



By **Gender Working Group**
RESPONSE TO THE NEPAL
EARTHQUAKE (as of 17/8/2015)

Summary of key facts and figures, case studies, initiatives, progress, challenges, needs and opportunities related to gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of the Nepal earthquake emergency response

Key Findings on Gender Equality in the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment Vol B.



Women explaining they have to walk further to collect water after the earthquake and walk two hours. Malechore, Sindhupalchowk, Photo Credit: Sama Shrestha/UN Women

The **Post-Disaster Needs Assessment Vol. B:** has been made public in early August. Volume B includes detailed information on each of the 23 sectors analysed and supplements and elaborates further on the PDNA Volume A: Key Findings, which was published in mid-June. Gender Equality was mainstreamed throughout the PDNA and a separate chapter on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion was included in both Volume A and B of the final report. The key highlights on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in the Volume B report, presented as elaborations of the key findings presented in the PDNA Vol. A, are as follows.

The combined factors of poor living conditions, disruptions in economic activities and loss of income could compel families to adopt negative coping strategies such as stress selling of assets, child labour, human

trafficking and early marriage, which would impact girls in particular. Added disruptions in policing, justice systems and loss of family protection also mean that vulnerable groups are at heightened risk of violence, abuse and exploitation. Toilets in public schools have been damaged and inadequate access to safe, hygienic and private sanitation facilities can be a source of shame, physical discomfort and insecurity for school going adolescent girls. Reconstruction of segregated and disability-friendly school toilets should be prioritised, even where children are in temporary schools, to provide privacy for menstruating girls.

Taking into account women's large contribution to the Nepali labour force and the constraints they face in accessing economic resources, efforts should be made to ensure that recovery programmes do not contribute to greater inequalities. Given the gender

disparities in time use and the unequal distribution of unpaid work between women and men, analysis of disaster impact on time use for women and men is critical. A quick time-use survey in Sindhupalchowk and Kavre indicated that women are spending an additional four to five hours per day clearing debris, salvaging of household items buried under the rubble and salvaging home construction materials for shelter construction. Caring for children is also said to have increased due to children being out of school, and it is done concurrently with other chores. Women also indicated that the constant need to check on children, out of concern for their safety, is limiting their mobility beyond their homes. Fetching time of water has increased up to three hours, which has also increased the work load of women considerably more than for men. This is the time women would have used for income generating

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activities, socializing and resting under normal circumstances. Three key considerations around gender appropriate strategies have also been made: first, that informal sector and all types of work need to be counted; second, recognizing micro enterprises where many women are engaged; and third, recognizing women's contribution as migrants and remittance providers



Women seeking relief and recovery information from District Information Desk, Sindhupalchowk. Photo Credit: Samir Thapa/ UN Women Nepal

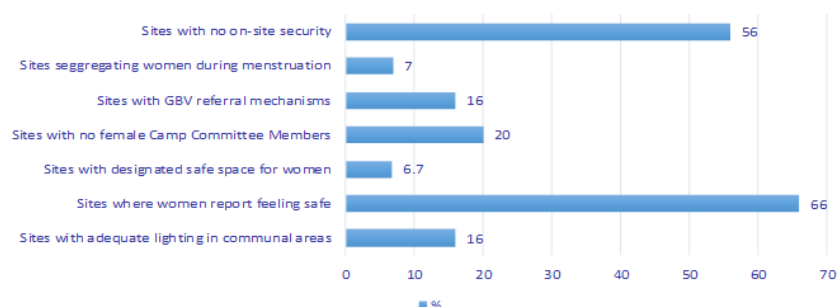
in the country's path to recovery (while seeking to improve protection against their trafficking and exploitation as migrant workers). Recovery also represents a short-term opportunity to kickstart and restore rural livelihoods as well as promote women's economic empowerment.

