



NEWS BULLETIN 292
MONDAY APRIL 24, 2017

Civil Society Drives Earthquake Reconstruction in Nepal

Two years on, only 8% of government aid has reached affected families



Rojina and Garima Manandhar, rear, with other rescued brick children at the Faidhoka School

Rojina Manandhar, 11, feared the worst after the earthquake demolished the family house in the mountainous district of Ramechhap on April 25, 2015.

The Manandhars were among 700,000 Nepalis who were pushed deeper into poverty by the disaster. Homeless and landless, they moved down to the Kathmandu valley intending to work in a brick factory. Rojina and her sister Garima faced the grim prospect of making and hauling bricks for up to 12 hours a day.

Instead, the two sisters were plucked from bricks and enrolled in the Faidhoka school by CONCERN, a Nepali organization that

partners with The Advocacy Project (AP). When AP visited last November, the sisters were getting high grades and praise from their teachers. They are among [50 children rescued from bricks by CONCERN and AP](#) since 2015.

CONCERN is one of three AP partners in Nepal that have launched imaginative projects to empower survivors of the 2015 earthquake, with funding from AP. The second group, Care Women Nepal (CWN), has screened over 4,000 village women for medical conditions in the remote district of Dhankuta. NEFAD (the network of families of the disappeared) has trained 35 wives of the disappeared to produce embroidery. Many beneficiaries, like the Manandhar family, found themselves further marginalized by the disaster two years ago.



Helping hand: At a CWN health camp

AP has raised \$46,414 for the three projects thus far, from 241 individuals and associations with a deep affection for Nepal. They have included 12 former AP Peace Fellows who have volunteered in Nepal; the Zonta Club of Washington; the fan club of two Korean film stars; and Grace McGuire, 12, who raised \$519 with friends in Washington, much of it in coins. Most of the money was donated through the [online platform Global Giving](#).

AP has deployed several Peace Fellows to help the three Nepal partners monitor their projects and report back to donors. Three Fellows - [Joty Sohi](#), [Lauren Purnell](#) and [Megan Keeling](#) - launched their own appeals on Global Giving and raised \$4,300 for their hosts.

The 2015 earthquake and aftershocks devastated Nepal, which was already one of the world's poorest nations. According to the National Reconstruction

Authority, the government body that coordinates relief, the quake affected 542,593 families in 17 of the country's 75 districts.

The international response was generous and swift. Donors pledged \$4.1 billion, of which \$3.4 billion has arrived in Nepal. However only \$276 million has reached families because of red tape and a cumbersome government process.

The Maoist-led government is offering each family \$3,000, to be delivered in three installments of \$500, \$1500, and \$1,000. By March 30, 540,856 families had received their first installment of \$500, but only 3,704 households had received the second tranche. Even less - 420 households - had received the third tranche according to Mr Ishwor Marahattha, from the Reconstruction Authority in Kathmandu.



Double damage: Shobha Bhatta from NEFAD lost her husband to Maoists and most of her house to the earthquake

Mr Marahattha told Prabal Thapa from AP that the delay has occurred because district authorities are visiting each family to make sure that the money is being used to rebuild shelters.

This contrasts sharply with the speed and efficiency shown by Nepali civil society in supporting reconstruction, helped by the resilience of the survivors themselves.

As the emergency recedes, AP's three Nepali partners are hoping to build on what they have started.

CONCERN hopes to improve the quality of education for students who live in brick factories by providing extra tuition. Care Women Nepal will use future health camps to strengthen under-funded government health services. NEFAD will help the 35 wives of the disappeared to collect ante-mortem data on their missing relatives, as a way of encouraging the government to exhume graves and identify victims. AP will continue to provide support.

AP has increased the funding target on Global Giving to \$30,000 and will deploy three Peace Fellows to Nepal this summer to help. **Global Giving will match donations made tomorrow (April 25) after 9.00 am EST by 50%. [To donate click here.](#)**

* [Read about a CWN health camp](#)

* [Read about CONCERN's program for brick children and view footage of children at work](#)

* [Click on a year](#) to meet AP Peace fellows who have worked in Nepal.

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