



Relief and Restoration in Post-Earthquake Nepal

A report on the partnership among Vision Network Nepal, Reconciled World
and the Disciple Nations Alliance

July 23, 2015



The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.
John 1:5

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The Earthquakes

On April 25, 2015, a 7.9-magnitude earthquake struck near Kathmandu and Pokhara. Several aftershocks were reported in the region, rattling communities about every 15-20 minutes, day and night, with one aftershock reaching a magnitude of 6.7 on April 26 and another on May 12 of magnitude 7.3. This was the worst natural disaster to hit Nepal since a quake in 1934.

More than 8,800 people were killed, and more than 23,000 were injured. Hundreds of thousands of people were made homeless with entire villages flattened across many districts of the country.

In the villages where Vision Network Nepal (VNN) is working, all of the homes are uninhabitable. Those still standing are used only for cooking or storage, but their instability requires the owners to sleep every night outside.



Center of the earthquake (Source: Channel News Asia)

As the local pastor was getting ready to deliver his sermon, people saw dust and mud crumbs falling from the ceiling, followed by a fierce shaking. They started to leave the church building.



Still it was too late, the building collapsed, and two people were trapped inside.

Thanks to the quick response of people, they were able to rescue them right away.

- Report from Nam Ho (left), staff member of Reconciled World, as he visited the village of Belani

The relief effort

Challenges to getting help

Even months later, international relief efforts are just scratching the surface of meeting the enormous needs in Nepal. Steep mountains and narrow roads have drastically slowed rescue and relief efforts, and some people in affected areas are still awaiting help.

With hundreds of thousands of people in desperate need, a shortage of supplies and workers is almost inevitable, and this is compounded by the Nepalese government's discrimination in providing help to those who need it. Whole villages have been passed over by the government and the international aid agencies it instructs because they support an opposing political party or are from a low caste.

In their desperation, some of these villagers have blocked supply vehicles passing by, robbing them in an attempt to get tarps to cover their heads at night and during the rain.



Many people in remote areas have received no help from the government or aid agencies



Relief efforts have been slowed by narrow roads



*Neighbors found Sarswoti (left) trapped inside her home with her buffalo. The only thing she remembers is that she was so scared and thought that she would die. Two months later, she still suffers back pain. Sarswoti lives alone; her husband left her 16 years ago for another woman, and her two grown daughters rarely visit. She survives by selling milk from her one buffalo and leftover maize from her small field. After the earthquake, a Christian from Sarswoti's village approached VNN in Kathmandu to see if they could bring help because no one else had. Due to the difficulty in accessing her village, VNN could bring only a few basic survival supplies. **Everyone in the village knew of Sarswoti's need and insisted she receive help first.** She was given three sacks of rice, a mosquito net and four sheets of tin. To her surprise, her husband returned for a few days to help her rebuild her house along with help from others from the village. She is very happy and appreciates the help from VNN, though she worries about the future because she was unable to plant her maize at the right time due to the disaster. Her harvest this year will be very small.*

First responders: Local Nepalese churches

Praise God that different networks of churches around Nepal responded promptly and are sharing what they have to ease the pain of their fellow countrymen. They have raised funds locally and sent rescue teams to help in remote areas. VNN is one such network that has



VNN's program coordinator (above, in white and blue checkered shirt) prays for one of the communities his teams are serving--a mostly Hindu community.

mobilized local churches to bring relief and rescue very early in the disaster.

Without considering people's religion, political affiliation, caste or other social identifier, these churches provided emergency supplies such as food, water, sleeping mats, blankets and tarps to meet the immediate needs of the victims.

Above all, they have been able to pray with people. In the midst of loss and trauma, people have felt the love of Jesus through his people.



Christians from undamaged areas of Nepal are giving generously to support their fellow countrymen.

At least ₹162,172 NPR (about \$1,600 USD) has been sent from Nepalese churches to VNN.

The offering shown above took place in a church in the far western part of the country.

Collaborating with local churches, the local government and international volunteers, VNN was able to distribute the lifesaving supplies detailed below in the hours following the first quake.

In some cases, they were the first and only people to bring help to survivors, traveling very long distances to reach desperate people across the nation.



240 25-kg bags of rice



50 blankets



5 bags each of salt and sugar



50 boxes of noodles



25 packs of cooking oil



5 bags of soy beans



50 tents



100 packs of drinking water



60 bundles of tin sheets (enough for 139 families to build temporary homes)

Only about 1-3 percent of Nepalese claim to follow Christ and, in some places, they suffer for their faith. In one community in the Sindhupalchok district, before the earthquakes, Christian pastors were beaten and church members were forced to dig up and relocate their deceased loved ones only days after burial.

