

Project Completion Report

Empowering Local Young Women and Artisans to Improve Resilience and Self-Recovery Capacity of 3 VDCs in Dolakha District

Implemented in Suspachhamawoti Metropolitan & Sundrawoti and Lapilang Rural Municipalities of Dolakha

From June 2016 to July 2017



**GLOBAL
ACTION
NEPAL
UK**

Submitted to:
The Big Lottery Fund (UK)

Submitted by:
Global Action Nepal (GAN)



COMMUNITY SAFE REBUILDING PROGRAMME

Dolakha District

Project Completion Report for the Big Lottery by Global Action Nepal

Introduction

This interim report to the Big Lottery is structured around four key questions, namely:

1. In what way have people 'been in the lead' in this project?
2. How have the Core Humanitarian Standard been implemented?
3. What progress has been made according to the specific activities identified in our Theory of Change?
4. What progress has been made according to the specific outcomes identified in our Theory of Change?

In addition to a narrative report, various pictures and video clip links are provided in this report to give a better idea of what has occurred over the first six months of this programme.

1. In what way have people 'been in the lead' in this project?

The 24 "Building Champions" (BC) are the driving force of this project, which also epitomize the fact that people are in the lead. The Building Champions are young women between the age of 20 and 50 years from the selected wards of the project VDCs, some of who either had lowest skill of a labourer or were completely new to this work. The BCs were identified and selected based on their need and interest, however the majority came from very poor and marginalized families. Their selections were facilitated by respective Ward Citizen Forum Coordinators. They were selected directly from the respective beneficiary communities, and have been upskilled so that they are not only able to help implement the project directly, but are also in a position to take a lead role in their communities in the long run, not only if there are future natural disasters, but in day-to-day life too. This is imperative for the sustainability of the project activities. The growth in skills, aptitude and confidence of the Building Champions in the project has been extraordinary, as revealed in this video interview with **Devi Basnet, aged 26 years and a BC from Lapilang**. Video links are also available below Please note that these clips are in Nepali but a summary has been provided below.

Clip 1	Clip 2 (Interview of Devi Basnet- Building Champion from Lapilang. Age 26)
	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5E02fzHuHUE
Question: How did you feel by the end of the training? Devi: <i>"In the beginning I was very confused about what would happen, how it would be, what I would be doing and I had all sorts of confusion. I had never been out of house like this. My confidence was very low as well. But having attended the training, I am happy to have participated in it."</i>	Question: What did you like most about training? What was the thing that was most important? Devi: <i>"Beforehand we did not know the importance of building safe houses in the village. All we thought about was building it. Now, however, we know about the need and importance of building safe shelter."</i> Question: How would you use the skill and knowledge that you got here after you go back to your community? Devi: <i>"As a member of mother's group, I will visit public places where people gather and tell them that we need to build our shelter in safe places in order to be secure, and that we should not build our houses on slopes or river banks, and all the other things I have learned during the PASSA training."</i>

A four day long residential training on Participatory Approach for Safe Shelter Awareness (PASSA)¹ was conducted in a hotel in Charikot, the district Headquarters of Dolakha district for the selected BCs with the objective of raising awareness of the 'everyday vulnerable' of the 'everyday risks' related to their built environment and foster locally appropriate safe shelter and settlement practices. PASSA offers a simple process through which communities can build upon their own insights, skills and leadership to attain improved living conditions and safer habitats. The nature and key purpose of the programme is to place **'people in the lead'**.

¹ PASSA was first established by ICRC.

Following PASSA training, another 4 day long residential training on Open Theatre (OT) was held for the BCs with the objective of enabling them to create, write and stage street or open theatres on various pertinent and burning issues in communities to disseminate messages and raise awareness among community people.

In addition, the BCs were provided with “On the Job Training (OJT)” on masonry, carpentry, plumbing and house wiring, which was very radical – the overwhelming majority had never before participated in any kind of training programme like this, and so were initially hesitant – even reluctant – to participate. They lacked confidence and many expressed the view that it was ‘not their place’ to take a leading role in programmes such as this. However, over the course, these attitudes changed, and by the end the participants felt that they had ownership of the project – and were even enjoying the training, as this video shows:

<https://www.facebook.com/geeshrestha/videos/1399034903454454/> .

The following video clip, of PASSA training and dissemination, shows this clearly.

Video of PASSA Training - https://youtu.be/N_YSNX-cF-U

Similarly, the photos below show the participatory, democratic nature of the training, and the fact that it was very directly focused on the specific, local needs of the participants.



Highlight on the Training Objectives



Keen listening



Active group participation



Developing leadership skills



Learning by playing



Working in group

Another key area, thus far, where people have clearly taken leadership over this programme, and ‘owned’ it at the community level, is in the clearing of the sites for the Community Learning Centres. As the photo gallery below shows, this has been a community-run and organised effort – they see the value of the programme, and want to do what they can to make it happen.



Community participation in clearing land



Age cannot stop me from working for community



Together we can change our community



NYCs & LYCs lending hands with locals

2. How have the Core Humanitarian Standards been implemented?

GAN along with the local project partner Community Environment, Education and Public Awareness Association for Rural Development (CEEPAARD) Nepal took utmost care that Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) were strictly considered and followed during the implementations of project activities. While implementing every activity, it was made to the best possible to make sure that both direct and indirect beneficiaries as well as rest of the community members were not negatively affected in any way. Information related to CHS 3, 4 and 6 can be found below:

Commitment 3: Communities and people affected by crisis are not negatively affected and are more prepared, resilient and less at-risk as a result of humanitarian action.

