

**The Outcome and Mainstreaming
of the CHS in Relief, Recovery
and Reconstruction in the
Aftermath of
2015 Gorkha Earthquake**

actalliance
NEPAL FORUM

The Outcome and Mainstreaming of the CHS in Relief, Recovery and Reconstruction in the Aftermath of 2015 Gorkha Earthquake

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Message from the Convener

Dear humanitarian actors and readers,

I am happy to share the 'The Outcome and Mainstreaming of the CHS in Relief, Recovery and Reconstruction in the Aftermath of 2015 Gorkha Earthquake' with you. Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) is a tool to help humanitarian organizations to improve the quality, effectiveness, and accountability of their programs. Humanitarian principles are meant to be strictly followed by humanitarian agencies during emergencies.



The CHS enables projects and programs to place affected communities or people at the center while planning, implementing, and evaluating humanitarian actions. This helps to build into the humanitarian interventions, the essential elements of principled, accountable, and high-quality humanitarian aid.

The importance of the use of the standards is reflected in the effectiveness of humanitarian supports rendered. The standards were developed based on the experience of the humanitarian actions carried out in different parts of the world. All the members of ACT Alliance Nepal Forum being humanitarian and development organizations follow the CHS. Humanitarian response should be: appropriate and relevant; effective and timely; based on communication, participation and feedback; and coordinated and complementary, among others.

All the five requesting members - DanChurchAid (DCA), Finn Church Aid (FCA), ICCO Cooperation, The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Nepal and Lutheran World Relief (LWR) - and the two non-requesting members - Diakonie Katastrophehilfe (DKH) and Christian Aid (CAID) provided humanitarian support to the people most affected by the temblor. We have followed the principles of humanitarian actions.

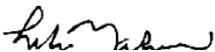
In order to learn from experience and further strengthen ourselves and enrich the CHS, we have carried out this study. Mainstreaming the CHS in relief, recovery and reconstruction was one of the important parts of our collective and separate humanitarian actions.

The findings of the study reiterates the swift response to the earthquake by ACT Alliance members. They continued supporting affected communities in recovery and reconstruction in areas of shelter, WASH, livelihood, education, emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction and community-based psychosocial support, applying an appropriate need assessment ensuring the relevance of the assistance.

The report states that the project activities did not have any negative impacts on biological, physical, social and cultural environment of the communities. Similarly, all the member organizations have made a significant contribution to enhancing the local capacity of the communities through sensitization and awareness programs, capacity development initiatives in their respective sectors to uplift the livelihood status and to make them resilient to future disasters.

It has also indicated some areas of improvement for future humanitarian actions. The report recommends that vulnerability and risk assessment should be incorporated mandatorily in need assessment. And optimal timing for the project activities should be planned taking into account weather, climate, national and local festivals, etc. I do believe that this report will be important for the humanitarian actors, academic institutions, students, teachers and the common people as well.

I would like to thank the study team of Scott Wilson Nepal, colleagues from all the member organizations, community people who provided their valuable input and time to the study. I also thank Mr Ram Sharan Sedhai of LWF Nepal for editing the report and coordinating its publication.



Dr Prabin Manandhar
Convener
ACT Alliance Nepal Forum

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Acronyms

ACT	Action by Churches Together
CAID	Christian Aid
CDO	Chief District Officer
CDRR	Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction
CFS	Child-friendly Space
CHS	Core Humanitarian Standards
COPPADES	Committee for the Promotion of Public Awareness and Development Studies
CTEVT	Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training
DADO	District Agriculture Development Office
DCA	DanChurchAid
DDC	District Development Office
DDRC	District Disaster Relief Committee
DEO	District Education Office
DKH	Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe
DLSO	District Livestock Service Office
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DUDBC	Department of Urban Development and Building Construction
ECO-Nepal	Environment and Child Concern Organization-Nepal
EPDRR	Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Risk Reduction
ERLR	Early Recovery and Livelihood Restoration
FCA	Finn Church Aid
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSCN	Friends Service Council Nepal
HRRP	Housing Recovery and Reconstruction Platform
ICCO	ICCO Cooperation
ICDO	Integrated Community Development Organization
JTA	Junior Technical Assistant
KII	Key Informant Interview
LGCDP	Local Governance and Community Development Program
LWF	The Lutheran World Federation
LWR	Lutheran World Relief
MEAL	Monitoring Evaluation and Learning
NCED	National Centre for Educational Development
NDRC	National Development and Reform Commission
NERP	Nepal Earthquake Response Program
NRA	National Reconstruction Authority
TLC	Temporary Learning Center

Executive Summary

This report presents an assessment of the extent of compliance of the Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) in the projects implemented by five requesting members of the ACT Alliance Nepal Forum — DanChurchAid (DCA), Finn Church Aid (FCA), ICCO Cooperation, the The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Nepal and the Lutheran World Relief (LWR) following the 2015 Gorkha Earthquake in Nepal. In the relief phase, emergency life support items were distributed to the affected communities. Later, programs on shelter, WASH, livelihood recovery, education, Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Risk Reduction (EPDRR) and Community-based Psychosocial Support (CBPSS) were supported under two key projects—NPL 151 and NPL 161.

The main purpose of this study is to assess the extent to which the above humanitarian actions were guided by humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality as enshrined in the CHS.

The tools used in this study were largely qualitative and included focus group discussion (FGD), key informant interview (KII), field observations and desk reviews. A total of 5 FGDs were carried out with the community in the project districts of Lalitpur, Sindhupalchok and Gorkha. Similarly, 10 KIIs were conducted with ACT Alliance officials and implementing partners from Friends Service Council Nepal (FSCN), UCEP, SSICDC, and ISARD and Society of Local Volunteers (SOLVE) Nepal as well as undertaking interviews with government staff of respective districts.

The scope of this study is mainly for the assessment of requesting ACT Members. However, a brief assessment of the non-requesting ACT Members, mainly the Diakonie Katastrophehilfe (DKH) and Christian Aid (CAID) has also been included.

The key findings of this study are:

- 1) ACT Alliance members responded swiftly to emergency soon after the earthquake. They continued their support in recovery and reconstruction phases in areas of shelter, WASH, livelihood recovery, education, EPDRR and CBPSS following appropriate need assessments which assure that the assistance provided was relevant.

- 2) The members followed a blanket targeting approach during the initial phase to respond swiftly to the emerging needs, but later a coordinated targeting was undertaken in close consultations with district UN clusters. Overall, ACT Alliance Members provided timely support in the affected areas with active participation of communities and their leadership.
- 3) Negative impacts of the project activities were not noted by the study.
- 4) Organizations have made some notable contributions to enhancing the local capacity of the communities through awareness events, capacity development, and training in their respective sectors.
- 5) The findings of the study show that complaints were mostly received directly through staff despite provision of complaint box and phone numbers provided to communities to file complaints.
- 6) Member organizations maintained documentation of key learning and best practices for transfer of knowledge.
- 7) Beneficiary community feedback to staff performance at field level and works by ACT Alliance members were largely satisfactory. Overall, organizations had staff capacity and competency to carry out the support.
- 8) The study noted that transparency of project resources, project budget and expenditures were upheld through periodic public audits and project boards. In addition, communities in FGDs also assured delivery of cost-effective humanitarian assistance based on humanity, impartiality, neutrality and accountability. Overall, ACT Alliance Members broadly adhered to the nine commitments of the CHS while implementing NPL 151 and NPL 161.

1. Introduction

1.1 Context

Two large earthquakes of magnitude 7.8 and 7.3 hit Nepal on 25 April and 12 May 2015 respectively. As per the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of Nepal, 8,891 people lost their lives, and 22,302 were injured. A total of 604, 930 houses were turned into rubbles and 288,856 were partially damaged. Further, 4.2 million people lost their access to water supply and sanitation. Nepal has since then been receiving humanitarian assistance in different phases – Rescue and Relief, Recovery, Reconstruction and Resilience - from many national and international organizations.

Members of ACT Alliance Nepal Forum have been supporting Nepal since the 1980s in the field of development and humanitarian response. Following the earthquake, DCA, FCA, ICCO Cooperation, LWF Nepal and LWR implemented Nepal Earthquake Response (NPL 151) in Dolakha, Sindhuplachok, Kavre, Bhaktapur, Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Makawanpur, Dhading, Gorkha, Lamjung, Rasuwa and Nuwakot districts. In the early phases, they were engaged in emergency life support activities such as distribution of ready-to-eat food and basic food rations, bottled water, tarpaulins for emergency shelters, kitchen utensils, bed and bedding, personal hygiene kits, water supply and purifiers, emergency education including temporary learning centers (TLCs)¹. Similarly, for recovery, reconstruction and resilience, NPL 161 project was implemented by DCA, FCA, ICCO, LWF and LWR in Dolakha, Sindhuplachok, Bhaktapur, Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Makawanpur, Dhading, Gorkha, Lamjung and Rasuwa. Shelter, WASH, livelihood recovery, education, EPDRR and CBPSS were the key components of both projects².

1.2 Core Humanitarian Standards

The CHS is a tool to help humanitarian organizations to improve the quality, effectiveness, and accountability of their programs. These tools reflect a set of universal standards for assuring quality, accountability and management of people for humanitarian response to the affected

1 ACT Alliance, Nepal Earthquake Response - NPL 151(Revision 1), 2015

2 ACT Alliance, Nepal Earthquake Recovery Reconstruction, and Resilience (3R)-NPL 161, ACT Response to the Gorkha Earthquake, 2016.

community or people³. The standards comprise nine commitments along with their quality criteria. Overall, the CHS indicators relate to:

- Project and program design
- Need and vulnerability assessment
- Resource management
- Monitoring at project, program, sectoral and response-wise level
- Agency-led organizational assessments
- Capacity-building strategies
- Internal evaluation
- Peer and joint reviews and evaluations, and
- Real time monitoring by affected communities and people.

The humanitarian organizations are required to apply the CHS to assure quality and effectiveness in the assistance they provide. In doing so, the CHS enables projects and programs to place affected communities or people at the center while planning, implementing, and evaluating humanitarian actions. This helps to build into the humanitarian interventions, the essential elements of principled, accountable, and high-quality humanitarian aid⁴. ACT alliance has been adopting the CHS in Nepal since 2015.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to assess the extent to which the humanitarian actions carried out in the wake of the earthquakes were guided by humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality.

