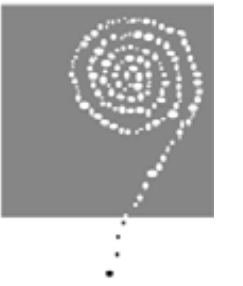


PROJECT nepali

*A Study on Relations between Communication Means and Knowledge
Adoption of Sustainable Recovery Solutions in Nepal.*



PROJECT REPORT PUBLIC VERSION

Sustainable Global Technologies Studio / Aalto University, Helsinki



PROJECT REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nepal experienced a 7.8 magnitude earthquake on 25th of April 2015, which resulted in approximately 9000 people dying and over 21 000 people being injured. In addition, over half million buildings were damaged (NPC, 2015). The massive destruction has resulted in an extensive reconstruction process that is still going on three years after the earthquake. Besides financial constraints, problems in communication between beneficiaries, government and organizations working with development projects are hindering the reconstruction.

Despite the problems, there are numerous successful communication means that the organizations in Nepal use to share information and sustainable practices with the local people. The aim of this report is to present communication means that we came across in the interviews with experts and organizations working on post-disaster reconstruction and beneficiaries of two case study sites in Bungamati and Dhungetar in Nepal. This report includes a short analysis of each mean of communication, examples and the relation of communication to different fields of sustainability.

Based on the 38 interviews we did with 83 people, it seems that the more participatory and inclusive the way of knowledge transfer is, the more likely it will result in a desired action and adopted knowledge. This means that a good communication practice should include

two-way interaction. In addition, it seems that effective communication merges into existing social structures. Peer-to-peer communication is successful because of trust that already exists between individuals of a community.

The project was conducted as a part of the Sustainable Global Technologies Studio (SGT) course at the School of Engineering in Aalto University, Finland. The studio course brings together Master and PhD students of Aalto University to work together on real projects in technology and sustainability in a developing context. The planning of this project started in November 2017 and the course took place from January to May 2018. For the duration of the field trip to Nepal in March, three local students from Asian Institute of Technology and Management (AITM) joined the project team offering invaluable local insight to strengthen our team.

We hope that this report proves to be helpful for people working in disaster and development work organizations when considering what means of communication to use in order to communicate sustainable reconstruction practices to beneficiaries.

We want to thank our sponsor Uponor, who made our field trip possible and look forward to a possible further collaboration between Aalto University and AITM in the context of sustainable development in the future.

Sponsored by

The logo for Uponor, featuring the word "Uponor" in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font.

02 PROJECT BRIEF

Introduction to the project, its objectives, aims and methodologies.



PROJECT BRIEF

INTRODUCTION



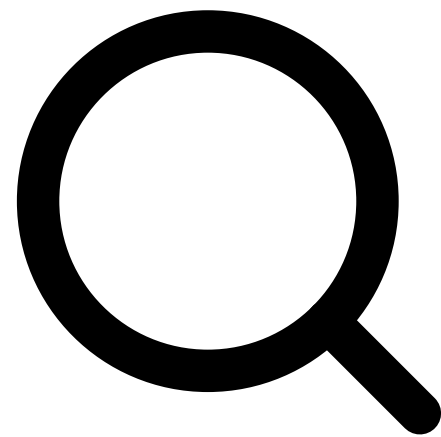
This project is part of the *Sustainable Global Technologies Studio (SGT)* course at the *School of Engineering in Aalto University*. The studio course brings together Master and PhD students of Aalto University to work on real projects about technology and sustainability in a developing context. The course aims to give students the opportunity to gain knowledge on how to conduct an international development project featuring different issues and areas in Africa, South America and South Asia. The students work in multidisciplinary teams representing various backgrounds such as engineering, architecture, design and business. The course includes expert lectures, interactive workshops and teamwork as well as a field trip to the project country.

The Nepali project started in November 2017 when the five of us Master's students and our mentoring PhD student got together for the first time. The actual coursework started in January 2018. What we knew at the time, was that the SGT course had never dealt with issues in Nepal before and this was our opportunity to pilot a project that could continue the following years as part of the existing projects of the course. In other words, we started this project from a blank page with the opportunity to create an impact in Nepal through a potentially long-lasting partnership between our university and local partners. Only few of us had prior experience in development work or Nepal, so we started an extensive background

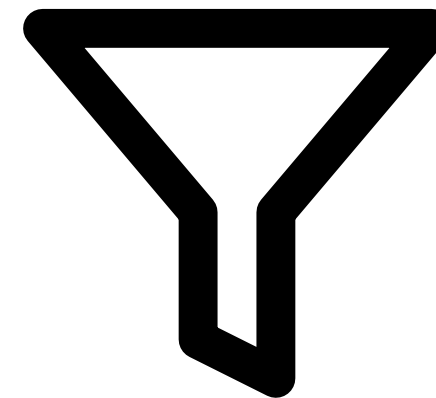
research to understand the challenges in the country. Through our background study and our first interviews with experts, it became clear to us that there is a lack of knowledge adoption of sustainable practices and context-specific communication between organizations and beneficiaries in the humanitarian sector. We decided to look into sustainable development related to reconstruction after natural disasters with a main focus on communication means.

After defining our project objectives and goals we started contacting potential partners and stakeholders that could support our work. In March 2018 we did a two week field trip to Nepal, where we established relationships with our partnering university (AITM), various organizations and other stakeholders. We gained insight on the current situations of the sites we visited and learned about different means of communication used in the context of reconstruction. In this report, we have gathered our learnings and findings of this seven month long journey.

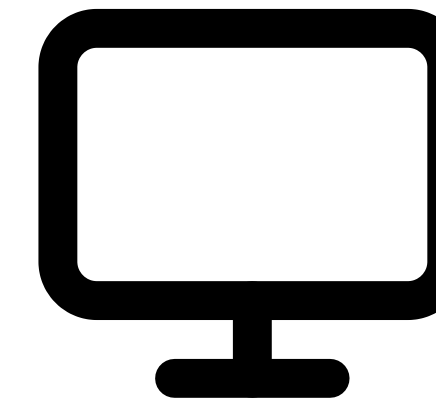
PROJECT BRIEF
OBJECTIVES



Study how organizations communicate post-disaster reconstruction to beneficiaries.



Collect different communication methods that aim to transfer knowledge and lead to knowledge adoption.

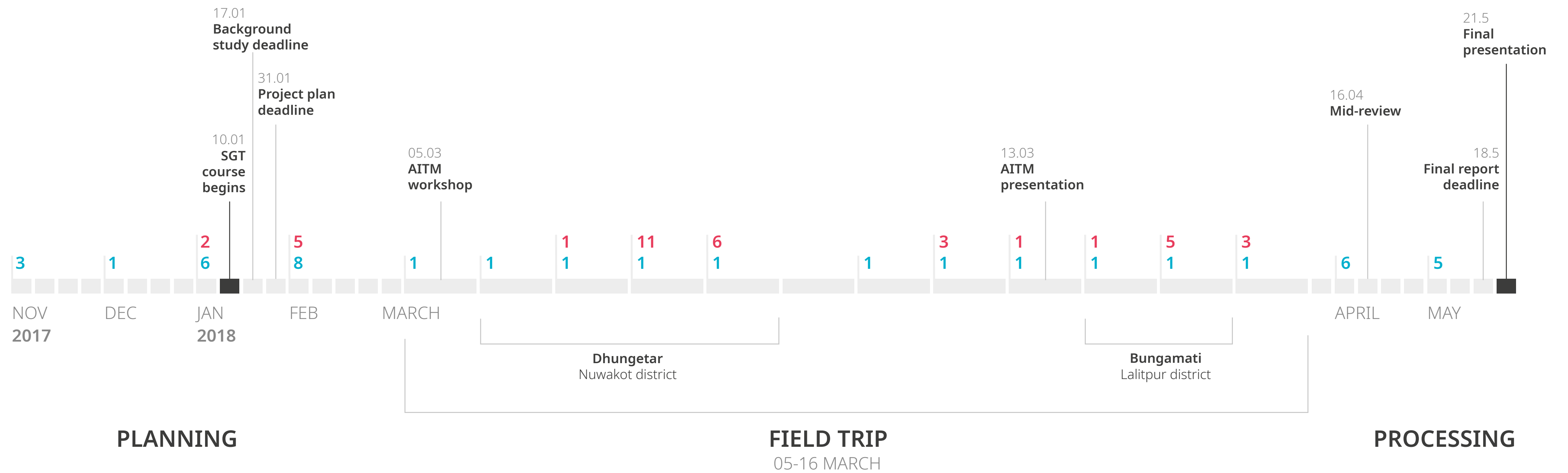


Present how the methods can be used to communicate sustainability issues in future work.

Our aim is to provide a collection and analysis of different communication methods for organizations to gain new insights on how to communicate and therefore, carry out their work more effectively.

PROJECT BRIEF

PROJECT TIMELINE



PROJECT BRIEF

METHODOLOGY

BACKGROUND

Our intention was not to replicate research that has already been conducted but rather add value to existing activities and research in Nepal. Through our initial interviews with experts in post-disaster reconstruction and background research, we found that communication is essential to sustainable development work and sustainable reconstruction. Therefore, we narrowed our project scope to focus on it and achieve the objectives listed prior.

