

Far Western Earthquake Response Operation Lesson Learnt and Recovery Planning Workshop Report

Dadeldhura, 7 – 9 April 2024



BACKGROUND

A magnitude of 5.3 earthquake hit western Nepal on 3 October 2023 at 14.40 PM and strong aftershock measuring 6.3 occurred after an hour. Several aftershocks were experienced from that day terrifying local people. The epicenter was in Bajhang district and the tremors were felt in six neighboring districts. Continuous aftershocks have forced people to leave houses and stay in open spaces. The earthquake has extensive damage in Jayaprithvi municipality of Bajhang district and Khaptad Chhededaha rural municipality, Gaumul rural municipality and Budhiganga municipality of Bajura district.

NRCS and IFRC have a joint operation in responding to the EQ affected families with immediate support for saving the lives and addressing the basic survival needs. IRA and detail assessment was conducted through coordination with Nepal government. The DREF was launched by IFRC for the immediate earthquake response. As well as the in-country members (The American Red Cross, British Red Cross, Danish Red Cross, Swiss Red Cross) supported funding from their emergency funds. The operation is managed as an integrated initiative with NRCS at the center, bringing together various streams of funding into one plan, one team and one monitoring framework.

After completing the initial emergency response, NRCS conducted a lesson learnt and recovery planning workshops on 7-9 April 2024 at Dadeldhura with the participation of Bajhang and Bajura district chapters to have an overview of the progress thereby capturing the key learnings from the response. This report summarizes the findings from the community consultations along with the participatory group exercise at the workshop, key priorities for the recovery planning until the end of 2024 were identified. In addition, Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) was ongoing and the initial findings from PDM was shared by the consultant during the workshop.

FAR Western Earthquake Response Lesson Learnt and Recovery Planning Workshop	
AGENDA	NOTES
Opening and Welcome	Introduction, speeches and objective sharing
Presentation of Far Western EQ Response Operation	Presentation by Executive Director
NRCS recovery concept and scope	Presented by IFRC and NRCS EOC
SWOT Analysis	Group exercise for SWOT analysis followed by problem tree and solution analysis Group 1: Organization and management structure, Group 2 & 3: Sectoral and operational/technical structure Group 4: coordination and collaboration
Beneficiary Voice	Sharing experience by the beneficiaries, reflection of the response and its impact through the voices of beneficiaries
District-wise priorities and recovery planning	District wise activity for recovery operation formulated through group exercise and the findings from community consultation and KII
Way Forward, Action Plan and Closing	Key action areas identified along with action plan and closing of the day