More specifically, the study is designed to examine the outcome of NPL 151 and NPL 161 based on the following quality criteria of the CHS:

- a) Humanitarian response is appropriate and relevant
- b) Humanitarian response is effective and timely
- c) Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects
- d) Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback
- e) Complaints are welcomed and addressed
- f) Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary
- g) Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve

3 Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS). <https://www.slideshare.net/ZeynepTurkmenSanduvac/chs-test-orientation-v1-zeynep>. Accessed on 20 January 2018.

4 CHS Alliance, Core Humanitarian Standards, CHS Guidance Notes and Indicators, First Edition, 2015.

- h) Staff are supported to do their job effectively, and are treated fairly and equitably
- i) Resources are managed and used responsibly for their intended purpose

1.4 Scope of the Study

The study has looked into the extent of compliance of the CHS in the projects implemented by the five requesting members⁵ of the ACT Alliance Nepal Forum. In view of additional requests made later on, the study also provides limited information on the CHS compliance of non-requesting members⁶. The study has looked into the core intervention sectors of each of the requesting members to assess the CHS application. The table below shows the sectors of response of total ACT response and the sectors covered by this study for each of the requesting and non-requesting members.

Table-1: Core Interventions of ACT Alliance Members in each District

S.N.	Member	Sector of Response	Sector of Response Covered in this Study
1.	DCA	Shelter, WASH, Food Security, PSS, ERLR, EPDRR	Shelter, ERLR
2.	FCA	PSS, Shelter, Education, EPDRR, ERLR	Education
3.	ICCO	ERLR, EPDRR	ERLR
4.	LWF	WASH, Shelter, PSS, ERLR	Shelter
5.	LWR	Shelter, EPDRR, ERLR	Shelter, ERDR
6.	CAID	Shelter, WASH, Livelihood, Education, DRR, Climate Change Adaptation, Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI)	Shelter, WASH, Livelihood, Education, DRR, GESI
7.	DKH	Shelter, Community Infrastructure, WASH, DRR, Livelihood	Shelter, Community Infrastructure, WASH, DRR, Livelihood

⁵ These include DCA, FCA, ICCO, LWF and LWR

⁶ CA and DKH

2. Methodology: Approach and Tools

2.1 Research Design

This is largely a qualitative study, the tools of which comprised mainly the consultations with the projects beneficiaries in the community, staff of the implementing partners and ACT Alliance member organizations. Consultations and desk reviews were the major source of information for this study, and this was complemented by field findings.

2.2 Study Areas

The study was carried out in three districts – Lalitpur, Sindhupalchok and Gorkha. Study sites for the respective ACT Alliance Members were selected in consultation with ACT Alliance. The basis for the selection of these specific sites included status of completion of their intervention, and accessibility and coverage of different interventions. The following table shows the study sites selected for ACT Alliance Members.

Table-2: Study areas

S.N.	Act Alliance Member	Study Locations
1	DCA	Lakuri Bhanjyang, Lalitpur
2	FCA	Chaughare, Lalitpur
3	ICCO	Karthali, Sindhupalchok
4	LWF	Bhattedanda, Lalitpur
5	LWR	Jaubari, Gorkha
6	CAID	In-person interview with CAID personnel
7	DKH	In-person interview with DKH personnel

2.3 Data Collection Tools

The data collection tools used in this qualitative study were FGD, KII and literature review.

Literature Review

A wide range of documents listed below were reviewed:

- Need Assessment Report, NDRC-Nepal, 2016, Executive Summary
- Lutheran World Relief, Need Assessment Report, NDRC-Nepal 2016
- ACT Response to the Gorkha Earthquake, ACT Alliance
- Narrative Report of ACT Alliance: Interim Report-I, Jan 2017
- Narrative Report of ACT Alliance: Interim Report-II, May 2017

- Annual Progress Report of Lutheran World Relief
- NERP Review Reflection, Lamjung, LWR
- Nepal Earthquake Relief, Reconstruction and Resilience (3R)-NPL 161
- Joint Monitoring Visit Report, LWR
- Post-Distribution Monitoring Report, LWF
- Community Perception of the Earthquake Response 2016, LWF
- Finn Church Aid Global Program Annual Report 2016
- Nepal Earthquake Response NPL 151
- DEC Collective Learning Report, CAID
- Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment 2015, CAID

Focus Ground Discussions

FGD check lists and questionnaire were developed and used to understand perceptions and views of earthquake-affected people (Annexe-I). The findings collected from FGDs were used to triangulate the findings from the desk studies. A total of 5 FGDs were carried out among community groups.

Key Informant Interviews

KII checklists were developed and KIIs were conducted with 5 staff of implementing partner organizations and 7 staff of ACT Alliance Members and 5 government staff. Field-level information on project activities were collected from implementing partners whereas information on policy, guidelines and code of conduct were collected from the senior-level official of ACT Alliance Members.

3. Limitations and Challenges

Due to time and resource limitations, this study was carried out in detail mainly for the requesting members of ACT Alliance Members. Also, due to timing of the study at the end of the project implementation, not all the project staff were available to meet, limiting the ability of the project staff to fully engage and apprise the assessment team of the full extent of project implementation details.

4. Findings and Analysis⁷

The findings and analysis presented below are structured along the nine CHS commitments.

4.1 Commitment-1: Communities and people affected by crisis receive assistance appropriate and relevant to their needs.

Quality Criterion: Humanitarian response is appropriate and relevance.

4.1.1 DanChurchAid

DCA Nepal was engaged in emergency and life supporting initiatives from the initial phase through the implementation of NPL151. DCA first started with a blanket approach in the first three months, and later followed with a needs assessment for further support. Desk review shows that the special needs of children, differently abled and elderly people were considered with an emphasis on the needs of disadvantaged groups including women⁸. FGD participants appreciated the emphasis given by the organization to the special needs of the children, differently abled and elderly people in the community. DCA largely based its humanitarian support measures on the disaggregated data⁹ that was available.

After relief phase, DCA support mainly covered shelter, WASH, EPDRR, PSS and livelihood sectors. The interventions included direct cash support to the community to build temporary shelters and improve their livelihoods. Similarly, repair and renovation of existing water supply system and damaged toilets were undertaken through NPL 151 while the construction of new water supply systems and toilets were covered through NPL 161.

With respect to the support through DCA, mainly the cash for constructing temporary shelters and restoration of livelihood were considered by the communities to be highly relevant and appropriate. This support was noted to help the communities in building safer shelter and restoring their livelihood. For example, affected communities in Mahalaxmi

⁷ The observations made here are largely from desk review and consultations with the members of ACT Alliance

⁸ Appeal, Nepal Earthquake Relief, Reconstruction and Resilience (3R)- NPL 161.

⁹ Appeal, Nepal Earthquake Relief, Reconstruction and Resilience (3R)-NPL 161.

Municipality of Lakuri Bhanjyang stated that the materials they received, i.e. tarpaulin, blankets, clothes and food items were much sought after and the cash for temporary shelter was provided when it was needed the most.

4.1.2 Finn Church Aid

The overall goal of FCA engagement in NPL 151 was to seek protection and wellbeing of school children. FCA ensured the protection of vulnerable earthquake-affected children by establishing temporary learning centers, child-friendly spaces (CFS) and by training the school teachers in PSS. FCA carried out rapid need assessment to identify and address needs of school children and teachers based on which FCA has constructed 666 semi-permanent classrooms in four districts of which 40 are in remote areas of Lalitpur district. Further, it conducted school enrollment campaign to encourage earthquake-affected children to resume their education. It has stated that 10,657 earthquake-affected children across 61 schools received PSS¹⁰ which was delivered in coordination with the government after rapid need assessment¹¹. The program was mainly targeted to school teachers, headmasters and students.

Moreover, FCA's effort in constructing safe classrooms with gender disaggregated toilets and hand washing facilities shows the relevance and appropriateness of their support¹². FGD participants and key informants at Chaughare also expressed similar opinions on the relevancy of the support.

4.1.3 ICCO Cooperation

Early recovery was a sector of response of ICCO in NPL 151, whereas early recovery and livelihood restoration, shelter, and emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction were sectors of response in NPL 161. ICCO used mobile-based application AKVO to conduct detailed need assessment where majority of the respondents opted for on-farm activities as their need for early recovery. In NPL 151, ICCO mainly contributed to restoring day-to-day lives of the people to normalcy by engaging them in income-generating activities and assisting in the revival of functional market. Through NPL 161, ICCO upscaled and expanded activities of NPL 151.

10 Finn Church Aid. Finn Church Aid Global Program Annual Report, 2016.

11 Act Alliance Forum Nepal. ACT Response to the Gorkha Earthquake - Lesson Learnt, 2016.

12 Finn Church Aid. Finn Church Aid Global Program Annual Report, 2016.

According to an official at ICCO, participatory vulnerability assessment, study on existing capacity of the community and vulnerability mapping was emphasized during the needs assessment with special focus on Gender and Social Inclusion.

The ICCO's initiatives were relevant in that they were designed to address the critical need to restore normalcy in everyday life. Further, interventions were climate-, culture-, and environment-friendly. For example, ICCO supported tiller or thresher so that a woman can also plough the field in the absence of male member of the family and earn. Promotion of technology further saved time which was important to engage communities in other income-generating activities. It also reduced the post-harvest losses.

Interview with an official at ISARD (implementing partner of ICCO) showed that data were disaggregated in order to prioritize the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups and to avoid duplication in the beneficiary list. Furthermore, the official ensured that possible risks associated with project and project sites were identified in consultation with stakeholders including poor and marginalized people. Landslide, thunderstorm and forest fire were the major identified and reported risk of Karthali, Sindhupalchok.

Consistent with the information received from ICCO and ISARD, FGD participants assured that assistance provided by the organization was relevant.

4.1.4 The Lutheran World Federation

LWF Nepal had conducted rapid need assessment in Kathmandu and other five districts. However rapid need assessment could not be conducted in all the affected areas due to time constraint and remoteness¹³. Need assessment was conducted through FDGs and primary household surveys, however, in initial relief phase blanket approach was adopted. Tarpaulin, family tents, sleeping mattress, blanket, drinking water, ready-to-eat food, hygiene kit, sanitary pads, solar lights, kitchen sets, mosquito nets, basic food, etc. were distributed to the affected communities in relief phase¹⁴. FGD participants at Bhattedanda stated that they received basic necessities such as tarpaulin, basic food, clothes, utensils, and blankets from the

¹³ ACT Alliance, Nepal Earthquake Response - NPL 151 (Revision-1), 2015

¹⁴ Pokharel, A. Adhikari G. & Budhathoki, N. Report on the Distribution Monitoring Survey, 2015.

third day of the 2015 earthquake. Assistance not only covered the primary needs of the affected people, but also the special needs of women and infants for sanitary pads, under garments and fortified food as well as personal hygiene kits were also addressed. Shelter, WASH and PSS were the main interventions of the project in Bhattedanda.

