

FINAL EVALUATION
DIPECHO SAMADHAN
A project on Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM)
July 2007
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Preface

A final evaluation of DIPECHO SAMADHAN has been undertaken to assess the impact of the “community based disaster risk management” project, implemented with local partners’ in three hazard prone districts in central and eastern Terai of Nepal.

The report is considered as a tool of accountability, therefore, treated with absolute transparency, high expectations and great regards, to administer the project performance in general as well as the effectiveness of implementing partners in specific.

1.2 Specific objective

The broad objective of this evaluation is to define and recognize major strengths and bottlenecks, underline influencing factors, and highlight achievements, good practices and the scope for improvement. Despite a short time line and a constrained socio political scenario, the project accomplished its overall objectives.

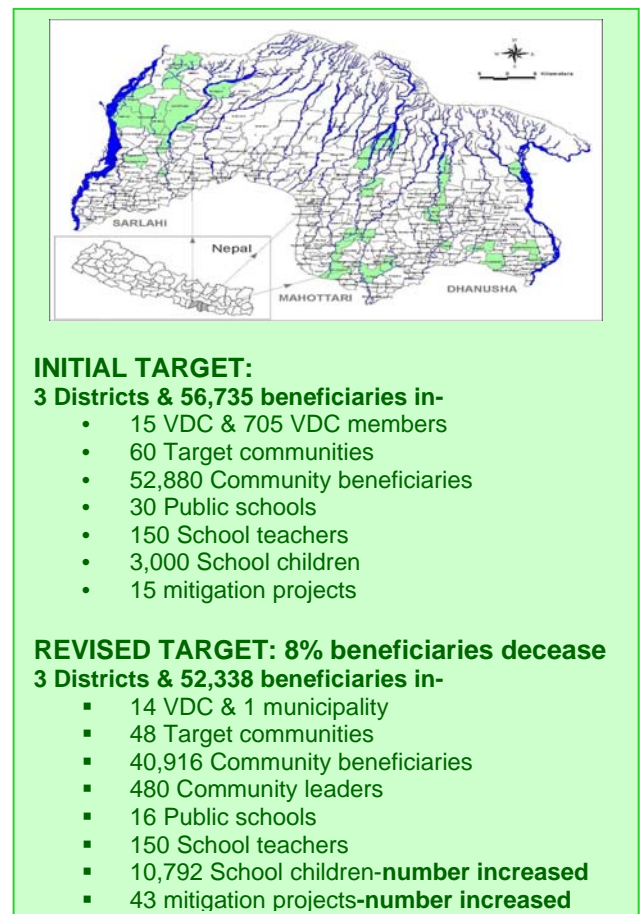
1.3 Main purpose and methodology

Purpose

The principal purpose of the final evaluation was to assess and document the large program scope, impact, capacity, quality assurance, appropriateness, coordination and timeline under which the CARE Nepal DIPECHO SAMADHAN program was implemented. The evaluation was also to highlight key lessons learned and principal recommendations in order to improve community preparedness and future emergency response mechanisms of CARE in Nepal.

The exercise was to look at to what extent, the programmatic decisions and approaches made by CARE Nepal, have contributed and influenced partners on the ground and DIPECHO stakeholder at the national level to date, to response and preparedness, referring to relevant lessons learned and good practices from Nepal Floods 2007.

The team also recommended how CARE and other DIPECHO stakeholders can regulate and fine tune their program efficiency, increase effective coordination and ensure improved coherence between agencies in next phase of operations.



Methodology

Methodology was designed to bring together the desk review of secondary data, literatures, relevant case studies shared by field partners, management team of CARE Nepal and DIPECHO stakeholders, triangulation and rationalization of primary data collected and reviewed from field observations, transect walk, spot check, semi structured drills and structured focused group discussions and one to one talk with targeted communities, village opinion leaders, members of several village development committees, sub committees and task force, and structured one to one interviews with key informants

In field, the evaluation was carried out in eight Village Development Committees (VDC). Informants included more than 21 community representative groups, cross cutting age, gender, class, occupations, languages and religions at several locations.

Informants also included eight Local Resource Persons (LRP) and ten available program and support staffs of Jagaran Abhiyan Nepal (JAN) in Sarlahi, Local Development Training Centre (LDTTC) in Mahottari and Samaj Utthan Yuba Kendra (SYUK) in Dhanusha- the three implementing partners of CARE Nepal DIPECHO SAMADHAN project in the three operational districts of the Terai.

