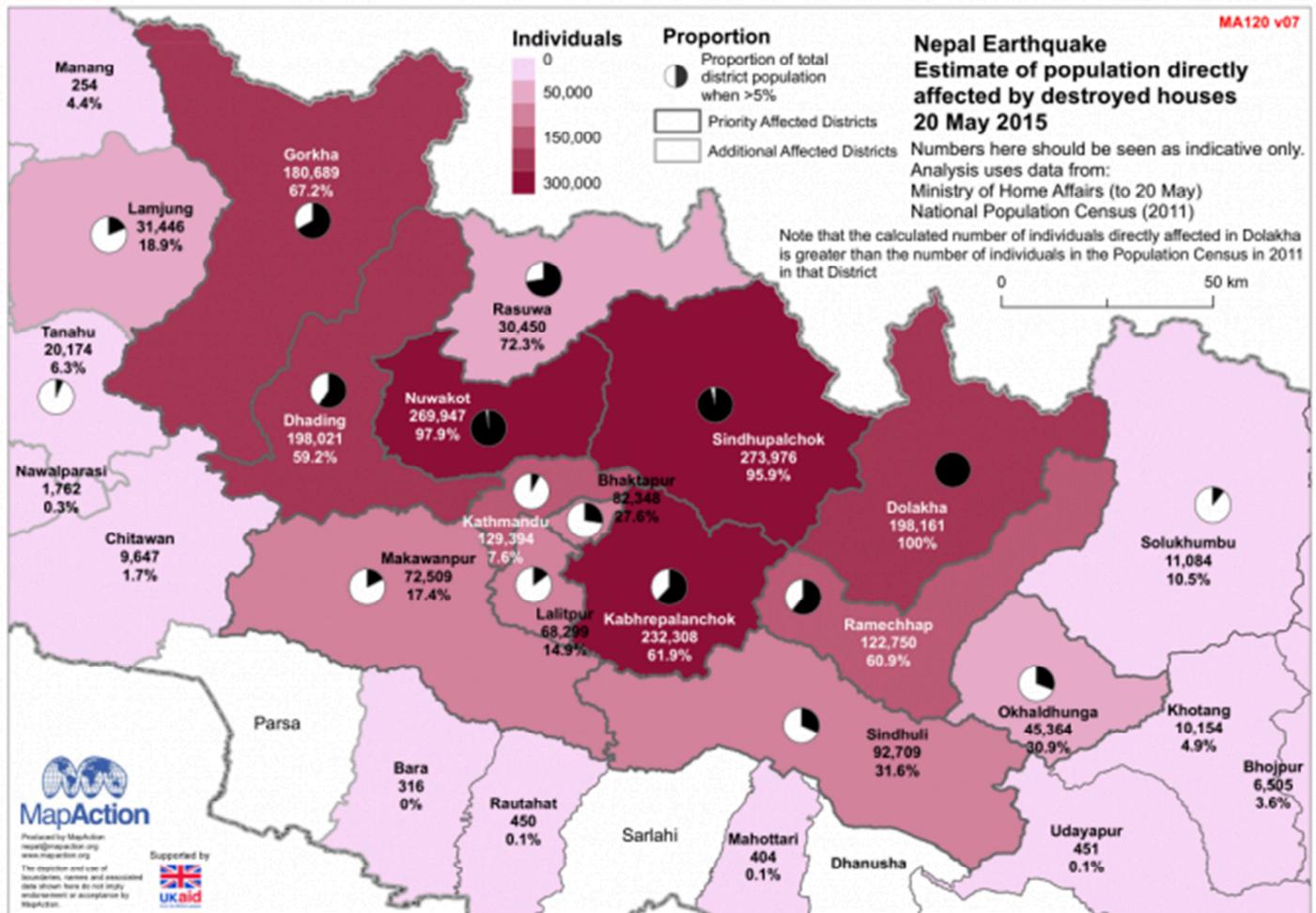


# Evaluation of the Concern Worldwide Nepal Earthquake Emergency Response Programme



<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/fr/operations/nepal/infographic/nepal-earthquake-estimate-population-directly-affected-destroyed-hous-3>

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*The evaluation team would like to sincerely thank the Concern, RRN and NEWAH teams working in Nepal at the time of this evaluation for their hospitality, assistance and cooperation.*

*The perceptions and understandings in the report are the evaluators own and do not necessarily represent Concern official policy and/or position. While every attempt has been made to report accurately, any misconceptions or inaccuracies remaining are the responsibility of the evaluator alone.*

## Executive Summary

The earthquake that hit Nepal on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2015, and its multiple subsequent aftershocks, caused significant damage, destruction and psychological impact to both urban and rural populations across 31 districts, affecting 5.4 million people. Against a politically and geographically challenging operating environment, Concern Worldwide mounted a response operation through two local partner organisations – RRN and NEWAH.

Over the following 8 months<sup>1</sup> the Concern response programme delivered a comprehensive NFI kit, transitional shelter materials (CGI sheet and toolkit), WASH support (latrines, bathing areas and water system repairs) and temporary learning centres (classrooms) to 14,546 distinct households, a total of approximately 79,350 individuals. This was conducted across 4 districts (Sindhupalchok, Dolakha, Sindhuli and Gorkha), through a €4.36million programme.

The programme was evaluated in February 2017 to examine the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the initial response activities. An evaluation team of 2 people visited the programme locations over the course of 14 days, meeting with programme participants, community and government officials, NGO and UN staff, and Concern, RRN and NEWAH staff. In addition, previous Concern staff were interviewed remotely, and pertinent documents examined. Overall, the findings of the evaluation were largely consistent, giving a high level of confidence in the conclusions that have been drawn.

The Concern response was found to be particularly **relevant** to the humanitarian context. Despite the difficulties of the operating context, and a lack of existing presence in the country, the Concern response was underway only a few days following the earthquake. An active decision to target locations less well-served by response organisations was taken, combined with a decision to focus on areas where the partner organisations had existing networks and capacity. This allowed Concern more space to mount an effective response. Whilst independent programme participant selection was largely impossible due to the government controlled 'coordinated' assistance approach, the programme did everything it could to ensure vulnerable and marginalised groups within allocated communities were included for assistance. Programme components matched with the needs stated by both those affected and humanitarian community reports.

A largely **effective** response was found: distribution of material goods rather than cash was welcomed by the affected populations, and the distribution process itself was praised by officials and communities alike, consistently citing it as organised and calm. Vulnerable people were prioritised and provided additional assistance for transportation if required. Whilst the temporary learning centres and Gorkha WASH project were very well received by communities, the initial designs could have been improved, which would have resulted in a higher quality outcome, suitable for use over a longer 'temporary' period of time. Communities were engaged in the response process as far as was possible given geographic and access constraints, and complaints response mechanisms handled few complaints, most relating to lack of inclusion in distributions.

Examination of the **efficiency** of the response found that overall, the response achieved value for money (given the difficult operating context) and was implemented within a similar timeframe to that of other organisations, despite delays to the initial procurement process that were beyond the control of Concern or its partners. Programme participants stated that the NFI kits were largely received in good time, but that the transitional shelter materials were a bit late. Concern ensured sufficient, experienced staff were deployed to support the partner organisations, and both partners largely managed to ensure sufficient staff levels. The working relationship with NEWAH was strong, however, with RRN some difficulties were encountered. Whilst some problems were anticipated, this appears largely attributable to the lack of detailed documented agreements at the start of the partnership, as well as the very high turnover of the Response/Country Director position. This meant it was very difficult to hold partners accountable for previously agreements, and both partners and Concern staff cited this turnover as one of the most difficult issues of the response. It also contributed to some later procurement problems, which delayed the distribution of the transitional shelter materials, and presented a significant risk in terms of the potential quality of the response.

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<sup>1</sup> This extended to 13 months in the case of a small WASH project in Gorkha

The **impacts** of the response programme under review are predominantly related to having enabled people to meet their basic needs following the earthquake. Programme participants are incredibly appreciative of the assistance received, particularly in terms of quality of items, all of which have allowed them to live more comfortably following the devastation of the earthquake. Households have particularly valued the tarpaulins, blankets and solar lights from the NFI kits; the CGI sheet; the ability to get back to Open Defecation Free (ODF) status; and provision of a more conducive environment for children to learn. Above all, the most appreciated support was the toolkit, which not only enabled households to construct their temporary shelter, but has provided them easy access to high quality tools that they can use to rebuild their permanent home. In this way, the Concern response has achieved a longer-term impact. A further, unplanned impact has been the increase in capacity of the two local NGOs, who now have the skills and the confidence to undertake humanitarian response activities in the future.

Overall, Concern has implemented a solid response to the Nepal earthquake, navigating the many challenges of the operating context and ensuring that those affected received quality support to cover their basic needs and start to rebuild their lives. Decisions made were largely appropriate, particularly in terms of target locations, activities undertaken and quality of items distributed. Some issues around partner relationships and staffing of senior positions have not had an extensive impact on overall programme quality, but they have presented some significant risks that should be mitigated in future response operations – limiting the turnover of the Response/Country Director, ensuring a ‘liaison’ function is fulfilled by a (Concern) experienced national of the country, and documenting a more detailed agreement with partner organisations should all help to achieve this. Finally, consideration should always be given to the ‘temporary’ nature of construction activities following a disaster, making the assumption that they will likely be in use for more than just a few years.

## Context – Nepal Earthquake

The mountainous, landlocked country of Nepal was hit by its biggest disaster in over 80 years on April 25<sup>th</sup> 2015 when a magnitude 7.8 earthquake occurred in Gorkha district, 77km northwest of the capital Kathmandu. More than 300 aftershocks greater than magnitude 4 were recorded in the following 6 weeks<sup>2</sup>, one of which recorded a magnitude of 7.3 on May 12<sup>th</sup>, centred in the district of Dolakha, 76km northeast of Kathmandu. As of June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2015 8,702 people had been killed, and 22,493 injured<sup>3</sup> as a result of the earthquakes. The initial impact would have been much worse were it not for the first earthquake occurring during daylight hours on a Saturday - children were not in school, government and business workers were not at work, and many people in rural areas were outside working in their fields.

Out of 75 districts in Nepal, the earthquake significantly affected 14 districts, including the densely populated urban areas in the Kathmandu valley. A further 17 districts were also moderately affected<sup>4</sup>. Dolakha, Sindhupalchok and Gorkha districts were the worst affected in terms of estimated value of losses per capita, and were also some of the nine worst affected districts with HDI scores lower than the national average<sup>5</sup>. 5.4million people in total were affected by the earthquakes<sup>6</sup> and the financial impact of the disaster was estimated to be over US\$7 billion<sup>7</sup>.

605,254 houses were destroyed as a result of the earthquake and its aftershocks, with a further 288,255 houses damaged<sup>8</sup>. Hundreds of historical and cultural monuments were also destroyed. People in many areas were forced to live outside in increasingly rainy conditions as the monsoon season set in. Water sources were damaged or disappeared, and some people reportedly lost up to 70% of their livestock. Many classrooms were damaged and schools closed for several weeks.

Local Nepali communities mounted rescue and relief efforts very quickly, the government requested international assistance immediately, and a flash appeal for US\$422 million was launched. However, the geography and population distribution of Nepal led to significant challenges in terms of accessing remote rural communities, which were further compounded by landslides and the worsening monsoon season. Aid efforts were required to be implemented through local organisations, and the complex political environment led to a blockade along the Indian border which restricted the import of goods, and significantly reduced the availability of fuel. Despite previous predictions of a significant earthquake in Nepal, the country was largely unprepared for the scale and extent the impact.

