

# 1 YEAR ON

Operational update on  
disaster response programs in Nepal  
following the 2015 earthquakes



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One year has passed since a devastating magnitude-7.8 earthquake struck Nepal on 25 April 2015, with the epicenter about 80 kilometers northwest of the capital, Kathmandu. This was the worst disaster to hit Nepal in decades. Only 17 days later a second earthquake of magnitude 7.4 hit near Mount Everest, taking more lives and destroying more homes. According to government estimates, the earthquakes left over 750,000 houses and buildings destroyed or damaged and caused over 8,790 deaths. It is estimated that the earthquakes affected the lives of approximately eight million people, constituting almost one-third of the population of Nepal.

With the situation dire, the Nepal government declared a state of emergency, and appealed for international aid. Along with other agencies, Habitat for Humanity answered the call to assist the people of Nepal. During the emergency phase, Habitat distributed 5,142 temporary shelter kits to families whose homes were destroyed or left uninhabitable. Habitat volunteers removed 650 tons of earthquake rubble, and distributed 20,000 water backpacks to families in earthquake-affected areas.

As the emergency phase ended, Habitat's programs shifted into reconstruction. Engineers completed safety assessments on 16,244 earthquake-damaged homes. Initial construction began on permanent homes in the community in Kavre district. As months passed, winter brought the threat of cold weather exposure, and Habitat distributed 2,424 winterization kits to families at risk to the elements. In addition, 32 trainers and 632 people in affected communities received instruction on the Participatory Approach for Safe Shelter Awareness.

Overall in the first year since the earthquakes, Habitat for Humanity provided assistance to more than 43,700 families through various disaster response programs.

As the construction on houses began, the security and economic situation in Nepal took a difficult turn. Civil unrest and blockades created access problems, closing off supplies of fuel and building materials. As a result, construction on permanent housing and other programs was delayed, and then had to be suspended for several months.

Gradually the demonstrations and blockades began to subside in February of 2016. Businesses reopened, transport resumed, and supplies of fuel and construction materials were once again brought into the country. As the situation stabilized, all of Habitat's programs resumed. With these improvements, Habitat's Global Village volunteers have since returned to Nepal, and housing construction has been restarted.

Looking ahead, Habitat anticipates the completion of construction on 87 houses by March 2017, and has finalized the organization's new "Build Nepal" strategy. The vital sectors Habitat plans to support include: Social Mobilization (empowering communities to join and rebuild), Technical Assistance (training to provide improved construction skills for safer reconstruction), Tiered Assistance (providing vulnerable households non-financial support for income-generating activities so that they can build their own capacity) and Market Development (improving housing value through access to better construction materials and labor). These four pillars will uphold an overarching participatory approach, and put households and communities in charge of rebuilding their own homes.

The overall "Build Nepal" strategy aims for a long-term, post-earthquake recovery program of five years. Habitat for Humanity hopes to directly support more than 10,000 severely affected families in 15 communities or Village Development Committees with an estimated project implementation cost of US\$ 15 million. However, our current secured funding of US\$ 3.375 million allows only for a two-year project covering approximately 4,000 families in five communities in Kavre and Nuwakot. We need your financial support to make the full scope of "Build Nepal" a reality.

**On this page:**  
*Women in Nuwakot walk home after receiving winterization kits from Habitat for Humanity, to protect against cold weather.*

**On the cover:**  
*Ratnadebi Shakya sits in a temporary shelter obtained from Habitat for Humanity in the Lalitpur Bungamati community of Kathmandu.*



# PROGRESS TO DATE

## Temporary shelter kits

Number of temporary shelter kits distributed: 5,142  
Distributions took place in: Thulo Dhading, Pedku, Jethal and Sunkhani (Sindhupalchowk district); Paanchkhal, Kashikhanda and Lamidanda (Kavrepalanchok district), Chapagaon and Godam Chaur (Lalitpur district), Dhunwakot (Dhading district), Gorkha district, Bidur municipality (Nuwakot district)  
Number of demonstration temporary shelters built: 21  
Number of families / people supported: 5,065 / 25,325  
Number of volunteers involved: 142

## Rubble removal

Amount of rubble removed: 650 tons  
Locations: Harisiddhi, Bungmati and Khokana (Lalitpur district); Pipaltar (Kavrepalanchok district); Rampur (Palpa district); Sankhu (Kathmandu district), Bhaktapur district  
Number of families/people supported: 126 / 630  
Number of volunteers involved in rubble removal to date: 637