We used the following methods to execute our project and collect data:

LITERATURE REVIEW

- All of us read multiple articles related to communication, sustainability and reconstruction in a developing context

GAINING NEW SKILLS

- We went to the Ministry of Environment and learned how to calculate a building's carbon footprint
- We attended SGT - course lectures on different subjects, such as project planning, mapping stakeholders and using design thinking in a developing context

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

- We created a guideline for the interviews with 10 topics and questions related to each of these
- We did altogether 38 interviews with 83 people: 25 experts and 58 beneficiaries. The interviews with 8 experts were done via Skype or in person in Finland and 17 experts and 58 beneficiaries were interviewed in person in Nepal
- At least 2 members from the team were always present in an interview: one would interview and one would take notes (mostly by hand). We recorded the interviews conducted in English and gathered all the information from the interviews to our google drive folder

OBSERVATION PROCESSES

- During our field trip, we took notes on the different materials used to build houses and measurements to calculate their carbon footprints (our mentor Kristjana is writing a separate paper to focus on this)
- We stayed in Dhungetar for 4 days and caught a glimpse of the local life and how ICIMOD operates there
- We gained a better understanding of the local context and situation of Nepal by being there for two weeks
- We visited reconstruction sites and settlements in Dhungetar (Nuwakot district) as well as Bungamati and Patan (Lalitpur district) to observe how the reconstruction is progressing (or not)
- We created a checklist to collect data on environmental sustainability that we used during interviews but also when observing different case sites

PROJECT BRIEF

METHODOLOGY

DOCUMENTATION

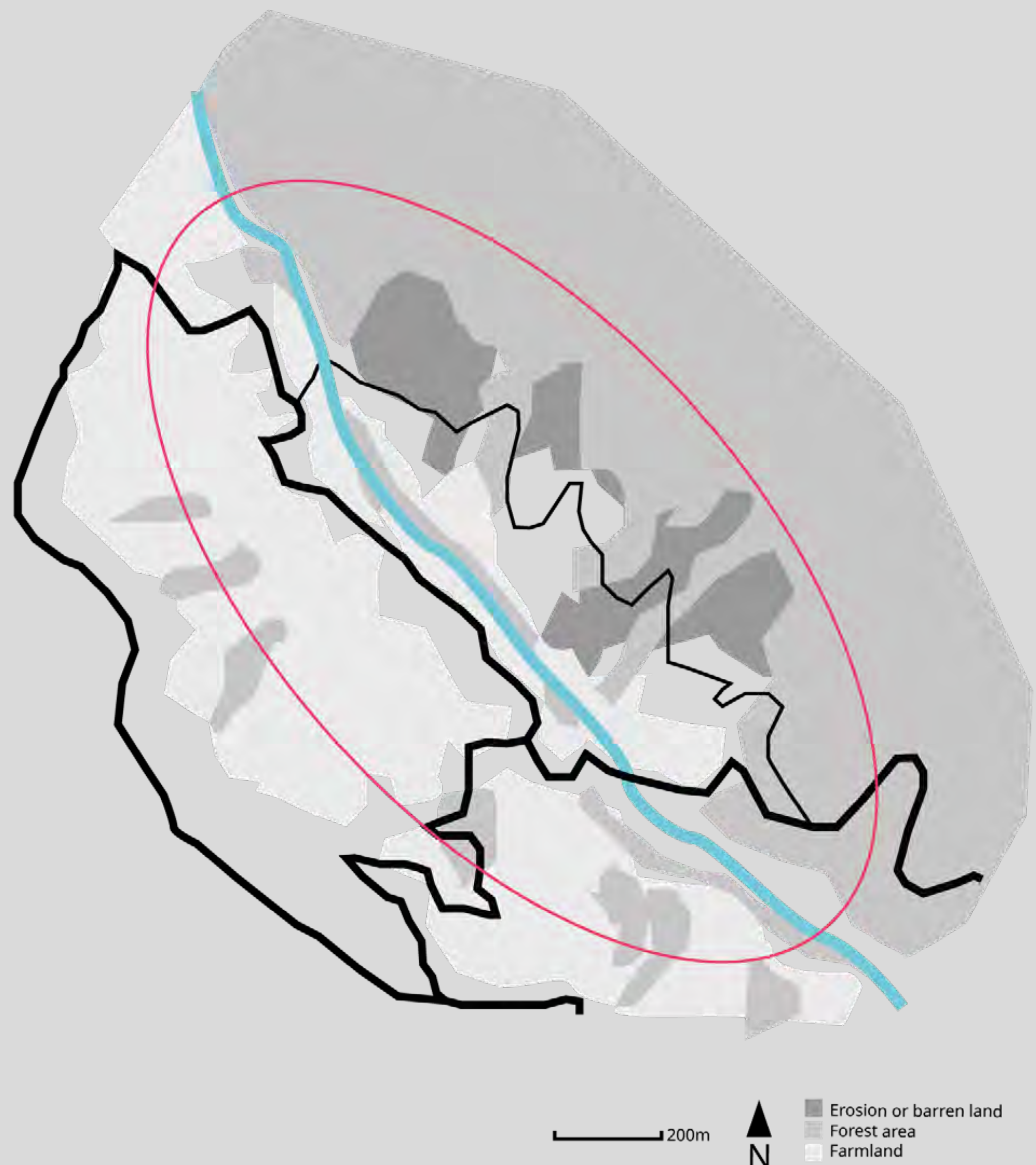
- We all kept personal learning diaries of the project
- We took photos and shot videos in all the locations we visited in Nepal
- We created a website for people to read about our project
- In our website, we posted 20 blog posts
- We updated our social media accounts on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram

ONLINE SURVEY

- We created a survey for experts asking questions related to development work, reconstruction and/or communication in Nepal and received 19/102 responses

CONTACTING EXPERTS AND ORGANIZATIONS IN NEPAL

- The survey was sent together with an email reaching out to 102 experts in Nepal. The aim was not only to receive survey responses but mainly get in contact with different organizations there.
- We searched for the contacts online and many of the email interactions then led to interviews in Nepal
- The interview and survey questions as well as environmental checklist can be found in the Appendix.



PROJECT BRIEF

DHUNGETAR

Dhungetar is a small rural settlement in the Bidur municipality in Nuwakot district, 68 km north-west of Kathmandu. It is situated in a valley on less than 1000 meters above sea level in a tropical climate zone. There is a river flowing between the southern and northern parts of the village. There are forests around but the village itself mainly consists of terraced farmland and housing.

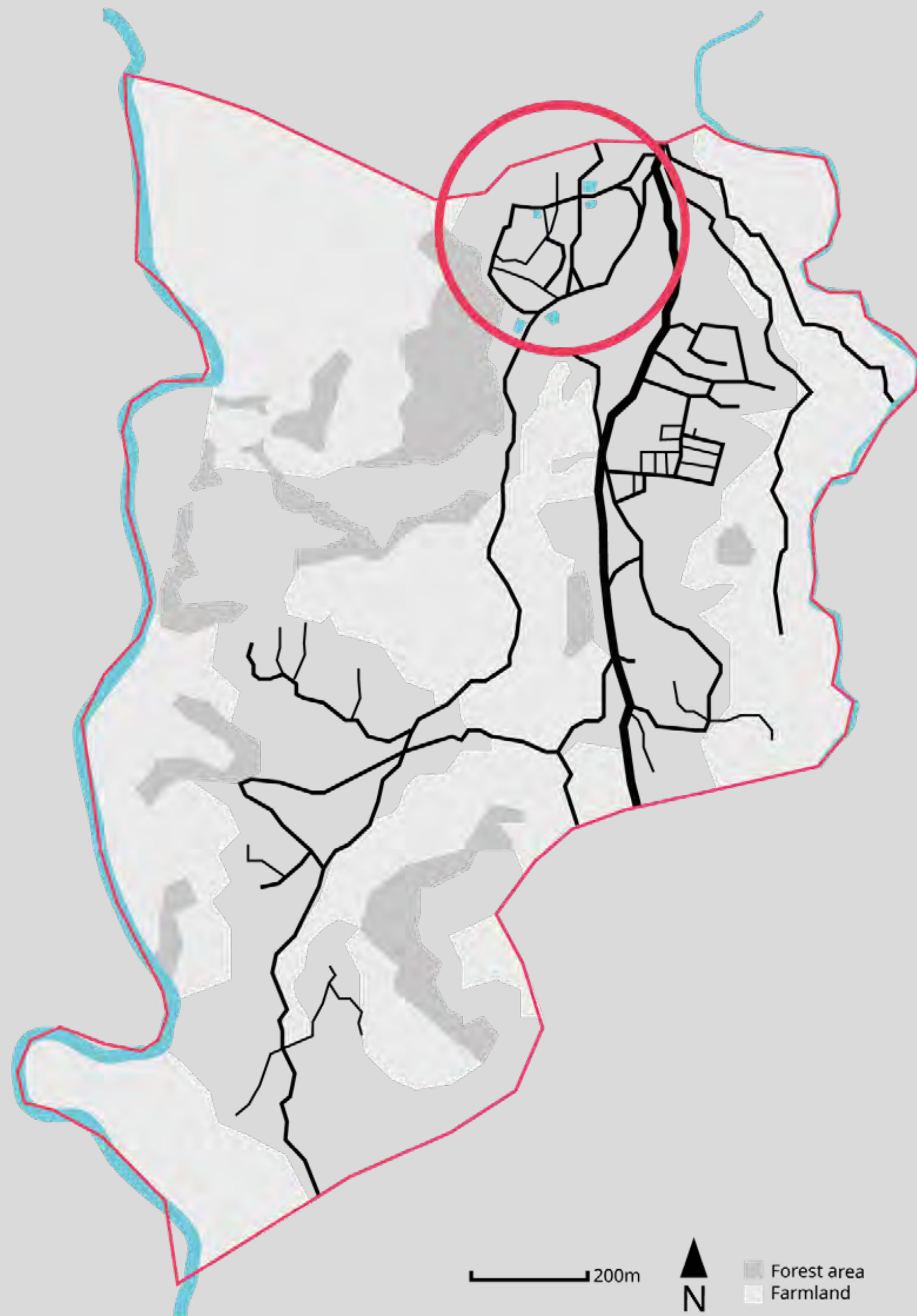
The population of 96 households and approximately 500 people is mainly adults and has an almost 50/50 distribution of men and women. The average household size is 5 people. Daily wages and traditional agriculture are main occupations. The fields are owned by higher-caste people outside the village. Many men are working either as guest workers abroad or as jewellery and ornament makers in Kathmandu. Women mainly take care of the family, household and animal husbandry.

Some men and women have studied until 12th grade (high school level) and they have received a government provided program on how to write their names, but most of them are illiterate. There is a school for small children (3-12 years) in the village built by an NGO after the earthquake. For higher level education there is a high school in another village around 1,5h walk away.

There are different ethnic groups, but mostly Sunar who are traditionally goldsmiths (low-caste and untouchables). Other ethnic groups represented are either from the merchant, agricultural, labourer, service provider castes or untouchables that are outside the caste system. The religions are a mix of hinduism, buddhism and own beliefs in the ethnic groups.