Community Consultations



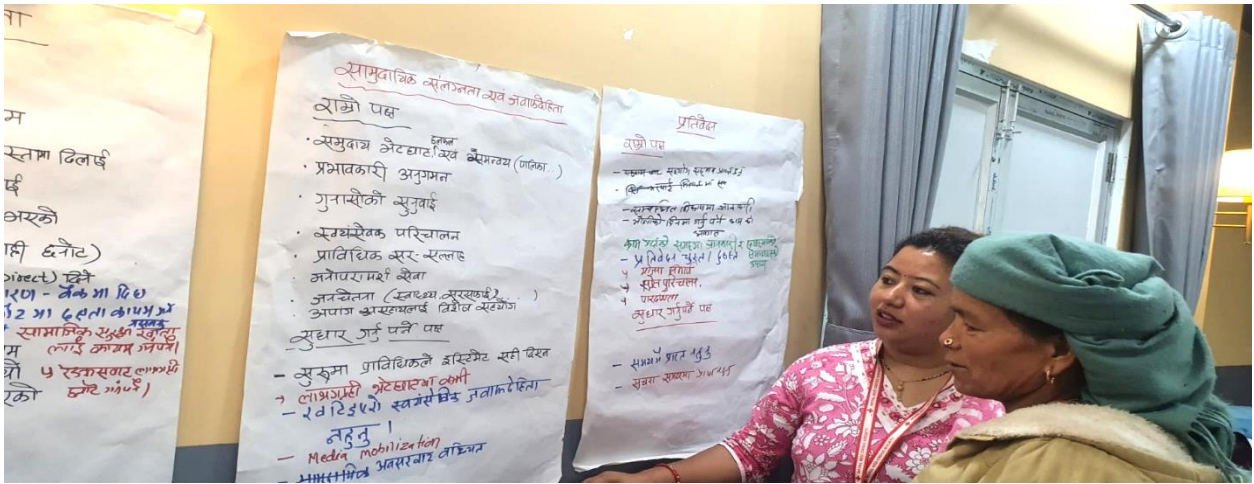
Lesson Learnt Workshop




Recovery Plan

PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS	<p>Prior to the workshops, each district carried out Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with affected communities, to collect effectiveness, current community challenges, additional support needed to recover further, feedback related to preferred communication mechanisms for future support. Furthermore, each district conducted FGD to map operational challenge and institutional needs for strengthening effective response. In addition, KII with district chapter, governance and staff members were conducted.</p>
LESSON LEARNT WORKSHOP	<p>The district-level workshops was conducted from 7-9 April 2024 with participation from NRCS Bajhang and Bajura district teams, Sudur Paschim Province Chapter representatives, representatives from respective municipalities from two districts, and a facilitation team from NRCS HQ and IFRC Network. The objectives of the workshops were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consolidate the progress; • capture effectiveness of the relief services (strength, gaps and areas of improvements); • identify key operational challenges, root causes and future strategies to overcome these challenges <p>In addition, the discussion during the workshop also focused to collect future needs of recovery initiative base on the NRCS Recovery Framework.</p>
RECOVERY PLAN	<p>The recovery plan with the prioritized activities with a focus for harmonization with the wider government- and humanitarian response, to ensure available resources.</p>





SWOT Analysis was conducted to identify the **effectiveness of response, best efforts incorporated** and **learnings** to develop the better strategy. Participants were divided into four groups and each group was engaged to analyze the SWOT of four broader issues as provided in the table below.

This process supports to assess the internal factors (strength & weakness) and external factors (opportunities and threats) that is/might significantly impact the effectiveness of the emergency response. This exercise was followed by Problem Tree Analysis that identify the root cause of weakness identified from SWOT analysis. The findings from the SWOT Analysis and problem tree analysis identified from group exercise.

Findings from the group exercise:

Strength Weakness Opportunities and Threat (SWOT) Analysis

Working Groups	Strength	Weakness/things to improve	Opportunities	Threats
Organizational and management structure and Policy/guideline/ HR Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District chapter mobilized volunteers within 24 hours. NHQ deployed ERT members to support District Chapter within one week. Established timely coordination among NRCS HQs, District chapters and local authorities NRCS Response Operation manual in place NRCS was able to distribute cash in timely manner The continued monitoring mechanism supported effective service delivery Good recognition and credibility of NRCS in the communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unavailability of real time data Lack of uniformity/ standardized package of NFI for distribution Challenges for the storage of relief item in district and sub-district level Lack of skilled manpower, especially for shelter construction Lack of adequate capacities at sub-chapter level for effective response Missing of few vulnerable households during IRA Coverage of NRCS support is limited in comparison to the number of families in need District chapter volunteers, staff and response team members does not have full understanding of response manual (strategies, and processes). Lack of adequate communication between NHQ and District Chapters regarding response strategies, relief standards, procedures, etc. Lack of extended warehousing management facilities based on the remoteness such as provision of Sub Province level warehouse management. For example, Dipayal could be central location for Bajura Acham and Doti Districts. Similarly, Khodpe could be another location for Dadeldhura, Baitadi Darchula and Bajhang. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good partnership with local government municipalities, province and other concerned stakeholder within the district for response Local Fund Mobilization Trust among the communities and local authorities on NRCS for response Engagement and Coordination with the beneficiary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different organization have different NFRI package which makes its difficulty in delivering uniform service Limited number of households coverage for RCRC support though remaining households are covered by government but service package was slightly different. Political/other biasness through concerned local authorities with unnecessary pressure for beneficiary selection
Operational/technical level: Shelter, WASH, Health, PGI, Relief item, CVA,PMER-IM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District chapters have strong network of volunteers who are engaged in community sensitization session on hygiene promotion, safe drinking water and water treatment process NRCS is able to design and deliver timely shelter support through bank transfer to targeted beneficiaries Community feels protected to shift into the transitional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of skilled manpower for shelter construction Transitional shelter (design and space) reported to be not feasible for the households with the family having large members (more than 5 family members) The PWDs and weather friendly measures are rarely considered while constructing transitional shelters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination opportunities with the concerned organization within district working on WASH sector Prepare and strengthen the community/ human resource for WASH promotion Engagement of community in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drying out of the water sources: due to unmanaged road extension that might lead for limited access to water Required maintenance of water supply pipe in community, long-way from source to communities Polluted water sources with potential risk for safe drinking water supply in the community

