

One Year Later: Why It's Especially Important to #FundEducation After a Disaster

In April and May 2015, two earthquakes of magnitudes 7.8 and 7.2 respectively devastated much of Nepal. The sudden loss of family members and homes shattered countless people's lives. The sudden loss of thousands of schools, while understandably not people's immediate focus of concern, made itself felt as the weeks passed and the desire to get "back to normal" strengthened.

Children living in the aftermath of a natural disaster or other major disruptive factor are at high risk of grave personal dangers such as being coerced, tricked, or sold into domestic slavery, prostitution, or forced labor. One of the best ways to combat this horror is to ensure that parents continue sending their children to school, and that there are schools to send them to!

School rebuilding efforts are underway in numerous districts of Nepal. At [Educate the Children](#) (ETC), we are concentrating most of our rebuilding work on 30 schools in Dolakha District (very near the epicenter of the second quake) with which we were already working when the quakes struck. Every one of those 30 schools received building materials and technical support for temporary classroom construction as well as classroom supplies and furniture to replace what was destroyed in the quakes. That was necessary work in the short term to get kids back to school with minimal delay, but the kids need and deserve sturdier, more weather-proof facilities. In recent months, ETC has been supporting permanent and semi-permanent construction at 19 schools, including Saptamai Primary School (pictured here).

Although the obvious importance of having school buildings to go to cannot be overstated, they are not much use if children don't attend. ETC recently provided important basic support to 670 children from impoverished families, who might otherwise be kept home from school. (Pictured here, ETC-Nepal Director Mira Rana and Education Director Laxmi Basukala present a child with her new backpack full of useful supplies.) We also hold regular open meetings with parents – attended by hundreds annually – at which parents gain information and learn strategies to give their children the best chance to succeed at school. Topics include the importance of regular school attendance and of reading at home, behavioral issues and how best to cope, and health issues.

The quality of education received is also of paramount importance. Rural teachers in Nepal are very unlikely to have any opportunity for ongoing professional development. ETC provides those opportunities every year to dozens of teachers of varying grade levels and subjects. Most recently, 34 teachers participated enthusiastically in a three-day music therapy training workshop, led by a well-known Nepali singer/musician. Incorporating music and dance into children's school activities offers an outlet for energy, fosters a positive learning environment, enables the use of skills and thought processes not typically engaged through desk work, and in this case provides children with a way to work through any ongoing post-quake stress. This effective training is now in high demand, and the Dolakha District Education Office is looking to offer it district-wide. (Pictured here are some of the training participants dancing to a lively song, and young children at Guranse Primary School dancing and singing in their classroom.)

The work of ETC and many other grassroots organizations has been instrumental in ensuring both the continuity and the improved quality of educational opportunities for many thousands of

Nepal's children, even with the added post-quake difficulties and dangers. However, we cannot do it alone. We need a multinational commitment to the underserved children of Nepal and throughout the world. Millions of young lives can be changed for the better if we #FundEducation!

[Educate the Children's](#) mission is to work with women and children in Nepal to improve health, welfare, and self-sufficiency by building skills that families can pass down to later generations. Through our children's education, women's empowerment, and sustainable agriculture programs, we provide training and resources to help thousands of marginalized and impoverished people make better lives for themselves. For more information about [ETC's](#) work both pre- and post-quakes, please [click here](#) to watch our short (less than three minutes) video.