

Lessons from inclusive community-based disaster risk reduction in earthquake-affected areas of Nepal



December 2017

Promoting inclusive Community Based Disaster Preparedness in the Recovery and Reconstruction of earthquake affected areas of Nepal

2016 – 2017 | Ramechhap | Okhaldhunga | Sindhupalchowk | Dolakha

BACKGROUND

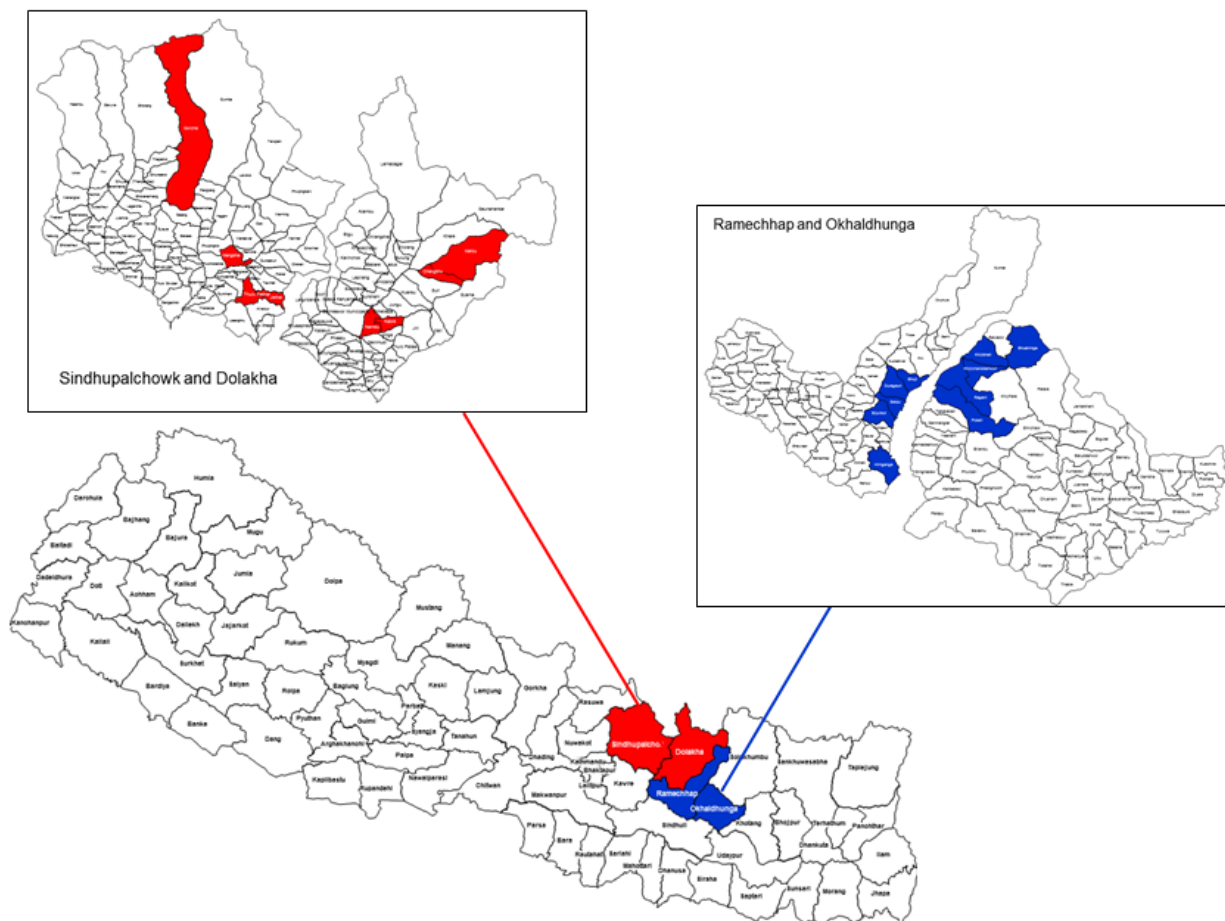
Two strong earthquakes hit parts of Nepal in 2015 causing widespread devastation and loss of life. The disasters highlighted the need for strengthened disaster preparedness at community level, increased capacity for information management and coordination for disaster response at district level, and policies to guide disaster risk management at national level in Nepal.

