

## Editorial



Eleven days have passed since an earthquake hit Nepal killing thousands and leaving many more injured and homeless. In addition to Kathmandu many rural areas are impacted. Aid agencies are making slow progress here and we are only slowly learning how terrible the suffering is there. Rural houses are mostly old and not well built.

In some villages nearly all buildings have collapsed. All of our friends seem to be still alive thankfully; and many have managed to report in. However to date we have only heard from a few of our stove makers. Many of them have lost their houses and all that they value. It is only a matter of time till we know that most of them are trapped in front of an abyss. We want to help them find their feet.

Please help with our request for donations at the end of this newsletter. We will take care that all one hundred percent of your donations help those impacted to rebuild their houses and to secure food and medical supplies.

Dr. Frank Dengler, chairman of the Ofenmacher

## The situation after 11 days

Most of the new „lattice construction“ (steel-concrete frame, internal brick walls) houses in Kathmandu are still standing. Many older houses and pagodas, built only from bricks, have collapsed. Supply chains are gradually returning to normal. Shops are open. Goods seem to be reaching the city.

In the country, on the other hand, the situation is still chaotic. Many villages are unreachable or buried in rubble. The aid agencies do not have enough vehicles or aid-workers to help everywhere. Reports of private initiatives in Kathmandu are especially impressive.

Many people are taking it on themselves to provide food, blankets, plastic sheets etc. fighting their way to remote villages by truck, car or motorbike, however they can! Tobias, a member of our organization and head of our monitoring operations and Moritz, a volunteer at the Ofenmacher and Street Dog Care, both joined such an effort earning our thanks and respect!

Words are not sufficient to describe the destruction in the villages. In Dhadaghaun, the village where Christa Drigalla our head of section for Nepal had her house and built a Health Post, hardly one brick remains standing on another.

The photos show the Health Post before and after the quake. My wife Katharina Dworschak worked there and cared for patients. Now medical aid is urgently required. What will happen to the many injured?

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The houses next to the Health Post are completely destroyed (the picture left shows the houses before the quake).



Tobias sent in the following pictures from the aid action around Melamchi in the district of Sidhupalchok.



Many people are trying to leave Kathmandu to reach their villages to look for parents and relatives and to check their houses. People are fleeing from the city, buses are overcrowded but at least they are available, at first scantily local buses but increasingly also long distance buses.



Currently we are trying to reach all our stove makers to get a systematic overview of where aid is most urgently required. That will take time as the power supply has mostly failed in rural areas and in the meantime cellphone batteries are exhausted.

*Frank Dengler*

## **Life after the quake**

Anita, our manager in Kathmandu, told Christa about her life after the quake. We are printing some of the report here along with reports from stove makers to create a picture of life both in the city and in the countryside.

There are not many aftershocks but each aftershock creates panic because people are simply afraid for their lives. Mostly Anita and her family stay on the ground floor, so that they can leave the house quickly in an emergency. Yesterday we managed to see and speak to Kedar (Anita's husband and vice president of our partner organization) on Skype. An aftershock occurred during the interview. Kedar was at the PC on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. His shock and fear for the safety of his children were clear to see. He ended the call abruptly and made his way out of the building.

Food supplies are low. Only a few shops in the region are open. The prices have climbed more than 50% in the last few days, which Anita could demonstrate with a few examples. To date her neighborhood has not received any aid. Anita's house is basically intact. However the damaged support frame for the water tanks on the roof means has interrupted the water supply. Anita and her family have to fetch water from an underground tank. They are using rain water to wash. Anita is trying to organize the repair work. Of course that it difficult!

Electricity has been available again since yesterday evening. Anita's father travelled to Hetauda in Tarai to check his house there – it has collapsed! Anita's sister Menuka also travelled to Hetauda. Her house is still intact. She still has rice supplies there, though transport is a problem. Menuka is worried about her father as he won't take advice and keeps crawling through the rubble of his house to rescue valuables.

