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Post-Earthquake Relief Efforts: A Case Study in Foreign Aid and Development

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Post-Earthquake Relief Efforts: A Case Study in Foreign Aid and Development

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# Table of Contents

Abstract .......................................................................................................................... 3

Acknowledgments ......................................................................................................... 4

Introduction .................................................................................................................. 5

Methodology .................................................................................................................. 6-7

The Major Players of Relief Efforts ............................................................................... 8-14
  - Governments ........................................................................................................... 8
  - Large Organizations ............................................................................................... 9
  - Small Organizations ............................................................................................. 10
  - Cooperation and Collaboration Between the Major Players ............................ 12

Relief Efforts: Immediate and Long-Term ................................................................. 14-17
  - Emergency Phase: Immediate Relief ................................................................. 14
  - Recovery Phase: Long-Term Relief ................................................................. 16

Seven Months Later: The Reality on the Ground ....................................................... 18-22
  - What is Needed Now ........................................................................................... 18
  - How Did We Get Here: Difficulties In Implementation .................................. 19
  - Looking Towards the Future: Effects of the Blockade .................................. 22

The Effects of Foreign Aid ........................................................................................... 22-25
  - In Relief Efforts .................................................................................................... 22
  - In the Long-Term .................................................................................................. 23

Conclusion: How We Can Help .................................................................................. 25

Appendices .................................................................................................................... 27-32
  - Appendix 1: The Nepali Times ......................................................................... 27
  - Appendix 2: Additional Photographs of Chuchepati IDP Camp .................. 28
  - Appendix 3: Additional Photographs of Kirtipur .......................................... 31

Glossary of Abbreviations and Organizations .............................................................. 33

Bibliography and Oral Sources .................................................................................... 34-35

Suggestions for Future Research .................................................................................. 36
Abstract

On April 25th, 2015, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck Nepal, followed by a 7.3 magnitude aftershock on May 12nd, 2015. Immediate humanitarian aid was needed and promptly received. Now, seven months later, long-term relief efforts are beginning. The major players in both post-earthquake relief efforts and foreign aid are foreign governments, large organizations, and small organizations. In the immediate aftermath, relief workers supplied victims with temporary shelter, food, and healthcare. Now, in the long-term, the two major challenges faced are resettlement and reconstruction. This is true especially because of new problems created by the recent blockade. Victims still are need of permanent shelters, nutritious food, and legal documents. Upon further investigation, mostly via interviews with foreign government officials, relief organization employees, and recipients of aid, there were holes that existed in relief efforts. Even though efforts were largely effective, not all aid was distributed equally. This was due to difficulty in accessing remote regions, as well as corruption by individuals, organizations, and the government. In the aftermath of a disaster, foreign aid is absolutely needed. However, when implemented in the long-term (it has been present in Nepal for the past sixty years) it can be detrimental and lead to a cycle of dependency. Still, this is not to discount that many lives have been saved, altered, and changed for the better because of foreign aid. Although many of the world’s problems seem immense, we, as individuals, have the power to make a small difference if we act based on educated decisions.
Acknowledgments

This paper would not have happened if it weren’t for the guidance of many people, all of whom I am grateful to know. First off, I extend my profound gratitude to all of my interviewees. Without the information and time you offered, this paper really wouldn’t exist. In addition, I’d like to thank Pema Dolma Lama and Sahina Shrestha, both of whom offered their own stories and experience to help me translate other women’s stories. Next, I’d like to thank all of my wonderful teachers who I’ve been lucky to have, both past and present. There are too many to list here, but I hope you know who you are and that teachers really do make a difference. Thank you to my fabulous advisor, Nazneen, who guided me through this past month with kind words, encouragement, and coffees. Thank you to my dear friend Dhara, who made an apartment in Kathmandu feel like home. Finally, thank you to my friends and family whose network of love and support follows me wherever I go. Last but not least thank you to my parents. Mom, thank you for taking a leap of faith and always nurturing my urge to explore this world. Dad, thank you for instilling in me the importance of the human aspect, storytelling, and for encouraging me to first pick up the camera.

I dedicate this to the women of Chuchepati, Jamune, and Kirtipur, whose stories need to be heard.
Introduction

Having been interested in development and foreign aid since my first trip to the “developing” world as a fourteen-year-old, I consider this ISP to be my formal (or perhaps not so formal) education on the systems and politics surrounding development. This is by no means a comprehensive account of foreign aid and earthquake relief efforts. I recognize there are large holes in my research. This was largely due to access, and will be addressed further in the paper.

My timing in Nepal is perhaps fortuitous to study this topic: this is being written a mere seven months after the drastic April 25th earthquake, two months after the adoption of a new constitution, and in the midst of an imposed blockade from India. As such, I approach the topics of development and foreign aid through the lens of current events, particularly post-earthquake relief. At first I was particularly interested in the different roles in relief efforts taken by governments (both foreign and Nepali), large organizations (for example, UNICEF), and small organizations (including local NGOs). Upon closer investigation of my findings, I find myself admittedly cynical about the strategies employed by governments and large organizations. That being said, development and relief work are far from simple and no one can do everything; each part has a vital role in the system.
Methodology

My interviewees fell into four distinct categories: representatives of foreign governments, large organization employees, small organization employees, and recipients of aid. I unfortunately was not unable to interview any Nepali government officials in this short month. For representatives from foreign governments and organizations, I first sent an email requesting an interview. If we were able to meet in person, we did so. Other interviews were conducted either via Skype or email. To interview recipients, I took three separate trips. I went to Chuchepati (the IDP camp in Chabil, opposite the Bhat-Bhateni Supermarket and Department Store near Boudha), Kirtipur, and Jamune, Sindhupalchok. For my visits to Chuchepati and Kirtipur, Pema Dolma Lama, a nurse from Dolpo who has done extensive relief work herself, acted as my translator. I went to Sindhupalchok with Nepali Times reporter Sahina Shrestha on assignment; she acted as my translator there and my photographs accompany her article (see Appendix 1). All of the persons included in this paper granted their permission, including to be photographed. However, many of the interviews with recipients of aid were haphazard and disorganized. Sometimes permission could not be obtained until a few minutes into the interview. If information gathered in these situations is utilized in this paper, the names have been changed accordingly. Each interviewee was interviewed only once. Finally, one interviewee is high-up staff member at USAID. They requested that no direct quotations be used and that they remain anonymous. They will merely be referred to as USAID, but their opinions are by no means reflective of the entire organization. The person I interviewed at FAO requested that some quotes remain anonymous. However, since I only interviewed one person there, I have kept them anonymous throughout the paper. They will be referred to as FAO and their opinions are not necessarily the views of the organization as a whole. The Israeli Ambassador, Yaron Mayer, did give his permission to be quoted. I was not able to obtain permission from a different staff member at the Israeli embassy, so their identity will be kept anonymous.