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) has its office in one of the beneficiaries houses and is actively involved with the reconstruction and development of the community with the support from International Development Research Center (IDRC). They have been there since 2015. Dhungetar is selected as a pilot demonstration project.

The village has one main sand road that ICIMOD built which goes from the main road through the three main areas of the village. A bridge and pathway has been built to reach the northern side of the river by foot. ICIMOD also created a drainage system in the village. There is electricity and public water taps available in some parts of the village, but clean water is still an issue and some fetch water from natural springs and rivers without considering the quality. There are a few small shops in the village, but the closest market is in Battar a few hours walk away. There are no health facilities in the village yet, but a hospital in Battar.



PROJECT BRIEF

BUNGAMATI

Bungamati is a semi-urban settlement in Lalitpur Metropolitan region in Lalitpur district, 14 km south from Kathmandu. It is situated 1300 meters above sea level and surrounded by jointly owned farmland and urban settlement. The Bagmati river flows next to Bungamati.

The majority of people belong to the Newari ethnic group and Bungamati is a major Newari settlement with a population of 6000 citizens. The Newari people in the area are especially known for their wood work and most men who follow the traditions take over the work as wood carvers from their fathers. At the same time, it is common to continue to university and college after the 12th grade, which have resulted in many young people taking up new professions and leaving their traditional ones behind.

Bungamati has a long history as a settlement (at least 1400 years) and its neighbourhoods are divided into clusters based on castes which are farmers, merchants and priests. In the town they have large areas of public spaces such as rest houses, temples and streets where people spend time and meet on a daily basis. Typical for the Newari culture is to self-organise their communities through different committee structures called guthi. The guthis have specific responsibilities they tend to.

Bungamati is the birthplace of Rato Machhendranath, a patron god of Patan, that according to traditions spend 6 months in Bungamati and 6 months in Patan. The ceremony of moving the god statue from one place to the other is one of the main festivals in Kathmandu valley. The sikhara temple of the god was destroyed during the earthquake in 2015.

Organizations that are present in the area are Centre of Integrated Urban Development (CIUD) that is working with reconstruction in collaboration with the community and with the support of UN-Habitat and a few other NGOs. The Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) has also active programs in Bungamati on livelihood, reconstruction and capacity building.

03 COMMUNICATION MEANS

Detailed showcase of Communication Means in earthquake recovery together with relevant examples.



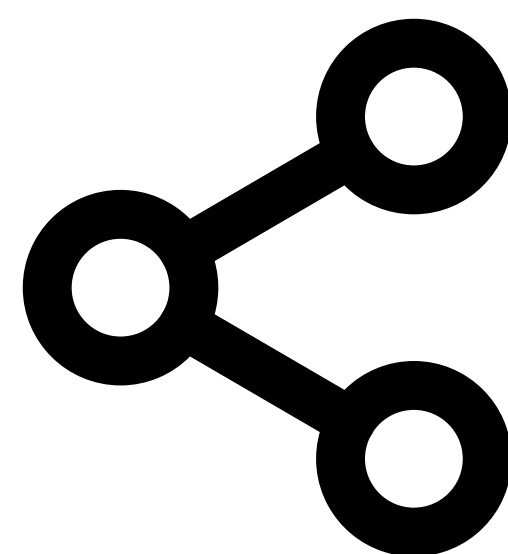
COMMUNICATION MEANS

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This chapter thoroughly lists different types of Communication Means. Where applicable, relevant examples and stories illustrate those practices. The appendix has an overview of the interview sources used.

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COMMUNICATION MEANS COMMITTEES



THE PEOPLE INVOLVED

The committees are usually groups of people representing local beneficiaries. The committees can be existing in the community or initiated by an organization or by the community itself. Many organizations aim to include community members from different ethnic groups, castes, gender and age in the committees. There might be roles such as chairman, secretary and other ones that have specific duties. The membership is mostly on voluntary basis and the members do not receive a salary. One community can have several committees that all serve different purposes.

THE OUTCOMES OBSERVED

The committees are in many cases existing social structures in the Nepalese society, and therefore an efficient way to mobilize beneficiaries to receive and share information, but also to empower them and get them involved in and committed to decision making processes. The committees do have more power than individuals and together with the organisations they collaborate to reach out to authorities. Voices from different social and financial levels can be heard and external organisations can get a better understanding of the needs and target the groups related to the needs.

THE ACTIONS PERFORMED

The committees organise focus group discussions, but also meetings where partnering organizations might promote their activities such as trainings and workshops. Different content such as brochures can be distributed during the meetings. The committees also spread the word on e.g. training by telling about it to the rest of the community. External organizations working together with committees use them to consult on different needs but also to hold the committees accountable of being committed to different projects.

THE ATTITUDE PERCEIVED

Some committee members feel that they have more power and can influence decision-making in their own but also the communities matters through the committee. Some partners prefer to work with the committees because it has a strong social aspect to it, building and maintaining relationships inside the community but also to the external organizations and authorities. It also activates the beneficiaries and is not only work among professionals but including the beneficiaries.

THE CONTENT DELIVERED

In the committee meetings, issues related to the community are discussed and decided on. A committee might for example decide on public issues that involves the whole community such as building infrastructure in a village or how to support individual household projects through funding from the community. Committees also do awareness raising through their meetings. In some communities there are existing committees who specifically take care of religious and cultural festivities in the community.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The committees mostly work through meetings but a lot of the communication that a committee does happens also outside the official meetings, through word-of-mouth. Individual committee members bring valuable information to their homes and neighbourhoods, but they also bring valuable information from these contexts to the meetings. Power relations are existing in committees as well, and it is important to consider when trying to get everyone's voice heard.

COMMUNICATION EXAMPLES

RECONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE



The current Reconstruction Committee in Dhungetar was founded in 2016 and its purpose is to serve as a communicator between ICIMOD and the beneficiaries to involve them in the decision-making processes that are related to reconstruction. The committee is currently dependant on the funding from ICIMOD and the members do not get any monetary compensation for their work.

The committee has 11 board members and they were selected by recommendations from other beneficiaries. In the beginning 3 women volunteered to be in the committee, and later more women were recommended so that there now is an equal representation of women and men. There is a chairman, vice-chairman and secretary in the committee. The secretary monitors the progress of reconstruction. He gets the information from the social mobilizers who visit the families who are currently building.

What the Reconstruction Committee did first was to bring in materials and machines to the village to support the construction work. Now they help in facilitating the workshops and trainings that ICIMOD organises to the beneficiaries. The committee communicates all the information on reconstruction processes and building techniques through different meetings, that are held on demand. Meetings and committees are familiar to the community members, as there already were some

existing groups in Dhungetar before. The beneficiaries can also turn to committee members for consultation individually.

Before, conflicts were dealt with between neighbours without any involvement from outside. The Reconstruction Committee was initiated to solve these kind of situations by involving beneficiaries in the reconstruction matters. Now when there are conflicts, the Reconstruction Committee organises a meeting between beneficiaries and everyone involved in the matter and they make written agreements to solve the problems.

There is a plan to build a Community Centre in Dhungetar, and the Reconstruction Committee has handed in a registration to the municipality to become an official entity so that they can buy land for the centre. The board members of the Reconstruction Committee see that once ICIMOD will leave Dhungetar they will continue the development work in the village. The committee has an important role in transporting the knowledge from ICIMOD to the community members and they experience that they have a good relation to the community as other beneficiaries turn to them with their problems.

COMMUNICATION EXAMPLES

MOTHER'S COMMITTEE



The Mother's Committee in Dhungetar existed before as a Women Development Committee initiated by an organization several years before the arrival of ICIMOD in 2015. The women met and discussed everyday events and problems occurring at home, while the current committee is more focused on a wider perception of community challenges related to health, sanitation, children and livelihood.

Before forming the Mother's Committee ICIMOD organized a one day orientation program to all women of the village to share information and have discussion on how women could participate in the reconstruction and livelihood of the village. In February 2018 the committee was initiated and the members handed in a registration for the municipality in order to become an official entity. The Mother's Committee has a chairman and vice-chairman, everyone else is equal. They meet once a month with the women in the community, the social mobilizers, the staff of ICIMOD and other beneficiaries (men and women) who are interested. Attending the meetings requires that the women leave their work and other duties for a while, which has made it difficult for some beneficiaries to participate. Around 50-70 women from the community have attended the meetings.

The committee recently started micro loaning, an idea that came from another village close by. The women collect from each household a specific amount of money that is then added up by the same amount from ICIMOD. The money is collected in the meetings and taken to the bank by the social mobilizers. The collected money is used to give loans to community members for them to invest in materials that can help them start small businesses.

In the meetings the beneficiaries also discuss what kind of trainings they need to improve their livelihood. For example, a training in creating Compressed Stabilized Earth Bricks (CSEB) was conducted earlier by ICIMOD and the women did not only learn how to make the bricks but also how to sell them.

The members of the Mother's Committee feel empowered and encouraged to take an active role in their community and also deal with issues such as alcohol consumption and gambling among the men. They are confident to continue the work of ICIMOD and manage on their own without the organization in the future. Some women did not want to work together in the committee with the lower caste women. Some men in the community find it problematic that the women have a more powerful status than before, while others experience the committee as a good thing as it makes the women less lonely.

COMMUNICATION EXAMPLES

NEWARI COMMITTEES



“The temple is now gone. 50 years ago the guthi system would have revitalized it. Now the Department of Archeology is doing it, but without engaging the community. The guthi system would be more sustainable, but since society has changed it is not realistic anymore. A middle way would be needed, between the guthi system and the government.”

Anil Tuladhar

The Newari committees are called guthi and they have existed since 5th century BC as a form of governance of society. Every guthi has its own purpose and function and in one community there are several that together maintain the socio-economic structure of the community. A guthi could establish and maintain hospitals, temples, irrigation channels and other public services. The guthi system is the backbone for preservation of Newari culture and heritage but it is slowly disappearing due to changes in the Nepalese society. Main guthi's still left carry out religious festivities and ceremonies. Meanwhile, some form of a guthi culture has been re-established due to the need of development and lack of governance from authorities.