Vulnerability assessment was conducted after the distribution of relief packages. During the process, demographic data was disaggregated on the basis of age, gender, caste and physical ability. As per the post-distribution survey, relief packages were also diversified during relief phase as per the ground needs of the people. Further, in order to enhance and utilize the local capacity, the local workers were given masonry and carpentry training.

The KII with LWF official has shown that the project adopted financial and social capital transfer strategy to address the need of vulnerable people. For example, project facilitated vulnerable people for swift access to installments. Similar observations were made by the participants in FGD at Bhattedanda.

4.1.5 Lutheran World Relief

LWR adopted blanket approach and targeted approach in NPL 151 and NPL 161 respectively. LWR has undertaken need assessment, participatory vulnerability assessment, and initial impact assessment using comprehensive study tools¹⁵. LWR follows the principles of human rights, impartiality, accountability, gender justice, climate justice and environmental sustainability¹⁶. Major risks identified in the short- and long-term risk assessment were associated with water, shelter, and psychology¹⁷. Desk study shows that the organization has documented the demographic data in disaggregated form for impartial assistance¹⁸. The KII with project partner also verified this. Permanent shelter, livelihood, DRR, capacity building training were the major intervention in NPL 161. In the FGD, participants responded that LWR interventions were as per the need of the community. Further, existing capacity of affected community were identified and suitable training in resilient building, disaster management were conducted¹⁹.

15 Need Assessment Report, NDRC - Nepal, 2016, Executive Summary

16 Lutheran World Relief, <https://nepal.lutheranworld.org/>

17 Lutheran World Relief, Need Assessment Report, NDRC - Nepal 2016. Page 3.

18 Lutheran World Relief, Annual Report, page 16 and Summary Section

19 Lutheran World Relief, Nepal Earthquake Response Program Review Reflection Report. Lamjung

4.1.6 Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe

DKH is a humanitarian organization based in Germany. It did not have country office or presence in Nepal prior to the earthquake. DKH deployed staff from the country office in Pakistan and Regional office in Turkey to Nepal for immediate support. In the relief phase, DKH partnered with local NGOs and INGOS already working in Nepal to expedite the support, and channeled funds to the ACT appeals. Gorkha, Dhading, Sindhupalchok, Kaski, were the major districts covered in initial relief phase. Blanket approach was followed in relief phase to provide emergency life support initiatives while in recovery and reconstruction phase, target approach was followed.

Based on Post-Disaster Need Assessment carried out by the government of Nepal, DKH conducted vulnerability assessment in its project sites in consultation with districts and village wards in its recovery and reconstruction phase. For that, household survey was carried out and data was disaggregated. Disaggregated data was then used in selection of beneficiary to target economically poor, marginalized and vulnerable people i.e. women-headed households, elderlies, people with disabilities. Permanent shelter, community infrastructure, WASH, DRR and livelihood were the major interventions of the projects in recovery and reconstruction phases.

4.1.7 Christian Aid

CAID has global policy of providing impartial assistance to the affected people. CAID's core initiatives were WASH, rehabilitation of water supply system, and construction of toilets. In the early phase, it adopted blanket approach in delivering live-saving supports. However, later it went with target approach. The needs of single women, elderly people, children and person with disability were addressed by conducting need and vulnerability assessments.

CAID covered the most affected districts by the earthquake. It worked with the UN cluster systems to provide vital emergency supplies for more than 400,000 people of the worst-affected areas. It covered most vulnerable areas of Kathmandu including surrounding districts. In its initial phases, it focused on relevant inputs such as rapid relief, recovery, early-warning initiatives. It also provided its support for disaster risk reduction, climate change and livelihood support.

4.2 Commitment-2: Communities and people affected by crisis have access to the humanitarian assistance they need at the right time. Quality Criterion: Humanitarian response is effective and timely.

4.2.1 DanChurchAid

In coordination with DDRC, DDC (then District Development Committee) and ACT Alliance Forum, DCA began its response from the third day of the massive earthquake. An early support to the affected communities was assured by adopting a blanket approach in initial phase. Formation of Project Implementation Coordination Sub-committee (PICSC), self-help groups and mobilization of existing local partners played a huge role in ensuring timely support. FGD participants in Lalitpur district stated that they received assistance from the second day. They also stated that the cash support received for transitional shelter was timely and it helped them to get back to their normal life. They further expressed their satisfaction with the support and consultation that they received from the staff.

DCA conducted a post-distribution monitoring to identify the unmet needs of the affected communities. The cash support provided by DCA enabled the affected communities to address their specific needs. DCA ensured the consultation with ward secretary and ward citizen forum of rural municipalities (then VDCs) while implementing the project.

4.2.2 Finn Church Aid

Temporary classrooms and PSS for children were recognized as urgent requirements in needs assessment. FCA was able to meet the government's target to reopen schools on 31 May 2015. The timely support for school infrastructure and PSS ensured early recovery of children from stress and enabled them to continue their education post-earthquake²⁰. Temporary classrooms built with bamboos were the best alternative option to resume the classes at the earliest post-earthquake²¹. Desk study shows that cash-for-work modality was adopted for quick impact²².

There was some interruption in the implementation of project due to the delay in promulgation of NRA guidelines. Overall, the communities have perceived FCA as a trusted humanitarian agency for providing timely support in the education sector. For example, according to the

20 Act Alliance Forum Nepal. ACT Response to the Gorkha Earthquake-Lesson Learnt, 2016.

21 Act Alliance Forum Nepal. Act Response to the Gorkha Earthquake - Lesson Learnt, 2016. page 19

22 Finn Church Aid, Narrative Report: Interim Report-I, January 2017

FGD participants, FCA's project activities in Chaughare, Lalitpur has given positive results to the students and teachers. Students were interested to go to school, and their learning capability has increased.

4.2.3 ICCO Cooperation

During the emergency stage after the earthquakes, ICCO's resources were mobilized through other ACT Alliance Members such as DCA, LWF, LWR, FCA for immediate lifesaving activities. In the meantime, ICCO was engaged in channeling funds to ACT Alliance Nepal Forum, fundraising efforts through media mobilization in the Netherlands and supporting ACT Alliance members and other agencies in data collection, surveys and market assessments. The needs assessment carried out by ICCO using mobile application AKVO identified infrastructure and local market as immediate needs for early recovery. Based on this needs assessment, ICCO's own livelihood support activities were planned. For the immediate execution of project activities, local partners were chosen. Community people during FGD were positive that they received timely support in reviving day-to-day life.

4.2.4 The Lutheran World Federation

LWF was able to reach timely into remote areas of Sindhupalchok, Dolakha, Kavrepalanchok, Bhaktapur, Lalitpur, Kathmandu, Rasuwa, Makawanpur and Nuwakot districts immediately after the earthquake. Affected people were aware of the date and time of distribution of relief packages²³. FGD participants at Bhattedanda, Lalitpur affirmed the presence of ICDO (the implementing partner of LWF) in Lalitpur from the very first day of relief distribution.

Though, a blanket approach was adopted in the initial stage, target approach was followed later. Unmet needs were also later identified and addressed. The KII with LWF official shows that most of the project activities in NPL 151 and NPL 161 were delivered on planned time frame.

Though overall project objectives were achieved on time, delay in government policies and delay in approval of NRA standards posed major challenges in the achievement of planned activities such as shelter construction. ICDO ensured that the project activities were carried out as per the project action plan.

4.2.5 Lutheran World Relief

LWR was the first humanitarian organization to reach Jaubari, Gorkha with emergency support²⁴. The FGD participants at Jaubari further verified that LWR was at the village on the second day of the earthquake. LWR mobilized COPPADES (an implementing partner of LWR in Lamjung even before earthquake 2015) in Gorkha district to ensure the timely support to the affected communities at Jaubari. Later, while implementing NPL 161, local non-government organization SSICDC at Gorkha was mobilized. The interview with LWR official has revealed that the collaboration with DDRC, CBOs, UN Cluster, Shelter Cluster at district, rural municipality (then VDC), NRA, and other government agencies at different levels enabled them to reach the affected communities on time.

Post-distribution monitoring and community feedback were used to identify and address the unmet needs and demands. For example, construction of irrigation canal and goat support were included later in project activities, based on community demand for livelihood improvement activities. Project activities in NPL 161 were driven by participatory decision-making process involving stakeholders and community people. LWR delivered its input with continuous community consultation, regular staff meetings and reviews.

4.2.6 Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe

DKH headquarters reacted immediately to mobilize staff to the ground in Nepal after the April Earthquake, for an initial assessment. It deployed staff from its nearest regional and country offices to Nepal for immediate and timely support. DKH partnered with already existing INGOs – LWF and UMN – and NGOs – Lumanti, LI-Bird, NEST and PHASE Nepal for effective and timely delivery of the assistance. Its resources were mobilized through its partners as DKH had not worked in Nepal earlier and was not registered. Regular monitoring was carried out in the project sites to identify and address the unmet needs. Most distributions in the aftermath of the earthquake consisting of food, shelter items, CGI, tarpaulins, kitchen utensils, seeds and tools as per the most urgent needs of the people.

After the relief phase, DKH formally established a country office in Nepal and registered with the SWC and NRA and recruited additional staff for managing the recovery and reconstruction phases.

24 Lutheran World Relief, Nepal Earthquake Response Program Review Reflection Report.

4.2.7 Christian Aid

CAID was at Arughat, Gorkha on 26 April 2015 with its immediate support. In early phase CAID's initiatives went to the community through LWF and Practical Action. It adopted blanket approach of support which enabled for quick support. Later, CAID's interventions were in time due to following reasons: (i) efficient management of logistic support, and engagement of porters (ii) hiring of local social mobilizers and emergency program officer who could support communities as and when needed.