In addition, perhaps my cynicism regarding the work of governments and large organizations is a direct reflection of my interviewees. Due to access and lack of time, the vast majority of my interviewees were from small organizations or professional individuals. I interviewed four people from three small organizations: Rasuwa Relief, Women for Human Rights, and the dZi Foundation. Two of my professional interviewees, Jurgen Hulst and Jonathan Hulland, work for the World Food Program and the Open Society foundation, respectively. Although both of these are large organizations, they were speaking as individuals and not on behalf of their organizations. That being said, even they were somewhat critical about the roles large organizations play. I do not know if their answers would have been different if they were speaking on behalf of their organization, but based on my interview with FAO, I predict this would have been the case. As for interviews with foreign governments, I was able to obtain an interview with USAID and the Israeli Ambassador. USAID could only tell me information that was publically available, so I do not know what they might have been omitted. I recognize two interviews with foreign governments are unbalanced as compared to the numbers in my other
categories. This was largely due to difficulty of access and lack of time. Finally, I was not able to gain access to interview anyone within the Nepali government.

I recognize this bias in my research.
The Major Players of Relief Efforts

Governments

In the aftermath of the April 25th earthquake, foreign governments sprang into action. Almost immediately, wealthy countries including India, China, Australia, Israel, and others pledged a total of $4.1 billion to help in relief efforts. 1 The United States initially pledged $1 million, with an additional $9 million soon thereafter. The U.S. also deployed a DART (Disaster Assistance Response Team) within 24 hours and sent 45 tons of supplies. 2 Two months following the earthquake, the United States announced a $130 million contribution to support long-term recovery. 3 That $130 million was divided between USAID (United States Agency for International Development), the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), and the Department of Defense. Israel had the largest immediate response, sending 260 relief workers, 200 doctors, and 95 tons of aid. 4 The pinnacle of Israeli relief efforts was the state of the art, full-fledged hospital the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) established in Kathmandu. 5 The Nepali army also responded quickly, mobilizing 90,000 troops, nearly 90% of the entire army. 6

Relief efforts had political implications internationally, particularly highlighting Nepal’s situation as a buffer state between India and China. Relief efforts were largely divided into zones of influence: China covered the north, India covered the west, and the United States covered the east. 7 Other wealthy, powerful foreign governments had political incentives to respond. Consider, for example, if the United States had not responded to the disaster. Firstly, the American people would be appalled at their country’s lack of response. For American politicians, upsetting their constituents and loosing votes is not in their self-interest. In addition, ultimately governments

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4 Regan, H. “International Aid Ramps Up.”
are accountable to their own citizens, and not to the people they are helping in other nations. Internationally, not responding to the earthquake would hurt the United States’ standing as one of the most powerful countries in the world, especially one that champions human rights. In addition, the United States is most likely bound to respond by international law, a topic that is outside the scope of this paper. For these, and many other reasons, it is not even a question that powerful countries like the United States respond to such disasters. As Yaron Mayer, the Israeli Ambassador described, Israel needed to respond on a large scale, so as to maintain a good relationship with Nepal; many Israeli tourists visit Nepal and many Nepalis come to work in Israel.

In June, the Nepali government proposed a bill that established the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA). The NRA was supposed to oversee the implementation and distribution of the $4.1 billion pledged by foreign governments. Unfortunately the government has not yet voted on the bill to actually establish the NRA. Nevertheless, all relief operations worked within the current structure of the local Nepali government and bureaucracy. This specifically refers to the Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Chief District Officers (CDOs). There is one VDC per village area, and multiple within a district. VDCs work under District Development Committees, which, in turn, function under the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development. In theory, the heads of the VDCs are politically elected, however there has not been a local election in over a decade. The CDOs (Chief District Officers) are in charge of the entire district. They are not politically elected and work under the Home Ministry. In addition, the Nepali government gave 15,000 NPR to households in need.

**Large Organizations**

For the purposes of this paper, large organizations are defined as bureaucratic INGOs such as UNICEF, Oxfam, and FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), as well as other bureaucratic governmental organizations such as USAID. In a post-disaster situation, large organizations are important because “they have scale...and can do things that others cannot.” They are well funded and their staff is experienced with foreign aid. In addition, since large organizations are well known around the world, it is “easier to mobilize international funding for emergency response.” This is true in disaster situations, but usually most of their funding comes from partner organizations or governments. For example, FAO’s main donors are the governments of Canada, Belgium, Italy, and Norway. As such, they are

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9 Shrestha, Sumeera, Senior Program Manager at Women for Human Rights. Interview by author. November 15, 2015.
first and foremost accountable to these partners and are not necessarily as transparent as their smaller counterparts. For example, before USAID implements a project, they have multiple meetings with their stakeholders.\textsuperscript{13} In terms of immediate relief, large organizations are able to supply a sizeable amount of goods, as well as utilize existing networks. For example, FAO continued their work with local partners such as District Livestock Offices, as well as utilized their District Coordinators to oversee aid distribution.\textsuperscript{14} USAID reprogrammed existing mechanisms on the ground during relief efforts.\textsuperscript{15} As for long-term recovery and development in general, large organizations often have ongoing programs and work in tandem with the Nepali government. For example, prior to the earthquake, USAID was implementing a five-year strategy in western Nepal as well as Food for Peace, an initiative that tackles malnutrition, throughout the country. The specifics of how large organizations work with not only the Nepali government but also small organizations will be discussed an upcoming section. In addition, further elaboration on the specifics of large organizations’ work is addressed in the portion that describes relief efforts in more detail.

\section*{Small Organizations}

For the purposes of this paper, small organizations are defined as local NGOs, some of which may also have foreign staff members. They are independently funded and are often transparent with their funds and work. Local responses will also be considered within this category. Due to their lack of bureaucracy and fewer staff members, small organizations can often act in a more flexible manner as compared to larger organizations. In addition, they usually have specific populations with whom the work as well as local networks. Two main roles that small organizations play in relief efforts are informants and distributors. Jurgen Hulst worked for the World Food Program as the Logistics Cluster Coordinator in the Gorkha region. He described the role of small organizations as, “useful to provide local relief and support tailored to local needs or specific vulnerable groups, and fill gaps, not properly addressed by large-scale response.” The three organizations that will be discussed are Rasuwa Relief, Women for Human Rights (WHR), and the dZi Foundation.

