Overview of the Situation:
Four months have passed since two significant earthquakes hit Nepal. Medair and Mission East have been working hard to bring aid to the affected communities in Sindupalchowk District and are now transitioning from Relief to Recovery and Reconstruction. Recovery and Reconstruction will seek to build upon the Relief phase by further reducing morbidity and safeguarding the survival of vulnerable households. Notably, to reach communities who are not accessible by road, we have continued to use innovative aid delivery methods, such as porters and helicopters. But monsoon rains and landslides have affected our distribution schedules. In fact, distributions have also been affected by protests and “bandh” strikes on the streets of Kathmandu and other areas – these events have occurred in relation to various groups putting forward their agenda in the government’s ongoing constitutional drafting.

Distribution Summary:
• As of August 31st, we have reached 8,480 households in Sindhupalchowk District with relief items.
• Distribution of shelter and WASH relief items is nearly complete in the target VDCs with only distribution of blankets remaining for Bhotechaur. Additional blankets have been purchased, as the household numbers for Bhotechaur have been ever-increasing.
• Hygiene Kit distribution is complete in all 8 VDCs. In total, 8,480 Hygiene Kits have been distributed.
• Distribution of Demolition Toolkits is nearly complete. To date, 829 Toolkits have been distributed, and another 213 are planned for distribution in Listikot and Phulpingkatti next week (via helicopter).
• A total of 1,287 solar lamps have been distributed in Gati. Electricity in this VDC has been disrupted since the earthquakes and subsequent landslides.
• Distributions have employed trucks, helicopters and porters to reach the most remote beneficiaries. Notably, porters are individuals mobilised from within their own communities.
WASH Activities:
• Materials for the construction of 3,500 temporary, upgradeable toilets and 1,100 sets of temporary toilet shelters were provided in communities on the basis of sanitation action planning.
• Open defecation has already been eliminated in Sindhukot VDC, and tremendous improvements have been seen in Piskar and Gati VDCs, where open defecation was high after the earthquake but are now also approaching Open Defecation Free (ODF) status.
• Construction of WASH facilities in 43 schools, 2 health posts and 1 VDC office begins this week. Toilets for schools and Temporary Learning Centers will be built, along with provision of hygiene materials. Support for toilets in selected health facilities is planned as well.
• Toilet construction will be complimented by ongoing hygiene promotion in schools, which allow youth to be change-makers in the community, practicing safe hygiene in school and at home.

Transitioning to Recovery:
• Preparatory work is now underway for the upcoming cash-for-work (CfW) project, including location visits to Gati and Listikot. Activities include: discussions with communities to determine needs and priorities, coordination with other agencies implementing similar work, mapping access and market strength, and procurement of additional tools and safety supplies.
• Notably, we are also considering support to earthquake-affected households in the relatively underserved VDCs of Ramechhap and Okhaldunga. If plans move forward, work will begin in November (next phase).
GENERAL UPDATES

Monitoring and Evaluation:
• Completed set-up of disaggregated household level database in 6 out of 8 target VDCs.
• Data collection for the study on post-earthquake situation of people with disabilities that was initiated by our disability inclusion partner, Sindhu improvement Society (SIS), is also completed.

District Level Coordination:
• Our response work has been equally supported and benefitted by a smooth and consistent coordination at the district level with humanitarian actors and local stakeholders. This coordination was initiated by day 3 of the earthquake aftermath, consulting with the Chief District Officer and Local Development Officers on the needs and areas of response.
• Through district level coordination, Mission East and Medair have been able to establish strong coordination and elevate their profile within relevant clusters like Shelter/WASH/Early Recovery and also with the district authorities/agencies such as the District Disaster Relief Committee (DDRC). Coordination has also enabled us to share and learn from other humanitarian actors and resolve issues that have arisen during our response work.
• Mission and Medair East representatives take part in the district level coordination through various meetings on a weekly basis.

Livelihood and Market Assessment
• Mission East’s Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist (together with a Livelihood Consultant) is assessing livelihood needs of earthquake-affected population in the target VDCs of Sindhupalchowk. This assessment will be used for recovery phase planning and is expected to be completed by 15th Sept 2015.
• Katharina Hackstein, Medair Cash Consultant, finalised her report on the market assessment undertaken to determine suitability of cash programming in the easterly VDCs of Sindhupalchowk. The overall findings were that the markets have largely recovered but that many communities and vendors are currently separated due to landslides caused by the earthquake and monsoon rains. Cash programming was deemed a viable response because community needs are quite varied and vendors expect to be able to cope with demand for items soon after the monsoon season.