CAID responded to the earthquake-affected communities from early days through its local partners. It mobilized staff from its regional office in Delhi, headquarters in London and local staff objectively to have reached early to the affected areas. CAID and local partners are reported to reach to more than 400,000 people with vital supplies. Later, the unmet needs were identified to address further requirements.

CAID started its relief activities within 30 days of the earthquake event. The organization considers that all the response activities were carried out in a timely manner. The activities, across each district, were completed within the stipulated time frame.

4.3. Commitment-3: Communities and people affected by crisis are not negatively affected and are more prepared, resilient and less at-risk as a result of humanitarian action.

Quality Criterion: Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects,

4.3.1 DanChurchAid

DCA initiated activities to build up the resiliency of communities. For instance, the FGD participants at Lakuri Bhanjhyang responded that they received disaster preparedness and masonry training. This training was expected to enhance their knowledge on recognizing risk and reduce loss of lives and properties in case of future disaster. Many workers who received masonry training have now become aware of national building standards and earthquake-resilient buildings. Economic status of the trained masons has improved due to the increase in their demand as skilled workforce in construction. Likewise, psychosocial support has enhanced positive coping capacity among the affected

people. Community people have experienced further improvement in social cohesion post-earthquake as communities are now united to face common problems. To ensure the sustainability of the activities and achievements after the project completion, organization facilitated communities to link them to cooperatives. Besides, information about the project activities and outputs were shared with elected representatives for their continuity.

Negative impact of the project's activities on environment and socio-cultural harmony were not reported by the participants during the FGD. Early recovery and livelihood restoration programs, training in disaster risk reduction and PSS helped to prepare and enhance the resiliency of the communities and are now expected to be at lowered risk.

4.3.2 Finn Church Aid

In order to maximize the positive impact, FCA coordinated with different relevant stakeholders (SMC, District Red Cross Society, DEO, EU, and UNICEF). Risks associated to the initiatives were identified in two folds: i) hindrance in smooth implementations of project activities, and ii) risk of increase in community dependence on exterior assistance. Landslide due to aftershocks, difficulty in providing logistic support due to geographic remoteness, robbery in temporary shelters, reluctance of people to leave temporary shelters²⁵ were identified as some potential risks.

Though the study team did not find any documentation of transitional and exit strategy, FCA has strove for smooth exit by training school teachers, students, and school supervisors on DRR preparedness. Moreover, the incorporation of Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction (CCDRR) in school curricula, safer schools constructed by FCA, and hazards mapping exercises are believed to have contributed to ensuring the resilience of affected communities. The Deputy Director of NCED asserted that there will be positive impact of resilient building initiative of FCA²⁶ in the community. According to an official at FCA, due to the nature of the project there is no direct contribution to the local economy. However, trained local human resources from the project are able to earn their livelihood. Similarly, 28 trained people were able to pass CTEVT mason skill test and are getting better earning

25 Finn Church Aid. Appeal, Nepal Earthquake Response - NPL 151

26 Finn Church Aid, website. <https://www.kirkonulkomaanapu.fi/en/latest-news/news/video-330-safe-schools-nepal/>. Accessed on 23 January 2018.

opportunities. Furthermore, the FGD participants agreed that the capacity building training have enabled them to cope up with similar nature of the disaster. No negative impacts of the support were reported.

4.3.3 ICCO Cooperation

ICCO contributed to building resilient communities by developing emergency preparedness and safety plans, providing DRR and social management training, conducting safety drills, and promoting climate-smart agricultural farming to communities²⁷. Furthermore, restoration of infrastructure such as small canal, grinding mills, water sources, collection centers, access to agricultural inputs and tools, linkages to micro credit for small enterprises, support and training for commercial vegetable farming/animal husbandry and poultry not only boosted the local economy, but also ensured resilient community by making them independent. An official at ISARD (implementing partner of ICCO in Sindhupalchok) further assured that livelihood intervention contributed significantly to have improved the economic condition of affected communities. He added, “cardamom farming has enabled farmers to earn up to NRs 400,000 annually”.

FGD participants said that the project’s activities were delivered by forming different community groups of trained individuals. These groups managed the resources supported by ICCO on their own. This shows that project activities were designed objectively to ensure the sustainability of the project’s activities and impact by developing local leadership. Participants during FGD confirmed that participatory risk assessment were done, and landslide and fire were identified as major risks. ICCO has been found to promote environment friendly and climate smart activities such as vegetable farming in plastic tunnels.

4.3.4 The Lutheran World Federation

The desk study shows that LWF Nepal sensitize communities to mainstream DRR/CCA in its project activities.

Project activities such as masonry training (provided to the local workers), formation of PSS networks, financial and technical support to build shelter/homes have contributed to ensuring resilient and sustainable communities. For instance, the PSS networks were formed

²⁷ ICCO-Cooperation. Website. <https://icco2016.annualreporting.org/project-results/icco-foundation/foundation-projects/disaster-recovery>. Accessed on 20 January 2018.

in collaboration with the existing cooperatives and clubs. These networks are supporting the affected people and they are expected to support the communities if any similar kind of disaster to occur in the future. The masons trained within this project are making a good living for themselves and for their families. Furthermore, they are expected to sustain and support the communities in similar disaster. According to an official at LWF, the project supported communities now have developed coping capacity due to the change in their behavior to think, perceive, act and react with situation. Self-support and togetherness were the important learning of the community.

LWF had a clear exit strategy. Participatory hazard, vulnerability and capacity mapping were done as preparedness measure for future disaster. “Do no Harm” framework was applied in all stages of project cycle.

In terms of negative impact on the environment due to the project activities, LWF is committed to reducing its own carbon footprint by adopting environment-friendly practices²⁸. The compulsion for building a toilet in a newly constructed house was set as one of the criteria to get the final financial installment is expected to support in declaration of open defecation-free (ODF) zone. FGD participants did not report any negative consequences of project activities in their community. Instead, sharing of community resources and improvement in social cohesion were experienced by the community of Bhattedanda.

4.3.5 Lutheran World Relief

Desk study, KII with implementing partners and FGD with affected community shows that LWR’s intervention has promoted local economy. LWR’s review reflection report shows that around 80% of the trained masons are working in their villages²⁹. The FGD participants at Jaubari, Gorkha responded that the trend of migration of youth from the village has declined due to livelihood interventions at the village level. Furthermore, LWR trained the communities in providing basic first aid, building and maintaining canals and saving seeds. Such activities and outputs are instrumental in ensuring the resiliency of affected communities and sustainability of project interventions.

28 Act Alliance Forum Nepal. ACT Response to the Gorkha Earthquake - Lesson Learnt, 2016.

29 Lutheran World Relief. NERP Review Reflection, Lamjung

Training provided to local staff in quality and accountability of humanitarian response has strengthened human resource capacity at the local level.

Desk study also shows that the coordination capacity of affected people has increased and now they are able to approach and coordinate with government bodies including district authorities for demanding budget for DRR³⁰.

The study team noted that LWR considered environmental issues such as climate change in its interventions. For example, as expected by the CHS, LWR adopted climate-resilient crop varieties.

4.3.6 Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe

DKH promoted income-generating activities by providing training in masonry, plumbing, sewing, wiring, etc. These training helped them to develop and strengthen local capacity and leadership. Furthermore, DKH promoted the local economy by giving priority to the local markets in procuring construction materials. DKH worked through user committees (formed or reactivated) for each of the projects' activities to engage community people in the project implementation, procurement, recruitment and payment of workforce and construction; and beyond for operation, repair and maintenance of the schemes. Repair and maintenance guidelines of the schemes were prepared for community infrastructure. Users committees were capacitated and encouraged to collect repair and maintenance fund from the users. This community-driven approach does not only ensure ownership of the infrastructure to the communities, but also ensures their sustainability in the long run.

DKH implemented different stand-alone DRR activities, such as developed disaster management plans which was later endorsed by the authorities, trained the people and local authorities on DRR. It supported to construct and maintain water supply and irrigation infrastructure including permanent shelters. It supported in livelihood by distributing climate-resilient seeds.

As an exit strategy, DKH linked its local partner organizations to its sister organization BftW (Bread for the World) to ensure the sustainability of its activities and achievements, but there has not been any systematic link between DKH's relief and recovery activities and long-term development projects with Bread for the World.

4.3.7 Christian Aid

CAID policies assured that its interventions were focused to produce positive impacts. Community resiliency was expected through skill enhancing training and behavior changes on health and hygiene. According to CAID, the project's interventions have strengthened local leadership ultimately to contribute to the sustainability and resiliency. One such example is: people are now aware and capable of seeking/ demanding funds from local government to maintain community infrastructure such as water supply systems.

CAID has envisioned that the achievements be sustainable. For example, capacity at local level has been developed on clean energy, markets and advocacy. CAID's initiatives on livelihood have enabled locals to earn their livelihood.

CAID assessed and documented the potential risks of the assistance as per its organizational policy. Similarly, the negative consequences of interventions on environment were also mitigated. One such initiative was CAID's implementing partners closely monitored and controlled illegal collection of woods. This initiative ensured the unwanted destruction of trees.

4.4. Commitment-4: Communities and people affected by crisis know their rights and entitlements, have access to information and participate in decisions that affect them.

Quality Criterion: Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback.

4.4.1 DanChurchAid

The study found that DCA ensured access of information on project's activities to the community people. DCA also conducted a number of capacity-building activities for the meaningful participation of affected community specially women and elderly people. According to an official at DCA, decision-making process was participatory in all activities. In each community groups, project assured the participation of at least 33% women and mandatory provision of at least one woman in the executive position. Furthermore, marginalized and minorities were given preference in beneficiary selection process. Information

to community people were disseminated via monthly meetings, which were organized in the presence of field staff and relevant stakeholders. Review reflection meetings were held quarterly with implementing partners. The findings/information gathered in these meetings were also shared with communities.

Similar feedback was received from communities in FGDs. Further, communities responded that they received information on project's budget, expenditures and beneficiaries from the information board. According to the implementing partner organization, information was also shared through community gatherings, public and social audits, street drama and face-to-face conversation.

4.4.2 Finn Church Aid

FCA linked the beneficiaries to the services, contextualized livelihood models and supported the rights holders to claim their livelihood rights³¹. Interview with FCA representative shows that the project information was channeled through school management to teachers and students, and then to the community. Project related information was shared with the community through the meeting that was organized by FCA in the first few months of the earthquake. Moreover, the information boards were displayed at the project sites to disseminate information related to project cost, donors, beneficiaries, and activities. The FGD with community revealed the similar findings.