However, over the following 6 months more than 450 aid organisations responded to the needs of those affected, providing over 3 million people with shelter assistance, 2 million people with food and enabling 300,000 children to access education through temporary classrooms. Whilst the coping strategies of the Nepalese people were severely tested by the earthquake, they continue to demonstrate significant resilience in the face of significant hardship.

### Concern's Response Programme

Following a rapid decision by Concern's senior management, the first members of the response team arrived in Nepal on the evening of the 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2 days after the earthquake. Concern had previously been operational in Nepal between 2005 and 2010, and was able to immediately re-establish contact with two

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<sup>2</sup> 'Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA)', Government of Nepal, National Planning Commission, 2015

<http://www.npc.gov.np/web/new/uploadedFiles/allFiles/PDNA-excutiveSummary.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> UNHCR Summary Infographic, June 2015,

file:///C:/Users/User/Documents/Work/Concern/Nepal%20Evaluation%20Feb17/Background%20Docs/External/Nepal%20Earthquakes%202015.html

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> 'Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA)', Government of Nepal, National Planning Commission, 2015

<http://www.npc.gov.np/web/new/uploadedFiles/allFiles/PDNA-excutiveSummary.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> 'Nepal Earthquake Humanitarian Response April to September 2015', OCHA, September 2015

<sup>7</sup> 'Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA)', Government of Nepal, National Planning Commission, 2015

<http://www.npc.gov.np/web/new/uploadedFiles/allFiles/PDNA-excutiveSummary.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

partners with whom they had previously worked – RRN and NEWAH. The teams were strongly advised by the partner organisations not to visit the affected communities until they had some assistance to give, following reports of at least one attack on aid workers. Instead they used secondary data and previous experience of similar emergencies to outline a rapid response plan with both partner organisations.

The Concern intervention focused initially on the districts of Sindhupalchok, Dolakha and Sindhuli. Ultimately only one Village Development Committee (VDC) received assistance in Sindhupalchok before Concern refocused attention on Dolakha and Sindhuli. Several months into the response a small project in Gyachowk VDC, Gorkha district was also implemented.

On the basis of the initial data the Concern programme planned and implemented initial relief activities - a distribution of a comprehensive non-food items package (NFIs) to 11 VDCs and one municipality area in Sindhupalchok and Dolakha (in conjunction with RRN) and 12 VDCs in Sindhuli (in conjunction with NEWAH). More detailed assessments took place once distributions had begun, leading to the development of the second phase of response activities focusing on transitional shelter and temporary learning centres in Dolakha district, and WASH activities in Sindhuli and Gorkha. The €4.36million programme, initially intended to be implemented over a 6 month period, was funded by the Disasters and Emergency Committee (DEC) (with a grant of €1.4million) and additional funding from Concern’s own fundraising activities in Ireland, the UK and the US.

The initial relief programme assisted a total of 14,546 distinct households (HHs) and 64 schools, a total of approximately 79,350 individuals. The components of the initial response programme include:

Sector	Location	Direct Beneficiaries	Description - Targets
NFI Distribution	Sindhupalchok (1 VDC) Dolakha (10 VDCs, 1 municipality area) Sindhuli (12 VDCs)	14,092 households (67,907 people approx.)	Tarpaulin, sleeping mats, blankets, hygiene kit, jerry can
Shelter Distribution	Dolakha (6 VDCs, 1 municipality area)	6,500 households (28,066 people)	CGI sheet (24 sheets), tools and fixing materials
Temporary Learning Centres	Dolakha (12 VDCs)	64 schools (8,813 people)	Materials and cash support to construct temporary classrooms
WASH	Sindhuli (12 VDCs) Gorkha (1 VDC)	770 households (4,216 people approx.)	Temporary latrines, bathing units and water system repair materials (Sindhuli) Water system extension, cash support for latrine construction, hygiene promotion

## Evaluation Methodology

This evaluation covers the initial response phase of the Concern Nepal Earthquake response programme started in April 2015 and completed by June 2016 (with the majority of activities complete by December 2015). The evaluation seeks to establish, in an evidenced-based manner, the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the strategies deployed to respond to earthquake affected populations and to look at the impact and sustainability of the response for those assisted. It also seeks to identify lessons that might be appropriate to future Concern response programmes. The full terms of reference for the evaluation can be found in [Annex A](#).

The evaluation was undertaken by an independent lead evaluator (Jo Goldsmith) with the assistance of a Concern staff member from the Emergency Unit in Dublin (who had had no involvement in the initial Nepal earthquake response activities covered by this evaluation – Peter Doyle). The evaluation was conducted between February and March 2017, including a country visit from 14<sup>th</sup> February to 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017. Both members of the evaluation team jointly conducted interviews in Kathmandu and visited the project in Gorkha, before separating to visit the districts of Dolakha (Jo) and Sindhuli (Peter). It was not deemed

necessary to visit Sindhupalchok as only limited response activities took place there which were replicated in Dolakha. A full evaluation schedule can be found in [Annex B](#).

The evidence on which this report is based comprises a combination of data sources aimed at gathering as wide an understanding of the programme as possible, undertaken through both a desk-based review and physical visit to the programme locations. The data sources, which are predominantly qualitative, are:

- Relevant programme and external documents
- Focus group discussions/group interviews with individuals in affected communities (3 focus groups)
- Household discussions (20 interviews)
- Key informant interviews/group discussions at community level - Village District Committee (VDC) representatives, Ward Citizen Forum coordinators, school management groups (9 interviews/discussions)
- Key informant interviews at district level – government representatives in the District Office (DO) and District Education Office (DEO) (4 interviews)
- Key informant interviews with NGO and UN representatives (10 interviews)
- In depth discussions with Concern staff members (14 interviews)
- Observation of programme activities/outputs

The full question set, from which key semi-structured interview questions were developed, can be found in [Annex C](#).

Some limitations/possible biases were experienced in terms of data gathering. Action was taken to minimise these wherever possible:

- the amount of travel time required to reach the focus districts, and then to travel to individual communities within those districts, limited the time available at each programme location.
- some programme locations could not be reached within the timeframe available without compromising on the ability to collect sufficient information for the evaluation
- individual households of a community tend to be scattered across a wide area rather than grouped together, making it difficult to conduct interviews across a geographic cross-section of a community
- local culture appears to be quite communal, meaning most discussions/interviews involved talking to a group/committee of people rather than individuals. Women as well as men were observed to contribute relatively freely in such a forum, and individuals were targeted with direct questions where this was felt not to be the case. However, there were not many women found in key positions such as on VDC councils or in positions of authority at district level
- the programme was implemented through local NGO partner organisations, and thus the initial evaluation schedule required the support of the partner organisations to develop. The evaluation team were, however, able to make changes to the schedule as the evaluation progressed, ensuring any bias was limited
- the discussions/interviews at community and district level were conducted largely through translation, leading to the possibility of misinterpretations/bias in both questions and answers
- the evaluation was conducted nearly 2 years following the earthquake, so some people at community level found it hard to differentiate the Concern response from the other assistance received. Many individuals both in government, partner and international NGO positions had moved on since the initial response period, making it difficult to find those who were involved in the response or knew of Concerns' activities
- a damaged road meant an alternative route had to be used to travel to Sindhuli, which took more than 1 day to complete; a rumoured strike toward the end of the evaluation period resulted in fuel scarcity in Dolakha District, meaning the planned community visits on the last day of the field-trip schedule had to be abandoned in order to reserve enough fuel to travel back to Kathmandu
- there has been limited dedicated monitoring activities (e.g. post-distribution surveys) or documentation of monitoring activities carried out for the period of the initial response

- limitation of the evaluators' knowledge and understanding of cultural and political norms and issues within the various programme locations

A purposive sampling strategy was used, identifying those expected to be able to provide the most useful data for the evaluation. However, more extensive sampling was also undertaken to ensure that the results were verified amongst the wider stakeholders to the programme. The issues covered were drawn from the original evaluation questions and broadly focused around the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the programme, as well as what people would have done differently.

Analysis took into account the bias that may exist amongst certain groups of people, as well as the need to 'weight' evidence according to how valid an individuals' viewpoint might be<sup>9</sup>. The data was also analysed through a triangulation approach, ensuring that findings were compared and cross-checked between a variety of sources to ensure reliability and validity. Ultimately there was relatively minimal conflict between the evidence gathered. Where conflicts arose the evaluators considered the differing agendas and experience of the source in light of their own humanitarian experience, before drawing conclusions. The high degree of consistency in the findings gave confidence in concluding that the limitations/possible biases detailed above had minimal impact on the outcome of the evaluation.

## Evaluation Findings

### The Relevance of the Intervention: Were appropriate choices made?

#### Ability to Respond

The scale of the impact of the Nepal earthquake on April 25<sup>th</sup> 2015, and subsequent multiple and sizeable aftershocks, clearly fulfils Concern's criteria for mounting a response operation in a country that does not have an existing programme<sup>10</sup>. Nepal is a well-known country, popular with tourists and other visitors, and so was expected to garner a lot of public and media interest following such a significant disaster, further giving weight to Concern's decision to respond in terms of guaranteed availability of funding.

The operating context in Nepal, for international NGOs, is a complex and controlling one. The lack of operational presence at the time of the earthquake resulted in a number of other difficulties in setting up a response operation, not least in the ability to recruit staff and get funds into the country, although ways to mitigate these issues were generally found. The requirement to work through local NGO organisations (partners) brought added complexity – it is an approach that Concern does not undertake very often in rapid-onset emergency contexts. Concern was, however, able to quickly re-establish relationships with two local NGOs which had been partners to the Concern country programme prior to its closure in 2010<sup>11</sup> and, as a result, had initial response activities planned 5 days after the earthquake struck. This occurred whilst many other organisations were chasing new partnerships.

Furthermore, whilst local NGOs had very strong development capacity, they were limited in terms of emergency response capacity, particularly on the scale required. Concern was able to immediately deploy Nepal-experienced humanitarian staff, who arrived 3 days after the earthquake, and were supplemented over the following days by numerous other skilled response staff, ensuring adequate capacity to support the partner organisations. Despite the lack of presence at the time of the earthquake, Concern was able to adapt and navigate the issues faced, resulting in a response programme that was not seen to be significantly slower or less effective than those of other organisations already operational in the country.

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<sup>9</sup> For example, comments on the impact of an activity carry more weight from a programme participant than they do from a staff member

<sup>10</sup> 'Concern's Approach to Emergencies', Concern Worldwide, March 2002

<sup>11</sup> An agreement had been left in place with previous partners at the time of programme closure that, should a significant scale disaster occur in future, Concern would look to support them in a response operation

## Location

The majority of Concern's relief activities have focused on Dolakha and Sindhuli districts, locations that were chosen very quickly following arrival in country. This decision was partly based around the existing operational presence of the two partner organisations – RRN in Dolakha, and NEWAH in Sindhuli – an appropriate approach to take given their existing links as well as cultural and geographical familiarity with the locations. However, a deliberate strategy to target less well-served locations was also put in place, and so a decision was actively taken not to work in Gorkha District, the epicentre of the earthquake, due to the large numbers of NGOs concentrating efforts in that area. Furthermore, there were initial commitments to work in Sindhupalchok District, a significantly affected area, but when it became clear that other organisations were able to respond more quickly in the initial stages, Concern diverted its resources to Dolakha District (following the completion of a distribution of NFIs in one VDC in Sindhupalchok). Although most of Dolakha was less affected at the time these decisions were taken, it proved particularly appropriate following the significant aftershock occurring on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2017, the epicentre of which was located in Dolakha and which left the district almost as badly affected as Gorkha. Furthermore, as of September 2015, Sindhupalchok District had the highest number of operational agencies<sup>12</sup>. Sindhuli remains, to this day, underserved in terms of response and recovery activities and, whilst the pattern of damage was different, the impact on individual households was as significant as elsewhere, especially for the more vulnerable in remoter areas targeted by the Concern programme. Overall, the strategic approach to focus on less well-served locations allowed Concern more space to mount an effective response.