Institutional participation and representation of discriminated social groups through District Disaster Relief Committee (DDRC) in all recovery programmes is essential to ensure they benefit equally but also to ensure that recovery programmes do not further marginalise them. Furthermore, measures to support and promote attainment of ownership rights, tenure rights, certification and registration are essential to ensure that post disaster recovery programmes do not re-enforce the inequalities faced by women and vulnerable social groups. Women, men and vulnerable groups must have access to reconstruction and rehabilitation jobs as well as public works, investment funds and income-generating projects to support their long-term economic recovery. Ensure that the community, including women and other vulnerable groups, have access to information on services in relation to disaster management such as basic health services, including reproductive and sexual health services, compensations, cash transfers, insurance, social security, credit and employment.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM ASSESSMENTS

According to the [Common Feedback Project Micro-Survey Round 1](#)² findings, 77% of women reported that their problems are either "not very much" or "not at all" being addressed compared to 73% of men. When asked if their particular problems as a woman are being addressed, 73% of women responded "not very much" or "not at all." Districts where responses are the most negative are Rasuwa and Sindhuli, with 90% of women in each saying that their needs have not been met. The two biggest problems that women reported facing are the same as those faced by the overall population: Shelter (long- and short-term housing) and Financial support. 61% of surveyed men and women feel support is not provided fairly. Women feel less informed than men: some 43% say they do not have enough information at all. The equivalent figure for men is 38%. 73% of surveyed men and 77% of surveyed women answered "not very much" or "not at all" when asked whether they feel they have been heard.

Source: DTM Round 3 and OCHA Humanitarian Bulletin Issue 02



When front line workers were asked if they thought women's particular problems were being addressed, 60% of respondents did not believe so - 29% said 'not at all' and 31% 'very little'. Main problems for women reported by frontline workers were 1) Maternal/neonatal care and 2) gender based violence.

According to [Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 3](#)³ (published 21st July) out of the nearly 60,000 people in displacement sites, 51 per cent are female, 49 per cent are male and 14 per cent are children under age-5⁴. The displaced population in 187 priority camp sites in the 14 most affected districts with special needs includes: 1.7% single female headed households, 0.2% single child-headed households, 1.7% senior citizen headed household, 1% pregnant women, 1.9% breastfeeding mothers, 0.3 % unaccompanied/separated children, 1.4% persons with chronic disease/serious medical condition, 17.9% members of marginalised caste/ethnicity, 0.7 % persons with disabilities. Of the 44 camp committees identified, 20% had no female members, and half had less than 25% female members. 44% of sites reported that security is provided on site by the following actors: military (16%), police (64%), self-organised (16%), community leaders (2%), other (2%). The most common type of security incidents reported was alcohol/drug related (41%), followed by theft (23%) and internal friction among site residents (12%). Small groups of men, women and children were asked whether they feel safe in the sites - women in 34% of the sites did not feel safe, compared to 26% for men and 30% for children. In 84% of the sites assessed, there were either no or inadequate lighting available in communal areas such as around WASH facilities and public spaces. 7 out of 104 sites assessed have designated safe / social places for women. In many districts there were significant

2 <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/nepal/document/community-feedback-report>

3 <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B6h0ePDUUpqiWS2Vzd1Q1eVhXdDA/view>

4 Cited in OCHA Humanitarian Bulletin issue 02 (1-31 July 2015)

Response and Good Practices

knowledge gaps among those living in displacement sites on how to report incidents of abuse or exploitation.

According to the [Protection Thematic Report⁵](#) (30th July), female representation is lacking on decision-making committees at the community and site level. A rapid assessment in six districts observed an absence of women from relief coordination and decision-making mechanisms. Widespread damage to WASH infrastructure and displacement of communities has resulted in a lack of adequate segregated sanitation facilities for men, women, and third-gender, increasing the risk of gender-based violence, particularly in spontaneous settlement sites. Approximately 24% of the population does not possess a citizenship certificate, which presents a barrier to accessing government relief services and benefits. Women, low-caste, and minority ethnic groups in particular, face challenges acquiring citizenship documents. Pressure on household resources may lead to adoption of negative coping mechanisms, including GBV and increased alcohol use, and heightened risk of child labour and trafficking. Female-headed households, needing to attend to agricultural tasks and childcare, may be at a disadvantage in terms of clearing rubble, salvaging materials, and repairing their homes. There are anecdotal reports of divorced women, married women living with their parents, and women whose husbands work abroad report being excluded from relief.

