

## Earthquake in Nepal – Community Action Nepal’s Appeal

Community Action Nepal (CAN) has been working with remote mountain communities in Nepal for over 20 years – building and running rural health posts (13), schools (8), porter welfare shelters (3) and community projects. CAN is a highly respected NGO and INGO amongst both local Nepali communities and Nepalese Government Agencies.

**The current situation** (check [www.canepal.org.uk](http://www.canepal.org.uk) for more news about CAN’s projects)

Bachan Gyawali, a CAN Trustee, influential businessman and a senior member of the Nepalese community, sent us the following report from Nepal on 28 April 2015 -

“CAN operates in 10 of the country’s 70 districts and all the projects and surrounding communities have been affected. Bachan tells us that damage has been particularly severe in the Gorkha, Langtang, Kathmandu, Sindupalchowk and Helambu areas – all the areas where CAN has most of its 40+ projects. Whole communities have been displaced and many of their homes destroyed by this earthquake.

Major damage has occurred to old houses and monuments in city areas, but damage in the remote areas has been more indiscriminate with between 50 – 90% destruction in rural villages. At present only the city areas are receiving any aid as rural areas are cut off by landslides.”

### Could there be more earthquakes?

Oxford Professor of Geology, Mike Searle, is a world expert on plate tectonics and the geology of the Himalaya. Mike, a long-time supporter of CAN, has informed us that further earthquakes are very likely -

“After a major earthquake like this there are bound to be many aftershocks and they will go on for months. The Andaman – Sumatra earthquake aftershocks continued for more than a year. The immediate two months or so after the quake is the most likely time as the plates readjust. There may have been five metres of motion on the fault below Gorkha, but the fault did not rupture to the surface, the strain is still below and could be released at any time as aftershocks. So it is, therefore, highly likely there could be further loss of life and damage to homes, businesses and infrastructure over the coming months.”

### How CAN will respond and help?

Governments and agencies equipped for disaster relief and management (such as the Red Cross, Oxfam etc) are best placed to handle the immediate relief, rescue and help in Kathmandu.

This, however, is short term help. The role of CAN will be for the long term support, rebuilding and rehabilitation of remote mountain communities. It is able to do this because of the tried and tested ways developed over 20 years of ‘getting things done’ in Nepal. CAN’s office staff in Kathmandu, headed by Murari Gautam, have proved to be second to none in their efficiency and dedication. CAN ensures that all donations go out to the project areas without any deduction for administration costs here and in Nepal, these are covered separately from sales and auctions at lectures and fundraising events held in the UK.

CAN is in the process of assessing the damage to CAN schools, Health Posts, Porter Rescue Shelters and community buildings. CAN is also making provision to cover the immediate needs of the communities where we operate, once we have an accurate overview of the situation. At the moment new information is coming in all the time but we have yet to hear from the communities we serve in the far east and far west. A final word from Bachan, “CAN would not want to allocate most of its resources to the ones who first come to our notice only.”

Long after the initial attention on this tragedy in Nepal wanes **CAN**, with its partners **IPPG**, **Porters Progress UK** and **Himalayan Trust UK** will continue to support those communities that need help most.

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