



ALL HANDS VOLUNTEERS

Nepal Earthquake Recovery: Nuwakot Base

Volunteer Information

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PROGRAM NEPAL

The 2015 Nepal earthquake, which killed more than 8,000 people and injured more than twice as many, occurred at 11:56am on Saturday April 25th. With a moment magnitude of 7.8 and a maximum Mercalli Intensity of IX (violent shaking), it was the most powerful disaster to strike Nepal since the 1934 Nepal-Bihar earthquake.

Thousands of people were left homeless, with entire villages flattened across many districts of the country. Centuries-old buildings were destroyed at UNESCO World Heritage sites in the Kathmandu Valley, including some at the Kathmandu Durbar Square, the Patan Durbar Square and the Bhaktapur Durbar Square.

A second major earthquake occurred at 12:50pm on Tuesday May 12th with a moment magnitude of 7.3. The epicentre was on the border of the Dolakha and Nuwakot districts. This earthquake occurred on the same fault as the larger magnitude 7.8 earthquake of April 25th, but further east than the original quake. Tremors were felt as far as about 2400 kilometres away from the epicentre in Chennai. In Nepal, at least 153 people were killed by this second earthquake and more than 3,200 people were injured, primarily in mountain regions of the northeast. The district of Nuwakot, which was also one of the regions hit hardest by the original quake, was among the worst affected areas. Between the two quakes, 95% of houses in and around Nuwakot were destroyed.

NUWAKOT

Nuwakot District is a part of Bagmati Zone and is one of the seventy-five districts of Nepal. The district, with Bidur as its district headquarters covers an area of 1,121 km² and had a population of 277,471 in 2011.

The name, Nuwakot, is made up of two words 'nawa' and 'kort'. Nawa means nine in Nepali and 'kort' means sacred religious site at the top of hill. The district accordingly has 9 nine hills over which various deities are said to dwell thus overseeing and protecting Nuwakot. This has led Nuwakot often being called "City of nine hills".

Our base is just outside the town of Trisuli (not far from Bidur) in Nuwakot, on a road which leads 70km straight to China.

As a result of the earthquake on April 25th, around 1,000 people have been reported killed and 1,311 injured. Among the highly affected were the north-eastern areas of the district where infrastructure and houses are destroyed and there were a large number of casualties.

51% of the population of Nuwakot were affected by the earthquake with 30,000 buildings destroyed in the earthquake and 15,000 partly damaged.



PROGRAM DETAILS

The magnitude of the earthquake has resulted in thousands of extremely dangerous structures at risk of collapse with every aftershock, tremor and bout of heavy rainfall. The Nuwakot district has a variety of Schools and private homes that we will be focusing on. There will be a variety of work including demolition, debris management (rubble) and building temporary and permanent structures.

Whilst working with us, there is a high chance you will be on a 'mobile' team. With volunteers camping close to their work sites, there is less travel time and we can work more efficiently. Please be prepared – bring a tent, roll mattress and a thick sleeping bag to keep you warm at night!

ASSESSMENTS

Our assessors are often the first point of contact with the communities and homeowners we serve. They are deployed into remote villages and surrounding areas in search of structures that have been affected. They talk with homeowners and community leaders to determine if and how we can be of assistance. Our assessment teams are led by national volunteers from Nepal.

DEBRIS MANAGEMENT (RUBBLE)

Our Debris Removal Program addresses the need for debris clearance from completely collapsed homes in the district. Teams of volunteers clear private home sites of debris, while salvaging belongings and reusable materials, often alongside the homeowners. Volunteers use hand tools, manpower and a lot of teamwork to clear sites; they are able to assist homeowners in removing the devastating past so that they can re-build a brighter future. After a site is cleared, homeowners often plan to rebuild their homes and plant new gardens. This work is physically demanding, but also incredibly rewarding. It's a crucial part of what we do and enables homeowners and communities to take the next step and start the rebuilding process.