## Water backpacks

Number of water backpacks distributed: 20,000  
Distributions took place in: Gorkha, Dolakha, Sindhupalchowk, Ramechhap, Kavrepalanchok, Bhaktapur and Dhading  
Number of families / people supported: 20,000 / 100,000  
Number of volunteers involved: 64

## Safety assessment project

Number of houses assessed: 16,244  
Districts where houses were assessed: Kavrepalanchok, Dolakha, Lamjung  
Number of families / people supported: 16,244 / 81,220  
Number of surveyors / engineers trained: 60

## Permanent home construction

Number of demonstration permanent houses built to date: 1  
Number of permanent houses under construction: 22  
Number of remaining permanent houses to be built: 64  
Number of families / people supported: 87 / 423

## Winterization Kits

Number of winterization kits distributed: 2,424  
Distribution sites in Nuwakot District: Tupche, Salme, Likhu, and Ghyangfedi  
Number of families / people supported: 2,424 / 12,120  
Number of volunteers involved: 500

## Build Nepal

**Training for Participatory Approach for Safe Shelter Awareness**  
Districts where PASSA was implemented: Gorkha, Kavrepalanchok, Dhading  
Number of people that received instruction to be trainers: 116  
Number of people who participated in the PASSA process: 632





# BUILD NEPAL STRATEGY

## Four pillars of support

Social Mobilization, Technical Assistance, Tiered Assistance, and Market Development

## Project locations

Kavre (Panchkhal), and Nuwakot (Bhalche, Kaule, Salme, Tupche)

## Number of families / people to be served

4,200 / 22,500



### SOCIAL MOBILIZATION

Engage families and entire communities in the Participatory Approach for Safe Shelter Awareness to empower them to make informed choices on house construction, water, sanitation and other shared community resources. Participation is critical to successfully implement a tiered service model program in a community.



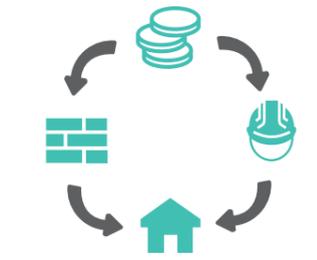
### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Non-financial services and products that will enable families to make improvements to their houses. Delivered through the set-up of Housing Support Services Centers manned by cadre of technical trained staff and social mobilizers to support community members in the collaborative, owner-driven reconstruction efforts.



