

# Fostering a comprehensive approach to disaster risk reduction in Nepal

## Case Study

August 2014

**Kathmandu, Nepal** – For a developing country, nothing can be more demoralizing than a single disaster wiping out years of development. Countries that are prone to disasters have to prepare for the worst to protect what they've worked so hard to gain. Understanding disaster and climate risk management is an important step to safeguard development achievements.

Nepal has made great strides towards its development goals in recent years. Some achievements include fewer people living below the poverty line, an increase in wage rates, and a rise in literacy and school enrolment rates. However, the country's progress is threatened due to its geological location, which makes it disaster-prone, and is affected by earthquakes, floods, drought, and landslides.

In 2011, United Nations Development Program (UNDP) launched the Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Program to help the Nepalese government develop long-term risk reduction plans. The program, running until 2015, aims to mainstream disaster risk reduction efforts to minimize the effects of natural hazards. ADPC was engaged by UNDP to provide training, specifically strengthening the national and local governments' ability to mainstream disaster and climate risk management in the country.

"We were engaged as technical consultants, so before defining the scope of the project, UNDP Nepal had several discussions with the government of Nepal. Our role was to fulfill those demands on the technical side," says Mr. Sudhir Kumar, former Senior Project Manager at Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC).

ADPC provided workshops and training to several national and local government agencies. Each workshop sought to build the capacity of a key agency on sector-specific issues related to



*ADPC trained Nepalese government officials in order to build expertise in mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into the sectoral development processes.*



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mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into the sectoral development processes. The training involved the National Planning Commission, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development, Ministry of Urban Development, Ministry of Irrigation, Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation, Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, and Ministry of Education.

### **Fostering long-term development**

Proper training at the local level is important to ensure the government's policies have a lasting effect. The workshop engaged the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development that facilitates 75 District Development Councils, 58 municipalities, and 3,915 village development councils to enhance mainstreaming development programs. The training improved the capacity of local authorities to respond to disaster and provided them with a strategy for implementing local community development programs.

ADPC organized capacity building activities for five national training institutions, and one in particular has adapted the training for future use.

“The training that we did under the project has been taken over by a Nepali institution called the Local Development Training Academy. They are adapting and further improving what we produced into Nepali and adapting the concept and delivery of the training,”

says Mr. Sudhir Kumar, former Senior Project Manager at Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC).

In 2011 alone, 160 local and central government officials were trained to incorporate disaster risk reduction issues into development planning, and thirteen district preparedness and response plans were drafted making authorities better prepared for a disaster. To further help local governments, sixteen district emergency operation centers were established to coordinate disaster response.

### **Improving existing systems at the national level**

In Nepal, the National Planning Commission has the responsibility of turning national disaster risk management strategies into policy, to later be implemented at the local level. ADPC's training



*Nepal's geological location makes it disaster prone. Without safeguarding its development, it is vulnerable to earthquakes, floods, drought, and landslides.*

was focused on improving this process by enhancing the commission's understanding of mainstreaming. Essentially, the training focused on improving existing practices.

The training was broken down into seven technical sessions that included mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and climate risk management in a variety of areas. These areas included framework development, integration strategies, annual planning and budget processes, project appraisal processes, and monitoring and evaluation systems.

Mr. Pradip Kumar Koirala, Under Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs – the ministry responsible for policy implementation and coordination in disaster management – attended the training on Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Program (CDRMP).

“The training covered various facets of mainstreaming, and gave us new knowledge of how to mainstream disaster risk reduction,” says Mr. Koirala.





development gains against disasters, progress may be hindered by hazards such as

The training aided the ministry, but there is still work to be done.

“We still have room for improvement. Moving forward we need to mix practical knowledge with theory,” Mr. Koirala says.

### **Online portal to prompt mobilization of relief**

A reliable information resource is essential given the vast amount of interconnected disaster preparedness efforts underway in Nepal. Mobilization of personnel and supplies after a disaster needs to happen quickly and efficiently. This led to the establishment of the Nepal Disaster Risk Reduction Portal with technical support from ADPC.

Benefiting the local communities, ministries, departments, district authorities and development partners, the goal of the portal is to serve as a one-stop online information source on disaster risk reduction in Nepal. Also, academic institutions and external partners can use the portal as an information resource.

Once in full use, the portal will provide information on policy instruments, priorities, and agencies involved in disaster risk reduction campaigns. The portal allows disaster risk reduction efforts to be monitored ensuring strategic and effective interventions and support both internally and externally.

In the future, the Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Program conducted in Nepal will provide a solid model for other countries in the region in mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into national and local development frameworks.

*By Don Tartaglione*



## **The backbone of support**

The backbone of ADPC's support in Nepal during the Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Program is based on three elements: capacity building, partnership, and knowledge management.

### **Capacity building**

Training was designed considering the gaps within existing disaster risk reduction strategies and future needs based on legislation, strategies, and directives of the relevant ministries.

### **Partnership**

A variety of partners are required to ensure disaster risk reduction has a lasting effect within a country. The support of the Government of Nepal, UN agencies, technical institutions, universities and NGOs was invaluable during the process to address the needs of different ministries. Simultaneously, all the parties involved show how disaster risk reduction is an all-encompassing process where the national and local levels need to work together.

### **Knowledge management**

Coordination needs were met by developing a Nepal Disaster Risk Reduction portal. This website quickly provides all the necessary information for disaster relief efforts and implementation in Nepal.



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