



# GENDER EQUALITY

## UPDATE No. 3

By Gender Working Group  
**RESPONSE TO THE NEPAL  
EARTHQUAKE**  
(as of 9/7/2015)

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

### Update on the Common Charter of Demands by Women's Groups



*Submission of Common Charter to Hon' Mahendra Bahadur Pande, Minister, Ministry of foreign Affairs*

In order to implement and disseminate the [Common Charter of Demands by Women's Groups](#), a Core Group has been formed consisting of representatives of eight women's organisations. The issues of the Common Charter were shared and discussed in a CSO consultation led by the NGO Federation to agree on key issues to be raised during the Donors' meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2015. The Core Group submitted the Common Charter to Hon' Mahendra Bahadur Pande, Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2015, and to Hon' Ranju Jha, Chairperson, Constituent Assembly Committee on Women, Children, Senior



*Submission of Common Charter to Hon' Ranju Jha, Chairperson, Constituent Assembly Committee on Women, Children, Senior Citizens and Social Welfare*

Citizens and Social Welfare on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2015. The Common Charter includes demands in the areas of: 1) women's representation and leadership; 2) food security, shelter and sustainable livelihoods; 3) prevention of violence against women and girls, and 4) special programmes for women<sup>1</sup>.

### Key Findings on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment



*Photo Credit: UN Women Nepal/Piyavit Thongsa-Ard*

The [Post-Disaster Needs Assessment](#)<sup>2</sup> (PDNA) of the Nepal Earthquakes 2015 was led by the National Planning Commission and conducted in partnership with the UN, World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Union, and the Japan International Cooperation Agency. The Assessment covers 23 sectors and was conducted in the course of June 2015. **Gender Equality was mainstreamed** throughout the PDNA and a separate chapter on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion was included in the final report. The key highlights on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in the report are as follows.

The PDNA concludes that overall, **women, as over half of the overall population, constitute the single largest disadvantaged group who have been most adversely affected across the key sectors**. More women and girls died than men and boys, partly because of gendered roles that disproportionately assign indoor chores to women. As agriculture is largely female-dominated, comprised of 60% women, **the disaster's impact on agriculture has had disproportional effect on women**. In the tourism industry, women who are found more in less skilled jobs such as housekeeping and waitressing are likely to be

the first to be laid off. **Women's unpaid work** in caring labour for the children, elderly and the sick is likely to grow in the aftermath of the quake. Their **time for water and firewood collection** has increased by up to 3 hours per day in some districts including Dhading, Lamjung and Gorkha. Such strains, combined with loss of family protection and desperation for alternate livelihoods, could promote negative coping strategies among poor households thereby increasing the **risk of sexual and gender based violence, human trafficking, child labour, and early marriage for women, girls and boys**. Competition for resources could further increase discrimination of women, the elderly, people living with disabilities, Dalits and indigenous communities. Provision of broad-based alternative livelihoods, finance and markets targeting women and vulnerable social groups will be key in reducing dependence on agriculture and local tourist markets and enhance their resilience against future disasters.

Reconstruction should be equitable and inclusive, with **equal rights to land and property** accorded to women. Considering that only 19.17% of women own land and houses; access to new homes or home building finance should be made on condition of joint spouse ownership and full ownership to female heads and single women. The destruction of toilets compounded by lack of water and poor living condition, which do not offer privacy for women and girls have been a serious impact on the **personal hygiene and menstrual hygiene of women and adolescent girls**. Construction of public and private toilets with proper lighting should be part of the housing programme. Damage sustained by hospitals and health centres has limited **women's**

<sup>1</sup> This Common Charter of Demands by Women's Groups was developed with the technical support from UN Women.

<sup>2</sup> Nepal Earthquake 2015 Post-Disaster Needs Assessment, Vol.A : Key findings (June 2015)

**access to sexual and reproductive health services**, and urgent rehabilitation of damaged birthing centres is a priority to reduce the risk of obstetric complications for pregnant women. In addition, poor lighting, overcrowding, lack of segregated toilets and wash facilities in temporary shelters can contribute to an increase in **sexual violence against women and girls**.

The needs of some disadvantaged social groups require further investigation. One such group is **newly widowed males** who suddenly may have to take the sole responsibility of parenting, childcare and household hold work. Additional targeted support may also be required for **LGBTI and people living with HIV**.

