

PROFILE: NEPAL



Home of Mount Everest and culturally diverse, Nepal suffers frequent natural disasters and severe rural hardship.

A magnet for adventure tourists, the country's striking landscape ranges from humid plains in the south to the Himalayas in the north.

But Nepal is the poorest country in Asia and the 15th poorest in the world. Dalits, indigenous populations and Muslims are the most marginalised groups.

From 1996 to 2006, a civil war between the government and Maoist guerrillas killed thousands of people, destroyed infrastructure and caused massive displacement. Nepal was declared a democratic republic and the ruling monarchy was abolished.

Most Nepalis are farmers, but many villages suffer food shortfalls – their vulnerability increased by drought, earthquakes, fires, epidemics, avalanches and windstorms.

More than a hundred caste and ethnic groups have distinct languages, cultural traditions and religious practices. Nepal's 1990 constitution forbids discrimination on the basis of caste, race, sex or religion. However, lower castes continue to be neglected, especially Dalit women.

The first Nepali church was established in the 1950s. Data held by some Christian networks suggest there could now be more than 800,000 Christians in 6,000 congregations. After years of persecution, since 2006 churches have had new freedoms.

TEARFUND'S WORK IN NEPAL

Tearfund has been active in Nepal for more than 40 years. The following are examples of some of our local partners' work:

Share & Care work with marginalised poor communities in Nuwakot District, to the north of Kathmandu, enabling communities to assess their needs and resources already available. By providing training and additional resources, the work is having big impacts in the areas of agriculture, income generation, women's empowerment and education.

Also working in Nuwakot, our partner 'Carnet' works with local community groups (including churches) to raise awareness of the risks of child trafficking and sexual abuse. They provide income generation training to vulnerable families to provide alternatives to sending their children away into risky situations.

Transformation Nepal has been working in the Sarlahi district for several years with funds from other donors, assisting local schools to improve the quality of education. Tearfund is providing additional assistance to help reduce some of the underlying causes of high school drop-out rates – enabling poor and marginalised families to increase household income and address health issues (related to water and sanitation)

International Nepal Fellowship (INF) works in the remote mountainous Karnali Zone. Lack of fertile land and agricultural knowledge means villages only cover their food needs for a small part of the year – forcing men to migrate for seasonal work. INF helps them to develop kitchen gardens, diversify livestock and access government services.

INF also engages in 'safe migration' work, raising awareness of trafficking in villages and training churches – along the Nepali border – to spot women and girls being trafficked and link them with local authorities or specialist NGOs.

United Mission to Nepal (UMN) helps communities in mid-west Nepal form disaster preparedness committees. Members are taught to assess vulnerability to common threats and develop pre-emptive action plans.

- **Pray for people living in poverty in Nepal.**
- **Pray for our Nepali partners as they seek to help others.**
- **And pray for Nepal: for justice, peace, health and hope for everyone.**