Working Groups	Strength	Weakness/things to improve	Opportunities	Threats
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate mechanism in place to share reports, and conduct joint planning among the local authority and community • Participatory bottom-up planning process followed to ensure one integrated IFRC-wide response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The grant amount to construct transitional shelter is insufficient, especially for large families • On-time maintenance of the water source during emergency is challenging to reduce potential water borne diseases • Challenges to establish emergency toilet in timely manner immediately after an earthquake • Lack of technical volunteers to conduct water quality testing on regular interval • Unavailability of data and information from communities/districts • Lack of skill and knowledge among the volunteer to use mobile based application for data collection and management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • coordination with local authority • Coordination with technical institutes at local level for safe shelter construction • Functional local markets during the time of emergencies in place. • Opportunities to strengthen/developed capacity of volunteers jointly with municipalities • Scaling up Cash Modality for future response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased deforestation as beneficiaries used woods from nearby forest to build their shelter • Changing Climate, its' impact and human behaviour that promotes environment degradation • Challenge for the selection of beneficiary for shelter due to various external factors and influences • Availability of various quality of construction material and potential risk of theft of such materials • Increased health risk due to use of CGI sheets in the shelter (extreme cold during winter) • Challenges having good Internet connection/Network availability
Coordination & Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of NFI through "one door system" followed by concerned government authorities • Availability of NRCS staff, volunteer along with FA trained capacity, in position to readily mobilize at community • NRCS's experience on multi sectoral response (shelter, health, WASH, Livelihood, etc.) • Timely mobilization of ERT/volunteers technical from NRCS HQs • The NRCS, Trusted and Role assigned by local government authority for detailed data collection through Kobo tools • Quick Orientation/training staff/volunteers for the data collection • Existing organization network of NRCS extended from community to international level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less participation of community from the planning phase • Unclear Roles and responsibilities of district and subchapter in field level operation • Lack of proper orientation on response process, standard tools, checklist among field volunteers. • Inadequate participation of Red Cross in LEOC • Different level of understanding about "one-door system" in DDMC and Municipality, caused delay in relief services. Time taking process for coordination and technical support from NHQs to Train staff and volunteers on Kobo tools for data collection • Limited staff and volunteers with PGI/CEA knowledge at district level • Decentralization of roles for response (at district and sub chapter level) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good relation with local authority for coordination and collaboration • The NRCS, trusted by beneficiary and concerned local authority • Enhanced capacity of organization along with community and organizational structure • Resource mobilization through coordination at local level and private sectors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To include the community people who have not any land for construction of the transitional shelter • Potential risk of multi hazard (monsoon, earthquake, landslide etc.) • Challenge to manage warehouses to pre-position NFI in Municipal levels • Risk of missing the most vulnerable and affected family members during data collection due to external factors (political, influences, geographical remoteness etc.)

Problem Tree Analysis

Issues Prioritized	Root cause	Issues Prioritized	Root cause
1. Challenges in beneficiary selection: not transparent and independent support from palika	Political/social system influences	5. Challenges for NFI storage and transportation at District chapter/Province level)	Not available enough resources for its management
	Gaps in the communication with beneficiary		Limited coordination with local concerned authority
	Missing of beneficiary at house/village during Data collection		For the NFI storage including establishment of local warehouse, there is an availability of land but there are legal issues which are yet to be resolved.
	Lack of contextual mapping/verification of the collected data		Difficult topography
	Not enough technical/skilled trained human resources at district		Unavailability of NFI management system at municipality level
	Monitoring mechanism for ensuring the beneficiary selection		Procurement issues due to lack of competitive market and limited bidders available in districts.
	Absent of pre-identified risk mapping		Due to lack of uniform transportation cost in districts resulting in delayed transportation of NFIs. This applies for hired NFI transportation vehicles as well.
	Heterogeneous household/community		Lack of trained human resource who can handle management of warehouse
	Lack of effective Feedback mechanism		6. Management gaps for NFI distribution and its management at Ward and Palika level
2. Unavailability of verified data on time	Lack of trained human resources staff and volunteer mobilized for data collection	7. Challenge in timely and uniform package distribution of NFI items	DRR not prioritized
	No enough/ regular support for Capacity enhancement of staff and volunteer for data collection		Gaps in coordination/one door channel among the concerned stakeholder at the municipality level
	Difficult geographic terrain		Lack of warehouses at local level and low level effort for warehouse construction and maintenance
	Network issues		Due to lack of preparedness budgeting at municipality level results in delayed NFI distribution for affected population and warehousing as well.
	Transportation challenges		Not distributing standard packages, splitting items. Not having uniform package of NFI among humanitarian agencies in Nepal