While women and certain social groups have been disproportionately affected, simply viewing them as victims only exacerbates their vulnerability. They have knowledge, social and practical skills that are critical for recovery. **Meaningful participation of women and other social groups in the design, implementation and monitoring** of national and community DRR programmes will be critical. In addition to the government's existing institutional arrangements of social assistance programmes for vulnerable groups, **cash transfers** will be essential for vulnerable single women/widows, ethnic minorities, and children from households



Photo Credit: UN Women Nepal/Piyavit Thongsa-Ard

that have suffered catastrophic economic losses. The government's institutionalised **gender responsive budgeting** mechanism, which aims to translate commitments to gender equality into results for women should be applied to all recovery and construction programmes.



Men and women removing debris. Chautarra/Sindhupalchowk. Photo Credit: UN Women Nepal/Samir Thapa

### Key Figures:

- About NPR 23.5 billion is needed to **restore food consumption of vulnerable groups** (households with PLWDs, single women, children and elderly) in the most affected 14 districts to their pre-earthquake levels.
- About 26 percent of the **damaged houses** belong to female-headed households, 41 percent to Dalits and indigenous communities, and 23 percent belong to senior citizens.
- With women holding more than 54 percent of **unskilled jobs in the tourism industry**, they are likely to be the first to lose their jobs.
- It is expected that 46 million workdays would be lost in the **agriculture sector**, resulting in a personal income loss of NPR 4,603 million over the next 12 months. This will particularly affect women who make up 60 percent of the agricultural labour force.
- It is proposed that at least 65 percent of the **budget for commerce and industry recovery** be allocated to high-priority target groups needing specific support, namely women, youth and migrant workers returning home.

### Highlights from Assessments

- According to [assessment in Gorkha](#)<sup>3</sup>, **senior citizens and female headed households were identified as the most vulnerable group**. Existing poor hygiene practices have been exacerbated following the earthquake with only 9% of the population practicing hand washing and almost no instances of using **menstrual hygiene** products reported. Further the assessment report notes that the use of menstrual hygiene products is not a traditional practice among the assessed communities.
- According to [assessment in Sindhupalchowk](#)<sup>4</sup>, **child, female headed and senior citizen headed households were identified as the most vulnerable**. Respondents reported a greater need for information from NGOs and aid workers in areas with a large proportion of single female headed households compared to other areas.
- According to [Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 2](#)<sup>5</sup>, the displaced population in 187 priority camp sites in the 14 most affected districts with **special needs** includes: 2.2% female headed households, 0.6% child-headed households, 4.1% senior citizen headed household, 1% pregnant women, 3.3% breastfeeding mothers, 0.4 % unaccompanied/separated children, 2.3% persons with chronic disease/serious medical condition, 12% members of marginalised caste/ethnicity. Over 45% of these camp sites report that women do not feel safe and almost half of the sites report children feeling unsafe.
- According to the [Shelter Cluster REACH assessment](#)<sup>6</sup>, in Gorkha, Bhaktapur, Kathmandu, Sindhuli and Sindhupalchowk, **no female headed households reported that they have received support to repair or rebuild their houses**.
- Discussions are ongoing with the Assessment Unit and individual clusters about **strengthening the gender aspects** of future rounds of assessments, in terms of both methodology and content.

<sup>3</sup> Assessment Working Group Gorkha Coordinated Assessment Findings (19.06.2015)

