Overview of the Situation:
Five 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 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 rain, landslides, protests, and strikes (“bandh”) have continued to affect our movements in/through Kathmandu and surrounding areas this month. In fact, on 20th September, after 7 years of negotiation, Nepal finally promulgated a new constitution. This event was marked by both public jubilation and subsequent strike/social unrest in the Tarai (the southern plains adjoining India). The unrest has occurred in relation to minority groups in the Tarai and the Indian Government being dissatisfied with some of the provisions in the constitution (e.g. delineation of federal units and electoral constituencies). Specifically, an unofficial blockade was imposed on the Indian side of the border, which limits the import of essential goods from India and has caused a nationwide shortage of fuel. The fuel shortage has limited some of our vehicle movements, delayed delivery of items and has obstructed distribution schedules.

Distribution Summary:
• As of September 30th, we have reached 8,480 households in Sindupalchowk District with relief items. We have also completed the construction of 25 latrines for Temporary Learning Centers, VDC offices and health posts (48 latrines in total are planned).
• Distribution of shelter and WASH relief items is nearly complete in the target VDCs with only distribution of blankets remaining for Bhotekot. Unfortunately, the final delivery of blankets was delayed at the Indian border due to Nepal’s current political situation. Moreover, additional blankets have been purchased to meet winterisation needs of VDCs high in the mountains of Phulpingkatti, but these blankets are also still delayed at the Indian border.
• Hygiene Kit distribution is complete in all 8 VDCs. In total, 8,480 Hygiene Kits have been distributed.
Distribution of Demolition Toolkits is complete. In total, 1,142 Toolkits have been distributed. Final distributions (via helicopter) took place in Listikot, Naryansthan and Selangkatti.

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:

- Construction of sanitation facilities is ongoing at Temporary Learning Centers and Health Posts. Accessible toilets along with hand washing stations are being built at 48 institutions in Sindhupalchowk. Mission East / Medair has also provided hygiene materials and toilet cleaning kits at an additional 15 schools in the district.

- In communities with damage to water supply infrastructure, rehabilitation of 29 water supply schemes are ongoing, including the provision of replacement water pipes in seven schools and communities. In some areas, landslides have damaged water pipes, where in others earthquakes have affected the local geology, causing old water sources to go dry, and in other places communities have relocated due to landslide risks. Rehabilitated water supply schemes will improve water access in these communities.

- Recent household surveying conducted by CDECF indicates that open defecation is now at a minimum in most of our working VDCs. Where gaps remain, sanitation promotion activities will be intensified in October to achieve more Open Defecation Free communities.

- Mission East has planned provision of long-term household water treatment and handwashing facilities for over 4000 households in our four targeted eastern VDCs. Handwashing facilities will incorporate bathing spaces especially for women household members. The distribution of these items had been planned to begin by 10th October, however, due to political unrest and the closure of the Nepal border with India, household water filters and other items have not been received.
Cash-for-Work Activities:
• In total, 2,086 community members from the 4 eastern VDCs have signed up as Cash-for-Work (CfW) laborers. This is broken down as follows: Gati = 791; Listikot = 586; Phulpingkatti = 227; Piskar = 482.
• 592 of those registered as CfW laborers are “skilled”, which means they have practical experience with construction, engineering or demolition. DWR is providing additional training and experience to some of these skilled laborers in order to build local capacity for further demolitions.
• CfW demolition started the middle of September and is now ongoing in the four planned VDCs (Gati, Listikot, Phulpingkatti and Piskar).
• Disaster Waste Recovery (DWR) is managing the technical demolitions and has been safely demolishing an average of 4 to 6 buildings (mostly homes) each day. CDECf follows behind each demolition with teams of community CfW laborers to clear the rubble from each site.
• Demolition decisions are community led and priority is given to households of the more vulnerable and buildings that are public hazards.
• Notably, VDC communities are now using the demolition toolkits that we have provided, and our CfW workers are also given additional safety gear (e.g. helmets, safety glasses).

Shelter Activities:
• A National Planning Commission Workshop on Rural Housing took place on September 13th, which invited select partners to comment technically on housing standards and design, as well as social aspects of housing.
• A Shelter Cluster Recovery and Reconstruction Working Group (SCRRWG) was launched on the September 10th. A follow-up meeting was held on September 25th to draft a 6-month plan and to identify resource persons and organisations.
• The SCRRWG released an FAQ document to give clarity on the roles and plans of the government in recovery and reconstruction.
• Medair Shelter Advisor, Mimz Diño, visited Listikot VDC mid-month to better understand the situation in the community. The visit provided some understanding of community dynamics and shelter typologies and capacities relate to community needs and government plans.
• Medair Shelter Advisor, Mimz Diño, met with an Engineer from the Dept. of Education, Engineering division to request information on school designs for our proposed school infrastructure construction. A set of construction drawings for a 2-room school structure was received on October 2nd.