Some of the ways which ensured that Commitment 3 were strictly adhered to were as follows:

- Selections of BCs (unskilled) and Building Leaders (BLs- who already had basic skills and knowledge in masonry, carpentry, plumbing and house-wiring works and had been involved in building simple shelters), was done entirely on their own terms (because they wanted to) and through discussions at a community level, to ensure that there was no kind of compulsion, family disagreements or disagreements or conflict between community members. The selections of the BLs were also done in the similar process as of BCs.
- Involvement in the training and by playing a key role in disseminating the information, skills and knowledge learned in the trainings, the BCs gained significant confidence in themselves; as a result, they are now better prepared for disasters and their resilience capacity has also improved considerably.
- The majority of the project staff (7 out of 11) were recruited locally, in addition to all 18 BLs and 27 BCs.
- CEEPARD, the project partner organisation, has the working experience in similar fields in recent times, and the data gathered by them was been used to help assess existing hazards and risk assessments, and to ensure that previous mistakes were not repeated.

- The training and upskilling received by BLs means that they are well-placed to be first responders in any future disaster scenario.
- A safe and sustainable exit strategy plan of the project was created to ensure that the project objectives continue to be met even after the phasing out of the programme. One of the main mechanisms for achieving this was turning the model house into a Community Learning and Resource Centre (CLRC) and formation of CLRC Management Committee consisting of BCs as office bearers and few other active female community members. The role and responsibilities of the CLRC Management Committees is to keep the CLRCs active and contributing towards community and social development and not limiting to the programmes and activities related to disaster management alone but also for serving as platforms for exploring and creating opportunities for lifelong learnings and entrepreneurship. The three CLRCs have also been equipped with all the construction related equipment and tools along with the safety gears used during the construction of the centres.
- In addition, as agreed with the concerned local government bodies, respective Wards and CEEPAARD Nepal will act as a guardian of the CLRCs. The CLRCs were handed over to the CLRC Management committee through respective newly formed government bodies. However, the CLRCs will be operated by a committee composed of BCs, who will continue to work as professional masons, carpenters, plumbers and electricians even after phasing out of the project. A system has also been discussed on establishing cooperatives according to which a certain percentage (10-15) of their earnings will be contributed in the same account. The funds will be used for repair, maintenance, purchase of additional tools, supporting needy community members etc. Additionally, a seed money of NRs. 100,000 will be deposited in the common account of each Ward to start an enterprise/income generating activities to support and back-up the infrastructures built by the project. This will not only help the individuals involved to be more financially resilient, but the communities as well.
- Young girls and women of the community are encouraged and motivated to become members of this cooperatives and join the saving schemes and benefit from the facilities of the cooperative. The role of CLRC Management Committee will however, be limited not only to these. They will be responsible for managing literacy and non-formal education classes for the illiterate women of the community enabling them to read and write simple Nepali and do basic arithmetic calculations and meanwhile become active decision making members-at homes and at community levels.

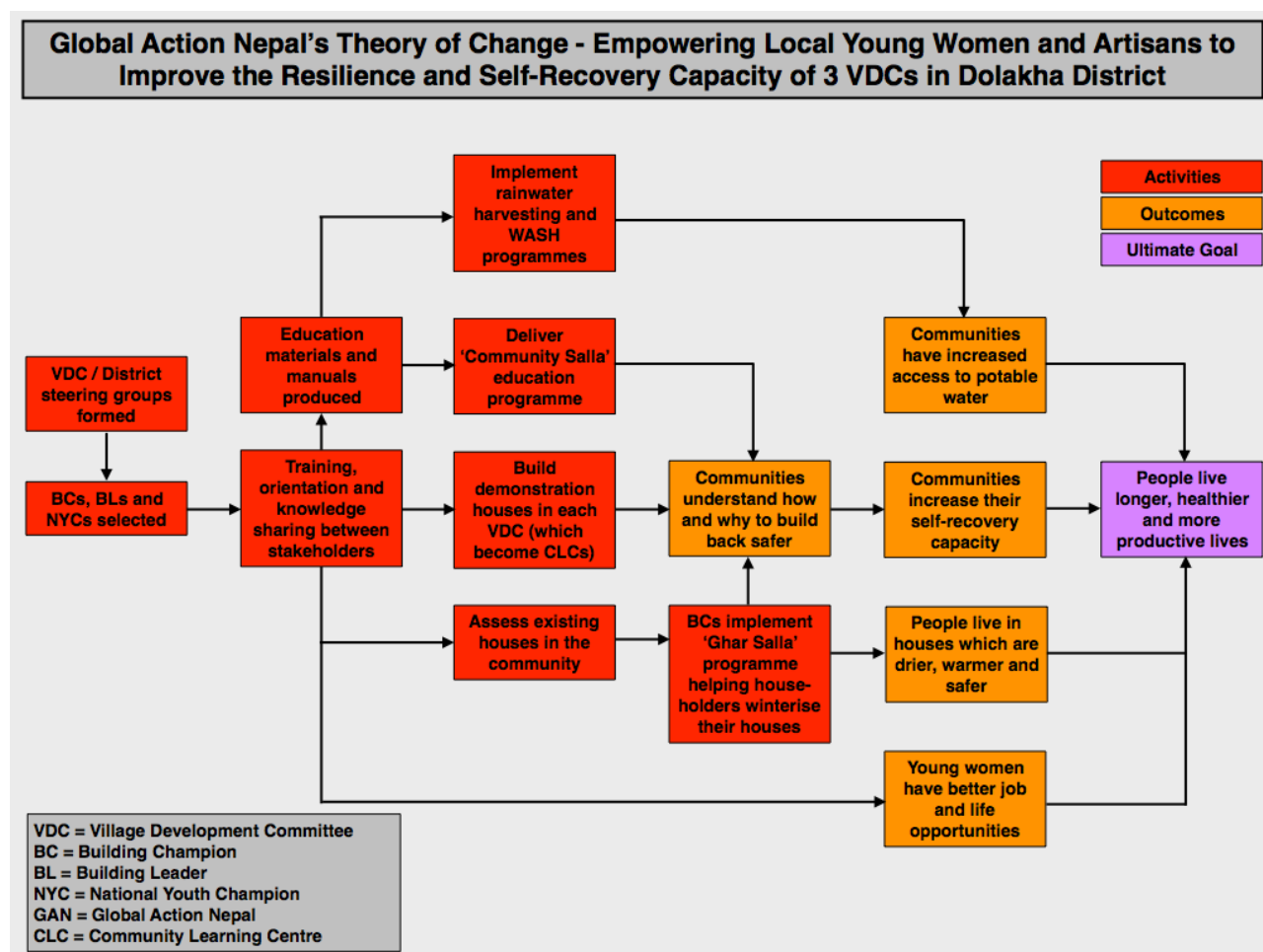
Commitment 4: Communities and people affected by crisis know their rights and entitlements, have access to information and participate in decisions that affect them.

