

Himalayan Trust UK

Disaster Relief Reserve Policy

Adopted in December 2023

As a charity our principal aims and objectives are to support our strategic goal of developing improved education and health outcomes to remote rural areas in the mountain regions of Nepal. Our current and planned future focus is in Taplejung and Kanchenjunga Conservation Area.

In doing so, we foster deep and sustainable long-term relationships with partner NGO firms. We provide financial support and strategic advisory assistance to these firms enabling them to meet planned targets over mid-term durations. This necessitates careful, prudent budgeting of the demand from our NGOs for financial support against projected fund-raising capabilities on our part.

We have experienced many natural and human disasters in recent years. These have each resulted in demands on our charity, both in terms of diverting attention from our principal objectives but also, and importantly in the context of this policy, for financial contributions. The Board of Trustees have agreed a broad set of principles as follows:

1. The best time to discuss our capability to support natural disasters is when we are not faced with an emergency.
2. We recognise the tension between our human emotional desire to help and our practical ability to do so.
3. The core focus of us as a charity is not disaster relief. Substantively we do not have skills or experience in this area.
4. Our partner NGOs are not experienced, nor do they have deep capability in disaster relief, and we should not expect them to be able to step in.
5. Equally, while we appreciate that our partner NGOs may feel compelled to help, we should be careful about supporting any short-term initiative that may not be part of the objectives of the NGOs.

With these principles in mind, our Policy is as follows:

1. A designated Disaster Relief Reserve (“Reserve”) has been established from our long-term reserves.
2. This Reserve will be reviewed annually, and the amount shall be set taking into account our income and our core project plans.
3. Access to the Reserve will be accompanied by public appeal for support funding.
4. As a rule of thumb, we will cap our contribution and not break in to long term reserves other than in exceptional circumstances to be agreed by the Board.
5. In all cases, the long-term financial sustainability of HTUK and our ability to support our NGO goals will be at the forefront of our thinking.
6. We agree that we may have to reject funding disaster appeals where the Reserve has been fully expended in any given year.

7. We acknowledge that a decision to access long-term cash reserves following full expenditure of the Reserve could jeopardise our financial stability to meet our strategic goals.
8. Where we have agreed in exceptional circumstances to exhaust our Reserve and to deploy long-term cash reserves we will not be in a position to respond to future disaster requests for support until we have regained three years of cash reserves to meet our commitments.
9. We only respond to events that directly affect our constituents.
10. We seek to engage with subject matter experts to assist in any disaster relief support we provide rather than defaulting to our NGOs.

Further guidance on disaster relief scope and response is in Appendix 1.

For the year 2025 the Fund is set at £45,000

The Reserve will be reviewed annually in December.

Appendix 1: Guidance on HTUK disaster relief scope and response

Disaster relief: scope

Disaster level ¹	Description	Examples	HTUK linked assets (schools, health clinics)	Local villages/ community	Taplejung District	Solukhumbu District	Nepal
1. Emergency	Sudden event causing damage, injuries and some fatalities	Storm, landslide, mudslide, rockfall, wildfire					
2. Disaster	Major event causing significant damage, many serious injuries and many fatalities	Severe storm, thunderstorm					
3. Calamity	Large scale event causing severe destruction, major number injuries & great number of fatalities	Earthquake					

Strategic approach
Priority: direct fund/support
Selective: direct fund/support
Indirect: fund other agencies to deliver support
Out of scope: not for HTUK

Reference:

¹ USA Natural Library of Medicine 'Universal severity classification for natural disasters' 2021

Disaster relief: support

Disaster level	Description	Examples	HTUK linked assets (schools, health clinics)	Local villages/ community	Taplejung District	Solukhumbu District	Nepal
1. Emergency	Sudden natural event causing damage, injuries and some fatalities	Storm, landslide, mudslide, rockfall, wildfire	Response & recovery	Recovery only	Recovery only	Recovery only	
2. Disaster	Major natural event causing significant damage, many serious injuries and many fatalities	Severe storm, thunderstorm, major landslide	Response & recovery	Recovery only	Recovery only		
3. Calamity	Large scale natural event causing severe destruction, major number injuries & great number of fatalities	Earthquake	Response & recovery	Recovery only			

Support
Response: rapid emergency assistance & support
Recovery: damage repair & restoring normal operations

Priority: direct fund/support
Selective: direct fund/support
Indirect: fund other agencies to deliver support
Not for HTUK