GENERAL UPDATES

Monitoring and Evaluation:
• Data collection for post distribution monitoring from all eight working VDCs is complete. Data collection included a total of 344 household interviews, 87 key informant interviews, and 6 focus group discussions. Analysis of the data collected is underway and will be completed by end of October.
• Mission East / Medair and partner CDECf were joined by members of the WASH Cluster for a joint-monitoring visit to Sindhukot VDC this month. The team monitored the sanitation condition and usage of emergency toilets, finding no open defecation in the community. Mission East / Medair were encouraged to continue to support Sindhupalchowk in WASH recovery and reconstruction.

Beneficiary Feedback System:
• During distributions, we have made Complaint Hearing Desks available in the distribution locations. These desks have received and recorded a number of complaints, all of which have been addressed by the Relief Management Committee on site.
• We also have a Post-Distribution Monitoring in practice, through which we have learnt that beneficiaries have little knowledge about how to provide feedback / ask questions after distribution. Usually, in cases of post-distribution complaints, they go to the VDC committee and if VDC committee members are not able to solve the
issue, they give the phone numbers of our field staff directly. In an effort to provide a more sustainable postdistribution feedback mechanism, we have now established a Toll-Free Beneficiary Feedback telephone number.

- As of mid-September, we have an active Toll-Free Beneficiary Feedback telephone number (1660-01-16606). This number is strictly for the collection of feedback from beneficiaries of the Mission East / Medair Earthquake Emergency Response and there is no cost to the caller, whether he/she calls from a landline or cell phone.
- Mission East has arranged a Receptionist to be available to answer and record all incoming calls on this Toll-Free number. The Receptionist has been trained to ensure she is able to action each incoming call, and direct it to the proper Mission East / Medair representative. The system ensures that each caller receives a response within a reasonable timeframe.
- 160 posters were designed and printed this month for publicizing the new Toll-Free number in the VDCs. To date, 24 posters have been posted in Listikot, Gati and Phulpingkatti.

Project Review and Planning Meeting:
- An Emergency Response Project Review and Planning Meeting was held in Dhulikhel on the 1st and 2nd of September. Partners shared the achievements and progress of the project and jointly prepared a plan of action for the remaining project period. Together, the meeting was participated by 21 individuals representing all 5 project partners.

Livelihood Needs Assessment:
- In September, Mission East completed Livelihood Needs Assessment of earthquake-affected populations in the target VDCs of Sindupulchowk. This study was based on information collected through fieldwork (Piskar, Gati and Sinduhkot VDCs) and consultations with relevant stakeholders at the district level.
- Major findings show that the impacts of the earthquakes on livelihood include loss of crop storage space, loss of livestock, and disruption of agricultural activities – all of which contribute to continually increasing vulnerability.

Disability Inclusion in WASH activities:
- Sindhu Improvement Society (SIS), our disability inclusion partner, have successfully completed the distribution of 26 commode chairs, 13 pairs of crutches, 6 wheelchairs and 6 white canes in Bhotechaour, Haibung, Thakani and Sinduhkot VDCs. The target beneficiaries were identified based on the need assessment undertaken in respected VDCs.

Field Assessment:
- Mission East conducted a 4 day assessment visit of Okhaldhunga and Ramechhap districts to identify ongoing support from various agencies, as well as existing gaps in service, with particular focus on WASH needs of the EQ affected population.
- The team conducted series of meeting with Chief District Officer (CDO), Local Development Officer (LDO) and representatives of NGOs implementing emergency WASH projects in Okhaldhunga district.
- Likewise, in Ramechhap, the team conducted joint meetings with WASH partners and District Water and Sanitation Office (DWSO). A separate meeting was also undertaken with the Assistant Chief District Officer and representative of District Development Committee.
- The assessment team provisionally identified 3 VDCs of Ramechhap – namely, Himanga, Saipu and Bujulikot – for the recovery phase. In Okhaldhunga district, the proposed VDCs run along the Likhu River (which is adjacent to the proposed VDCs of Ramechhap). Both district authorities were enthusiastic with our finding and proposal in terms of target VDCs and type of intervention.
**From the Field**

*From the Field*

A volunteer showing how to fit the distributed sanitation material in Thakani VDC. © Mission East

Toilet construction site at Bhairav Kunda Primary School, Listikot VDC with completed toilet pits. © Mission East

Gita Subedi (CDEC F Supervisor in Gati VDC) works with a Red Rose CPS tablet. The tablets are used to register Cash-for-Work laborers, to record their daily attendance, and also to take before/after pictures of each demolition site. © Medair / Tanja Kisslinger

“Until today, NGOs only arrived with male staff. But now I have been able to share and it gives me hope. You can see the women around us are very interested. We don’t get the chance to speak up very much. This is special.” (Listikot beneficiary) © Medair / Tanja Kisslinger

**EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM**

*Goodbyes:*
Gyan Bahadur Adhikari, Country Representative, Mission East
Sarika Amatya, Admin & Finance Manager, Mission East

*Newcomers:*
Mags Bird, Country Representative, Mission East
Dambar Singh Gurung, Program Manager, Medair
Prasun Singh, Communications Officer, Medair
Purna Bahadur Gandhari, Finance Officer, Mission East
Mina Bharati, Program Assistant, Gender Inclusion, Mission East

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CONTACT

This SitRep will be produced on the first Thursday of each month. The next SitRep will be published on Thursday, 5 November 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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