

Open Data's role in Nepal's earthquake

How open data played a pivotal role in providing earthquake relief after Nepal's devastating earthquake



Who: OpenStreetMap & Kathmandu Living Labs

What: A crowd-sourced open data & open data source response to the Nepal earthquake

Where: <https://opensource.com/life/16/6/open-source-open-data-nepal-earthquake>

Why: Rapidly increasing the impact and speed of disaster response through collaboratively building on existing data and tools and crowdsourcing their expansion

When: 2015

The devastating magnitude 7.8 earthquake struck Nepal on April 25, 2015, killing more than 9,000 people, injuring thousands more, and leaving an additional 3 million homeless.

It took us a calamity of huge scale to learn the importance of open data. Open data and open source projects saved numerous lives after the earthquake and provided important lessons that other countries can learn from Nepal.

Immediately following the earthquake, thousands of local and international volunteers instantly stepped in to collaborate and create data and tools. Responding agencies then used this information to coordinated planning mobilisation of resources.

In the aftermath of the earthquake, about 8,000 local and international [OpenStreetMap](#) community members worked to create detailed maps of affected areas.

The open data gathered by these "digital humanitarians" was then replayed volunteers to address the needs of survivors and victims to volunteers on the ground. Training was provided on OpenStreetMap to responding units and organisations, and custom maps were produced for specific purposes and missions.

Since the earthquake, there have been many data collection projects for damage assessment, relief distribution tracking, and reconstruction monitoring.

This includes work between multiple government and non-government organisations to collect damage assessments of historical sites, schools, and residential buildings. Work between partners such as the Kathmandu Living Labs and the World Bank, to use mobile data collection for relief and reconstruction monitoring and tracking.

Free open source tools were used such as [QuakeMap.org](#) which allowed people to communicate their needs to responding organisations, and the [Open Data Kit](#), a data collection platform which helped organisations build, collect and aggregate data.

The Data

Data: [Open Street Map Nepal](#)

Source: Open Street Map

Formats: Geospatial

Licence: [Open Data](#)

[Commons Open Database License](#) (ODbL)

Data: [QuakeMap](#)

Source: Kathmandu Living Labs/Ushahidi

Formats: CSV, XML

Licence: OpenStreetMap contributors

“We can safely say that open data and open source projects saved numerous lives after the earthquake.”

