

100 DAYS OF UNDP RESPONSE: WESTERN NEPAL EARTHQUAKE, NOVEMBER 2023



Message from the Resident Representative



It has been 100 days, since the devastating earthquake measuring 6.4 magnitude struck Karnali Province, Nepal on 3 November 2023 and caused extensive damage. Jajarkot, Rukum West and Salyan districts were the worst affected, leading to loss of 154 lives and damages to over 10,700 structures. The recovery and reconstruction cost is estimated at USD 518 million¹.

Under the umbrella of the UN Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), UNDP has been working closely with the National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Authority (NDRRMA), the Provincial Government of Karnali, District Administration Offices and municipalities, UN and development partners, since day one to support response, relief and early recovery efforts. The interventions include distributing Non-Food Items (NFIs), supporting information management, facilitating smooth governance through effective service delivery and debris removal. 'Leave no one behind' has been the core mantra of all interventions. These interventions are guided by UNDP's past experiences, which include the Gorkha earthquake (2015) recovery supported by the Government of India. The interventions also built on the on-going work by UNDP in Karnali, which includes the Strengthening Urban Preparedness, Earthquake Preparedness and Response in Western Regions of Nepal (SUPER) supported by the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and the Enhancing Human Security through Local Climate Action (EHSICA) supported by the Government of Japan.

100 days is adequate time to take stock of what has been done under response and early recovery interventions, how many people have benefitted and how it is contributing to larger efforts by all stakeholders to support earthquake affected communities. This document is an attempt to capture UNDP's response and early recovery intervention and also to identify priority areas of intervention for recovery, using the build back better principle.

I would like to thank the Government of Nepal for their unwavering trust in us. I would also like to thank ECHO, the Government of Japan and UNDP Crisis Bureau and the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific along with the entire UNDP team from the country office, SUPER project and the Field Office, Karnali for their support.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Aish', written in a cursive style.

Ayshanie Medagangoda-Labé
Resident Representative, UNDP Nepal

1. According to the Preliminary Damage Needs Assessment (PDNA) 2023 and the cost includes recovery and reconstruction of two other recent earthquakes in Doti and Bajhang in Nepal.



Usha Humagain, UNDP engineer interacting with a community member engaged in cash for work at Nalgad Municipality, January 2024.

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Context

100 days have passed since the 6.4 magnitude earthquake struck Western Nepal, affecting Jajarkot, Rukum West and Salyan districts of Karnali Province on 3 November 2023, resulting in the tragic loss of 154 lives and leaving thousands homeless. This earthquake occurred a month after the 5.3 and 6.4 magnitude Bajhang earthquake of 3 October 2023 in Sudurpaschim Province, neighboring the province of Karnali. Livelihoods and income generation activities of communities have been affected due to the damages to social, infrastructural, and productive sectors. Nepal requires a total of USD 518 Million² for its recovery and reconstruction. From this budget, USD 471 Million²; of which 91.63% (57.58% of which is housing sector), required across different sectors and an additional USD 47.1 Million² for operational costs.

UNDP has been working closely with the federal, provincial and local governments along with humanitarian country team and development partners to extend support to the affected people in Jajarkot and Rukum West through initial response and early recovery efforts. Further, UNDP also supported early response efforts in Bajhang.

In December 2023, UNDP began shifting its efforts from relief to early recovery in Jajarkot and Rukum West. Building upon the previous experience including the Gorkha earthquake response supported by Government of India, and leveraging the on-going preparedness interventions in Karnali supported by European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and the Government of Japan, UNDP's response and early recovery interventions include debris removal through cash for work, information management and coordination, technical assessments, transitional shelter, support to government for basic service delivery and disaster preparedness. Since women and Persons with Disability are more vulnerable and encounter exceptional challenges when a crisis unfolds, gender, disability and social inclusion is at the core of all interventions. While significant progress has been made, a lot more is needed to be done for early recovery and long-term recovery and reconstruction.