Many Newari communities have created new committees that specifically address issues on reconstruction such as the 13 neighbourhood cluster committees in Bungamati.

The committees are under the umbrella community organization called Bungamati Area Reconstruction and Development Council (BARDeC) which is supported jointly by CIUD and UN-Habitat. The members of BARDeC are major stakeholders and political figures who can influence the local government and fasten the reconstruction process. The neighbourhood cluster committees consists mainly of young men and women from different castes who are active members of the community.

The organizations working in Bungamati with the committees or guthis have conducted interaction programs, excursions and trainings for beneficiaries to demonstrate traditional ways of building that sustains the cultural heritage of the Newari people.



COMMUNICATION STORIES

STRENGTH FROM THE INSIDE

Riken Maharjan is CEO of the family company R B Diamond Jewellers. He is also one of the founders of Maya Foundation (MF), a family CSR that started by empowering the youth in their community, enhancing their skills to get employed through trainings and job placements. Since 2015, MF is focusing on supporting the local Newari community in Pilachhein in Patan, Lalitpur district to reconstruct and create new possibilities for the community members to make a living through tourism.

The reconstruction and tourism project works through different committees, being procurement committee (managing raw materials), the accounting committee (responsible for finances), the advisory committee (advices on reconstruction) and management committee of MF (manages the operation of the overall project). There is a separate committee from the community that brings in issues, complaints and suggestion regarding the project. The committees communicate through meetings.

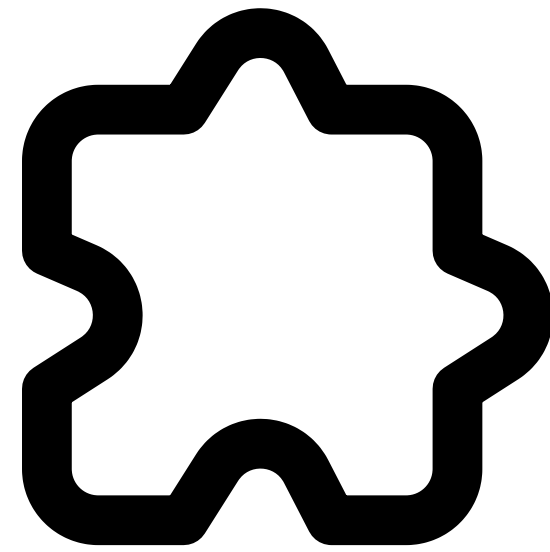
When the earthquake struck, most of the houses were destroyed. Through the project with MF 82 out of 100 houses will be rebuilt. Most of the beneficiaries are red card holders and therefore receive the instalments but since the governmental support is not enough, MF created a funding scheme for the reconstruction. In the scheme 25% is voluntary labour from the community (every household that receives help, helps another household), 25% is

donations, 25% is what the house owner puts in and 25% is a loan the house owner receives from a partnering bank. The donations are collected through different gatherings and various donors from inside and outside the community have supported the project. Factories and construction companies have also offered their raw materials and technical support for free.

The idea is to build RCC houses with maximum 4 floors: traditional workshops in the first floor, guest rooms for possible tourism (homestay) in the second floor and the rest of the floors for the families. Not all the beneficiaries were pleased with the concept in the beginning, but the community got together to solve the issue and decided on continuing as they were in urgent need of permanent housing. The first house was finished one year after the earthquake, in 2016. It represented a demonstration for the other beneficiaries and made them hopeful and excited to build. Since the first house, 12 other houses has been completed.

Even though MF has been able to support the community of Pilachhein in self-organizing for reconstruction, it has been a challenge to operate without a project manager since the committees have their own responsibility but no one is responsible of the overall process. As a businessman it has also been difficult for Maharjan to communicate with NGOs on the same level.

COMMUNICATION MEANS CO-CREATION PRACTICES



THE PEOPLE INVOLVED

Co-creative approaches in communication is used in various NGO's working directly with local people. They require the organization to have social mobilizers, volunteers or other staff that have good relations with the beneficiaries and get them involved to co-creation. These practices often reach only a part of the residents and even people who live in the working area don't get the information about organised activities if no supporting forms of communication are used.

THE OUTCOMES OBSERVED

Outcome of the practices depend on the specific context and type of the action. With workshops, an outcome can be for example a plan for a new construction in the neighbourhood or practical skills gained by the participants. Co-creation of concrete objects for presenting information result in case-specific products such as three-dimensional maps or mural paintings. Whether it is co-creation of tangible products or things such as theatre, the outcome seems often to be a shift in attitude of the beneficiaries and sometimes new knowledge adopted.

THE ACTIONS PERFORMED

Co-creative practices include workshops and collective creations such as theatre plays and paintings. These require involved people to meet and work together face to face. Before co-creative action, the event has to be advertised to the public. People might seem doubtful at first, but secured funding increases the interest. It is important that apart from only repetitive meetings there will be an actual participatory action. Co-creative practices seem to also offer a good possibility for gathering feedback after the actual implementation.

THE ATTITUDE PERCEIVED

When people themselves participate in creation, their attitude towards the outcomes seems proud. For example, the participatory 3D model of the Dhungetar village co-created with beneficiaries by ICIMOD, was described as a showcase of the village by a local. Overall, the attitude of people is neutral or positive towards the co-created products even though they would not gain information or use them.

THE CONTENT DELIVERED

Generally, we found out that co-creative practices can be divided into two main categories by their content. First, these Communication Means may be aimed to gain insights from local residents at the same time as spreading information. This can be done in the form of workshops where people plan, design or even make something for themselves or their neighbourhood. Second, these practices can be used for simply presenting and sharing information in an engaging way, such as by co-creating street theatre, mural paintings or maps with beneficiaries.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Co-creation may require already well-established trust and a good connection between the organization and the beneficiaries. Sometimes the designed outcome of the co-created product and the actual outcome might differ. Instead of new information the participants might gain more insight and a new outlook on the relevant issues. This possibility should be approached openly and utilized rather than disregarded.

COMMUNICATION EXAMPLES

MINECRAFT



In 2017 CIUD conducted a 3-day workshop on how to revitalize the temple complex. The workshop was held with UN-Habitat and by utilizing the Minecraft game. This was the second time that the Minecraft workshop was used in Nepal.

A wide variety of residents were playing the game in the workshop and came up with designs which then were presented to a larger part of the community. The participants made numerous different designs including details such as solar panels, a fountain and gardens. After the presentations, the community chose which ones to develop. The end result is the rest house built on the main square in Bungamati.

While conducting the workshop, the beneficiaries were suspicious towards the outcome as the workshop was not very hands-on building workshop. The beneficiaries were also tired of meetings after meetings without an actual benefit. However as soon as the funding of the project was allocated, the level of interest increased. The workshop organisers think that it is a good way of designing as it involves the local people in the design process and enhances the ownership on the outcome. Financially the project was supported with UN Habitat, but also Minecraft gave funding together with some other international organizations. The local community funded 25% of the Rest House project.

After the earthquake, also the public pond in Bungamati was in bad shape as it was full of debris, polluted and the pipelines had been destroyed. CIUD and UN-Habitat decided to utilize the Minecraft again in a workshop to revitalize the public pond. The workshop resulted in new designs of the pond and the public spaces around it. The construction work was made with the same community based approach as Rest House, but it is yet to be finished due to lack of budget.

COMMUNICATION EXAMPLES

MURAL PAINTINGS



The left side of the mural painted in the wall by the water source in Bungamati displays how before there was lots of alcohol consumption and drug addictions among the beneficiaries and people used the same water for animals while not keeping waste and clean water separate. The right side of the painting shows that after the trainings and introducing waste management technology, people have become aware of risks and waste issues. It shows that the waste should be managed correctly and that the garbage should be thrown in bins.

The mural was created based on the community meetings, where the NRCS analysed the main issues of the community together with beneficiaries and came up with the idea for the mural.

A professional local painter was hired to make the piece. We interviewed community members who said that they know the mural and recognise the issues it presents. However, it seems that the mural itself is not as effective in sharing information as it could be, as we also encountered a man who said that he has seen the mural in the town but did not get the message.

COMMUNICATION EXAMPLES

3D MAPPING

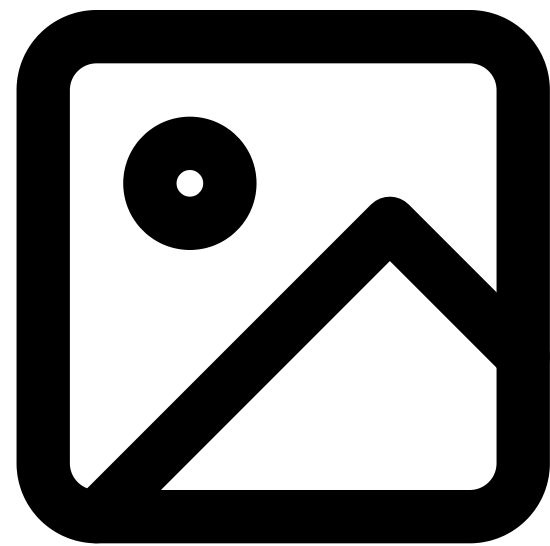


A three-dimensional miniature model built in a participatory workshop seems to enhance the locals' pride and also hands them ownership of their village and the ongoing projects.

ICIMOD conducted a participatory workshop in Dhungetar to build a three-dimensional miniature model (P3D model) of the village. The model is currently located in ICIMOD's office and they use the model to communicate with external persons and other non-governmental organizations. They also use it to explain locations to other community members and think everyone in the village came to see the P3D model at least once.

While ICIMOD staff perceives that the P3D model has helped the beneficiaries to learn a lot about their environment and the geography of the village such as locations and resources, the interviews with the beneficiaries seem to conflict with this idea. We met a man whose son had worked with building the model, but he said that they have not used the model for anything particular after that. Despite this, the man said that seeing their house in the model makes the family happy every time. Other comments from community members revealed that they have seen the P3D model, but do not actually know what it is made for and think that it is rather a showcase of their village than a tool.