[Report by Inter-party Women's Alliance \(IPWA\)](#), launched on 30th July 2015 based on research carried out in 14 earthquake affected districts included the following key findings: 1) Single, unmarried, widowed, divorced and women whose husbands practice polygamy are facing particular problems in accessing government relief, 2) Lack of representation of women in disaster management, 3) Lactating, pregnant and menstruating women facing problems staying in temporary and integrated shelter due to lack of women friendly facilities, 4) Increase in cases of violence against women and girls, women and even girls, 5) Lack of water and toilet facilities in temporary and integrated shelter, 6) Trafficking of women and children with Chitwan as a key transit route, and 7) Cases of men selling relief material to spend money on buying alcohol.

Coordination

Gender indicators prepared by the Gender Working Group Core Group have been included in the Flash Appeal Monitoring Framework. Based on the indicators, progress is being tracked in critical areas of concern for the overall response across all sectors. These are: women's participation in decision-making committees; collection and use of sex and age disaggregated data by clusters; women's and men's perception of the adequacy, fairness and transparency of the relief efforts; as well as the extent to which gender equality is regularly addressed in clusters' discussions. These cross-cutting gender indicators complement the cluster specific indicators for which the reporting of sex and age disaggregated data has been encouraged by the ICC.

- The Gender Working Group in collaboration with the Protection Cluster and GBV-sub cluster, is working closely with the Inter-Agency Communicating with Communities Group in order to ensure the voices of women are fully captured and their specific needs and priorities identified, when feedback from affected people is collected. This includes ensuring that survey methodologies and questionnaires of the Common Feedback Project are gender-responsive and leading sessions on "Substantive Equality" and "Gender Based Violence" conducted by UN Women and UNFPA as a part of a Training of Trainers Programme for 75 Scout Volunteers as Community Mobilisers.

According to report ["After the Earthquake: Nepal's Children Speak Out"](#)⁶ based on consultation of 1,800 children in the 14 priority districts undertaken by Plan International, UNICEF, Save the Children and World Vision in collaboration with Central Child Welfare Board (CCWB) and Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development, children, especially girls, are facing an increased burden of domestic chores and other tasks to support their parents in ensuring adequate food, shelter and water. The additional work roles reported by boys were more associated with shelter, including salvaging family belongings from destroyed homes; dismantling damaged or destroyed houses; searching for materials for temporary shelters and help with construction. Girls in particular also reported increased feelings of vulnerability to exploitation, sexual abuse and trafficking including due to the inadequacy and insecurity of tents and other temporary shelters. In several FGDs girls reported specific incidents or issues of concern, such as sexual harassment incidents. Girls from two districts (Rasuwa and Ramechhap) said they were worried they may not be able to return to school because of the increased burden of domestic and other chores since the earthquake. Mostly older girls, noted that their parents had become more protective towards them and that this was limiting their freedom to go out and meet with friends (six FGDs). Maintaining menstrual hygiene in a cramped, shared space was a major concern for adolescent girls. With markets closed, it was difficult to buy sanitary pads or even cotton cloth to use as a substitute. Girls described being embarrassed to change the pads and having nowhere private to wash.

Shelter⁷

The emigration of large numbers of men to work abroad is anticipated to have a major impact on the availability of labour for rebuilding shelter. This also adds additional burden on women with many already taking on multiple family roles. In the absence of the male head of household, women will have a critical role to play in managing and overseeing the quality of housing construction and should be supported through knowledge and skills development that is targeted to meet their needs. In Gorkha District, the Shelter Cluster conducted community consultations with 65 to 80 women on vulnerabilities and priority issues at the village level verified this as an emerging issue⁸. On 29th July 2015, over 50 Shelter Cluster partners came together in a Gender and Shelter forum with various presentations on gender-related shelter issues and good practices. Key messages from the forum included:

- Include padlocks in shelter toolkits; they are cheap and easy to include, and make a big difference to women's privacy and security.

Preliminary findings from research conducted by the [Democracy Resource Center Nepal](#) on behalf of the Asia Foundation in six districts (Sindhupalchok, Dolakha, Okhaldhunga, Makawanpur, Gorkha and Syangja) from 9 June to 26 June indicate that communities report a desire for equal distribution of relief VDC wide. Researchers observed a notable absence of women, Dalits, and Janajatis in local governance mechanisms, including relief coordination.