This community is one place where VNN has focused its relief efforts, providing tin sheets and working collaboratively with the local church and other community members to help those most in need.

Now, in the same community, having received so much help from the local church, non-Christians are providing wood to rebuild the collapsed church building and are giving burial land to church members.



This woman lost her home but received a new one thanks to VNN, the local church and community members working together.

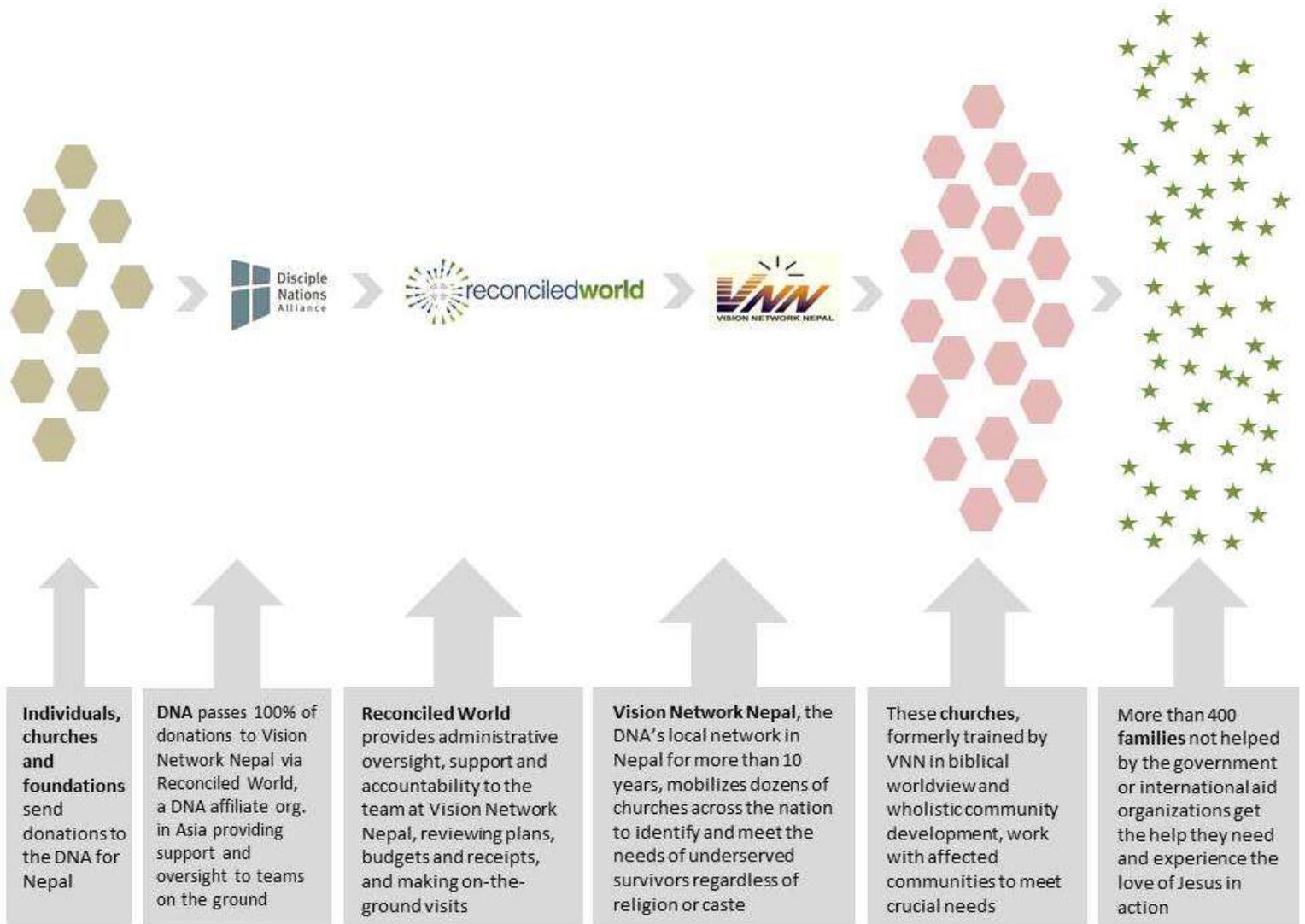
“Now, with so much of our help through the local churches, their thinking toward the church has been changed,” says VNN’s program coordinator.