Rasuwa Relief is a small organization that was established in the aftermath of the earthquake by Americans and Nepalis. All of the staff members either had previously worked in the Rasuwa district or had been in the area at the time of the earthquake. They describe themselves as a “‘humanitarian volunteer initiative’ that was established…to provide support for both immediate humanitarian assistance and long-term recovery within severely affected communities of the district of Rasuwa.”\textsuperscript{16} They particularly focus on the Rasuwa district not only because that is where their expertise lay, but also to fill a void, which is “the general lack of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[14] FAO. Interview by author.
\item[15] USAID. Interview by author.
\item[16] “Progress Report: Rasuwa Relief by the Numbers.” October 1, 2015. Sent to author by Galen Murton on November 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 2015.
\end{footnotes}
major humanitarian efforts designated for Rasuwa.”\textsuperscript{17} In addition, Langtang, the village that was infamously destroyed by an avalanche following the earthquake and “is still the most single devastated, concentrated destruction that occurred” is located in the Rasuwa district.\textsuperscript{18} Rasuwa Relief is focusing fifty percent of their efforts on immediate relief and fifty percent on long-term relief. Within that, they are focusing fifty percent of their efforts on the district of Rasuwa as a whole and fifty percent on Langtang specifically.\textsuperscript{19}

Women for Human Rights (WHR) is a Nepali organization that focuses on the plight of single women. In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, they extended their help to all demographics, while still focusing on vulnerable groups like single women, lactating mothers, and the elderly.\textsuperscript{20} WHR is a prime example of the use of local networks in disaster response. They employed their Single Women District Committees, which they have throughout the entire country, to help them gather data for rapid need assessment. As their Senior Program Manager Sumeera Shrestha described, “In a month or two, we were able to document data for around 16,000 [single women].” They split their recovery into three phases. The first phase focused on need assessment, identification, and implementation. The second phase, in which they are currently working, is focused on direct and indirect services such as counseling, legal aid, and skills training. The third phase, into which they are transitioning, focuses on resettlement and reconstruction.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{bulletin-board.png}
\caption{A section of a bulletin board hanging in WHR Headquarters, outlining their phases of relief efforts. (November 15, 2015, author’s photograph)}
\end{figure}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{17} Murton, Galen, co-founder of Rasuwa Relief. Email interview by author. November 5, 2015.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Lord, A. Interview by author.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{20} Shrestha, S. Interview by author.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
The dZi Foundation is an organization that works “in some of the most isolated communities in Eastern Nepal and takes a very holistic and long-term approach to community development.”\(^{21}\) After the earthquake, the dZi Foundation’s immediate response was to provide temporary shelter in the communities in which they work. After this initial work, their response aligned with their work in the past, focusing on community-based methods. As Ben Ayres, their Nepal Country Director described, “We hosted 70 neighborhood meetings with representatives of 2,500 households in attendance.”

There were also many local groups that helped in relief efforts, many of which are not officially registered. One example is Students Of Dolpo a group of around eight students from Dolpo who came to Kathmandu to study. They brought tarps, food, and medical services to Sindhupalchok in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake. As member Pema Dolma Lama described it, “…they were scared of going to Sindhupalchok, it [was the] most effected area. I said I want to go, but I need somebody to go with me.” Another example is the Yellow House group. “Unregistered, unlicensed, and nonexistent in official terms, the Yellow House group is one of many ad hoc efforts that have cropped up to deliver aid to some of the quake’s hardest-hit areas quickly and without much fuss.”\(^{22}\) Of course, there are many more examples of local responses, including many individuals who offered services in their country’s time of need. As Mikel Dunham, who was in Kathmandu during the earthquake writes, “I witnessed…the civic engagement of people from all walks of life…rolling up their sleeves in a united effort to remove rubble from trapped victims.”

**Cooperation and Collaboration between the Major Players**

Of course, no one can do everything. Across the board, the major players agree on the need for communication, collaboration, and cooperation. Collaboration ensures that efforts are not duplicated, and in theory, allows relief to be equally distributed. All of the major players operate within the same disaster complex and timeline, allowing relief efforts to function as a sort of industry: each player knows their part.\(^{23}\) Although scholars differ in the specifics and terminology of the disaster timeline, there is a consensus on the major phases. These phases are the emergency phase, recovery phase, and post-disaster development.

All relief efforts in post-earthquake Nepal, both from governments and organizations, were channeled through VDCs and CDOs. Although VDCs and CDOs function under different ministries, ultimately, the CDO has final say in what happens in their district. For example, when WHR wanted to work in a certain district, they first spoke to the CDO. The CDO then “provided [them] with one VDC. And they said, ok if you want to work, work on this district.”\(^{24}\)

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\(^{21}\) Ayres, Ben, Nepal Country Director at the dZi Foundation. Email interview by author. November 25, 2015.


\(^{23}\) Lord, A. Interview by author.

\(^{24}\) Shrestha, S. Interview by author.
to VDCs, most relief efforts were channeled through the clusters. The UN General Assembly introduced the cluster system in 2005 as a part of its Humanitarian Reform Agenda.\textsuperscript{25} Clusters are groups of organizations, both non-UN and UN, which are divided into their area of expertise such as logistics, health, education, among others. Clusters allow for cooperation and coordination between different organizations. Although participating in a cluster is voluntary, many organizations do choose to play a part.\textsuperscript{26}

\textbf{Figure 5. Phases of Recovery in the Aftermath of Disaster (Alexander 2002)}

A graph depicting the phases of the disaster timeline. (Baird, M.)

In addition to formal methods of communication, like clusters, there are also many less-formal channels of communication like social media or word of mouth. Informal communication is a role often taken on by small organizations because they have good on-the-ground information and networks. For example, both WHR and Rasuwa Relief acted as informers during relief efforts. As previously mentioned, WHR’s Single Women District Committees gathered data and rapid need assessment reports. As Galen Murton, one of Rasuwa Relief’s founders describes, “Rasuwa Relief’s role has largely been to gather and disseminate information and connect communities in need with donors and agencies with means to provide support…we’ve been able to provide really good data and on-the-ground reports to everyone from the Red Cross…to small relief teams.” Because of their on-the-ground networks, small organizations not only act as informants, but also as distributors for large organizations. As Sumeera Shrestha of WHR described, “we have these roots on the ground [and] also wanted...[to] make use of our

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{26} Hulst, J. Interview by author.
\end{itemize}
network. So that [we] can also distributed some things.” Another role small organizations fill is to address the gaps left by large organizations and governments. They are able to do this because often, they have very specific target populations. For example, Rasuwa Relief is focused on the Rasuwa District, WHR is works mainly with single women, and the dZi foundation concentrates on communities in Eastern Nepal. The reasons for these gaps left by large organizations will be examined in the following sections.