Mission East, along with project partner Save the Children, worked together with national and district partners to implement an inclusive and context-relevant community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM) project in four earthquake-affected districts. The project was possible thanks to European Union funding through the European Commission's European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations department (ECHO).

This summary report highlights the key lessons learned and recommendations for others implementing disaster risk reduction (DRR) and resilience programmes in Nepal.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Project title	Promoting inclusive community-based disaster preparedness in the recovery and reconstruction of earthquake affected areas of Nepal
Objective	To strengthen community and institutional capacity on Disaster Risk Management through the implementation of inclusive and flexible community-based DRM, improved coordination and information management, and policy advocacy.
Duration	1 May 2016 – 31 December 2017
Funded by	European Union
Budget	1.2 million EUR
Location	18 former Village Development Committees (VDCs) in 4 districts: Ramechhap, Okhaldhunga, Dolakha, Sindhupalchowk





Local Disaster Management Committee (LDMC) members practicing hazard, vulnerability and capacity assessment tools

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The following is a summary of the key achievements which the Inclusive Community-based Disaster Preparedness project made major contributions to:

- Local Disaster Management Committees (LDMCs) with representation of marginalised and vulnerable groups were formed and trained in 18 former Village Development Committees (VDCs). LDMCs were supported to lead >150 participatory and inclusive Hazard, Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments at local level consulting more than 5,000 people.
- An increased understanding and knowledge on hazards, risks and disasters at community level, and an increased sense of individual responsibility to contribute to reducing disaster risks. In the end of project household survey, almost 90% of respondents said they felt their understanding and knowledge on DRR had increased; and the proportion who said they themselves could do something to reduce disaster risks in their community more than doubled.
- Local Disaster Risk Management Plans (LDRMPs) developed in 18 VDCs by LDMCs outlining disaster risks, key mitigation schemes, and a 5-year action plan for DRR. Budget allocation committed at local government level in 17 of the project VDCs for implementation of LDRMPs.
- More than 40 small-scale DRR schemes outlined in the LDRMPs prioritised and implemented through an inclusive and consultative process. The schemes mainly focus on landslide mitigation and drinking water supply protection; reducing disaster risk and vulnerability of more than 12,000 people directly.
- Emergency funds established in 17 of the project VDCs to provide small funds for households affected by localised disasters. Fund mobilisation criteria and guidelines have also been developed to ensure correct use of the funds and a plan for replenishment when used.

- Eighteen VDC level and four district level disaster simulations conducted with active participation of a wide range of stakeholders for disaster response including Taskforces formed and trained through the project – First Aid, Search & Rescue, Damage & Needs Assessment – LDMCs, Nepal Army, Armed Police Force, Nepal Police, local NGOs, local schools and hospitals, Red Cross, clusters and Government of Nepal newly elected representatives, district offices and line agencies.
- Four online District Emergency Operation Centre (DEOC) information management platforms established with information necessary for rapid and coordinated disaster response.
- Local Disaster and Climate Resilience Planning (LDCRP) Guidelines developed through a consultative process with a wide range of stakeholders; replacing the LDRMP Guidelines with a more inclusive and flexible guide combining disaster and climate risk management.
- A Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act legislated by the Government of Nepal which provides a mandate for DRR and DRM at all levels of governance. Support for the enactment of this national policy has been ongoing for many years and pressure was increased by project partners through advocacy via media, consultations, meetings and workshops.



