

THE JTI FOUNDATION NEWS



In Serbia, one year after the floods, communities are on their way to recovery. Here the Sabac soup kitchen, supported by the JTI Foundation and the City of Sabac, was inaugurated in June



Nepal is still coping with the devastating aftermath of two related earthquakes earlier this year

Nepal quakes while Serbia recovers

Natural disasters strike unpredictably. While communities in some parts of the world are well into a recovery process, others are suddenly touched by the tragedy of an unforeseen catastrophe.

Such is the case in the settings of Serbia – ravaged by floods in May 2014 and now making headway with its recovery – and Nepal, which is still struggling to cope with the devastating aftermath of two related earthquakes in April and May this year.

The JTI Foundation has partners operating in both countries. The programs of those in Serbia have wrapped-up, or are nearing completion. In contrast, the JTI Foundation's partners in Nepal are still hard at work with the community to identify and meet their people's most basic needs – for clean water, food, medicine and somewhere safe to live.

Rescue efforts in Nepal

LONG-TERM COMMITMENTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

This year, Nepal suffered two devastating earthquakes in the space of as many months. The first, of magnitude 7.8 on the Richter scale, struck to the west of the capital, Kathmandu, at around midday on April 25. It caused massive and widespread damage to houses, infrastructure and cultural monuments. According to the latest Nepalese government's estimates*, over 8,790 Nepalese lost their lives and around 23,000 left injured by the country's worst natural disaster since the earthquake of 1934.

Of many aftershocks, the most severe occurred on 12 May 2015, registering a magnitude of 7.3. The epicenter of this second quake lay further east, between Kathmandu and Mt. Everest. More than 200 people died, and over 2,500 were injured in this second aftershock.

In response to the first quake, four of the JTI Foundation's partners immediately deployed to the shattered country. GEA, an organization of Turkish volunteer Search & Rescue (SAR) specialists, was one of the first international teams in Nepal – arriving in Kathmandu at 11 am local time the day after the quake. On arrival, the team was welcomed by the Nepalese Army, and working in coordination with the military, immediately commenced search missions in Sitapaila, an area of the capital badly damaged in the disaster.



In response to the Nepal earthquake, GEA and REDOG worked together to save lives

* Nepal earthquake 2015 – Post Disaster Needs Assessment, Vol. A: Key Findings, Government of Nepal, National Planning Commission Singha Durbar, Kathmandu



JTI Foundation partner Peace Winds Japan also deployed in Nepal

Shortly after, the Swiss Rescue Dog Association, REDOG, and Peace Winds Japan (PWJ) – both JTI Foundation’s long-term partners – also arrived to begin Search & Rescue missions.

Shortly after, UK-based ShelterBox – which delivers non-food relief items in post-disaster situations using its renowned ‘ShelterBoxes’ – began to assist with Nepal’s early recovery phase. Having assessed the needs of local people, ShelterBox, with JTI Foundation support, distributed 151 tents in Chautara, Sindhupalchowk district, lying north east of Kathmandu – another region severely affected by the earthquake. A total of 500 tents have subsequently been distributed in this area to date.

Believing that the work of its disaster relief partners would improve through closer cooperation, the JTI Foundation in June 2013 convened a workshop in Istanbul. This brought together partners GEA, REDOG, PWJ and ShelterBox to explore areas for potential collaboration.



REDOG is a Swiss-based volunteer organization specialized in canine search and rescue operations



With JTI Foundation support, Shelterbox delivered 151 United Nations specification tents



