



Safe School Policy Landscape in Nepal

An Assessment in the Context of Post-Earthquake 2015

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Published in April 2018.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAN	ActionAid Nepal
BPEP	Basic and Primary Education Project
CLRP	Community Led Reconstruction Programme
CSSF	Comprehensive safe school framework
CwD	Children with disabilities
DCC	District coordination committee
DEO	District Education Office
DoE	Department of Education
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
ECA	Extracurricular activities
ECD	Early childhood and development
EFA	Education for all
EiE	Education in emergencies
GoN	Government of Nepal
HVCA	Hazard vulnerability capacity analysis
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
NCED	National Centre for Education Development
NFE	Non-formal education
NSDRM	National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management
PDNA	Post Disaster Need Assessment
PTA	Parent-teacher association
SIP	School improvement plan
SMC	School management committee
SSDP	School Sector Development Plan
SSRP	School sector reform plan
TLC	Temporary learning centre
VDC	Village development committee
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene

Executive summary

Overview

The earthquake of 2015 damaged a good deal of Nepal's education infrastructure, mostly its schools. In fact, the school education sub-sector comprised 88.8% of the total damage in the education sector. Specifically, 8,242 public schools were affected, and 25,134 and 22,097 classrooms were totally and partially damaged respectively. Private schools also experienced significant damage: 956 and 3,983 classrooms were totally and partially damaged respectively. In addition, a total of 4,416 toilets and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, and 1,791 compound walls were damaged. It is reported that 584 students, 571 in school and 13 in higher education, lost their lives. A total of 49 teachers from schools and colleges also died. In addition, the earthquake directly affected, both physically and mentally, an estimated 3.2 million children. Of these, around 870,000 were left without permanent classrooms and an additional half a million required support to return to learning (PDNA, 2015).



Objective

The objective of this study was to carry out study on 'Safer School Policy Landscape in the context of post-earthquake' and "develop a Policy Brief' for the wider dissemination.

Methods

The study included (i) a review of legislation, policies and strategies related to the education sector; (ii) focused group discussions with school-going children as well as with members of school management committees (SMCs), parent-teacher associations (PTAs), education working groups, and the education cluster; and (iii) key informant interviews with government officials at the centre as well as in the district education offices of Makwanpur, Sindhupalchock, Dolakha and Kathmandu. Key informant interviews were commissioned with relevant government officials at the center, particularly key personnel from the Department of Education/Ministry of Education, and other relevant line agencies. At the districts and schools, such interviews were held with District Education Office (DEO) officials, and head-teachers.

Impacts of earthquake on education sector

As a result of the 2015 earthquake, school buildings were damaged, teaching materials and school supplies were lost or damaged, regular teaching was disrupted for long periods, teachers and students were injured or killed, and students regularly dropped out of school. The earthquake also damaged early childhood and development (ECD) centers, furniture, libraries, laboratories, computers, and various equipment, disrupting whole the system of education. The earthquake utterly destroyed many school buildings and their associated infrastructures and damaged many others, rendering them unfit for immediate use unless those infrastructures are carefully repaired. In some cases, many children still attend school in makeshift temporary facilities without walls and thereby open to the cold winter weather. Damaged schools need to be reconstructed as soon as possible because studying in cracked physical infrastructures is not just a physical threat but also disturbs children and teachers psychologically, therefore impeding their ability to study and teach, respectively. Improve the quality of education necessitates that physical infrastructures be rebuilt as soon and as durably as possible.

The earthquake had a major impact on children, youths, and the education system as a whole. It resulted children's missing school days, the absence of affected teachers, disruption of the school calendar, and the closure of schools, whether because of the destruction of or damage to school infrastructure or to the use of schools as emergency shelters by people from affected areas. School days were lost not just because of the closure of schools during the immediate aftermath of the earthquake but also because of the adoption of irregular schedules once schools did re-open. The wounds caused by the earthquake will take several years to fully heal. The unsafe and substandard school buildings had a devastating impact the lives and wellbeing of children and teachers.

Earthquake impeded quality education

The earthquake reduced school enrolment rates because the earthquake disrupted the livelihoods of many families. The prolonged interruption of education has

adversely impacted the future prospects and development of many children progress in the reconstruction of the education sector has been slow. The extensiveness of the damage to the education infrastructure, together with the already existing challenges to school enrolment in Nepal, has left millions of children in desperate need of educational support to help ensure their long-term development. The earthquake made the need for safe schools, now and in the future, abundantly clear. But building safe schools faces three key hurdles: the scale of the physical destruction wrought, the lack of educational continuity, and the slowness of reconstruction.

Safe School Policies and Practices

The national policies reviewed were Education Act (1971) and its eighth amendment (2004), National Education Commission (1992), Building Act (1998) and its first amendment (2007), Building Regulations (2009), National Framework for Child-Friendly Schools (2010), School Sector Reform Plan (2009-15), and National Policy on Children (2012), safe school policy (2017 draft), and DRRM Act (2017).

Good initiatives, major gaps and implications

This study suggests incorporating three key pillars: (i) structural (physical infrastructure), (ii) non-structural (awareness, capacity building, knowledge management), and (iii) policy (advocacy and campaigning). These pillars are further divided into 10 sub-components.

Structural (physical infrastructure)

It is crucial that sites for school construction be selected carefully as the deep-rooted mind-set that schools should be in remote locations works against safety, as does the fact that the public land freely allocated is usually cheap and therefore located in a hazardous area. There are policy gaps regarding safe-s The earthquake reduced school enrolment rates because the earthquake disrupted the livelihoods of many families. school construction, too. The Building Regulations do not require that small buildings secure local-level approval for their construction even though the Building Act calls for it. Many schools have renovated without assessing their physical vulnerability or meeting the National Building Code. While it is easy to carry out hazard, vulnerability and capacity analysis for constructing new and maintaining or retrofitting old schools, it is rarely done, a gap that proves critical as, without it, it is difficult to predict the strength of the site and the building and their ability to withstand the likely impacts of a disaster. Even when considerable money is invested to construct a new school, the National Building Code is not adequately considered in its design, cost estimate, material choice, or construction.

Non-structural (awareness, capacity building, knowledge management)

Most of the curriculum developed so far focuses on educating people about subject matters but not on developing life skills, it discusses 'symptoms' but not their 'consequences,' and is problem- rather than solution-centric. Policy allows teachers to select reference materials to suit their lessons but most do not or use materials ill-suited the Nepali context. While the curriculum does address the types and nature of natural hazards and the problems and challenges each poses, too little learning is directed at disaster prevention and preparedness. And the value of local knowledge is overlooked. In addition, there are no guidelines to integrating

DRR into the curriculum and no educational materials. Teachers have no training, so they are unenthusiastic about delivering lessons in DRR. Even when co-curricular activities are organized, the DRR and safe school messages they deliver are not reinforced in formal education. In fact, the non-structural component is not really an agenda of safe schools or capacity-building. Student retention and educational performance are key issues in the education sector; school safety is not. Knowledge is fragmented even though many DRR institutions espouse knowledge management and have implemented safe school initiatives.

Policy (advocacy and campaigning)

The lack of political will, resource constraints, and the inappropriate development approach have worked against the safe school approach, which is largely ignored. School safety policies should reflect physical and socio-cultural realities as well as the priorities of state and local entities but they do not. The plethora of policies and provisions has created some confusion and made it difficult to monitor their performance.

The way forward

a. Develop common understandings on safe school concept

- Understanding of the safe school concept varies at the local, regional, and national levels. Some still believe that safe schools entail only hardware components, or physical features. This is a misconception.

b. Make balance of software and hardware components

- In order to prepare schools for emergency response and disaster management, considerable emphasis must be placed on software components, such as the empowerment of school families and neighbourhood residents, school safety planning, capacity-building, and the development of standard operating procedures. The capacity and understanding of children, their families and school staff to grasp the safe-school concept and to understand the principles of DRR must be fostered.
- To ensure school safety and thereby to uphold children's rights to education, safe-school activities must consider far more than physical improvements but also about psychosocial well-being, protection, and physical safety. In the future, all school facilities should be made disaster-resilient in order to mitigate the likely risks of a variety of hazards. Only disaster-resilient schools can ensure children are able to continue their education even when a disaster strikes.

c. Increase the participation of SMCs and PTAs in safe school initiatives

- SMCs and PTAs should be involved in all steps of school construction, including the selection of safe school sites; hazard, vulnerability and capacity analysis; design and cost estimation; management of good-quality construction materials; and construction itself. In addition, close follow-up and frequent monitoring will help to ensure that the quality of construction meets or surpasses minimal standards.

d. Support to simplify the Building Codes and Standards

- Building Codes and Standards should be simplified for the construction of disaster-resistant and child-friendly schools following review and reflection by education stakeholders. The simpler the codes, the more likely it is that they will be employed.



e. Develop curriculum and textbook that foster DRR knowledge

- Curriculum and textbook reforms with DRR and resilience perspective and teacher training on the new curriculum and textbooks should be in place through existing teacher training institutions. Curricula should be learner-centred and generate life skills. Involving children in the assessment of local risk and vulnerabilities and available resources and capacities will help them understand the situation better than will traditional classroom teaching.
- Curriculum should focus on solutions, not problems. It should be context-specific, and tailor-made but not ad hoc. Only solution-centric curricula foster the life skills of learners as they promote learning by believing. Teaching about the consequences of hazards is more important than identifying what they are.
- The Curriculum Development Centre of Nepal should also provide reference material on disaster prevention and preparedness and the principles of disaster-resilient construction and environmental protection.

f. Impart capacity building initiatives

- Disaster preparedness and response initiatives at the school and community level should be strengthened through school-based disaster risk management (DRM) and community-based DRM training and planning by enhancing the capacity and preparedness of SMCs/PTAs, child clubs, and communities in DRM.
- Relevant refresher training session should be conducted for school communities so that they truly understand school safety awareness programs including the need for and nature of preparedness and hazard evacuation plans. Contingency and school preparedness plans should be the outcomes of HVCA.