In addition to the focus of activities on Dolakha and Sindhuli districts, both located east of Kathmandu, a small programme was also, eventually, undertaken in one VDC in Gorkha district (Gyachowk VDC), west of Kathmandu. This was at the request of NEWAH, who had undertaken substantial work with the VDC previously, and who saw a significant need and minimal presence of other agencies focusing on the WASH sector. There is no doubt of the impact of this small intervention, but some design/implementation issues have been identified. A donor proposal submitted at the same time, which was not funded, would have increased the operational activities in Gorkha and would have likely resulted in increased monitoring presence. The resulting situation does, therefore, raise a question of the appropriateness of spreading limited resources (particularly for performing monitoring activities) over a significant geographical area in a context such as Nepal, where access constraints are significant.

## Programme Participant Selection

For the majority of the response activities, independent programme participant selection was not possible. The government very quickly established a 'one door policy' by which all response organisations – national and international – were required to coordinate. Both government and local NGOs advised against assessment visits immediately following the earthquake unless taking items to distribute, due to attacks that had occurred on some aid workers. The government-led coordination approach allowed for the District Disaster Relief Committee (DDRC) to make the final allocation of which organisations undertook which activities in which locations, in an attempt to minimise overlap and ensure coverage of gaps. Concern and its partners were able to make recommendations as to where they wanted to target relief activities, which were mostly accepted by the DDRC, through a process of matching approximate quantities of goods available to the size of anticipated numbers affected in respective Village Development Committees (VDCs). As the scale of the needs vastly outweighed the ability of any organisation to respond individually, this was an unusual, but not inappropriate, approach to take.

Those requiring assistance were determined by the government-led 'red card' assessment, based solely on the level of damage to a family's house. This resulted in the majority of Dolakha residents being eligible for assistance, and a much lower percentage in Sindhuli<sup>13</sup>. Whilst most accept this was a fair approach, some

<sup>12</sup> 'Nepal Earthquake Humanitarian Response April to September 2015', OCHA, September 2015

<sup>13</sup> Mapping reports indicate this is 100% for Dolakha, and 31.9% for Sindhuli, although this is households assessed as affected in relation to the 2011 Census figures, which were found to be out of date in most locations. 'Estimate of population directly affected by destroyed houses' MapAction, May 2015

people in Sindhuli have expressed concern that other criteria (such as poverty or vulnerability level) had not been taken into account, resulting in the most severely affected receiving less than they might have as assistance was spread across a wider range of households. In addition, VDC authorities came under quite a bit of pressure from those who had not received assistance and, in certain cases, used their own resources to distribute tarpaulins to those who had not received assistance from any other source.

Following the allocation of organisations to VDCs for specific response activities, determining the exact numbers of households requiring assistance was not straightforward. The availability of robust, disaggregated data concerning affected people was very limited in the early response phases<sup>14</sup>. Given the restrictions on visiting communities, international organisations were largely reliant on secondary data, and pre-earthquake records had not been well developed or maintained. The approach followed by most organisations was to request the VDC secretary and representatives to take responsibility for creating lists of households who required assistance, based largely on the government 'red card' assessment process, an indicator of level of house damage. Concern ensured its partner organisations pushed VDC groups to include vulnerable communities that they may not have otherwise included (such as Dalit groups) and that they identified vulnerable individuals who required additional assistance.

Each of Concern's partner organisations attempted to verify these lists to a certain extent, but the distances and spread of households, as well as the inaccessibility created by earthquake damage and monsoon weather, made this impractical to achieve in a timely manner. Instead, extensive discussions were held with VDC representatives, and RRN in Dolakha did seek to cross-check VDC level data to that held by the nearby Tamagoshi Power Plant (who had distributed shares to households in the districts) and the Open Defecation Free (ODF) project data. Whilst this approach brings risk of exclusion, mitigating measures used ensured that inclusion rather than exclusion errors were more likely, a risk deemed worth taking in order to ensure timely distributions could occur.

Some confusion was also generated due to households with multiple families wishing to split following the earthquake. Agreement was reached that had a 'family' had a separate kitchen (but within the same household) prior to the earthquake they would be counted as a separate household for response purposes. Other issues arose as people with multiple houses across Nepal returned to claim assistance, even if their house elsewhere was relatively unaffected, and those that had migrated to new locations were not always sure which location they should claim assistance from.

Findings from the household level demonstrate the approach taken to programme participant selection was successful, with only limited households complaining they missed out on distributions, most of which were resolved following a verification process (conducted jointly between the VDC and Concern's partner organisation) after the main distribution in any given location. Whilst it would have been largely impossible for Concern to take a different approach, and whilst some individuals believe the red-card approach resulted in too many households receiving unnecessary assistance, it was a very participative approach which is believed to have limited conflict between communities and assistance providers, particularly where a communal culture exists<sup>15</sup>. Past experience of government led assessments in Nepal, aimed at providing a targeted response, have reportedly taken a significant time to complete, inhibiting the timeliness of the response considerably. Given the rapidly approaching monsoon season and the condition which people were living in, this was an appropriate approach in trying to achieve a timely, conflict-free response.

### Programme Components

The response activities undertaken by Concern were felt to be very appropriate, which both the communities themselves, as well as other stakeholders, agree with. The immediate needs of affected populations were initially anticipated from previous experience and secondary information, identifying that people would need to keep dry, warm and clean, leading to the design of the comprehensive Concern NFI

<sup>14</sup> Most VDC and district level officials, as well as partner staff, report this as one of the most significant obstructions to mounting an effective response, and that it is something they need to improve on for future emergencies

<sup>15</sup> In Garimudi, the issue of which households were eligible to count as separate households for transitional shelter distributions caused community disagreements that took nearly 3 months to resolve prior to the distribution commencing.

kit. All stakeholders consulted as part of this evaluation agree that shelter and basic items were the highest priority for everyone, followed by food. Water availability, although initially expected to be a substantial need, was not significantly affected by the earthquake and, as a result, Concern cancelled an order for water purification tablets once more detailed data became available.

Once the immediate needs had been taken care of, the onset of the monsoon season and upcoming winter months meant that more durable shelter became a priority for individuals. Assessments for the transitional shelter programme were conducted through focus group discussions held during the NFI distributions, and this component of Concern's response activities has had the most significant impact for assisted populations.

A more detailed assessment was undertaken before deciding to focus on WASH activities in Sindhuli and the temporary learning centres in Dolakha. Fewer organisations were understandably focusing on WASH, but given the capacity of Concern's partner, NEWAH – a WASH focused organisation – and the progress already made across the country towards achieving open defecation free status, it was very relevant to engage in such interventions where needed. Education was identified as less of an immediate priority than shelter, but many parents and teachers cited the psychological impact of the earthquake as being a significant problem, and the fact that being able to return to school allowed children and adults alike to regain a sense of normalcy following the earthquake. Parents feel obligated to educate their children, as they want them to be able to access more opportunities when they grow up, and so this remains a continuing priority for them.

### **The Effectiveness of the Intervention: Was it done well?**

The Nepalese operating environment, over the period of the initial response programme, was not the most conducive for implementing an effective and timely response. Environmentally, the country suffered a month of continued and significant aftershocks as well as the onset of the monsoon season, which, combined with the mountainous terrain, earthquake damage and spread of households, ensured that many already remote locations became inaccessible. Governmentally, the country was unprepared for a significant earthquake (despite years of predictions), and so chaotic coordination, unreliable population data and political agendas threatened to undermine needs-based interventions. Logistically, lack of availability of quality materials, inefficient import regulations, the volume of goods imported, and a blockade along the Indian border (leading to fuel/transport shortages) all conspired to prevent an effective response.

In addition, Concern was not registered in country until August (despite submitting the appropriate paperwork very soon after arriving in country), which presented added complications, preventing the hiring of staff locally, the opening of bank accounts and the lease of office and accommodation facilities. However, despite the numerous constraints, all of which required constant, creative adaptation to work through, the Concern programme was able to achieve its planned results, albeit with some delays and project extensions.

### **Programme Design**

#### ***NFI and Transitional Shelter Materials***

The Concern response opted for distribution of material items to address shelter and basic needs. Some organisations, such as the Red Cross, prioritised cash distributions instead (particularly for transitional shelter) and reported very high satisfaction levels with this approach. However, all the community-level stakeholders consulted as part of this evaluation, except one, declared they preferred receiving materials directly. Not only did they receive higher quality materials than they may otherwise have been able to purchase (or did purchase in some cases), they also believed that the right goods weren't available in the markets at the time, and that people may have misused the money they were given<sup>16</sup>. The cost to travel to markets to purchase and then transport materials home would also have been very high, eroding the purchasing power of any cash distributions. One woman also reported that she was not in a position

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<sup>16</sup> It is possible that those questioned, whether they received cash or materials, were not able to compare to the prospect of having received the alternative, and so have some bias in reporting their preference

psychologically to travel anywhere to try and find goods to buy following the trauma of the earthquake and her concern for the safety of her children. Her appreciation of receiving material goods was very evident.

The distribution of NFI kits in Dolakha and Sindhuli, and of transitional shelter materials in Dolakha, were implemented very effectively. Programme participants and authorities alike commented consistently on how well organised, calm and systematic the distribution process was, unlike those implemented by some other organisations (some of which suffered looting and conflict issues). The District Office in Sindhuli suggested other organisations should follow the same approach in future, and both RRN and NEWAH received positive feedback from district stakeholders at the time of the distributions. This was achieved as a result of having sufficiently experienced Concern staff deployed at the start of the response and situated in the districts alongside the partner staff. The delay in bringing goods into the country, despite the obvious frustration this created, did allow Concern and the partner organisations to discuss and practice how best to run their own distributions, and to observe the problems arising from those of other organisations. RRN also reviewed their distribution approach part way through both the NFI and shelter distributions, in order to improve the process where possible.

Distributions were also designed in such a way as to prioritise vulnerable people – elderly, disabled and those living furthest from the distribution sites – allowing them to receive items first. Further provisions were made during the distribution of the transitional shelter materials (consisting of heavy and bulky items), by using multiple distributions sites in each VDC (to distribute items closer to individual's houses) and to pay for labour support for any vulnerable individuals who were not able to find a way to transport the items themselves. The VDC and Ward Citizen Forum representatives were responsible for identifying who these people were, and for the most part, individuals had family members or neighbours who were able to assist. Not all community members, including a group of elderly citizens, were aware of this provision (with some saying they had to fund transport themselves), but ultimately no one reported that they really struggled to transport their goods home.

### ***Temporary Learning Centres***

The support to schools through the construction of 'temporary learning centres' (temporary classrooms within school boundaries – TLCs) was undertaken as a second phase activity within the initial response period, being agreed towards the end of June. Initially the project planned to cover 47 schools, but RRN found they were able to purchase more supplies for the money available. Once they were in a position to begin implementation (after suffering significant delays due to the border blockade and the difficulty of importing and transporting the goods required), the team found that some targeted schools had already received some external assistance in building TLCs. In light of both factors the project was reoriented to provide the same number of classrooms (392) but over a larger number of schools (63). Although this did cause further delays, it did eventually support a wider number of communities.