Karnali Province³

Karnali is the largest province among 7 provinces in Nepal. Sparsely populated with over 1.6 million people, this province has high prevalence of multidimensional poverty and is one of the most remote regions of Nepal. The access to many parts of the province is challenging due to the rugged terrain and limited infrastructure. Karnali has harsh winter when temperatures drop to approximately -7°C (January):⁴

Area: 27,984 square kilometres

Altitude: 4,308.83m

HDI: 0.538

Multidimensional Poverty: 39.5%⁵

UNDP Interventions



Working Areas

3 Districts
7 Municipalities



Funding

European Civil Protection and
Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)
Government of Japan
UNDP



Total Budget

USD 1,025 Million

2. According to the Preliminary Damage Needs Assessment (PDNA) 2023 and the cost includes recovery and reconstruction of two other recent earthquakes in Doti and Bajhang in Nepal.

3. <https://www.undp.org/nepal/publications/sdg-baseline-report-karnali-province>

4. According to climateandweather.com

5. <https://www.undp.org/nepal/publications/nepal-multidimensional-poverty-index-2021>



A community member holding her child and pondering on the consequences of the earthquake, November 2023.

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MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS



18,770 relief items provided in Jajarkot and Rukum West



700 assistive devices provided to Persons with Disability



800 community members benefitted through cash for work for debris removal



1,544 people benefitted through⁶ temporary shelters in Jajarkot, Rukum West and Bajhang⁷



Gender and Social Inclusion at the core



70 public buildings (police offices, municipal offices, etc.) assessed for structural safety and habitation



Early Recovery Cluster, co-led by UNDP, **reactivated** at the national and provincial level



Technical assistance provided by UNDP to the government as a member of the PDNA working committee



7 prefab structures being provided to the government for basic service delivery

6. 4.5 persons as average family size according to Annual Household Survey 2016/17
7. Bajhang, in Sudurpashchim Province was struck by 5.3 and 6.4 magnitude earthquake on 3 October 2023.



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Distribution of relief items at Nalgad Municipality and Barekot Rural Municipality in November and December 2023.

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RELIEF AT A GLANCE: NON-FOOD ITEMS



15,000 warm jackets provided in Nalgad, Musikot, Bheri, Aathbiskot Municipalities and Barekot, Sani Bheri Rural Municipalities



800 thermocoats provided in Nalgad and Aathbiskot Municipalities and Barekot and Sani Bheri Rural Municipalities



270 blankets provided in Nalgad Municipality and Barekot Rural Municipality



2700 pieces of p-foam provided in Nalgad Municipality and Barekot Rural Municipality



303 tents provided in Nalgad and Aathbiskot Municipalities and Barekot and Sani Bheri Rural Municipalities



40 temporary shelters provided in Jayaprithvi Municipality, Bajhang



A community member engaged in debris removal work, December 2023.
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Community members with their QR Code ID card.
© Binod Chand/UNDP Nepal



Debris Removal Through Cash For Work Modality

As the earthquake halted daily activities affecting livelihoods, UNDP initiated debris removal to support livelihood revival and create employment opportunity for household owners and local community members. Based on the previous debris removal experiences in the Gorkha earthquake (2015), and the urban and hospital waste management interventions during the pandemic, UNDP implemented community led debris removal using cash for work modality. A maximum of 2 household members were mobilized for rubble removal of their houses.

This initiative supported 400 households headed by vulnerable groups, such as women and Dalits were prioritized for debris clearance in Nalgad and Aathbiskot Municipalities and Barekot and Sani Bheri Rural Municipalities.

With safety of members as utmost priority, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Kit including 200 safety helmets, pairs of gum boots, safety gloves, shovels and cement mixing bowls were provided to individuals involved in the debris removal process. 10 engineers were engaged to support and guide the 800 community members.

Leveraging the Sambodhan project on emergency cash transfer, payments to community members were made through banks. A QR Code based ID Card was created for all community members engaged in debris removal, for transparency and accountability.



800 community members, of which **393** were women, benefitted through cash for work for debris removal by receiving **NPR. 2800** (**USD 21.21**) for **3 days** work.