“We were having very good relationship with the community, helping them with the relief and meeting them, and now they are very much thankful to the churches.”



Church and community members formerly at odds are standing together during this tough time.

The DNA's partners: Vision Network Nepal and Reconciled World



As of July 14, 2015, the DNA has received \$64,975.50 from 42 donors in five countries. It has been our joy to support God's people in Nepal bringing restoration, healing and blessing to their broken communities, and we will continue to walk with them in the years to come as homes are rebuilt and villages reestablished.

To learn more about Reconciled World, visit reconciledworld.org.

To learn more about Vision Network Nepal, email info@disciplenations.org.

The rebuilding effort

Barriers to rebuilding

Most people in affected areas are still living in temporary shelters made of tarps or whatever material they can scavenge because their houses are either completely collapsed or too dangerous to stay inside due to cracks.

They are prevented by the Nepalese government from building permanent new houses until new laws are passed that standardize how houses are built—a process expected to take a very long time.



Meanwhile, for those whose damaged houses still stand, they can use the old house during the day for cooking or storage, but they sleep outside at night to avoid being crushed by falling pieces.



In villages where there is space to build a small temporary shelter next to one's damaged home, people are scavenging for reusable items like electrical wires, water pipes and scrap wood. But some villages had almost 100 percent of their houses destroyed, requiring residents to move to new land and start all over with nothing: no house, no water, no electricity. For these people, life is much more challenging.

Directly from our partners on the ground at VNN:

“Our desire is not just to give material goods to people and leave but to build relationship with people to have a long-term impact even after we finish our relief effort.



Belani is one community passed over by the government because the people who live there are from the outcast, "untouchable" Dalit caste. This is one of four areas where VNN is focusing its efforts. In this photo, VNN's program coordinator is making animal voices for the children to show that he is the same as they are.

“The government requires all relief efforts to go through the district headquarters or have special permission from them but, often, the relief goods end up in the hands of their favorite people. We wanted to make sure that our help made it to people in real need and was used to actually rebuild houses.

“Local churches play an important role in this process; they initiate and work with community leaders

to distribute evenly and make plans so that everyone works together to achieve the common goal.

“Even though the resources are from outside, the majority of the work is done by the local community and so the district government has no reason to make trouble.”



Community and church members work together to rebuild homes.

Four villages of focus

“We chose to focus on rebuilding houses because the tarpaulins [tarps] many people received to build tents have proven too easily damaged against the wind and rain, especially with the approaching monsoon season.” –VNN staff

It will take many years for survivors of this year’s earthquakes to piece their lives back together and return to normalcy. After having provided emergency relief, VNN now is using the donations they have received to provide tin sheets for 375 homes and two schools in four areas.

Sinkre: “A model community”

About 80 percent of houses in Sinkre were destroyed by the earthquakes. More than 1,820 people died, thousands were injured and, tragically, more than 3,000 people from this area are still missing. This is one of the worst-affected districts, and it also is a place where God’s love through the church is shining the brightest.

Even though Sinkre is fewer than 50 miles northeast of Kathmandu, to drive there takes more than five hours. Most of the homes here had completely collapsed leaving nothing to salvage and requiring families to start all over.

In early May, VNN brought 60 bundles of tin sheets to Sinkre—enough for 40 new roofs. In just five weeks, local church and community leaders built 70 complete houses using that tin.



60 bundles of tin sheets, valued at \$4,250 USD and expected to provide roofs for 40 houses