5 UN OCHA Nepal Earthquake Assessment Unit: https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/150730_protection_thematic_report.pdf

6 https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/assessments/150727_sc_pi_wv_unicef_children_consultation_final_lowres.pdf

7 For more information: Training Tip Sheet: contact Tom Bamforth, tom.bamforth@sheltercluster.org



Information volunteer disseminating information at Salyantaar, Dhading, Nepal. Photo Credit: CARE Nepal



Information volunteer disseminating information at Jalbire, Sindhupalchowk. Photo Credit: CARE Nepal

■ Women have particular and unique needs in terms of their health and hygiene that must be considered, this includes both sanitation and cooking/kitchen facilities; a number of organisations are planning to include cleaner and more efficient stoves in their building project plans.

■ Assessments of how water and wood are collected and used should be included in shelter projects; identifying ways to reduce women's and children's workloads is important, and can have a positive impact on their health and wellbeing.

■ All cash for work projects should be underpinned by a commitment to equal pay for equal work.

■ Navigating the path between supporting the status quo in terms of (harmful) cultural practices and norms and contributing to a transformative agenda can be tricky; it is however necessary and important.

■ Family structure, socio economic position, and physical and geographical factors are all key factors that have a major impact on a family's capacity to recover. Gender, physical ability, age – to mention just a few vulnerabilities, are all important considerations in shelter.

■ Women's participation in training programs can be encouraged and supported by following a few key pointers on creating an enabling environment, avoiding some common pitfalls, and taking an innovative approach to the design and implementation of training programs.

Vulnerability Prioritisation Score Card and Shelter Cluster Guidance on Mainstreaming Gender and Diversity in Shelter Programs are both available on the Shelter Cluster website⁹.

Gender Based Violence (GBV)

GBV responders, in particular national NGOs, have scaled up prevention and response activities,

including establishing women's security committees in several displacement sites¹⁰. In total 11 trainings on GBV in emergencies have been conducted in 8 districts to 292 participants and 30+ agencies including with district level GBV Sub-Clusters and Protection Clusters, Nepal Red Cross, DFID and UNFPA reproductive health/GBV mobile field teams. IOM/CCCM Cluster is in the process of mainstreaming GBV Prevention and Response through its Displacement Tracking Matrix and upcoming Camp Managers training, in coordination with the GBV Sub Cluster.

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CARE Nepal began its Gender Based Violence (GBV) messaging program in Sindupalchowk, Dhading and Gorkha districts as an emergency response program. The awareness program started from May 2015 and will be completed in October 2015. The target is to reach 10,000 beneficiaries in Gorkha and 11,000 beneficiaries in Sindupalchowk and Dhading districts. The program aims to create awareness among people about trafficking, sexual violence, child marriage, rape, psychological first aid and menstrual hygiene with major focus on women and girls. Information Volunteers are the locals of VDCs who conduct messaging program. The program is carried out five days a week. One particular message is delivered throughout the week so that people become clear about the issues before disseminating another message. The message is dispersed in groups and also on an individual basis through

door to door visits. Additionally, there are provisions of Female friendly spaces (FFS) and referral services for the GBV survivors.

Education

As part of the emergency response, where Education partners are establishing temporary classrooms, they are in turn responsible for ensuring WASH services (both hardware and software) are provided. In addition to the hardware components, Education partners will also support software components through the training of teachers on safe hygiene and sanitation practices. Teaching children how to wash their hands with soap is a key lifesaving message and life skill. Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Management training and supplies should also be considered for schools serving adolescent girls. The provision of quality WASH services in emergency affected schools and temporary learning centres is a key part of an equitable and gender-sensitive education in emergencies response. In particular, partners are working to ensure:

- Latrines are segregated for boys and girls. The establishment of temporary urinals is encouraged as a cost-saving and practical measure.
- Latrines should be gender-sensitive, including locks on doors (or other form of privacy ensured), adequate light, water availability and menstrual pad disposal or cleaning facilities.
- Latrines should be designed to be accessible for learners with disabilities, such as providing adequate space to move safely inside the stall, adequate light, handrails or supports if necessary, and accessible handwashing facilities.
- For schools serving adolescent girls, attention should be given to menstrual hygiene management. Partners should provide