Shelter Cluster Presentation:
• A presentation on accessible shelter was jointly presented by Medair, Mission East and Handicap International at the Shelter Cluster. This presentation provided ten key criteria for accessible and early recovery shelter as part of the current “build back better” objective.
• The presentation recommends the formation of Technical Working Group to move forward.

Donor Review and Visits:
• Dutch Relief Alliance Peer Review Coordinated by Oxfam on the 20th August: A joint monitoring visit with Oxfam was conducted in Sindhukot and Nawalpur VDCs. This learning opportunity for both Oxfam and Mission East / Medair shed light on the need for decommissioning of certain toilets – pit toilets will be filled, and Mission East / Medair will advise relocating families on the sale closure of the toilets and reuse of materials. Both organisations highlighted the need for sustainable water purification in communities and since the visit both organisations have decided to go ahead with provision of ceramic filters for earthquake affected households.
• **Dutch Relief Alliance Mid-Term Review on 26th August**: The meeting was coordinated and organised by Oxfam in Kathmandu, and was attended by Dutch Relief Alliance (DRA). From Mission East, Hari B. Karki, Emergency Response Program Manager, and Gyan Adhikari, Country Representative, attended the meeting and shared achievements, challenges and lessons learned.

• **EO Metteraad (EOM) field visit and dinner on 26th August**: Representatives of EOM, a Dutch broadcasting station that raised funds for our earthquake relief projects, visited target VDCs with Dr. Sheetal Rana (Mission East) and Monica DeGraaf (Medair). During the visit, VDC beneficiaries expressed the hope that Medair and Mission East would continue to support them in building back their homes. After the visit, EOM said they had a much better impression of the challenges in the field, how the relief items were being used, and what the needs/priorities were among beneficiaries. Notably, James McDowell, Country Director of Medair and Gyan Adhikari, Country Representative of Mission East, took part in dinner meeting with EOM representatives and shared their ideas and plans for the recovery and reconstruction phases.

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**From the Field**

**Rebuilding Hope and Homes in Bhotechaun**

*By Tanja Kisslinger, Asia Regional Communications Officer, Medair*

On 28 August, I walked along a remote road in Bhotechaun VDC with Shovana Shakya, the translator I had brought with me to help find and speak with beneficiaries of our previous distributions in the area. The houses were spread far apart, and we could see both quake-damaged homes and makeshift shelters scattered along the mountainside road. Before long, we spotted Ruku Sapkota walking toward us, alone, and she seemed happy to see us approaching. She smiled, pressed her palms together, and said “Namaste” with an earnest gaze.

Through Shovana, Ruku shared her story and her sadness. She told us that she is a single, 55 year old woman with a daughter in Class 12 (but her daughter doesn't live with her). She also told us that the first (April) earthquake collapsed her house, and she described the disastrous scene with tears in her eyes. Ruku said that she had received two tarpaulins in a Medair / Mission East distribution shortly after the earthquake, and was very grateful. In fact, she was now living in a shelter made of these tarps – it was a lonely existence and she expressed fear and doubt about her future, yet she still felt fortunate to have temporary shelter. Her singular hope for the future is to rebuild her damaged house.

I remember looking into Ruku’s eyes as she spoke to us, and feeling that this simple interaction was an important outcome of our meeting on the road this day. I felt it in her embrace, as we said goodbye, that she was grateful for the chance to be heard, not just the tarps. Overall, Ruku reminded me that our beneficiaries are more than numbers – they are individuals with life stories, losses, hopes, dreams and fears. Although the earthquakes have reduced much of their daily life at this time to a struggle for subsistence, they have determined spirits and they hold the dream to rebuild. They long to rebuild more than damaged houses – they long to rebuild their lives, livelihoods, communities and country.
Beneficiaries in Bhotechaur line up to receive Hygiene Kits on the 28th of August. A Community Volunteer helps to keep the line moving. © Medair / Tanja Kisslinger

An elderly man from Gati VOC smiles after receiving his Demolition Toolkit items, distributed on the 28th of August. These toolkits are distributed one per seven families. © Mission East / Padam Prasad Jamar Kattel

EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

**Newcomers:**
Tanja Kisslinger (Asia Regional Comm's Officer, Medair)
Mimz Dino (Shelter Advisor, Medair)

**Goodbyes:**
Juni Maya Tamang, (Field Assistant, Mission East)
Viren Falcao (Project Coordinator, Medair)
Simon Bird (Shelter Advisor, Medair)

CONTACT

This SitRep will be produced on the first Thursday of each month. The next SitRep will be published on Thursday the **1st of October 2015**. If you have questions about the SitRep, are in need of additional information, or want to add anything for the next SitRep, please contact:

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