



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## SUCCESS STORY

### PEER Strengthens Nepal's Disaster Response Capacity

**USAID's sustained support for disaster management training in Nepal has strengthened Nepal's capacity to respond effectively when disaster strikes.**



Photo by Miles Price, USAID

*Nepalese Army medical first responder trainees demonstrate proper treatment techniques for instructors during a PEER training.*



Photo courtesy of the National Society for Earthquake Technology

*The Nepal Police and other PEER-trained emergency first responders put their skills into action during earthquake search-and-rescue operations in the Kathmandu Valley.*

The importance of USAID support for the Program for the Enhancement of Emergency Response (PEER) was evident on April 25, 2015, when a magnitude 7.8 earthquake struck less than 50 miles from Nepal's capital city of Kathmandu. Immediately following the earthquake, more than 1,000 PEER-trained personnel used their knowledge and skills to save lives and provide critical medical care.

Since 1998, USAID has supported PEER to assist local, regional, and national disaster management authorities to organize and conduct trainings in medical first response (MFR); collapsed structure search-and-rescue (CSSR); community action for disaster response (CADRE); and hospital preparedness for emergencies (HOPE). In Nepal, PEER partners include the Nepal Police, the Armed Police Force, the Nepalese Army, and the Nepal Red Cross Society.

In the immediate aftermath of the April 2015 earthquake, more than 500 PEER-trained CSSR and MFR graduates from Nepal's security forces deployed to earthquake-affected areas, rescuing people trapped in buildings and providing life-saving medical care prior to the arrival of international search-and-rescue and disaster response teams. Since Nepal's CSSR and MFR trainings conform to international standards, rescue teams that arrived in Nepal from around the world were able to collaborate effectively in rescue efforts. In coordination with other search-and-rescue teams, CSSR teams from Nepal's security forces rescued nearly 350 people. Additionally, more than 600 CADRE-trained volunteers—including more than 150 trained through OFDA's PEER program—provided immediate emergency assistance in their communities prior to the arrival of professional first response personnel.

By implementing best practices identified through the HOPE training course, including developing a disaster response plan and implementing non-structural mitigation techniques, such as fastening oxygen cylinders to walls and laminating windows, Kathmandu's Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital remained operational when the April 2015 earthquake struck. As a result, hospital staff were able to provide medical care to approximately 700 earthquake survivors and perform more than 300 earthquake-related surgeries in the days following the disaster.

In April 2015, PEER-trained first responders quickly and effectively responded to the critical emergency needs of those affected by the earthquake. In 2016, USAID continues to support the PEER program to provide training in essential, life-saving skills that allow the people of Nepal to better prepare for and respond to disasters.