Regular meetings and interactions with the local communities and people affected by the crisis created a sort of comfort zone for them to come up and express their feelings and opinions more freely than before. Sharing with them about the project and its purpose, they often came forward and did not hesitate to put up the issues about their rights and entitlements before us. They did not want any activities or programmes that were against their interest and rights.

Commitment 6: Communities and people affected by crisis receive coordinated, complementary assistance.

Communities and people of the project areas who were affected by crisis were provided with best possible complimentary assistance and coordination by the project. Change in the winterisation relief materials and inclusion of water wells are the two examples of this. These decisions were purely made on the request of the communities.

3. What progress has been made accordingly the specific outcomes identified in our ToC?



While launching and implementing the project, best possible efforts were made to follow the “Theory of Change” module. As per the “Theory of Change”, DDC and VDC level project orientation programmes were conducted to apprise the participants about the project and its activities and objectives in totality and DDC and VDC level project coordination and monitoring steering committees were formed at the district and VDC levels.

27 BCs, 18 BLs and 6 NYCs (3 from Kathmandu and 3 local) were selected as mentioned in the “Theory of Change” module. Similarly, education material (Flip chart) was designed and published for use in training the BCs and NYCs to use them in the communities to raise public awareness on different issues and community problems. The BCs and NYCs were provided with PASSA and **Open Theatre (OT)** residential trainings. With regard to developing their professional skills and knowledge on construction of safe shelters, they were provided with masonry, carpentry, plumbing and house-wiring training so that they were able to use these newly acquired skills and knowledge in their new professions.

Implement Rainwater Harvesting and WASH Programme

With regard to rainwater harvesting support to the selected communities, the concerned beneficiary communities showed more importance and need of rehabilitating the damaged and drying up natural water well but still expressed to have support in rainwater harvesting systems too. Besides identifying 36 natural water wells in the 3 VDCs, we also identified 37 clusters for rainwater harvesting systems installations so that the beneficiary households had rainwater for different household chores.

Despite of the best efforts for the rehabilitations of the natural water wells and installations of the rainwater harvesting systems in 37 clusters in time, this activity could not happen in desired time due to various reasons among which unavailability of the required materials and poly-tanks; constructions of many shelters still being temporary making them unfit for installations of RWH system; unavailability of the beneficiary household members due to their priority of work etc. were some major reasons. As of date, of the total 37 planned installations 28 have been installed and rest 9 could not be installed because the clusters have all temporary

houses, which are completely unfit for the installations of the systems. However, poly-tanks and fitting materials have been made available to all these clusters, which are stored safely by respective cluster households who have assured us that once they build their permanent houses they will install the systems at their own cost as the project would have phased out.

The temporary shelters are basically the initiatives and the responsibility of the individual households with the financial support from the government for the reconstruction, which unfortunately is a lengthy process and takes lots of efforts and time. The grant is provided in instalments and till now only 2 instalments have been provided that too not to all families.

Deliver “Community Salla” education Programme

“Community Salla” is consulting and sharing with the community people with regarding to building back safer and on how they can protect and save themselves from the approaching winter and cold. This activity was conducted in groups in different areas of the selected Wards with the view of identifying their major problems, especially related to building back safer, being safe from the approaching winter and to providing necessary suggestions/inputs in resolving those problems. Similarly, “Ghar Salla” (house to house) consultation activities were also conducted to help the needy families to protect themselves from the approaching winter season and on how to keep themselves warm and safe from the severe cold. Families based on their economic status, living conditions, age, physical and mental status, single women etc. were identified for support in winterisation programme. As the result of this activity, people in the communities’ have better understanding about the knowledge and information on how and why they should work to build back safer.

Build demonstration houses in each VDC

The selected BCs and BLs were provided with “On the Job Training (OJT)” on masonry, carpentry, plumbing, and house-wiring during which they were involved in constructions of model demonstration houses in all the VDCs, which was later converted into Community Learning and Resource Centres (CLRCs). The purpose of the On the Job Training was to enable to BCs and BLs build earthquake resistant shelters/houses and also to enable them to be the first respondents in the communities during any disasters in the future and also play a lead role in the communities to provide necessary advices or feedback to the people in building back safer.

With the rehabilitations of the identified natural water wells, the people in the communities have now better access to drinking water even in dry seasons as the each of these sources have been provided with a suitable size of poly-tanks that serve as reservoir tanks.

Having understood the importance and need of building back safer, their resilience and self-recovery capacities have also been increased and are confident that in case of any future disasters, they would be able to become more resilient and recover themselves in a better and effective manner and at the same time also help other community members to become more resilient and recover themselves.

Despite the fact that many families have not been able to reconstruct or rebuild their partially or fully damaged houses, they have been making all efforts to keep their children and aged parents at drier and warmer place. This was possible because of the “Ghar Salla” programme carried out by the trained BCs and NYCs.

The On the Job (OJT) training to the young BCs have enabled them to find jobs related to constructions easily with wages equal to their male counterparts (please see case studies at the end of this report). This has made them more confident and they are now given due place in the family and community as they are being considered as trained, skilled and better knowledgeable than other women and men. This has made their living conditions better than before and are able to afford to have better health services, send their children to schools and think in terms of savings etc. (see case studies and video link)

Inputs planned after phasing out of the project

The key activities of the next phase of the programme are as follows:

- ☐ Global Action Nepal will link all three CLRCs with GAN Research and Learning Resource Centre, Kathmandu and will provide all possible support as per their need;
- ☐ Global Action Nepal will be supporting BCs/BLs and other people for next six months carrying out non formal education, capacity building, saving scheme in each CLRC;
- ☐ Global Action Nepal will explore with other I/NGOs, social and development organisations and other likeminded institutions for possible help/support in providing their IEC and learning materials, in Dolakha district.
- ☐ CEEPAARD Nepal, the Dolakha based project partner will continue to monitor and provide necessary

guidance to the BCs and provide a brief report on CLRCs to Global Action Nepal;

- Each Community Learning and Resource Centre has formed a saving group along with the seed fund provided by the project for its resource sustainability.