SCHOOL-BUILDING PROJECT

Our Room to Read School-Building Project is an effort to build new schools and repair partially damaged schools in remote locations in the Nuwakot district. Thousands of children are currently out of school and are missing a significant part of their education due to the number of schools that were destroyed or made unsafe in the earthquakes. In partnership with the non-profit, Room to Read, AHV is planning to have 5 schools up and running by the beginning of 2017 to allow 2,000+ children to continue their education. We have a highly experienced team of construction and engineering specialists who will ensure that each school is built and repaired to the highest, earthquake resistant quality possible.

VOLUNTEERING WITH ALL HANDS

OUR MISSION

To provide immediate, effective and sustainable support to communities in need by harnessing the energy and commitment of dedicated volunteers.



WHAT DOES IT COST?

All Hands Volunteers does not charge a fee for volunteering. Volunteers are responsible for funding their travel to and from the program. Once on base, we provide accommodation and 3 meals a day – for the 6 work days. Please make sure to budget accordingly for the extras such as: meals on your day off, entertainment, snacks, drinks, visa extensions, etc.

We do strongly encourage volunteers to also be supporters of our organization. It will cost All Hands roughly \$25 per day to cover the shelter, food, tools, materials, transport, and management that make your stay possible. Starting a personal [fundraising page](#) is a great way to help us offset these costs. It gives everyone you know a way to donate to the great work being done here in Nuwakot. [Click here](#) to get started or email projectnepal@hands.org for more information

To give you a general idea of prices: USD \$1 = 100 NRs. (Nepalese Rupees) correct in January 2016.

Please refer to www.xe.com for up to date currency conversions.

- Bus from Nuwakot to Kathmandu – 180 NPR (USD \$1.55)
- A meal on your day off – 150 NPR and up (USD \$1.50+)
- A 500ml beer – 280 NPR (USD \$2.80)
- A small bottle of coke – 50 NPR (USD \$0.50)
- Sleeping Pad – 800 – 1000 NPR (USD \$8.00) (can be bought in Trisuli, Nuwakot or Kathmandu)

****Please be advised that due to a fuel shortage all of these prices may be higher when you arrive. This is particularly relevant to the cost of taxis and buses, which in some circumstances may double.*

PREPARING FOR YOUR TRIP

WHAT SHOULD I BRING?

Shopping for supplies needs to be conducted either before you enter Nepal, or in Kathmandu. There are very limited options outside the capital. Come prepared!

As this is a disaster response program – you will be working with mud, rubble, very old timber, concrete blocks, and other dirty things. **Be prepared for any clothing you wear on the worksite to be destroyed! We will supply t-shirts for you to wear on site.**

Please be mindful that we live in a remote region where residents are often not familiar to interactions with Westerners. We take cultural sensitivity VERY seriously.

Shoulders must be covered and knee length shorts or pants/trousers must be worn when on site.

Leggings can only be worn underneath shorts.

Culturally appropriate clothing must also be worn outside of work hours and overnight in case of emergency evacuation.

Must bring:	Recommended:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Blanket or sleeping bag ▪ Air mattress or sleeping pad (we <u>DO NOT</u> provide bedding) ▪ Headlamp or flashlight ▪ Safety glasses and good quality work gloves ▪ Sturdy work footwear – Must be closed toe. Puncture-proof soles and steel toes are best ▪ Work clothes – these will get destroyed ▪ Normal clothes (for after work & days off and community events) ▪ Second pair of non-worksite footwear ▪ Immunization shots (minimum tetanus) ▪ Water bottle ▪ Personal first aid kit ▪ Personal cash and ATM/credit cards ▪ A printed copy of your travel insurance ▪ Lots of socks – they will go missing ▪ Sunglasses, sunscreen, insect repellent ▪ Personal items, toiletries, towel ▪ Hand sanitizer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Solar shower ▪ Tent (some privacy on mobile sites/base may be preferable) ▪ Inside shoes/slippers ▪ Extra work clothes ▪ Extra work gloves ▪ Mosquito Net ▪ Books ▪ Sharpie (for marking your belongings) ▪ Comfort food, rehydration supplements ▪ Laptop, camera, and power adapters ▪ Ear plugs and sleep mask ▪ Sense of Humor <p>Remember to pack light, space is limited!</p>

LANGUAGE

Nepali is the official language of Nepal. Most people speak at least a few words and phrases of English. It is possible to travel through Nepal without learning any Nepali but it would be highly beneficial. Click [here](#) to get started!