The team cross checked and authenticated the filed findings with senior government officials (Chief Development Officer-CDO) at the district, two CARE SAMADHAN project technical officers and two support officers and the Program Manager of DIPECHO SAMADHAN in Janakpur, where the project's office is based.

In Kathmandu - the capital city of Nepal, the team interviewed the DIPECHO Manager, Program Coordinator, Assistant Country Director and the Country Director of CARE Nepal as well as senior representatives of UNICEF, UNDP and five program spokespersons of other DIPECHO partners in Nepal.

The evaluation was chiefly focused on i) Targeted beneficiaries at the community level ii) Partner field staffs at the district level iii) Field program and support staffs and the core program management team at CARE Nepal's central office iv) Government officials and DIPECHO stakeholders at the national level.

1.4 Evaluation framework

The evaluation was conducted towards the very end of DIPECHO SAMADHAN project. Evaluation was able to assess what occurred in the program, request end-of-project reactions from project staffs and assess the success in meeting project objectives, The evaluation is not only intend to increase quality of follow up programming and coherence with other DIPECHO partners, it is also meant to guide CARE Nepal's programming in disaster risk reduction going forward.

The evaluation team gathered informations about the project at the beginning of the study.

This information was to establish a baseline on selected indicators, from which changes in the impact on the community can be tracked by CARE

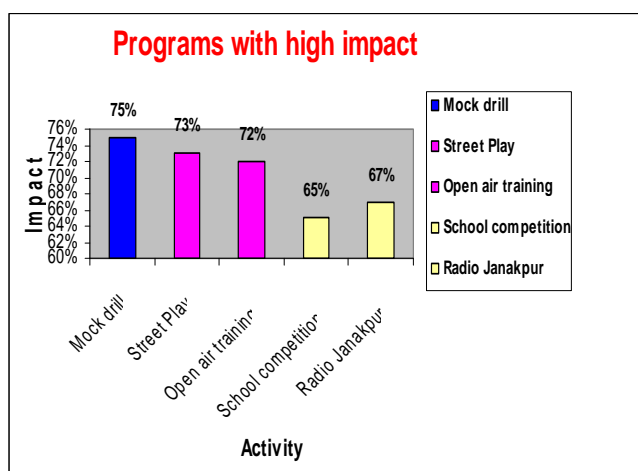
Nepal in next phase.

1.5 Prime achievements

Apart from slight exceptions in mitigation projects, the evaluation team found that, sites visited in all three districts, were found to be achieved and executed based on stated deliverables well on time with technical specifications as sighted in the action plan. Out of 43 small scale mitigation measures, several may require "no cost extension" due late start of their construction. CARE Nepal and local implementing partners are following up with these mitigation measures through another project called "Chuli".

Even with technical weakness and drop in initial number of targeted villages and beneficiaries' midway, each partner performed their best and achieved almost every targeted activity with good impact and high visibility, especially those activities with visual illustrations and drills. This was possible only because of extraordinary team spirit, good intensions to deliver task on time,

admirable openness to learn from mistakes, and a cohesive management approach at all level.



Mock drills:

75% of beneficiaries interviewed, hold on to the positive results and high impact of the mock drills and responded spontaneously during the evaluation (Ref-Chapter-IV).

Street plays:

73% of beneficiaries interviewed, responded positively during the evaluation about the effectiveness of the street plays (Ref-Chapter-IV).

Open air trainings (2nd module community trainings):

72% of beneficiaries interviewed, responded positively during the evaluation about the effectiveness of the open air trainings (2nd module community trainings (Ref-Chapter-IV).

School completions:

65% of beneficiaries interviewed reacted with high positive impact to the school competitions (Ref-Chapter-IV).

Radio Janakpur:

The “Radio Janakpur” programming is one of the most cost effective and high impact activities of the project. 67% of beneficiaries interviewed, responded with high positive impact to the radio program on disaster preparedness mass awareness (Ref-Chapter-IV).

Small scale mitigation projects:

Community workshop on “mitigation project” was effective. It provided platforms for community leaders to improve their existing capacity to prioritize collective need and implementation infrastructures in short time (Ref-Chapter-IV).

