

**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR THE WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT, 23-24 MAY, 2016, ISTANBUL  
PRESENTED BY CIVIL SOCIETY OF NEPAL**



**May 2016**

**1] BACKGROUND**

As one of the least developed countries, Nepal faces serious threats from disasters, which occur with appalling regularity—over 900 every year on average. It is a disaster hot spot<sup>1</sup>. In the same report, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) stated that in the last twenty years (1983-2003), 21,246 people lost their precious lives because of disasters. The deadliest earthquake of 25 April 2015 was so swift. In just less than a minute, the Gorkha earthquake and a series of aftershocks claimed 8,891 precious lives, 22,302 injured and 886,456 families affected (MoH, Baisakah to Mangsir 2072)<sup>2</sup> causing 4% GDP loss. It triggered avalanches on Mount Everest and in the Langtan valley. Villages were flattened and people were made homeless across 31 districts, with 14 districts suffering the highest impact<sup>3</sup>.

Natural hazards like the Gorkha earthquake 2015; are indiscriminate: it has no regard for social hierarchy, gender, age, disability, religion, ethnicity, or caste. But its impacts and the humanitarian response to them – can easily discriminate against the very people who are most in need. Citing the National Planning Commission, Nepal Earthquake: Post Disaster Needs Assessment, 2015, it reports that 41 percent of earthquake affected houses belong to Dalit, 26 percent to female-headed households and 23 percent of older people houses damaged<sup>4</sup> and 40% (3.2 million) children were affected.

While global response often looks similar when natural disasters strike, Nepal's post conflict context – with its own gender and social norms, expectations, economic and social setting – are often very different<sup>5</sup> and consequently causes different degree of damage. Unfortunately, humanitarian programming often, does not take it into account these contextual factors, resulting in responses that fail to acknowledge different needs, experiences and barriers and inequalities faced on the basis of gender and other social groups. This failure has life-threatening consequences, and furthermore undermines protection and recovery efforts, as well as effective resilience building.

**2] THE CHALLENGES**

More than 900,000 individual houses, several school buildings, health facilities and government buildings collapsed. Though, a deadly earthquake was expected but Nepal was not well-prepared. Many District Disaster Relief Committees (DDRCs) were found to be ill-equipped, lacking essential supplies to respond to disasters<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), Govt. of Nepal and Nepal Disaster Preparedness Network-Nepal. (DPNet) pp 16, 17 – 2009.

Need Assessment of Older Person and Persons with Disabilities, HelpAge International, Nepal 2015.

<sup>3</sup>Nepal's Earthquake 2015: Post Disaster Recovery Framework 2016- 2020 pp 01

<sup>4</sup>Did the Humanitarian Response to the Nepal Earthquake Ensure No one was Left Behind? A Case Study on the Experience of Marginalized Groups In Humanitarian Action: Save the Children – Nepal.

<sup>5</sup>Building Back Better or Restoring Inequalities? Gender and Conflict Sensitivity In the Response to Nepal's 2015 Earthquakes, International Alert - 2015

<sup>6</sup>Need and Risk Assessment of Older People and Persons with Disabilities - HelpAge International 2015

As for shelter which was identified as prioritized need in the quake hit districts as 76.40% of earthquake survivors are still in the temporary shelters, the freezing temperature will have debilitating effect on health of older persons and person with disabilities<sup>7</sup>. It clearly uncovers big gap in response to humanitarian crisis. Research reports reveal that actors and agencies engaged in the humanitarian response need to recognize and address the multiple and complex layers of vulnerability and exclusion, taking into account gender hierarchies and the socioeconomic exclusion. Most of the organization came with their readymade response approach without knowing the context.

The Post Disaster Needs Assessment has revealed that the earthquake has disproportionately affected poorer, rural locations, comparatively to the urban and semi urban area. The Human Development Index (HDI) of nine out of 14 severely affected districts is lower than the national average. Beside capital city Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Patan, all the affected areas are rural. If the reconstruction process is not designed to address the local and national context, the losses will continue to amplify, pushing more locals below the poverty line. Due to the remoteness and lack of information system on settlement most of the affected and vulnerable women, men and children in remote areas didn't receive relief materials and other support in time and whether context specific local needs have been addressed is one of the major reflections from the beneficiaries.

The reconstruction policy and approach should be designed with an emphasis to retain or incentivize youth working abroad to return to their home village. This is possible only if livelihood opportunities are available and the prospect of economic opportunities exists. The government should provide subsidies and loans to youth who want to stay or return to the village, enabling them to establish micro enterprises in areas like agriculture, horticulture, construction, groceries and livestock. This especially regards men, who have traditionally left regional areas to seek employment in local urban areas. Nevertheless, statistics show that rural-urban job migration for these youth have not been as successful as hoped. Unemployment for youth aged 15 to 24 has increased from 7.6% in 1998 to 13% in 2008. Hence, almost 2 million workers (2011 estimates) have looked at opportunities overseas, up from 762,000 in 2001 (ILO, 2014). The departure of male youth has thus left affected districts with a majority female and children population. This has caused much hardship as the women are then forced to take the responsibility of managing agriculture and livestock, whilst also fulfilling their cultural obligations of domestic work. Hence, the retention or return of youth, especially males, would assist with the reconstruction process, while also making the economy vibrant at the same time.