Small organizations can no doubt help large organizations, but the same is true vice versa. For example, WHR could not function without grants and long-term partnerships from larger organizations like UNWOMEN. USAID, as a funding organization, gave money to implementation organizations doing relief work. For example, they gave “$3 million to the UN World Food Program (WFP) – the head of the Logistics Cluster – to coordinate and manage logistics activities to ensure the timely delivery of relief supplies.” In addition, because of their size and experience, large organizations cover basic needs on a much greater scale. As Galen Murton of Rasuwa Relief said, “big organizations have economies of scale that little guys like us cannot touch.” Large organizations also work more closely with the government and “augment the government’s response.” For example, USAID is bound by the Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS). Although these five-year strategies are not geared towards post-disaster relief, they are a good example of cooperation between USAID and the government of the partner country. Even during their post-earthquake response, USAID was still bound to and worked closely with the Nepali government. This was true for all organizations, as previously described regarding VDCs and CDOs.

**Relief Efforts: Immediate and Long-Term**

As previously mentioned, the timeline following a disaster is divided into phases. Currently, about seven months post-earthquake, most relief efforts are transitioning from the emergency phase into the recovery phase. However, with the recent Indian blockade and resulting shortage of fuel and supplies, a new humanitarian crisis and emergency phase may be on the horizon. Nevertheless, the following discussion will focus on the relief efforts following the April 25th earthquake. The services and goods discussed here are by no means a complete list, but rather an attempt to identify the most important relief efforts taken.

**Emergency Phase: Immediate Relief**

Across the board, relief workers agreed upon the most immediate needs in the aftermath of the earthquake. Those needs were food, temporary shelter, and healthcare. As Austin Lord of Rasuwa Relief described, “It was clear that there was a sort of work that immediately needed to

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27 Shrestha, S. Interview by author.
29 Hulst, J. Interview by author.
30 Dunham, M. “In Nepal the Pols Play”
be done like getting tarps into certain areas, getting food into certain areas, sanitation facilities in IDP camps, things like that.” It is important to note that these immediate needs are not unique to the Nepal earthquake; they apply to most natural disasters. The goods, scale, and methods of distribution differ depending on the size of the relief operation. In the immediate efforts, although organizations offered aid to all those affected, they often still maintained a focus on their target area. This is partially due to communication and clusters. For example, since the FAO and WFP (World Food Program) were co-leaders of the Food Security cluster, they focused on the immediate distribution of food as opposed to providing shelter. Since the FAO’s “vision is more sustainable and long-term” they had to merge their emergency efforts with long-term mechanisms. In addition to distributing 190 tons of paddy seed for immediate consumption in six districts, they also distributed seed storage bags so victims could conserve food they already had. In contrast, WHR “initially went to nearby places because in Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, and Lalitpur, they were quite largely affected.” Although they mostly distributed dry food to the general population, they also distributed cooked meals to “specific people like lactating mothers with a newborn child,” thus concentrating on their focus population. Since they have more infrastructure and resources, large organizations like FAO could do work on a much larger scale in the immediate aftermath as compared to smaller organizations like WHR.

In addition to food, temporary shelters were also needed. In order to maximize their effects in the early stages, organizations often created community shelters and distributed tarps. For example, in Kirtipur Oxfam “came and they gave a tin roof. But they didn’t give to every family…asking everyone to be together in one tent.” The dZi Foundation “provided around 3,000 tarps for people whose homes were destroyed.” Often, the community shelters catered to vulnerable populations. Women, particularly new mothers, were one group that was prioritized in regards to shelter. WHR established Female Friendly Spaces (FFS) in multiple districts and UNICEF helped establish twenty-two shelter homes, which “provided a safe haven for nearly 10,000 pregnant women, new and lactating mothers and their babies.”

Finally, in addition to food and shelter, immediate healthcare was needed. Foreign governments, organizations, and trained individuals all contributed to this work. Medical efforts were mobilized within forty-eight hours of the first earthquake. The Israeli Military sent soldiers and a team of 200 doctors, who worked “overnight to become a full fledged hospital” in

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31 FAO. Interview by author.
32 Ibid.
33 Shrestha, S. Interview by author.
34 Ibid.
36 Ayres, B. Email Interview by author.
37 Shrestha, S. Interview by author.
Kathmandu. The hospital operated for two weeks with multiple departments including a maternity ward and eight ICUs. It was open to all people and often received cases from other overcrowded hospitals in Kathmandu. Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) teams conducted over 2,500 medical consultations and also completed multiple airlifts in remote districts. Small organizations, like WHR, which does not focus on medical issues, referred patients elsewhere. Both local and foreign individuals with medical training also offered their services. For example, nurse Pema Dolma Lama has been working in various affected areas since the earthquake struck seven months ago. At first, she volunteered at a first aid station at Shechen Gompa in Boudha, Kathmandu. She describes that “there [were] some monks who got first aid training…I helped them. And also there was one foreign nurse. I think she was from France.” In addition to immediate injuries, sanitation was a major concern in relief efforts. Both large and small organizations helped in relation to this issue. For example, WHR went to IDP camps and taught children how to wash their hands properly and UNICEF has reached 174,951 people by building sanitary toilets.

During this frenzy of distribution, there was a need for data, tracking, and communication. This was true across the board, for small organizations, large organizations, and foreign governments. This data was not only to keep track of distribution, but also for need assessment. Nearly every organization that I spoke to had some sort of mechanism for tracking data. WHR utilized their Single Women District Committees throughout the country. FAO District Coordinators oversaw distribution and sent information back to the National Coordinator, who collated all the information. In addition, “at least every other week [the National Coordinator] was in the field,” allowing the organization “to be there and be present.” FAO compiled a need assessment report in collaboration with WFP and the Ministry of Agriculture and Development. The Nepali Government also composed a Post Disaster Needs Assessment report, which was referred to by many organizations during their efforts.

Recovery Phase: Long-Term Relief

After the emergency phase, the post-disaster timeline then enters the recovery phase. Now, seven months after the earthquake, this phase is just beginning. However, because of the current blockade and fuel crisis, this post-disaster timeline may regress back into a form of the emergency phase. Nevertheless, relief workers as a whole are beginning to think about recovery in three main themes: resettlement, reconstruction, and livelihood. Less information about these efforts is currently available because they are still in their early stages.

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39 Mayer, Y. Interview by author.
41 Shrestha, S. Interview by author.
42 Ibid.
43 “Reaching the Unreached.” UNICEF.
44 Shrestha, S. Interview by author
45 FAO. Interview by author.
Resettlement applies to people whose homes were destroyed or are unlivable. What happens to “a person, even if they want to, they cannot go back…[their] whole village has been wiped?”

Many people came to Kathmandu from their villages in the aftermath of the earthquake. When and how can they return? This is particularly applicable for the residents of the IDP camp Chuchepati in Chabil, Kathmandu many of who came from outside the city. The land owners are requesting that they move and are saying, “they cannot live any longer here in this land.”

Women living in Chuchepati explained that “they will look for apartments somewhere here, but it’s difficult to get…and it’s expensive.” Organizations are currently thinking of ways to address these issues. However, resettlement is difficult because not only is it social and political, but it is also costly and more technical.

