



8 million

people in Nepal
are in need of
humanitarian
assistance.



The 7.8 magnitude earthquake that rocked Nepal April 25th has left thousands dead.

Experts predict the toll will rise much higher, as many relief efforts have yet to reach remote areas. These rural areas are at particularly high risk and will face ongoing challenges, as many are difficult to access under normal circumstances, and almost impossible since the earthquake due to land slides. Thousands of villagers are living outdoors because their homes have been destroyed, and their grain supplies have been wiped out, leaving them at high risk for food security. With the monsoon season arriving in just weeks, it is crucial that relief efforts get to these areas as soon as possible.

THE ROLE OF LOCAL COMMUNITY CENTERS IN RURAL RELIEF EFFORTS:

READ Global provides 1.9 million rural Nepalis with critical access to information and resources through 59 community library and resource centers (READ Centers). While many of our communities have been hard-hit by the earthquake, our Nepali staff have been working hard since day one to keep this vast network of READ Centers open, and to coordinate disaster relief efforts with municipal bodies and INGOs that may not have a connection to rural communities on the ground. In some villages that have not yet been reached by other response efforts, and where most people have lost their homes, the READ Center is the only building still standing strong.

READ Centers are playing a key role in immediate disaster relief efforts:

- **Shelter:** In several communities, a majority of homes have been destroyed but the READ Center is still standing. Many villagers are currently taking shelter inside the Centers. READ Staff are also distributing tarps and tents as temporary shelter.
- **Food and water:** Volunteers at Centers are mobilizing their communities to collect and distribute rice, milk, salt, and other food for nearby communities in need. READ staff in Kathmandu are purchasing supplies and sending them to our Centers in the hardest-hit areas.
- **Communications and energy:** READ Centers are often the only place in rural communities with electricity (solar panels), which allow villagers to charge cell phones - a communication life-line. Centers also offer free access to computers and the Internet. READ Staff have begun distributing solar lamps to villages that have no other power source.
- **Medical support:** Centers are organizing blood drives, bringing in doctors to conduct health check-ups inside the Centers, and distributing medicine, face masks, and gloves. A few Centers even have ambulances that are providing emergency support.



We are in this for the long haul. While millions of dollars have been funneled into disaster relief efforts, help is not getting to many rural areas. Because READ already has a strong presence in 127 rural villages across Nepal, we are uniquely positioned to assist in both the short and long term.

- **Community trust and co-ownership:** READ Centers are owned and operated by local communities, which means that they are trusted platforms for relief efforts. All donations of food, water, and medical supplies are being organized and distributed by the local leadership and volunteers in each community, so there is less concern about graft and corruption.
- **Rebuilding families' lives and homes:** Our local partner communities are already organizing fundraisers so they can directly support their neighbors in rebuilding - a testament to the power of community engagement and initiative. A majority of Centers in Nepal also have savings cooperatives, which will allow members to take out loans to rebuild homes in the coming months. Because the monsoon season will begin in a matter of weeks, and many families have lost their crops, READ Centers are organizing agricultural extension outreach. READ will additionally offer trauma counseling for earthquake victims.
- **Rebuilding Centers to ensure long-term access to information and services:** Once the immediate relief needs have been met, we will be rebuilding damaged READ Centers, so that they can continue to support communities by providing trainings in health and sanitation, vocational skills, literacy, agriculture, and more.

— At least sixteen READ Centers have been damaged by the earthquake. We will need to rebuild these Centers to ensure our communities have ongoing access to information, services, and education. —

100% of funds

directly support our partner communities and Nepali staff so they can provide relief services and information through READ Centers, reconstruct damaged Centers, and help families rebuild their lives.

What is a READ Center?

Under normal circumstances, READ Centers provide essential resources: literacy, livelihood skills development, agricultural training, women's empowerment programs, micro-loans, and health services. This is all done through a community-owned building that includes:

- A **library** with 3-5,000 books in local languages
- A **computer room** with free access to the Internet
- A **training hall** that can also be used by partner organizations and visiting medical professionals
- **Women's and children's sections** with specialized resources
- **Communications** and A/V equipment

Now, more than ever, READ Centers in Nepal are serving as community hubs, providing information and critical resources to rural villages in need.