3.2 Activities and Outcomes of the Theory of Change

The section will look more specifically at each activities and outcomes presented in the Theory of Change which has driven this project. Specifically, it will look at the progress made, the challenges encountered and future steps which will be implemented in the next phase of the programme.

3.2.1 VDC/District steering groups formed

- Project orientation programmes was conducted at each VDC to apprise the VDC, Ward coordinators, local political party representatives, various formal and informal groups, concerned stakeholders and the community members about the project, its objectives, plans and activities. This was needed as to get their



VDC level community meetings at Sundrawoti, Suspachhamawoti and Lapilang VDCs respectively

support and cooperation in implementing the project activities. Subsequently, an all-inclusive Project Coordination and Monitoring Committees have been formed in all three VDCs.



District level Project Orientation Programme attended by representatives from concerned government bodies, political parties and media.

- A district level project steering group was formed when getting project approval from the District Development Committee (DDC), comprising representatives from different concerned government and local bodies. The purpose of this committee was to ensure the effective and smooth operation of the project activities.

4.2.2 BCs, BLs and NYCs selected

- As per the project provision, 27 BCs (9 from each VDC) were selected in coordination of the Ward coordinators of the respective VDCs. But as each VDCs had 9 Ward, it was requested by the VDCs and Wards to have one representation from each Ward so that there was not controversies. This was agreed with the condition that the total budget of the BC's subsistence allowance however would remain unaffected and remain same. Agreed on this by all sides, the selected 27 BCs were successfully recruited, and it was encouraging that there was such active interest from the community to apply. It was also very encouraging that so many – and such a range – of women applied. Ages ranged from 20 to 50, and educational background from those who did not complete school to those who had a +2 education (equivalent to 'A' Level). There was real diversity. Even at this early stage, the BCs spoke positively about their desire to become skilled in a profession which they could potentially use for income generation purposes in the future and would play a positive and constructive role for the betterment of the community and the people.

- There was also a good range of people who were interested in becoming BLs. The project was able to recruit 18 people as BLs from within the same VDCs with a range of skills in areas such as masonry, carpentry, electrical work and plumbing. Ward coordinators were involved in the process of selecting the BLs, to ensure that there was no future controversy.
- The 3 field coordinators were selected locally through regular recruitment process by advertising in the local newspaper, shortlisting based on their qualifications and experiences and then by holding interviews. Similarly, the 6 Youth Champions chosen contained a good mix of skills, experience and knowledge. The process for choosing them was done fairly, with adverts being placed in local newspapers, and criteria-based shortlisting and interviewing conducted. The end result was that 3 of the Youth Champions were from the local area, thereby providing excellent local knowledge, contacts and understanding, and 3 were participants from GAN's previous 6-month long 'National Youth Champions' Programme', where they had already received extensive training in a range of different areas, which they were able to cascade to the other stakeholders.

4.3 Training, orientation and knowledge sharing between stakeholders

- A series of VDC level project orientations and interaction meetings were held in all three VDCs to apprise the VDC office bearers, Ward coordinators, local political party representatives, mothers' groups, teachers and other concerned stakeholders about the project goal, objectives and activities. The meetings also served as platforms for the community to put their issues, concerns and doubts.
- A district level project orientation programme for district level concerned government authorities, media, political party representatives and other concerned stakeholders was organized in order to apprise them about the various aspects of project.
- A four-day long training on PASSA (Participatory Approach for Safe Shelter Awareness) was organized for Building Champions, NYCs, LYCs and other project staffs in order to build and enhance their skills regarding the need, importance and other aspects of safe shelter, hazards, risks and dangers from different types of possible disasters in their areas. The objective of this training was also to improve their resilience and self-recovery capacity to enable them to play the role of first responders in future disasters, and to deepen their understanding of the 8 core PASSA activities several PASSA groups were formed in their respective communities and the PASSA activities were conducted at Ward level so that other members of the communities also become aware about the various issues covered in activities.
- Similarly, a four-day long training in Open Theatre was also organised for the same participants in order to enable the participants to convey and disseminate social messages to the general public through Open Theatre. The training included sessions on storyline writing, script writing, dialogue writing, delivering role plays etc. The objective of this training was to enable the participants, especially the BCs, to take the messages to community members about safe shelters, dangers and hazards from different types of disasters and other social messages. As a part of exercise, the participants also staged an Open Theatre drama at the main junction of the Charikot town where a large number of public gathered and watched the drama and appreciated the play, the story and the acting of the participants.

Further inputs planned

- Even after the phasing out of the project, the knowledge sharing will continue to be more incidental, serendipitous and non-formal, consisting of the stakeholders cascading the key learning points.

4.4 Education materials and manuals produced

A flip chart with colourful illustrations and related texts on various situations related different types of natural and human made disasters were produced and sent to the 3 VDCs. The selected Local Champions (+2 students) and 6 project LYCs were oriented and trained on its using methodology who later organised mass awareness programmes for the general public in different communities of the 3 VDCs these flip charts. The responses from the communities were positive and very encouraging.



Flip chart pictures about disasters and rebuilding

4.5 Implement rainwater harvesting and WASH programmes

- Rainwater harvesting systems have been installed in identified 1 school of each of the 3 VDCs. Similarly, the systems have been installed in all identified cluster areas. The beneficiary household members were fully apprised on how the process would operate – of their rights and responsibilities in terms of the upkeep and maintenance. As the rainwater is not safe for drinking unless it is filtered and purified using various level of filtration processes, it will mainly be used for various household purposes like washing, cleaning, water for cattle, etc. Total beneficiary households from the rainwater harvesting is 180 from a total of 39 cluster rainwater harvesting systems.