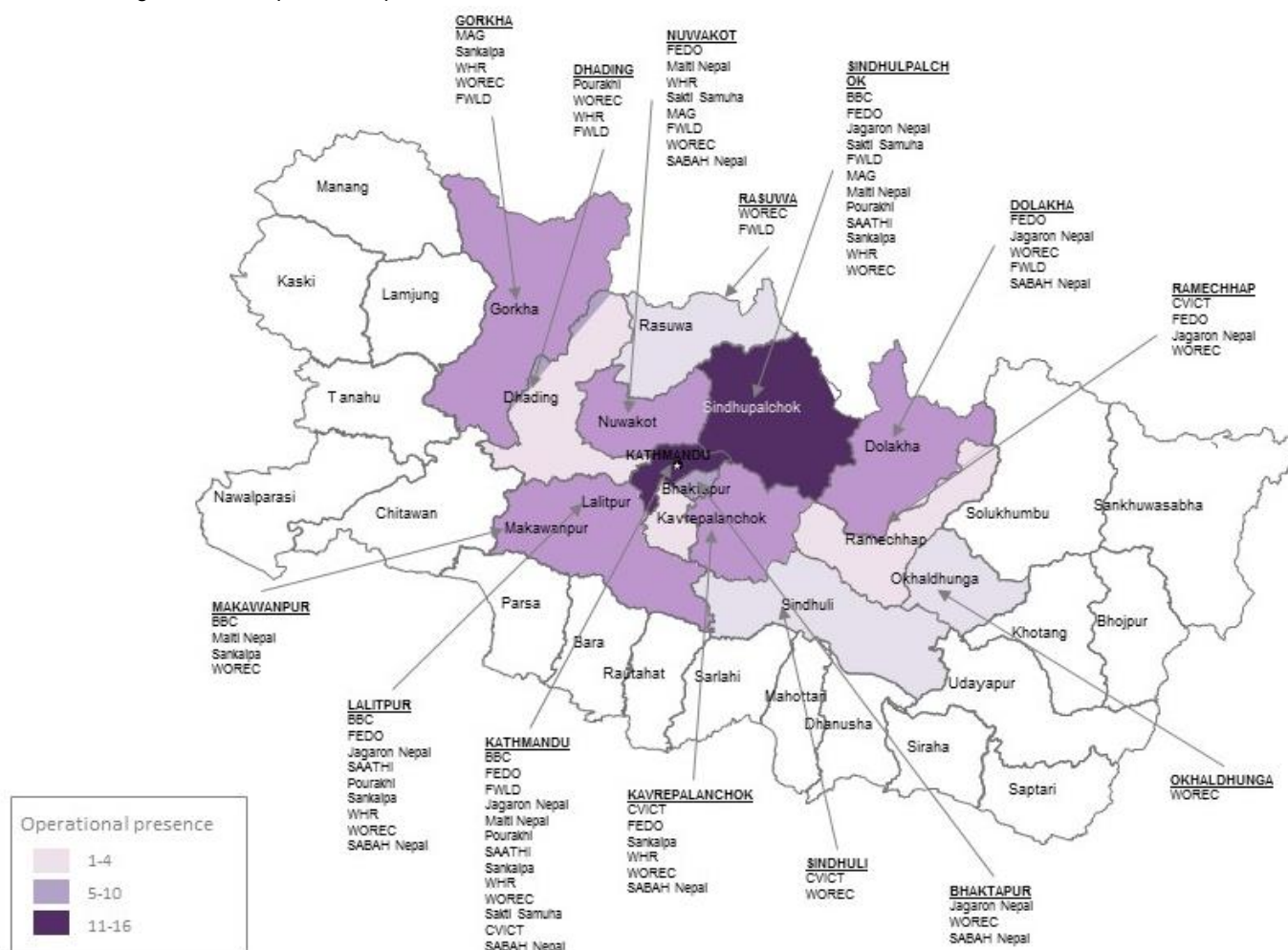
<sup>4</sup> Assessment Working Group Sindhupalchowk Coordinated Assessment Findings (09..06.2015)

<sup>5</sup> Nepal EQ DTM Round 2 findings

<sup>6</sup> Shelter Cluster REACH assessment



## Women's Organisations' operational presence in the 14 most affected districts<sup>7</sup>



### Coordination

- Gender indicators have been prepared by the Gender Working Group Core Group to be included in the Flash Appeal Monitoring Framework, complementing the cluster specific indicators.
- Following meeting chaired by Susila Wagle, Women and Children Officer of Ramechhap, **District-level Women's Committee** was formed in Ramechhap consisting of representatives of local women's groups/networks/cooperatives/inter-party alliance to collectively advocate for gender-responsive humanitarian response efforts including by addressing incidents of gender discrimination and gender-based violence

### Shelter

The Shelter Cluster's tool for the prioritisation of targeted shelter support has been developed to support Shelter Cluster partners in their targeting and prioritisation and includes information on 'targeted' and 'blanket' approaches. Other tools available on the website include: [All Under One Roof: Disability-inclusive shelter and settlements in emergencies \(2015\)](#); [Nepal Gender and Protection \(2015\)](#); [Guidance on mainstreaming gender and diversity in shelter programs \(2013\)](#)



