and a small television set that still worked despite the impact of the earthquake. One of the first things she did was to lay a carpet on the earthen floor and arranged the utensils. Sajan helped by moving their old bed into the shelter.

While the shelter is a temporary structure, it made a world of difference to Niru and her family. "Whenever it rained, I was scared that the tent would fall apart. We have had tough days and sleepless nights."

It was in the temporary shelter that Niru gave birth to her son Samrat two months later with the help of a few women from the community. "If we continued living in a tent, life would be miserable. My infant son might also get sick," Niru said.

"Now that we have a temporary shelter, we feel much more comfortable. I don't fear the rain. This has become a place where I can cook for my family. For my children, they have a better place to play, eat and sleep," she added.

**"For my children, they
have a better place to
play, eat and sleep."
– Niru Danuwar**

Her husband Sajan has resumed working in their own field where they grow maize and local vegetables. With the sale of the crops, he can earn between 4,000 and 5,000 Nepali rupees (about US\$38 and US\$47) a month.

Niru's family is among those families who are looking to build permanent houses with Habitat for Humanity Nepal as part of the earthquake recovery project in Kavre.

Recognition

Habitat for Humanity is very thankful to all donors and partners who supported the earthquake disaster response program in Nepal.

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