Cluster Rainwater harvesting systems at and Suspachhamawoti school and at Sundrawoti VDCs

- Similarly, as per the need and request of the beneficiary communities for the support in drinking water scheme, poly-tanks, pipes and other fitting materials were provide and were fitted to the rehabilitated natural water wells. Water from these natural water well are being collected in the poly-tanks and used for drinking purposes during dry seasons when water sources go dry. A total of 585 households are benefitting from a total of 36 rehabilitated natural water wells with poly-tank water reservoirs.



Poly-tanks connected with natural water wells for storage of drinking water during dry seasons

4.6 Deliver 'Community Salla' education programme

- This component was conducted as a part of the PASSA and activities, during which the BCs, NYCs and LYCs along with the PASSA groups sat together and discussed with the community about safe shelter, and how to keep oneself, family members and communities safe from hazards and risk of disasters. They also discussed the importance and need of building earthquake resistant shelters in the future.



Community Salla in progress at Sundrawoti, Chhamawoti and Lapilang respectively.

Further inputs planned

The PASSA and Open Theatre trained BCs along with the previously formed PASS Groups will continue to discuss and share information and knowledge about safe from hazards and risk of disasters and on the importance and need of building earthquake resistant shelters in the future.

4.7 Assess existing houses in the community

- With government distributing the relief money to the earthquake affected families for reconstructions of their damaged/destroyed houses and also as few other I/NGOs are providing support in constructions, reconstruction of such houses have started but still not at the expected pace.
- The information gathered from this exercise has fed directly into the planning for the activity “BCs implement ‘Ghar Salla’ programme helping householders winterize their houses”, which is outlined below.
- As it was found during the baseline survey that the 300 targeted beneficiaries for winterisation families needed warm mattresses and blankets to keep themselves warm from the severe cold, they were provided with high quality mattresses and blanket (instead of tarpaulin and silicon) so that their family members were saved from the falling temperature.

4.8 BCs implement ‘Ghar Salla’ programme helping householders winterize their houses

- Materials were been successfully distributed in all three VDCs. An inventory of the materials distributed to date is as follows: A picture gallery of this can be seen below.

Material distributed:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|---|------------|
| 1. Single size foam mattress | - | 245 pieces |
| 2. Double size foam mattress | - | 241 |
| 3. Blankets | - | 300 |

The remaining single mattresses are being kept in the three community learning centres and the double mattresses have been distributed to the most needy Early Childhood Development (ECD) running schools of the project areas where small children had to sit on floor without any proper mattresses or carpets.



Winterisation relief materials (mattress & blankets) were distributed to the selected old, sick and handicapped people of the 3 VDCs.

4.9 Build demonstration houses in each VDC (which become CLCs)

- The Community Learning and Resource Centres (CLRC) have been built in all the three project VDCs and have also been handed to the respective local government bodies. The BCs and BLs were provided with appropriate “On the Job Training (OJT)” during which they worked as masons, carpenters, plumbers and electricians for which they were paid wages on daily basis. Expert trained trainers in these fields were hired to train the BCs and BLs.



Building Champions (BC) and Building Leaders (BL) at “On the Job Training (OJT)”

- The detailed architectural design and other necessary documents related to CLRC and WASH facilities were submitted to the Department of Urban Development and Building Construction (DUDBC), Government of Nepal for their approval, which was finally granted after certain revisions in the design.
- A sealed tender bid request for the building materials was advertised in the relevant newspapers, and a vendor selected for the supply of construction materials.

4. What progress has been made according to the specific outcomes identified in our Theory of Change?

On the whole, it can be said that with a few exceptions, the project met the assumption of our Theory of Change. The communities and stakeholders were positive about the project and fully cooperated during the baseline survey and other activities. The project orientation programmes at the VDC and district levels were well received by the participants and the project was appreciated—despite some difficult moments early on—for being innovative and different in nature by focusing on the empowerment of young women through capacity building in non-traditional professions like masonry, carpentry, plumbing and electricity. The two training courses—PASSA and Open Theatre—provided a forum to the BCs to develop their skills and to show the community that they were as capable as male members of the community, and that they deserved the right to be economically active and self-dependent. The increased confidence was one of the most important changes in the young women involved in the programme. This has been seen in our project but the inclusion of women in building activities following the earthquake, and the impact this has had on women, has been noted by other agencies and wider evaluations - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-39694171>

4.1 Communities understand how and why to build back safer

The PASSA and Open Theatre training to BCs, NYCs and LYCs have enabled them to know and understand about how and why they should build back safer. They are transferring same information and messages to the communities of their respective areas by furthering the 8 PASSA activities with the help of PASSA group members who are selected on voluntary basis on their interest. This helped other community members too to understand how and why they should build back safer.

4.2 Communities have increased access to potable water

With the support to drinking water schemes by motivating and mobilising the targeted communities work for the rehabilitation and repair of the damaged and open natural water wells, they were also oriented about protecting and making the water from these wells safe for drinking. With the collection of the water from these water wells in the poly-tanks provided by the project, the communities would now have increased access to potable water even during dry season.

4.3 Communities increase their self-recovery capacity

The PASSA and Open Theatre trainings have increased the self-recovery capacities of BCs who have shared their newly learned skills, knowledge and information about safe shelters, hazards from possible disasters, possible ways of being and keeping others safe from disasters etc. The communities are gradually accepting the sharing from these BCs and trying to bring them in practice in their own lives.

4.4 People live in houses which are drier, warmer and safer

The winterisation relief materials like high quality foam mattresses and blankets have helped the targeted beneficiary families to live in drier and warmer conditions than before. Most of the families are yet to need to reconstruct a safer house for themselves. As mentioned, with the distribution of foam mattresses and blankets, many of them are now able to sleep on mattresses that keep them warm and drier.

