

Facts and figures

Land area: 137,000 square kilometres

Population: 20.3 million (1992)

Population growth rate: 2.6% p.a.
(population will double by 2019 if present rate of growth continues)

GNP per capita: 170 US\$

Main exports: carpets, ready-made garments, rice, timber

Main imports: fuel, chemicals, manufactured goods, fertiliser

Daily calorie intake: 1,957 per capita

Adult literacy: 25.6% (male 38.7%, female 12.5%)

Life expectancy: 53.5 years (male 54, female 53)

Maternal mortality rate: 830 per 100,000 live births (1980-92)

Infant mortality rate: 99 per 1000 live births

Under-five mortality rate: 128 per 1000 live births

Children under five who are underweight: 51% (1990)

1 doctor for every 16,667 people.

(Sources: UNDP and Economist Intelligence Unit)



Omar Sattaur/Oxfam

Oxfam in Nepal

Oxfam has been funding projects in Nepal since the 1960s. At first, support was given to organisations working at national level on improving the country's health care capacity: the provision of hospital equipment, work with sufferers from Hansen's disease and TB, and long-term support to rural community health services.

The level of Oxfam funding increased substantially in the 1980s as contacts were made with counterpart Nepali organisations who could work directly with disadvantaged groups such as destitute women, child labourers, and low-caste groups. With democratisation in 1990 it became easier for Nepali NGOs to register, and Oxfam supported their work in rural communities on income generation, adult literacy, and water and sanitation.

Throughout the years, Oxfam has also provided help to communities devastated by disaster. In 1989 and 1991 emergency assistance was provided to a district in which houses had suffered severe damage by earthquake and fire. Again, in 1993 Oxfam responded when crops and houses in some parts of the country were destroyed by flooding.

When southern Bhutanese fled from their country and sought refuge in Nepal, Oxfam joined with UNHCR and other international agencies to provide assistance in the refugee camps in eastern Nepal. Programmes for refugee women focused on a variety of income-generating projects and an adult literacy programme, which has now incorporated discussion groups where refugees can share their problems and concerns.

The Oxfam Bridge programme works closely with small-scale crafts producers, helping them to develop successful marketing strategies and to improve their

productivity. The aim is to ensure that the producers, usually poor women living in rural areas, are paid fairly for their work. Some of their products are sold through Oxfam shops in the UK and the Oxfam mail-order catalogue, as well as in craft shops for tourists visiting Kathmandu.

Oxfam believes that its most important contribution is in strengthening the capacity of local organisations who are working side by side with poor people in their efforts to develop sustainable livelihoods and become full participants in their society, with the right to benefit from the resources of their country and full recognition of their basic rights as citizens. To this end, Oxfam works in close partnership with Nepali NGOs who carry forward innovative projects in adult literacy, sustainable agriculture, community development, and income generation, among other activities.

Members of an Oxfam-supported women's group

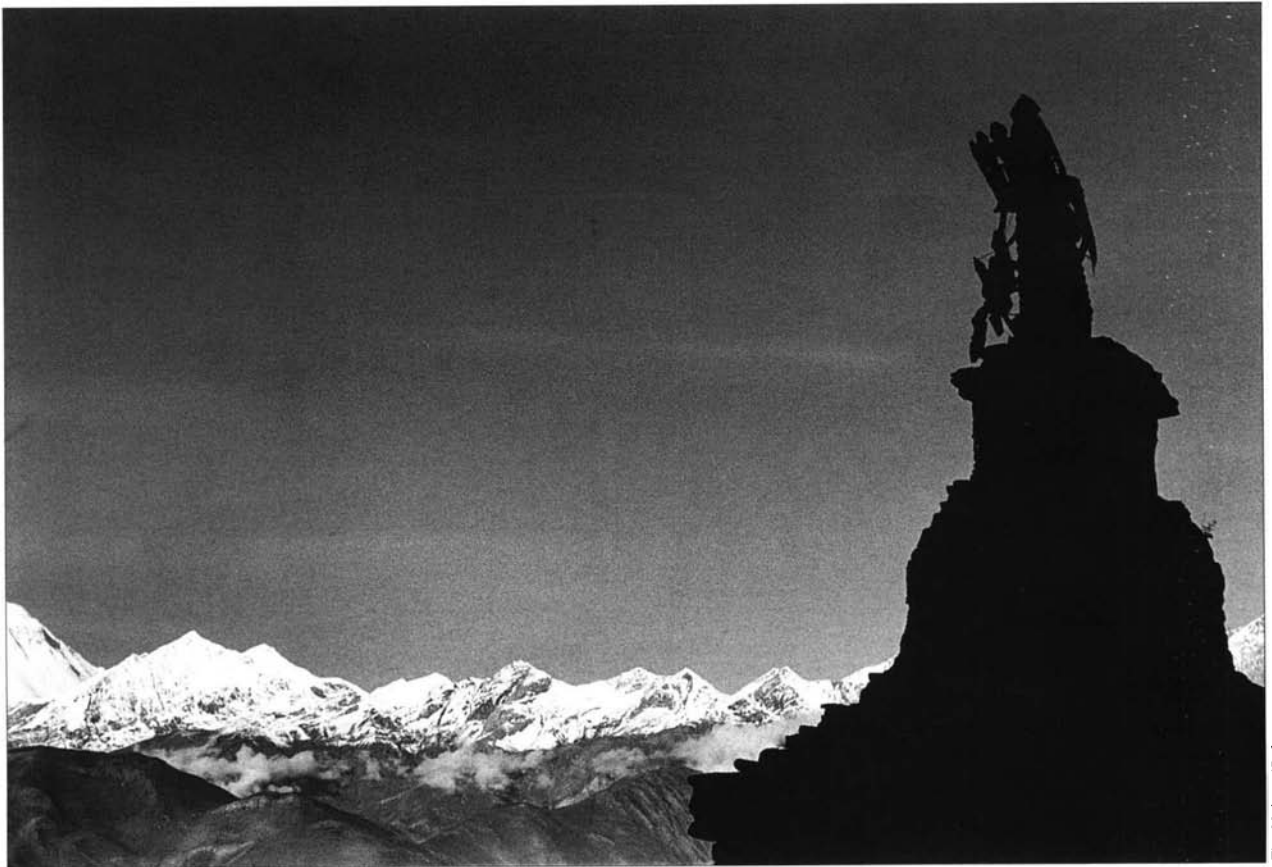
Belinda Coote/Oxfam



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