Whilst this project clearly proved valuable to teachers and pupils, the evaluation assessed that there were gaps in the approach taken to the project design that would have increased the quality of the project outcome. A variety of different TLC designs were seen during the evaluation, and various drawbacks have been noted about the different designs (e.g. bamboo walls are draughty and noisy; CGI sheet roofs are cold in winter, hot in summer, noisy during rainfall and form significant condensation at various times of the year; CGI walls are not flat so difficult to hang learning materials on). The project relied on schools determining for themselves, with RRN support to some extent, the types of materials they required to build the TLCs, based on their own 'design'. Had standard design options been proposed by RRN, with details to mitigate the basic issues experienced (e.g. a simple plywood ceiling protects from condensation drops and reduces the noise from the CGI roof) higher quality, and therefore longer lasting, TLCs would have been achieved. RRN commented that the project development period for this intervention was too quick, and done without a proper assessment. Greater time and technical input from Concern staff at the project design stage should have ensured the opportunity for an improved outcome was not missed.

The model school approach (10 schools given more support to construct the classrooms to a higher standard as a 'showcase' for other schools in the VDC), was a commendable one and achieves greater sustainability of

resources used. But again, limited technical design input and support from RRN/Concern has meant these classrooms are not as high a quality as they could be, and therefore not fully achieving their intended aim.

### **WASH**

For all WASH components of the response Sphere standards appear to have been respected. WASH activities in Sindhuli focused on temporary latrines and bathing areas for those whose facilities had been destroyed by the earthquake. This wasn't the largest component of the relief programme. However, as Nepal had already made strong advances in terms of moving people away from open defecation, the provision of simple latrines and bathing areas was a relatively straightforward element for the community to accept, although the concept of communal latrines was initially rejected as people were used to household latrines. Many of the facilities had been dismantled by the time of the evaluation as families had been able to rebuild their own.

The Gyachowk WASH project, which commenced in June, focused on repairing the water supply system, extending it to a group of community members who had resettled following the earthquake, and ensuring everyone in the VDC had access to a temporary latrine. The high impact of this project is clear (see 'Impact' section). However, whilst the WASH cluster were clear that provision of temporary latrines was the way forward at this point, the approach taken resulted in the majority of households rebuilding their damaged latrines using existing techniques/approaches<sup>17</sup>. This has resulted in structures that are not temporary, but ones that are not earthquake resistant either. Given the declaration by the WASH cluster to focus on temporary latrines, and the fact that many people were living in temporary shelters and hadn't yet determined the exact locations they would rebuild their houses, this project should have focused on temporary latrines only. It seems that NEWAH may have misunderstood the cluster requirement, but there also appears to be a lack of technical input/guidance from Concern staff during the project design/agreement phase to ensure an appropriate approach was taken.

### **Accountability**

In accordance with Common Humanitarian Standard #4 (Humanitarian Response is based on communication, participation and feedback) it was found that good practice was largely following, as far as was possible, in Concern's response programme. The key area lacking was around feedback to programme participant groups, beyond the participative resolution of complaints and conflicts. In-depth post-implementation monitoring was not carried out for most response activities, and so there was limited formal learning to be shared with communities or other stakeholders.

### **Community Engagement**

The Concern programme, implemented through NEWAH and RRN, sought to engage with the affected communities to as great an extent as possible in the initial phases, taking into consideration the limitations of time/speed, distance, accessibility and security considerations. As both partners are very experienced in development approaches, this likely ensured that community engagement was a higher priority than might otherwise have been. Particularly in the early stages, partners held community meetings with the VDC representatives to request the development of accurate programme participant lists. If any problems arose, as in the case of Garimudi VDC, discussions continued until they were resolved, ensuring that distributions themselves proceeded smoothly. VDC representatives were also on hand at distributions to help verify the identity of individuals, ensure vulnerable people were served first and assist them as required, and to review and verify any complaints received. Despite being unable to undertake assessments in the early stages of the response, distributions of NFI kits were used as an opportunity to hold focus group discussions with community members regarding the design of the transitional shelter project.

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<sup>17</sup> Some of the last latrines to be constructed, in the newly settled site, are temporary ones (using CGI sheet); this change was instigated after a monitoring visit from Concern suggested traditional masonry structures were not the most appropriate design

All VDCs in Dolakha were content with RRN's approach and behaviour, and in Gyachowk the VDC representatives stated that NEWAH were very transparent, explained everything clearly and that it was very rare to find an organisation in which they could have such confidence. One factor to consider in this finding is that of the lack of women in positions of authority within a VDC, and the understanding that women do still regard themselves as less able than men when it comes to representation. However, the sentiment of satisfaction was largely echoed when talking to individual women at household level during the evaluation, so there is confidence in the findings. In future, it would be sensible for this aspect to be more actively considered and catered for in programmes and responses.

School management groups were delighted at the full involvement they had in the decision making process regarding the TLC construction, for which they were requested to provide local materials and source local labour to complete the work. The communities benefitting from WASH interventions were also requested to contribute local materials and labour where possible, and NEWAH ensured technical capacity building for households was integrated into the programme design. Whilst this engagement alone was not sufficient to ensure results were achieved, it did ensure implementation of the different projects progressed as smoothly as possible, despite multiple other hindrance factors. Interestingly, it seems that such community engagement was easier in the early response but has since deteriorated, as political affiliations and personal agenda's common in Nepal once again come into play.

### ***Information Sharing***

Communities were informed, through the VDC representatives, that they would receive assistance. Community expectations were understandably high in many areas, and RRN tried to mitigate this by explaining the extent of their funding/materials and exactly what could be expected from them. The VDC representatives knew up to 15 days in advance of the first distributions taking place. However, in most cases, the community members report only being informed a day or a few hours ahead of time that a distribution was occurring. Some individuals only found out once the distribution had started, and some people reported they would have liked to have known in advance what they were to receive in order to make more informed decisions about what they focused their own self-recovery efforts on. Given the extent of the spread of households in mountainous, difficult to access areas, it is unsurprising that it was difficult for messages to be communicated, and that the partners had to rely on community representatives (VDC members, Ward Citizen forum representatives, teachers) to spread the information. However, greater clarity of expectations of community representatives may have improved this process.

### ***Complaints***

Complaints response mechanisms were established by both partners during distributions and for WASH activities in the case of NEWAH. RRN's system focused on a complaints desk at each distribution, details of which were contained on a banner as well as communicated by megaphone throughout the distributions. RRN staff assisted people who couldn't write to document their complaints. NEWAH had a very similar system, but also provided a phone number for the period of the initial relief activities, allowing individuals to submit complaints both during and after distributions if required. Given that individuals didn't really have an opportunity to fully examine or test items before they transported them home, this was a sensible additional element to have in place which would have been appropriate for RRN to put in place also. Most individuals interviewed reported that they were not aware of how to raise a complaint had they needed to, although this may be due to the period of time that has elapsed since the response. Some VDC representatives were aware they could have contacted partners' regional offices, and as both partners have continued to work in the targeted locations, it is anticipated this channel would have been utilised had it been required. NEWAH have since stated they would increase the number of ways in which they communicate about the complaints mechanism in future – to include handing out cards and SMS messaging.

Ultimately, it appeared that people had very limited complaints. Those submitted at the time of distributions largely related to households having been missed off the distribution lists (which is felt was predominantly due to the issue of multiple families, each with a separate kitchen, living in the same household), an issue which was discussed and verified, through the VDC representatives and partner staff, at

the end of each distribution. Follow-up monitoring activities by Concern staff (visits to households to verify materials received) found few complaints. Interviews with household members as part of the evaluation process also revealed very few complaints about the overall assistance received (items, process or behaviour of partner staff) with most individuals appreciative of the process and very thankful for the items or support they received. The fact they didn't need to complain may also explain why they didn't know how to.

### **Programme Participant Protection Policy**

Whilst current Concern staff are knowledgeable as to Concern's Programme Participant Protection Policy (P4)<sup>18</sup>, and clear on how they would report an issue should they suspect one, there remains almost no understanding of the P4 amongst RRN and NEWAH staff. Only the lead figure of each organisation recollected the agreement being appended to the contract that was signed between themselves and Concern, but the details of the policy had not been shared with other staff members. Both RRN and NEWAH have a code of conduct for their own staff, which it is believed contains some elements around avoiding exploitation, although it is not believed this goes into the same detail as the Concern policy. Also, only one VDC seemed aware of NEWAH's own Code of Conduct. Wider sharing of what communities could expect from both RRN and NEWAH would have strengthened the level of accountability during the response.

### **Coordination**

The government led 'one door' policy was more of a thinly veiled intervention approval process than a coordination mechanism, at least in the first stages of the response. It was initially very difficult to negotiate for space through this mechanism, and many other organisations cited coordination as the biggest challenge, with central level policies being interpreted in different ways at the district level. However, many agencies, including Concern, made significant attempts to contribute to the coordination process and, in doing so, were progressively able to guide and influence, to different extents, the approach and decisions taken by the District Disaster Relief Committees (DDRC) and the cluster groups. RRN and NEWAH were very familiar with navigating the complexities of government relationships and, under some technical guidance from Concern, were therefore able to contribute to the coordination process quite significantly – the District Education Office (DEO) in Dolakha praising RRN for its continued engagement with them. Some duplication occurred in the areas of distribution, but this appears relatively limited, and when raised with the relevant coordination body solutions were easily determined through collaborative discussion. In this respect the Concern programme did appear to benefit from the coordination mechanisms in place, as well as from the effective police/military support available during the first phase of NFI distributions.

Ultimately, there was very little choice but to engage in the coordination process. Several Concern staff members raised the question of whether Concern was visible enough at the national and district level coordination forums, suggesting that whilst it was important for the partner organisations to be engaging around the programme, relationship development through such networking opportunities may have better facilitated the process of approvals faced later in the programme's lifetime.

## **The Efficiency of the Intervention: Were resources used well?**

### **People – Staffing and Management**

The advantages of having to work through local NGO organisations were significant in the Nepal context – access to cultural, political and geographical understanding in what is a particularly complex operating environment, as well as established relationships with communities and government stakeholders which enabled response activities to get up and running quicker than they might have done through direct programming. However, whilst Nepal's national NGOs had strong capacity from a development perspective, they had limited experience in relief activities, particularly at the required scale. This was largely mitigated

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<sup>18</sup> The P4 is included as part of the recruitment process, being distributed to those asked for interview, and questions asked at the interview stage. New staff are asked to sign the P4 as part of their contract agreement, and are given an induction once they start

by ensuring experienced Concern staff were available to provide technical response support to both organisations. In terms of staffing levels, RRN struggled to ensure enough staff in the initial distribution period, but were up to full capacity by the time the transitional shelter distributions took place. NEWAH felt they had enough staff, especially given the capacity development support they received from Concern.

## **RRN**

Whilst RRN is the stronger and larger of the two partner organisations<sup>19</sup>, the relationship experienced some difficulties during the response period. Discussions and agreements made at the national level initially appeared to be mutually agreeable, but it appears those understandings did not sufficiently filter down from staff in Kathmandu to those at district level, making it difficult for both RRN and Concern staff to develop effective working relationships at the start of the response, particularly around logistics and field-level programmes. This was resolved within a week, but further complications arose regarding RRN's adherence to required processes and procedures, particularly regarding procurement. RRN management seem to regard Concern as more of a donor than a partner, stating they were confident their systems and processes were appropriate, and that once an agreement has been made Concern should trust the organisation to complete the activities, rather than 'interfering'. However, both RRN management and field staff recognise that they benefitted significantly from the technical support and capacity building provided by Concern, which possibly indicates there was not fully compatible understanding as to the expectations and responsibilities between both organisations.