- Integrating DRR and safe-school concept into existing teacher training and school curricula is a must. For this, policymakers, planners, curriculum developers, practitioners working on education in emergencies, and writers of DRR and safety plans at school level should be included in knowledge-sharing and review-and-reflection processes.
- Capacity-building activities should have both a life-skills component (with drills and simulations of practice like duck–cover-and-hold, building evacuation drill, evacuation to safe havens, safe family reunification, and curricula development) as well as a child-friendly schools component (safe construction and school preparedness).
- All the DRR modules developed should be mainstreamed in head-teacher and teacher-training modules to expand the DRR knowledge through different capacity building initiatives.
- DRR elements have been included in the supplementary training manual for school improvement plans (SIPs) and, as part of capacity-building efforts of the Support for Improvement of School Management project of the DoE and JICA, training and orientation are being held for education officials at the national to the school levels. While imparting this training, safe-school elements must be retrofitted in the curricula so that the concept can be widely disseminated.
- The National Centre for Education Development (NCED) has incorporated elements of school safety into its training for head teachers. A one-day module was developed, and trainers from education training centres were trained. In the organization of such training, care must be taken that each school-safety element is clearly elaborated in a step-wise process so that head teachers truly internalize the need for those elements. DRR and safe-school elements must be made mandatory in all training curricula targeted at schools. Support should be provided to the NCED to develop a module on school safety for teachers and to disseminate through NCED’s networks.
- Teachers and students should be trained in safe-school elements that will help minimize disruptions when disasters occur. Education is a platform for building a culture of prevention and resilience as educating children fulfils two important goals: it lasts a lifetime, and children pass their knowledge on to their parents and other community members. Children who are involved in disaster preparedness programs demonstrate a more realistic perception of risk, are less afraid, have more knowledge, and are more aware of the importance of knowing how to react than those who are not involved. Children who are educated about natural disasters are less likely to get hurt or fatally injured. The emphasis should be on DRR through schools rather than on DRR in schools.

g. Run co-curricular activities at schools

- Cultural shows and art, song, poetry, dance, and theatre activities with DRR messages should be organized as they appeal children. These activities should not be optional but mandatory and the members of SMCs and PTAs and Resource Centre heads should ensure they are offered to students. They should also, along with District Education Offices, ensure that schools are open the minimal number of school days. To ensure that DRR-related co-curricular activities are effective, multiple strategies, including child-to-child peer education, songs, electronic and print media, and action learning, should be used.

h. Provision of DRR focal teacher at school

- Since there are no focal teachers responsible for implementing DRR and other safe school activities at the school level, DRR is not adequately integrated into

curricular and extracurricular activities. Each school should assign a DRR focal teacher and both the school sector reform plan (SSRP) and SIPs should lay out provisions about implementing DRR activities on a regular basis.

i. Improve safety elements in the school

- The safe-school approach should include earthquake-resilience measures, emergency support mechanisms, safe school plans, a protection-from-multiple-hazards perspective, and personal safety and rights. Improved access to schools and climate-smart interventions has great value for safe schools. Children's access to schools should be improved through the reduction of physical risks (sidewalks, road and river crossings, ramps for disabled children, etc.). Climate-smart interventions like rainwater harvesting and solar panels should be promoted as should health and hygiene and separate sanitation facilities for girls and boys. To reduce death and injury, safe schools should have lightning rods and policies to promote safety during thunderstorms.

j. Carry out thorough assessment for retrofitting technologies

- Decisions to replace seismically vulnerable school buildings or retrofitting require thorough information on the risk levels of each building. The assessment should capture schools' exposure to other hazards (floods, landslides, fires, wind-storms, avalanches, rock falls) as well as availability of drinking water source and accessibility to communities. The DoE should prepare make it mandatory to consult Building Codes and land-use and hazard maps before it channels any funding.

k. Mainstream DRR in policy provisions

- Since neither the SSRP nor the individual SIPs adequately incorporate DRRs, they must be amended to incorporate and even mainstream safe-school elements. The GoN should allocate additional resources to accomplish this change. The earthquake of 2015 should be utilized as an opportunity to improve Nepal's education system in general and the safety of schools in particular. Education management information system (EMIS) should be strengthened to incorporate a module on school safety and DRR.
- The government has acknowledged the importance of integrating a comprehensive safe school framework (CSSF) into its School Sector Development Plan (SSDP). In fact, the technical group of Association of International NGOs in Nepal was successful in adding a DRR chapter to the SSDP which includes all three pillars of the CSSF. The continuous lobbying of the GoN, particularly the Ministry of Education, the DoE, and the NCED at the national level and DEOs at the district level, has made it mandatory to integrate DRR into education-related policies, plans, teacher-training modules, and the curricula.
- The GoN has already incorporated DRR in education-related policies, strategies, initiatives and plans in accordance with international DRR initiatives like the SFA and SDGs, but its implementation of these initiatives is still weak because of resource constraints and weak commitment on its own part as well as on that of humanitarian agencies. The GoN should leverage additional resources for translating policy provisions into practice. While the Ministry of Education and the DoE, together with CCDRR consortium, did draft a Safe School Policy, it needs to be enacted by the government. More advocacy for this step is needed.

Introduction

Education is a priority sector for the Government of Nepal (GoN). The sector has been receiving the largest share (around 14 percent) of the government budget allocation in recent years. Furthermore, public investment in education as a fraction of gross domestic product increased from less than 2.9 percent in 1999 to 4.2 percent in 2014. More than 80 percent of the government's education budget is allocated to school education, and within that about 60 percent goes to basic education. On average, development partners have accounted for more than 22 percent of the total education budget although it decreased to 13 percent in FY2015 (PDNA report, 2015).

Nepal, the 11th most vulnerable country to earthquake in the world, experienced a devastating earthquake of 7.8 Richter scale on 25 April, 2015. Another aftershock of 7.3 Richter scale hit on 12 May causing further loss of life and property. According to Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) data, as of July 2015, the earthquake had claimed 8790 lives and injured 22300. Government of Nepal's PDNA (Post Disaster Need Assessment) Report revealed that the total economic loss was NPR eight million. Earthquake and its aftershocks have affected 57 districts, 1,120 village development committees (VDCs) and 71 municipalities. Most of the hardest-hit



areas are rural, and some of them are remote and difficult to reach, either due to landslides or route blockage. Fourteen districts¹ are considered to be the hardest hit in the nation. In addition to loss of life and human suffering, the quakes have caused extensive destruction and damage to housing and other infrastructure as well as lifelines and livelihoods, leading to a drastic reduction in living conditions, income, and access to basic services. More than 1.2 million families (around 6 million people) have been affected directly by the quakes (MoHA, July 2015).

The earthquake of 2015 damaged a good deal of Nepal's education infrastructure, mostly its schools. In fact, the school education sub-sector comprised 88.8% of the total damage in the education sector. Specifically, 8,242 public schools were affected, and 25,134 and 22,097 classrooms were totally and partially damaged respectively. Private schools also experienced significant damage: 956 and 3,983 classrooms were totally and partially damaged respectively. In addition, a total of 4,416 toilets and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, and 1,791 compound walls were damaged. It is reported that 584 students, 571 in school and 13 in higher education, lost their lives. A total of 49 teachers from schools and colleges also died. In addition, the earthquake directly affected, both physically and mentally, an estimated 3.2 million children. Of these, around 870,000 were left without permanent classrooms and an additional half a million required support to return to learning (PDNA, 2015).

1.1 Rationale behind the “safe-school approach”

Schools are centres of learning and education, particularly the sharing of disaster knowledge, is the best tool for reducing disaster risk and vulnerabilities. The impacts of disasters can be minimized by promoting the safe school approach.

Disaster is not a new phenomenon. For centuries, a variety of natural and human-made hazards and disasters have impacted a large population around the globe. Disasters cause immense loss of life and property and impact the education as well as other sectors negatively. Specifically, disasters reduce overall educational achievement by damaging school infrastructure, disrupting academic calendars, forcing children to drop out the school, and undermining the resiliency of communities.

Education is central to development, peace and social justice. It plays a fundamental role in reducing poverty, exclusion, ignorance, conflict and human rights violence. Article 26(2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, “education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.”

While disasters impact the education sector very negatively, this sector is itself a powerful tool to reduce disaster losses. To reduce the impacts of disasters on education sector, many initiatives are being undertaken. Safety in schools is starting point for disaster risk reduction (DRR) and mainstreaming DRR in education is a key agenda. To translate this agenda into practice, many safe-school policies and

¹ The 14 Category A districts include Gorkha, Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Lalitpur, Sindhupalchowk, Ramechhap, Dolakha, Nuwakot, Dhading, Rasuwa, Sindhuli, Okhaldhunga, Makwanpur, and Kavrepalanchowk. The 9 Category B districts are Sangja, Chitwan, Kaski, Tanahu, Khotang, Solukhumbu, Udayapur, Bhojpur and Lumjung.



practices have been formulated to safeguard schools by mitigating their vulnerability, ensuring educational continuity even during emergencies, and empowering communities and students to build resilience to disasters through capacity-building and knowledge-management initiatives.

Since 1990, when Nepal participated in the World Conference on Education for All and signed the culminating declaration, many provisions, policies and protocols have been developed to enable an uninterrupted development effort in the education system and contribute to achieving the goal of a good-quality education for all. In the following section, existing safe-school-related policies and practices are reviewed at three levels: global, South Asia, and Nepal.

1.2 Study objectives

ActionAid International Nepal is implementing the 'Community Led Reconstruction Programme (CLRP) project which envisioned a people-led and owned reconstruction process prioritizing contextual community needs voiced by the people. CLRP is AAN's long term engagement with communities affected by the disaster to ensure

their lives are transformed positively and that their situation becomes even better than before the earthquake. ActionAid Nepal (AAN's) strategic response to poverty requires placing the people living in poverty- the rights holders in the center of all its intervention. Therefore, CLRP is committed to support and empower local community leaders and groups, especially women, representing vulnerable groups to lead the post disaster reconstruction phase. Based on this context, the purpose of the assignment is to carry out study on 'Safer School Policy Landscape in the context of post-earthquake ' and "develop a Policy Brief" for the wider dissemination.