4.4.3 ICCO Cooperation

ICCO is open to information sharing. It has a protocol that regulates the use of telephone, email, Internet and social media responsibly for information sharing³².

The KII with ICCO's implementing partner has shown that project information was delivered to the community through regular meetings and workshops. The information sharing took place from the top-level managers to field coordinators and social mobilizers. Social mobilizers were responsible to disseminate information to the communities. FGD generated similar conclusion on information sharing. To make information sharing more efficient, a mobile-based application 'AKVO' was used to collect data from the project sites. This helped ICCO to make swift decisions and thus early response to the affected communities.

31 Act Alliance Forum Nepal. ACT Response to the Gorkha Earthquake-Lesson Learnt, 2016.

32 ICCO-Cooperation. ICCO Protocol for the use of Telephone, Internet, and Social Media. January 2013

4.4.4 The Lutheran World Federation

As per the FGD, communities got project information through project board with detailed information on budget, beneficiaries and activities. Consultation with ICDO (implementing partner) revealed that information about project activities were given through phone to vulnerable people. KII with LWF shows that series of activities at the community-level were conducted to disseminate the project information. The community and other stakeholders were consulted while designing the project activities. Local social mobilizers along with other technical human resources such as masons and engineers played an active role in giving timely and appropriate information to the communities. Frequent orientations; review and reflection; and social audits were held at the district and Community-levels to inform communities and stakeholders regarding progress, achievements and challenges of the project activities. Two-way communication with the community and the stakeholders avoided duplication/repetition, addressed newly emerged needs, and minimized complaints.

4.4.5 Lutheran World Relief

Information on LWR's interventions were shared among affected community and people through project information boards that were placed at the project's sites. There was a plan and budgetary provision for project visibility and awareness. Information was also shared via electronic and social media³³, and via social and public audits. The FGD participants verified that they received information about the project from local FM stations and newspapers. Field-level staff and participants in FGD further stated that public hearings, community meetings, public reviews were also held at the community-level for information sharing.

4.4.6 Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe

In order to ensure the participation of communities in decision-making process, user committees were formed. Though the presence of one-third women and at least one woman in executive position in users groups was made mandatory, in most of the cases it was difficult to implement. Community-level meetings were held regularly at least once a month to incorporate people's suggestion in project activities. Information boards were placed in major places to disseminate

33 Lutheran World Relief. NERP Review Reflection, Lamjung

information on project activities. Local radios, IEC materials, jingles and social mobilizers were the major channels to disseminate project information to the communities.

4.4.7 Christian Aid

The project information was shared to community through community meetings, project information board, beneficiary register and CAID's website. More clearly, the beneficiaries register book is kept in project site to document the project-related feedback and suggestion. Furthermore, CAID disseminated the information to general public through electronic and print media. In detail, CAID assured that the affected communities and people know their rights and entitlements, have access and participation in decision making by adopting following steps and strategies:

- a) The word “community consultation meeting” focused as these meetings are/were not only a medium to inform about the project but also to involve community in the decision-making process.
- b) Public hearing meetings are/were also conducted so that the community can voice their feedback and those feedback are incorporated through project team consultation or by liaising with the relevant bodies.
- c) With CAID partner - Samata Foundation, Christian Aid has been airing a radio program which talks about the rights and entitlement of the community in regard to safe shelter construction guidelines and government grants.
- d) Shelter information fliers “housing reconstruction information” were also disseminated which had the details about awareness on deadline set by the NRA. Information on reconstruction helpline with contact number of NRA engineers deployed in different wards along with other technical person of different organizations was shared.
- e) Street dramas were other medium of disseminating information.
- f) Shelter design board has been also in the field as per NRA shelter guideline which made it easier for people to understand shelter models.
- g) Regular meeting with the local government officials where the progress update and additional needs of the projects were discussed.

4.5 Commitment-5: Communities and people affected by crisis have access to safe and responsive mechanisms to handle complaints.

Quality Criterion: Complaints are welcomed and addressed.

4.5.1 DanChurchAid

At organizational level, DCA has a Complaint Handling Policy according to which Complaint Handling Committees (CHCs) have been established in each project sites. The CHC is responsible for monitoring DCA's complaints handling mechanism through liaison with staff at all levels. DCA welcomes and addresses the complaints and feedback systematically with trained and capacitated human resources. On the other hand, it is open to invest for an innovative idea to welcome and address the issues in time. For example, it has established a pilot project called "Listen Learn Act" in Gorkha where all staff were trained in and oriented to their effectiveness. DCA has contributed a lot to build the capacity of partners in complaints handling mechanisms and overall CHS.

At the field level, communities felt that they needed further orientation to enable them to have full understanding on the working of the CHCs. On the other hand, they knew well about the complaint response mechanism, process and consequences of filing. People were made aware that they could file complaints through complaint box, toll free number, email or directly speak to the staff.

There is a provision of resolving operational complaints at field level. However, sensitive complaints are directed to Human Resources Unit. Safety, confidentiality, transparency, and accessibility of complaint response mechanism are maintained in all the project's sites. For example, to receive immediate feedback/complaints from the beneficiaries while implementing CASH for livelihood and CASH for temporary shelter activities, DCA provided visiting cards and information slip along with cash to the communities. FGD participants at Lakuri Bhanjyang shared that they are aware of the complaining mechanism. CHS-trained project coordinators were assigned to document and resolve the complaints through consultation with the community, field staff and stakeholders.

4.5.2 Finn Church Aid

Complaint handling policy exists in FCA. Affected community and people could file the complaints in various forms (text, email, or phone call) as per their accessibility. Complaint handling policy was not only made mandatory to be followed by all staff, it was also established in all field offices as a code of conduct.³⁴ An official at FCA said, “Though, the complaint boxes are placed in each school, very few complaints are received in the complaint box because the school children and parents can make a direct complain to the school headmaster of their respective schools”. School management committee and implementing partner are responsible for handling complaints.

Participants in FGD asserted that they were aware about the complaint filing mechanism. Further, public hearing events were held in the presence of responsible persons from District Education Office (DEO) and UCEP (implementing partner of FCA) objectively to resolve complaints.

4.5.3 ICCO Cooperation

An official at ICCO shared that ICCO is following a customized version of the Complaint Handling Policy of ACT Alliance. Complaint handling mechanism is used for receiving complaints as well as feedback. ICCO’s partner organizations had a provision of taking complaints and feedback from the communities in monthly project meetings, and the minutes were shared with ICCO for resolution of complaints, which were again addressed in the next monthly meeting.

FGD participants in Karthali, Sindhupalchok verified their awareness about Complaint handling mechanism. However, the participants responded that they were less aware on the resolution of their complaints. When the study team approached ICCO’s partner organization in Sindhupalchok, they cited limitations in engaging trained staff which led to some limitations in responding appropriately to complaints received.

4.5.4 The Lutheran World Federation

At organizational level, Complaint Handling Policy is in practice. According to LWF’s Accountability Framework, there is a provision of establishing Complaint Handling Committee³⁵.

³⁴ Finn Church Aid, Complain Policy

³⁵ LWF Nepal, Accountability Framework, 2012

Complaints from operational level were handled at field level by a committee comprising a member from Shelter Management Committee, Technical Staff (Engineer) and Social Mobilizer, but the complaints related to harassment, security and corruption were addressed from the central level. Community at Bhattedanda used complaint box, phone call, and email to put complaints. The focal person also monitored, welcomed, dealt and followed up for early resolution of the complaints. However, some participants in FGD at Bhattedanda expected to keep the complaint box in safer and accessible place.

4.5.5 Lutheran World Relief

LWR Nepal Program is abided by LWR headquarters quality and accountability guidelines. LWR has also adopted ACT Alliance quality and accountability framework. LWR developed Community-level complaints handling and response mechanism. Further, LWR has complaint handling policy in place with zero tolerance. It abides by six core principles of IASC too and follow PSEA. Sensitive complaints are handled by Country Director, Admin and Finance Manager and respective Program Manager/Director. LWR headquarters has a zero tolerance policy for the complaints related to the abuse, corruption and discrimination. Country Office is abided by the global policies including PSEA.

The study team observed that a complaint box has been kept in Jaubari, Gorkha. This box was being used to collect complaints and feedback of the affected communities. The FGD participants in Jaubari stated that though complaint handling mechanism was unknown to him, project has informed and encouraged them to file complaints in complaint box for any unsatisfactory issues in project activities. During an interview an official of implementing partner staff at Jaubari, Gorkha stated that no formal complaints were received from the community because the community preferred to put their dissatisfaction through the field staff directly, and such informal complaints were resolved at the community-level through discussions. The KII with LWR shows that the complaint handling issues were discussed with partners to seek resolution of the complaints within 15 days. Overall, participants in FGD were satisfied with LWR's approach in proactive and sincere dealing with complaints.

4.5.6 Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe

DKH encourages all its partners to set up a complaint response mechanism and is applied at field level accordingly. However, DKH is yet to develop complaint handling policy further. Complaint boxes

were located at accessible places and communities were encouraged to file the complaints; or hoarding boards mentioning several ways for filing complaint (box, email, phone) were placed at strategic locations. However, complaints were mainly received directly through field staff including social mobilizers. Field-level complaints were resolved at the community-level by implementing partners in consultations with the communities and stakeholders. Though sensitive complaints were not received, the complaints which could not be addressed at field level were to be directed to the management which were resolved in consultation with implementing partner and DKH.

4.5.7. Christian Aid

The complaints handling process is in place in CAID's interventions. It has been communicated to the community through community meeting in presence of its partner. CAID had trained the senior management of its implementing partners, who were also expected to train their staff further on complaint mechanism.

CAID regularly provides training and refreshers to the staff of CAID and its partners on complaint response mechanism. Most of the time, it is seen that feedback from the community comes verbally or through partner organization or through social mobilizers. Though communities are always encouraged to either write or call to share their grievances/feedback, there is no any reported case of serious complaint. Basic grievances are resolved in the field by complaint response committee.

4.6 Commitment-6: Communities and people affected by crisis receive coordinated, complementary assistance.

Quality Criterion: Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary.