A Community Search and Rescue Taskforce member practicing search and rescue methods in training

KEY LESSONS LEARNED

The following is a summary of the major lessons learned through the implementation of the project:

- **Planning and implementing community level activities around the availability, convenience and preference of community members** ensures the highest commitment, and active participation of the most people. This approach is also ultimately the most inclusive and likely to have the biggest impact. This is relevant for agreeing the most suitable date and time for project activities taking into account agricultural seasons, daily labour commitments, women's household and caring duties, and religious/cultural festivals. It is also necessary to be flexible, for example, a 1 day activity might be better spread over 2 half days for most people.
- **Flexibility is important to ensure community-based disaster risk reduction (CBDRR) is context relevant.** For example, adapting the roles and responsibilities of an Early Warning System Taskforce – more relevant for flood-prone terai areas than landslide-affected hilly regions – to include a Damage and Needs Assessment role.
- **Ensuring CBDRR is genuinely inclusive** of the most vulnerable and marginalised groups requires commitment through the full project cycle and in all project activities to enable or ensure appropriate attitude, communication, accessibility and participation (ACAP). Additional efforts must be made to reach those who are unable to participate in key project activities to ensure a truly inclusive approach. For example, targeted consultations with marginalised groups to explain the LDRMP and cross-check that their concerns are addressed, and door to door visits to persons with disability to share appropriate information through tailored information, education and communication materials.
- The **ACAP Inclusion Marker was a good way to measure and monitor** inclusion in project activities. The tool also served as a regular reminder and guideline for all project staff, not just those focusing on ensuring inclusion. The Inclusion Marker is one of a number of tools in *Towards Inclusion* (2017) Mission East, ICCO Cooperation, and Light for the World.
- **District Emergency Operation Centres (DEOCs) are vital** for rapid, coordinated and effective disaster response. The role of information management is key and the four new online DEOC information management platforms provide a central and easily accessible location for relevant data. Visit Ramechhap District platform here: www.implatformnepal.com/ramechhap/.

Tara, Dolakha District

"I am a Master Trainer on DRR now after attending the training. It was actually my first time participating in any DRR training. The training has been a real eye-opener! I found out that if we are able to identify and map the possible causes of disaster, then we can take appropriate measures to avert a disaster through timely plan and execution.

The beautiful part of the training is that it not only covers the theoretical part but also provides practical session with field exercise on how to prepare LDRMP.

LDRMP is a very strong important document for the communities, which helps them to reduce the loss of lives and livelihoods at local level. If the plan were properly executed on timely manner in consultation with community people, it can save lives and livelihoods. If the LDRMP was already made in VDC before the earthquake in 2015, the loss of lives in Dolakha would not have been so grave."



- **Regular disaster simulations are very effective** for key stakeholders to highlight any gaps, practice their learning, build their confidence, clarify their roles and responsibilities, and raise awareness on coordinated disaster response mechanisms at community and district level.
- **Providing Master Training of Trainers on DRR** to stakeholders who will be based in the project area in the long-term is an effective way of ensuring knowledge and capacity on DRR continues in the target area. Suitable Master DRR Trainers are local Government officials as well as local school teachers, Local Governance and Community Development Programme (LGCDP) Social Mobilisers, District NGO representatives, active LDMC members, Ward Secretaries etc.
- **Coordinating closely with other stakeholders** is a very effective way of ensuring relevant lessons learned are shared and acted upon, and identifying potential for sharing responsibility and costs for key activities. Multi-stakeholder dialogues held through the project were effective at linking community members with relevant authorities and holding them to account for the earthquake recovery and reconstruction process. This all builds longer term monitoring and support mechanisms beyond the timeframe of short-term projects, and ultimately increases the sustainability of project outcomes.
- **Engaging media to increase outreach of advocacy for national policy and strategy** is an effective way of reaching a wide audience and gaining commitments from relevant political representatives; helping all relevant stakeholders to hold them to account



Local Disaster Management Committee (LDMC) members discussing issues in an awareness raising session with vulnerable groups

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the key recommendations for consideration by others implementing disaster risk reduction (DRR) and resilience programmes in Nepal.