Issues Prioritized	Root cause	Issues Prioritized	Root cause
	Access to information		Lack of preparedness for effective distribution mechanism
	Lack of sufficient budget		Gaps in dignified needs identification of the community
3. Limited community participation	Community are not aware on the activities		
	Lack of understanding regarding distribution mechanism		
	The behavior of ward representatives (not clear what is meant for)	8. Limited capacity and Participation of sub chapter	Lack of trained and skilful human resource
	Absent of bottom up approach for planning and implementation		Lack of dissemination/decentralization of policy/plan/guideline from HQs
	Though the beneficiary crieteria for reaching the marginalized group but its implementation still remains a big challenge to be agreed by the concerned authority at all level		Lack of fund/ resource mobilization strategy and initiation
	Lack of adequate awareness/sensitization among the community		Absent of Sub chapter level annual plan
	Less engagement of community from the phase of planning for gaining their ownership and acceptance		Lack of information related to response preparedness and coordination and its dissemination leads to minimum participation of Sub-Chapter while responding to emergency and non-emergency situation
	No structure/building of sub chapter		
4. Coordination with concerned local government authority	Government not being Accountable High Political influence		
	Lack of will power among HR at all level		
	Lack of advocacy and orientation		
	Lack of assigning NRCS focal person for municipality level operational coordination		
	Limited access to information		
	Need to share plan and have a consensus on plan (not clear)		

Beneficiary Voice

Beneficiaries of the program from both district (3 females and 1 male) participated the workshop where they share their experience regarding the process and the use of support they have received from the response. During the sharing session, they shared details on how they have been informed for the support, support from the



NRCS volunteer for receiving the support including their feedback throughout the process. Cash support for transitional shelter integrated with WASH facilities were most welcomed and they shared how this approach has supported the family and the timely use of multipurpose cash support for meeting their basic needs.

Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) sharing

IFRC hired external consultant for conducting Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) survey in Bajhang and Bajura districts. During the workshop, the consultant team for PDM completed the KII and FGDs at the community while the household survey was still on process. The findings observed by the team until the workshop were shared during the workshop. Lead consultant made a presentation highlighting findings and recommendations for future operations. Key findings from PDM survey presented in the workshop are:

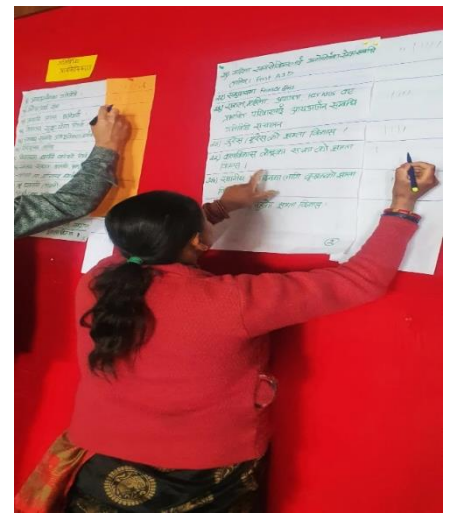
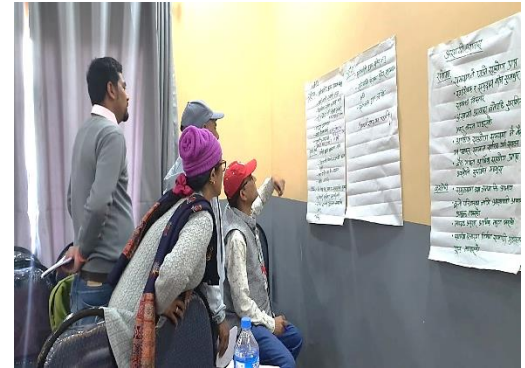
Recommendation

- *Capacity building of staff and volunteers on disaster preparedness, management, response and online/offline data,*
- *To provide orientation on humanitarian work, its basic principles and other basic knowledge and skills to people's representatives and employees who play a special role in the decision-making process*
- *Assist in capacity building and establishment of Local Emergency Operations Centers (LEOCs);*
- *Sensitize community on pre-disaster, mid-disaster and post-disaster activities*
- *Top-up cash assistance to meet the immediate needs of high-risk individuals and households, to reduce the cost for reaching the bank*
- *Continuous coordination with banks and financial institutions for effective service delivery and communication with beneficiary*
- *Strengthen/Capacity enhancement of the district chapter and subchapter on DRR related activities for better response during the emergency*
- *There should be provision of one sub chapter under one municipality to ensure the networking*

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The below overview consists of the common activities and priorities which were identified across all districts, within the Red Cross recovery scope, and with a focus on cross-sectoral activities.

