



NEPAL

Participatory Disaster Management Programme

Disaster Context

Nepal is a disaster-prone country mainly due to its young geology, mountainous terrain, and widespread poverty. An assessment made by the Ministry of Home Affairs shows that more than 18,000 people were killed by various disasters between 1983 and 1998. The losses of productive properties such as animals, agricultural land, and crops are overwhelming.

Major types of disasters in Nepal include floods, earthquakes, droughts, landslides, epidemics, Glacial Lake Outburst Floods, fire, and ecological hazards. Less devastating disasters include avalanches, rainstorms, hailstorms, stampedes, and industrial accidents. Among the major disasters, floods, landslides, and epidemics are the most frequent and are usually deadly. Seismic faults pass through the country, and it has been reported that the region is likely to suffer a major earthquake in the near future.

Project Title

- Participatory Disaster Management Programme (NEP/99/014)
- Strengthening Disaster Management Capacity (NEP/03/004)

Sectors

- Disaster preparedness and prevention
- Disaster management
- Humanitarian assistance

Funding

- The total NEP/99/014 programme resource for the first year (2001) was \$410,000, and \$200,000 for 2002.
- UNDP contributed \$ 100,000 from TRAC 1.1.3 funds for NEP/03/004.

Partners

- Ministry of Home Affairs
- UNDP/Japan Women in Development Fund
- UNOPS
- The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development

Programme Activities

The programme intends to improve Nepal's capacity at local and national levels on disaster preparedness and management, and to influence development-related organisations to deal with disasters as regular development activities rather than separate entities. This project builds upon the successes of NEP/95/05 (Upgrading Disaster Management Capacity in Nepal) by mobilizing local communities to mitigate water-induced disasters, particularly floods and landslides, based on indigenous knowledge and locally available materials.

The programme's objectives are to:

- Develop the capacity of the community by mobilizing women and men into self-governing community organisations that cope with natural disasters
- Strengthen local bodies in their disaster management capacity
- Develop standard operation procedures to respond to future disasters in collaboration with the government, international communities and local communities
- Develop a methodology for women's vulnerability assessments in disaster mapping, including collection of gender-disaggregated data on water-induced disaster and rural poverty vulnerability mapping and situational analysis of women's vulnerability through research

The major thrust of the programme is to: (1) enhance the capacity of local communities, particularly women,

in disaster management; and (2) lessen the impacts of natural disasters, particularly floods and landslides, on the lives of people by shifting the focus from disaster relief and rescue to disaster preparedness and mitigation. This thrust has been incorporated in line with the recent policy discussion of the government towards placing more emphasis on disaster preparedness and mitigation.

Programme outcomes and impact:

- Self-Governing Community Organisations (SGCOs) were formed by the local communities to enhance local participation, to generate and mobilize local resources, to maintain records of external support, and to serve as a bridge between the local community and the programme.
- Twelve SGCOs were formed in all project districts. About 50 percent of SGCO members are female. At least four more SGCOs are planned in the new project districts.
- Fifty-one SGCO and community members participated in a four-day-long disaster management training programme. About 40 percent of the participants were female.
- After the training programme, SGCO and community members designed and implementing disaster mitigation activities in all project Village Development Committees (VDCs) with seed grants from the programme and locally generated resources.
- The programme organised transparent account keeping and a nursery management training programme for the members of the SGCOs.
- Hazard mapping and risk assessment of the VDCs has been completed.
- Seventeen government officials from four project districts participated in a three-day disaster management training programme. About 30 percent of the participants were female.
- The Programme assisted in organising a high-level meeting on disaster preparedness attended by the Deputy Prime Minister/Home Minister, the Vice Chairman of National Planning Commission, several ambassadors and heads of bilateral and multilateral organisations.
- All SGCOs have been implementing disaster mitigation activities based on indigenous knowledge and locally available materials with support from programme seed grants.

- Thirty participants (17 male and 13 female) from SGCOs from four project districts participated in a weeklong inter-district visit programme. The participants visited all the project sites in Chitwan and Syangja to observe community initiatives in disaster management and to interact with the local community.