4.6.1 DanChurchAid

DCA had coordinated with DDRC, DDC, ACT requesting members, association of INGOs, UN shelter clusters, WASH cluster, CASH group, Social Welfare Council (SWC) and other development partners. The project activities were delivered by establishing partnership with local agencies - FSCN, ECO Nepal and Action Nepal. The partners were selected based on the basis of competencies, their presence, and experience at the project sites. The initiatives were effectively

implemented by ensuring clear understanding on mutual roles, responsibilities, resources and capacities of collaborating partners³⁶. For instance, DCA partnered with Kathmandu Upatyaka Khanepani Limited to build a 3-km pipeline to provide water access to the people of Bungmati, Lalitpur³⁷, and it collaborated with 'Hello Paisa' to assure easy and timely handover of the cash to the community through mobile phones to build immediate shelter.

FGD participants at Lakuri Bhanjyang indicated the proper coordination and collaboration at district level ensured complementary assistance at the community-level. Repetition of similar support and gaps in support were not reported. Within the Lakuri Bhanjyang community, committee comprising five members were formed along with designated ward coordinator to facilitate the distribution in relief phase. Moreover, different users committees comprising members of ward citizen forum, social mobilizers were also formed for the effective implementation of the project.

4.6.2 Finn Church Aid

The major intervention sectors of FCA were education, capacity building and PSS. FCA is a core member of Nepal Education Cluster at the national level and was the only member of ACT Alliance to respond in education sector during the emergency³⁸. FCA is found to have collaborated with relevant organizations such as Department of Educational and National Center for Education Development, Department of Education, District Development Offices, schools and local stakeholders to maximize the coverage, avoid duplication, and amplify the benefits of the project activities³⁹. According to the representative of FCA, the cluster coordination helped to avoid duplication and leveraged the impact of resources. In 2016, FCA and UNICEF signed the Program Cooperation Agreement (PCA) to implement an education project in three remote districts hit by the earthquake. FCA also worked in close collaboration with Center for Mental Health and Counseling (CMC) in providing PSS and counseling to earthquake-affected children⁴⁰. Key informants and FGD participants (teachers, school management committees, ward members) agreed that re-establishing of school on time was possible because of FCA's strong coordination with the DEO.

36 Appeal, Nepal Earthquake Relief, Reconstruction and Resilience (3R)-NPL 161

37 Act Alliance, Act Responses to the Gorkha Earthquake-Lesson Learnt. 2016.

38 Finn Church Aid. Finn Church Aid Global Program. Annual Report. 2016

39 Act Alliance Forum Nepal. ACT Response to the Gorkha Earthquake-Lesson Learnt, 2016.

40 ACT Alliance, Nepal Earthquake Response - NPL 151 (Revision-1), 2015

4.6.3 ICCO Cooperation

ICCO had collaborated with different sectors and organizations including international community (UN), district clusters, DDRC, CDO, rural municipalities (then VDC), private suppliers and retailers, agricultural cooperatives, traders, and relevant technical institutions to ensure the delivery of relevant assistance on time and to avoid duplication⁴¹. Partnership policy of ICCO is taken as a core of the program implementation, and it has a clear vision in partnering, partnership diversity and coherence⁴².

According to the key informants and FGD participants, the project had mobilized local actors such as JTA, and social mobilizers to broaden the coverage of assistance amongst the affected communities. Further, ICCO's activities were carried out through community-based organizations, which also promoted public-private partnership to revive socio-economic services and livelihood.

4.6.4 The Lutheran World Federation

The study team found that LWF had coordinated with Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), National Reconstruction Authority (NRA), Department of Urban Development and Building Construction (DUDBC), Rural Municipalities (initially Village Development Committees), IASC clusters and thematic working groups, District Disaster Relief Committees (DDRCs), District Coordination Committee (DCC), Association of INGOs in Nepal (AIN) and Disaster Preparedness Network Nepal (DPNet Nepal) for constructing shelters in affected areas⁴³. Local partners have been hired based on their competencies. FGD participants reported that there were no repetition of relief packages and similar interventions. This is an evidence that assistance was provided in a coordinated approach and was complementary.

4.6.5 Lutheran World Relief

LWR has worked in coordination with DDRC, shelter cluster at district level, HRRP, DUDBC, NRA, DLSO, DADO, VDC, NGOs/INGOs and local stakeholders in implementing its project activities in respective districts⁴⁴. During the cluster meeting, LWR coordinated with other stakeholders in sharing data and knowledge on disaster response. A

41 ICCO-Cooperation. Website. Annual Report. <https://icco2016.annualreporting.org/project-results/icco-foundation/foundation-projects/disaster-recovery>. Accessed on 23 January 2018.

42 ICCO-Cooperation. ICCO Protocol for the Use of Telephone, Internet, and Social Media. January 2013

43 LWF. LWF Nepal's Response to the Gorkha Earthquake., 2016

44 Lutheran World Relief. Annual Progress Report. October 2016-September 2017.

representative from LWR's partner organization said that LWR initially mobilized COPPADES (LWR's local partner from Lamjung) to deliver immediate support at Jaubari. Then, it coordinated with ward citizen forum, VDC secretary, and district level stakeholders while planning project activities. Furthermore, the sharing of plans and joint actions helped to avoid duplications. FGD participants confirmed no repetition of similar intervention.

4.6.5 Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe

DKH delivered assistance in close coordination with DDRC, DUBC, NRA, District Shelter Clusters, District WASH Clusters, local NGOs and INGOs to avoid duplication. For example, while implementing a DRR project in Kavre, DKH came across a local NGO carrying out similar activities. DKH avoided duplication of work by signing an MoU with the local NGO, where they decided to support the communities in 4 wards each. Later, they merged the findings.

DKH identified the capacity and competencies of community, private sectors, local institutions, government agencies and mobilized them according to their capacity and competencies. For Example cash-for-work scheme to mobilize community in project activities, Credit and Saving Cooperatives, local market, etc.

4.6.6 Christian Aid

CAID started the emergency response through existing partners- Practical Action, and LWF, Lumanti - in the early stage. After registration with the SWC, CAID selected district-based local implementing partners to implement the recovery and reconstruction activities. The interventions were coordinated with ACT Alliance members, NRA, UN Clusters, DCC, DRCC, local NGOs, etc. The collaboration resulted in the avoidance of duplication, promoted synergistic effort, created secured environment and enabled geographical coverage.

4.7 Commitment-7: Communities and people affected by crisis can expect delivery of improved assistance as organizations learn from experience and reflection.

Quality Criterion: Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve.

4.7.1 DanChurchAid

DCA was found to have practiced participatory monitoring and evaluation for learning and improvement. For instance, DCA replicated the mobile phone-based Cash Transfer Programming (CTP) from the Saptari fire case in earthquake response to distribute cash to build immediate shelters. Similarly, learning from other countries has been applied. DCA used MAGPI, a mobile-based data collection application, to ensure delivery of improved assistance. Digitization and use of technology for the more efficient execution of project activities were the key lessons learnt by DCA. Furthermore, according to an official at DCA, review/ reflection meetings were held quarterly to review progress and plan future activities. FGD participants in Lakuri Bhanjyang were positive that they received improved assistance at the right time and the learning and experiences were shared with them via meetings.

4.7.2 Finn Church Aid

FCA had been practicing participatory monitoring and evaluation amongst partners, stakeholder, and affected people. Quality of deliverables has been the prime concerns of FCA. FCA had mobilized the technical (engineers) team and social mobilizers to construction sites in order to inspect and verify the technical quality of school buildings that were being constructed. Such intensive quality inspection from qualified personnel provided several learning and reflecting opportunities to FCA. However, FGD participants at Chaughare, Lalitpur expected for enough information to be shared with them regarding the project activities.

4.7.3 ICCO Cooperation

ICCO has its own monitoring and evaluation policy document. This document was objectively developed to make project activities accountable and transparent towards donors and beneficiaries. The major components of the policy were down/upward accountability, transparency and participatory approach in program planning, monitoring and evaluation phases⁴⁵.

An official at ICCO said that lessons learned, and prior experience from NPL 151 were reflected in project activities of NPL 161. Further, progress of project activities were continuously collected from the field using mobile application tool AKVO⁴⁶ which simplified as well as expedited its learning on progress, challenges of the project activities and improve practices accordingly.

45 Dieneke de Groot (PMEL Unit of P&D Department ICCO and KerkinActie. ICCO Alliance PMEL Policy, 2011
46 Appeal, Nepal Earthquake Recovery, Reconstruction and Resilience (3R) -NPL161

4.7.3 The Lutheran World Federation

Monitoring and evaluation policy is in practice in LWF. LWF was found to have amended the project's activities based on its learning in the fields. During an interview, an official at LWF shared that "house painting" was not among the initially planned activities in LWF's shelter project. They added this activity after learning that people were more likely to live in their newly constructed homes if they were to be painted. Apart from this, LWF conducted periodic monitoring of field activities, review meetings with implementing partners and regular community meetings. Project activities were amended according to the lessons learnt from monitoring visits and review meetings.

4.7.4 Lutheran World Relief

Desk study shows that LWR had organized learning and sharing workshops among multi-sector groups/stakeholders to disseminate project related information⁴⁷. Similarly, a district-level internal workshop was organized in Lamjung in which suggestions to improve the 'program pathways and programs' were sought from the participants⁴⁸.

An official at LWR said that lessons learned, and prior experience from NPL 151 were reflected in project activities of NPL 161. According to him, key learning of NPL 151 was that the restoration of everyday lives of people was possible only through their engagement in income-generating activities. Thus, livelihood improvement activities were included in NPL 161 as learning from NPL 151. Overall, the organization has mechanisms to record the learning/experiences and improve practices accordingly.

4.7.5 Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe

DKH was found to have documented knowledge and experience. Project activities in Nepal's earthquake response were designed based on DKH's learning from humanitarian assistance that were delivered in other countries.

4.7.6 Christian Aid

CAID has a policy to deliver improved assistance as it learns from experience and reflection. Further, learning and application of learning is found to be a regular process of the organization.

Review meetings with the partners forms a strong basis of reflecting on CAID's response and recovery activities. The lesson learned in the

47 Lutheran World Relief. Annual Progress Report. October 2016-September 2017.

48 Lutheran World Relief. Nepal Earthquake Response Report, Review, and Reflection Report. Lamjung. 2016

past phases has been incorporated to improve the quality of assistance. Post-distribution monitoring conducted helped CAID to reflect on the challenges and lesson to find its way forward for effective implementation.

