

Distributing Multi-Purpose Platform to Earthquake Survivors in Nepal

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
Friday, 30 October 2015 16:45



The earthquake on April 25th, 2015 in Nepal devastated the country and destroyed many homes. Thousands were left homeless and many had to move to the Kathmandu Valley in search of safe shelter, food, health care, and possibly, work. However, there are also many people that did not have the means to travel to the Kathmandu Valley. For these less fortunate ones, help and resource is even more scarce and scattered.

Relief works in Nepal

Taiwan Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation (Tzu Chi) has been in Nepal since April 28th, and even now, more than 6 months since the earthquake, Tzu Chi Foundation continues to work with the government and local NGO's to assist in the recovery and the rebuilding of Nepal, both in the Kathmandu Valley, as well as in the other districts.

On October 17th 2015, Tzu Chi distributed to 260 families of villagers from Sertung VDC and Jharang VDC that are temporary residing in Dhading Besi in Dhading District because their homes were completely destroyed. Previously, Tzu Chi had provided tents, hygiene kits and blankets for these villagers so that they can get through the most difficult part of the monsoon season. Now, after nearly two months had gone by, Tzu Chi once again returned to the same villagers in Dhading Besi, and distributed 260 multi-purpose portable folding platforms, to help the villagers get through the difficult winter ahead.



These multi-purpose portable folding platforms were designed for when ground inside the tent or temporary shelter is wet, flooded, muddy, or otherwise unsuitable for sitting and sleeping, and thus must require a raised platform (similar to a bed) so elderly and children, blankets and clothes can remain dry and warm. The multi-purpose platform has won international acclaims, including Red Dot Design Award in Germany and Invention & New Product Exposition award in the U.S. But most importantly, this multi-purpose platform gave the tent dwellers in the aftermath of the earthquake in Nepal a fighting chance to get through the difficult weathers safely. In the two months since the earthquake, Tzu Chi had already distributed more than 7,000 multi-purpose portable folding platforms to tent communities in the disaster districts, often receiving much praises from government officials, recipients and volunteers, as these platforms become increasingly important for the tent dwellers to stay dry in the monsoon seasons.

Difficulties of shipping multi-purpose platforms

However, it was not without difficulty to distribute these multi-purpose platforms. After the initial 7,000 multi-purpose platforms were distributed to the hospitals, health institutions, and tent

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communities in the first two months after the earthquake, Tzu Chi saw a continued need during the monsoon season, and decided to send another 1,500 units for distribution in the monsoon season. As the shipment finally arrived at the India-Nepal border in September after one month at sea, there were border complications and interruptions, shortage of petroleum and transport vehicles, and other uncertainties and issues that further delayed the distribution. That is why when the Dhading distribution was completed, volunteers from Tzu Chi and local NGO partners let out a collective sigh of relief, because the tent dwellers in Dhading Besi can finally have the platforms to help them prepare for the harsh winter ahead.



Tzu Chi plan to distribute the remaining multi-purpose folding platforms to other tent communities in disaster districts in the coming months before the arrival of winter, as soon as transportation and petroleum problems begin to subside. The long-term relief plan and effort by Tzu Chi, however, will not stop even when confronted by such unforeseen logistic challenges and difficulties. At a time of recovery, rebuilding and revival of Nepal, Tzu Chi will continue to stay in Nepal, to empower the local communities, and to work with local NGO's and the government in all recovery efforts. It is the hope of all volunteers in Tzu Chi that with such sincere friendship and blessings, which come in the form of donations from more than 35 countries worldwide, together we can infuse a stream of warmth into Nepal, and help all of Nepal get through the upcoming bitter winter.

Notes:

As of October 15th, 2015, Tzu Chi Foundation has already provided the following goods and services in the continued effort to assist in the recovery and rebuilding of Nepal:

1. Distribution of food and non-food items to more than 105,000 people, benefitting over 16,000 households. Distributed items include rice, lentil, cooking oil, salt, sugar, tents, tarpaulins, and over 15,700 eco-blankets and more than 7,000 multi-purpose portable folding platforms.
2. Conducted free medical clinic in more than 25 urban and rural areas, benefitting over 11,000 patients. Tzu Chi Foundation also donated over 1.5 tons of medicine to hospitals in the Kathmandu Valley.
3. Built 97 semi-permanent classrooms in the Kathmandu Valley to restore education to the affected schools. Each of these semi-permanent classrooms are made of materials that can insulate heat and cold, and can last for 10-15 years, to provide students suitable environment for learning and studying.
4. Raised fund from Tzu Chi Foundation chapters in 38 countries, and during disaster relief period (4/28 –8/14, 109days) organized 11 shifts, mobilizing over 300 volunteers from 11 countries to assist charity and medical missions in Nepal.

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5. Conducted cash-aid-livelihood programs and volunteer training programs to empower the local survivors to help fellow Nepali.

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