It is still unclear where the problem lay in this situation, but is likely a combination of the fact that Concern's work was not their highest priority given the high levels of funding they received from elsewhere; all discussions were being channelled through a single person in RRN; the depth of the initial discussions regarding the nature of the partnership and the roles, expectations and requirements (e.g. procurement procedures) were not as extensive and/or documented as much as they might have been; there was not a strategy in place to ensure agreements were communicated effectively to all partner staff; there was a significant turnover of Response/Country Director, undermining the ability of Concern to fully implement previous agreements and hold RRN accountable to their commitments. Whilst some challenges with the 'personality' of RRN were anticipated from the start, and some of the identified issues were difficult to mitigate in the chaotic set up of a new response operation, it is felt that, regardless of the approach taken, Concern would always have to compromise with RRN to ensure relief activities were completed. Ultimately, the problems experienced at the management level with RRN have had limited impact on the quality of the response operation. However, there was a significant risk this could have been the case, and so strategies that may help mitigate this eventuality in future humanitarian partnerships are required.

## **NEWAH**

The relationship with NEWAH was more straightforward, and appears to be much more of an effective partnership-based association. NEWAH recognised their lack of capacity in mounting an effective response, and requested operational support both in terms of procurement (Concern implemented this directly), and technical support to establish and manage distributions. They have been a very strong technical partner since the WASH-related projects began, requiring much less technical support, although findings detailed elsewhere indicate that greater technical input at project development stage would have improved the outcome of the Gyachowk project. Concern staff report NEWAH were willing and able to engage and learn, ensuring a relatively smooth relationship which assisted in ensuring quality work could be achieved. During the evaluation process they also showed their commitment to accountability and learning by absenting themselves voluntarily from certain key informant interviews and group discussions so as to ensure that discussions could be as open and frank as possible.

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<sup>19</sup> RRN also had significant funding from both DFID and Welthungerhilfe

## Concern

Overall Concern ensured a sufficient number of appropriately experienced staff were deployed to the first phase of the initial response, with several of the core team having had significant recent experience in Nepal and others with strong technical, communications and coordination skills. There were some gaps in staffing levels when transitioning through staffing phases which added pressure on those remaining, reduced the support to partners at the field level, and may explain the limited technical input in the development of the TLC and Gyachowk WASH projects. But largely the team appears to have reacted quickly and appropriately to a changing context, adjusting focus locations, adapting transport plans and reframing projects when necessary. Both RRN and NEWAH staff are highly appreciative of the relationships and support received at that stage, both at Kathmandu and district level. RRN management commented that Concern were very quick and participatory during the initial stages, and others have cited the work of key individuals as ensuring that the response was effective, particularly in the early stages. There is evidence that navigating some partner relations proved difficult at various points in the initial response phase, and it should be remembered that working through partners often requires a different skills set to implementing direct programmes. Whilst Concern had staff with strong partner experience at various points during the response, ensuring stronger staff awareness regarding how best to work through partners may have eased some of the issues encountered.

Two significant staffing issues were identified. Firstly the turnover in the senior leadership position, initially Response Director, followed by Country Director. In the first five months of the response, five different people were in charge of the programme for varying times<sup>20</sup>, and the impact on both staff and partners has been significant. It is thought that this may also have impacted to some extent on the ability of Concern to secure the required registration and programme approvals as developing and maintaining relationships with government stakeholders is seen as crucial to operating effectively in the Nepalese context<sup>21</sup>. Staff involved in the later stages of the relief period, and those still associated with the programme, have expressed their exhaustion and frustration at having to adjust to new personalities and learn new ways of working, as well as cited multiple instances when previous agreements were not upheld or were overturned. Both RRN and NEWAH management have cited the regular change of Country Director as problematic for maintaining a strong working relationship.

Such a turnover in the leadership of the programme, whilst often unavoidable in the very first stages of a new response, can have a detrimental effect on staff morale, and undermine the ability of the programme to effectively follow-through on decisions/agreements made in a rapidly changing response environment. This becomes even more significant when dealing with partner organisations, as it limits the ability of the programme to hold the partner to account for agreements already made, with the risk that it will also prompt the partner to further pursue their own agenda as the relationship progresses. In the Nepalese context these issues are exacerbated even further by the complex political environment in which partners are known to not be fully neutral organisations, where government control and authorisation of activities is extensive, and because government staff are regularly moved to different positions in different locations. Given this, consistent leadership is crucial to achieve desired goals and fully capitalise on opportunities.

The second observation made by the evaluator, based on experience from other response programmes, is that there was a lack of an experienced Nepalese person(s) as a consistent part of the team during the first four months of the response period. Whilst it was not possible to hire any local staff directly until registration was approved, given that Concern was establishing a new operation in a known complex environment, a 'liaison' function is normally invaluable. Whilst the programme did make use of Concern experienced Nepalese staff at various times, the Nepalese Programme Officer deployed in June was not fully utilised in terms of helping to navigate the complex working environment and developing strong relationships with key officials. Although difficult to prove, it is felt that placing someone in such a 'liaison' position may have better facilitated relationships and future agreements with government and, to some extent, with partners, a fact which a number of response staff agree with. At the very least, it would have

<sup>20</sup> This high turnover at Country Director level has also continued to the current time, although not at the same rate

<sup>21</sup> Although most organisations have struggled in similar ways with gaining programme approvals from the government

provided consistency in terms of key external relationship management throughout the turnover of the top management position.

A further issue has been identified around the initial safety and security processes in place following the first earthquake. In any earthquake situation, as in this instance, a significant number of powerful aftershocks are likely to follow the initial earthquake; this period lasted more than a month in this case. Whilst staff felt they had strong briefings and support upon arrival in Kathmandu, they were less sure how they should best be mitigating the risks after arriving in the districts. The most significant aftershock, centred on Dolakha district, resulted in the programme identifying that appropriate communications and emergency equipment had not been sufficiently considered for staff in the field. Whilst no one was hurt at that time, and this was rectified quickly, such issues should have been identified and catered for at the start of the response.

### Materials – Logistics

Procurement and transport of relief materials was one of the most difficult elements of the response operation. Initially, minimal availability of low quality supplies in-country meant it was necessary to seek appropriate supplies internationally. Concern was able to access the initial relief goods (NFI kits) from a number of different sources – goods in kind (GIK) from Irish Aid, coming from their storage hub in Dubai; newly purchased kits in India, on their way to be stored in the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) in Dubai, but rerouted directly to the Nepal response; additional kits purchase through the same suppliers in India; and, additionally, an agreement that RRN would directly purchase 40% (approximately 4,000) of the kits they intended to distribute. As delays to both air and road transport were possible, both transport methods were used in order to try and get some items into the country as soon as possible.

The constraints faced were outside of Concern's control, and this evaluation has not identified alternative approaches that would have yielded a better result. By ensuring items came from different sources, and that different forms of transport were initiated simultaneously, the programme covered all possible contingency options. Logistics staff positioned in Kathmandu and the border crossing area helped to smooth the transport of goods as far as was possible. However, both flight and road transport options experienced significant delays and frustrations. Kathmandu airport had reduced capacity following the earthquake, and the process for incoming flight approval was convoluted. Landing slots were assigned randomly and couldn't be matched up to departure slots from the flight's point of origin. After several attempts, flight options were abandoned and all goods were sent by road from India. However, this also suffered difficulties with customs at the border, delays from the sheer volume of relief goods being imported, and the need to transfer items as Indian trucks were not allowed into the country. Ultimately, the RRN purchased kits arrived first.

Further transport problems were faced in procuring the transitional shelter kits (CGI sheet and tools), and materials for the TLCs. The border blockade, occurring in protest to the newly created national constitution, began hindering import of goods from India from about June, and slowly also began to affect the availability of locally manufactured goods (often reliant on raw materials from India), as well as significantly reducing the availability of fuel, limiting the ability to transport items. This caused both projects to require extensions

Later in the response period, difficulties were faced with RRN over the procurement of CGI sheet, with Concern identifying a risk of putting such a large order through a supplier previously untested at that scale. RRN, though, was adamant they wanted to use their own pre-determined supplier (selected through an annual process, and thus pre-earthquake, rather than per project), despite initially participating in an open procurement process with Concern. It is likely this issue originated as a result of several factors – driven by an underlying agreed relationship between RRN and the supplier in question, and compounded by a lack of clarity over who was ultimately responsible for procurement in this instance, and RRNs lack of clarity over exact procedure requirements at the point of agreeing the partnership. The issue was further complicated when the then-Country Director, who, against the recommendation of the logistics team, passed responsibility for procurement to RRN. This may have undermined Concern's position to insist on RRN systems compliance going forwards. Delays to the distribution process were experienced as the supplier could not meet the high demand in a short period of time. However, the CGI sheet was ultimately of very good quality and the full order was delivered at an acceptable cost. Ultimately, the risk of a sub-quality

response appears to have been significant, and so it is important to identify measures that might mitigate such an occurrence in future.

NEWAH also commented that they ran into some problems adhering to Concern's procurement process, as they weren't fully aware of the requirements. Ultimately the problem was resolved, but they would have appreciated a stronger orientation on required procedures earlier in the process. Despite the numerous problems faced, NEWAH was very satisfied with Concern's logistics support, and the RRN logistics officer very much appreciated Concern's assistance in establishing good systems and paperwork for the transport, storage and distribution of goods. The quality of items/materials procured, across the board, was very good, allowing the programme to achieve a strong impact for those it assisted.

### Money – Finance

A good amount of initial funding, of a flexible nature, was available to the initial response activities, totalling €4.36 million, of which approximately half was raised through general donations, a third from DEC and the rest from small donors. This enabled flexibility in the programme as required, and reduced the requirement for arduous reporting and constant re-budgeting. However, once the international response to the disaster was mounted it became clear that additional bilateral funding was limited, as much of this was instead being channelled directly through the Nepalese government. Two consortium-based funding bids presented by Alliance 2015 members (a necessary approach given Concern's lack of registration at the time) also failed to receive funding, despite strong verbal interest from donors. There were more activities the programme could have engaged in, mostly notably around livelihoods and disaster management capacity building, and staff in both Concern and RRN felt able to scale up had the funding been available.

This programme has achieved a cost per beneficiary of just under €55 per person. Whilst this is not spread evenly over all those benefiting from the programme, given the impacts of the programme, the clear preference for receiving goods rather than cash, the quality of the items/materials distributed, and the transport requirements to reach people in remote, mountainous communities it is felt this represents good value for money.

### Timeliness

The earthquake hit on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2015. Concern had staff on the ground by the 28<sup>th</sup> April, and by 30<sup>th</sup> April had partner agreements verbally in place and decisions on which districts to work in. Due to the delays in bringing goods into the country, distributions didn't begin as quickly as those from other organisations in certain locations. The first distribution occurred in Sindhupalchok, 2 weeks following the earthquake using NFI kits procured by RRN, and distributions in Dolakha began just after the large aftershock that hit on the 12<sup>th</sup> May, 3 weeks after the initial earthquake. As relief items were taking time to arrive in-country, distributions in Dolakha were prioritised first, given the higher level of need and the increased capacity of RRN. Distributions followed in Sindhuli, reportedly the first items that some communities received. All NFI distributions were completed within approximately 6 weeks of the earthquake, with the delays due to the time taken for goods to arrive. The delays were turned to advantage, building the capacity of partner staff in setting up and running distributions (even running 'mock' distributions in Sindhuli), which likely contributed to achieving more 'calm and organised' distributions than those of some other organisations.

Programme participants in both Dolakha and Sindhuli had mixed views about the timing of the NFI distributions, with many saying they came at a good time, and others commenting they arrived a bit late. However, most people added that they understood the effort and time required to bring the items, with one man adding that they wouldn't have been able to acquire them themselves. Some staff have also expressed concern that people waited too long for relief items, and a question was raised as to whether a smaller package of the most essential items (tarpaulin, blankets, mats) should have been procured and distributed first, followed by the more extensive package, in order to speed up the process. However, there was no certainty these goods would have arrived any quicker, and given the terrain and difficulty of access due the encroaching monsoon season, a double distribution process may have proved impossible to achieve. Ultimately, programme participants appear to have been very satisfied with the comprehensive kit they

received, particularly in comparison to VDCs covered by other organisations who also requested that RRN and NEWAH provide them assistance instead.