8. As per government rates

9. USD 1 = NPR 132



Community members engaged through cash for work with UNDP team at Aathbiskot Municipality.
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UNDP IMO supporting jacket distribution at Jajarkot, December 2023.
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Anushka Nepal, UNDP IMO sorting out IEC materials.
© UNDP Nepal



UNDP experts interacting with community members regarding debris removal process.
© UNDP Nepal



Information Management & Coordination

Early Recovery Cluster

The Early Recovery Cluster (ERC) was reactivated at the national and provincial level to respond to the Western Nepal earthquake and to coordinate early recovery intervention which aims to stabilise the situation and create enabling environment for long-term recovery and reconstruction. UNDP co-leads the cluster at the national and provincial level. The ERC meetings have helped to identify situational needs, plan implementation of essential early response initiatives that have supported thousands of community members in Jajarkot and Rukum West. A total of 4 meetings, 1 at the national and 3 at the provincial level have been held in 100 days since the earthquake.

Experts Deployed: Coordinators and Information Management Officers (IMO)

To assist the provincial, district and municipal governments to facilitate smooth coordination and information management for response and early recovery efforts related to the earthquake, UNDP deployed personnel to support activities of the Provincial Disaster Management Committee (PDMC), the District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC) and the Local Disaster Management Committee (LDMC). Since the past 100 days, these experts have been supporting municipalities, districts and provinces by producing status reports and earthquake updates, which helped in avoiding duplication of interventions. These experts have also provided technical assistance and coordination support for efficient implementation of activities.

Since UNDP was implementing projects supported by ECHO and the Government of Japan, the project team was on the ground which helped to respond since day one. This was received well by the local government and community members.



- **National ERC Coordinator**
- **National IMO**
- **Provincial ERC Coordinator**
- **8 IMOs at province, district and municipality.**



Subash Gurung, UNDP Municipal Information Associate conducting initial assessment through drone in Barekot Rural Municipality and Nalgad Municipality, November 2023.
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Technical Assessment Support

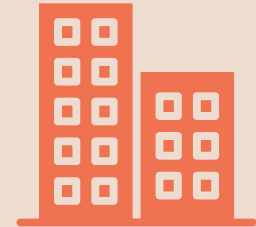
UNDP collaborated with NDRRMA to conduct assessments with specific objectives. Disasters are typically followed by multiple assessments to determine the effects on people, infrastructure and society in general. The assessments collect information on the impact of the disaster and help identify the most urgent relief needs and long-term recovery and reconstruction. These assessments range from rapid initial assessments to detailed damage assessment.

Initial Assessment through Drone

To collect information on preliminary damage caused by the earthquake, UNDP conducted an initial drone assessment that was carried out by a drone pilot in Barekot Rural Municipality and Nalgad Municipality. The assessment provided aerial imagery and an initial idea on the type of damage, which helped to understand the damage typology.

Assessment of Public Buildings

To assess the structural health and safety of buildings, and recommend solutions, UNDP collaborated with the National Society for Earthquake Technology–Nepal (NSET) to evaluate all public buildings, except health and school buildings, in Barekot Rural Municipality and Nalgad and Bheri Municipalities. 41 buildings in Barekot Rural Municipality and 27 buildings in Nalgad and 2 buildings in Bheri Municipality were assessed. The assessment found that buildings built with stone with mud mortar had most damages while buildings with stone with cement/mud mortar may need to be retrofitted.



70 public buildings: 27 Municipal Offices, 4 Police Offices, 15 Agriculture and Forest Offices, 14 Community Health Units, 2 District Administrative Office and 8 other public buildings have been assessed for structural safety and habitation.



A woman beneficiary happily carrying tent poles in Berekot Rural Municipality.
© Ganesh Bishwokarma/UNDP Nepal



A female community member engaged in debris removal using cash for work at Aathbiskot Municipality, December 2023.
© Ganesh Bishwokarma/UNDP Nepal



Assistive devices provided to Persons with Disability.
© UNDP Nepal

INCLUSION AT THE CORE

Women, children, elderly and Persons with Disability for reasons are vulnerable and encounter exceptional challenges when a crisis unfolds. UNDP prioritizes Gender and Social Inclusion at the heat of its response initiatives.



Recruitment of Personnel

UNDP used its roster of professionals who worked in past projects including earthquake response such as the Gorkha earthquake (2015) and the Local Infrastructure Support Programme while recruiting staff for response and early recovery in Karnali Province. Further, local professionals were prioritized. The gender and social inclusion considerations were ensured while recruiting engineers, coordinators and information management officers.