4.5 Young women have better job and life opportunities

The On the Job Training on masonry, carpentry, plumbing and house wiring have been completed and as expected, some of the BCs have already started working in construction works in different parts of the village and around it. However, it cannot be claimed that everybody in the training have found a job for themselves. But it is expected that those who have not been able to find themselves a job will sooner or later.

Case studies of two Building Champions

Binita Rokka, BC from Sundrawoti - <https://youtu.be/A9qGr2dmYPo>

Binita Rokka is a resident of Sundrawoti Ward No. 9, Kalinchowk Rural Municipality. She is among one of the women coming from a very poor family. She was very pleased to be one of the BCs selected from her area and had opportunities to attend training organized by Global Action Nepal and CEEPAARD Nepal, including the masonry On the Job Training. Below is an excerpt of her opinion expressed during a mass gathering for social audit at Sundrawoti.

Earlier, I could not even speak properly but during the PASSA and Open Theatre training, I started speaking. After the OJT during which I had to interact with people, I overcame my hesitation on speaking. I am now confident on doing different types of construction works. Soon after the training, I along with my husband, brother-in law and was engaged in building my mother-in-law's house for which we did not hire any labourers from outside. My husband also painted the house by himself and therefore, our money did not go out. I am also interested in that work and will definitely learn that skill. We are now busy in building my younger father-in-law's house and here too we have not hired any labourer from outside. The walls are almost ready and will be plaster them within few days. I am also working in a road construction site with my 2 father-in-law, my husband and brother-in-law. We finished a week's work in just four days. Happy with my work, the contractor paid me the equal wages as men as I could do the similar work as the men. Earlier, they were paying me 350 rupees a day but now they are paying me 700 rupees a day.

I have been working as a labourer for 16 to 17 years but was never treated like this. I was often humiliated. But now after the training I am treated well and respecting my new skills and knowledge the contractor himself raised my wages even without my asking saying that I deserved that. I happily accepted it.



Binita Rokka

Bhagwoti Shrestha, BC from Suspachhamawoti- <https://youtu.be/8spsknc8ug8>

I was selected as one of the Building Champions from the Sundrawoti VDC. The Ward coordinator had recommended my name to Global Action Nepal and CEEPAARD Nepal. We were initially provided with four day's PASSA training and 4 days' Open Theatre training. Both trainings were related on building back safer and helping the communities making aware them of the same. Later, we were provided with On the Job Training on masonry, carpentry, plumbing and house-wiring in different groups during the constructions of CLRC. I worked as a mason trainee. The expert trainer and the Building Leaders trained us on different aspects of masonry work. We were also provided with wages for each working day. All of us started working in construction of the Community Learning and Resource Centre (CLRC) happily. We enjoyed the work and training. After 35 days of our OJT construction of CLRC continued under contract, for which we could also bid. But unfortunately, we could



Bhagwoti Shrestha

not qualify to get the contract as the price quoted by our contractor was quite high. Anyways, after the completion of the training, I did not want to stay at home like before instead wanted to go out and work as I felt that the food earned by self was very sweet and tasty. I told my husband that I did not want to stay home and want to work. On my request he talked to the contractor working for road construction and I was hired. While staying at home, my mind was full of worries and other unnecessary things, from which I am free now.

Global Action Nepal and CEEPAARD Nepal have shown us the path of being earning and becoming self-dependent, which has made me feel to keep working. I am being highly encouraged and motivated. Earlier, my family members even told me that why should go out to work. But I insisted on going out for work telling them that earning by working gives me pride and satisfaction and my health is also improving. Moreover, the 23,000 rupees that I had earned working as trainee mason was used for paying back the instalment of the loan that we had taken for buying a piece of land. As the result of this, there is no objection from my family on my working. In fact, my husband helps me in household chores and then goes out for his work. I am really very happy at all these things.

I would like to express my deepest and heartiest thanks to the sirs from GAN and CEEPAARD Nepal and also request them not to forget me whenever there is opportunity for trainings.

I have realized the change within myself after the training. I feel that my spirit very high for being able work and earn; feel happy and good mixing up with colleagues at work; and hope that other organisations including GAN and CEEPAARD Nepal will call me for any kind of training for which I am always ready.

I am now being considered as a skilled worker and the contractors have no hesitation in hiring me as they all know that I have gone through an intensive masonry training. Even my husband is happy with my working and he has no problem in that. If someone in the community invites me to work in the construction of his/her house I am always ready to go and use my newly earned skills.

Handing over of CLRCs

With the completion of the constructions of the Community Learning and Resource Centres (CLRCs) and WASH facilities in Suspachhamawoti of Bhimeshwor Municipality and in Sundrawoti and Lapilang of



Social Audit at the three CLRCs at Suspachhamawoti, Sundrawoti and Lapilang.

Kalinchowk Rural Municipality, Social Audits were conducted in all 3 places in presence of Ward Chairs, BCs, BLs, political party representatives and local communities and there queries and concerns were duly responded by the GAN Director, CEEPAARD Nepal ED and other representatives from the two organisations.



Handing over of CLRC keys to the Ward chairpersons of Chhamawoti & Sundrawoti respectively by GAN Director and then to CLRC Management Committee Chairs by the Ward Chairpersons.



Posing for group photos at CLRCs of Suspachhamawoti, Sundrawoti and Lapilang respectively.

All the Ward Chairs praised and thanked the project donor The Big Lottery, Global Action Nepal and CEEPAARD for all the project activities conducted in their respective areas and expressed that the direct beneficiaries of the project like BCs, BLs, local trainers and recipients of winterisation support, rainwater harvesting system, drinking water scheme support etc. have definitely benefitted from the project and other community members are also benefitting from the activities of CLRCs in the future. They also hoped that GAN and CEEPAARD will play active role in bringing more projects to these areas and play key roles in the development of the areas. They also shared their ideas and opinions on the use of CLRCs for different purposes.

Similarly, representatives from different political parties also expressed their views in similar line and hoped that The Big Lottery Fund will be generous to grant more funds to reach out those areas and people who were not included this time.