COMMUNICATION MEANS DEMONSTRATIONS



THE PEOPLE INVOLVED

Constructions of demonstrational structures are usually initiated by an organization to transport concrete and tangible knowledge to the beneficiaries living in the community, the organization tries to engage in.

The actual construction of the structure itself, can vary in the degree of participation and therefore be rather set up externally or rather from within a community of beneficiaries.

THE OUTCOMES OBSERVED

The construction of a demonstrational structure by an organization creates trust towards its capabilities in a community. It also engages the beneficiaries to discover and learn the possible advantages of the application of new technologies on their own.

Demonstration of 'knowledge in action' can engage the audience to overcome for example existing bias or misconception and is highly tangible, which makes the adoption more likely.

THE ACTIONS PERFORMED

Seeing is believing - this simple statement describes well how applied knowledge or theory becomes accessible and comprehensive if you manage to give it a physical form and hand it to the people.

The actions can be building a complete house for beneficiaries to live in, or just small-scale models to display certain building techniques. It is putting theory into tangible praxis.

THE ATTITUDE PERCEIVED

Both, organizations and beneficiaries perceived this way of communicating as highly engaging and positive.

The finalized structure as well as the introduced technologies infused a lot of useful and applicable knowledge into the community.

THE CONTENT DELIVERED

The core message is usually showcasing different methods or materials for the reconstruction process but can also be the display of new technologies for farming, water supply or livelihood improvements.

Since the structure is a physical object, which becomes embedded in the community, it can also serve to transport and shape values or traditions.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Demonstrational structures can be constructed to actively support individual beneficiaries. If so, the selection criteria must be communicated to avoid perceived inequality.

Besides new technologies, it can also be traditional methods or materials to be reintroduced to sustain a certain culture or heritage.



COMMUNICATION STORIES

DEMO HOUSE IN DHUNGETAR

“I feel like an ambassador for everything new that comes to Dhungetar. Of course, some of the people were jealous in the beginning but then they all come here to know more. I am an important part of the community and happy to share my knowledge.”

Tilkomari

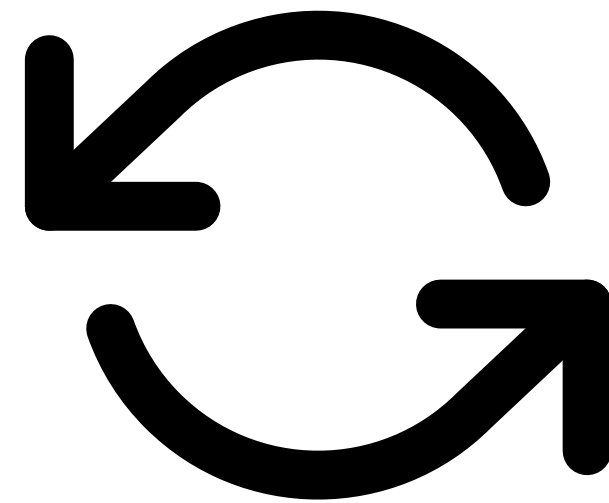
The ‘Demo House’ in the village of Dhungetar was built by ICIMOD as an example of reconstruction using Compressed Stabilized Earth Bricks (CSEB) as the main building technology. Most of the work during the building phase itself was executed by the organization’s staff, but Tilkomari, the woman who is now living in the house, supported ICIMOD in making bricks, bringing all kinds of construction materials and preparing food for the workers.

Tilkomari’s husband died over 20 years ago, so since then, she is taking care of the house and the nearby farms on her own. After the earthquake left her only with ruins of her old home, ICIMOD approached her with the project plans for the ‘Demo House’ on her farmland. Even though she and many other community members were biased about the size and stability of her new home, she was more than happy to take the opportunity and accepted their offer.

After the finalization of the construction, the house was equipped with a solar powered cooker, a solar drying box for food and various other new technologies such as a biogas plant, connected to the toilet house, or rain water harvesting systems. Everyone in Dhungetar visited her at least once to see what is possible with the new building techniques and what else could facilitate their daily struggle of living in rural Nepal.

Seeing the results but also getting to know in what way ICIMOD can help them with their own eyes, created a solid foundation of trust towards the organization. And they still come to ask Tilkomari about her own experiences in using all those new things, since she is now an expert and living example of successful recovery in the village.

COMMUNICATION MEANS FEEDBACK MECHANISMS



THE PEOPLE INVOLVED

The hotlines and suggestion boxes were feedback mechanisms between NRCS and community members in Bungamati. It was not restricted to beneficiaries only. However, it may exclude certain people, as the hotline requires a phone - which not everyone owns - and the suggestion box requires a person to be literate - which is not always the case.

THE OUTCOMES OBSERVED

This communication method has allowed for reinforced explanations by the NRCS as to why certain people are not beneficiaries. It is always a sensitive issue 'selecting' beneficiaries and communicating it to those who are not in the group. The hotline and suggestion box allow for people to give feedback, express perhaps more frustrated opinions, be heard and have one-on-one conversations.

THE ACTIONS PERFORMED

In order to use the hotline, the beneficiaries call #1130. There are three staff members responding to the calls. If they cannot advise the community members, they delegate the issue further to someone who can.

The purpose of the suggestion box in Bungamati is to give feedback and in order to do so, beneficiaries need to move to the place where the box is and drop a note with their suggestions

THE ATTITUDE PERCEIVED

According to the NRCS volunteer, the hotline has been successful and people will always receive an answer to their question or concern.

Out of the five community members we interviewed in Bungamati, one knew about the hotline but never had felt the need to use it, and another had not heard of it. A few people stated that they knew about the suggestion box. However, they did not express any particular feelings toward either feedback mechanism.

THE CONTENT DELIVERED

According to the volunteer working for NRCS, mainly non-beneficiaries use the hotline to give dissatisfied feedback and inquire why they are not eligible to receive certain benefits.

The community members may use the hotline or suggestion box to ask and/or express anything they wish.

GENERAL INFORMATION

This section covers the use of hotlines and suggestion boxes. Other means, such as house visits and information bases were also used as ways to receive feedback, and no organization was only using hotlines and suggestion boxes.



COMMUNICATION STORIES

THE WORLD IS NOT FAIR

Many families in the village of Dhungetar are split up: while the women stay in the mountains, the men are working abroad. But some of them have already returned home – this is a story about one of them.

He is a farmer and he has his own small field next to his house, something rather unusual as most of the people don't own the fields they are working on. But he wasn't born owning the land he now works on. He used to work in Saudi Arabia as a construction worker for five years. A long time being away from his family. He saved as much money as possible to buy the land once he moved back. His house is made from traditional stone and mud materials.

Even though his land is not big, the fields provide enough food for about six months of the year for him and his family. During the rest of the year, he must work somewhere else on a daily wage basis. The prices of land are high in Nepal, at least compared to the average income level.

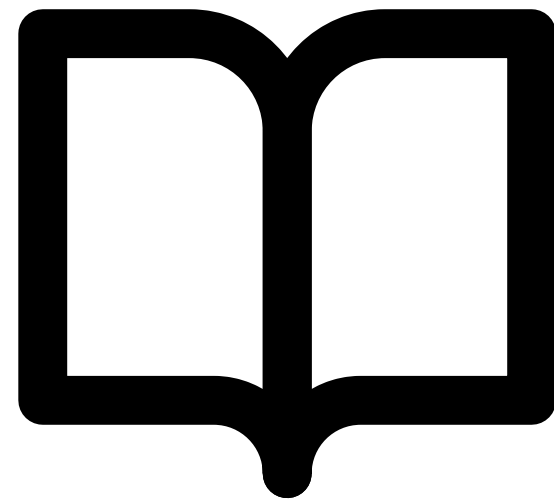
During the earthquake, his house was severely damaged. But he used as his savings to get local materials from the bazar to repair it as soon as possible. There was no alternative since there was no other place for his family to live in.

When the local officials arrived in Dhungetar to file damage reports, his house was already repaired. If you are living in a damaged house, you can get the “Red Card” that entitles you to financial support. But his family did not qualify, even though their repaired home was still made from stone and mud and therefore vulnerable for future earthquakes.

Watching most of the population around him rebuilding their homes using new, interlocking brick technologies, he decided to do the same. He wants to keep his family safe for the future, even if this requires taking the financial burden of building a new house without any governmental support.

To him, this feels not fair, it feels like getting punished because he started to act on his own, not waiting for someone else to come and help.

COMMUNICATION MEANS INFORMATION HUBS



THE PEOPLE INVOLVED

People working at information hubs are staff members from an organization, social mobilizers, volunteers or key persons from the community with information on current development and activities. The space is meant to be accessible for as much community members as possible, but especially those who prefer to meet staff members face to face. In many situations the staff members and key persons move around in the community, but the hub is their base where they can be found at certain hours during the day/week.

THE OUTCOMES OBSERVED

The information hub is a way to reach as many beneficiaries as possible, trusting the word of mouth to take it further to the persons who do not visit the hub themselves. It also builds trust if the staff members or key persons involved in the activities at the hub are available for community members. A challenge is the opening hours if they are during daytime when many beneficiaries are working.

THE ACTIONS PERFORMED

The information hub is often used as a meeting place between staff members of an organization and beneficiaries. Staff members organise and/or facilitate closed and public meetings, workshops, trainings and meet with beneficiaries individually as well. The beneficiaries can visit the hub themselves when staff members are present. In the locale there is often a notice board with latest updates and news on the different activities organised by the organization or decisions coming from the municipality.

THE ATTITUDE PERCEIVED

Many beneficiaries prefer the face to face discussions and consultations as a communication tool, and therefore the information hub is appreciated by them. Community members learn fast that if they have questions or uncertainties about something they can turn to the information hub and the staff there to get more information.

THE CONTENT DELIVERED

In the hub there are staff members who inform community members who drop by about the latest activities. The content of such communication is often related to trainings in livelihood or reconstruction, or information on when and where a meeting, where decisions need to be taken related to the development in the community, is taking place. The communication is both ways: staff members can reach out to the beneficiaries who visit the hub, and beneficiaries can reach out to staff members as they know where to find them. The staff uses to some extent also brochures and templates.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The information hub is a meeting place, an official center or office in the field, located usually close to a community in order for the beneficiaries to access it. It can also be informal in the sense of using an existing meeting place such as a shop that the community members actively visit.