1.3 Study methods

The study methods have embraced seven steps: (i) mobilization, (ii) desk analysis, (iii) instrument design, (iv) stakeholder consultation, (v) data analysis, (vi) data interpretation, and (vii) report writing.

Primary desk analysis was comprised the review and analysis of data available, especially all legislation, policies and strategies related to education sector, which has helped to devise study tools and techniques to collect primary/secondary information. At least four schools from different districts viz. Kathmandu, Sindhupalchok, Dolakha and Makwanpur were visited and carried out focused group discussions with school-going children as well as with members of school management committees (SMCs), parent-teacher associations (PTAs). Additional information was captured through consultation with (i) Association of Private and Boarding School Nepal, (ii) education working groups, and (iii) the education cluster. Key informant interviews were commissioned with relevant government officials at the center, particularly key personnel from the Department of Education/Ministry of Education, and other relevant line agencies. At the districts and schools, such interviews were held with District Education Office (DEO) officials, and head-teachers.

A draft report was produced after analyzing all primary and secondary information collected and a final report was developed after incorporating feedback and suggestions received from the relevant stakeholders and AAN colleagues. Based on the final report, a "Policy Brief" was developed.

Study findings and analysis

2.1 Impacts of earthquake on education sector

2.1.1 Physical impacts of EQ in education sector

As a result of the 2015 earthquake, school buildings were damaged, teaching materials and school supplies were lost or damaged, regular teaching was disrupted for long periods, teachers and students were injured or killed, and students regularly dropped out of school. The earthquake also damaged early childhood and development (ECD) centers, furniture, libraries, laboratories, computers, and various equipment, disrupting whole the system of education. The earthquake utterly destroyed many school buildings and their associated infrastructures and damaged many others, rendering them unfit for immediate use unless those infrastructures are carefully repaired. For months, aftershocks continued to devastate already ruined physical infrastructures, leaving educators, students, and their families in a bind. It was lucky the earthquake occurred on a Saturday as if it had occurred during school hours, the number of casualties would have been many times higher.

In some cases, many children still attend school in makeshift temporary facilities without walls and thereby open to the cold winter weather. In others, children attend classes in unsafe buildings. Most schools in Nepal are unsafe and, due to the lack of awareness about disaster risks, new schools are too often built in disaster-prone areas. The increase in the incidence of disaster events over the past 25 years has rendered the problem of unsafe school even graver. Nepal's difficult topography and geology makes it hard to access many schools, further complicating the task of reconstructing them under the GoN's stated goal of "building back better." Damaged schools need to be reconstructed as soon as possible because studying in cracked physical infrastructures is not just a physical threat but also disturbs children and teachers psychologically, therefore impeding their ability to study and teach, respectively. Improve the quality of education necessitates that physical infrastructures be rebuilt as soon and as durably as possible.

2.1.2 Psychological impact of earthquake

The earthquake had a major impact on children, youths, and the education system as a whole. It resulted children's missing school days, the absence of affected teachers, disruption of the school calendar, and the closure of schools, whether because of the destruction of or damage to school infrastructure or to the use of schools as emergency shelters by people from affected areas.

Several school buildings that are still standing are unsafe. The temporary learning centres (TLCs) and safe spaces that were established did promote the continuation of education during the emergency, but could not undo the psychological impacts of the earthquake. Schools, if they are rebuilt quickly, can provide children with the space they need to access psychological, regain a sense of normality, and heal from

The quality of construction work improved when the capacity of masons and SMC and PTA members was built

In Gokarneshwor School of Kathmandu, school buildings were reconstructed following the provisions of the building code. The school conducted hazard vulnerability capacity analysis (HVCA); enabled SMC and PTA members and children to identify areas of high, medium, and low risk; and taught them how to react to an earthquake initially, how to exit the classroom after the shaking subsides, and where to gather afterwards. After they identified risks and hazardous areas, locals better understood the likely impacts of disasters and the resources needed to counter them. This kind of knowledge, in turn, made it easier for them to formulate a DRR plan for the school. A series of review-and-reflection workshops and interaction programs helped people contemplate how disaster erodes their lives and livelihoods and what sorts of initiatives need to be undertaken to reduce the impact of disasters.

School construction proceeded rapidly because SMC and PTA members were involved in all the steps of school construction, including the selection of safe-school sites; HVCA; design and cost estimation; management of good-quality construction materials; and construction itself. Building Codes and Standards were simplified for the construction of disaster-resistant and child-friendly schools following review-and-reflection meetings among education stakeholders. To scale up the SMC-led safe-school construction approach, the capacities of SMC and PTA members in technical, financial, and managerial aspects based on the “Safer-School Construction Guideline” was enhanced. Because a series of programs sharing the elements of this guideline were conducted for SMC and PTA members and they built their understanding of that document, they are no longer dependent upon technicians. SMC and PTA members should be involved during the formulation of contingency plans and know enough about them that they can follow those plans and ensure the continuity of education in future emergencies. Masons, if they are trained, can contribute confidently to reconstruction work, knowing that they are upholding building code provisions. Both locals and officials now understand the importance of building codes. After school stakeholders were sensitised, the school drafted an emergency plan which clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of various actors, including members of the SMC, the PTA, and the child club.

distress and trauma. School days were lost not just because of the closure of schools during the immediate aftermath of the earthquake but also because of the adoption of irregular schedules once schools did re-open. Most schools in Sidhupalchock and Dolakha districts were not able to hold full-day classes for at least a month after schools re-opened, rendering it difficult to provide a good quality education.

The displacement of families also had a severely negative impact on learning environments at home. Child informants reported that they lost the motivation and confidence to study after their learning habits were disrupted. They said that they are anxious that they will have forgotten what they learned and that they will therefore find

it difficult to pass their exams. Classes were particularly irregular when teachers, too, had lost their homes, and were unable to return to teaching after schools re-opened.

The wounds caused by the earthquake will take several years to fully heal. The unsafe and substandard school buildings had a devastating impact the lives and wellbeing of children and teachers. The cost of recovery in the education sector is estimated at almost \$415 m USD, and that figure doesn't even attempt to put a price on the psychological costs to both teachers and students (PDNA, 2015).

Case Study

2

Capacity-building and working on multiple hazards decrease the risks associated with earthquakes

The majority of the SMC members at Indreswari School in Melamchi, Sindhupalchok, worried that the construction work after the earthquake of 2015 would not be completed on time and would not be good quality. They were wrong, however, as the school, the DEO, and humanitarian agencies constantly monitored and supervised the ongoing construction work. SMC members said that their enthusiasm and team spirit increased exponentially following their participation in capacity-building and involvement in the multi-hazard risk analysis process. The progress of reconstruction with safety features at school was speedy because the school shared its safe school approach to SMC, PTA, and relevant staff of resource centres and the DEO. Staff at resource centres were made aware of measures they could implement to make schools inclusive. The design school hostel is attractive and caters well to the basic requirements of children with disabilities (CwDs).

Organizing earthquake drills as part of extracurricular activities (ECAs) increased understanding about earthquake preparedness and reconstruction work. Child club wrote the scripts of and performed the dramas about earthquake preparedness. Because schools are considered to be a forum for transmitting knowledge about DRR, DRR became part of the school's curricula. Another good approach was conceiving of DRR-led ECAs and drills as processes, not one-time events. Most importantly, the school, with the help of humanitarian agencies, was able to manage a first aid box, a stretcher, a fire extinguisher, and basic search-and-rescue materials in a tin trunk for use during emergencies. An orientation on when and how to use materials and equipment was also imparted. The confidence of the SMC and the PTA increased when the school, with the support of humanitarian agencies, invested a large proportion of its resources in making its school building earthquake-resilient. The school also paid attention to hazards other than earthquakes, including windstorms, fires, lightning, and epidemics. Children formulated DRR plans and programmes based on their analysis of the existing problems, a process which enhanced both their own capacity and that of the community to cope and cemented their understanding of DRR. Students and community leaders now better understand how their coping and adaptation strategies can be tailored to different hazards in order to address the root causes of those hazards. Despite the input of many these resources, school was unable to install a fire alarm, an earthquake alarm, and lightning rods to reduce the risk of fires, earthquakes, and lightning respectively. Informants claimed installing blinking lights in classrooms and toilets would increase the safety of deaf children.

Schools play a vital role in a child's life during an emergency. They can be a source of comfort and normalcy in a world turned upside down, but in this case, because they were not safe or well-built, they were not. The fact that schools have not been reconstructed has continued to compound the emotional distress of millions of children and guardians who do not see a quick recovery on the horizon. Those children who can no longer access of education may never learn to read, write, be numerate or develop an enquiring mind. Because reconstruction has not proceeded at a suitable pace, it is clear that children's cognitive and developmental needs have not been fully acknowledged by government and humanitarian agencies.

Case Study

3

Green Schools are earthquake resilient

A school block with two rooms in Kalinag Secondary School of Kalinchock-3 of Dolakha is different from other RCC school buildings. This is green school which was constructed by ActionAid Nepal a decade back. This school block has successfully tolerated the impacts of 2015 earthquake while other school buildings in the same school were collapsed. It justifies its importance and demonstrated that it is an earthquake resilient school. Experiences have shown that green schools are particularly beneficial to all ecological regions of Nepal. The technology is used in such a way that it maintains the warm during the cold season and cold during the hot season. The cases of green school have demonstrated that they are beneficial to reduce the risks induced from different risks viz. earthquake, and extreme cold and hot and provide an environment of "education without fear" to the school family. Despite of its many benefits, local and district based stakeholders are not much familiar with the green school concept and technology used. There is a need of scaling up of this technology and using during the reconstruction of schools. One of the difficulties for the scaling up of this technology is unavailability of materials at local level.