The approach should also recognize the hardships of minority groups hit by the disaster, including children, women, Dalits, elderly citizens and people living with disabilities (PLWDs); who often have limited ownership of land and also may not have the ability to reconstruct their houses. Payments and special loans may also be required for them, in addition to the government's social assistance programs, which are currently in place. The policy would also help protect women, girls and young boys in future from the risks of unsafe migration and trafficking for the sexual exploitation, organ trading and labour profiteering, which has experienced a spike in the aftermath of the earthquake.

Further, there was a lack of a coordinated multi-sector needs assessment and agreed vulnerability-based targeting criteria and a 'blanket approach' was adopted. Despite the fact that families with pre-existing vulnerabilities generally require more support to meet immediate needs<sup>8</sup>. For example, the Gender Based

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<sup>7</sup> *Need and Rihs Assessment of Older Person and Persons with Disabilities - HelpAge International Nov 2015*

<sup>8</sup> *Did the Human Response to the Nepal Earthquake Ensures No One Was Left Behind? pp11,*

Violence (GBV) has increased after the earthquake in the quake hit districts; the data collected from the districts was corroborated with cases filed at the National Women Commission<sup>9</sup>. While actors and agencies under the government leadership, tirelessly responded to the disaster, it offered some knowledge and that can be of great asset to have disaster preparedness plan. Beside these efforts, lesson learned is; Nepal is not yet prepared and DRR has not yet been mainstreamed in development and planning.

## 2] KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

**This paper describes nine key recommendations that Nepali Civil Society hopes to present at the WHS:**

1. Make commitments that complying with the major international human rights conventions and humanitarian standards to uphold the rights of all affected populations by systematically identifying and accounting for the most marginalized by designing adapted and equitable assistance, which also supports empowerment of the most marginalized persons and communities on the basis of age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, caste, ethnicity, religion and those identified as disadvantaged groups in Nepal, ensuring their participation right from the initial assessment and decision making process that promote demand driven humanitarian response.
2. Recommit to ensuring every humanitarian response is based on an assessment and analysis of needs, risks, vulnerabilities and barriers to assistance, services and participation for girls, boys, women and men and other vulnerable groups, including pregnant women, older persons, person with disabilities and others who are marginalized.
3. Recommit for strengthening local capacity that the particular needs of vulnerable groups are identified, and that these groups are able to participate in and benefit from disaster response; local bodies should also be adequately resourced; develop and implement disaster preparedness plans that take into consideration specific needs based on age, gender, disability, caste and other exclusion factors.
4. Commit to institutionalizing the inclusion of national and community-based organizations in international humanitarian coordination structures, such as Child-Focused Organizations (CFO), Older Persons Associations (OPA), Mothers groups, Youth groups, Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs), Dalit Organizations and other marginalized groups. To progress these recommendations and design strategies promote marginalized communities at the forefront, as key partners in the earthquake recovery, as well as preparedness efforts and for future emergency response. And recommit to act locally connect globally through institutionalizing inclusion of national and community-based organizations in international humanitarian coordination networks.

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*Save the Children 2016*

<sup>9</sup> *Need and Risks Assessment of Older People and Persons with Disabilities, HelpAge International, Nov 2015*  
International Labour Organization 2014, *Nepal Labour Market Update*, November,  
[http://www.ilo.org/kathmandu/whatwedo/publications/WCMS\\_322446/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/kathmandu/whatwedo/publications/WCMS_322446/lang--en/index.htm).

5. To explicitly commitment to the Worldwide Initiative for School Safety and endorse the Safe Schools Declaration, as well as ensuring government and humanitarian actors double the investment on emergency preparedness targeted for children, women and other vulnerable groups, including pregnant women, lactating mothers, older persons, person with disabilities and others who are marginalized.
6. Commit to ensuring that no countries are under-financed for humanitarian assistance and build back better. Countries and humanitarian agencies support for displaced and severely affected people in fulfilling their rights including its integration into local and national development policy, plans and programmes. Investment to fulfill the short-term humanitarian needs, which undermine their resilience, as well as build community resilience to disaster and climate risks.
7. Commit to ensuring that the accountability structures are developed to oversee implementation and monitoring of the humanitarian response and preparedness agenda with particular focus on the most vulnerable and displaced populations.
8. Commit to promote equitable livelihood opportunities to offer decent vocational skills training and creating jobs for the youth, including providing economic empowerment opportunities for women, older persons, and marginalized communities; prioritize industries that provide employment to women & vulnerable people that promote peace and harmony, in the recovery and reconstruction phase and preparedness, in line with Un Security Council Commitments on Women, Peace and Security (1325, 1820, 2242).
9. Commit to ensuring all countries including humanitarian agencies have country specific inclusive and integrated legal framework and national DRR policy in place as a policy best suits with a country might not be pertinent to other, no policy formulation on blanket approach and guarantee that polices are formed from the perspective of age, gender, disability, caste and other social inclusion that enshrine a bottom up participatory approach.

