



International Needs Responds to the Earthquakes in Nepal

The Relief, Recovery and Redevelopment campaign...

As caring people all around the world responded with kindness and generosity to survivors of two earthquakes that claimed the lives of more than 7000 people in Nepal, International Needs Canada launched a campaign to raise \$50,000 to help International Needs Nepal cope with the crisis.

Their relief effort focused on providing relief supplies to people in remote, hard-to-reach villages in the Sindhupalchok area while also addressing significant losses in Kathmandu.

Losses Close to Home

The tragedy struck close to International Needs Nepal. Eleven of the 22 women who were in residence at the Lydia Vocational Training Centre in Kathmandu, when the earthquake struck, lost their homes in rural villages. Some International Needs Nepal staff members—a Community Support Worker and the Sponsorship Coordinator—lost their homes and found emergency shelter in tents. Meanwhile they worked to contact each of the sponsored school children in their care across Nepal to ensure their safety.

International Needs: First Responders in Remote Communities

A few days after the first earthquake, Esther Thapa, Executive Director of International Needs Nepal, travelled by motorbike to assess the needs of survivors around the village of Lamasagu. Esther was the first relief worker to visit the village. Walking past a pile of rubble that had been the local school, Esther shared the sadness of one woman

Continued on next page



Mark Your Calendars!

The annual **Ride for Refuge** has been set for Saturday, October 3rd. Come rain or shine, cold or heat, thousands of Canadians will put on their riding gear and hit the road in a fun, family friendly, fundraising adventure. **An exciting new addition to the ride this year is a 5km walk.** Now those of us who are not comfortable on a bike can join the action by walking 5 km. Whether you're walking or biking, your fundraising dollars will help support International Needs' ongoing Relief, Recovery and Redevelopment efforts in Nepal. More information will follow in our summer edition of **The Link**.

PRAYER CORNER

ITEMS FOR PRAYER

"In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help." Psalm 18:6

Please pray for the people of Nepal. The recent earthquakes have taken thousands of lives and left many injured. Entire villages have been wiped out. A lack of shelter, contaminated water and poor sanitation could lead to outbreaks of cholera, dysentery and other water-borne diseases. Please pray for wisdom for the Government of Nepal, for our International Needs partners, and for all the aid and rescue workers who are helping the country cope with this large-scale tragedy. Pray also for those who have lost loved ones.

ITEMS FOR PRAISE

"Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving." Psalm 95:2

Praise God that our partners in Nepal were able to reach the hard hit area of Lamasagu with 330 large packages of food and basic necessities for each family in the community. This was a great encouragement to the people.



Continued from previous page

who was lifting boulders, one by one, in a heartbreaking attempt to recover the bodies of her family members, all of whom had died. Then Esther recoiled from the stench of a shallow makeshift grave where 15 people were buried. They had died when the church in which they had been worshipping collapsed. Later she met two women who had recently given birth and were desperately seeking to keep their newborns safely sheltered, nourished and healthy.

Delivering Substantive Relief

Four days later, Esther returned, and with the help of International Needs Nepal staff members—accountant Dipendra with his sons Ajay and Sanju, Community Workers Pranish, Deepak, and Ashmita, administrative assistant Ashish and Esther's daughter Sradda—delivered a truckload of food and supplies to sustain 330 families who had been surviving on plastic packets of water and instant noodles. International Needs provided each family with packages containing rice, lentils, pulses and beans, sugar, oil, bathing soap, detergent, tea leaves, turmeric and spices. The two women who had recently given birth received special packages with a mosquito net, mosquito repellent, baby soap, baby lotion, baby powder, reusable diapers, hand sanitizer, mouth wash, oral rehydration drinks, and chicken for nourishment.

"Feeding 330 people for a few weeks is not a lot given the scope of the disaster," Esther said, "But for these people it is significant. I am grateful to work in an organization that inspires me to believe in helping others."

Thank you so much for your hard work and commitment to helping the people of Nepal in their time of need. In the coming days and months ahead, as we rebound from the disaster, we will share more stories of the hope that your generosity has helped us to build and the level of recovery and resilience that your kindness has helped us to achieve.