VISAS

Tourist visas are available on arrival for citizens of most countries at the designated land borders and at Kathmandu airport. The visas costs \$25 USD, for 15 days, \$40 USD for 30 days and \$100 USD for 90 days and you will need to pay by cash. Other convertible currencies such as the Euro, British pounds and Australian Dollars can also be used but some smaller land borders like Birgunj may not accept them. **Obtaining a Visa on Arrival in the airport is A LOT cheaper than applying for one from your home country or once in Nepal.** For example, to buy a 2 month visa once you are in Nepal is about \$120 as opposed to \$100 for 3 months when paid on arrival.

All tourist visas are currently "multiple entry" type visa and permit multiple entries and exits during the period of validity. It is your responsibility to ensure you are aware of visa requirements and are in possession of the correct documents and permits. The tourist visa shall be granted for a period in maximum of 150 days in a visa year (visa year means calendar year – January to December).

Visas are the responsibility of volunteers, in regards to the cost, making sure visas cover time in the field and ensuring that any visa extensions are done in the volunteers **OWN** time and not during work days.

CULTURAL CUES

The Nepali culture is very friendly, although they can be shy when first meeting with strangers. Appropriate clothing (shoulders and knees should be covered, especially in the villages) should be worn and politeness should always be practiced (avoid swearing). Public displays of affection between those of the opposite sex are likely to be frowned upon on Nepal, especially in rural areas. Even married couples do not hold hands in public.

BRINGING DONATIONS

NGOs and the local government have been distributing items required by affected communities. As an individual it is impossible to bring enough to make a positive impact after such a large-scale event. Giving to some and not others is unfair and it is difficult to ascertain where the need is greatest.

Instead, please consider making a [general donation](#) or setting up a [personal fundraising page](#) which will be used to directly fund the projects we're working on.

As much as possible, we try to purchase all of our materials and tools in the community where we work to support the local economy and ensure the cultural relevance and appropriateness of our purchases.



We also have a wish list of items that are needed for the program but we cannot source locally. Our wish list can be found [here](#).

LIFE ON BASE

WHAT KIND OF ACCOMMODATIONS CAN I EXPECT?

This is communal living at its finest. You'll live together, work together and eat together with your fellow volunteers and moments of privacy are rare. Our base has cold water showers and warm water for bucket showers, we have a majority of western style toilets. Some would call it rustic; we call it home.

Currently the Nuwakot base is housed in a hotel complex located just outside the small town of Trisuli. We will have a large dorm area and some smaller more private rooms, which are generally taken by long term volunteers. We also have a few outside basic tent style cabins. All of our rooms are co-ed, however if you are uncomfortable living with the opposite sex please email the staff (projectnepal@hands.org) prior to arriving so we can make proper arrangements for you. Please bring your own sleeping pad/mattress, sheets and pillow; regardless of which type of room you sleep in, bedding will not be provided. A mosquito net is also highly recommended. All of our work shirts are washed throughout the week, however we cannot provide personal laundry on base. There are two places within the area that provide laundry services. Prices range between 80 to 90 rupees per kilo and laundry is dropped back at the base. Socks inevitably go missing so please bring plenty!

When you are on a mobile team, you will be sleeping in tents close to your work site. You may be in an area with no electricity, however you'll always have access to clean drinking water, and there'll be water to wash with. This is basic living, but lots of our volunteers enjoy the mobile work the most, staying in a small local community. **Please come prepared for mobile work. Ensure you bring a roll mattress and a thick/warm sleeping bag!**

Trisuli a small village relatively close to base has limited facilities and outlets. Basic items, fruit and vegetables are available, but little else. Due to this, please purchase your personal necessities, snacks and supplementary food items in Kathmandu before you make the journey to Nuwakot. We have a kitchen for volunteers to cook in on their day off if they wish, but this does not include a refrigerator or freezer. We also do not allow our volunteers to cook with the gas as it is still difficult to obtain due to the fuel crisis, however volunteers may use the electrical hobs to cook.

DAILY SCHEDULE

6:30am onwards – Quiet hours cease. Cook and eat breakfast, get your gear organized, boots on!