### Food

**WFP's Cash Transfer activity under Cash for Work Programme**, has provided 8,000 rupees (equivalent to 80 US Dollars) to over 8,750 households (30% of whom are women recipients) in Makwanpur District. The beneficiaries contribute to light work, such as removing rubble and plantation in their fields. Through separate Focus Group Discussion and interviews held with men and women (including people living with disabilities and the elderly), they reported consulting with spouses and other family members on how to spend it. Female/male headed households make the decision on cash

*Radha, 76 years old lost everything in the earthquake. With the money received from WFP she is going to buy food and a dress.*  
Photo Credit: WFP/James Giambrone

expenditure. Majority buy food and a few household items, and one woman happily informed that she would buy personal clothing with the remaining cash as she lost everything in the earthquake.

<sup>7</sup> Prepared by UN Women Nepal based on inputs by women's groups. Last updated 4<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

### Nutrition

The **Emergency Nutrition Response Program in Dhading** by United Mission to Nepal (UMN) has looked at 2,574 children between 6 months to 5 years for check-up and feeding counselling. Sixty six health workers and 117 Female Community-based Health Volunteers received training on Community Management of Acute Malnutrition. A few hundred pregnant women and lactating mothers have also received nutrition counselling service from trained health workers. UMN has conducted training and workshop in its regular working areas like Mahadeveasthan, Salyantar and Darkha health posts. 4,500 sachets of Ready to Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) were distributed at the three health posts. Dignity kit, delivery kit and other reproductive health related materials (received from UNFPA) were also distributed to the targeted groups.

*Subiraj Chepang is on a special diet as he was diagnosed with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) and was admitted in the Community Based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) program. Photo Credit: United Mission to Nepal*



### Early Recovery

Early Recovery Cluster is working on debris management and demolition in six of the most affected districts. Part of debris clearing is organized through Cash for Work programme. Currently there are **cash for work activities** in three VDSs in Sindhupalchowk. **Of total 3,016 participants 43% are female.** Participants work in mixed brigades consisting 17 persons. Often men are doing the demolishing and women are collecting and piling the debris e.g. stones. Participants are paid daily salary according to their skill level.

### Gender-based violence

Key updates from the GBV Sub-Cluster include: 1) the endorsement of the **GBV Information management system (IMS) intake form, consent form, and Referral Pathway** from the Department of Women and Children, 2) **Training on GBV in emergencies** at district level with GBV Sub-Clusters and Protection Clusters, Nepal Red Cross, DFID and UNFPA reproductive health/GBV mobile field teams, 3) the establishment of GBV Sub Clusters in Dolakha and Dhading and 4) orientation on the GBV IMS for 25 participants.



*Older women listening during women's safety audit in Patalekheta VDC, Kavre.  
Photo Credit: Women's Rehabilitation Center (WOREC)*

### Issues concerning Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Transsexual and Intersexed (LGBTI) community



*Candle light programme for LGBTI. Photo Credit: Blue Diamond Society*

**Lack of livelihood alternatives** has driven many into sex work and due to the limited supply of contraception in the current context many LGBTI sex workers are put at enhanced risk of unsafe sexual practice. Many transgender either lack ID documentation needed to access relief or their ID do not match with the gender they identify as, and this has created further difficulties in their access

to relief and recovery support. As most of the emergency response efforts target families, this risks excluding LGBTI. Many LGBTI faced difficulties accessing toilets after the earthquake at relief camps as the toilet facilities in camps are not inclusive. Due to post-earthquake trauma and continuous discrimination many LGBTIs are facing severe mental health problems.

In terms of **response** the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare has allocated funds for LGBTI programmes and BDS and FSGMN SGMN has received relief support from several organizations (Save the Children, UNICEF, Red Cross and NRCS) which was distributed in Kavre, Gorkha and Sindhupalchowk. LGBTI issues were incorporated in the flash appeal. BDS and FSGMN are calling for **incorporating LGBTI needs in all plans, policies and programmes for relief, rehabilitation, rebuilding and recovery** to make sure they are inclusive, and to collect data on LGBTI in needs assessments.