2.2 Earthquake impeded quality education

To protect school-going children, who spend 30-35% of each day in school, it is essential to make schools safe from each of the wide variety of disasters Nepal faces. Building safe schools not only allows children to learn and develop in a healthy environment but also minimizes disruptions to educational activities due to disasters. The earthquake of 2015 re-emphasized the need to ensure that schools are both havens of safety and centres of learning. Every parent is concerned about of the level of safety of the schools they send their children to and has the right to see his fears alleviated.

The earthquake reduced school enrolment rates because the earthquake disrupted the livelihoods of many families. Informants in Sindhupalchock and Dolakha reported that enrolment had still not returned to pre-earthquake levels. In fact, even before the earthquake struck, Nepal's high dropout rate was a major concern. Around 1.2 million children between the ages of 5 and 16 have never been to school (UNICEF, 2015).

Back-to-school campaigns are often problematic after disasters

Sundrawoti Lower Secondary School in Dolakha District resumed classes two months after the earthquake, and the DEO, the school, and many humanitarian agencies began to run back-to-school campaigns to convince parents to send their children to school as soon as possible. Slogans such as “Bye-bye bhukampa (earthquake),” ‘earthquakes are not a big deal’, and ‘education must continue during emergencies’ were imparted, radio jingles broadcast, street plays performed, and group counselling provided, all to ensure the continuity of education. All these activities were quite successful but some children did not return to school due to fear and trauma. Learning from the earthquake of 2015 revealed the importance of including the concept of education in emergencies (EiE) in the training curricula targeting SMCs, PTAs and children so that they would understand why they had to resume schooling. It was discovered that safe spaces, TLCs, and new buildings will not, on their own, fully eliminate the distress and trauma caused by the earthquake. School-based disaster preparedness activities are also needed to reduce fears and trauma. Trimming tall trees within the school vicinity, building protection walls, avoiding slippery areas near school toilets, removing hanging materials, and preparing a second door as an emergency exit are all activities that have reduced the multiple risks that children face. These services will reduce risks and encourage children to join schools and guardians to send their children with confidence that schools are safe.

The capacity-building initiatives run by various humanitarian agencies have motivated parents to listen more to their children’s ideas and to work with them to implement DRR initiatives at school and home. Now that skills and knowledge about DRR have been imparted through DRR education, fears about the impact of hazards has abated and confidence has surged. Many behavioural changes regarding minor matters were observed: students no longer leave the classroom during a heavy thunderstorm and they do not run out of their classrooms until the earth has stopped shaking.

The prolonged interruption of education caused by the earthquake has adversely impacted the future prospects and development of many children. Progress in the reconstruction of the education sector has been slow. Informants claimed that children who stay out of school for extended periods of time, including during emergencies, become increasingly less likely to return to school because of their involvement in formal and informal tasks which help their families earn a livelihood. Informants in Sindhupalchok said that, in some cases, children had been forced to shoulder the roles and responsibilities of adults. In addition, children who were out of school as a result of the earthquake were more vulnerable to being recruited by armed groups, being exploited by employers, trafficking and drug abuse, and numerous other ills.

To build back better, public schools must open their doors to all children, regardless of whether they have never enrolled before or if they once studied in a private school. Renovating the public school system well can be an important way to bridge the gap between the public and private education sectors and create an equitable and streamlined education system that offers infrastructures, resources, and educational quality comparable to those of private education.

Safe-school practices built a culture of safety among students and teachers

Members of the SMC, the PTA and the child club at Shree Panchakanya Lower Secondary School of Sipapokhari-2, Sindhupalchock, have identified and marked the safest places in the school and in settlements to serve as places to assemble during an emergency. Evacuation routes and safe exits have also been identified and marked, and all stakeholders have been informed about them. Though these efforts are small, both local people and students now feel much safer. Students and teachers now know how to practice 'duck, cover and hold' techniques and are aware of the do's and don'ts during and after an earthquake. In addition, the school has an earthquake evacuation plan. The more than 400 students who attended this school are now physically safer from the risk of earthquakes. They also report that their fear of earthquakes has been reduced. This school serves as a model for other schools and communities and has spurred the DEO into promising to transfer earthquake-resistant technologies to other schools too. Now that schools understand all the benefits of safety and security and people are fully convinced that they have the right to live in a safe place, they have been claiming their right to external resources from duty bearers, including district coordination committees (DCCs), DEOs, and rural municipalities.

Schools carried out other initiatives to reduce physical risks, too. At children's request, school resources were used to construct large windows for better lighting, separate desks and chairs, two doors in every classroom, and safety railings. Because of children's efforts in advocacy, new houses have been built in safe areas. People are slowly adopting the new and safer technologies. Trainings for masons are organized to promote safe construction work. The fact that trained masons are paid better wages than those who are not trained and have a good reputation in society suggests that people's attitudes toward safety have changed considerably.

After the earthquake, the TLCs and safe spaces established and managed by the government and humanitarian agencies helped children to learn and play. There, they were able to access a full range of services and support for their cognitive development. Such facilities not only reduced children's vulnerability to the increase in physical risks associated with damaged physical infrastructure but also decreased violence, sexual exploitation, and child labour.

The scale and extent to which crises interrupt children's access to education and the high cost of education in emergencies interventions, can be minimised if resources are invested in making the national education systems less vulnerable and if local schools are well prepared to bounce back from crisis and return children to learning as soon as possible. The government has now finalized some school designs, all of which adhere to the National Building Code and will be resistant to both earthquakes and other disasters. These designs, however, are costly to build, so many development and humanitarian agencies are reluctant to adopt them. Thus, there are efforts to reduce costs without sacrificing adherence to the building code.

Along with hardware, software activities make schools earthquake-resilient

The construction work at Shanti Bahira and Shurtha Srawan school in Makwanpur was of high quality because of the balance of hardware and software activities. As part of the software component, the capacity of children and SMC and PTA members was built and DRR and safe-school elements were introduced into their school disaster management plans. Children's access to school was improved through the reduction of physical risks by building sidewalks, road and river crossings, and ramps for disabled children. Buildings were provisioned with safe and properly sized staircases, proper exits, well-built furniture, and appropriate equipment, all to minimize potential harm to school occupants. Displays and equipment for early warning and evacuation arrangements were also put in place.

To foster software activities, the school emphasized DRR in ECAs and knowledge management. Training in first aid, search-and-rescue, and disaster preparedness techniques as well as in HVCA also served to disseminate knowledge about DRR. Building the capacity of SMC and PTA members and ECD facilitators served as a form of psycho-social support to reduce stress and trauma, especially during the post-disaster period. It was learnt that stress and trauma were healed when children were able to interact and share their feelings in groups and with their peers at school. Emphasis was placed on practicing 'DRR through schools,' not 'DRR in schools.' Now that students and teachers have learned about hazards, the causes and consequences of disasters, and strategies to mitigate risks, students no longer believe that disasters are the result of God's will. EiE was fostered by safeguarding the right to education. With the improvement of physical facilities and increased understanding about safe schools, CwDs have better access to education.

To move Nepal closer to its all-children-in-a-safe-school objective, the good initiatives outlined above under structural, non-structural and policy components must be continued and scaled up, the gaps and their adverse implications addressed and following recommendations taken into consideration.

The long-term impacts the earthquake has had on children's learning is still to be assessed and analysed. That said, the extensiveness of the damage to the education infrastructure, together with the already existing challenges to school enrolment in Nepal, has left millions of children in desperate need of educational support to help ensure their long-term development.

Small-scale interventions in some schools in Sindhupalchock and Dolakha have enabled school communities to take measures to protect teaching and learning materials and thereby to ensure the continuity of the education system. But not all schools have taken such proactive measures as SMCs and parent-teacher association PTAs often are inactive, lack awareness and capacity, and have little in the way of financial resources to work with. The loss of months of education due to the earthquake compounded pre-existing problems, making the quality of education decline. Informants claimed that it was difficult to sustain the attention of

students for long periods of time and that having classes on weekends to make up for lost time was nearly unimaginable. Teachers are simply not motivated and SMCs and PTAs are not willing to push for this extra effort. In addition, many students who were forced out of school by the earthquake have simply never returned.

The earthquake made the need for safe schools, now and in the future, abundantly clear. But building safe schools faces three key hurdles: the scale of the physical destruction wrought, the lack of educational continuity, and the slowness of reconstruction.



2.3 Review of education policies in Nepal

The Government of Nepal has issued many policies and guidelines regarding DRR, but they focus only on structural components, specifically those regarding earthquake safety, and do not include safety measures designed to increase resistance to other hazards such as floods, landslides, fires, windstorm, and cold and heat waves. Moreover, the existing guidelines are unclear and do not encourage contributions from SMCs or PTAs.

i. Education Act (1971)

The systematic development of education only began after the enactment of the Education Act in 1971, which focused on the development of human resources for national development and promoted good conduct, decency and morality in consonance with the new multi-party democratic system. The Act mentions nothing about school safety and has no provisions regarding the likely risks to the education sector posed by natural and man-made disasters.

In 2001, seven amendments were made to this Act, making it more democratic by addressing issues such as gender mainstreaming, affirmative action for girls, sensitization to the issues of the Dalit, development of mother tongue curricula and textbooks, teaching in translation, and inclusive education.

