

NEPAL - 1 YEAR ON AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE

Nepal one year on is not so different to how it was this time last year.

Some of the areas in Kathmandu have been cleared and several tourist attractions made secure, but many of the villages not so far outside the city are largely unchanged. Those areas near the epicentre are much as they were one year ago, with little or no evidence of the government using the money they have been given by other countries and corporations to help people rebuild their homes and their lives.



The terrain is still unstable. The first night I was in Nepal (staying in Kathmandu) there was a short 4.5 earth tremor which shook the foundations of the (modern) hotel, causing all occupants to grab their most important belongings and head outside.

We waited for 15-20 minutes but no more tremors came, so we went back to our respective rooms. I did not sleep well that night, but lay there wondering if another bigger tremor might come.

The country is still feeling the affects of the aftershocks from the earthquake, 12-months later.



I spoke with Sushan, who lives in Sokwo, one of the villages about a 1-hour bus ride outside Kathmandu that I visited last year. He said nothing has happened in his village, and he is still living in a temporary corrugated tin house. The local people are doing what they can to rebuild their properties themselves, but no government aid has reached them, and daily conditions are still difficult.



In other areas made more unstable since the earthquake, there have been many landslides after the last monsoon. The villagers, who live on the hillsides, have tried to shore up the banks by netting the areas to protect their properties. They continue to live in temporary accommodation while they rebuild their cracked and damaged houses.

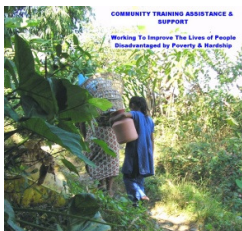


Some while last year after the earthquake, India closed their border posts to Nepal, which resulted in severe petrol shortages over several months. This in turn meant there was a shortage of building materials, fresh food in the shops, and a general hike in prices of all goods!

The ongoing political issues with India (over the new constitution) continue to affect the country. The regular petrol shortages have a deep and adverse affect on Nepal's economy. With no fuel, there is no vehicle movement; with no transport people, especially those in the towns, cannot get to work or do their jobs. For weeks on end sometimes, people sit idle at home with no income, contemplating the increased cost of rice and dhal to feed their families.

How will a country devastated by last year's earthquake ever rebuild itself under these conditions?

We want to do more to help the poor people of this country, as their own government has failed them.



Your continued support and assistance, enables us to change people's lives, and makes all this possible.
As always, thank you.

Michele Spencer (Chairperson)

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