It was followed by the CLRC handing over ceremony. Director of Global Action Nepal Mr. B.K. Shrestha handed over the keys of the CLRCs to the Ward Chairs of Suspachhamawoti and Sundrawoti who then handed over the keys to the newly appointed CLRC Management Committee Chairpersons. Similarly, in the absence of the GAN Director in Lapilang, the CLRC keys were handed over by the Project Manager Mr. Ghanshyam Shrestha to the Ward Member, who then handed over the keys to the newly appointed Chairperson of the CLRC.

Challenges Encountered

Challenge 1.

Launching a project related to recovery and reconstruction in a disaster-struck area was a phenomenally big challenge since the people in such areas are often completely broken, frustrated, and their dreams have shattered. When organisations come with new projects and programmes, the expectations are often very high – and if these expectations are not met, it can make them aggressive, violent and volatile. This rears its head even more when it comes to deciding who is going to be the beneficiary of material goods.

Mitigation Method

- *The VDC level project orientation and briefing with the local government authorities, representatives from political parties, stakeholders and community people in the very beginning of launching the project in the targeted areas during which project objectives, purpose, targeted beneficiaries and selection criteria were clearly spelt out and VDC level project coordination and monitoring steering committees were formed including representations from all possible groups of people made us much easy to overcome this challenge in due course of time except for some hitches caused by some ill reputed people of the community.*

Challenge 2

There was delay in getting the approval from the Nepal Government's Department of Urban Development and Building Constructions (DUDBC), firstly because of the lengthy bureaucratic system of the government agencies and secondly because of some of the changes that had to be done after receiving comments for the changes from DUDBC, which again had to be submitted for approval. Working with government agencies was extremely slow – especially in terms of getting the design ratified. Besides National Reconstruction Authority (NRA), DUDBC is another government agency that is mandated and responsible to see that all buildings and houses are built strictly according to the government guidelines introduced and implemented after the 2015 disastrous earthquake.

Mitigation Method

- *Though this was unavoidable, we however were able to persuade them by our regular persistence and requests for early approval as far as possible, which otherwise could have lengthen the approval period.*

Challenge 3

VDCs often changed their mind about the land they were providing for construction of CLRCs. Initially, Sundrawoti VDC agreed to give the land adjoining to the VDC office, which they later changed to another plot but still on the roadside, which was good enough for the CLRC. But, excavator had to be used to chop off the hillock to flatten and level the land for construction.

Mitigation Method

- *At Chhamawoti, initially, there were some controversies and conflicts of opinions for some days but later the VDC and community agreed to allocate that land on which the CLRC stands today. The land allocated here was used as the Ghat (platform) resting place for the mourners of the dead of that area and had a shed with lots of stones. The clearing of the shed and small stones were voluntarily removed by the community people once it was decided that the land would be used for construction of CLRC.*
- *The biggest problem was in Lapilang in allocating land. The land sites were changed three times. It was only after third decision that the VDC and the community people finally agreed to give a plot at a place some 50 metres below the road level but there was no motorway.*
- *As use of excavators had to be used in all three land plots for clearing, flattening and levelling, which meant an additional cost of 100,000 or more in each VDC, requests were made to all VDCs to provide possible financial support to meet the cost of excavators. As this had to be decided by the Village Council meetings, which took few weeks or months to sit, it further delayed the start of the construction works.*
- *This challenge was overcome by regular communications and interactions with the concerned VDC authorities and local communities and making them understand the usage of the CLRC for various purpose that would ultimately benefit the community and VDC as a whole in long run. But luckily, all Village Council meetings agreed to provide certain amount of financial support to use the excavator to clear, flatten and level the allocated land plots among which Sundrawoti provided maximum of 250,000 rupees.*

Challenge 4

Increase in cost of building materials due to high demand for them in the district because of large scale reconstruction and construction works was another big challenge. This situation was further aggravated by shortage of the materials in the local market.

Mitigation Method

- *Though this challenge was very worrying and of great concern as the project budget was limited and was already going on a deficit of around 3 million rupees due to the fluctuations in the exchange rate between Nepali rupees and UK Sterling Pound, we opted to go for locally available material as far as possible so that cost was minimized.*

Challenge 5.

One of the biggest challenges encountered in this project was the very high expectations of the target/beneficiary groups. This had been caused by the unrealistic expectations set by several large INGOs, with considerable money and resources, who during (and indeed before the earthquakes set what we consider to be a very bad precedent – for example, paying people to come to community meetings. This has created expectations that all development organisations do the same thing.

Mitigation Method

- *Although it was difficult and needed more time to convince the beneficiary groups telling them that that such payments ran contrary to the philosophy of the programme, some did not accept this – instead believing that there was a budget line for this, but staff were pocketing the money for themselves, but as we explained them the details of the project budget and their breakdowns, many started believing and trusting us and also started telling their colleagues about the reality of the situation. As the community began to trust us and to see the value and benefit of the training (and in particular the opportunity for future earnings), their attitude gradually changed.*

Challenge 6.

Although more than a year had passed after the great natural disaster, people were still living in temporary shelters as no reconstruction works had started on the damaged and destroyed shelters and there were no proper roofing systems appropriate for installations of rainwater harvesting system. It was thus, difficult to immediately decide on where to install the rainwater harvesting systems in clusters. This was indeed a big challenge for us. Secondly, there was shortage of the poly-tanks, gutters and other fitting materials needed for the system in the local market and as the poly-tanks were of 1,000 litres, there was no space for the storage of these poly-tanks which were in large number at vendor's place. Lastly, the financial challenges presented by the fall in the value of sterling – in addition to the significant increase in the cost of materials (demand far outstripping supply) meant that the original plan to provide the number of rainwater harvesting sites (based on individual households) was not possible.

We were however able to overcome this challenge by following steps:

- *We interacted with the beneficiary households of each cluster and discussed on the possibility of identifying a households which were either fit for installations of rainwater harvesting system in their roofs or households that were temporary at that time but was likely to be constructed very soon.*
- *With regard to shortage of required number of poly-tanks and fitting materials for installations of rainwater harvesting systems and drinking water schemes, the beneficiary households were informed in time about it that convinced the beneficiaries and became ready to wait until all materials and poly-tanks were available in required numbers.*

Challenge 7.

