



FACTS ABOUT THE GORKHA EARTHQUAKE

STRUCK 25 APRIL 2015

MAGNITUDE 7.8

9,000 PEOPLE DIED

22,000 PEOPLE INJURED

OVER 1 MILLION HOMES DESTROYED

**NEPAL RANKED 144TH OUT OF THE
LIST OF 188 COUNTRIES AND
TERRITORIES**

UNDP Human Development Report 2016

**NEPAL RANKED 11TH AND 30TH
RESPECTIVELY, WITH REGARD TO
VULNERABILITY TO EARTHQUAKES
AND FLOODS**

UNDP/BCPR, 2004

WHEN DISASTER STRIKES BUILDING PREPAREDNESS FOR EARTHQUAKES, VOLCANOES AND FLOODING IN ASIA

Countries in Asia live with the constant threat of natural disasters, be it earthquakes, volcanoes or flooding. Devastating earthquakes struck Asia in 2015: Nepal in April, then Pakistan and Afghanistan in October. Following the 7.8 magnitude Gorkha earthquake in Nepal on 25th April 2015, nearly 9,000 people died and over 22,000 were injured. Over one million homes were destroyed or damaged, and infrastructure including hospitals, schools, roads and government buildings were destroyed or badly damaged.

In the immediate aftermath, the first priority was the emergency response to survivors: providing blankets, medicines, clean water, food and shelter. However, Nepal is a low-income country ranked 144th out of 188 countries on the human development index.

Nepal had experienced a devastating civil war between 1996-2006, followed by gradual transition and a new constitution agreed in 2015. It is also geographically isolated within the Himalayan Mountains, accessed through either a single international airport, or via long and dangerous mountain roads from India and China. Infrastructure and basic services, including health care, were already weak before the earthquake struck, making delivery of the emergency response even more challenging.

Effective emergency response requires a country to be prepared before disaster strikes. Nepal is ranked 11th in the world in terms of risk and vulnerability to earthquakes and has in place a National Strategy on Disaster Risk Management. But how prepared was Nepal, in reality, and how can it improve its preparedness before the next, inevitable, disaster strikes?



HOW IDI'S APPROACH IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Despite being a small organisation of around 30 staff, IDI achieves significant and sustainable impact through the way it works. In this case, IDI brought together Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) in 19 countries around a single, common need: to improve audit quality and make a difference to the lives of citizens. IDI creates an environment in which public auditors can learn not just from experts in the field, but from the knowledge and experiences of their peers. The approach is facilitative: around 50 auditors (45% being female, in a region where government positions are dominated by men) across Asia worked together to develop the audit approach – based on the International Standards of Supreme Audit Institutions (ISSAIs) – ensuring ownership and sustainability.

Teams from each audit office developed their audit plans, conducted field work and drafted reports, with coaching from IDI. Reports were peer reviewed by auditors from other participating countries to enhance quality. After the programme, many audit offices adopted or integrated the audit approach into their own internal guidance, and some of the 50 auditors trained staff from their own offices on the approach, building the capacity to conduct similar high-quality audits in future, independent of IDI's assistance.

IDI applies similar approaches to strengthen SAIs in developing countries across the world, working in English, French, Spanish and Arabic. IDI facilitates strengthening the audit of government programmes, compliance with government regulations, and government's financial statements. It also supports SAIs to assess and report on their own performance, develop strategic plans, enhance training and professionalization, and strengthen communication with citizens, Parliaments, and media to increase transparency and accountability in the use of public money, and fight corruption.

IDI/ASOSAI AUDIT OF DISASTER MANAGEMENT

With assistance from the INTOSAI Development Initiative (IDI), Nepal's Audit Office (Office of the Auditor General of Nepal) undertook an audit of the government's response to the 2015 earthquake, and its preparedness for future quakes and other disasters. The report was submitted to the President of Nepal, sent to the Parliament and published. The report recommends the government to improve disaster preparedness.

The report found preparedness to be weak. Findings included insufficient stocks of relief items prior to the quake, and no list of required relief items available to share with the international community that offered assistance, resulting in relief items supplied not matching needs. It also found weak systems to distribute relief items resulting in perishable food and medicines being stockpiled and later disposed of rather than distributed to those in need.

While district offices have accepted the audit findings and agreed to implement the recommendations, the SAI is still awaiting a formal response from central Government agencies. The SAI plans to follow-up the audit findings during 2018.

IDI's support extended beyond Nepal. As part of its programme on the audit of disaster management in Asia, IDI brought together public auditors in 19 countries to build capacity to undertake high quality audit of government programmes, especially preparedness for disasters. 15 audit offices completed their reports, with 13 of them being published. Pakistan reported on relief activities following the October 2015 earthquake. Indonesia reported on preparedness for volcanic eruptions. Laos reported on the distribution of aid to flood victims.

Working together with SAIs, IDI makes a real difference to the lives of citizens in developing countries.

This kind of capacity building programme helps us to enhance staff competence on the subject matter. I believe that audit findings and recommendations reported will be instrumental to the concerned government agencies for better disaster preparedness planning in future.

Tanka Mani Sharma (Dangal)
Hon'ble Auditor General, Nepal