CAID values the relationship between learning and accountability that centers around learning the overall aspect of the project. DEC learning initiative is one such example document to facilitate in making changes in the remaining program activities.

4.8 Commitment-8: Communities and people affected by crisis receive the assistance they require from competent and well-managed staff and volunteers.

Quality Criterion: Staff are supported to do their job effectively, and are treated fairly and equitably.

4.8.1 DanChurchAid

DCA is a CHS-certified organization which is delivering assistance from competent and well-managed staff and volunteers. DCA has its own staff code of conduct applicable to all staff. All staff and partners are trained on the CHS which is a part of the organization. DCA has taken number of actions to mainstream the CHS in DCA interventions. Similarly, staff have to abide by the staff recruitment policy, anti-corruption policy and the CHS. DCA has been found to have promoted the professional and personal growth of its staff through training, capacity building, retreats etc and exposures. For example, training in the CHS were conducted for all level staff to maintain impartiality, neutrality, accountability and humanity on the supports. In total, DCA has taken a number of actions in mainstreaming the CHS in its interventions.

Positive track record and prior presence in the affected area⁴⁹ were the main criteria while selecting implementing partners. DCA was found to have emphasized in enhancing and utilizing the competencies of the staff in the best way⁵⁰. For example, in initial phase of earthquake response, DCA deployed available staff in affected areas around Kathmandu. But later, they hired additional staff to mobilize into new working areas jointly with already trained staff. In terms of staff's capacity, DCA had deployed one disaster management expert, and a global cash expert after April 2015 Earthquake⁵¹.

49 Appeal, Nepal Earthquake Relief, Reconstruction and Resilience (3R)-NPL 161.

50 Appeal, Nepal Earthquake Relief, Reconstruction, Resilience (3R)-NPL 161.

51 LWF Reflection, 2015

FGD participants at Lakuri Bhanjyang showed consistent finding that field staff from FSCN Nepal (implementing partner of DCA) not only provided them unbiased and effective assistance, but they also played an efficient role in mediating community's problem to DCA.

4.8.2 Finn Church Aid

The study team found that staff hired by FCA had worked according to the mandate and values of FCA. FCA's annual report, 2016 has illustrated that staff code of conduct including country-level human resource policy are applicable to all level of staff to promote accountability along with the key responsibilities⁵². An official from FCA responded that CHS training were given to all staff.

As per the KII with implementing partner, field staff were aware of their code of conduct. FCA ensured the competency of staff by providing periodic training and orientation to procurement, the CHS principles, Complaint handling mechanism and project management⁵³. FCA had its own policies and provisions for staff's security and wellbeing⁵⁴. Though some hindrances were faced in project implementation due to transfer or turnover of partners staff⁵⁵, satisfactory feedback on staff performance and behavior in the project activities were received from FGD participants.

4.8.3 ICCO Cooperation

ICCO had its own staff code of conduct, which was to be followed by all staff. ICCO promoted competency and capacity of its staff including implementing partner by providing training in the CHS, project management, complaint handling mechanism, etc. Competency of partner organization was ensured by selecting those organizations which were experienced and who had prior presence in the community. Moreover, the familiarity of the implementing partners' and their staff with local context such as culture, language, geography enabled them to maintain impartiality, neutrality and accountability while providing support to the affected communities.

In FGD at Karthali, Sindhupalchok, staff performance and their behavior were well appreciated by the communities. Communities reported that they received timely and unbiased assistance from staff.

52 Finn Church Aid. Finn Church Aid Global Program. Annual Report. 2016

53 Finn Church Aid. Narrative Report: Interim-I. January 2017.

54 Finn Church Aid, website. <https://www.kirkonulkomaanapu.fi/en/latest-news/news/video-330-safe-schools-nepal/>. Accessed on 23 January 2018.

55 Finn Church Aid. Finn Church Aid Global Program. Annual Report. 2016

4.8.3 The Lutheran World Federation

LWF has its own staff code of conduct, which is to be abided by all staff. Orientation to and training in the CHS, Sphere Standards, stress management, code of conduct, Do no Harm, community-based PSS, monitoring and evaluation were also given to its staff including implementing partners. Consultation with Implementation partner ensures that time-to-time formal and informal mentoring was also provided to them to enhance their capacity and rejuvenate them.

FGD participants at Bhattedanda responded that staff deployed at field provided unbiased assistance. Further community also assured that staff were friendly in nature with good behavior.

Country office provided incentives to its staff working long hours in risky and stressful conditions during earthquake relief phase. Overall, LWF has polices in place for safety, security and wellbeing of the staff along with enhancing their capability and competencies.

4.8.4 Lutheran World Relief

LWR delivered services through capacitated human resources. For the purpose, it initiates capacity development at various level. For example, country office and headquarters have made provisions to develop capacity building events for the staff annually. To assure the delivery of assistance through competent and well-managed staff and volunteers, LWR was found to have followed a wide ranges of strategies. It had applied its global HR policy in staff code of conduct. During emergency, two international staff were deployed for early support. Furthermore, LWR's Nepal staff were trained by The Global Humanitarian Capacity Development wing. LWR further trained the partner organizations' staff on Sphere Standards, the CHS, quality and accountability⁵⁶.

In terms of performance, behavior and impartial assistance, FGD participants provided satisfactory feedback and very much appreciated staff's dedication, impartiality, neutrality and accountability and their effort in the implementation of project activities. In a nutshell, staff were found to have adhered to the organization's policies and were competent for delivery of assistance.

56 Lutheran World Relief. Nepal Earthquake Response Report, Review, and Reflection Report. Lamjung. 2016

4.8.5 Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe

According to an official at DKH, staff and consultants have to sign and abide by ACT and IFRC Code of Conduct. However, staff of partner organizations have their own code of conduct. In order to make assistance more effective, selection of local partner organizations were made based on recommendations from Bread for the World as well as MSF or ACT Alliance; and based on their prior experience and presence at the project sites. Local staff well acquainted with the language, culture and geography of the project sites were hired at field level to ease the two-way communication between the organization and communities. Though formal training and orientation were not provided to the field staff, they were informally sensitized to work within the organization's code of conduct, norms and values.

DKH's Country Representative and Program Officer had been already working with DKH prior to working in Nepal. As a result, they are well acquainted with the operational modalities, policies and procedures of DKH. Local staff were recruited for finance/admin, procurement and support. DKH's staff have attended relevant training all along DKH's operations. DKH also gave the opportunity to its partner organizations' staff, project staff and/or core staff to attend training organized by DKH itself, ACT Alliance Nepal Forum or other stakeholders; in line with DKH's approach worldwide to work through local partners and build their capacities as per need.

4.8.5 Christian Aid

CAID has its own staff code of conduct, child safeguard policy and human resource policy which are followed by its staff at all levels. Competency of the staff are enhanced through training.

CAID partners are also given the opportunity to participate in capacity development training including CHS orientation. Such training enhances the skills of the staff for effective services based on the principles of CHS. Regular workshops of DDGT, MEAL, Agrovet, paravet, SBDRR training, training in resilient livelihood, communications, photography and story writing training, etc. have been organized at the field level to ensure that the staff are provided with sufficient skill enhancement opportunities.

Use of digital data gathering tool KOBO assure unbiased field information for improved assistance.

4.9 Commitment-9: Communities and people affected by crisis can expect that the organizations assisting them are managing resources effectively, efficiently and ethically.

Quality Criterion: Resources are managed and used responsibly for their intended purpose.

4.9.1 DanChurchAid

DCA practices anti-corruption principles, which has been well explained in its anti-corruption policy document. Complaints related to corruption are expected to be reported by the communities through a designated email 'addresscomplaint@dca.dk' was maintained and communicated directly to Copenhagen for receiving email so that unwanted behaviors could be noticed.

Personnel from DCA responded that public and social audits were held at the community-level for transparency of budget, expenditures, project activities, etc. Information board with detailed information on project budget, beneficiaries, and expenditures were made mandatory in all project sites. Further, internal and external audits reports were maintained by the organization. FGD participants at Lakuri Bhanjyang also stated that due to the direct involvement of community people in project activities, the project resources were used as per project ethics.

DCA conducts CPAC/DPAC and other regular meeting with government body timely and incorporate the feedback into action. DCA is also promoting greening initiatives. For example, it discourages to hard copy printing, promote soft copy filing, participate in 'go green activities', promote plantation, plastic-free office zone, etc.

4.9.2 Finn Church Aid

Personnel from FCA asserted that public and social audits were held at the community-level for transparency. Information board with detailed information on project budget, beneficiaries, and expenditures were made mandatory in all project sites. Further, internal and external audits reports were also maintained by the organization for all the projects.

FCA's implementing partner organization at Chaughare claimed to have conducted public audits and meetings to make project cost and expenditures transparent, but FGD participants had a contradictory take on it. According to them such programs were at to be organized in their community by the partner organization.

4.9.3 ICCO Cooperation

Personnel from ICCO said that public and social audits were held at the community-level for transparency. Information board with detailed information on project budget, beneficiaries, and expenditures were made mandatory in all project sites. Further, internal and external audits reports were also maintained by the organization for all the projects.

Besides, participants in FGD said that project resources were utilized for intended purposes ethically, and efficiently.

4.9.4 The Lutheran World Federation

Personnel from LWF asserted that public and social audits were held at the community, VDC and district levels for transparency of budget, expenditures, project activities etc. Information board with detailed information on project budget, beneficiaries, and expenditures were made mandatory in all project sites. Further, internal and external audits reports were also maintained by the organization for all the projects.

FGD participants reported that they never witnessed any mismanagement of resources and corruption in project activities. However, they were unaware of any public audits conducted by partner organization on financial details (budget, expenditures, procurement process) of the project. Inconsistent to this information, one of the local political leaders and designated ward coordinator claimed during FGD that all kinds of financial information were transparent and open to public.

4.9.5 Lutheran World Relief

According to personnel from LWR, public and social audit, third party audits, internal audits, were held at the community level for transparency and for avoiding risk related to corruption and fraud. Information board with detailed information on project budget, beneficiaries, and expenditures were made mandatory in all project sites.

It has been found that LWR has managed its resources effectively, efficiently and ethically. Participants in FGD witnessed the evidence of transparency, effective use of resources showing accountability towards the communities.

4.9.6 Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe

Public audits and social hearings were held to make project activities transparent and public. Internal and external audits were done. Further,

information board were placed at project sites with detailed information on project budget, beneficiaries, expenditures, project period, etc. DKH has its own procurement policy which has also been followed by the partner organization. To make the procurement system more transparent and participatory, committees were formed at the Community-level.