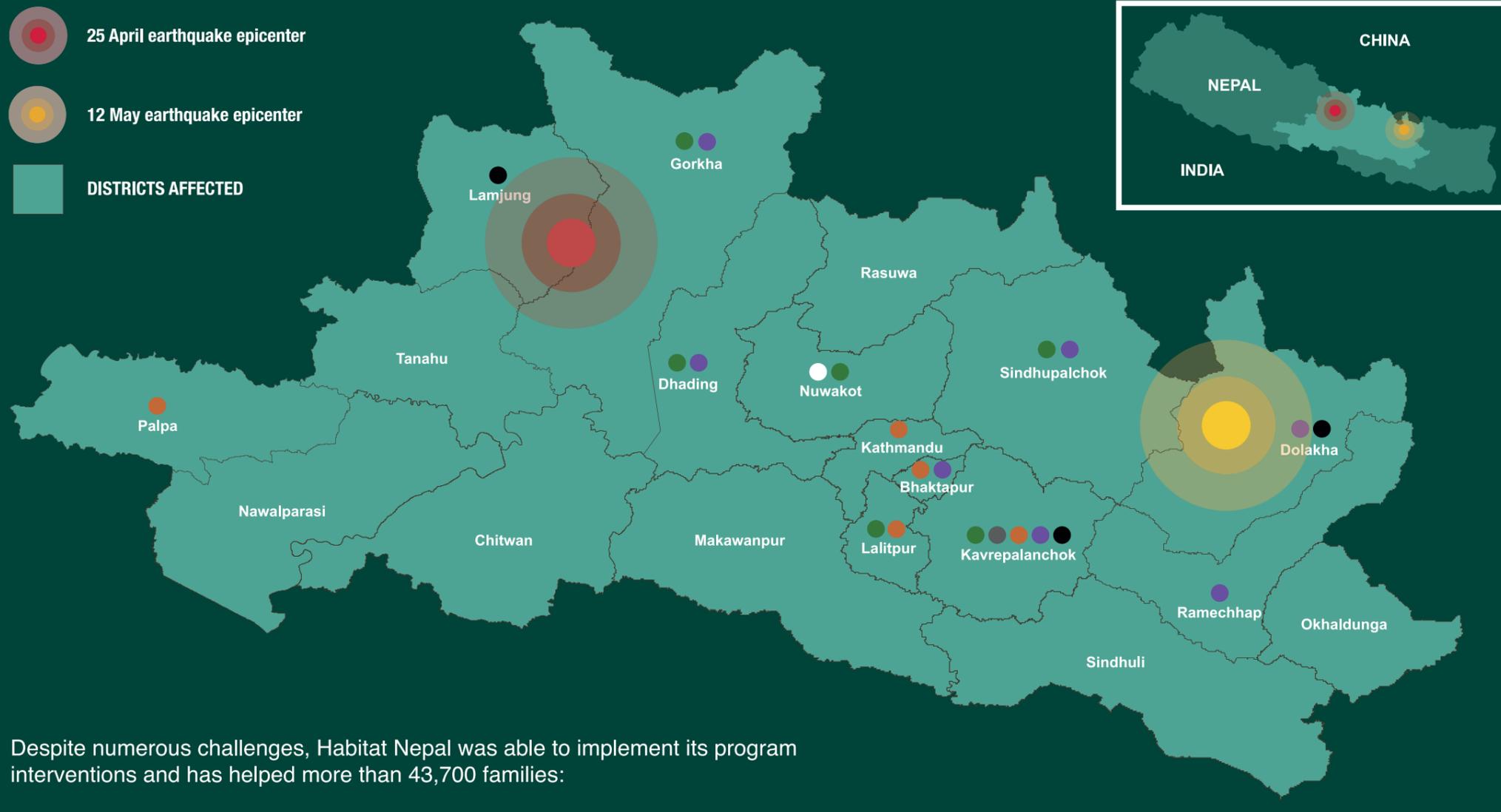
### TIERED ASSISTANCE

Give the most vulnerable households the non-financial support they need to begin participating in income-generating activities so they can build their capacity. Besides livelihood opportunities, other non-financial support can be provided to families like Goods-in-Kind (e.g. construction materials, tools, and livelihood assets).



### MARKET DEVELOPMENT

A market survey in disaster-affected areas is carried out to better understand the ability of households to access safe shelter, building materials, construction labor, and other service providers. A value chain analysis is also being conducted on the construction industry to address gaps to improve access to affordable housing.



Despite numerous challenges, Habitat Nepal was able to implement its program interventions and has helped more than 43,700 families:



# PROGRAM ACTIVITIES





# FAMILY STORIES

*Rojan and his mother Samjhana survived the earthquake; they later moved into a temporary shelter obtained from Habitat for Humanity.*

## From disaster, to shelter, to rebuilding

On April 25, Samjhana was just outside her mother's house in Sindhupalchwok helping her wash clothes. Samjhana's 22-month-old son Rojan was sleeping inside the home. Suddenly, the women felt the ground shake under their feet. "My mother grabbed my arm and pulled me away from the house," Samjhana said. "I saw the roof falling down." Then she panicked. "I remembered my son was sleeping inside. I cried for help."

Neighbors rushed over. They heard Rojan's sharp, unmistakable cries, and found him lying on the floor, alone and terrified, but alive. Gingerly, Rojan was picked up and carried out of the rubble and placed into his mother's arms.

Rojan was one of the more fortunate children to survive the earthquake, emerging unscathed with only a few scrapes and bruises. For the next three days, Samjhana stayed in a tent with her parents and son, eating only what food emergency aid could provide. When she returned to the home she shared with her in-laws in Kavre district, Samjhana was overcome with sadness. Their home had been severely damaged and her family was now living in a makeshift tent.

Samjhana's family is just one of thousands who received a temporary shelter kit from Habitat for Humanity Nepal later that June. With her relatives help, Samjhana used the kit to build a temporary shelter, and she immediately moved in with her family.

Since her husband works overseas, Samjhana is solely responsible for caring for their family. "It was never easy to live in a temporary shelter," she said. "In winter, we were battling the bitter cold. Now that summer is approaching, we fear the snakes." But working with Habitat Nepal and local masons, Samjhana is now building a two-room brick and cement house.

"Home is a place where family can rest, and children can grow up well," Samjhana said, smiling. "Now that I see my new house being constructed, I feel like I have found a place to proudly call home."

## The first female mason in her community

Sharada Danuwar is 22 years old, and like nearly everyone else in her community, she lost her family home when the quakes hit last spring. Since then, she and her extended family of eight have been living in temporary shelter they built with materials from Habitat for Humanity. And, like others in her community, Sharada is attempting to turn loss into gain.

Informal on-the-job mason training is a component of Habitat's village reconstruction project. As Habitat for Humanity has families participate in the construction of their homes as partners, Sharada decided that she wants to learn to be a mason.