PRIORITIZATION OF RECOVERY ACTIVITIES	
LIVELIHOODS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Skill-based training: Both agricultural and non- agricultural. Plumbers and masons, cross-cutting with Shelter and WASH) 2. Sustaining of livelihoods: Provision for livestock rearing, promotion for local crops production/kitchen gardening, 3. Cash for Work through mobilization at DW scheme maintenance/renovation, grants business start-up
SHELTER	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mason training for safe shelter construction +mobilization (cross-cutting with livelihoods) 2. Sensitization of communities on EQ safe infrastructure construction (cross-cutting with DRR)
WASH	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rehabilitation of water facilities at school and communities 2. Safe drinking water support for communities (water quality testing + sensitization) 3. Household latrine construction 4. Hygiene Promotion in communities 5. Sensitization/ Waste management at school
HEALTH	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MHPSS services/programming 2. Health promotion in communities and schools (cross-cutting with education/children) 3. Equipment support to community health facilities 4. First Aid training to women's group, FCHVs
DRR	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community training and self-empowerment on DRR and risk knowledge (integrated across sectors) 2. Training of response/DRR capacities in Districts and Wards (IRA, CADRE etc.) 3. Development of school safety plan with simulation exercises 4. Formation/reformation of WDMC with orientation
CEA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthening feedback mechanisms 2. CEA training and cascading to volunteers
PGI	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trainings + Awareness raising on SGBV prevention 2. Mapping of referral pathways and services
NSD	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reconstruction of District Offices and warehouses 2. Training of district teams for response preparedness 3. Replenishment of prepositioned stock





NEXT STEPS – ACTION PLAN	TIMELINE
Finalization of early recovery plan	By end of April
Administrative, HR and other preparation for implementation of plan	By end of April
Development of operational strategy and guideline	1 st week of May
Dissemination plans to province and districts	Mid of May
Implementation of early recovery plan	May onwards



Annex: Program schedule

Time	Agenda	Methodology	Responsible	Remarks
Day 1: 7 April 2024				
4:00 - 4:30	Arrival and Registration		Dadeldhura DC/EOC	
4:30 – 5:30	Opening and Welcome Introduction and objective sharing	Short Speech	Facilitation/MC: Dadeldhura	
5:30 - 6:00	Overall Bajhang EQ Response Presentation	Consolidated presentation IFRC Wide budget vs. expenditure	NRCS ED/ EOC	
6:00 – 6:30	NRCS Recovery Concept/ Scope sharing	Presentation	NRCS EOC /IFRC	
6:30 – 6:45	Discussion Q &A Closure of 1st day			
Day 2: 8 April 2024				
9:00 - 9:15	Welcome & Recap of previous day		NRCS EOC	
9:15 – 11:15	SWOT Analysis (Strength Weakness Opportunity and Threats)	Group exercise and presentation: Group formation: Group 1: Organizational and management structure, Policy/guideline/HR management Group 2: Operational/technical level: Relief Distribution, CVA, CEA PMER-IM Group 3: Operational/technical level: Shelter, WASH, Health, PGI, PMER-IM Group 4: Coordination & Collaboration Gallery walk: for further inputs from the other groups	NRCS EOC Prajwal/Shubhadra/Santosh Sharmila	
11:15 - 12:45	Problem tree analysis	Identification of root cause of identified weakness/problem	Prajwal/Sharmila	
12:45 – 13:45	LUNCH			
13:45 – 14:45	Solution Tree Analysis	Group exercise for identifying possible solution for the identified root causes of problem	Shubhadra/Prajwal	
14:45 -15:45	Beneficiary Voice	Sharing experience and story from Beneficiaries from Bajura/Bajhang	Shubhadra/Sharmila	NRCS DC
15:45 - 16:00	Break			
16:00 -16:45	PDM Sharing	Presentation: 30 min Q&A: 10 min	PDM consultant	
16:45 -17:00	Way Forward/ Action Plan/Closing	Next steps presented and agreed upon Vote of thanks	Facilitator NRCS Province	
Day 3: 9th April 2024				
8:00 – 8:15	Recap of the previous day			
8:15 – 10:30	Recovery Findings/Prioritize activities	Planning: recovery Group Exercise: Sharing FGD findings from community and district chapter	Rajendra Rokka/Sharmila	use sticky notes identify Priority 1,2,3 ... FGD checklist for community and DC will be shared by NRCS EOC and DC will share the findings.
10:30– 11:00	Way Forward/ Action Plan/Closing	Next steps presented and agreed upon Vote of thanks		
11:00 – 11:45	Lunch			