Eighth amendment in Act, adopted in 2004, included the following provisions

- Commitment to provide free primary education
- Provisions for an alternative schooling program for out-of-school children, whether they had never enrolled or dropped out after beginning, through a non-formal program
- Implementation of a teachers' licensing policy through the National Teacher Service Commission
- Empowerment of SMCs through capacity-building in their various responsibilities
- Formation of inclusive SMCs and PTAs

Progress in implementing the provisions of the Act and its amendments is extremely slow. No amendment has yet internalized the concept of disaster risks and or the need to make schools safer.

ii. New Education System Plan (1971)

This plan, based on the Education Act (1971) of the same year, successfully laid out rules and regulations for textbooks and reference materials in order to promote good-quality of education. While it did to systematize the curriculum, this plan did not incorporate school safety issues and says nothing about the structural component of school safety, i.e. the physical improvement of schools and their vicinities.

iii. Natural Calamity Relief Act (1982)

This is the first act directed towards disaster management in Nepal. Its sole focus is on responding to disasters and providing relief to the affected. The government recognized that it did not have a sufficiently comprehensive platform for implementing national DRR strategies. In particular, it had the National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management (NSDRM). However, until it is replaced by a proposed new Disaster Management Act, it remains the principal framework for disaster response and for a limited range of DRR activities within the scope of rescue, relief and response. This Act does not say school safety or children's issues.

iv. Basic and Primary Education Project (BPEP) Master Plan I (1992–97)

To translate the key provisions of the Education Act (1971) and the New Education System Plan (1971) into practice, the Basic and Primary Education Project (BPEP) was designed and implemented. Its goal was to strengthen the network of pre-primary educational institutions. It addressed the issues of non-enrolment, non-attendance and low retention in primary education on a sustainable basis. It stressed the need for bottom-up, community-based planning in which parents, teachers and other stakeholders are consulted about program formulation and the management of BPEP activities.

BPEP I was built upon the experiences of the Seti Education for Rural Development Project and the Primary Education Project of the 1980s. Pre-primary education is not currently part of the formal education system. BPEP I aimed to increase access and equity, enhance quality and relevance, and improve the management efficiency of primary education. It covered 40 districts and served about 55% of public schools. It had 14 components: (i) textbook and curriculum development and dissemination; (ii) regular evaluation; (iii) teacher training; (iv) resource centre development; (v) early childhood development; (vi) school building construction; (vii) non-formal education; (viii) women's education; (ix) education for special target groups; (x) special education; (xi) community mobilization; (xii) enhanced technical capability; (xiii) improvement in educational management and information system; and (xiv) program management and improvement. It clustered schools under a resource centre school (usually a high school) supervised by a resource centre head. Because BPEP I covered so many issues, its focus was diluted and its impact less than expected. It had nothing to say about safe schools or making children the centre of school safety.

v. Governmental Periodic Plans

Though Nepal adopted a planned development approach in 1956, it was not until the Eighth Plan (1992-97) that the role of primary education was emphasized. This plan introduced compulsory primary education (grades 1-5) and provided for gradual expansion of compulsory to higher grades. The Ninth Plan (1997-2002) focused on ensuring that out-of-school children would gain access to schooling. It emphasized the gradual introduction of compulsory primary education and the launching of national literacy campaigns with the involvement of national and international agencies, local bodies and communities as a strategy for achieving education for all (EFA).

The Tenth Plan (2003-2007) campaigned for educational access and equity along with free primary education. This plan also focused on ensuring EFA, including for deprived groups (the poor). This plan, like the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, identified education as a key way to reduce poverty. This Plan stressed a pro-poor approach and emphasized achieving the objectives of universal primary education and reducing illiteracy.

The Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) and national documents on education lay down guidelines for safeguarding and ensuring the rights of children. The current Three-Year Interim Plan (2010-2013) includes strategies to implement the School Sector Reform Program effectively, resolve the problems existing in teachers' management and educational administration, and revise and reform the curricula of and teaching materials for all levels of school education.

Though many targeted programs have been formulated to ensure education for all, progress is not satisfactorily. The safe-school approach is not incorporated in either formal or informal education curricula or in the training curricula of teachers' training.

vi. National Education Commission (1992)

The National Education Commission was formed in 1992 to address the weakness of the previous education plan, that of 1971. It brought a change to the education system by ensuring the quality of education, building the capacity of teachers and improving the curricula. Though it did vaguely address the issue of child rights, it was silent about need for school safety.

vii. Building Act (1998)

The Building Act (1998) and its first amendment (2007) provide for the regulation of building construction to protect buildings against earthquakes, fires, and other natural calamities, to the extent possible. National building codes are administered by the Department of Urban Development and Building Construction; whose direct regulatory responsibilities extend only to public buildings. District and local municipal and village governments are responsible for seeing that private building construction upholds these codes.

viii. BPEP II (2001-04)

One good practice under BPEP II (2001-04) was to bring school-age girls and children from disadvantaged and deprived communities into the mainstream schooling system, an initiative later reinforced in the EFA core plan (2004-09). BPEP II made it clear that schools, teachers, and local institutions must have a vision for achieving good-quality education.

Compared to BPEP I, BPEP II's coverage was high. It covered all 75 districts and its design fell within the overall framework envisaged in the Ninth Plan and was in line with the objectives identified by BPEP I. Eight BPEP I components were reformed: (i) school physical facilities, (ii) special needs education, alternative schooling, education of girls, and education of special focus groups, (iii) early childhood development, (iv) community mobilization and literacy, (v) curriculum renewal and assessment, curriculum and textbooks renewal, and continuous assessment, (vi) teacher training and professional support, recurrent training and support, and certification training, (vii) strengthening institutions, strengthening central level institutions, strengthening district planning and implementation, and local capacity building, and (viii) core investment program management, program management and the establishment of the Technical Support Advisory Group. Compared to BPEP I, BPEP II had more provisions for safe schools as it had covered both structural and non-structural components, but even it did not internalize the possible consequences of disasters that may impact school environments,

ix. Local Self-Governance Act (1999) and Regulations (1999)

This legislation delegates responsibility for local governance and development (including DRR projects outside the context of a declared disaster) to regional, district and local governments--municipalities in urban areas and village development committees in rural areas. For the first time, local governments were able to assume considerable responsibility for the management of public schools, especially regarding construction and the payment of teacher's salaries from the annual budget.

x. Education Regulations (2002)

The government replaced the term ‘adult education’ with ‘non-formal education’ in the Education Regulations (2002) and expanded the scope of such education to incorporate basic adult education, post-literacy education, continuous education, and alternative primary education programs. None of these non-formal education programs have anything to say about making children disaster-resilient either at school or in their communities. None of the curricula of these programs address the safe-school approach or any of its associated issues.

The second amendment (2004), however, does have a provision for compensation if school property is lost due to a natural disaster. The rules read: “If any loss of the property of a community school is incurred because of a natural disaster or other situation beyond the control of that school, such as environmental degradation, compensation may be provided--up to NPR 5000 by the school management committee on the recommendation of the headmaster, up to NPR 10,000 by the District Education Officer on the recommendation of SMC, up to NPR 20,000 by the Director of Department of Education, and up to NPR 25,000 by the Secretary of the Ministry of Education. More than this amount can be granted if the Ministry of Education secures the approval of the Ministry of Finance.” These rules acknowledge that natural disasters have consequences for the safety of schools for the first time.

xi. National Plan of Action (2003)

This plan envisages using formal and non-formal education to ensure that all children have ‘equitable access to quality education.’ It addresses pertinent issues like (i) achieving EFA goals, (ii) early childhood and development, (iii) appropriate learning and life skills, and (iv) ensuring the rights of indigenous people. Even though a rationale for establishing safe schools was made blatantly obvious during the 1988 earthquake in Udaypur, the majority of Nepal’s policies, frameworks and plans are disaster-blind.

xii. Education for All (2004–09)

Nepal EFA (2004–09) was a natural continuation of BPEP I and II, a strategic program guided by the national policy to provide free and compulsory primary education to all children. Its components are based on the six EFA goals as well as plus the additional goal of ‘ensuring the right of indigenous people and linguistic minorities to basic and primary education through mother tongue’.

Implementing Nepal EFA, which focused on primary education and led to the development of the School Sector Reform Program (2009-2014), helped Nepal make significant progress in basic education. It fostered the decentralization of educational decisions and management as key to increasing access, meeting learning needs through inclusive education, and improving quality. Its strategies included the development of school improvement plans, which were linked with village and district education plans and which, in theory, enabled schools and communities to plan and monitor work with a view toward managing and thereby improving access, quality, retention, and achievement. In practice, however, things are different: a review of Nepal EFA revealed that School Improvement Plans are mainly used to secure or allocate allocating funding not to carry out genuine community-based planning for local education needs. Overall, the review concluded that the performance of the EFA is not satisfactorily.

xiii. School Sector Reform Plan (2009-15)

This plan came into being after Nepal EFA (2004-09) ended. It is a long-term strategic plan for achieving certain goals and objectives related to both basic and secondary education (2009-14). It comprises key strategic interventions and the estimated financial resources required to implement them. It continues the activities of Nepal EFA, the Secondary Education Support Programme, the Community School Support Programme and Teacher Education Project and also introduces new, strategic reforms such as restructuring school education and improving the quality of education. It also emphasizes increasing access among out-of-school children and commits to enabling all children to learn by enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of services in the education sector. This plan is based on Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which reads “to develop its personality, talents, physical and mental abilities to its fullest potential”. This plan is a comprehensive one which mainstreams a number of issues, including the right to education, gender parity, inclusion, and equity, into the education sector.

Under this plan, the Department of Education more effectively manages school safety, particularly regarding the safe construction and retrofitting of schools to meet national standards. Masons and engineers are trained to oversee construction, implement safety standards and ensure safer public schools, but the insufficient numbers of such capacitated human resources within the Ministry and Department of Education, has resulted in the limited translation of provisions into action. Thus, despite its willingness to mainstream DRR into the education system, the government has its hands tied.

xiv. Department of Water-Induced Disaster Prevention (2003)

The Department of Water-Induced Disaster Prevention (2003) produced a supplementary reader for Grade 5 which contains seven units: (i) Nepal's geographical situation, (ii) concepts related to, types and causes of, and measures for controlling of water-induced disaster, (iii) soil erosion, (iv) landslides, (v) debris flow (vi) floods, and (vi) participatory disaster control measures. The last chapter includes topics relating to the concept and mapping of disaster, trends of hazards, disseminating information to people, and evacuating people to safe places. While this is a good initiative for making curriculum disaster-friendly, there are no vertical linkages to upper or lower grades.

xv. Non-Formal Education Policy (2007)

The government-issued non-formal education (NFE) policy of 2007 aims to establish NFE as parallel and equivalent to formal education system. This policy envisions having literacy and post-literacy programs that provided lifelong and continuous education. NFE centres deliver NFE education services for various target groups of illiterate people.