"I like to learn, and want to be a skilled mason," said Sharada. "I want to prove to myself that I can do everything that the boys can do, and be an inspirational woman to my village."

Up to this point, Sharada has learned the how-tos of mixing mortar, brick laying, leveling and measuring excavation depths. While she is playing a crucial role in rebuilding her own village, the reconstruction process has provided her with an opportunity that would have otherwise been difficult to access. Admittedly, there is a glass ceiling in Nepal, but she is determined to break through. If she sticks with it, Sharada will be the first female mason from her community in Kavre, ever.

"I feel very thankful to Habitat for Humanity for providing me with the opportunity," said Sharada.



*Sharada Danuwar is pleased to be learning masonry in her community in Kavre.*

**"I feel very thankful to Habitat for Humanity for providing me with the opportunity."**

**-Sharada Danuwar**

# CHALLENGES AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Days after the first devastating earthquake hit Nepal, Habitat for Humanity responded and began relief programs that eventually supported more than 43,700 families. Just three months after the devastating earthquakes, Nepal faced additional challenges, including civil unrest, a fuel blockade, and an overall scarcity of supplies. These factors put tremendous pressure on the country's political and economic activities and severely delayed the reconstruction efforts of not just the international aid agencies, but local NGOs as well. These challenges hampered the reconstruction projects of Habitat for Humanity particularly on house construction and technical assistance.

In 2016 we have seen positive developments, including the reconstitution of the National Reconstruction Authority. During the last week of February the long expected Government of Nepal Earthquake Housing Program was launched. However, the NRA also halted new house construction programs until: 1) the eligibility criteria for the reconstruction grant is finalized, 2) the reassessment survey in 11 of the 14 most affected districts is completed, and 3) the enrollment of affected families for the grant disbursement can commence.

The NRA Earthquake Housing Program reconstruction strategy calls for organizations to undertake social mobilization by organizing local communities to rebuild; provide technical assistance, including the establishment of housing support service centers to advise families; provide vocational training for construction workers; and to construct model houses if they are part of the vocational training and/or the development of livelihood projects.

To align fully with the NRA Earthquake Housing Program, Habitat for Humanity's Build Nepal reconstruction program was revised. Habitat will focus on self-reliance, working holistically with the government, whole communities and families to plan and rebuild strong, safe, and decent homes using proper house design and safe construction techniques. Habitat will introduce "build back safer" techniques through community participation, providing technical assistance with housing design, until houses are completed.

*Habitat volunteers move bricks in Kavrepalanchok, a district hit hard by the earthquakes.*

# WAY FORWARD

Habitat for Humanity is now shifting its focus toward promoting permanent shelter solutions to help Nepali families build back safer homes and increase their resilience to future disasters. Working with local implementation partners, Habitat for Humanity will apply an owner-driven reconstruction methodology through four key areas or pillars of support: social mobilization, technical assistance, tiered assistance and market development. These four pillars will uphold an overarching participatory approach putting households and communities in charge of rebuilding their own homes by having access to quality materials, improved technical construction knowledge, and the site supervision support that they need to build back safer homes.

Technical assistance will be provided through the set-up of local Housing Support Service Centers. Each center, located within the community, will provide non-financial services and products that will enable a household to make improvements to their house on their own. The HSSC will be operated with the leadership of the partner project manager with a cadre of local technical trained staff and social mobilizers to support community members in the collaborative, owner-driven reconstruction efforts.

Pending government approval, the Build Nepal program will be implemented in Kavrepalanchok (Kavre) and Nuwakot, two of the 14 most earthquake-affected districts. More districts will be served once additional funding is secured. Potential future districts are Sindhupalchok and Lalitpur, where Habitat earlier distributed temporary shelter kits.

Through the Build Nepal program, Habitat for Humanity will:

- Increase disaster resilience by empowering communities through participatory methods.
- Provide non-financial technical support through Housing Support Services and increase local knowledge of build back safer methodologies, enabling communities to self-recover.
- Facilitate self-recovery of earthquake-affected households through income-generating activities so that they may build their own capacity through tiered support for the most vulnerable, as per the vulnerability index set forth in government guidelines.
- Address weaknesses in the housing value chain by strengthening access to quality construction materials and labor.

*Local women and Habitat volunteers worked together in Kavrepalanchok district for a "Women Build" event.*



# RECOGNITION

Habitat for Humanity is very thankful to all donors and partners who supported the earthquake disaster response program in Nepal.