COMMUNICATION EXAMPLES

OFFICE IN DHUNGETAR



The ICIMOD Office is an information hub in Dhungetar. The staff represents professionals from outside the community who work closely together with the social mobilizers and the community members. The office is open certain times everyday and the beneficiaries are welcome to visit the office during those times. It is located in the middle of the village and the office space is rented from a local beneficiary who owns the house.

The ICIMOD Office facilitates both public and closed meetings in the village. They organise trainings and workshops to involve community members from different ethnic groups, castes, gender and age. One focus of the office has been to empower the women and give them skills through training to financially be able to support themselves and get involved with the reconstruction work since many of the men are working as guest workers abroad. The office works as an Information Hubs to inform the community on the upcoming meetings, trainings and other activities.

Due to the presence of ICIMOD since 2015, they have been able to build trust among the community members and many members feel that they can easily turn to the staff members for help. Even non-beneficiaries of ICIMOD visit the office for consultation and help with reconstruction. Some beneficiaries call ICIMOD a “god” because they answered their prayers by actually doing something, building infrastructure and supporting the reconstruction of houses while many other organizations have not been able to help. The beneficiaries in Dhungetar also feel confident to continue the work of ICIMOD once the organization leaves the site.

COMMUNICATION EXAMPLES

MULTI-PURPOSE WOMEN CENTRE



UN Women in Nepal supported victims of the earthquake from 2015 to 2017 through the establishment of five Multi-Purpose Women Centres in five of the earthquake affected districts. In order to understand the district context and its needs and to identify the marginalized and vulnerable beneficiaries that UN Women wanted to support, they consulted relevant partners to map out the location, services and people around the area. They also looked into the financial aspects and calculated where they could operate so that it would be financially sufficient. After the consultations they decided on the exact location where they would operate and the local people who became their beneficiaries. The centres are in rural areas on government owned land.

The initial purpose of the centres were to provide victims with dignity kits (non-food items) and solar lanterns to fulfill energy needs and as an outcome enable school children to study at home. The distribution of dignity kits happened in fixed times and there was an orientation before it where women could ask questions and understand why they were receiving the items. The beneficiaries (women) could also get psychosocial support through the centre. The beneficiaries coming to the centres could come from up to a two day walking distance (around a 4 hour drive).

The facilitators of the Multi-Purpose Women Centres were also mobilized to different pocket areas (identified and planned beforehand) once a week to discuss issues, provide relief and bring the psychosocial counsellor with them who provided their services either individually or in groups. UN Women also provided the funding for different kind of livelihood training for beneficiaries that local civil society women's groups, who have better capacity to address the needs, organised in relation the the centres.

Today 2 of the centres are run by local NGO's and 3 by the government. The idea of the centres is to continue using them for women, under UN Women guidelines of gender equality, capacity building and reconstruction. In case of emergency the centres will be used again as multi-purpose centres, providing immediate relief to victims of natural disasters.



COMMUNICATION STORIES

MULTI-LEVEL EMPOWERMENT

“In order to challenge harmful practices and discriminatory norms in society, efforts must be considered at multiple levels. A part of this effort is to economically and socially empower women and girls. The utilization of the media and support from community members including men and boys is a must for the achievement of positive norm change to tackle issues related to adverse social norms in society.”

Sama Shrestha

UN Women has a mandate to advocate equal partnership and leadership for women. Sama Shrestha, Program Specialist for Women Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action at the Inclusive Governance unit of UN Women in Kathmandu, works also in gender and social issues related to reconstruction in Nepal.

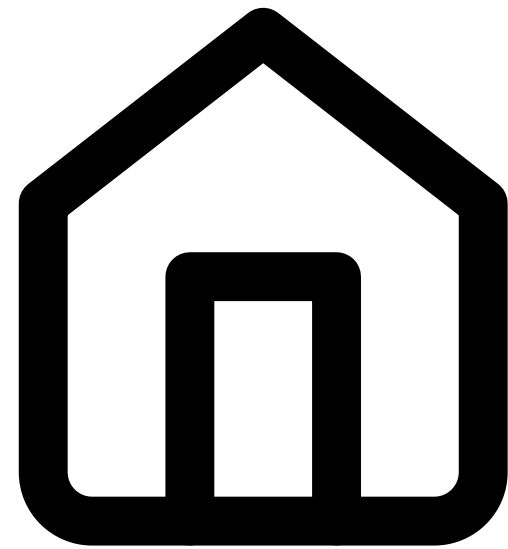
The current focus is to work with the government entities and in partnership with other organizations working in the field. UN Women has a long-term strategy to provide partners and authorities with guidelines on how to involve women in societal issues and they organise constructive meetings to ensure their guidelines are considered. As an outcome the relations to the partners are strengthened and capacity is being built for facilitators and authorities to have a gender perspective in their work. One such partner is the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA), a government entity that coordinates reconstruction work following the 2015 earthquake. UN

Women provided the NRA with technical support on gender issues in reconstruction.

UN Women has a gender working group that gets activated right after a disaster and it meets with key actors in the field such as cluster leads and gender focal points to discuss concerns on gender and social inclusion and what are the recommendations for this. The group works through the whole process of disaster to support key actors which include marginalized and vulnerable people in their programs.

Mobilization of local community members including women and girls, men and boys, and community leaders such as religious leaders and faith healers, is an efficient strategy for addressing harmful practices and empowering women in reconstruction. Further support through the community radio is important to affect change at both, individual and societal level.

COMMUNICATION MEANS HOUSE VISITS



THE PEOPLE INVOLVED

Both the government and also non-governmental organizations may use house visits to map out the situation and specific needs of different households after a natural catastrophe. These visits are either done by the staff of the conducting organization, volunteers or beneficiaries hired to do them. The latter are often working as social mobilizers for the organization.

THE OUTCOMES OBSERVED

Outcome of house visits can be widely varied depending on the scale and purpose of the visits. Visits before and during a reconstruction project help in establishing trust between beneficiaries and organization.

THE ACTIONS PERFORMED

House visits can be preliminary visits that are conducted to gain insight and an accurate picture of the current situation of the beneficiaries. These first house visit rounds in a target area might include also a survey, that can be later analysed and used for monitoring the project. Different actors may also share their survey results and gain more insight in this way. House visits can be also more personal and need-based, used as a way to inform specific households about issues relevant for them and monitoring their progress.

THE ATTITUDE PERCEIVED

House visits seemed to be one of the most preferred ways of communication. Especially among illiterate, low caste people a visit to one's house was perceived to be even the only efficient way to share information of a new project. If ongoing regular house visits are suddenly cut off, it will produce distrust and the value of the organization in the eyes of beneficiaries seem to decrease.

THE CONTENT DELIVERED

The content of house visits is either distributing or collecting information on an individual household level. This means that the information shared can be detailed and accurate. Personal counselling, feedback and in-depth analysis and advice on a specific family's situation are possible.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Generally, house visits offer a personal and engaging way for both, beneficiaries and organization staff members, to communicate. Benefits are in the possibility of conducting a survey simultaneously with sharing information and establishing long-lasting relationships. A down side is clearly the extensive time and effort that repetitive individual visits require.

ICIMOD INDIVIDUAL HOUSE VISITS



Continuing house visits help to establish trust and keep on track regarding the problems that individual households may encounter.

ICIMOD visited all the houses in Dhungetar to collect information before the start of their project in the village. Households in the project area were surveyed individually and also the first project meeting was called together by going from door to door. The survey was made first around a year before taking action. The beneficiaries were especially happy that ICIMOD started the project by asking themselves what they needed. Some of the illiterate women in Dhungetar also remarked that they don't know any other possible way of informing about these kind of projects than walking from house to house in the village.

However it was not only the organization that made the house visits: In the beginning, also the community committee promoted ICIMOD by going from door-to-door. Later during the ongoing project close communication with families has helped to keep on track regarding their problems and examine, if the village is benefitting from the actions.

Also, ICIMOD's staff members said that they spend a lot of time with community members and feel close to them. The individual visits also allow to explain about in depth all the different technologies and improvements they provide.

ICIMOD meets with all households individually in the beginning to discuss the housing design and modalities as well as the budget. They also make sure, that people can finalize their projects and don't start something, they cannot finish and have experts that do regular process monitoring of the reconstruction work.



COMMUNICATION STORIES

COMMUNICATION WITHIN ICIMOD

“If you don’t have proper relationships and communication within staff, you can’t succeed. Communication is a key element in having a good management team.”

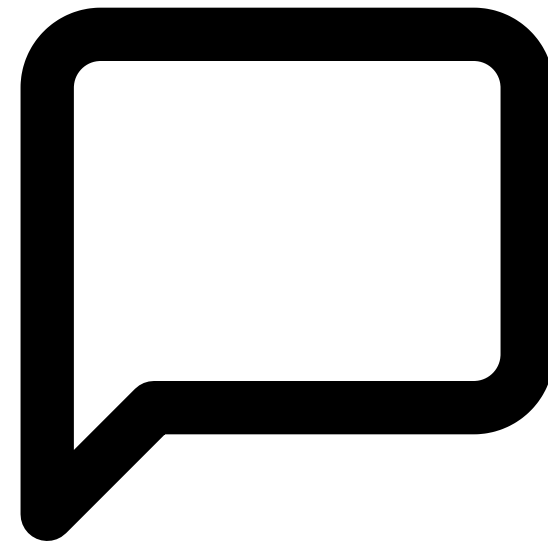
Ram Tamang

Ram is a staff member of ICIMOD. We had many discussions with Ram during our field trip to Dhungetar and he was always ready to help us and share his knowledge. He has a background in agricultural engineering and is doing his Master’s degree in water resource management.

Ram has been part of ICIMOD’s development project in Dhungetar since the beginning. He monitors and manages the on-going projects and supports the project coordinator. He sees himself as a bridge between the senior staff and junior staff members.

Ram mentioned that they used to have lots of miscommunication amongst the team, but now they have 1-2 meetings a week where the staff can bring up any issues and speak freely. He said it has gotten way better and he believes one of the reasons the project and team is doing so well is because they have focused on communication amongst the staff. He has one-on-one conversations with all staff members to discuss the work and challenges they may be facing.