6:45am – Help the team leaders gather tools and load up work vehicles

7:00am – Work vehicles leave base and travel to the worksites. Don't be late!

11:30pm – Lunch

12:45pm – Teams return to the work site



4:30pm – Teams finish work and return to base

5:30pm – Mandatory nightly meeting

6:00pm – Dinner and free time

10:00 – Quiet time and curfew; All volunteers must be on base

We work six days a week with Saturday as our day off.

HOW DO I CONTACT MY MUM?

There is no WiFi on our base. We have a volunteer computer with an internet dongle, which can be used in the evenings and on weekends to get in touch with family and friends. There is a small charge of 30NPR per use.

We are in an area where mobile phone service is widely available and we can provide contact numbers for incoming calls from your family. It is also very inexpensive to purchase a handset (or bring your own unlocked phone) and SIM in country on a prepaid plan; you will need a passport photo and copy of your passport. In this area the NCELL network seems to have the best coverage, also providing good 3G coverage in some areas. If you choose to purchase a SIM it is recommended that you purchase one at the airport upon exiting baggage claim.

WHAT WILL THE WEATHER BE LIKE?

If you are arriving in the months of March, April, May, Mid-Jun:

During the Pre monsoon, days and nights will be warm and the temperature will gradually increase. Thunderstorms are quite common at this time of year and are sometimes combined with short bursts of heavy rain. Average during this time is 54°F - 86°F (12°C – 30°C).

If you are arriving in Mid-June, July, August, Mid-September:

The Monsoon season dominates Nepali climate and brings frequent rain showers and storms. The majority of the rain falls in the afternoon and night-time but there are also occasional days of continuous rain. During this season the temperature and humidity is very high during both the night and day. Average weather during this time is 68°F - 86°F (20°C – 30°C).

If you are arriving Mid-September, October, November:

With monsoon seasons coming to a close, there is less humidity but still some rain. The days are normally quite pleasant but nights are starting to get a bit colder. Average weather during this time is 53°F - 75°F (12°C – 24°C).

If you are arriving in December, January, February:

Winter in Nepal can be extremely cold; mornings and evenings are cold, however day times are generally still warm and sunny. We do not experience much rain in the Nuwakot District during this time. Average weather during this time is 37°F - 66°F (3°C -19°C).



CAN I CHARGE MY LAPTOP?

The electrical grid supplies 220-220v power at 50Hz. Most electronics will be compatible, but always confirm the specifications of your device before plugging it in. The most common plug types are the round European 2 and Indian 3-pin. If necessary, you will be able to purchase an adapter in Kathmandu. We have a semi-reliable supply of power, but it is not uncommon for the area to experience brownouts. It is recommended to bring backup battery charging packs. Please consider your electrical needs carefully and pack accordingly.

WHAT IS THE FOOD LIKE?

All Hands will provide volunteers with three meals a day six days per week. Breakfast will be bread, an egg and oatmeal or flat rice with coffee or tea. Lunch and dinner will be simple, traditional Nepali food, which usually features rice with lentils. No meals are provided on Saturdays which is our day off.

Now that the weather is warmer, our food on base will be strictly vegetarian and meat will not be provided for safety reasons. You may wish to supplement your diet, either with food you bring from home or supplies you pick up locally. Jerky, dried fruit, tinned tuna, nuts, biscuits and crackers are a good idea. We will not be able to provide vegan meals.

The local Nepali cuisine tends to be moderate to very spicy. On base, our chefs work with us to prepare the food with minimum spice, however when eating out in the community you will be served food the way they traditionally prepare it.

TRAVEL TO OUR BASE IN NUWAKOT (TRISULI)

HOW DO I GET THERE?

The **Machha Pokhari Bus Park (also known as new bus park)** in Kathmandu services buses to the Nuwakot region. There are buses each hour from 6 am daily that go to **Trisuli**, approximately 45 minutes' walk to base. Alternatively, there is one bus each day at 8.00 am that goes to **Boontang** where you can get off about 10 minutes' drive past Trisuli at the **Colony Intake bus stop**. This stop is closer at approximately 20 – 25 minutes' walk from base however as the bus only leaves once per day it fills up fast so arrive early to ensure you get a seat.

