

CAMP HOPE

THE START OF A NEW FUTURE



PHOTO: KASHISH DAS SHRESTHA - USAID

A young girl plays with her doll outside her family's tent at Camp Hope. More than 330 families from the Sindhupalchowk district are taking temporary shelter at the camp.

The summer sun is scorching the ground beneath our feet, and it is barely past 7:30 in the morning.

We move to a perch on an elevated platform, shaded by a large old tree. From here, we see a sweeping, yet jarring view. A horizon line of neat concrete houses, dotted with seasonal potted plants on their roofs, stands in stark contrast to fabric roofs covered in plastic tarp that dot the landscape in the foreground.

This is Camp Hope—a one square kilometer tent city in Jorpati, Kathmandu that serves as a temporary home to 330 households from five villages in the Sindhupalchowk district, just north of Kathmandu. The earthquake damaged or destroyed approximately 88 percent of houses in the district.

“We had to move,” said Sukra Tamang, an 18-year-old who now lives at Camp Hope with his family. “With all the debris and the ground shaking constantly, there was no space to even rest our feet.”

The April 25 earthquake and aftershocks displaced more than 500,000 families, uprooting the foundations of their homes and turning the hill terrain that supported their villages into rubble. Camp Hope demonstrates the positive outcomes that are possible when private and public sector partners work together.

WELCOME TO CAMP HOPE



PHOTO: KASHISH DAS SHRESTHA-USAID

Tents made of materials strong enough to withstand monsoon season are built at Camp Hope for families displaced from their homes by the April 25 earthquake.

At the camp's main gate, young volunteers check and register all visitors before they are allowed to enter. Inside, a group of senior citizens, already freshened up and

dressed for the day, bask in the morning sun. Chickens cluck as they scurry past.

Camp Hope is alive and teeming with activities. It looks, feels, and even sounds like a village. Murmurs of conversation fill the air, people line up at the hand water pump, and children fill open spaces with laughter and play. A group of women wash clothes as the din of construction echoes in the background.

Built on a community football ground, Camp Hope is an exemplary model of private-sector led humanitarian assistance – a clear demonstration of the impact that is possible when the private sector engages with other partners.

“When we wanted to start a camp for these communities, we couldn't get any government land,” says Sangeeta Shrestha, camp founder and operator of Dwarika's, a boutique heritage hotel, owned by her family. “A local youth club came offering their football ground, so here we are.”

USAID soon stepped in with additional support. Heavy-duty plastic sheeting provided by USAID was utilized to create shelters that are strong enough to endure the monsoon season. In addition to building temporary homes for displaced families at Camp Hope, USAID provided shelter and protection for approximately 310,000 Nepalis across earthquake-affected districts.

A PARTNERSHIP OF HOSPITALITY



PHOTO: KASHISH DAS SHRESTHA - USAID

Full-stocked kitchen offers three meals a day for residents of Camp Hope.

There are many advantages when a world-class hotel owner steps in to lead and manage a shelter like Camp Hope.

“We always have a lot of resources at our disposal, and I am lucky to have my hotel team of engineers and technicians whom I could call on to help set up the camp,” said Sangeeta, who now manages the camp full-time.

Adding a bit of comfort to the lives of displaced villagers, the camp offers a fully stocked kitchen and store room tent that is maintained by Sangeeta's hotel. Camp residents are offered chicken once a week and eggs twice a week during their meals.

While shelter, food, and basic medical services address the physical needs of residents, their social and emotional needs are also important. Camp Hope offers a variety of programs and spaces to help residents as they heal. A prayer tent allows the community to continue their spiritual rituals in a minimalist manner. In the afternoon, women in the camp engage in sewing, knitting and other crafts in a facility that has been set up for training. The camp also enrolled 83 children in a local school and

regularly schedules field trips for youth.

“The plan, we hope, is to build back their villages so they can return to their communities,” said Sangeeta as she discusses what the future might hold for Camp Hope.

LOOKING AHEAD: CHARTING A ROADMAP TO REBUILD A BETTER NEPAL



PHOTO: KASHISH DAS SHRESTHA-USAID

Camp Hope is designed to be a safe and comfortable space for residents.

Returning home for many of the residents of Camp Hope will be a challenge. Questions remain, about when, if, and how rebuilding of some villages may happen. Massive landslides during the April 25 earthquake completely destroyed many communities.

A discussion about the road forward—for vulnerable villages in the most affected regions and across the country—was at the forefront as the Government of Nepal convened key donors and development stakeholders together at the June 25 International Conference on Nepal's Reconstruction.

As Nepal's longest standing development partner, The U.S. Government's commitment to Nepal has stood the test of time. Our pledge at the International Conference on Nepal's Reconstruction increases the total amount of U.S. emergency relief and early recovery assistance to \$130 million, and is only the beginning of our contribution to Nepal's earthquake recovery, which will span multiple years.

As recovery efforts continue, aid and investments from the U.S. Government will support efforts to get the most impacted people back on their feet and to create a Nepal that is more resilient in the future.

We will train Nepalis to rebuild seismically-stable houses in affected areas.

We will help build temporary learning centers for children who are learning outside in makeshift tents. Efforts are underway to establish approximately 1,000 Temporary Learning Centers in earthquake affected districts.

We are helping people rebuild livelihoods by injecting cash and strengthening agricultural systems, the economic lifeblood for nearly 75 percent of the population of Nepal. USAID jump-started early recovery—our resilience and livelihood program began cash-for-work programs within weeks of the earthquake, helping the hardest-hit families, so they can begin the enormous task of rebuilding damaged homes and much-needed infrastructure.

We will continue to protect Nepal's most vulnerable, including those susceptible to human trafficking.

We will lay the foundations for a more resilient Nepal by building institutions that can respond effectively to future disasters.

All of these efforts, along with support leveraged from the private sector, can and will help build back a better Nepal.

Those in Camp Hope know that this dream is possible. ●

To read the full story on USAID's IMPACT blog: <http://blog.usaid.gov/2015/06/setting-an-example-emblematic-of-recovery-possible-in-nepal>