Alternative schooling opportunities for out-of-school children and school drop-outs through the open education mode are also provided for. The curriculum takes into account many issues, but not school safety and disaster issues. In fact, words like “disaster” and “school safety” are not even used.

xvi. National Curriculum Framework for School Education (2007)

This framework emphasizes the relationship between education and issues related to the democratic polity and human rights. “Education” it declares, “should help enhance and strengthen social justice, democracy, human rights, co-existence,

equity and equality. Education should also address peace, tolerance, etiquette and employment.” This framework provides a long-term vision for school education. It includes policy for and guidelines on contemporary curricula, including environmental issues like plantation, natural disaster, and conservation. It also includes home and school sanitation, the causes and mitigation of environmental pollution, safety from accidents involving fire, electric current and sharp tools. This framework contributed a good deal to safe-school by including disaster-related issues in curriculum.

xvii. Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium (2009)

Building on the National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management, the Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium was formed to support the Government of Nepal in developing a long-term action plan for DRR. Based on government priorities and discussions with multi-stakeholder groups, the consortium members and the government identified five flagship areas for immediate action, the first of which is school and hospital safety. This flagship area focuses on both structural and non-structural mechanisms for making schools and hospitals earthquake-resilient and is the most relevant initiative for making schools safer.

xviii. Building Regulations (2009)

This legislation specifies items that need approval prior to the construction of large buildings, particularly those in the categories of A, B and C (but not D) and small homes less than three stories tall. Detailed documentation must be submitted to the concerned municipal and district urban development offices. In terms of the construction of new school buildings, however, the provisions of this legislation are not fully operationalized. In fact, even though the provisions of this legislation are, in general, good, they are not stringently implemented. Nor is there a specific law regulating the safety of private schools. As a result, the physical condition of private schools, most of which are housed in rented accommodations, is poor.

xix. National Framework for Child-Friendly Schools (2010)

A child-friendly environment is an ideal environment in which there is neither any harm to children nor any obstructions to their physical, mental, intellectual and emotional development. Since to earn the label “child-friendly” a school must special precautions to protect children from potential accidents, this framework includes arrangements for improving the physical conditions of schools. Filling in pits and trenches, erecting walls or fences around school grounds, making provisions for first aid and fire control, insulating rooms from extreme heat or cold, and making appropriate lighting arrangements are among the structural safety measures provided for. This framework also advocates adopting measures to protect schools from earthquakes and other natural disasters through the planned dissemination of information and organization of simulation exercises. However, due to limited political will and capacities, these important provisions are not adequately implemented.

xx. National Policy on Children (2012)

This policy prohibits armed conflict-related and political activities within school premises. It also bans corporal punishment of children by family, educational institutions and child homes and encourages governmental and national and international non-governmental organizations working with children to formulate child protection policies. In addition, it provides for the development of child-friendly teaching-learning environments at schools; the implementation of existing school curricula and training materials in a child-friendly way; the adoption of peace

education and non-violent, punishment-free educational systems; and the formation of inclusive SMCs and PTAs. It calls for the inclusion of issues like child rights, sexual exploitation and abuse into school textbooks. Rules and regulations have been developed to take departmental action against teachers who inflict physical or psychological torture on students. This policy is highly pro-children because it erases in the traditional belief in controlling and punishing students in the name of discipline. It addresses the non-structural elements of safe schools. As is the case for all the other legislation discussed above, implementation is poor.

xvi. Safe school policy (2017, Draft)

Safe school policy has been drafted (it is yet to enact from the government) on the basis of (i) National Building Code Guideline 2060, (ii) School Design Guideline 2073, (iii) School Sector Development Plan (2072-79), (iv) Post Disaster Need Assessment (PDNA)-2015, and (v) Post Disaster Reconstruction Framework (2016). Review the key provision of this policy in light of CSSF framework' is presented hereunder.

Structural component (physical infrastructures in and around the school)

- Develop disaster resilient school buildings (disable friendly)
- Develop basic criteria of physical infrastructure and services of school as per the National Building Code and build safe school accordingly
- Retrofit at-risk school infrastructures that are in operation
- Manage safe water in collaboration with community and local government
- Develop early child development center and teaching center along with safe drinking water, water storage and collection system
- Manage library, book corner, subject-specific laboratory and virtual laboratory to make teaching-learning more sustainable, meaningful and effective
- Carry out retrofitting of existing buildings following Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment and risk analysis of school
- Transfer vulnerable schools to a safer location
- Improve and ensure child friendly school fence, playground, roads leading to school
- Arrange furniture in accordance with the age, height and disability status of the students
- Manage toilet facilities with adequate water supply, separate for boys and girls, waste disposal system
- Manage alternative energy
- Identify open and secure location

Non-structural (awareness, capacity building, knowledge management)

- Ensure child friendly learning environment through non-structural risk management
- Develop education plans at federal, provincial and local level to manage the disaster risks
- Promote the culture of safe school
- Ensure psychosocial counseling and educational recovery of children
- Mainstream safe school related topics in the curriculum
- Mainstream disaster management in educational plans
- Develop information management system related to the disaster in school and community
- Improve the capacity of school to alleviate violence and discrimination in school

- Develop, distribute and use of safe school related educational materials
- Include simulation and drill activities in the annual work schedule of the school
- Integrate safe school related themes in teacher training materials
- Ensure stock-pile at school considering different hazards
- Develop contingency plan for selection of safe alternative location
- Carry out multi hazard mapping and assessment
- Prepare disaster related response plan as per the disaster response national policy framework
- Develop/update school disaster management plan and school improvement plan
- Manage resource materials by establishing the disaster learning center in the school premise
- Promote greenery in and around the school premises
- Form/strengthen school disaster management committee and task force

Policy (advocacy and campaigning)

- Retrofit the indicators of national framework for child friendly school for safe school
- Arrange children desk with one stakeholder representative in all federal, provincial and local government levels to manage for emergency and long term psycho-social counseling and educational recovery

xxi. DRRM Act (2017)

DRRM Act (2017) provisioned the “inclusion of disaster management in the school level educational curriculum” as spelled out in section 8 (roles, duties and rights of executive committee). In section 33, it said that Nepal government may close down educational institution for certain time period, deploy personnel of educational institute for the disaster rescue activities and whenever there is need to use the movable and immovable properties of educational institute. The government may make use and take in control the transport vehicles of educational institute for this purpose.

Gaps in policy provision at practice level

3.1 Gaps in structural (physical infrastructure) component

a. New school construction

For both new schools being constructed and old schools requiring maintenance or retrofitting, it is essential to carry out hazard, vulnerability and capacity analysis (HVCA); unfortunately, such analysis is rarely carried out or taken into consideration. This is a crucial gap without which it is difficult to predict the strength of the site and building strengths and its ability to withstand the likely impacts of disasters. Few new school buildings adhere to building codes and land-use and hazard maps are rarely consulted or hazard safety measures incorporated while constructing a building.



Newly constructed schools and early childhood development centres do not fulfil quality standards as building codes are not upheld during either the design or construction phases. The UN slogan ‘every new school should be a safe school’ is ignored as there is no guideline for developing safety in schools or addressing risks to the right of children, especially girls, to protection.

Early childhood education and development (ECED) centres need to be structurally safe and facilitators should be knowledgeable about the safe-school approach. In fact, the culture of safety should be inculcated in children right from the very first day of their formal educational experience. However, stakeholders pay little attention to ECED buildings and believe that administrative offices and upper grades are more deserving of being housed in any new buildings constructed. Ironically, children in the lowest grades are most susceptible to disaster impacts but they are less likely to attend classes in safe infrastructures.

b. School construction through retrofitting

It is crucial that sites for school construction be carefully selected, in Nepal, however, the deep-rooted mind-set that schools should be in remote locations works against safety, as does the fact that the public land freely allocated is usually cheap and therefore often hazardously located along a riverbank, on a degraded hill slope or on a ridge. Such locations are exposed to a variety of disasters, including floods, landslides, earthquake and windstorm, rendering schools vulnerable. The land donated out of religious merit-earning motives is similarly unsafe.

There are policy gaps regarding safe-school construction, too. The Building Regulations do not require that small buildings secure approval for their construction at the local level even though the Building Act calls for such approval. Because SMCs and PTAs are not well-informed about, PTA about the provisions of the Building Regulations, schools are almost always constructed on an ad hoc basis.

Since the National Building Codes of the Building Act have been only partially implemented by a small number of municipalities, high-risk school buildings continue to be constructed. Nor is there a system of assessment in place to identify which private buildings (which often house schools) need to be retrofitted for earthquake safety. There is no comprehensive, resourced mechanism to implement the National Building Codes to guard against fire either.

The majority of parents choose a school for their children based on the quality of education it offers in general and its educational performance in particular and accord safety standards little priority. Their relative indifference to safety works against efforts to implement the safe-school approach despite the fact that vulnerability in the education sector is ever increasing.

Building standards for school buildings, both new and existing, must be regulated by the government and relevant to local hazards. However, the gap between policy and practice has seen many schools be renovated without assessing their physical vulnerability or fulfilling the provisions of the National Building Code.

In fact, school buildings are vulnerable despite the National Building Code. Because proper maintenance, inspection and enforcement are lacking, the existing codes do not protect schools. Other weaknesses are that the Codes are too technical for many local communities to understand and that they do not address indigenous

knowledge. Simple, inexpensive changes in building practice are needed to save lives during disasters. The use of overly technical jargon in the name of safe schools is often counterproductive.