Continued Need: A Path Towards Recovery and Redevelopment

For the months immediately ahead tents are in especially high demand. With the arrival of the monsoon season, heavy rains will make life difficult for children, the frail and the elderly. But, beyond relief, International Needs Canada is looking toward a recovery strategy for the community. Semi-permanent tin homes would be one way to start rebuilding stability for adults in the community. But perhaps a more lasting contribution towards redevelopment would be rebuilding the primary school in Lamasagu which was reduced to a pile of rubble in the earthquake. This would strengthen the community tremendously by providing educational as well as psycho-social benefits for the children.

"Your generous, wholehearted contributions to the relief effort will make a tangible difference—building hope—to the people in this community, Esther said. "Your continued support is vital to creating opportunities for lasting change and sustainable development."

To donate, please go to our website at www.internationalneeds.ca or fill out the form enclosed, place in the return envelope and mail to the International Needs Canada office in Burlington.



Esther Thapa: **Serving Vulnerable Women and** **Children of Nepal**

A Choice Born of Commitment and Experience

Esther Thapa began the journey to her role as Executive Director of International Needs Nepal on March 16, 1958, the third child in a Hindu family of 4 children. Her father was a carpenter and her mother grew potatoes, corn and other vegetables.

“I was a difficult child,” Esther says. “I was not a good student and I had a bad attitude; I wanted nice things but we were poor.”

In high school, Esther secretly started dating a young man from a lower caste. When her older brother found out, Esther spent 14 days in hospital recovering from the beating he gave her. The romance continued. Esther’s mother sent her to live with her older sister in a distant town. There Esther met two girls her sister had employed to look after her household. They were Hindu untouchables who had converted to Christianity.

One day, as Esther was walking with the girls to the market, they stopped to pick up broken glass that was scattered across the road. When Esther protested this embarrassing display of servitude, the girls answered: “Esther you have shoes on your feet, but many people walk barefooted and they could get hurt.”

That night Esther reflected on the events of the day.

“Those two girls challenged my way of thinking,” Esther says. “I was a middle caste woman with a selfish heart, and these were untouchable girls with hearts of love and compassion. I started going to church with them.”

Esther says she struggled with becoming a Christian because she feared rejection from her family. Eventually her rebellious streak won. Esther enrolled at a Christian college, immersed herself in church activities, met and married her husband Thirta, a church youth leader, in 1984. At first, her family was upset, but soon they all converted. Esther graduated with a degree in Religious Education and ran a private elementary school. In 1998 Esther joined the Board of International Needs Nepal and immersed herself in a variety of humanitarian initiatives. In July 2011 Esther became Executive Director of International Needs Nepal, managing the sponsorship of hundreds of vulnerable school children across Nepal as well as the Lydia Vocational Training Centre for women. Esther and Thirta live in Kathmandu, Nepal.

“My greatest desire is to serve the Lord,” Esther says “by serving the women and children of Nepal with all my heart.”



Empowering **Women** **in Remote** **Villages of** **Nepal**

Manju is a typical Nepalese girl. Actually, for a girl from a lower caste Hindu family, she is luckier than most. Manju’s parents sent her to school until grade 7. Then she had to abandon her studies and help her family cultivate the fields. Through the generosity of our sponsors, Manju was accepted at the Lydia Vocational Training Centre. Today, she is acquiring skills that will improve her life opportunities.

Women in Nepal carry the stigma of being female from birth. They are treated as second class citizens, unworthy of financial investment. Many rural families refuse to spend money educating their daughters and marry them off as teenagers. As a result Nepalese women are vulnerable to abuse, exploitation and trafficking.

Lydia Vocational Training Centre was created to provide a sustainable way for women to overcome this formidable hurdle to their independence and personal empowerment. Since 1997, when Lydia first opened its doors, the institution has accepted two groups of 22 women each year to complete a 5-month training program that includes literacy and numeracy, life skills, health and nutrition. Each woman also graduates with marketable sewing skills and many of them start their own tailoring businesses. Each graduate is given a sewing machine, and in return commits to teaching 5 other women in their communities the skills she has acquired.