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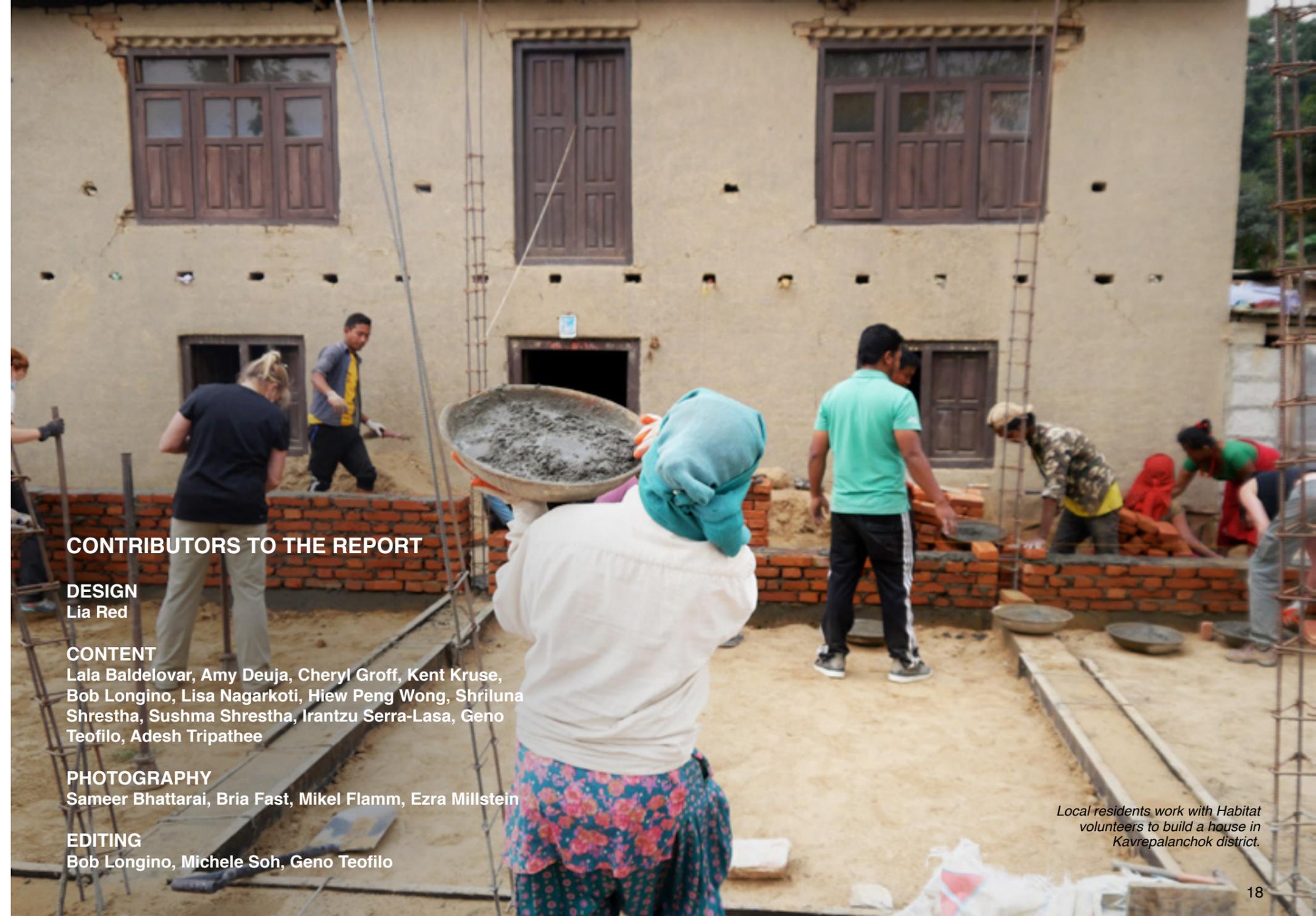
Special thanks to the individual donors who have contributed to the Nepal disaster response program.

# CALL FOR SUPPORT

The overall “Build Nepal” strategy aims for a long-term, five-year post-earthquake recovery program. Habitat for Humanity hopes to directly support more than 10,000 severely affected families in 15 communities or Village Development Committees with an estimated project implementation cost of US\$ 15 million. However, our current secured funding of US\$ 3.375 million allows only for a two-year project covering approximately 4,000 families in five communities in Kavre and Nuwakot.

We need the financial support of current donors and like-minded individuals and organizations to achieve the overall objectives of our Build Nepal Disaster Risk Reduction Response Plan.

[habitat.org/donate/nepal](https://www.habitat.org/donate/nepal)



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*Local residents work with Habitat volunteers to build a house in Kavrepalanchok district.*

Published by



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