Rebuilding is an issue that must be thought about in tandem with resettlement. Reconstruction is a very difficult task because it too is costly; prices of construction materials are skyrocketing because of the blockade. In all of the aid recipients I spoke to, the need for housing was unanimous, particularly because winter is coming. As women in Jamune, Sindhupalchok said, “If any organization would come forward and help them out a little, they would be happy with a one-story structure, if it’s more concrete and means more security...if someone gives them the money, only money and no labor, the whole village can build itself.” Rebuilding is not only an issue for structures that have been completely lost, but also for structures that are damaged. This is difficult because not only does it cost money to build structures, but it also costs money to tear them down. Kabina Bajracharya of Kirtipur paid 1.5 lakhs to have her severely damaged house knocked down, but needs an estimated 15-20 lakhs to rebuild a one-story structure. Again, organizations are beginning to think of how to tackle this monumental problem. One example is the dZi Foundation, which, in line with their community based approach “[sat] down with community members and [got] their opinion on how best to approach recovery and rebuilding.” The community’s response included helping people learn how to build houses.

Rebuilding structures is merely one step in looking towards future sustainability. Another factor is putting people back to work. As Sumeera Shrestha explained, “We really have to send them back to doing something that they were doing initially.” Since many Nepalis livelihoods depend on agriculture, WHR gave many families livestock. The FAO has been at the forefront of reestablishing local farms. So far, they have provided grain storage bags and addressed the concern of livestock falling ill by distributing tin sheets for animal shelter. They also delivered

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46 Shrestha, S. Interview by author.
48 Lord, A. Interview by author.
49 Shrestha, S. Interview by author.
50 Ayres, B. Email interview by author.
plastic tunnels that are meant to function as temporary greenhouses and keep vegetables alive throughout the winter.\textsuperscript{51}

Seven Months Later: The Reality on the Ground

What is Needed Now

Although the immediate relief efforts were on quite a large scale and made an impact, they only applied to the emergency phase. Now, seven months later, the recovery phase is beginning. Temporary shelters and tarps are important in the immediate aftermath, but they are just that: temporary. Especially with cold weather coming, people cannot live under tarps and tin roofs forever. When talking to recipients of aid, structurally sound, permanent housing was something all of them mentioned as one of their primary needs. For instance, when asked what she needs most now, Durga, age 19 from Jamune, Sindhupalchok said, “Concrete houses because obviously winter is coming…for now, houses [are] the main concern.” However, as previously mentioned, this is no easy feat: supplies are becoming more and more expensive due to the blockade. In addition, ideally the new houses would be built stronger than the old ones. As the woman of Jamune, Sindhupalchok described, “most houses that collapsed were made of brick and mud…[we] don’t want to build houses like that anymore.”

Just as temporary housing was beneficial in the aftermath, the distribution rice and dried food also has a limited window of time when it is useful; people cannot live off of rice. Now, seven months later, people are in need of more nutritious food. As recognized by WHR, this is particularly true for vulnerable populations, like the new mothers of Jamune, Sindhupalchok. Although they are a farming village, they are unable to grow enough food to feed themselves. As a result, they cannot produce enough milk to feed their babies, many of who are now malnourished.

In addition to procuring enough food for themselves and their babies, women have also faced other issues post-earthquake. Of course women are not the only demographic who have suffered. However, they were the only demographic of aid recipients to which I was able to speak. This was because during the day when I visited communities, the men were either working or “just roam[ing] around.”\textsuperscript{52} Nevertheless, another major problem that women have faced is harassment in IDP camps. Karmala, who lives in the Chuchepati IDP Camp said, “Being a woman living in this open area is not so safe.” Her husband now lives with her, so she feels more secure. This is corroborated in the accounts heard by Sumeera Shrestha and WHR. They reported an increase in domestic and sexual abuse. This increase is due to increased proximity, particularly in sleeping quarters. As Sumeera described, “even people, when they come and don’t touch, it’s still harassment because you are sleeping next to some outsiders.” In addition, there

\textsuperscript{51} FAO. Interview by author.
\textsuperscript{52} Shrestha, Krishna Maya, resident of Kirtipur. Interview by author, translated by Pema Dolma Lama. November 16, 2015.
have been many instances of privacy lacking when women are showing or menstruating.\textsuperscript{53} As Durga of Jamune, Sindhupalchok described, during her period she “has to use a piece of cloth. And even can’t change that when [I] have to because the toilets are so open, [I am] not comfortable with it.” These problems were present in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, but unfortunately not much have changed, and who knows how long they will continue.\textsuperscript{54}

![Toilets installed by UNICEF. Many women suffer from lack of privacy in IDP camps. (November 8, 2015, author’s photograph)](image)

Another issue people face is the fact that their legal documents are missing. For example, a group of women in Kirtipur who all shared the same house are unable to prove they own the land because they are missing their housing document.\textsuperscript{55} For this reason, WHR is promoting legal counseling in the second phase of their relief efforts. Their Senior Program Manager said WHR is spreading “information about how to get citizenship again, because all the documents have been gone. Land certificate – because there is no house now.”

Finally, victims are looking to receive more aid. After the immediate influx of aid, they are still in need even once the emergency phase is over. As women in Kirtipur said, they’d “be very happy if somebody comes to give aid.” Luckily, although Nepal is no perhaps no longer in the international consciousness, aid organizations are still working.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{53} Shrestha, S. Interview by author.
\item \textsuperscript{54} Shrestha, Sahina, “‘We Do Not Exist.’” The Nepali Times. November 16, 2015.
\item \textsuperscript{55} Shrestha, K.M. Interview by author.
\end{itemize}
How Did We Get Here: Difficulties In Implementation

As was discussed earlier, there was a huge amount of aid and relief efforts, both ongoing and immediately following the earthquake. Why then, are so many people still struggling with basic needs? Although there were many beneficial relief efforts, holes also existed. As Austin Lord of Rasuwa Relief described, “there’s an overwhelming presence of aid that’s not being very well distributed in the immediate.” Lack of oversight within large organizations, difficulty of access in remote regions, and the limited time relief workers stay were all factors that contributed to the poor distribution of goods.