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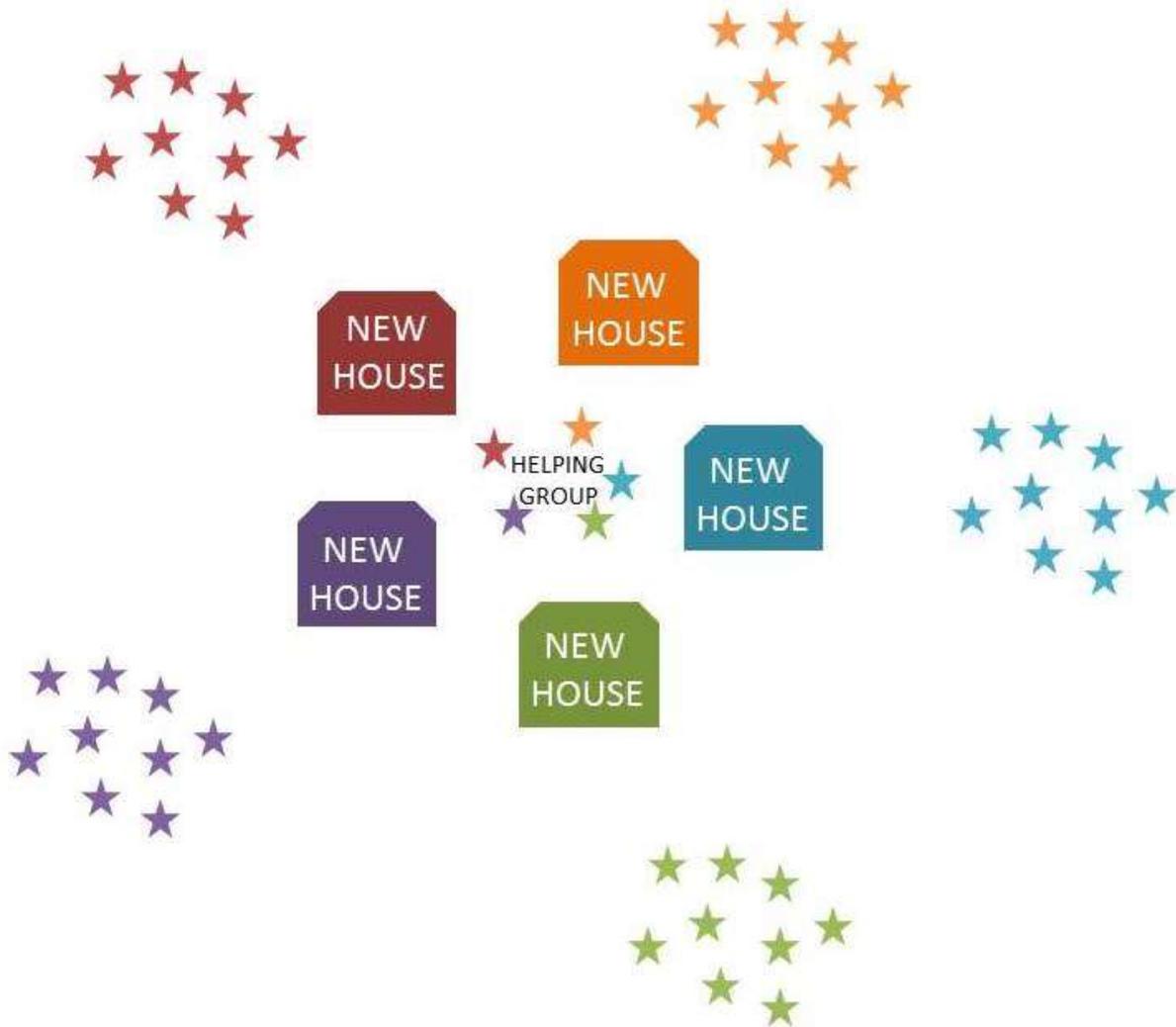
**70 strong and lasting homes for 139 families (two families per home)
Cost per home = \$60.71 USD**

The combined efforts of the local church and community leaders, scavenging leftover wood and working together

How did they do it?

Church and community leaders in Sinkre worked together to devise a brilliant plan:

After forming a “helping group” of five people—each person representing a different family—the group takes turns building a house for each family represented in the group until there are five new houses. Meanwhile, all the rest of the family members keep working to earn a living, so the family’s income is not lost while their new house is built (it takes one week to build each house).



Families who cannot send anyone to the “helping group” can either hire someone from another family or pay the equivalent of \$7 USD to the group.



So far, the people in Sinkre have proudly built 70 new homes for themselves and their neighbors.

Even though 70 percent of the people in Sinkre are Hindu, the local church initiated this work and collaborated successfully with community leaders to help all of the residents. “Everyone knew about the love of Jesus and praised the church for what they have done,” VNN staff says. Because of how impressed they have been with this community so far, VNN has committed to providing tin sheets for the 80 remaining houses that need to be built. “We want this area to be a model community for the others,” they say.



God's name is praised in this area because his followers are showing his love.

Thulobandhan: Overlooked because of their political affiliation

The Nepalese government has given nothing to the survivors in Thulobandhan because they are from a different political party.

After the earthquakes, a cracked school building here (at right) was marked “NOT SAFE – BANNED” by the government, yet the government did nothing to help repair the building.



The local church helped build a few temporary shelters for the school so the children could keep learning, but it is not enough to hold the 30 students.



Most homes here are used only during the day for cooking. At night, people sleep outside because of fear that the house will fall down on top of them.