The recent earthquakes have delayed, but not deterred the training of the current group of women. International Needs Canada is committed to ensuring that Manju and her classmates return to their communities fully empowered and equipped to provide leadership and help their communities recover from the disaster. Your generous contribution to our \$50,000 Relief, Recovery and Redevelopment campaign will greatly facilitate this effort.

Lydia Vocational Training Centre Paving the Road to Recovery for Women

Faces of the Nepal Earthquake Tragedy

When the earthquake first rocked Nepal on April 25, these 11 students at Lydia Vocational Training Centre, received news that their villages were decimated and some relatives may have died. They travelled home and witnessed the devastation. Today, they have returned to Lydia to continue training as community leaders, providing life skills and coping skills to others. Your generosity will transform their lives and strengthen their communities now more than ever...



JIBITA • DOLKHA DISTRICT (9 HOURS FROM KATHMANDU)

Of the 15 houses in Jibita's neighbourhood, 5, including hers, were completely destroyed. Others were badly cracked. Jibita's 10 family members were saved from the rubble. In the larger community,

12 of 31 houses, the church and hospital were destroyed. Most people are living under tarp, outdoors and sharing sheds with animals.



RAM • MAKAWANPUR DISTRICT

The school, church, hospital and 150 houses in Ram's neighbourhood were destroyed. The treatment for victims was delayed. Blocked roadways prevented delivery of relief supplies. Ram's family is 'safe' but taking shelter in the animal shed.



PIPAALU • CHANKU, DOLKHA DISTRICT

All 250 houses in Pipaalu's immediate neighbourhood were destroyed. There were two deaths and two injuries. Pipaalu lost one cousin. Her immediate family is sheltering under a tarp and in the animal shed, since their house was completely destroyed.

The school, churches and hospital also completely collapsed.



RITA • JHAYAKU, DOLKHA DISTRICT

Forty of the 50 houses in Rita's neighbourhood fell during the first earthquake, killing 5 people. The second quake made the remaining houses uninhabitable. Rita's 9 family members, sheltered under tarp and in animal sheds are 'safe'.



KABITA • MARBU, DOLAKHA DISTRICT

Kabita's house which had been badly cracked in the first quake is now completely destroyed. Her immediate family members are safe, but sheltered only by a tarp.



SUSHMA • DOLAKHA DISTRICT

After the first earthquake, Shushma was travelling back to the Lydia Centre in Kathmandu when a flash flood suddenly blocked the roadway. Shushma and her friends were saved from the floodwaters by the Nepalese army and sent back home. She will be making the return trip to Lydia as soon as she can travel safely.



SUNDARI • PANGURPU, SINDHUPALCHOWK DISTRICT

Within a few days of the first earthquake Sundari's entire village of 200 houses had turned to a pile of dust. Thirty villagers died. Twenty people were injured—five of them fatally—during a church service. Sundari's mother and her pastor were

rescued from the rubble of the church after 2 days. Villagers pitched in to bury dead bodies. Today survivors are living under tarp or in animal sheds.



PRASANSHA • LALITPUR DISTRICT

The 50 houses in Prasansha's neighbourhood, are either collapsed or unfit for habitation. Ten people died and 15 were injured in the first quake, but Prasansha's family members are safe, living like most other survivors under tarp and temporary

sheds made from the rubble of collapsed buildings.



MANJU • MALU, DOLAKHA DISTRICT

Five people died and 2 were injured in Manju's village, but her 7 family members are safe. Most of the houses, the church and hospital in her village are cracked. People cannot stay inside their houses. Some of them have found shelter under tarp. Most

of them are sheltered only by the sunlit sky....



ROSHANI • LAMJUNG DISTRICT

Fifty houses in Roshani's neighbourhood collapsed, leaving two people dead and 1 injured. Roshani and the 9 members of her family were unharmed in the quakes, but landslides and flooding blocked roadways and delayed the relief efforts.



SHUSHMITA • SINDHUPALCHOWK, BHAKTAPUR DISTRICTS

Sixty of the 70 homes in Shushmita's immediate neighbourhood were destroyed. Thirteen villagers died and 10 were injured. All 17 members of Shushmita's family are safe, but because of the extent of damage to their home, they, like most of

the other villagers, are all living under a tarp. The school, health post and churches all collapsed, making relief delivery difficult.