



## SUCCESS STORY

### 'Go Bags' Increase Earthquake Preparedness in Nepal

**USAID promotes and supports earthquake preparedness in Nepal, including the use of household 'go bags'.**



Photo Courtesy of NSET

*Sita Shrestha, a resident of Nepal's Kathmandu District, received disaster preparedness training in 2013 as part of NSET's USAID-supported Nepal Earthquake Risk Management Project. In addition to learning how to react when an earthquake occurs, Sita received a 'go bag' that included essential items, such as a tarpaulin, medicines, and soap, that helped keep her family healthy and safe following the April 25 earthquake.*

When the magnitude 7.8 earthquake struck central Nepal on April 25, Sita Shrestha knew what to do. She found a place near an inner wall of her house to wait out the shaking with her five-month-old daughter and told her six-year-old son, who was on a different floor, to do the same. When the shaking stopped, Sita grabbed her 'go bag'—a disaster preparedness kit—and took her children to a safe, open space in the courtyard. Using the tarpaulin from the go bag, she made an emergency shelter for her family. She also used disinfectant from the kit to treat her children's wounds and passed out medicines to neighbors with headaches and other minor ailments. Additional supplies from the bag, including chlorine to purify water, a head lamp, soap, and toothpaste, proved invaluable in the days following the earthquake, according to Sita, who made use of every item in her kit.

Sita attributes her capable response during and after the April 25 earthquake to a preparedness course she took in 2013, conducted by USAID partner the National Society for Earthquake Technology (NSET). The NSET training taught Sita how to protect herself during an earthquake and the importance of having an emergency kit in her home, which NSET provided to course participants. Sita retained the knowledge gained from NSET and shared it with her family, but she did not fully realize the value of the go bag until the April 25 earthquake struck.

"Since I got training on earthquake preparedness and emergency response...I had told my children and other family members not to panic and not to run inside the home or use the staircase...but stay at the safe place and go outside once the shaking stops," remarked Sita. "I also learned about the need to store the emergency kit from the training. I knew that the go bag was important and so have kept one myself, but I had not imagined that our go bag could be that useful in this situation."

The training Sita received was a component of the larger USAID-funded Nepal Earthquake Risk Management Project, through which NSET coordinated long-term disaster risk reduction planning and worked with the Government of Nepal, local schools, and communities like Sita's to increase earthquake awareness and preparedness. NSET implemented the program in two phases between March 2011 and April 2015, training more than 4,000 people and distributing more than 600 go bags during the second phase. The program focused on Kathmandu Valley and other urban areas of Nepal, including Kathmandu city, four sub-metropolitan cities, 53 municipalities, and 135 small towns.