As previously mentioned, large organizations often do not distribute the aid themselves; small organizations help with this task. Sometimes distribution is also left up to individuals. This is a problem because, more often than not, these individuals keep all of the goods to themselves. I met one such individual at the Chuchepati IDP camp in Kathmandu. I have kept his identity anonymous for protection reasons. The only time I met him was when, during my interview with a group of women in Chuchepati, he came over yelling at me to leave. I inferred from this encounter that he would not have accepted my offer to interview him. The group of women whisked me away, and we continued the interview in one of their tents. Once inside the tent, the women told me about him in hushed voices. He is actually one of the six unofficial leaders of Chuchepati. Once, he collected 200 rupees from each tent, saying that he would use the money for tents, rope, and medical supplies. At the time there was nearly 900 tents in the camp. He kept the funds for his own use. The women described how “[the camp leaders] take photos of us, show INGOs how victim we are and keep the funds for themselves.” Not only do they take funds from INGOs, but they also keep goods for themselves. As was described to me in Chuchepati, “Some aid organizations give to community leader or something, then it’s corrupted and misused.” So even when organizations say they are working with locals and getting daily distribution updates, that does not necessarily mean that it is actually getting distributed equally. Pema Dolma Lama, a Nepali nurse who has been working on relief efforts since the earthquake struck, has witnessed this phenomenon multiple times. She explained, “For example, Oxfam is doing a lot of things. And the give, for example, tin roofs to ward number one of Kirtipur, let’s say. And then they just give that
amount to them. And then they say we gave and finished. And then the people here, of course they will not distribute equally.”

However, there is not only corruption with individual people, but also within the local government. According to a prominent member of the diplomatic community, this is because the government was afraid to lose control of relief efforts. He described, “They didn’t understand the opportunity of foreign aid…they wanted to control it.” He cited instances of goods remaining at the airport for weeks and the government accusing the WFP about providing substandard rice. Even VDCs have been accused of stockpiling. In addition, CDOs were due to rotate at the time of the earthquake, as they do every two years. However, “moving people in the middle of a disaster is idiotic.” Even if the new CDOs were apt for dealing with the situation, they would need to first become familiar with their districts, which takes time. A post-disaster situation is far from an ideal time to switch leadership. Still, the government fast-tracked the completion of a new constitution, to allegedly give people hope and show that the government was at least doing something. This backfired. As Mikel Dunham writes, “Because of the Constituent Assembly’s preoccupation with completing the constitution writing, the earthquake disaster was kept on the backburner.” Relief workers agree, even those who worked closely with the government during relief efforts. Galen Murton said, “The fact that not a dollar of the $4+ billion of aid dollars has yet been distributed and that the government has turned a humanitarian crisis into a political circus is sad, tragic really.” Jonathan Hulland of the Open Society Foundation described the government’s actions as “a perfect storm of negligence.”

Another, perhaps more practical factor that caused poor distribution of aid is access. For example, the women of Jamune, Sindhupalchok described how the nearby village of Bhotechaur received a lot of aid, but they have not. This is because Bhotechaur can be accessed from both sides, whereas Jamune is only accessible from one road, which is in poor condition since the earthquake. Similar challenges are present in the areas where Rasuwa Relief works. Rasuwa is a mountainous, remote region in northern Nepal; thus, it is difficult to reach Rasuwa. As Austin Lord described, “There’s only one way in essentially. Now there’s a half a way in, the other road got closed out completely.” In addition, Nagarkot is south of Rasuwa, and essentially “captured resources from Rasuwa.”

In addition to unequal distribution, another problem faced during aid implementation is how long workers can remain in Nepal. For example, the Israeli soldiers and doctors who came during the aftermath had to return to their regular jobs after two weeks; Israel also needs protection and medical services. Although this is understandable, this problem becomes particularly applicable once efforts begin to enter the recovery phase. As Austin Lord explained, “The biggest problem in the entire disaster is that the majority of the people who came, lots of them were capable…but the majority of people who came were gone in two months.”

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56 Shrestha, S. Interview by author.
57 Lord, A. Interview by author.
58 Ibid.
victims now have temporary shelters and bags of rice that they did not have before due to really beneficial work that occurred in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake. But now what?

Looking Towards the Future: Effects of the Blockade

On September 20\textsuperscript{th}, 2015, the Nepali Constituent Assembly (CA) adopted a new constitution. The way the constitution divided the country into states gave less power to the historically marginalized ethnic groups in the south. As a result, violent protests erupted along the Indian border. A blockade along the southern border ensued. It is convoluted and somewhat opaque at the moment as to what is causing the blockade. India cites the protests in the south and does not recognize the blockade as official. Most Nepalis I have spoken to blame India and absolutely see it as an official blockade. Either way, goods are not coming through the border. Most importantly for relief efforts, fuel, medicine, and construction supplies are in very low supply and are therefore becoming significantly more expensive.

Fuel is important to relief efforts for distribution purposes. For example, WHR had health kits and clothes that were supposed to be distributed in effected districts. They just finished distribution, paying three to four times the estimated cost of fuel.\textsuperscript{59} I met one woman named Krishna in Kirtipur who has already run out of her diabetes medication. Across the board, people were citing the increased cost of construction supplies for a reason they have not rebuild their house yet. Kabina Bajracharya of Kirtipur “planned to rebuild [her house.] But because of this blockade, everything is getting very expensive.”

Some experts are predicting another humanitarian crisis in Nepal, only seven months after the decimating earthquake.\textsuperscript{60} Unanimously everyone I interviewed, from relief workers at the UN to women still living in tin houses, agreed that the situation in Nepal was improving until the blockade occurred. As Kabina Bajracharya in Kirtipur described, her situation was “getting getter because they don’t feel scared of the aftershocks these days. And also they got this temporary house so they can live separately…It was getting better, but then because of the fuel crisis it [got worse.]” In addition to the blockade, winter is fast approaching and “many experts say it is already too late to ‘winterize’ the most remote areas in Nepal.”\textsuperscript{61} As Mikel Dunham writes so poignantly, “People are going to freeze to death in Nepal this winter. The question is: how many?”

The Effects of Foreign Aid

In Relief Efforts

In a disaster situation, foreign aid is no doubt needed; in a country where the economy is not functioning, money needs to come from somewhere. As a staff member at the Israeli

\textsuperscript{59} Shrestha, S. Interview with author.
\textsuperscript{61} Dunham, M. “In Nepal the Pols Play”
Embassy noted, the Nepali government didn’t function for the first few days after the earthquake, just like the Haitian government after it’s earthquake in 2010. Foreign aid not only came from governments, but also from individuals and organizations. For example, in the aftermath of the earthquake, Women for Freedom from Italy and Women Kind from the UK helped fund WHR’s efforts. Rasuwa relief and the dZi Foundation turned to their foreign donor bases for help. Israeli NGOs like Tevel b’Tzedek and the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) established projects here and brought aid workers. Individuals around the world sprang into action. Even Facebook established a way to donate through their website; Facebook users around the world donated more than $15 million in one week. It wasn’t just foreigners who were donating; Nepalis living abroad also contributed. For example, a monk living abroad donated $2000 to Students of Dolpo, allowing them to buy tin roofs. When asked how they felt about foreign aid, the recipients of aid of course felt positively. As Durga from Jamune, Sindhupalchok said, she is just happy that help is coming from somewhere.