School infrastructure is vulnerable during disasters due to two main reasons: poor construction and lack of proper maintenance. In addition, the poor selection of sites without testing soils or assessing hazards, particularly seismic fault line is problematic. Too often policies ignore structural safety issues or, if they do consider them, do not make addressing them mandatory.

Transparency is another gap. The quality of school building construction is often sub-standard because of tendering processes are not transparent and there is no mechanism for the mandatory involvement of civil society organizations like Private and Boarding Schools' Organisation, Nepal, SMCs, PTAs, and engineering associations, in monitoring construction work, though they could very well act as a watch dog. The poor quality of construction materials is another gap. In the absence of social auditing and public hearings, local-level issues are not disclosed. Instead, a limited number of persons make all the decisions regarding construction without consulting stakeholders. While in theory SMCs and PTAs should be involved in all steps, from site selection to designing and costing to monitoring for quality control, they rarely are.

c. Management of financial resource for structurally safe schools

Even when considerable financial resources are invested in the construction of a particular new school, the National Building Code is not adequately considered while designing, preparing a cost estimate for, gauging the quality of construction materials needed, or actually constructing the building. This fact demonstrates that the lack of resources is not the sole barrier.

The Department of Education (DoE) provides an annual operation and maintenance budget to every school. Because there are no conditions attached to this money, it is not always used as it is intended to. Another problem occurs when the DoE supplies a school undertaking construction or maintenance with less money than it has anticipated, rendering it either unable to complete the work or forcing it to resort to cheaper materials that do not meet the prescribed standards of quality. The DoE neither monitors nor even comments on the quality of construction work, in such a situation.

Recent trends show that while the loss of life during major disasters has decreased significantly, the economic and livelihood losses associated with disasters have increased considerably; thereby putting a drain on already stressed national education budgets. The resultant economizing may decrease children's access to education and reduce the quality of their learning.

To entice parents in a competitive market environment, private boarding schools focus on the strength of their academic achievement, completely ignoring safety factors. When parents visit, they search for evidence of its educational quality, but do not explore physical safety issues like the condition of the playground and physical infrastructure, the presence of fire alarms and extinguishers and first aid kits and the like, policies regarding punishment, evacuation plans for disasters despite the fact that their children will spend long periods in the school environment.



The difference in the level of understanding of various stakeholders is another gap. Effective safety requires the commitment and participation of all stakeholders, but in this case some stakeholders namely, parents are often more willing to align themselves with safety policy than others (namely, political leaders and teachers). One common reservation among all stakeholders stems from a lack of appreciation about the need for safety, while teachers may feel safety considerations will increase their workload and parents that it will cost them financially.

Since government resources do not suffice and donor agencies have not yet translated their commitment into action, the quality of work is sub-standard and schools did not meet the ideal of structural safety. Because the budget is low, SMCs are tempted to engage in ad hoc construction and maintenance too often awarding the dear and near contractors instead of mobilizing, as makes sense, the members of both the committee itself and the PTAs for additional financial resources. Sometimes the budget for operation and maintenance is not even used for that purpose instead, guided by the political pressure and vested interest, committee use it to pay teacher salaries. The efforts of donor agencies are not systematic; they occur irregularly and are patchy in approach. Donors do engage education stakeholders but channel few resources and are not guiding local players toward a safe landing and a logical end.

3.2 Gaps in non-structural component

a. Curriculum

Most curricula developed so far focuses on educating people on the subject matters but not on developing the real life skills; it discusses ‘symptoms’ but not their ‘consequences’ and is problem- rather than solution-centric. As a result, these curricula often create havoc and generate ‘fear’. Other limitations are that they do not explicitly address socio-psycho and do not involve people in creative learning.

The existing policy allows teachers to select reference materials to suit their lessons. Such flexibility is a good way to generate innovation but most teachers do not use any reference materials and those who do often do not use materials that suit the Nepali context. To avoid confusion, suitable context-specific materials should be recommended and their use made mandatory.

While the curricula do address the types and nature of natural hazards and the problems and challenges each poses, too little learning is directed disaster prevention and preparedness. Nor do the curricula consider the value of local knowledge to provide physical and environmental protection from these hazards. The effectiveness of the curricula is further reduced because no material has been written in local dialects. Neither the curricula nor the textbooks and teachers’ guides are fully disaster-sensitive. Correlations among the curricula, children’s understandings and teaching methods and processes are weak. In particular, almost same standard curricula are used for each grade despite the fact that the level of understanding of students differs markedly.



Despite the existence of commitment at the policy and institutional levels, there are no guidelines to integrating DRR into curricula, education materials and training. The result is a state of confusion and, despite many efforts, limited inclusion of DRR content and lessons in the education curricula. Even though the government has agreed to provide information on risks and means to protect against them, strengthen networks and promote dialogue and cooperation, DRR has not yet been mainstreamed into the school curricula.

b. Co-curricular activities

The majority of co-curricular activities are merely fashionable activities rather than those designed to correspond with the themes and objectives of formal education lessons. Instead of co-curricular activities, students participate in extra-curricular activities. Though they do generate knowledge, extra-curricular activities do not directly address the objectives of co-curricular activities. Even when co-curricular activities are organized, too often the DRR and safe-school messages they deliver are not reinforced by the delivery of the same messages in formal education.

For these reasons, co-curricular activities have not really built disaster resilience; they have simply made free time more fun. Another problem is that the large number of unscheduled closures has left teachers unwilling to use school time co-curricular activities. For them, the priority is finishing the formal curriculum, not doing “extras.”

c. Capacity-building

Despite its importance, the non-structural component is not really an agenda of safe schools in general and capacity-building in particular. Student retention and educational performance are key issues; school safety is not.

Though Nepal has been aware of safe-school issues for 25 years, ever since the Udaypur earthquake in 1988, there is no ‘uniform governmental definition of a safe school’ and no ‘indicators for monitoring’ school safety. As a result, many institutions working in this sector have set their own definitions, which vary widely. Without a common consensus about what constitutes a safe school or which aspects of school safety should be advocated, managed, promoted, and prioritized, stakeholders have found it difficult to standardize capacity-buildings initiatives. Progress, in turn, has been slow.

Inadequate capacity-building and empowerment regarding safe-school issues leave SMCs ill-prepared to provide psychological counselling during disasters. As a result, students and teachers lose hope for the future. School personnel need disaster management plans, emergency response skills, and regular drills to cope with expected disaster impacts. Capacity-building is further constrained by the inadequacy of safe school-related reference materials and by the lack of explicit safe-school curricula in teacher education and training materials.

d. Knowledge management

There is no provision for collecting DRR information or communicating it to communities. As a result, early warning and DRR communications are very weak. Disseminating public safety messages and bridging the gap between scientific knowledge and people’s science is still a challenge. The DoE’s flash reports contain no information about school facilities, existing infrastructures or the need for a safe-school approach and learning.

Knowledge is fragmented even though many DRR institutions espouse knowledge management and have implemented safe school initiatives for 25 years. Some knowledge documentation is in place but it is at the project not the program level and very patchy. Because information about past learning is fragmented, it is difficult to use it to predict future situation and thereby tailor upcoming initiatives adequately.

3.3 Gaps in policy (advocacy and campaigning)

a. Mainstreaming DRR into education

The lack of political will, resource constraints and an inappropriate development approach have worked against the safe-school approach. There is no education network to advocate for the mainstreaming of DRR into education.

b. Safe-school provisions are not incorporated in existing policies

School safety policies should reflect physical and socio-cultural realities as well as the priorities of state and local entities but they do not. The plethora of policies and provisions has created some confusion and made it difficult to monitor their performance. Collective indigenous knowledge concerning DRR has been diluted or even forgotten while formulating all these policies. Safe-school provisions need to be explicitly stated.

c. Political will and governmental commitments

Education stakeholders have a thorough knowledge and understanding about the concept, rationale and consequences of school safety. Even so, the safe-school approach is largely ignored. There is a considerable gap in political will and commitment. Specific school safety policies and guidelines are lacking though safe-school issues are touched on in other policies and guidelines. As a result, safe-school initiatives are optional.

One crucial challenge is the influence of party politics, which divides SMCs and PTAs and makes it difficult to mobilize them to embark on collaborative efforts to promote school safety. Another problem is that Nepal has produced many policies, regulations, frameworks and plans without assessing the good practices of and gaps in already formulated policies. Thus, these new policies side-line previous policies, some of which were extremely good, and further undermine political will.

Political turmoil, bad governance, and lack of visionary leadership have worked against the safe-school approach. Since government staff is not transferred on the basis of quality, vision and performance but on the basis of seniority and political affiliation, the talents of many progressive human resources are lost, with a negative impact on the education system in general and safe-school initiatives in particular.



The way forward

To ensure that reconstruction takes into account those factors that can ensure that Nepal's education system will survive future disasters and to improve both the safety and quality of education, the following recommendations must be taken into consideration

a. Develop common understandings on safe school concept

- Understanding of the safe school concept varies at the local, regional, and national levels. Some still believe that safe schools entail only hardware components, or physical features. This is a misconception.

b. Make balance of software and hardware components

- In order to prepare schools for emergency response and disaster management, considerable emphasis must be placed on software components, such as the empowerment of school families and neighbourhood residents, school safety planning, capacity-building, and the development of standard operating procedures. The capacity and understanding of children, their families and school staff to grasp the safe-school concept and to understand the principles of DRR must be fostered.
- To ensure school safety and thereby to uphold children's rights to education, safe-school activities must consider far more than physical improvements but also about psychosocial well-being, protection, and physical safety. In the future, all school facilities should be made disaster-resilient in order to mitigate the likely risks of a variety of hazards. Only disaster-resilient schools can ensure children are able to continue their education even when a disaster strikes.

c. Increase the participation of SMCs and PTAs in safe school initiatives

- SMCs and PTAs should be involved in all steps of school construction, including the selection of safe school sites; hazard, vulnerability and capacity analysis; design and cost estimation; management of good-quality construction materials; and construction itself. In addition, close follow-up and frequent monitoring will help to ensure that the quality of construction meets or surpasses minimal standards.

d. Support to simplify the Building Codes and Standards

- Building Codes and Standards should be simplified for the construction of disaster-resistant and child-friendly schools following review and reflection by education stakeholders. The simpler the codes, the more likely it is that they will be employed.

e. Develop curriculum and textbook that foster DRR knowledge

- Curriculum and textbook reforms with DRR and resilience perspective and teacher training on the new curriculum and textbooks should be in place through existing teacher training institutions. Curricula should be learner-centred and generate life skills. Involving children in the assessment of local risk and vulnerabilities and available resources and capacities will help them understand the situation better than will traditional classroom teaching.