## Issues concerning Dalit community

During the Gender Working Group Multi-Stakeholder Forum meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2015 a presentation was held on the earthquake's impact on Dalits by the Feminist Dalit Organisation (FEDO) with the following key findings. FEDO conducted rapid assessments in Lalitpur, Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Kavre, Sindhupalchowk, Nuwakot, Kavre, Dhading, Ramechhap. According to the assessments, the earthquake aftermath has increased the vulnerabilities of the Dalit communities, yet there has been **discrimination against Dalit communities, especially women**, in the rescue and relief response as services are only reachable in central areas and not in the remote areas where Dalits reside. As Dalits are not included in **decision-making bodies** for the response they are not able to ensure their accessibility. Homelessness has become a heightened risk due to Dalit's lack of **land ownership**. Dalit women are facing increased vulnerabilities to **sexual violence** in the current context.

Key measures that need to be taken to address these challenges include: support to resettlement and rehabilitation, psycho-social counselling, increased participation of Dalit women in the decision making and monitoring processes of the humanitarian response, reduction of sexual violence against Dalit women and children, prohibition of any kind of caste-based or gender discrimination in the delivery of services.

## Stories from the field<sup>8</sup>

**Sharmila Nepali** is a single woman. The earthquake left her with a nineteen month old baby girl on her lap and a four year old son who was unable to re-join school. Her husband, who used to be the main breadwinner, abandoned the family 3 months ago right before the earthquake, washing away all her and her children's dreams. The house she rented totally collapsed and she was not able to collect any of her belongings from the debris. Since then Sharmila has become a displaced person. For a few days, she slept in a vegetable shop under a tarpaulin received from the Red Cross. Sharmila and her children also received some food from the Red Cross but she explained this was not sufficient. She has since then been staying in Tudikhel in Kathmandu under a tarpaulin. "I wasn't able to change my dress after the earthquake, but after I received this dignity kit and clothes from the WHR office, I'm happy that I can now change both me and my children's clothes," Sharmila explained. During her stay in Tudikhel, Sharmila was able to receive two meals a day. Sharmila hopes to receive financial support from WHR for the treatment of the wound on her chest after she was burnt from hot lentil soup while waiting in the food distribution queue. Sharmila told WHR that if she is provided with some money for paying rent for the first month, she would try to earn by herself onwards. She shared that she previously worked as a tailor and that she would like to start up her tailoring work again. WHR assessed her skills as high level and Sharmila has now been hired as a tailor in the Single Women Entrepreneurs Group (SWEG). She says that her future plan is to educate her children.



Sharmila Nepali engaged in tailoring. Photo Credit: WHR

**Shirisha Tamang** is a twenty one year old single mother living in Godawari. Her home collapsed into rubble during the earthquake and she is now living under a sheet of tin with her family. "At night time we have to wander alone to go to the bathroom and are constantly in fear, therefore the solar lamp is a big help making us feel safer" said Shirisha. "The items in the dignity kit such as soap, towel, washing powder have been useful to me as I have no money to buy such goods from the market".



Temporary shelter built within two weeks after the disaster in Sindhupalchowk. Photo Credit: Helvetas Nepal

**Shrijana Giri**, a resident from Palchok village development committee in Sindhupalchowk faced a series of disasters following the earthquake on April 25, 2015. She was living with her husband's parents while her husband himself married a second woman and lived in Kathmandu. She felt secure within this joint family but immediately after the earthquake, a family disaster struck. She was rejected by the joint family and had to settle separately with her two sons. She received support from Helvetas Nepal for the construction of her temporary shelter which helped her settle after the disaster. She used recovered wooden planks, tree log columns and corrugated sheets to build the walls for her temporary shelter. She bought some corrugated sheets from the market to use for new roof. She managed to recover window panes from the rubble which are now assembled in her new home. Moreover, she built a kitchen fireplace in one corner of the temporary shelter. It is admirable, how she managed to build a temporary shelter within only two weeks after the earthquake struck. Yet, mentally recovering from the rejection by her wider family will no doubt take time.

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**Link:** <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/nepal>

This update was prepared based on inputs from members of the multi-stakeholder forum of the Inter-Cluster Gender Working Group (GWG). The forum enables information exchange, coordinating efforts towards shared priorities, and raising attention to key issues in the field of gender equality during the Nepal earthquake humanitarian response. The Gender Working Group is co-chaired by UN OCHA and UN Women Nepal.

<sup>8</sup> The stories were provided by WHR, Saathi and Helvetas Nepal