For safety reasons we recommend you do not leave from Kathmandu any later than 2pm as there are no street lights on the walk to base. Currently there is no taxi services available in Trisuli. **We do not accept volunteers after 8pm or on Saturdays.**

For further information please refer to the Directions to Nuwakot packets.

WHAT IF I ARRIVE IN KATHMANDU TOO LATE TO LEAVE FOR NUWAKOT?

Pilgrims Guesthouse is a good choice for accommodation if you will be spending a night in Kathmandu before making the next leg of your trip to Nuwakot. You can find a room from \$14-20 USD. Walking



down the streets in Thamel you will be surrounded by hundreds of hostel options for the night. A prepaid taxi from the airport to Thamel should not cost more than 600NPR. Be careful in Kathmandu, and don't accept drinks from strangers.

WHAT IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG?

Relax. Take a deep breath. This is international travel and something is always going to go wrong. That's part of the fun, right? Patience and a smile go a long way in a stressful situation. The English language is prevalent here and there are always people willing to help you out. If you need assistance please call our Onsite Volunteer Coordinator at +977 981-859-3105 (from local phone dial: 981-859-3105). You can also email ProjectNepal@hands.org

SAFETY & SECURITY

WILL I BE SAFE IN NEPAL?

We feel it is critical that all potential volunteers make well-informed decisions as they consider joining us, or any other organization, in Nepal. All Hands Volunteers would not launch a program if we didn't feel it was safe, but there are inherent risks involved with any international travel, particularly in a disaster-affected area. We encourage you to do your own research before deciding if you're comfortable living and operating in this environment. Consult your country's travel recommendations for Nepal and get the facts about the health and safety risks.

NATURAL DISASTERS

Situated in a high risk seismic zone, Nepal is still at risk for earthquakes, aftershocks and landslides. We will stock emergency equipment and supplies, and implement our emergency plan if the need arises. The decision to travel to an active disaster zone is a personal one and you should do your own research to make sure this opportunity is right for you at this time.

WILL I BE SAFE AT THE VOLUNTEER BASE?

We continuously monitor security alerts and are prepared to respond if a security issue develops, however we generally prefer to take a community-based approach. We've found that establishing a positive reputation and tight relationships in the community where we operate is much more effective than high walls and armed guards. We still make sure to lock the doors, but we also place a significant responsibility on individual volunteers to practice the awareness and good decision-making to keep themselves and their fellow volunteers safe and sound each day.

Nuwakot is considered safe, and violent crime rates are low. Occasionally, thefts may occur, which are most commonly crimes of opportunity resulting from carelessness with belongings. Remember that your camera, wallet, or iPod might be too much temptation for someone in a desperate situation, and please be discreet and careful with your possessions; we do not provide lockers.

For your safety there will be a 10pm curfew throughout the week. As the base of operations for Program Nepal, Trisuli is centered in a remote area, the closest market area shuts down at around



8:30pm and the rest of the community resides within their property and homes by 9pm. Harassment or violence towards volunteers, staff, or community members will result in immediate dismissal from the program.

WILL I BE SAFE AT THE WORKSITE?

Volunteers will be provided with the proper instruction and briefed on each day's work projects. We aim to provide an experienced Team Leader for volunteers new to certain tasks; this is a great way to learn new skills!

Accidents can be avoided by taking precautions and staying alert to your surroundings. Earthquake damaged homes are full of hazards such as jagged glass, broken timbers, sharp rusty nails, corrugated iron sheets, piercing pieces of re-bar to name a few. Thus sturdy, high-topped, puncture proof work boots are recommended. **Volunteers are requested to provide their own high-quality work gloves and eye protection.**

All volunteers will be required to sign a medical release and insurance waiver releasing All Hands from liability due to any accidents that may occur on site. First aid kits are always available at work sites, just in case. Please bring additional first aid items to add to our kits as they are often difficult to find locally and much more expensive than back home.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Volunteers should be in good physical health, as most of the work on this program will involve manual labor in a hot and humid climate. As we live in a rural area, we recommend that you do that best that you can to protect yourself so you can stay healthy. Frequent hand washing and good hygiene is the first line of defense in staying healthy and productive. Hand sanitizer can be useful not only on base, but out on site before you eat and after you use the restroom. If you have a weak stomach, it would be advisable to check with your doctor prior to arriving to see what medication you can bring with you such as probiotics, anti-diarrhea medication, rehydration salts, etc.