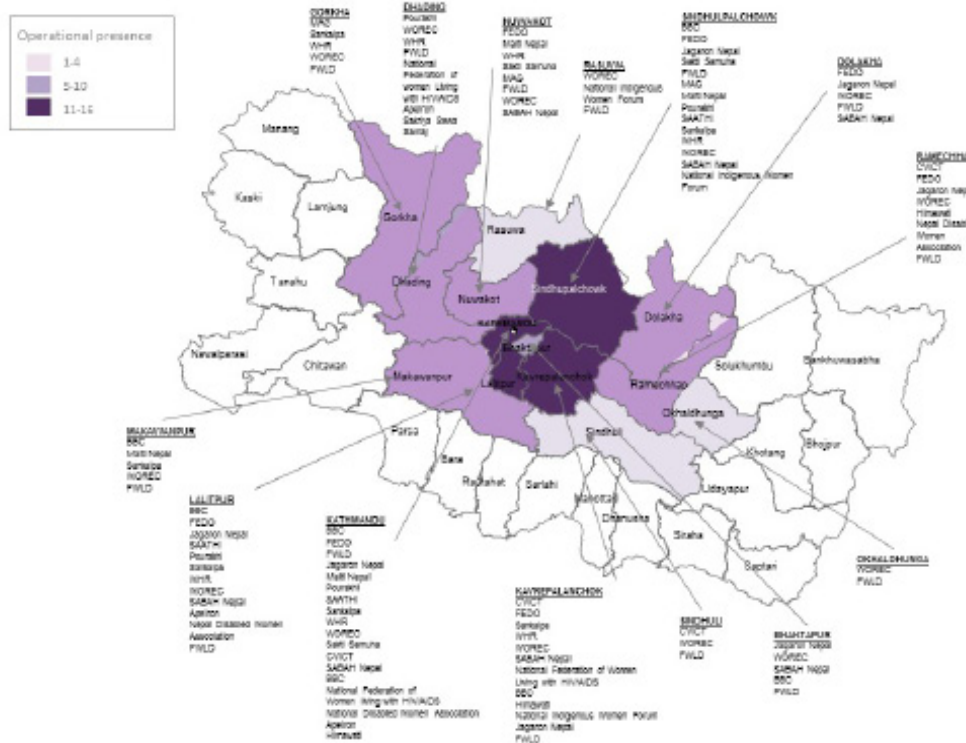
Separate Temporary Toilet & Urinals for girls & boys (Vidhyamandir Se. School, Naikap, Kathmandu). Photo Credit : Education Cluster

8 OCHA Humanitarian Bulletin Issue 02 (1-31 July 2015)

9 <https://www.sheltercluster.org/response/nepal-earthquake-2015>

10 OCHA Humanitarian Bulletin Issue 02 (1-31 July 2015)

Women’s Organisations in the 14 priority districts – as of 4th August¹¹



training and some form of menstrual hygiene supplies.

The Education Cluster target relating to WASH in schools is 100%: temporary learning spaces are not safe until there are gender-sensitive WASH facilities available. To date, 59% of TLCs have adequate WASH facilities, so there is more work to be done to ensure good practice is followed and the target is met.

Early Recovery¹²

An estimated 57,300 households (of 35,000 households targeted in Flash Appeal) have benefitted from safe demolition and debris removal. Composition of the households has been recorded during the assessments. The data is currently being digitalized. Currently debris removal is focusing on public buildings including health and education facilities. More people are benefitting from restored access to services, while the cash for work modality will not reach as many individuals as planned in line with current demand. 5,800 people (of 85,000 targeted in Flash Appeal) have been employed in Cash for Work modality in support of debris removal



Women engaged in Cash for Work Debris Management. Photo Credit: UNDP Nepal

42% of the cash for work participants engaged in debris management are women

in rural areas. 42% of the participants are women¹³ (as reported by partners who disaggregate the data). Due to planting season many people are working on the fields, so the number of participants (both men and women) in debris removal has been lower than expected.