- Curriculum should focus on solutions, not problems. It should be context-specific, and tailor-made but not ad hoc. Only solution-centric curricula foster the life skills of learners as they promote learning by believing. Teaching about the consequences of hazards is more important than identifying what they are.
- The Curriculum Development Centre of Nepal should also provide reference material on disaster prevention and preparedness and the principles of disaster-resilient construction and environmental protection.

f. Impart capacity building initiatives

- Disaster preparedness and response initiatives at the school and community level should be strengthened through school-based disaster risk management (DRM) and community-based DRM training and planning by enhancing the capacity and preparedness of SMCs/PTAs, child clubs, and communities in DRM.
- Relevant refresher training session should be conducted for school communities so that they truly understand school safety awareness programs including the need for and nature of preparedness and hazard evacuation plans. Contingency and school preparedness plans should be the outcomes of HVCA.
- Integrating DRR and safe-school concept into existing teacher training and school curricula is a must. For this, policymakers, planners, curriculum developers, practitioners working on education in emergencies, and writers of DRR and safety plans at school level should be included in knowledge-sharing and review-and-reflection processes.
- Capacity-building activities should have both a life-skills component (with drills and simulations of practice like duck–cover-and-hold, building evacuation drill, evacuation to safe havens, safe family reunification, and curricula development) as well as a child-friendly schools component (safe construction and school preparedness).
- All the DRR modules developed should be mainstreamed in head-teacher and teacher-training modules to expand the DRR knowledge through different capacity building initiatives.
- DRR elements have been included in the supplementary training manual for school improvement plans (SIPs) and, as part of capacity-building efforts of the Support for Improvement of School Management project of the DoE and JICA, training and orientation are being held for education officials at the national to the school levels. While imparting this training, safe-school elements must be retrofitted in the curricula so that the concept can be widely disseminated.
- The National Centre for Education Development (NCED) has incorporated elements of school safety into its training for head teachers. A one-day module was developed, and trainers from education training centres were trained. In the organization of such training, care must be taken that each school-safety element is clearly elaborated in a step-wise process so that head teachers truly internalize the need for those elements. DRR and safe-school elements must be made mandatory in all training curricula targeted at schools. Support should be provided to the NCED to develop a module on school safety for teachers and to disseminate through NCED's networks.
- Teachers and students should be trained in safe-school elements that will help minimize disruptions when disasters occur. Education is a platform for building a culture of prevention and resilience as educating children fulfils two important goals: it lasts a lifetime, and children pass their knowledge on to their parents and other community members. Children who are involved in disaster preparedness programs demonstrate a more realistic perception of risk, are less

afraid, have more knowledge, and are more aware of the importance of knowing how to react than those who are not involved. Children who are educated about natural disasters are less likely to get hurt or fatally injured. The emphasis should be on DRR through schools rather than on DRR in schools.

g. Run co-curricular activities at schools

- Cultural shows and art, song, poetry, dance, and theatre activities with DRR messages should be organized as they appeal children. These activities should not be optional but mandatory and the members of SMCs and PTAs and Resource Centre heads should ensure they are offered to students. They should also, along with District Education Offices, ensure that schools are open the minimal number of school days. To ensure that DRR-related co-curricular activities are effective, multiple strategies, including child-to-child peer education, songs, electronic and print media, and action learning, should be used.

h. Provision of DRR focal teacher at school

- Since there are no focal teachers responsible for implementing DRR and other safe school activities at the school level, DRR is not adequately integrated into curricular and extracurricular activities. Each school should assign a DRR focal teacher and both the school sector reform plan (SSRP) and SIPs should lay out provisions about implementing DRR activities on a regular basis.

i. Improve safety elements in the school

- The safe-school approach should include earthquake-resilience measures, emergency support mechanisms, safe school plans, a protection-from-multiple-hazards perspective, and personal safety and rights. Improved access to schools and climate-smart interventions has great value for safe schools. Children's access to schools should be improved through the reduction of physical risks (sidewalks, road and river crossings, ramps for disabled children, etc.). Climate-smart interventions like rainwater harvesting and solar panels should be promoted as should health and hygiene and separate sanitation facilities for girls and boys. To reduce death and injury, safe schools should have lightning rods and policies to promote safety during thunderstorms.

j. Carry out thorough assessment for retrofitting technologies

- Decisions to replace seismically vulnerable school buildings or retrofitting require thorough information on the risk levels of each building. The assessment should capture schools' exposure to other hazards (floods, landslides, fires, wind-storms, avalanches, rock falls) as well as availability of drinking water source and accessibility to communities. The DoE should prepare make it mandatory to consult Building Codes and land-use and hazard maps before it channels any funding.

k. Mainstream DRR in policy provisions

- Since neither the SSRP nor the individual SIPs adequately incorporate DRRs, they must be amended to incorporate and even mainstream safe-school elements. The GoN should allocate additional resources to accomplish this change. The earthquake of 2015 should be utilized as an opportunity to improve Nepal's education system in general and the safety of schools in particular. Education management information system (EMIS) should be strengthened to incorporate a module on school safety and DRR.

- The government has acknowledged the importance of integrating a comprehensive safe school framework (CSSF) into its School Sector Development Plan (SSDP). In fact, the technical group of Association of International NGOs in Nepal was successful in adding a DRR chapter to the SSDP which includes all three pillars of the CSSF. The continuous lobbying of the GoN, particularly the Ministry of Education, the DoE, and the NCED at the national level and DEOs at the district level, has made it mandatory to integrate DRR into education-related policies, plans, teacher-training modules, and the curricula.
- The GoN has already incorporated DRR in education-related policies, strategies, initiatives and plans in accordance with international DRR initiatives like the SFA and SDGs, but its implementation of these initiatives is still weak because of resource constraints and weak commitment on its own part as well as on that of humanitarian agencies. The GoN should leverage additional resources for translating policy provisions into practice. While the Ministry of Education and the DoE, together with CCDRR consortium, did draft a Safe School Policy, it needs to be enacted by the government. More advocacy for this step is needed.



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Annex: Safe school Initiatives in Nepal (1988-2013)

Year	Major initiatives
Post 1988 earthquake	Since most public schools were in very poor physical condition, it took about three months to reopen schools because of the massive structural damage incurred.
1988-1995	JICA developed earthquake-resistant technologies for schools.
1994	The GoN formulated a building code for the construction of safe buildings.
1997-1999	The Kathmandu Valley Earthquake Risk Management Project undertaken jointly by NSET and GeoHazards International ran the community-based School Earthquake Safety Programme.
1997	School based disaster preparedness was taken as a part of CBDP in Nepal but, the school safety and disaster risks in education was not observed.
1999	The GoN approved the Building Act.
1999-2000	Many INGOs undertook structural and non-structural vulnerability assessment programmes to update the seismic vulnerability of schools, hospitals, and other key buildings.
1999	The Department of Urban Development and Building Construction, with assistance from the UNDP Earthquake Risk Reduction and Recovery Project and NSET educated the public education about the earthquake risks associated with buildings and organised training for municipality authorities
1999	The School Earthquake Safety Programme retrofitted a few school buildings to make them more resistant to earthquakes.
2003	The GoN approved the National Building Code.
2003	Disaster impact assessments of development projects made mandatory in the Tenth National Plan (2002-2007).
2003-till now	Many INGOs supported safe-school initiatives under DIPECHO with financial assistance from ECHO.
2007-2009	ActionAid Nepal designed and implemented the DRR through Schools Programme. It's safe-school component was central.
2007	The first amendment to the Building Act of 2007 came into force in 58 municipalities, 28 districts and 81 VDCs.
2009	An international consortium to support the GoN of Nepal in developing a long-term DRR action plan for implementing important strategic actions suggested in the National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management was formed. NRRRC identified five flagship and school safety programme is under flagship one.
2009	The School Sector Reform Plan (2009-2015) will continue on-going programmes such as EFA, Secondary Education Support Programme, Community School Support Programme, and Teacher Education Project in order to foster safer-school initiatives in Nepal.
2012	Mercy corps, Plan Nepal and Save the Children took some of the initiatives to work on school safety programme
2013	Plan Nepal initiated Safe School Project in Makwanpur District.
2013-2015	DIPECHO projects implemented by many organizations
2015-2018	Reconstruction of damaged schools by earthquake of 2015 in the principle of building back better

ActionAid Nepal

ActionAid started working in Nepal in 1982, just after ten years of its establishment as a charity organisation in the United Kingdom. Today, ActionAid is a global movement of people working together to further human rights and defeat poverty for all. With an aim to become more 'locally rooted and globally connected', ActionAid Nepal has registered its entity in the concerned Nepal Government authority. ActionAid is a global federation and ActionAid Nepal is one of the members of that federation.

Based on the learning from its engagement in various sectors at various levels from grassroots to international, AAN has evolved through various changes on approaches and working modalities in its 36 years journey of the fight against poverty and injustice. Starting from charity-based work in the 1980s to improve the basic living conditions of the poorest people, AAN has now adopted a human rights-based approach with an aim to enhance the capacity of the poor and excluded people to claim and exercise their rights to live a dignified life. Our approach reaffirms the role of popular struggles, social justice movements, popular actions, community-based organisations and people's organisations for rights conscientisation and transformation of unequal power relations.

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