For the transitional shelter kits (CGI sheet and tools), in contrast, the majority of individuals interviewed felt these had arrived a bit late. These kits were distributed approximately 5-6 months following the earthquake. RRN staff report that it took time to finalise the project initially (the agreement was signed towards the end of June), followed by the procurement process suffering delays both in identifying the supplier, and in receiving the supplies themselves, before delays in distribution occurred due to the lack of available transport and access problems caused by the monsoon season. Many of the constraints faced by this element of the response were outside the control of Concern or RRN staff, and not dissimilar to the delays experienced by other organisations. However, the project agreement delays and supplier selection issues (detailed above) certainly did contribute to the delay.

For the TLCs there were some mixed views, but the majority of schools interviewed, as well as the DEO in Dolakha, were content this work had been completed at a good time. This element of the project did require an extension, but the constraints faced were again beyond the control of RRN and Concern, with the primary issue faced being that of the border blockade. This issue also affected the ability of the WASH project in Gyachowk to transport the required goods, as limited transport was available due to the fuel crisis.

### **The Impact and Sustainability of the Intervention: What difference did it make, and will it last?**

The period of the response programme under review focused mostly on enabling people to meet their basic needs following the earthquake; further interventions not included in this evaluation have supported communities in recovery and rehabilitation. As a result, there are limited impacts in terms of improving resilience and reducing vulnerabilities to future shocks, and limited opportunities to ensure sustainability in the interventions carried out.

Overall, the objectives of the various relief projects have been achieved. Programme participants are incredibly appreciative of the assistance received, with some worrying that they are too much in debt to the humanitarian community, and won't be able to repay them, in this life or the next! An additional impact which shouldn't be underestimated is the capacity that has been built within two of Nepal's strongest NGOs, which both now have the skills and the confidence to respond to future disasters.

### **Programme Value**

#### **NFIs**

Unanimously, everyone interviewed at community level as part of this evaluation appreciated the NFI package they received, particularly in terms of the usefulness and quality of the kits, with everyone saying they were still using the items received. Most people cited the tarpaulins as the most useful items, corresponding to the situation people experienced following the earthquake – that of living in open spaces with no shelter, many in rainy conditions. This was closely followed by the mats and blankets, as well as the solar light (which is still used by many even now) as communities had been without power for a significant time following the earthquake.

Everyone reported that the majority of items within the NFIs kits were useful, with tarpaulins, blankets, mats and solar lights consistently identified as the most useful (although this varied a little depending to what extent people had been able to salvage items from their damaged houses). The least useful item was the toilet roll (not culturally used in the affected locations), and less so the toothbrush/toothpaste. Everyone also commented on the quality of the kits, with the only items reported damaged being a few jerry cans and some tarpaulins. As the jerry cans were the semi-collapsible variety it is not surprising that extensive use would result in damage, although most people said they were still able to use them. Tarpaulins were reported to be of very good quality, especially when compared to some of the ones received from the government or other organisations (some reported to have not lasted more than 20 days). Through observation of the items people had, it was clear that some were not in everyday use, and others had been

used (presumably at the time they were required) and then put away as people began to recover. Some families in Sindhuli commented that, as they were now more aware of what was needed in the event of such a disaster, they were storing items such as the tarpaulins as part of an emergency kit, ready to use if needed.

Households reported that receiving the items allowed them to live more comfortably following the earthquake, affording them some protection from the wind, rain and sun after living under the open sky. One mother observed that she was very worried about her children's health whilst they were living outside, and so the mats and blankets were a welcome way to protect them from the cold.

### ***Transitional Shelter Materials***

The CGI sheet and toolkit were the most valued assistance received. Every community visited as part of this evaluation was seen comprising of numerous styles of temporary shelter, all constructed to some extent with CGI sheet. In many cases this is only temporarily fixed in place, with rocks or rope for instance, in order that it can be used in rebuilding their permanent houses, and so contributing in a small way to an improved future. The quality of the CGI sheet was expressed as significantly better than anything they could, or did, acquire for themselves, anticipating it would last 20-25 years, as opposed to standard quality which may last only 10 years. Ultimately this has allowed people to live much more comfortably, and securely, than they were able to in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, protecting them and, in some cases, their animals, from the elements, and better enabling household activities such as cooking. It is worth noting that although no complaints were received about the CGI sheets, comments were made about how they can become very hot in summer and very cold in winter. This was the standard material for transitional shelter kits, determined by the national authorities, and readily available in the quantities Nepal required following the earthquake. However, future responses may want to consider alternative options, such as corrugated PVC sheets, which are now becoming available.

***'You gave us good quality materials. Had we not had that we wouldn't have been able to build for ourselves' Mother, Birkhot***

The toolkit appears to be the item(s) most valued by households. All tools observed were still in good condition, and appear to be of a quality that will last a significant amount of time. The kit is comprehensive, although some commented the addition of a rock-breaking hammer (to create the gravel they use for concrete) would have been helpful. But households are most grateful for the fact that they now have the tools they need readily available to start rebuilding their houses as, previously, they would need to try and borrow items from others in the community. It is clear that the tools were used to a certain extent to clear destroyed houses and construct temporary shelters, but their real value lies in enabling people to rebuild going forwards, something they are understandably pre-occupied with and is likely to take a good amount of time. As they are concerned the government grants will not be sufficient to pay for the required materials and labour, the fact that they do not also have to source tools (which would have likely been of lesser quality had they done so) means the project has achieved a measure of lasting impact. In addition, skilled construction workers have benefitted further from the tools, enabling them to restart their own livelihoods and assist in the rebuilding effort in their own communities.

### ***TLCs***

School management groups and the District Education Office in Dolakha (DEO) have all expressed their gratefulness at the assistance received, and clearly value both the intervention and the approach taken by RRN to achieve it. The TLCs visited as part of this review were all in use, apart from 2 which had collapsed as a result of being built on a cliffside that later collapsed. The temporary classrooms allowed classes to move back inside (from open spaces under tarpaulin sheets) into spaces that were more comfortable, protected children from the elements, offered better security from animals and individuals in the wider community, and reduced distractions from noise and other classes. Having walls also allowed for better use of teaching equipment and materials, such as whiteboards and posters. Teachers noticed the difference in pupils' concentration levels as a result, observing that the classrooms have helped to reduce anxiety, made them feel more secure, and 'made their minds more comfortable', allowing them to engage more effectively in learning activities.

Some school management groups anticipated that they may have to use the temporary classrooms for up to 7 years before schools can be rebuilt. In a significant disaster, this timescale for rebuilding is not uncommon, and although a project may be looking to provide 'temporary' facilities, it should be envisaged that this will likely mean they will be used for at least 5 years. Whilst this project has achieved a strong impact over the short term, it has missed an opportunity to ensure a better quality of design/construction that would ensure sustainability until such a time as rebuilding funds are acquired.

### **WASH**

The temporary WASH facilities in Sindhuli were reported to have provided privacy and ease of bathing for families in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake. Many of the facilities have now been dismantled, meaning household level facilities have been reconstructed, and that the interventions were designed accordingly for the length of time they were required.

In Gyachowk, the extension of the water supply system and the provision of latrines has enabled the community to once again reach ODF status, something they are proud of and incredibly grateful for. One man reported that he was no longer able to farm at one point, as everyone was using his fields for open defecation; he is now able to farm again. Many women found the lack of privacy and security difficult after losing their latrines, an issue that has now been eliminated. A woman reported that her father was no longer constantly sick after the latrines were rebuilt, and a mother commented on how she didn't have to take her youngest child to the hospital anywhere near as often as her previous children. No-one interviewed could remember the last time they were sick, and no children had missed school in the previous week.

The only concern regarding this project is that the majority of the latrines have been built using a traditional design, which is not earthquake resistant. This presents a risk to people in the event of a future earthquake, which could have been avoided by following the cluster recommendation to focus on temporary latrines structures. This would also have been more appropriate in the period before families rebuild their permanent houses, as is it likely they will want to relocate latrines at a future point in time.

## **Conclusions & Recommendations**

Despite significant challenges, Concern has implemented a solid response programme to address the initial needs of those affected by the Nepal earthquake. With a focus on the less well served areas affected by the earthquake, Concern has sought to ensure greater equality of assistance across the affected populations, and in so doing has also allowed itself greater space in which to mount an effective response. Despite restrictions on community and programme participant selection, Concern's partners have sought to engage the communities in as participatory an approach as possible, particularly in determining recipients of relief items and design of temporary learning centres.

Despite delays to the procurement of household and shelter items, most of which were outside the control of either Concern or its partners, distribution processes have been praised by communities and government stakeholders alike, resulting in government bodies recommending other agencies to follow a similar approach. The range of items distributed and the quality of the items received has been unanimously appreciated, and has ensured a longer-term impact for those assisted. Ultimately, the support received allowed families to live more comfortably and securely, making a significant difference to the lives of those forced to live in open areas following the earthquake. The development of temporary infrastructure to support schools has created more conducive learning environments for children, allowing them to engage more effectively in learning activities. WASH support activities have given people privacy and dignity, as well as reduced illness levels significantly.

Whilst working through local NGOs was a requirement of operating in Nepal, the approach taken by Concern in supporting the efforts of two strong development organisations has also resulted in their increased capacity and confidence to respond to significant disasters, something that will further support Nepalese populations in future years. Working through partners, particularly in a new response context, is something that requires a slightly different skill set. Whilst the partnerships have been largely effective, some

significant risks existed that may have been mitigated by a stronger approach to establishing the partnerships initially, and by ensuring all Concern staff are better equipped to navigate such relationships.

Whilst a significant number of strong, experienced Concern staff have supported the development and implementation of the programme, a lack of both consistent leadership and a key national staff 'liaison' position has likely prevented Concern from achieving the full extent of what it might otherwise have been able to. Nepal presents a complex operating environment where strong relationships with government, partners and other stakeholders is seen as essential to achieving effective programmes. Staff and partners alike have found the lack of leadership stability to be difficult and frustrating. It is believed this has limited the ability of Concern to hold one of its partners to account in some instances, presenting significant risks and limitations to some elements of the programme. One staff member observed how Concern appears to have 'underestimated the complexity of working in Nepal', which, given Concern's previous experience in the country, and the strong Nepal experience of some key staff members, should have been avoided.

In an environment such as Nepal, following a disaster that has caused such significant infrastructural damage, it is clear that funding and implementation timelines for infrastructure rehabilitation of houses, school and other facilities will ensure that 'temporary' structures will be used for much more than a year or two. Any temporary infrastructure support should therefore take this into consideration at the design stage, assuming such structures may be in use for 5 or more years. The quality of the CGI sheeting provided for families has addressed this need, as it is anticipated to last 20 or more years, at least twice as long as the materials households were more likely to acquire by themselves. However, the project to provide temporary learning centres missed an opportunity to guide schools to develop more durable 'temporary' classrooms that would have both been assured to last until permanent rebuilding could occur, and would have mitigated some of the numerous problems experienced with such a basic temporary design. A similar situation occurred with the latrine construction in Gyachowk – either temporary latrine structures, or a more comprehensive earthquake resistant design would have yielded a better outcome.

Ultimately, Concern has been creative in finding ways to navigate the many challenges to this programme, adapting interventions and approaches to the changing context. The various management issues, both within Concern and with partner organisations, have not significantly affected the quality and impact of the programme. A sizeable response operation has been achieved, particularly for an organisation with no presence in country at the time of the earthquake, and one that could have been increased had more funding opportunities been available.