Khundan, Anita's son, didn't speak for two hours after the first quake. Then he started asking: „Who did that?“, „Why did that happen?“, „Which God is responsible for that?“, „When will everything be OK again?“. That is strenuous for Anita. He watches too many movies about Gods on TV. His Grandpa told him there are too many badly behaved children; so the God Krishna stamped his foot and the Earth shook.

After everyone was safely outside and the first semblance of peace returned the children were calmed with small presents: sweets, cheese-balls, chocolate etc. Khundan thought that was great and so the adventure phase of the earthquake started. He started exploring the rubble with his friends. Anita nearly died of fear as the lively children were hard to control

Akriti, Anita's daughter, was in her Grandma's arm when the quake started. Grandma cried for her life and held the child so tightly that Akriti was scared. Since then she has been scared of her own Grandma and only wants Anita to look after her. Otherwise she is fine.

Anita is surviving. She takes care of everything. Tries to organize repair men, visits shops to buy vegetables or something to eat. She keeps in touch with her siblings and still tries to do her work for the Ofenmacher. She is almost embarrassed that she and her family are doing so well whilst she sees much devastation all around.

The daily temple visit is still part of her life (though the temple is closed as it is in danger of collapsing). People simply leave their gifts in front of the temple. Anita invited an old woman,

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who used to beg in front of the temple for small gifts, for dinner. Anita's mother gave her a sari as she had lost everything to the quake. The family offer shelter and sleeping bunks in their two garages for people from the neighborhood. Recently 19 people slept in a single room

Stove makers:

Rajendra Bista in Gulmi registered 600 completed stoves. Gulmi was not hit hard by the quake. The connection isn't great but it is possible to maintain contact.

Jas Bahadur Tamang in Ramechhap couldn't call in yet. Anita hopes that's only because his cellphone battery is empty and he has no chance to charge it. She is confident that in the villages in Ramechhap are OK; otherwise she would have heard something.

Kiran Lama is at home in Nuwakot, where things are very bad. Nuwakot is close to Ghorka and the epicenter of the first quake. From there we only know that help is urgently required. Anita says that the „mid-management is missing“ by which she means the state organizations like police and army. Everyone is working „till they drop“ but there is no plan, no coordination and so the work is ineffective.

Sita Rupakheti, one of our longest-serving and most experienced stove makers reported that she was working to adjust a stove for the family's favorite cooking pot when the quake started. Everybody ran outside. She realized too late that her tools and her cellphone were still inside as she watched the house collapse. Anita could comfort her. She has already built more than 500 stoves. Of course she will get new tools from us. Anita also promised her a new cellphone.

That all happened in Dhading, Jeevanpur 7. Sita herself is from Dhading but from another village. When she returned home, she found her own house in ruins. It took three days for her to rescue a sari from the rubble. She was happy to be able to change clothes for the first time since the quake.

We received similar reports from Parwati Tamang of Nuwakot. She has been working for us for a long time and was one of four women who travelled to Gulmi last week to help. When she returned home, she found that she did not have a home anymore! She is living, with her entire family, in a field where they have nailed some corrugated iron and plastic together. They wait in their makeshift residence and once again have to cook on an open fire! Everything has been reset – back to nothing.

These are examples from individual stove makers. We have had no news at all from more than 80 and can only hope that they have survived. We are working with help from Tobias, a member of our organization, and Anita, our tireless manager, to get an overview and want to direct help to where it is most needed.

*Christa Drigalla, Frank Dengler*

## **Request for donations**

The people in Nepal need help urgently, today to look for those lost and to help the injured, tomorrow to supply food, tents and blankets, the day after tomorrow to help them rebuild their houses and their lives.

Many of our stove makers live in the worst impacted areas. We especially want to help them, their relatives and friends, wherever the need is greatest.

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We ask for your help with donations!

Please donate with the **code word „Earthquake aid“** to our account:

Die Ofenmacher e.V.

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