As the baseline survey was done house to house in each of the selected Wards of the project VDCs, every household expected some kind of winterization support. But as project had plan and budget for distributing winterization relief materials to only 300 most needy and poorest of the poor families, there were discontentment and disappointment among those who were not within the list of 300 households. Initially, in one of the VDCs, the Ward coordinator even told us not to distribute winterization materials to anyone if it was limited to only 300 families.

Mitigation Method

- *In this regard, we had to play bit tough with the particular Ward coordinator by asking him to tell that he will not allow the distributions of the winterisation materials to the selected beneficiary families in a mass meeting of the community and that he should give us his decision of not allowing to distribute in writing so that we can take our own decision. Hearing this, he stepped back and allowed us to distribute the winterisation materials to the selected beneficiary families.*
- *To be more specific on the issue of overcoming the challenges, the “Community Salla” and “Ghar Salla” proved to be very effective and useful instrument in convincing the communities and the families as these helped them to understand the intention and the purpose of the project in a better and clearer manner, which helped in overcoming most of the challenges that were related with the communities and the*

beneficiary families or households. This was backed up by the VDC level project coordination and monitoring committee as they played important role in driving the project activities in the right direction and giving necessary and helpful support to the project implementing agencies and to the communities.

A Step Ahead

Considering the sustainability factor of the project in totality for a long term impact, it was being strongly felt that the Building Champions' needed to be better literate, empowered and upscale their skills and knowledge for at least few more months so that they are able to manage and operate the CLRCs and cooperative more effectively and efficiently. Global Action Nepal (GAN) extended its support to the CLRCs with the literacy programme for next 5 months with lady literacy facilitators for each CLRC so that the BCs in the CLRC Management Committees and other interested young women become literate and are able to read simple Nepali and do simple mathematical calculations. Besides, GAN has linked these CLRCs with GAN Centre and will provide any opportunity to the BCs for upscaling their skills and knowledge relating to their new professions, empowerment and literacy.

Conclusion

The project has met challenges along the way and changing circumstances that required diplomacy and project alterations, however, overall the project has met the key outcomes.

1. Communities have increased access to potable water

Based on the demand of the communities from the project sites, we identified a total of 36 natural water wells that were partially or completely damaged by the disastrous earthquake of 2015 for our support in their rehabilitation and reservoir tanks so that they could have drinking water from these reservoirs even during dry seasons. These 36 water wells were providing drinking water to 585 households. These wells however were not well protected and covered and the people did not use any kind of water purifying method. Of the 36 natural water wells, 14 were in Sundrawoti benefitting 201 household, 9 in Suspachhamawoti benefitting 193 households and 13 in Lapilang benefitting 191 households. With the intervention of the project, the beneficiary households were that the project would support them with a large poly tank of 1,000 liters for each water well and connect them with the water wells with pipes and fittings provided that they worked together to rehabilitate the wells and protect them with proper coverings etc. We also advised them to use some kind of filtration or purification system so that the water was free from deadly germs. The beneficiary households of each well got together and rehabilitated the wells and we connected them with pipes and fittings. Some of the remote households were also connected to the reservoirs (poly-tanks) so that they did not have to travel a lot to collect their drinking water. Earlier, many households had to travel for hours early in the morning in dark to collect water as the wells would get dry by late morning. The female members often had a very hard and difficult time travelling and carrying water from these wells. But now, with the wells rehabilitated and water stored in reservoir tanks, and many households connected to the reservoirs, they no more have to travel for hours fearing scarcity of water also carrying water. They now have easy and increased access to well protected potable water, which is safer for drinking.

2. Communities increase their self-recovery capacity

With the intervention of the project, the communities of the project areas have certainly increased their self-recovery capacity as the result of the "Community Salla" activities organized in groups in communities by the PASSA and OT trained Building Champions and National Youth Champions and the Local Champions (+2 students). They went to the communities, small groups and house to house to conduct Community Salla and Ghar Salla during which they briefed, oriented, shared and interacted with the community and families about the need and importance of improving their resilience and self-recovery capacity during the time of disasters and also on need of building back safer. The community Salla and Ghar Salla programmes were backed by demonstration of practical exercises of 8 PASSA activities, Open Theatre and flip charts. One of the noticeable and appreciable outcome of these activities is that the community members are sharing and learning about these information, knowledge and skills with each other whenever they meet.

3. People live in houses which are drier, warmer and safer

Although most of the families are still living in temporary shelters as they have not been able to start reconstructions of their houses because they have not been able to receive the instalments of the government grants for rebuilding their houses. This posed a big threat to the aged, sick and children from the shivering cold of November to February. Fortunately, our winterization programme was there to address this threat for 200 families of the 3 VDCs. As per the winterization programme, the "Ghar Salla" activities were either conducted on house to house visit or in small clusters of beneficiary households during which our NYCs and BCs shared and advised the winterisation beneficiary

households on how to keep their shelters warm, drier and safer during winters and protect their aged, sick and children from the cold. The project provided the beneficiary households with appropriate numbers of high quality foam mattresses and blankets so that the vulnerable family members could sleep in a drier, warmer and safely.

4. Young women have better job and life opportunities.

The “On the Job training (OJT) on masonry, carpentry, plumbing and house-wiring to the selected young women BCs backed by their skills and knowledge on building back safer after PASSA and OT trainings have definitely been a great boon to many of them as they have experienced a total transformation in their lives, which have not only made them to have better job opportunities with better and equal wages but also to see better future for themselves and for their families. The case studies of the two BCs in the report are the clear indications/examples to reflect this. In addition to this, the CLRC Management Committees in which all BCs are included are being linked up with the GAN Centre, which has committed to provide all possible opportunities to upscale their knowledge, skills and education appropriate and concerned with their new professions and life.