DKH has kept a modest structure in Nepal to look after the earthquake response program. It tried to keep operational and indirect costs as low as possible, with limited staff, office and equipment. Project's budgets were within the ratio 80% of direct project costs and 20% of operational costs which has been as per SWC regulations.

4.9.7 Christian Aid

Project managed resources effectively, efficiently and ethically. The system of performance-based budget assured that the project resources were used for intended purpose only. Transparency on initiatives were maintained by conducting social and public audits as per the government policy.

5. Conclusions

The Requesting ACT Alliance Members — DCA, FCA, ICCO, LWF and LWR—implemented the projects titled “Nepal Earthquake Response (NPL 151)” and “Recovery, Reconstruction & Resilience (NPL 161)” in Dolakha, Sindhuplachok, Kavre, Bhaktapur, Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Makawanpur, Dhading, Gorkha, Lamjung, Rasuwa and Nuwakot districts. The findings stated earlier in relation to executing the above programs lead to the following conclusions:

- ACT Alliance members actively engaged in humanitarian assistance in the earthquake-affected districts immediately after the earthquakes. Shelter, WASH, livelihood, emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction, early recovery and livelihood improvement, education and psychosocial support were the major components of both the projects.
- The immediate presence of ACT Alliance Members to provide immediate lifesaving necessities to the community people helped to assure that the timely and effective support was provided by the organizations. Thereafter, the continuity of assistance in the respective districts in recovery, reconstruction and resilience phase further ensured that affected community got relevant assistance.

- Blanket approach was followed in the initial phase for relief support. However, the activities in recovery and reconstruction were carried out in consultation with district cluster, government and stakeholders taking into account demographic status, vulnerability status, inaccessibility, and capacity of the beneficiary communities. Overall, ACT Alliance Members helped to provide timely support in the affected areas with active participation of communities and people.
- Negative impacts of the project activities on biological, physical, social and cultural environment of the communities were not noted by the study.
- Organizations made significant contribution to enhancing the local capacity of the communities through sensitization and awareness programs, capacity development initiative and training in their respective sectors to boost the livelihood status as well as to make them resilient to future disasters.
- In handling the complaints, organizations either formulated their own complaint handling mechanism or followed ACT Alliance mechanism. Communities gave access to filing complaints through complaint box, phone numbers and through focal person. Training to handle sensitive complaints were limited to district level/project level/central level staff only and was deemed inadequate.
- Documentation of key learning and good practices were maintained within the organizations. Transfer of knowledge through sharing of learning to the communities and taking their feedback in future project activities were in practice throughout the implementation phase.
- ACT Alliance Members along with their implementing partners were found to have staff capacity and competence to provide effective delivery of assistance in the affected areas. Communities also provided satisfactory feedback on staff performance at field level. However, field-level training in the core humanitarian standards was limited and inadequate.
- Transparency of project resources, project budget and expenditures were found to have been made to the communities through periodic public audits, and project boards. Hence, delivery of cost-effective humanitarian assistance without corruption, mismanagement, misuse of resources was assured by the communities in the discussion.

Overall, ACT Alliance Members were largely found to have adhered

to the nine commitments of the CHS. As the CHS is a new concept and was adopted since 2015, organizations were noted to be learning and improving in integrating them fully into their program implementation.

6. Recommendations

The study also noted a number of areas for improvement and strengthening in integrating the CHS into future programs. These are summarized for each of the commitments:

Commitment-1

- Vulnerability and risk assessment should be incorporated mandatorily in need assessment.

Commitment-2

- Optimal timing for the project activities should be planned taking into account weather, climate, national and local festivals, etc.

Commitment-3

- Identification and mitigation of negative impact of project activities should be incorporated in project design.
- Clear transition and exit strategy of initiatives should be developed to assure long-term impact of the interventions.

Commitment-4

- Study could not show a concrete mechanism of participatory decision making. This may be due to lack of documentation or guidelines or policy provisions. So, it is recommended to promote participatory decision making in each steps of project interventions.

Commitment-5

- Trained person with appropriate level of sensitivity to public concerns should be assigned to handle complaints. Complaints handling and feedback mechanisms are two major but different components of the CHS. Complaints handling mechanism should be established separately.

Commitment-7

- Monitoring, evaluation and learning tool should be strengthened, along with measurable objective indicators for improved delivery of interventions.

Commitment-8

- Capacity development training (e.g. training in the CHS, stress management, project management, etc.) should be given to all the field staff of implementing partners.

- Staff guidance, staff code of conduct and other policies relevant to staff of implementing partners should be made available to the staff of implementing partners as well.

Commitment-9

- Public audit should be conducted more regularly and methodologically to clarify the project expenditures to the communities.
- Resources should be distributed taking into account family size.

ANNEXE-1

Focus Group Discussion Questionnaire/Checklist (Project beneficiaries)

Commitment-1

1. What were your primary needs? Did the project support to fulfill your primary needs? Were special needs of women/old people/differently abled people addressed?

Commitment-2 Did project staff come to visit you and supported you in time? How long did you have to wait for their support? (e.g. days, week, months, etc.)

2. Were your unmet needs identified and addressed later?

Commitment-3 Did any activities (e.g. community sensitization / awareness/training programs/formation of committee) conducted to increase your capacity to cope with similar crisis?

3. Was any negative consequences of assistance observed? (e.g. pollution/environmental degradation/encroachment of privacy/culturally unacceptable activities in social cultural harmony)

Commitment-4 How did you know project information? Were there any display board about the support in the project site?

Commitment-5 Were you consulted in designing complaint handling mechanism? Which methods of Complaint handling did you suggest? Have you filed any complaint/s? How and where did you file? Did you get response? Were you satisfied ?

Commitment-6 Was there any repetition or gap of relief material assistance from more than one organization?

Commitment 7 Did the assistance get better with time? Have organization shared learning with you?

Commitment 8 Are you satisfied with the performance of staff? (e.g. language/accent/acknowledging your queries/feedback/complaints, responding in time, effectively delivering assistance)

Commitment 9 Did you experience any wastage of project money or materials?

Has there been any sharing of information (e.g. public hearing/meetings/gatherings) regarding transparency of budget, expenditures and goods/service procurement procedure?

ANNEX-2

Key Informants Interview (KII) Questionnaire for partners/government staff (Program manager/CHS focal person/HR and M&E officer)

Commitment-1 How were risks identified and addressed? What were primary risks affecting in communities?

1. Did you assess existing capacities of the communities? How did you meet the gap?
2. Do organization/project have disaggregated data (gender, caste, age, physical ability)? How these data were used when designing resource allocation?

Commitment-2

3. What strategies were adopted in giving right input in the right time to the affected community?
4. Was participatory decision-making process adopted? How were early and proper support systems established?
5. Did you have project action plan? Was it updated as per need? Were there any policy provisions to make staff responsible at field level?

Commitment-3 Is there any contribution to the local economy as a result of project intervention? Were the interventions that contributed to restore the condition of people?

Commitment-4 How did the people from vulnerable groups (older people, children, people with disability) get project information?

Newspaper, radio, meeting, household visit of project staff, or any communication technology?

Commitment-5 How was the complaint handling mechanism communicated to the people?

Commitment-6 How did project share information to partners, coordinated groups, and other relevant groups? (methods, guideline, meeting or workshops or any other means).

ANNEX-3:

Participants in the Key Information Interview Government staff/ACT Alliance members

Commitment-1 Communities and people affected by crisis receive assistance appropriate and relevant to their needs

1. Do organizations have need identification policy/strategy/guidelines? What were vulnerability assessment criteria?

Commitment-2 Communities and people affected by crisis have access to the humanitarian assistance they need at the right time

2. Did project follow national policies, guidelines, or any international documents?

3. Were there any replicable learning ? Were they used in policy reformulation? Were there positive results of collaboration with the government/NGOs/CBOs/communities?

4. How organizational policy assured required human resources and equipment and materials? Do organization have workforce planning?

5. Did you use the learning from monitoring in changing project strategy for timely impact?

Commitment-3 Communities and people affected by crisis are not negatively affected and are more prepared, resilient and less at-risk as a result of humanitarian action

6. Is there a policy regarding procurement of materials/services from local market, market development or any IGA available?

7. How did you consider environmental protection issues? Do you have environment-friendly policies? (e.g. Green Procurement Policy).

8. What mechanism was in practice for data confidentiality? How did organization share data with donors, stakeholders, or public?

Commitment- 4 Communities and people affected by crisis know their rights and entitlements have access to information and participate in decisions that affect them.

9. Are transparency policy/guidelines/or strategies available in the organization? How communities got project information?
10. What is your opinion on the level of engagement and participation of social, political, gender and individual actors in project decision making?
11. Was there any feedback mechanism designed in Community-level? How were formal feedback received, documented, and responded? Were staff trained for handling the feedback of communities?

Commitment-5 Communities and people affected by crisis have access to safe and responsive mechanisms to handle complaints.

12. How was complaint handling mechanism communicated to the people ?

Commitment-6 Communities and people affected by crisis receive coordinated, complementary assistance. Quality Criterion.

13. How organization assessed/identified sectoral supports, resources, competencies, and geographical coverages of other organizations ? Were this information used to avoid duplication in program design, planning and implementation?

Commitment-7 Communities and people affected by crisis can expect delivery of improved assistance as organizations learn from experience and reflection.

14. How did the organization record/share/disseminate project learning? What media (publication, documentary, meeting of electronic media) were used in sharing learning?

Commitment-9: Communities and people affected by crisis can expect that the organizations assisting them are managing resources effectively, efficiently and ethically.

15. Is external audit report available? Did organization experience wastage of resources?
16. Were local resources used ? What were they? Were negative impacts on environment assessed? Was mitigating measure adopted?
17. Who examined hampering factors while conducting M&E?

ANNEX 4

Photos from the study sites

a. Baghvairav School at Chaughare, Lalitpur



b. FGD at Bhattedanda, Lalitpur



c. Shelter under construction at Bhattedanda Lalitpur



d. WASH project in Dolakha



ACT Alliance Nepal Forum Members



Australian
Lutheran
World Service



DCA
actalliance

Diakonie
Katastrophenhilfe



Finn Church Aid

Felm¹⁸⁵⁹



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