1.6 Key lesson learned

Needs assessment

Initiating a fresh project without a structured pre-project capacity and needs assessment is indubitably an institutional learning both for CARE Nepal and the partners of DIPECHO SAMADHAN project. This is especially the case since CARE Nepal was working with a new donor, on a new short term 15 month project, with inadequate technical expertise and limited prior exposure, fresh project managers, and all new field staffs both in house as well in partners. This resulted in the proposal of ambitious targets and large operational areas at the initial stage, the need to hire an expatriate as DIPECHO manager at the request of the donor, and an unexpected drop of initial communities and beneficiary numbers to adjust the project in a more realistic manner midway

Time line

Effectively strengthening community resilience to natural hazard events requires regular interactions with target beneficiaries and continual drilling with task forces. This is hard to achieve in a target driven short duration project, especially given the challenges described above, by the time partners and community started responding, the time line of project come to an end.

Monitoring

The project started without clarity of distinct job descriptions, especially for the partner field staff. Initial activities were behind schedule, and a systematic monitoring plan was not put in place at the start of the project. As a result, it was difficult to maximize and targets against achievements, especially given such short term high pitch deliverables. Monitoring of field activities was regular. However, it was needs driven

Coordination

Coordination with DIPECHO partners at the national level, between CARE Nepal's central office and project office, between CARE field staff and local partners, and amongst the local resource persons have been truly unique and performed crucial roles in achieving results.

Nevertheless, more could have been significantly achieved to link good practices with **advocacy** with local government specially to mainstream operation and maintenance of small scale mitigation projects, avoiding overlap with other DIPECHO partners in terms of demarking operational area, and sharing among DIPECHO partners with regards to overall project design, layout of village contingency plans, task force training modules, sharing list and ensure distribution of common items in village task force kits, developing common information, education and communications materials and disseminating collective messages on disaster preparedness.

Common minimum standards

In few cases, especially while developing training modules, the project did refer the International Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standard, particularly Sphere; however it could have been a good practice both for CARE Nepal and its local partners to develop an understanding and practice on how to draw a technical common line between project cycle and disaster cycle in project. (*Ref-Chapter-IV*)

1.7 Principal recommendations and conclusions

Project continuity

There is a recognized need to continue the community based disaster risk management project cycle beyond 15 months to be able to reduce the related risk and vulnerability of targeted communities in the Terai of Nepal. In future, for such short term projects, donor may reconsider the fact to supplement with minimum complementary contingency funds for the DIPECHO stakeholders as well as the local partners, to carry forward a small number of post project follow up actions like refreshers trainings, mock drills, or mainstreaming maintenance of small scale mitigation projects. However, to ensure effective results, continuity of such project with a scope of at least three to five years of regular funding to the local partners is crucial.

Advocacy

Given the regional disaster context with recent South Asia Floods 2007, there is a felt need to strengthen the **advocacy** for cross broader learning opportunities up and down the line amongst the DIPECHO partners in the region. This is to principally identify a common line of action, recognize the benchmarks of good practices and indigenous coping mechanisms, i.e -

Terai Nepal gets floods, followed by North Bihar and North East of India, followed by Bangladesh and so on causing phenomenal catastrophes. (*Ref-Chapter-IV*)

Humanitarian charter

The International Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standard – Sphere – needs to be mainstreamed in local languages, especially with staff and partners in the field. For example, CARE Nepal can bring either international expertise or outsource resources like UNDP or Oxfam GB. UNDP was a DIPECHO partner working with DP Net in Nepal and promoting the Sphere handbook in Nepali. Oxfam GB was also a DIPECHO partner in the third action plan, and it is a global signatory of Sphere Global Project worldwide. Resources from Sphere Global Project or RedR India may also be useful.

Project design and linkage

With such a low literacy rate in the Terai, including the project area, the evaluation team concluded that the project activities that relied heavily on literacy had low impact with beneficiaries whereas activities that relied more on visuals and mass media had high impact. The team therefore recommends that CARE Nepal focus more on these aspects in the next project. It is also recommended that CARE collaborate more deeply with other DIPECHO partners to work towards common program layout and develop common disaster preparedness messages.

Mitigation master plans

Though, the project technical team worked hard and developed master plan with VDC for each small scale mitigation site, moreover, the evaluation team recommends that CARE Nepal and local partners develop district level mitigation master plans with well defined locations, design lay out, land allocations at the site, cost effectiveness, cost benefit analysis, hand over mechanism of infrastructures, coordination strategy with respective line departments at government or DIPECHO stakeholders.

Initial need assessment and interim review

The team recommends a more realistic initial need assessments be conducted to ensure realistic planning and reduce potential risks. Structured mid-term evaluations could also help in such short term projects to strike balance between successes and bottlenecks.