## Recommendations - Future Response Programmes

### Programme Approach

- Future response programmes, as far as funding opportunities allow, should **continue to focus on less well-served populations** in new responses. This will better ensure equality of support to affected populations, and give Concern more opportunity to implement an effective, high-impact response
- Ensure consideration of the timeframe over which 'temporary' structures will realistically be utilised following a disaster, and **ensure infrastructure designs can last for an appropriate length of time**, as far as funding limitations allow
- **Conduct evaluations** of response programmes **within 6 months of the initial relief period**

### Staffing

- **Minimise the turnover of the senior leadership position in the first phase of any response programme**, particularly when operating through partner organisations, or where strong government relationships are required for effective operations. Concern should look to ensure that an experienced surge-team member can replace the Response Manager after an initial 3-4 weeks, with the ability to remain in position for 4-5 months before handing over to a permanent Country Director. This should ensure better implementation of initial relief efforts and transition to recovery activities, and provide sufficient time to find an appropriate Country Director to lead the longer-term programme.

- Where there is no existing Concern presence in country, ensure **recruitment/placement of an experienced national person** (preferably with Concern experience) who can take on 'liaison' responsibilities to ensure the smooth setup of operations and provide added continuity throughout staff transitions over the initial months of the programme. If direct national recruitment is not possible, a consultancy contract or secondment from an Alliance partner should be considered
- Develop and maintain a **register of current and ex-Concern staff from countries/regions at high risk of disasters** to enable rapid contact at the onset of a new emergency
- When implementing a response through partner organisations, discuss and **agree a strategy by which partner staff, at all levels of the organisation, are actively briefed about the agreed roles, expectations and boundaries** of each party. Ensure such agreements are also clearly documented (beyond the formal partnership agreement) so that newly deployed/recruited Concern staff can also be briefed

### Concern's Response Toolkit

- Investigate **developing a short, interactive workshop guideline** that can be used by experienced response personnel to discuss and contextualise the **Programme Participant Protection Policy (P4)** with partner staff (and/or newly recruited local staff). The aim should be to ensure that the P4 can be effectively rolled out under the constraints of a high-pressure response with multiple priorities
- **Develop a short guideline on working with partner organisations in a rapid onset response** in order to guide initial response and longer-term staff in effective partnerships approaches and practicalities
- **Develop a short summary document outlining the essential logistics, finance and other requirements for partner staff** to be aware of, to use as part of the partner negotiation and agreement process
- **Support partners to conduct appropriate and timely post-distribution monitoring activities** that can contribute to programme review and learning

### Nepal-specific Recommendations

- Before closing the current response programme, **identify several partner organisations to partner with in the event of a future significant emergency**. If possible, discuss anticipated roles and expectations (at a broad level) of both Concern and the NGO in question, and document these in writing in a signed agreement. The capacity of the selected organisations should also be built through Concerns 'Preparing for Effective Emergency Response' (PEER) process as part of the agreement, and the NGOs contact details should be stored in a known location within Concern's internal knowledge base

## **Annex A1: Terms of Reference**

### **1. BACKGROUND**

Located in the centre of the Himalayan range, Nepal is one of the most disaster prone countries in the world due to its topography and climatic conditions. Earthquakes, landslides, floods, fire and thunderstorms are the major causes of disaster events. Nepal is especially prone to earthquakes as it lies in an active seismic zone. The country witnessed three major earthquakes in the 20th century namely the Bihar-Nepal earthquake (1934), the Bajhang earthquake (1980) and the Udayapur earthquake (1988).

Before this emergency, Concern Worldwide had worked in Nepal from 2006 to 2010, at which point we handed over our programmes to local partners who continued the work we started. Our previous programmes in Nepal focused on livelihoods, water and sanitation and nutrition.

### **2. APRIL 2015 EARTHQUAKE**

On 25 April 2015 Nepal was hit by a powerful 7.8 magnitude earthquake with the epicentre in Gorkha district. This was followed by continued aftershocks occurring at very short intervals with a powerful 6.7 aftershock on 26 April. The earthquakes caused thousands of deaths and injuries and extensive damage to the country's infrastructure including collapsed historical buildings, ruined temples ruined and destroyed roads. Another big aftershock of 7.3 magnitude occurred on 12 May. This chain of events triggered landslides across the country and damaged 284,479 houses and completely destroyed another 602,567, according to surveys carried out by the government. In total almost 9,000 people lost their lives and over 22,000 were injured due to these events.

By the end of April 2015 Concern had begun responding to the primary needs of the affected population in Dolakha, Sindhupalchowk and Sindhuli districts through our national implementing partners. The first phase of the emergency response involved blanket distributions as per local government instructions. Concern, (with support from the national Partner Rural Reconstruction Nepal) distributed emergency NFI Kits to over 10,000 households in Dolakha and Sindhupalchowk. The organisation was able to reach over 4,000 households in Sindhuli district through another national partner: Nepal Water for Health. In addition 6,500 households were supported with temporary shelter materials in 7 Village Development Committees (VDCs) in Dolakha and the construction of 392 temporary classrooms in 48 schools in 8 VDCs in Dolakha. The construction of 300 temporary latrines and 218 temporary bathing units in 11 VDCs in Sindhuli was also supported by Concern during this first phase of the response up until the end of January 2016.

During 2016 Concern has continued working in Dolakha, Sindhuli, Gorkha and Dhading districts with earthquake recovery activities as part of the Building Resilience of Earthquake Affected Communities (BREAC) programme which builds upon the work completed in temporary classrooms to support forty-five schools with integrated reconstruction, WASH and DRR activities. While many of these activities could not begin as planned due to evolving reconstruction guidelines and a delay in approval from the government, approval was finally secured in July 2016.

### **3. OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION**

As the programme enters its reconstruction phase, an evaluation of the emergency phase of the programme has been planned. This evaluation seeks to establish the appropriateness and relevance of the strategies deployed to respond to earthquake affected populations and to look at the impact and benefit of the response.

The evaluation seeks to gather useful information to improve future response programmes and is intended to:

- a. Assess, in an evidence-based manner, the effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of the program's components and implementation strategies against project results/objectives and assess impact
- b. Provide understanding of the relevance of the Earthquake response by gathering and analysing information regarding overall living conditions, social and economic situation of the program beneficiaries
- c. Capture lessons learned from Concern's Earthquake response, considering the planning, management, implementation and challenges encountered
- d. Provide recommendations that will inform future emergency response programmes of a similar nature

The results of the evaluation will be used for Concern (and shared with the donors – eg DEC) to evaluate the overall achievements of the interventions and importantly will also be used by Concern to inform future programming and share lessons learnt with relevant stakeholders (local authorities, government bodies, and other interested local and international actors).

#### **4. METHODOLOGY**

The evaluation will be carried out through the analysis of various sources of information including survey data, site visits, in-depth interviews/case studies with programme participants, consultations with key stakeholders including Concern and local partners, local authorities and community members. In addition to a review of existing monitoring data, it is also anticipated that the consultant will undertake interviews with a number of beneficiaries and community members.

The evaluation will review the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and emerging and expected impact of the Earthquake response. The key questions below are of particular interest to Concern and therefore, while not exhaustive, should be included in the review. The evaluation is expected to answer the questions in an evidence-based manner using either qualitative or quantitative data, to note and highlight differences between the implementation strategies and program components in terms of their overall effectiveness and relevance.

Cross cutting themes e.g. equality, partnership, programme participant protection, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Sphere Standards, and advocacy should be taken into account throughout the evaluation.

##### **The Relevance of the Intervention: Were appropriate choices made?**

###### *Identification/selection and registration of beneficiaries*

- How efficient were the selection criteria used to identify beneficiaries? Were the right people (disaster-affected and extreme poor) targeted?
- How participative and transparent was the selection criteria of the participants in the programme.
- To what extent were the assessment tools adequate for fully capturing beneficiary needs?

###### *Relevance*

- To what extent have objectives and strategies responded to the needs and priorities of our target groups and the various stakeholders at various stages?
- How well did the programme respond to the needs of the affected population within the Nepal context?
- How well did the programme align with the needs as outlined by the clusters and other coordinating UN agencies and NGOs?
- How has the analysis of hazards and risks contributed to the design of the programme?

## **The Effectiveness of the Intervention: Was it done well?**

### *Effectiveness*

- To what extent have the expected results of the Earthquake Response programme as identified in project log frames been achieved and what are the main factors that have enabled or impeded this achievement?
- How have programme interventions been redirected in response to results of on-going monitoring and how have the program indicators been used in this process?
- What adaptations were made to fit the realities of the local context as the programme progressed?
- How were beneficiaries, communities, partner NGOs, Government Bodies involved in decision-making about changes in programme implementation strategies?
- How well did the programme ensure the contribution of local partner NGOs and Government Bodies in the delivery of outputs?
- To what degree was programme learning shared within the community and neighbouring communities, local authorities and other CBOs/NGOs (local and international)?
- Did the response benefit from engagement with the humanitarian architecture – clusters etc.
- How have equality issues been addressed, and how were issues related to poorer families and individuals and issues between men and women addressed?

### *Accountability*

- To what extent was the level of engagement and awareness of beneficiaries/stakeholders in the design and implementation of the project sufficient to ensure optimum achievement of results?
- How effectively were complaints received and dealt with?
- How well is Concern's Programme Participant Protection policy (P4) understood by the staff of Concern and its partners?
- How well were conflicts and programme issues resolved?
- Have protection concerns been adequately considered in the design of assistance? e.g. children at risk, women headed households, people with a disability?
- Information sharing - What strategies did Concern employ to share information with beneficiaries (CHS Commitment #4)?
- Have the IFRC Code of Conduct and Sphere standards been respected?

## **The Efficiency of the Intervention: Were resources used well?**

### *Efficiency and Management Issues*

- To what extent have the human resource levels, management and partnership structures been appropriate and effective in delivering the programme?
- To what extent was management able to respond to changing needs within the programme?
- How responsive has been the project's management structure?
- How did the various components and support mechanisms of the intervention work and complement each other?
- How well did the programme ensure the timely and on-budget delivery of outputs?
- Has the programme been implemented in such a way as to give value for money for the attainment of the desired standards?
- The Impact of the Intervention: What difference will it make?

### *Impact*

- Have the programme objectives been achieved?
- How have the different activities improved the economic and social resilience of affected population?
- How has the programme contributed to increased capacity to respond to and to withstand future shocks of this magnitude?

- Has the response reduced future vulnerabilities and has the programme helped build resilience to future shocks amongst the target group and the wider community? Are the infrastructures which were developed for the programme replicable and sustainable?
- Have any unintended consequences and/or negative changes resulted from programme implementation?
- What have been the positive and/or negative effects of the programme on not directly targeted communities?
- What value do beneficiaries, stakeholders and communities attach to the outcomes achieved?
- What real difference was made to their lives as a result of this response?

#### **The Sustainability of the Intervention: Will it last?**

*Sustainability – The level of connectedness and coherence of the response*

- Did the short term nature of the emergency activities take longer term issues into account – recovery and sustainability
- How have donor and national policy been influenced by this intervention?
- To what degree did we avail of advocacy opportunities

#### **Future Opportunities**

- Based on findings of the evaluation, make recommendations for future responses to similar emergency situations, both in terms of needs' evaluation and programme design.

The methodology should be proposed by the consultant but must be participatory and allow for the inclusion of viewpoints of representatives of key stakeholders, including:

- Implementing partners
- Government stakeholders
- Donors (DEC etc)
- Concern's Senior Management and Earthquake response team
- Beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries
- Particularly disadvantaged or vulnerable groups (women, people with disabilities etc.)