COMMUNICATION MEANS MEETINGS



THE PEOPLE INVOLVED

Meetings can be hosted by organizations but also by different committees or individuals within the community of beneficiaries.

They can consist of a focus group of people, dedicated to a specific subject, or they can be open for everyone to address the biggest audience possible.

THE OUTCOMES OBSERVED

The main outcome is an informed audience. Key is the transport of a given set of information from either the organization to the beneficiaries or vice versa. This usually includes the possibility for open discussion and feedback about the information, so meetings engage their participants to actually think about the discussed matter.

Depending on the matter, sometimes the meetings are also only used to discuss community internal issues.

THE ACTIONS PERFORMED

The centre is the exchange of information. Organizations use meetings to introduce new information to their audience but also consider them important feedback mechanisms.

A meeting can act as a platform to give beneficiaries a voice, but it can also be used to facilitate decision making in communities or to introduce voting systems.

THE ATTITUDE PERCEIVED

Participation for meetings can be considered as quite high but varies in number according to the location. Beneficiaries tend to be open and interested in the possibility to participate in them and are interested in gathering new information.

The fact, that meetings also give space for critical discussion and ensure a degree of transparency, they are perceived a very good way of communicating.

THE CONTENT DELIVERED

Initial, first contact meetings can provide information of how an organization is planning to work with a group of beneficiaries. They can include information about financing, government help, construction techniques, obligations or time schedules but also selection criteria for beneficiaries.

Other kinds of meetings are used to decide on communal actions such as the construction of community centres or livelihood programmes.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Besides the rather open community meetings, usually smaller, closed meetings are also frequently held. They allow more effective decision-making and the presentation of more focused, in-depth information. The participants are usually external experts and community representatives for a given subject such as waste-management, reconstruction of a specific public building or gender issues.

COMMUNICATION EXAMPLES

FOCUS GROUPS



“Group meetings are the best way to get information. Every group usually meets about once per month to discuss new issues so we already have some kind of expertise in the community before everything gets spread.”

Beneficiary in Bungamati

The complexity and size of the Newari settlement in Bungamati, required a more adaptive approach to meetings. In order to make decision making and communication more effective, smaller focus groups were introduced where possible. Those focus groups limit the number of attendees in a certain meeting to a reasonable number and renders them agile while not losing community participation or implementing top-down approaches.

Focus groups on waste issues can now discuss their issues and ideas simultaneously to another group that takes care of engineering aspects such as construction plans and drawings.

Being almost close to the nature of a committee, a focus group usually bears a less formal character and is therefore more flexible - it is still close to the initial idea of open community meetings. In addition, upcoming problems or issues can be first discussed in smaller groups before passing on the information to the whole settlement.

COMMUNICATION EXAMPLES

COMMUNITY MEETINGS



“I always try to make it to the community meetings. Sometimes I have to work for multiple weeks in Kathmandu, but then I still try to plan everything so I can come back in time to gather.”

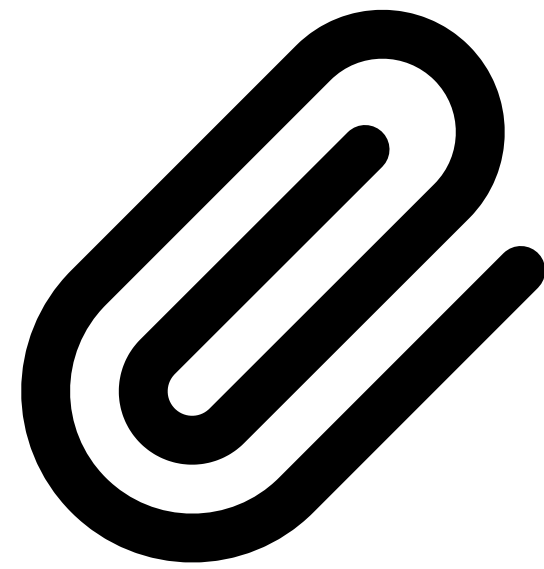
Beneficiary in Bungamati

Community meetings in Dhungetar are fully open for everyone to join. The meetings are held regularly and have a strong tradition in rural areas. Keeping this tradition alive by supporting it, is as important as the output the meetings create. Building up a sense of community is important for establishing a mentality of “together” instead of leaving everyone on his own.

Since Dhungetar is not yet an officially registered community, there is no community centre to hold the meetings. Therefore, they are usually held close to the office of ICIMOD. After the initial house visits, community meetings were used about once per week to inform the beneficiaries on new topics but also provide them with a steady stream of information and build up deeper understanding.

But the meetings are not necessarily connected to any organizational influence. Discussions can vary from personal conflicts between members of the community to decision makings that are going to influence the settlement. In their core, the meetings are a platform that builds this sense of “standing together” and supporting each other. This is a relevant factor towards creating resilience because a closely connected community is more capable of dealing with possible harm caused by external events such as earthquakes.

COMMUNICATION MEANS OPEN INFORMATION



THE PEOPLE INVOLVED

Many organizations use brochures, leaflets and advertisements as a support for their other communication means. Although the information is targeted to masses, it can easily exclude illiterate community members. This is why it would work better when targeting urban or semi-urban settlements where people are more literate, rather than rural areas. Also, communication via mobile phone is exclusive for people who own an appropriate device.

THE OUTCOMES OBSERVED

Outcome of this kind of communication is raised awareness, if the message reaches its recipients. Visual mass communication is also a way to gain more participants for trainings or workshops than could have been reached by other, more time-consuming ways of communication.

THE ACTIONS PERFORMED

Mass communication requires relatively little effort compared to the achieved areal coverage. The formation of message is important. If the information is shared in a static point rather than by spreading leaflets or text messages, the location of such a notice board should be well decided. There is no direct possibility for feedback in this kind of communication, so it would be more efficient to combine the open information with feedback mechanisms.

THE ATTITUDE PERCEIVED

Attitude towards visual mass Communication Means seems neutral or positive. A new note on a notice board can make beneficiaries curious. This makes the people who are illiterate to seek information about current issues from their friends who can read the notes. In this way, a notice board works as a communication mean also for uneducated people. Brochures and text messages are more often disregarded.

THE CONTENT DELIVERED

The mass communication is targeted to the general public. It is a good way to inform about trainings and other open events or projects. Some organizations share information about best practices in this way but it lacks further engagements and should be supported with other means of communication.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Issues communicated via visual mass communication should be kept relevant to the local target group, so that the interest towards for example a notice board does not decrease. Text messages and even applications can be a good idea, but it has to be made sure that the beneficiaries have the skills and technology to receive information through them. The sustainability of leaflets themselves is questionable in a country with inadequate waste management system.

COMMUNICATION EXAMPLES

NOTICE BOARD AND POSTERS

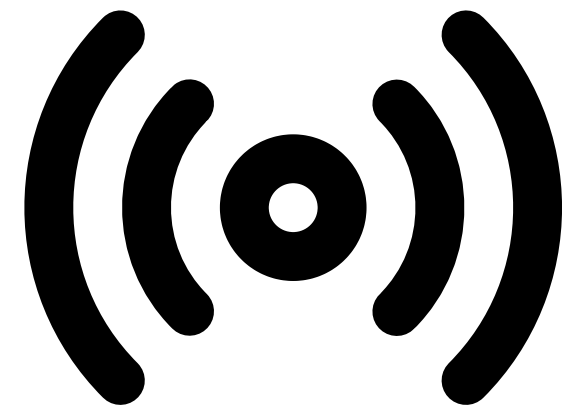


NRCS has used a notice board as one of their multiple communication channels in the town of Bungamati. There is one by the library that beneficiaries are familiar with. Even though not all people are literate, new announcements on the notice board make them curious about what is going on that is being advertised. A woman we interviewed said that this makes her to pass information about news forward and read the announcements with the help of her friends or ask around for more information. This means that for some people the notice board seems to work as an alarm of “something is happening” rather than a direct source of information. We also met a mason who said that the notice board is his primary channel of getting information from NRCS and after the earthquake he attended an earthquake-safe masonry training that he read about on the notice board.

On the other hand, CIUD made rendered 3D posters of the reconstruction projects and put them on the walls in the streets. The purpose was to inspire and show people how the neighbourhood could look when building in the traditional way, but it was interpreted in a wrong way. People were feeling that the municipal authority, that approved the pictures, was trying to force them to build in a certain way. They could not either afford timber, so they started to ask for money to be able to build in the way that was shown on the posters.

This left them feeling that that they got the idea but not the tools and in the end the municipality outlined that people get 50 000 rupees (ca. 390EUR) more funding if they build in the traditional way, but according to our interviews with the local community organization no one has yet received any money.

COMMUNICATION MEANS RADIO BROADCASTING



THE PEOPLE INVOLVED

The Nepalese Radio can be divided in three different groups: Government Radio, Private Radio and Community Radio.

Even though all of them direct their message directly towards a population with an illiteracy rate of over 60%, the Community Radios have the biggest coverage in rural and more remote areas of the country.

THE OUTCOMES OBSERVED

The biggest outcome is giving the communities a voice to express their needs and their experiences. It allows them to share the difficulties of rural life with the rest of the country and it brings many culturally rooted aspects into public discourse that are otherwise tabooed. And as educators, community radios play an integral role in difusing mass-communicated information in a context-specific way to their communities.

THE ACTIONS PERFORMED

Community Radios are run by the communities themselves. Since there are over 120 different languages in the country, they often act as translators or facilitators for other radio programmes in the region. They fundamentally act as a common voice for the rural population and a way to connect them with the rest of the nation and each other.

THE ATTITUDE PERCEIVED

Due to the immediate reaction and important role that the radio played during the earthquakes, they are widely perceived as trustworthy and close to the people.

Since the stations are politically unmotivated and represent a way to express freedom of speech, some people now fear the implementation of censorship throughout the radio landscape by the new government.