- Community level project activities should be planned in consultation with community members, including a focus on those that would traditionally be excluded, to ensure the most suitable dates, times, seasons, venues and modalities enable the participation of all.
- Additional efforts must be made to reach the most vulnerable and marginalised community members through additional outreach, and adapted approaches where relevant, such as door to door visits for those who cannot join project activities. Budget must be allocated for this, and awareness raised on the importance of including everyone.
- Existing District Emergency Operation Centres (DEOCs) should be supported to build their capacity and functionality, including in particular the information management function. Investment should be made to ensure the continuation and maintenance of the new online DEOC information management platforms in the project districts, roll these out to districts where they are not present, and work towards data sharing with the national DRR Portal.
- Regular disaster simulations should be organised at community, municipality and district level to ensure relevant DRR stakeholders are ready to respond.
- Master training of trainers on DRR should include local non-governmental representatives alongside Government staff, such as teachers, LGCDP Social Mobilisers, and others.
- More research is needed on the effectiveness of low-cost, community-managed landslide monitoring systems to build an evidence base to assess the potential for early warning systems which are reliable and give advance warning.

Parbati, Ramechhap District

“In my community I have seen many disasters and victims but we didn't know it was a disaster or how to cope with them. I really didn't know what First Aid treatment was or about disasters before the project.

In the project I was trained in First Aid and I am a community First Aid Taskforce member. I have gained knowledge on how to provide First Aid treatment to any injured people and at the same time I also learnt how important First Aid treatment is as it can save a life! The project also made me aware about disasters and the importance of First Aid treatment to all the community.

Six days after I successfully completed the First Aid training my five year old son fell and hurt himself and I knew he had fractured his wrist. It is a 3 hour drive to the nearest hospital and the bus doesn't go there frequently so I knew I couldn't go that day. I felt helpless but suddenly my learning was triggered and I applied the knowledge and skill that I had learnt in the First Aid training! The next day I took my son to hospital and I found out from the doctor that it was the bandage that I put on that prevented the fracture becoming worse in the 20 hours that we had to wait to get to hospital and he praised me. I feel like I have developed my confidence to deal with casualties in case any disaster happens.”



WITH THANKS TO:

Funded by:	
 <p>Funded by European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid</p>	<p>The Commission's European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations department ensures rapid and effective delivery of European Union (EU) relief assistance through its two main instruments: civil protection and humanitarian aid.</p> <p>www.ec.europa.eu/echo</p>
Consortium lead:	
 <p>Mission East - values in action</p>	<p>Mission East is an international relief and development organisation, which works to help vulnerable populations, supporting communities' capacities to organize and assist themselves, through activities ranging from disaster relief to development assistance in Nepal and other countries.</p> <p>www.missioneast.org</p>
Consortium partner:	
 <p>Save the Children</p>	<p>Save the Children believes every child deserves a future. Around the world, we give children a healthy start in life, the opportunity to learn and protection from harm. We do whatever it takes for children – every day and in times of crisis – transforming their lives and the future we share.</p> <p>www.savethechildren.net</p>
National support partners:	
 <p>Fostering Knowledge on Disaster DPNet Nepal</p>	<p>Disaster Preparedness Network Nepal (DPNet Nepal) is a national network of organisations and individuals working in the field of Disaster Risk Management (DRM) in Nepal.</p> <p>www.dpnet.org.np</p>
 <p>NNSWO</p>	<p>Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organisation (NNSWO) has a long history on advocacy for Dalit empowerment in Nepal and fights for the inclusion of marginalised people in society.</p> <p>www.nndsw.org.np</p>
District implementing partners:	
 <p>CDS</p>	<p>Community Development Society (CDS) implements projects in Ramechhap district.</p>
 <p>LDCDF</p>	<p>Likhu Demba Community Development Forum (LDCDF) implements projects in Okhaldhunga district.</p>
 <p>RDTA</p>	<p>Rural Development Tuki Association (RDTA) implements projects in Dolakha district.</p>
 <p>दुकी संघ सुनकोशी सिन्धुपाल्चोक</p>	<p>Tuki Association Sunkoshi (TAS) implements projects in Sindhupalchowk district.</p>
 <p>सहास नेपाल SAHAS-NEPAL</p>	<p>Group of Helping Hands (SAHAS Nepal) works in the remote areas of Nepal mainly focusing on the poor and socially excluded groups in the country.</p>

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