When VNN shared the model employed in Sinkre with this community, the community leaders got excited and said they want to work together using the same model. VNN plans to help rebuild 105 homes and one school here in Thulobandhan.

Belani: Overlooked because of their low caste

There are 76 families in Belani, 32 of whom are Christian, and they received no help from the Nepalese government because they are Dalit—low caste—“the untouchables.”



This tent belongs to Misrupbasap's family. It is too small to fit all 10 of his family members, so half of the family is living with his brother.

family were spared that they, but they lost all of their nine goats. When asked about the future, he said, “We don’t know yet, just trying to survive each day. We grow maize but, because of the earthquake, we are unable to plant at the right time. This could affect the crop’s production.”

Misrupbasap’s 3-year-old son stayed home from church the morning of the first earthquake because he wasn’t feeling well. As the quake struck, Misrupbasap ran home to find his home completely collapsed and his son trapped inside. Praise God that the child was under two wooden beams in a cross shape, preventing his small body from being crushed by the rubble. He was rescued from the house with only a few scratches.

Misrupbasap and his whole

“When we hear their story and see their willingness to work hard as they expressed the desire to rebuild their house before the monsoon season comes, we know for sure that this is the area we should focus on. 85 families will be provided tin roof to rebuild their homes in this area.” –VNN staff

Bhakari Dada: Almost impossible to reach

Landslides have blocked and destroyed the roads to Bhakari Dada, one of the hardest-hit areas. More than a month after the first quake, no one from the government had come to help the people here.

The community has used scraps to build shelters for the most needy people, and leaders were told about the model used in Sinkre. “We are ready; all we need is some tins,” they said.

VNN will provide enough tin for 102 families here.



Everything is collapsed in this hard-to-reach community.

Expenditure reports

EMERGENCY-RELIEF SUPPLIES FOR MANTHALI, GORKHA AND DHADING AREAS

Item	Total units	Cost per unit		Cost of all units	
		Nepalese rupees	Nepalese rupees	USD	
Drinking water	100 packs	180	18,000	\$	177.26
Blankets	50	1,050	52,500	\$	517.02
Tents	50	1,600	80,000	\$	787.84
Noodles	50 boxes	400	20,000	\$	196.96
Bags of rice (25 kg each)	240	1,300	312,000	\$	3,072.56
Cooking oil	25 packs	1,350	33,750	\$	332.37
Salt	5 bags	850	4,250	\$	41.85
Cooked rice	5 bags	3,750	18,750	\$	184.65
Soy beans	5 bags	2,500	12,500	\$	123.10
Noodles	40 boxes	300	12,000	\$	118.18
Sugar	5 bags	3,500	17,500	\$	172.34
ID for relief volunteers	15	30	450	\$	4.43
Paperwork for relief permission	1	500	500	\$	4.92
In-country transportation, lodging and meals for VNN staff and volunteers			328,920	\$	3,239.19
TOTAL				\$	8,972.66

REBUILDING AND FOLLOW-UP SUPPORT FOR FOUR IDENTIFIED AREAS

Item	Calculation	Total units	Cost per unit		Cost of all units	
			Nepalese rupees	Nepalese rupees	USD	
Tin sheets for 375 homes	375 people * 1.5 bundles	562.5	7,000	3,937,500		\$38,776.29
Tin sheets for 2 schools	2 schools * 7 bundles	14	7,000	98,000		\$ 965.10
Transport of tin	3 trucks	3	20,000	60,000		\$ 590.88
Car rental for delivery trips	3 trips * 2 days	6	5,000	30,000		\$ 295.44
Food for VNN staff	3 trips * 2 days* 3 people	18	700	12,600		\$ 124.08
Accommodation for VNN staff	3 trips * 2 days* 3 people	18	800	14,400		\$ 141.81
Car rental for follow up	3 days	3	5,000	15,000		\$ 147.72
Food for follow up	3 days * 5 people	15	700	10,500		\$ 103.40
Fuel for follow up		1	16,000	16,000		\$ 157.57
Accommodation for follow up	3 days * 5 people	15	800	12,000		\$ 118.18
Transportation for leaders		1	37,500	37,500		\$ 369.30
Communication		5	2,000	10,000		\$ 98.48
Allowance for leaders - delivery	3 people, 3 days	9	2,000	18,000		\$ 177.26
Allowance for leaders - follow up	6 people, 4 days	28	2,000	56,000		\$ 551.49
Landslide relief				500,000		\$ 4,923.97
TOTAL						\$52,464.94