Volunteers should read information available online and consult a travel doctor for advice on prevention and treatment. Below is a link that provides useful travel information:

<http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/advice/general-travel-health-advice/food-and-water-precautions.aspx>

MENTAL HEALTH

Working in a post-disaster environment and communal living situation is tiring and stressful. The work is full of its own rewards, but do not compromise your mental health or the safety and effectiveness of the work by ignoring your limits. All volunteers staying long-term will be required to take a minimum 3-night break away from the program every 30 days, a minimum 7-night break every 60 days, and a minimum 10-night break every 120 days.

Volunteers are responsible for all mental health break expenses, so budget accordingly if you plan to be here a while.



MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

Medical facilities are available in the Kathmandu area. Kathmandu has decent medical care available at any of several local hospitals or clinics. We always try to work safely and carefully so that we can minimize our use of these resources, which are meant for the community. A local clinic is available in Nuwakot. In serious events, we recommend volunteers be transported to Kathmandu for treatment.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

All Hands Volunteers **requires all international volunteers** to purchase travel insurance that covers both emergency medical coverage and emergency medical evacuation coverage.

We ask that our volunteers bring a hard copy of their insurance policy including all international contact numbers for your insurance company with them.

ANYTHING ELSE?

It can be dirty, hard work, but that's why we love it.

If you have additional questions, check out our [Facebook group](#) to see if your question has been answered before or ask one yourself. If you just need to talk to a person, email ProjectNepal@Hands.org and we'll get back to you right away.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can I bring anything for the program?

Our wish list can be found [here](#). These items cannot be sourced locally either cheaply or in high enough quality.

Do I need any vaccinations?

You should definitely be up to date with tetanus vaccinations. We also recommend our volunteers consult with their travel medical professional before traveling to Nepal. As every individual has their own health needs and levels of acceptable risk we encourage you to work with your medical professional to decide on the best preventative measures for you.

How do I confirm my spot on Program Nepal?

As the last step to confirm your spot please fill out our online waiver in your original invitation email.

Can I buy a mattress or boots locally?

Yes, all of these things are available in Nepal. Items purchased locally may not be of the same quality as ones purchased at home. Boots of high quality (steel toed/puncture-proof soles) in the right size may be hard and expensive to find. Sleeping pads and mattresses can be found in Trisuli at a cost of approximately \$8.00 - \$10.00 USD

How do I exchange money in Nepal?

There is one ATM where you can withdraw Nepalese rupees from your home account (with a maximum withdraw limit of 10,000 NPR (approx. \$100 US) per transaction and no money changing facilities in Nuwakot. As such, ensure you've got enough cash to last you for at least 30 days or until you return to Kathmandu.

You can exchange currency at the airport or in Kathmandu. Exchange rates are competitive and ATMs easily accessible in Kathmandu. Fees from the ATM and your home bank may apply. US dollars, Euro and other major currencies can be exchanged at local banks and at money exchange kiosks in Kathmandu.

ABOUT ALL HANDS

THE ALL HANDS STORY

Our story begins in 2005, after the devastating Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami in December 2004. Business professional David Campbell spontaneously headed to Thailand to see how he could help. His intended one-week volunteer visit turned into a month, during which he co-founded HandsOnThailand, bringing in more than 200 other spontaneous volunteers to rebuild five fishing villages in Phuket. After Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast of the U.S. in late 2005, David and several other HandsOn volunteers established HandsOnUSA, bringing in another 1,500 volunteers to help the survivors of the storm. In 2010 HandsOnUSA became All Hands Volunteers. Dedicated to connecting those who need help with those who want to help, over the past 10 years All Hands has mobilized over 31,000 volunteers from 94 different countries on 62 disaster response and rebuild programs in 11 countries around the world.



Our Projects



PAST ALL HANDS DEPLOYMENTS

Since its inception, All Hands Volunteer has provided support to survivors of natural disasters with over fifty programs in the United States and around the world.