The GEA team rescued two people alive from the debris

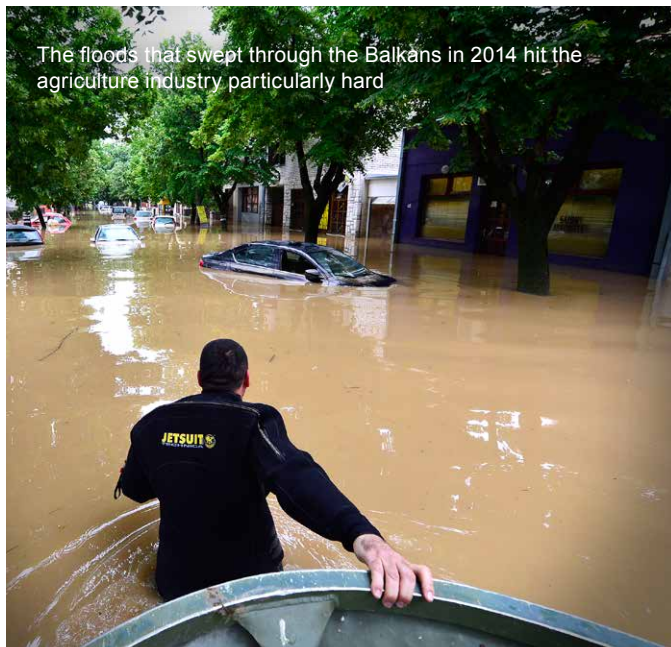
As a result, REDOG and GEA signed a protocol for joint deployment – which has helped both organizations achieve greater effectiveness on the ground in Nepal by combining their rescue efforts.

Despite the concerted international response to the earthquakes, the work of rebuilding Nepal remains a long-term and challenging mission.

As part of the JTI Foundation’s strategy of helping those vulnerable to disasters to build resilience, is also assessing with Habitat for Humanity International, the possibility to implement a long-term recovery program in the country.



In order to ensure fairness, in some disasters ShelterBox must comply to distribute standardized tents which differ in size and structure from the standard ShelterBox tents. Such was the case in Nepal



The floods that swept through the Balkans in 2014 hit the agriculture industry particularly hard



Not all beneficiaries were growing vegetables, this family received flower seeds. As special request delivered by Philanthropy

Recovery in Serbia, one year on: three carefully selected programs

May 13, 2014 heralded the arrival of a major low-pressure cyclone over large areas of south eastern Europe. In Serbia, the resulting torrential rains caused the worst flooding the region has seen since weather records were first tabulated 120 years ago. By May, some 57 casualties have been reported and over 30,000 people were forced from their home by a combination of flooding and landslides.

In response, the JTI Foundation lent its support to three programs in Serbia – each with a different focus – but all of significant impact to the communities involved.

First, and to support immediate relief efforts, the JTI Foundation provided the Serbian Emergency Department with a number of vital tools to manage the floods – which in some cases saw water levels rising several meters above their normal levels – and to kickstart the recovery process. Some of the most needed equipment included de-watering pumps and accessories, and specialist suits for technical interventions involving hazardous substances.

The second – implemented with local partner Philanthropy (Covekoljublje) – worked with agricultural communities to help farmers return to income-generating activities. This need was particularly acute, because the floods hit as the harvest was starting, resulting in a year's lost income for many local farmers.

The program provided 40 small-scale farmers' families with two large communal greenhouses 100m² each in which to restart the agricultural activities that form the bedrock of the local economy: growing fruit, vegetables and flowers.

Branko, leader of Miokus village, and Marija, local program manager at Philanthropy, explained that state support was only available for people who had registered their lands, leaving many poorer families without any means of support after the crisis. "We used the official list of beneficiaries, and cross-checked these with the local population to select the forty families most in need of greenhouses," Marija explains. The successful distribution of the greenhouses by Philanthropy triggered other similar projects in the area.

One local farmer, Dejan, tragically lost his mother to the rising floodwaters. With Philanthropy's support, some of this blow has been softened – and he is again selling the cucumbers and salads, amongst other crops on which his livelihood depends. "These greenhouses are the best we've ever seen around here," he said. "The support we've received from Philanthropy has been excellent – it was delivered quickly and in full consultation with our community."

Another local charity, The Housing Centre, is delivering the JTI

Foundation's third and final program in Serbia. This has reconstructed a soup kitchen badly damaged by the floods in the city of Sabac. While the original kitchen catered for around 1,200 disadvantaged people – and employed seven people – as a result of the reconstruction program its capacity will increase, enabling it to serve up to 2,000 vulnerable residents. Representatives of the JTI Foundation have attended the official inauguration of the expanded kitchen on June 26.



Dejan in one of the greenhouses

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