In the Long-Term

When I first walked into Durga’s village with Sahina Shrestha of the Nepali Times, the women initially thought we were from a relief organization. Sahina had to clarify that we were from a newspaper. Once we started interviewing the women, a common refrain was that “even in far-flung villages, which are more remote than this…help has come…but here, nothing.” One reason for this has already been discussed: access. However, when pressed further as to why this was, Amrita explained, “the men from that village actually actively sought out help, unlike the men in this village. Maybe that made the difference, because since everyone is having a hard time, they actually went and sought out organizations and told them that we need this.” She also cited the fact that there are more people from that village who live in Kathmandu, so it was easier for them to get help.

This made me frustrated. If they are complaining about not getting help, what are they doing to proactively help themselves? I realize that blaming these women was not fair of me; they are rural Nepali women who cannot go to Kathmandu because they need to take care of their young children. In addition, unfortunately they do not feel that are able to seek help; it must be the men. But still, is there a problem if every time a foreigner comes, they expect aid? Again, it is not fair to blame the women of Jamune, but what happens if you multiply this mindset by an entire country for the past fifty years?

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62 Shrestha, S. Interview by author.
63 Lord, A. Interview by author.
64 Ayres, B. Email Interview by author.
65 Mayer, Y. Interview by author.
67 Amrita, resident of Jamune, Sindhupalchok. Interview with author. November 9, 2015.
68 Ibid.
First one must ask: where does this mindset come from? This is a large question, the full answer to which is somewhat outside the realm of this paper. However, I will attempt to answer it briefly. Dor Bahadur Bista discusses this phenomenon in his book “Fatalism and Development: Nepal’s Struggle for Modernization.” He defines fatalism as follows, “that one has no personal control over one’s life circumstances, which are determined through a divine or powerful external agency.” Perhaps foreign aid has become this “powerful external agency.” Bista agrees. He describes, “the expectation of foreign aid as a divinely instigated redistribution.” So, fifty years later, if this external agent is still present, it is no wonder that this mindset persists.

Mind you, foreign governments and aid organizations do not want to be here forever. USAID said, “The idea and the hope is that as Nepal strengthens its democracy, as it strengthens its own service delivery…foreign assistance is going to be reduced.” A staff member at FAO echoed this sentiment in their description of sustainable development: they will leave “when the government can actually carry out everything by themselves.” Essentially, foreign aid will no longer be needed when the Nepali government is accountable to its citizens. Of course, Nepal’s government has a rocky history, including a ten-year civil war. It also just ratified a new constitution two months ago. No democracy is established overnight. However, there are other reasons that the current government is dependent on foreign aid and is not accountable to its people.

Bista points to a phenomenon known as afno manchhe, or “one’s own people.” He describes how in a collectivist society (as opposed to an individualist) such as Nepal, afno manchhe highlights being inside or outside of a particular group of people. Although collectivism can be utilized for productive means, afno manchhe “can also be readily subverted to negative ends…one finds exclusionary tendencies, factionalism, failures in cooperation, and corruption in various forms.” Essentially, if you are not in the circle of the government, the politicians have no incentive to care.

Just as the Nepali government is not accountable to its poor citizens, neither are the foreign governments nor are the INGOs. Foreign governments are accountable to their own citizens and will ultimately only complete projects if it is in their own self interest. As Jeffrey Sachs writes in his book The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time, “Foreign policy strategists have long recognized that acts of altruism…are also acts of enlightened self-interest.” For example, Israel “tries to develop projects here and there” to aid Nepal, but “there are countries where [their] interest is higher.” USAID is “primarily accountable to the American people,” and ultimately Congress dictates their funds. INGOs are accountable to their donors. As William Easterly writes in his book The White Man’s Burden: Why the West’s Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good, “aid bureaucrats have incentives to satisfy the rich countries doing the funding as well as (or instead of) the poor.” One of Easterly’s main arguments is that as a result of aid agencies only being responsible to wealthy donors,

69 Hulland, J. Interview by author.
71 Mayer, Y. Interview by author.
nobody is held accountable for goals not being reached. As Jurgen Hulst of the WFP explains, “I think donors are not critical enough on how the funds are spent.” Large organizations have very little transparency, and no one holds them accountable as to whether or not their funds are spent appropriately.\(^72\) For example, when large organizations bring in dozens of workers, they often stay in five star hotels.\(^73\)

So if no one is held accountable to women like Amrita, then of course she does not feel empowered to make her voice heard. No one has incentive to take action based on her plea. She has a temporary shelter, thanks to an INGO, so her government feels like it does not have to do anymore work. The INGO has done its job and has moved on to other projects. What is her logical reaction, then? To again, look towards foreign aid, which, again, allows the government to not do its job. As Jonathan Hulland describes, “foreign faces showing up with stuff…creates a power dynamic that is not really healthy.”

As Yaron Mayer said, foreign aid is “important but also could be counterproductive.” He then went on to say that it “has to be planned with vision of the country.” This goes back to a previous point, which is that hopefully, foreign aid will no longer be needed. But what happens when the government has no “vision of the country?” Then foreign aid continues to last for the past five decades. As USAID, which has been in Nepal since 1951, described, “Nepal…is still struggling…with it’s democracy as well as with it’s development. So I’d say that foreign aid continues to have a very strong hold within Nepal.”\(^74\)

The cycle continues.

**Conclusion: How We Can Help**

Although there are definite problems with relief efforts and foreign aid, it is of course not all bad. Lives were no doubt saved and it would be wrong to say that foreign aid has not has positive effects. For example, thanks to USAID’s work over the past sixty years, malaria has nearly been eradicated in the Terai region and Nepal has telephone lines.\(^75\) Aid workers agree that the work done post-earthquake was largely well done and well coordinated. As Austin Lord explained, “That’s not to say that we were all very jaded and pessimistic to begin with. I mean, there were lots of things to be excited about in the beginning.” However it’s obvious that there are aspects of relief efforts that could have been improved, and that foreign aid has its downfalls.

Now the question is, as individuals how can we help in this seemingly hopeless situation? Of course, you can commit your life to working on these issues like Sumeera Shrestha or Austin Lord or Ben Ayres. Such a life path is certainly admirable, but not all of us can or will follow such a path. In theory, another way to help is to hold large organizations accountable for their projects. Of course, this is much easier said than done because it would ideally involve being on

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\(^72\) Hulland, J. Interview by author.
\(^73\) Ibid.
\(^75\) Ibid.
the ground oneself. One would then have to get enough political clout and lobby for large organizations to become more transparent.

