

Stories of Impact

A series highlighting achievements in disaster risk management

Reducing Risk and Supporting Recovery in Nepal

REGION: SOUTH ASIA

FOCUS: RISK IDENTIFICATION, RESILIENT RECOVERY

COUNTRY: NEPAL



RESULTS:

- Following the devastating earthquakes, the Government of Nepal conducted a post-disaster needs assessment, with support from GFDRR and other partners. The assessment's findings helped the government secure \$4.4 billion toward its recovery and reconstruction needs.
- Before the earthquakes struck, GFDRR had laid groundwork to make Nepal more disaster resilient through its support of the OpenCities Kathmandu program, which mapped nearly 3,000 schools and health facilities, and trained 1,500 volunteers in mapping vital infrastructure.
- To help restore the significantly disrupted educational services, GFDRR's Safer Schools Program is supporting the government by providing technical advice to the Department of Education, informing the reconstruction and rehabilitation of affected education facilities, and individually assessing over 5,000 public schools.



Nepal is highly vulnerable to natural hazards, including earthquakes. In April and May 2015, two high magnitude earthquakes rocked the Kathmandu Valley, claiming nearly 8,800 lives.

Following the initial April 25 earthquake, teams from GFDRR quickly mobilized to help with recovery efforts alongside partners. To better understand the scale and scope of the disaster's impact, GFDRR helped enable the Government of Nepal to conduct a post-disaster needs assessment (PDNA), in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank, European Union (EU), Government of Japan, United Nations (UN), the World Bank, as well as other partners, and with the financial support of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. In the recovery efforts, the government and other stakeholders have also drawn on GFDRR support prior to the disaster to make Nepal more resilient.

CONTEXT:

Nepal is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to natural hazards, with approximately 80% of the country at-risk to multiple natural hazards, including earthquakes, floods, and landslides. However, the country, with GFDRR assistance, has taken steps to reduce its disaster risk. For example, in 2012, GFDRR's OpenCities Kathmandu program surveyed schools and health facilities in the Kathmandu Valley through community mapping activities.

When earthquakes struck in 2015, the country suffered the worst disaster in decades. It affected an estimated eight million people—almost one-third of the population—with early predictions suggesting an additional one million Nepalis may be pushed into poverty as a direct result. In response to the earthquakes, GFDRR has worked with partners to support the post-disaster assessment and recovery needs, as well as drawn on efforts established prior to the disaster.

APPROACH:

Following the April and May earthquakes, GFDRR mobilized to provide critical advisory and technical support for the relief and recovery efforts. The Facility assisted the government in carrying out a PDNA, which involved officials from all line ministries spanning 23 sectors. Despite challenging circumstances, a high-quality assessment report was finalized within six weeks after the initial earthquake, estimating damage at \$5.15 billion, losses at \$1.9 billion, and recovery needs at \$6.7 billion, or about a third of Nepal's economy.

Additionally, GFDRR has supported the government in key affected sectors. The Innovation Lab collated results from near-real-time remote damage assessments carried out by international partners for the housing sector, the hardest hit sector by the disaster. The Innovation Lab also worked with international partners in creating full inventories of the landslides using satellite data for the first time in a post-disaster context.

NEXT STEPS:

Looking forward, GFDRR will continue to provide technical assistance to Nepal for resilient recovery planning, including within the housing and education sector. There is a pressing need for specific and accurate information on the damage to housing, which is why GFDRR's Callable Fund is financing a survey to identify household candidates for reconstruction, working with the Government of Nepal and the UN. The resulting database will serve as the basis for Nepal's housing reconstruction program, including projects funded by the World Bank.

In addition, GFDRR's Safer Schools Program is raising grant resources and offering technical support to increase the safety and improve the quality of education facilities.

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*ALL MONETARY VALUES IN USD

"This [PDNA] report now equips us with a well-rounded view of the scale of devastation and an outline recovery strategy to chart the course for reconstruction and rehabilitation.... I congratulate my colleagues, as well as our development partners in achieving the mammoth task of carrying out this PDNA in a very short time through a credible, participatory process."

— Prime Minister Sushil Koirala, Government of Nepal



LESSONS LEARNED:

A government-led assessment can lead the way to a strong recovery and reconstruction process. While the PDNA involved more than 250 experts from 40 international and national development partners, the assessment was a government-led and government-owned process. This strong leadership by the Government of Nepal, as well as a focused assessment helping to provide a blueprint for the recovery strategy, assisted in gaining funding support at the June 25, 2015 donor conference.

Vulnerable countries need to be ready in advance for when disaster strikes. When the first earthquake struck, like many other countries, the Government of Nepal did not have a single agency leading disaster risk management (DRM) efforts. This has slowed coordination following the disaster. Countries vulnerable to natural hazards, like Nepal, need to prepare in advance by mainstreaming DRM and putting in place policies and mechanisms that can support large-scale reconstruction and recovery.