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## In Nepal, into the Breach: Lokesh Todi '09 Raises \$130,000, Documents Destruction and Tragedy After Earthquake Strikes His Native Nepal

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# In Nepal, into the Breach

Lokesh Todi '09 raises \$130,000, documents destruction and tragedy after earthquake strikes his native Nepal

By Barbara Walsh | Photography by Lokesh Todi '09

When a magnitude 7.8 earthquake devastated his country, Lokesh Todi '09 didn't hesitate.

Within 24 hours of the April 25 quake that struck Nepal, Todi and his cousin, Boston management consultant Aditya Todi, set up a crowd fundraiser online at Indiegogo. They initially hoped to raise \$20,000, but within days the tally doubled, then tripled. By May 5, the amount raised was almost \$130,000. Their new goal: \$150,000.



Shop owner Ghoma Lama ji is shown with a photo of his daughter Srijana, a school teacher who was killed in the Nepal earthquake. At the time the photo was taken, no aid had arrived in the devastated area outside Kathmandu.

**“My friends from Colby, my roommates, students in my government classes have been amazing,” said Todi in Kathmandu via Skype. “Everyone has been sharing my pictures and posts on Facebook, trying to get the word out.”**

Todi returned home nine months ago after earning a degree in economics and government at Colby and an M.B.A. from Yale. Lessons learned both in and out of the classroom are serving him well as he joins relief efforts to help thousands of people left without homes, food, or shelter.

“At Colby you’re taught to think critically, react, and make decisions,” Todi said. “You’re taught about civic engagement and how to be involved in society. You’re never taught how to handle something like a major earthquake, but my education

has had a major impact on what I've been doing during the past week to help the people in my country."

Along with posting pictures and updates about the destruction in Nepal on Facebook, Todi is working with Global Shapers, a group of young leaders who are partners with Childreach, an NGO. Todi has helped gather tents, food, and water purification tablets for the thousands of people rendered homeless. He has also journeyed into remote villages.

"We went to the Sindhupalchok district, where ninety percent of the homes cannot be lived in," Todi said. "Lots of these places don't have any aid yet."

As he toured one village, a man approached Todi, telling him, "I want you to come with me." Todi thought the man was angry that he and other relief workers were photographing flattened homes and buildings.

"The man took me to see a picture of his daughter, who had died in the quake. She was a school teacher, and her father wanted the world to know how great she was."



A Nepalese woman and her child receive treatment at a makeshift Red Cross treatment center in Chautara, Sindhupalchok.

As the death toll continues to rise with 7,500 dead, 14,500 missing, and rebuilding costs estimated at \$10 billion, Todi understands that it's easy to become overwhelmed. But for the young man who has had little sleep during the past 10 days, the tragedy is not about the numbers. "It's about the human connection," he said. "It's about people like the man who lost his daughter."

The earthquake victims and his country's story will soon be old news in other parts of the world. But Todi and several of his young friends and colleagues have no intention of moving on. They are committed to rebuilding their country. "It is the young people of Nepal who are stepping up, working with NGOs," said Todi, who may be better prepared than most. In his M.B.A. program at the Yale School of Management he took a yearlong course on managing global catastrophes. "I don't know whether or not it was fate that I returned here just before this happened, but I feel fortunate to be a part of this, to have a significant impact on our country's future."

For more information on Todi and his fundraiser, see his [Indiegogo page](#).

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