So how can the rest of us, especially foreign individuals, help, both in general and in post-disaster situations? In a post disaster situation, it is tempting to go and volunteer oneself. However, unless one has tangible skills such as medical expertise, in my opinion, it is better not to go to the disaster area. Otherwise, you may be using more of the limited resources available as opposed to contributing. If one feels so inclined to donate money towards a cause, one should research before choosing an organization to which to donate. I would advise choosing small organizations because, as discussed, they often have more on-the-ground connections and are more transparent with their funds. Support local organizations because not only are they more likely to have local knowledge, but they also create jobs for people in the community. Finally, tell others to do the same. Instead of clicking on Facebook’s donate button and having your money go into a large lump sum, give to small organizations who need more supplies and infrastructure to complete their work. Learn about what is happening; hear, read, and share people’s stories. Although this will not do anything tangible, it will keep experiences alive and in the public consciousness, which, in turn, will hopefully generate more support.

Especially with the state of the world, it is easy to feel overwhelmed. But if we all do what we can as individuals, hopefully we will be able to fix some of the world’s problems. Finally, urge and help others to do the same.
Appendix 1: The Nepali Times

In addition to completing research, this month I also had the opportunity to have some of my photographs published in The Nepali Times. This opportunity arose after I traveled to Jamune, Sindhupalchok with one of their reporters, Sahina Shrestha. Sahina had gone to the same village five months beforehand and was returning to write a follow-up story. I was lucky enough that she invited me to join her. A photograph of the article, as well as a link can be found here: http://nepalitimes.com/article/nation/help-for-earthquake-survivors-halted-by-blockade

Besides having the amazing opportunity to have photographs published, accompanying a reporter into the field was a learning experience in itself, especially in regards interviewing skills. By listening to Sahina’s questions, I realized that perhaps my questions were too complicated; hers were very simple and direct. She also asked follow up questions immediately. For example, one woman said what she needed most was a house. Instead of just accepting the answer, Sahina immediately asked the woman why. This strategy leads to more fruitful and more complete answers.
Appendix 2: Additional Photographs of Chuchepati IDP Camp
All photographs taken by author on November 8, 2015.

Chuchepati IDP Camp, Chabil, Kathmandu
A temporary school setup by Save the Children. Both times I visited the camp no teacher was present.

A temporary health clinic set up by UNICEF. The doors were locked both times I visited the camp.

Water infrastructure set up by Medicines Sans Frontiers.
The Women of Chuchepati

Mangali Tamang, 60

Karmala Dulal (right), 30 and friend
Appendix 3: Additional Photographs of Kirtipur
All photographs taken by author on November 16, 2015.

Janani Shrestha stands in the entrance to the destroyed top floor of her home. She now lives in a temporary shelter. She is scared to sleep in her home because she is worried it will collapse.

Wooden posts are used as reinforcements for damaged buildings.

Some people tried to mend the walls of their houses themselves.
Internal damage to various homes. In order for the families to move back into their homes, they must tear them down and rebuild again. But money and time are running out because of the blockade and winter fast approaching.
Glossary of Abbreviations and Organizations
- **CA**: Constituent Assembly. The body of 598 members that ratified Nepal’s new constitution on September 20, 2015.
- **CDCS**: Country Development Cooperation Strategy. Five-year strategies used by USAID, in collaboration with partner country governments to address specific issues of development.
- **CDO**: Chief District Officers. The bureaucrats who are the heads of each Nepali district. They work under the Home Ministry and are not politically elected.
- **dZi Foundation**: A small organization that has branches both in Nepal and the United States. They focus on long-term, community-based development. For further information, see Evelyn Hartz’s ISP from Spring 2013.
- **DART**: Disaster Assistance Response Team. Deployed by the United States government for immediate relief efforts.
- **FAO**: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.
- **FFS**: Female Friendly Spaces. Created by WHR in the aftermath of the earthquake as spaces where women could stay with their children.
- **IDF**: Israeli Defense Forces. Set up a hospital in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, which then acted as an army base for the rest of Israel’s aid efforts.
- **IDP Camps**: IDP refers to “Internally Displaced Person,” a term coined by the UN. Usually these camps consist of many makeshift homes that more resemble tents.
- **JDC**: Joint Distribution Committee. A Jewish humanitarian organization that provides aid around the world, particularly focusing on Jewish populations.
- **INGO**: International Non-Governmental Organization.
- **MSF**: Medecins Sans Frontieres
- **NGO**: Non-Governmental Organization.
- **NRA**: National Reconstruction Authority. An agency that was proposed by the Nepali government to distribute the $4.1 billion pledged by the international community for relief efforts. Has not yet come into fruition.
- **OFDA**: Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. Works under USAID.
- **OXFAM**: An INGO that works on development and poverty alleviation around the world. Sent many supplies during earthquake relief efforts.
- **Rasuwa Relief**: A small organization that focuses on post-earthquake relief efforts in the Rasuwa District.
- **USAID**: United States Agency for International Development. An organization that funds projects all over the world and works closely with partner country governments.
- **VDC**: Village Development Committee. Work under the District Development Committees in Nepal and, in turn, the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development
- **WFP**: World Food Program
- **WHR**: Women for Human Rights. A Nepali NGO that focuses on helping single women.
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-Pulmaya Mukton, 61, originally from Ramechap
-Mangali Tamang, 60, originally from Ramechap
-Dilli Kumari Adhikao, originally from Sindhupalchok
-Dala Kumari Dhotel, 61, originally from Karre
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-Durga, 19
-Amrita, 23, new mother
-Pawah, new mother
-Manju, 21, nine months pregnant at time of interview
-Karmala, 30, nine months pregnant at time of interview
-Dhana, 21, new mother, gave birth one month ago

-The Women of Kirtipur. All interviewed on November 16, 2015. Translated by Pema Dolma Lama
-Laxmi Kumareh Maharjun, 45
-Janani Shrestha, 50
-Krishna Maya Shrestha, 46
-Kabina Bajracharya, 28
-Cholku Maharjan, 53
-Shir Maya Maharjan, 70, lost her husband during the earthquake
-Rang Kumari Maharjan, 53
-Gyanu Suba Maharjan, 42
**Suggestions for Future Research**

One aspect of relief work and foreign aid that I did not have time to address was “voluntourism.” This is a phenomenon where tourists volunteer in the country they are visiting. Although I alluded to it in my conclusion, it is a fascinating topic that is worth investigation. There are many questions I have regarding voluntourism including but not limited to the following. How much do travel companies promote voluntourism? How much are tourists paying to volunteer? What skills do the volunteers have? Are the people they are helping getting the proper help, and do they even want help in the first place? There is also potentially large power dynamics that play into voluntourism, which are worth being explored.

There are many other individuals and organizations that I would have loved the opportunity to speak to if time allowed. They include the following:

- UNICEF
- A representative of the Nepali government
- OM Nepal
- The Dolma Fund
- Kirtipur Earthquake Relief Fund
- Anil Chitrakar (SIT has his contact information)

The following sources were either not cited in this paper or pieces that I would have liked to include if I had more time. This is not an exhaustive list and many more informational documents can be found on the websites of INGOs and of foreign governments.

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