All data should be disaggregated by gender, age and any other relevant criteria, where possible. Data collection and analysis should adhere to research methods best practice

## **5. DELIVERABLES**

The following deliverables will be required:

- An outline of key findings in writing to be discussed with the CD prior to concluding the in-country phase of the assignment;
- A first draft of the report with an Executive summary and clear recommendations (including annexes) for comment from Concern within one week of concluding field work;
- A full final draft of the report, integrating the feedback received within one week of receiving consolidated feedback on the draft report.
- The report, in English, should be 15-20 pages long without appendices and should be submitted in electronic format (Word or PDF), and include the following sections :
  - Executive Summary (maximum 2 pages)
  - Context of the intervention
  - Brief description of the intervention
  - Presentation of evaluation methodology and any limitations encountered
  - Presentation of main findings in relation to the points in Sections 3 and 4 of these TORs,
  - using graphs, charts and tables where appropriate

- Recommendations
- Annexes: including ToRs, list of people/ groups consulted, interview frameworks/ questionnaires or other evaluation tools

## **6. ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND RESTRICTIONS**

The evaluator will be responsible for:

- Developing methodology (including sampling size & methods, if appropriate) and evaluation plan for approval by Concern as well as detailed tools to obtain relevant data.
- Developing a programme/schedule for the evaluation with support from Concern
- Data compilation and analysis
- Presentation of draft findings to senior Concern staff
- Report writing
- Conclusion of reports according to feedback provided.

Concern will be responsible for:

- Approval of the final evaluation plan, tools and methodology
- Providing relevant documentation to the Consultant on the Earthquake response activities and an initial briefing on the intervention as well as expectations of this evaluation
- Provision of timely feedback to the Evaluator on first draft of the report
- Communication of results of the evaluation to key stakeholder groups in the appropriate languages
- Concern may provide an independent staff member to assist the lead evaluator if appropriate.

The report will be the intellectual property of Concern. Its content should be shared with third parties only with Concern's express consent. Sensitivities to confidentiality will need to be respected. Names associated with any particular quotes or experiences should be cited only with the informed consent of the person concerned.

## **7. CONSULTANT PROFILE**

The successful candidate will be identified on the basis of their ability to demonstrate the following criteria:

- Extensive knowledge and experience of humanitarian aid in rural settings,
- Proven expertise in conducting evaluations in natural disaster contexts
- Experience of qualitative research techniques
- Good oral and written communication skills
- Previous experience in Nepal including an understanding the caste/ethnic/gender dynamics of the country will be considered an advantage
- Physically fit and good stamina as hiking long distances at altitude may be required

## **8. LINES OF COMMUNICATION**

The evaluator will report to the Concern Worldwide Country Director in Nepal or to a person whom s/he will delegate for contractual matters including approval of deliverables.

## **9. BUDGET / FEES AND TIMEFRAME**

These will be agreed with the evaluator according to submitted quotation and available budget. It is expected that the work will involve approximately 26 days of work including travel to and from the programme area. The preferred month for the completion of the evaluation field work is November 2016.

<b>Task</b>	<b>No. of days</b>
Background reading and preparation of tools and methodology	2
Travel to Kathmandu	1
In country briefings, stakeholder meetings and preparatory field work	2
Field Work and site visits	12
Stakeholder meetings in Kathmandu and debrief	1
Travel home	1
Analysis and compiling of draft evaluation report	5
Complete final report following feedback	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>26 days</b>

## 10. DOCUMENTS

- Programme Proposals and Programme Reports
- Reports by other agencies – UN and NGO
- Project monitoring data

## 11. APPLICANTS

Those interested in the consultancy must include in their application a detailed technical and financial proposal with the following components:

### *Technical*

- Understanding and interpretation of the TOR.
- Methodology to be used in undertaking the assignment.

### *Financial Proposal*

- Consultant's daily rate in \$US or € Euro.
- Other costs if applicable (please note Concern will provide an economy return flight and accommodation).

### *Organizational and Personnel Capacity Statement*

- Relevant experience related to the assignment
- Curriculum vitae
- Referees
- Any publications or examples of similar assignments.

Interested candidates should submit their application by email to [peter.doyle@concern.net](mailto:peter.doyle@concern.net) by COB on 11 October 2016 at the latest.

## Annex B: Evaluation Schedule

Date	Location	Activity
14 February 2017	Kathmandu	Arrival
15 February 2017	Kathmandu	Meetings: RRN, NEWAH, Concern staff
16 February 2017	Kathmandu	Meetings: Nepal Red Cross, HRRP, Concern staff
17 February 2017	Gyachowk, Gorkha	Travel
18 February 2017	Gyachowk, Gorkha	VDC Visit: VDC WASH Committee, households, Gyachowk School Meetings: NEWAH staff, Concern field staff
19 February 2017	Gyachowk, Gorkha	Travel
20 February 2017	Dolakha	Travel Meetings: RRN District Office – RRN staff
	Sindhuli	Travel
21 February 2017	Dolakha	Municipality Visit: Ward 3 households Meetings: CDO, DEO, Unicef, Dolakha Red Cross, Plan Nepal
	Sindhuli	Meetings: District Office, NEWAH Regional Office – NEWAH staff, Relief Nepal,
22 February 2017	Dolakha	Garimudi VDC Visit: Households, Janajyoti Secondary School,
	Sindhuli	Ratanchura VDC Visit: DDC representative, district engineer Bahuntilpang VDC Visit: households
23 February 2017	Dolakha	Bhirkot VDC Visit: Households, FGD – elderly people, Ganesh Basic School Juhle VDC Visit: Community leaders, households
	Sindhuli	Jarayotar VDC Visit: VDC representatives, households
24 February 2017	Dolakha	Japhe VDC Visit: Households, Shree Chanaute Basic School,
	Sindhuli	Amale VDC Visit: VDC representatives, households
25 February 2017	Dolakha	Malu VDC Visit: Ward Citizen Forum representative meeting Travel
	Sindhuli	Travel
26 February 2017	Kathmandu	Rest Day
27 February 2017	Kathmandu	Meetings: Concern staff Consolidation of findings
28 February 2017	Kathmandu	Meetings: RRN staff, VSO, Concern staff RRN debrief
1 March 2017	Kathmandu	Meetings: Welthungerhilfe, Oxfam NEWAH debrief; Concern staff debrief Departure

## Annex C: Evaluation Tools

Some questions from the ToR have been moved between sections from the original ToR in order to improve the flow of the report. The semi-structured interviews for each group of person interviews (Concern Staff, Partner Staff, Government Representatives, International Community Members, Community level Key Informants, Community Members) were developed from the question set below, tailoring depending on the relevance of the question for that particular individual.

### Evaluation Questions

#### **The Relevance of the Intervention: Were appropriate choices made?**

##### ***Identification/selection and registration of beneficiaries***

- How efficient were the selection criteria used to identify beneficiaries? Were the right people (disaster-affected and extreme poor) targeted?
- How participative and transparent was the selection criteria of the participants in the programme.
- To what extent were the assessment tools adequate for fully capturing beneficiary needs?

##### ***Relevance***

- To what extent have objectives and strategies responded to the needs and priorities of our target groups and the various stakeholders at various stages?
- How well did the programme respond to the needs of the affected population within the local context?
- How well did the programme align with the needs as outlined by the clusters and other coordinating UN agencies and NGOs?
- How has the analysis of hazards and risks contributed to the design of the programme?

#### **The Effectiveness of the Intervention: Was it done well?**

##### ***Effectiveness***

- To what extent have the expected results of the response programme as identified in project log frames been achieved and what are the main factors that have enabled or impeded this achievement?
- How have programme interventions been redirected in response to results of on-going monitoring and how have the program indicators been used in this process?
- How have programme interventions been redirected in response to results of on-going consultations as well as routine monitoring and evaluation?
- What adaptations were made to fit the realities of the local context as the programme progressed?
- How were beneficiaries, communities, partner NGOs, Government Bodies involved in decision-making about changes in programme implementation strategies?
- How well did the programme ensure the contribution of local partner NGOs and Government Bodies in the delivery of outputs?
- Did the response benefit from engagement with the humanitarian architecture – clusters etc.
- How have equality issues been addressed, and how were issues related to poorer families and individuals and issues between men and women addressed?
- Have protection concerns been adequately considered in the design of assistance? E.g. children at risk, women-headed households, people with a disability?

##### ***Accountability***

- To what extent was the level of engagement and awareness of beneficiaries/stakeholders in the design and implementation of the project sufficient to ensure optimum achievement of results?

- Information sharing – what strategies did Concern employ to share information with beneficiaries (CHS Commitment #4)?
- To what degree was programme learning shared within the community and neighbouring communities, local authorities and other CBOs/NGOs (local and international)?
- How effectively were complaints received and dealt with?
- How well were conflicts and programme issues resolved?
- How well is Concern’s Programme Participant Protection policy (P4) understood by the staff of Concern and its partners?
- Have the IFRC Code of Conduct and Sphere standards been respected?

### **The Efficiency of the Intervention: Were resources used well?**

#### ***Efficiency & Management Issues***

- To what extent have the human resource levels, management and partnership structures been appropriate and effective in delivering the programme?
- To what extent was management able to respond to changing needs within the programme?
- How responsive has been the project’s management structure?
- How did the various components and support mechanisms of the intervention work and complement each other?
- How well did the programme ensure the timely and on-budget delivery of outputs?
- Has the programme been implemented in such a way as to give value for money for the attainment of the desired standards?

### **The Impact & Sustainability of the Intervention: What difference will it make and will it last?**

#### ***Impact***

- Have the programme objectives been achieved?
- How have the different activities improved economic and social resilience of affected population?
- How has the programme contributed to increased capacity to respond to and to withstand future shocks of this magnitude?
- Has the response reduced future vulnerabilities and has the programme helped build resilience to future shocks amongst the target group and the wider community? Are the infrastructures which were developed for the programme replicable and sustainable
- Have any unintended consequences and/or negative changes resulted from the programme implementation?
- What have been the positive and/or negative effects of the programme on not directly targeted communities?
- What value do beneficiaries, stakeholders and communities attach to the outcomes achieved?
- What real difference was made to their lives as a result of this response?
- Did the short term nature of the emergency activities take longer term issues into account – recovery and sustainability
- How have donor and national policy been influenced by this intervention?
- To what degree did we avail of advocacy opportunities

#### **Future Opportunities**

- Based on findings of the evaluation, make recommendations for future responses to similar emergency situations, both in terms of needs’ evaluation and programme design

## Annex D: References

- ‘Concern’s Approach to Emergencies’, Concern Worldwide, March 2002
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- ‘Nepal Earthquake Humanitarian Response April to September 2015’, OCHA, September 2015
- ‘Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA)’, Government of Nepal, National Planning Commission, 2015  
<http://www.npc.gov.np/web/new/uploadedFiles/allFiles/PDNA-excutiveSummary.pdf>
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## Annex E: Acronyms

CDO	Chief District Officer
CGI	Corrugated Galvanised Iron (sheet)
DDRC	District Disaster Relief Committee
DEC	Disasters and Emergencies Committee
DEO	District Education Office
DO	District Office
GIK	Goods in kind
HDI	Human Development Index
NEWAH	Nepal Water for Health (NGO Organisation)
NFI	Non Food Items
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODF	Open Defecation Free
P4	Programme Participant Protection Policy
PEER	Preparing for Effective Emergency Response
RRN	Rural Reconstruction Nepal (NGO Organisation)
SMS	Short Message Service
TLC	Temporary Learning Centre
UN	United Nations
UNHRD	United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot
VDC	Village District Committee
WASH	Water and Sanitation Hygiene