A new publication [The Effects of Gender Equality on Humanitarian Outcomes](#)¹⁴ commissioned by UN Women presents the findings of research including interviews with more than 2,000 crisis-affected households gathered for four case studies conducted in Nepal, Philippines and Kenya (the Dadaab refugee camps and the county of Turkana). A unique new “Gender Intensity Measure” was used to analyse the evidence and assess the degree to which gender equality and women’s empowerment was perceived to have been integrated into humanitarian programmes – by hearing from women beneficiaries themselves.

11 Prepared by UN Women Nepal based on inputs by women’s groups. Last updated 4th August 2015.

12 Early Recovery Cluster Brief 4# as of 28th July 2015

13 Only For UNDP’s Debris Removal under Early Recover Cluster

Stories from the field¹⁵



Multi Purpose Women's Centre, Sindhupalchowk.
Photo Credit: Sama Shrestha/UN Women Nepal

Three young girls who had come to the Multi-purpose Women Centre in Sindhupalchowk run by Saathi to receive psychosocial group counselling, said that they wish relief and recovery programmes would target young girls not only as beneficiaries but also by involving them as contributors and active participats in all stages of the humanitarian response. They stressed that “if given the skills and training, we young girls are able to do any kind of recovery and rebuilding work efficiently!”

Bishnu Mai Dangol is a 72 year old woman living in Malechore, Sindhupalchowk. Following the devastating earthquake she faced a lot of difficulties and worries about her future. Her only son took the 15,000 Rs, she received as social benefit from the government after the earthquakewith him to Kathmandu to spend on his own family. This left Bishnu and her husband with nothing but the rice they received from WFP to live off for the next month. They are unable to work on their farm land as her husband suffers from a knee problem and she is unable to bear the work burden after she donated a kidney to her other son who has now passed away. She sought support from the Multi-purpose Women Centre run by Saathi from which she received a

dignity kit, including a solar lantern, as well as psycho-social counselling. She said this support has been important in helping her cope with the difficult aftermath of the earthquake.

“if given the skills and training, we young girls can do any kind of recovery and rebuilding!”

Rita Shrestha, is a 16 year old girl of Baramchi VDC, Sindhupalchowk. She shared her emotional story of when she got buried under the rubble in the earthquake of 25th April, 2015. “The mud roof of her family house suddenly fell down on top of me and I became unconscious, I did not have any hope to continue living” she said. Fortunately, she managed to get out of the debris with the help of her family members and neighbors, and the Nepal Army got her on a helicopter to receive treatment in Kathmandu. She got stitches in her leg and stomach and can now walk normally again. After the treatment, she returned to her district and now lives in a temporary shelter. “Life under the tent is very insecure in terms of the health conditions, there is no proper sleeping space and due to the monsoon rains it is very humid here and the ground is all wet where we are sleeping. It is going to be difficult in the

days to come” Rita said.

Ruku Bhandari is from Kiwool-1 Mukhtitar of Sindhupalchok. Before the earthquake she was living with her husband working as a veterinary and two daughters, the oldest of which, Gamala, was a teacher in local school. Yet the earthquake on 25th April shattered her life as her husband and oldest daughter passed away when the nearby school building collapsed onto their house. Her younger daughter Sharmila was severely injured and airlifted for medication in Kathmandu. This tragic incident has left her lost and hopeless. “After all this I feel like there is no value in life without my dear ones, but however life has to go on” said Ruku with tears in her eyes. Ruku’s younger daughter is now back after receiving medical treatment. Between them they have no household belongings left from the rubbles of their house. Ruku received humanitarian support including household emergency kits, hygiene kits, tarpaulins and blankets from the VDC provided by HELVETAS which eased their situation a little. Currently they are living in a temporary cottage and are trying to manage with the support received despite their big loss.



Bishnu Mai Dangol, Multi-Purpose Women's Centre, Sindhupalchowk. Photo Credit: Sama Shrestha/UN Women Nepal

14 <http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/7/the-effect-of-gender-equality-programming-on-humanitarian-outcomes>

15 The stories were provided by Saathi, CBM Nepal and Helvetas Nepal