Beneficiary Identification

To ensure the vulnerable like children, PwD, elderly, women, Dalits are prioritized, and no one was left behind, a relief distribution list was prepared in coordination with the local governments and relief materials were distributed accordingly. Additionally, households headed by vulnerable groups such as women, Dalit were prioritized during the debris removal. A total of 250 households headed by women or Dalits were supported through debris removal.



Assistive Devices for PwD

UNDP collaborated with Handicap International to provide 700 assistive devices for Persons with Disability including slings, crutches, collars, kneecap, walking stick, walker, spinal board, canes, magnifier, and knee gaiter. Additionally, devices for physiotherapy support like muscle stimulator, treadmill, hand grip exerciser, cryotherapy, wax bath therapy, moist heat therapy, therapeutic ultrasound, interferential therapy, among others are also being provided to improve general health, mobility and strengthen the body.





The construction of a prefabricated structure for the Police Station at Nalgad Municipality, January 2024.
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A prefab structure construction for the Police Station at Aathbiskot Municipality, January 2024.
© UNDP Nepal

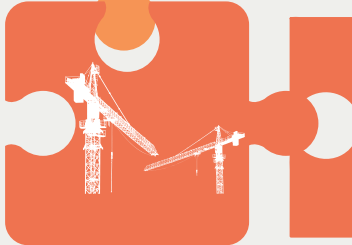




Facilitation For Basic Service Delivery by Government



UNDP has been working with the NDRRMA along with province, district and municipality governments to support response and early recovery efforts in the Western Nepal earthquake affected areas. It has been and will continue providing support to the government for timely and quality service delivery.



Support to Government for Delivery of Basic Services

Based on assessments of public buildings, 7 priority government buildings such as Ward Office & Police Station in Aathbiskot, Police Station & Veterinary Service Centre in Nalgad, and Agriculture Centre & Veterinary Service Centre in Barekot, District Administration Office (DAO), Jajarkot are being provided with prefab structures to support delivery of basic service.



Preliminary Damage and Need Assessment (PDNA) Support

To estimate the damage and need for reconstruction and recovery, the Government of Nepal conducted a Preliminary Damage and Need Assessment (PDNA). UNDP provided technical advisory as a member of the PDNA working committee which was formed under NDRRMA's chair for the preparation of PDNA report.



Retrofitting of houses in Bajhang, December 2023.
© UNDP Nepal



Children playing informative snake and ladder games while also learning about disaster preparedness, January 2024.
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Supporting Earthquake Day Celebration

To raise awareness and share information on earthquake risk reduction, UNDP provided technical support to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Law (MOIAL), Karnali Province for the 26th Earthquake Safety Day celebration event in Surkhet.



Creating Awareness

Children can be effective advocates for preparedness to disseminate information to educate and prepare their family and friends, enhancing resilience. For children's meaningful participation in disaster preparedness, UNDP organized interactive and engaging sessions where children learnt about earthquake, its preparedness and response and played entertaining and engrossing snake and ladder games.



Retrofitting of Houses

As a step for disaster preparedness following the earthquake in Bajhang, 8 houses with weak structures were evaluated and selected for retrofitting in Jayaprithvi Municipality. After the completion of the retrofitting process, these 8 houses were handed over by the local government to the owners, who were briefed regarding earthquake awareness and preparedness.



UNDP engineers briefing community members and IMO on safety measures in Aathbiskot Municipality, December 2023.

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Way Forward

The Government of Nepal, the UN Humanitarian Country Team including UNDP and the development partners are implementing the massive task of recovery with focus on response, relief and early recovery interventions, including temporary shelter, during the 100 days, since the earthquake. It is important to build on the existing momentum and implement early recovery and reconstruction interventions at scale, using the 'Build Back Better' principle. It is equally important to invest in disaster preparedness and risk reduction for sustainable development.

Priority Areas:

1

Governance support for restoration of public service delivery by municipalities

2

Enabling reconstruction of permanent houses including socio-technical assistance

3

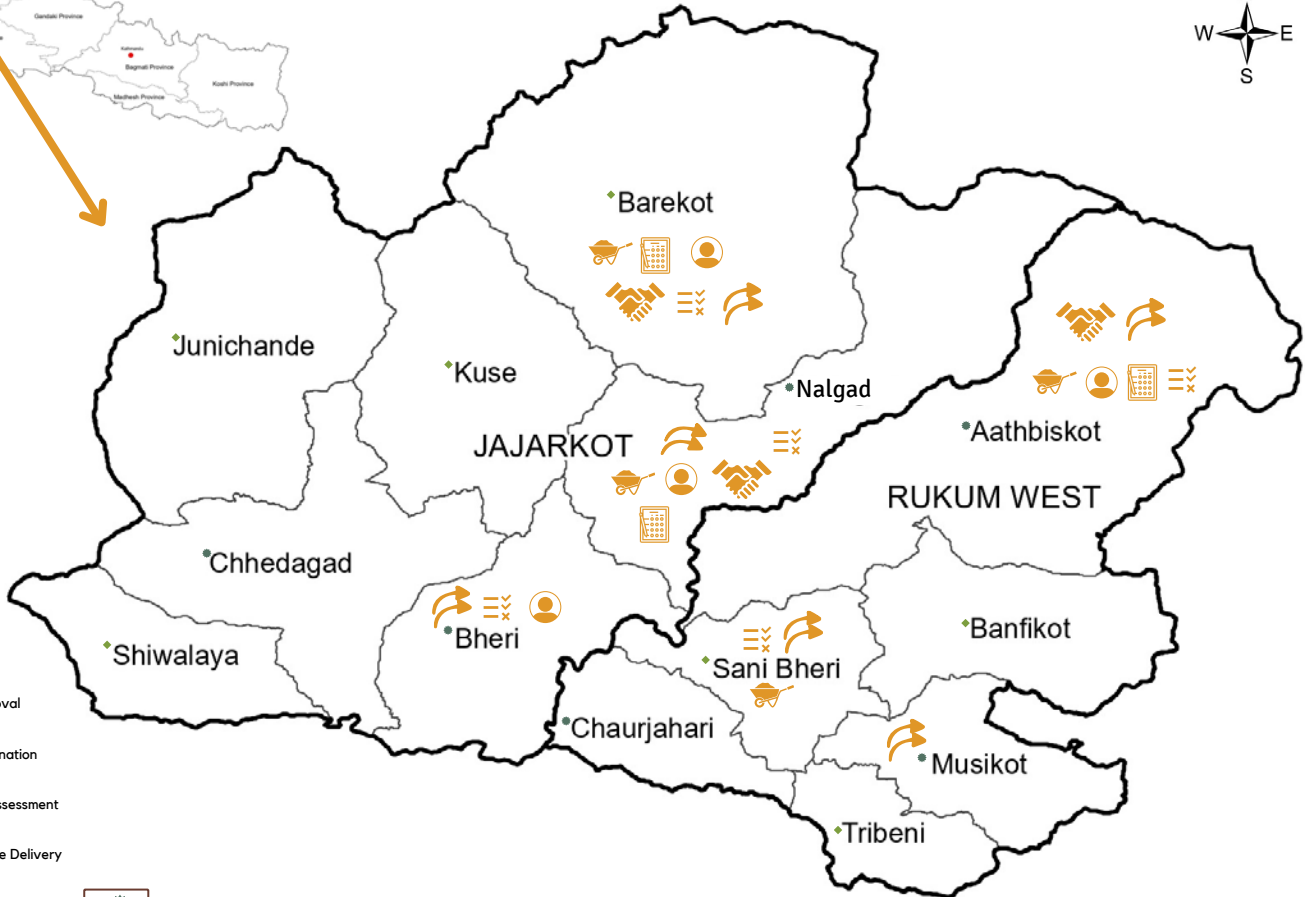
Livelihood restoration and value chain creation

4

Disaster preparedness and risk reduction



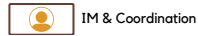
UNDP'S RESPONSE AND RECOVERY INITIATIVES AT A GLANCE



Legend



Debris Removal



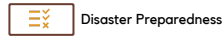
IM & Coordination



Technical Assessment



Basic Service Delivery



Disaster Preparedness



Emergency Response

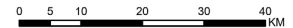


Urban Municipality



Rural Municipality

Disclaimer: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used in this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.



Scale: 1:750000

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