THE CONTENT DELIVERED

Besides the general content of radio programmes such as news, the radios provide information on reconstruction technologies or materials, farming techniques, livelihood improvements or health issues and how to deal with them. But also, socially controverse or tabooed subjects such as child marriage or domestic violence are discussed along with special programmes for post-traumatic stress relief from the long-term impact of the earthquake.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Radio broadcasting was the immediate mean of communication during the earthquakes. The destruction of critical infrastructure led to the use of mobile broadcasting units to transport information about food, water and shelter to over 80% of the Nepalese population. In the rural areas, radio units became information hubs themselves and were also used to find missing relatives by transmitting personal messages. The distribution of governmental information and instruction was facilitated and clarified using the broadcasting infrastructure as well.



COMMUNICATION STORIES

THE INNER VOICE

“What we want to achieve is stimulating both, the internal power and inner strength of the people and their communities.”

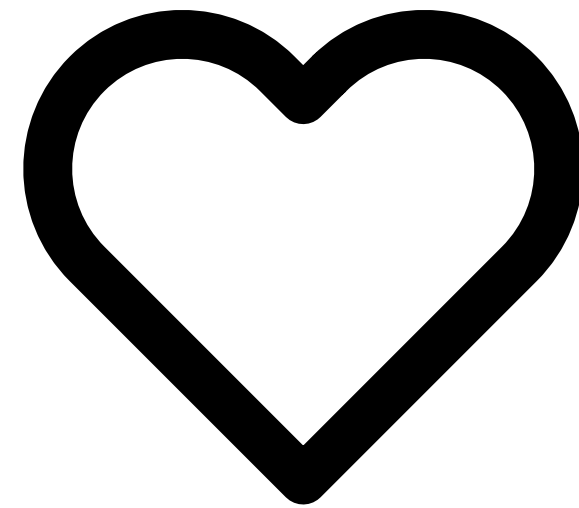
Ph. D. Ram Chandra Lamichhane / ACORAB

A rural community in Nepal, can be a whole world on its own: Imagine a hand-full of houses on this side of the mountain, another hand-full on the other one. A few more along the river and at the end of that dusty old road that never got finished by the government. Imagine walking almost two hours every morning and every afternoon to reach the next school, imagine walking for even more hours to reach the next bigger settlement with medical facilities. Imagine being a young girl married ‘away’ to her new husbands’ family, a few valleys away.

This is a place of isolation, a place where not that much arrives and where certainly not that much leaves after all. Giving this place a mean to reach out is giving this place a voice to be heard. A voice that comes from within the community and not a voice that talks about the hand-full of houses, somewhere up those mountains and the valleys in between.

Umbrella organizations, such as the Association of Community Radio Broadcasters Nepal (ACORAB), provide training to members of rural communities to establish a culture of community journalism. They encourage the people to speak out about what is going on in their community, no matter if it is a nice success story in reconstruction, a shortage in materials or maybe another case of unheard domestic violence. They give them the power of media and how it creates peer pressure and overcomes taboos. But they also allow them to connect closer with each other and strengthen the coherence in rural life. Because a few valleys away might actually require you to walk for a few days to get there.

COMMUNICATION MEANS SOCIAL MOBILIZERS



THE PEOPLE INVOLVED

Social mobilizers are widely used and common way to spread information to beneficiaries from the organizations. They can be paid workers or volunteers, but what is more important is that they can communicate with beneficiaries in their own language. They are used to spread information but also collect it from the community to the humanitarian organization. The social mobilizers can be from the village or area where the project is on, or somewhere close. It is valuable that beneficiaries can trust the mobilizers.

THE OUTCOMES OBSERVED

Based on the popularity of the social mobilizers in development work and experiences we heard from the beneficiaries and the humanitarian organizations we interviewed, the social mobilizers are a very useful communication mean. The strength of social mobilizers is that they at the same time can spread and collect information, as well as build trust between beneficiaries and organizations. Even though organizing the work of social mobilizers can be challenging and finding the right person for the it might be hard, it is still an effective and recommendable way of communication.

THE ACTIONS PERFORMED

Social mobilizers take contact to beneficiaries regularly by visiting their homes, construction sites or meeting places. They may also participate in community meetings. Contact with beneficiaries have to be done regularly and repeating. The visits can be done even twice a day, it varies based on the needs and resources. The visits are based on talking with the beneficiaries about how they are doing. The social mobilizers can qualify problems of constructions work or materials, and then they can report them to the organization.

THE ATTITUDE PERCEIVED

One of the best side of social mobilizers is that they are easily accessible for the beneficiaries, because they come to talk straight to them and they are interested. They can search every family of the target area, so the same message can be delivered to everyone. It does not matter if beneficiaries are illiterate or if they are just not actively participating by themselves. The core values what social mobilizers present are equality, participation and trust.

THE CONTENT DELIVERED

The content can be almost anything that is needed to communicate to beneficiaries or collecting information from beneficiaries. Social mobilizers can ask about how the beneficiaries are doing, how the reconstruction works are going or do the beneficiaries have any problems and even help in smaller jobs if its needed. They can tell about how they should do the reconstruction or how they can get support from the government or humanitarian organizations. It is common that they also promote organization other social activities in the community, like committees or meetings.

GENERAL INFORMATION

There are many different ways to use social mobilizers, sometimes they visit the beneficiaries twice in a day and sometimes once in a week. The core idea of the social mobilizers is participation by local actors between the beneficiaries and organizations. Organizations such as UN-Habitat, UN Women, NRCS and ICIMOD use social mobilizers in their projects. Social mobilizers can change their role during the project, they can start by promoting the organization and change to support reconstruction and informing about the community activity.

COMMUNICATION EXAMPLES

APSARA, BHOWANI, SAMIKSHYA & SARMILA



ICIMOD had social mobilizers in their pilot project in Dhungetar village. They were group of young women from the village, that were hired with small salary to work for the project. The girls work half a day for six days a week and in the morning, they attend the school.

The social mobilizers visit every reconstruction site of the project twice every day and focus on talking with the beneficiaries about their needs. They ask about problems in construction work and report them back ICIMODs office in the village. The girls make it possible for ICIMOD to be updated on the reconstruction process on a daily basis. This is valuable for ICIMOD because they were not doing construction work themselves but offer the tools and knowledge for using the earth bricks and guide the beneficiaries to build by themselves.

The girls feel that they are doing an important work for ICIMOD but also for their own community. They think they are trusted and appreciated in their own community. They also experience that they have power to influence the community but at the same time they are sometimes worried about passing wrong information to the community members.

The Mother's Committee established its own microcredit scheme, and the social mobilizers are managing the money collected from community members. They take the money to a bank in Battar.

It is clear that Apsara, Bhowani, Samikshya and Sarmila have big responsibilities and a significant role in making the development work in the village successful. They create an active connection between ICIMOD's staff members and community members, which enables a two-way information transfer.



COMMUNICATION STORIES

RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

We interviewed a woman, who lives in the centre of the village with her husband, daughter and son. Her husband is a mason in the village and she takes care of the household and animals. She and her husband are both illiterate, but they attended the government training and learned how to write their names. Her children have all studied to some level in the nearby school. Her daughter works for ICIMOD as a social mobilizer and her son goes to 6th grade. She has three other daughters but all of them are married and live elsewhere. It is custom for the wife to move to the husband's village and his parent's home.

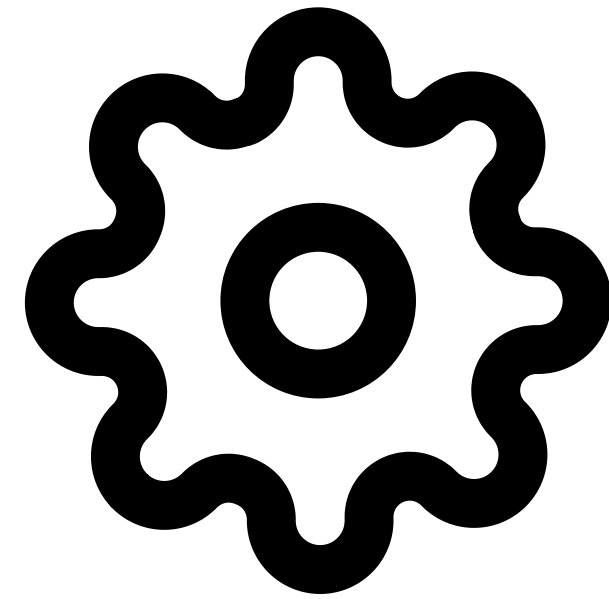
Her husband was abroad for six years: three in Saudi-Arabia, two in Dubai and one in Qatar. He was in Qatar at the time of the earthquake but returned home right after. With the money he had earned abroad, they built the house, bought land and cultivated it, paid for three daughters' weddings and used the rest to pay for their children's education.

They used to live in a mud house, but it collapsed in the earthquake. They had no prior knowledge of earthquakes or how to prepare for them. Luckily, their family and livestock were okay, but all the food grains were destroyed. They started reconstructing their house right away, so when the government officials came to assess the damage, they did not receive a 'red card' (the

housing grant). ICIMOD however, helped them out with materials to reconstruct a second house and a second floor for the food grains. They built an RCC house because her husband is a trained mason in RCC buildings.

She is grateful for ICIMOD and when she shares all the progress that is happening in Dhungetar to her relatives, they wish that ICIMOD could go there to their village too. She has attended the liquid soap, vegetation and goat farming trainings. For instance, from the goat farming training, she learned what goats need and how to take care of them easier than before.

COMMUNICATION MEANS TRAININGS



👥 THE PEOPLE INVOLVED

Organizations often use trainings to transfer knowledge, and it is one of the communication means, that all larger non-profit organizations use to educate and raise awareness. Generally, the trainings are initiated by organizations and are given based on the needs of the community and expertise of the organization.

The trainings are usually open for any community member to participate in unless they are designed for professionals to enhance their skill set and equip them for current challenges, such as masonry training.

👁️ THE OUTCOMES OBSERVED

Beneficiaries are able to expand their skill set and become more financially stable. This is important for communities to raise their level of economic well-being. In general, for development work to be successful and leave communities in a better shape, it is necessary for them to become self-sufficient instead of dependent on the organizations' help and presence. Trainings are often used as a mean to accomplish this.

⚡ THE ACTIONS PERFORMED

Trainings are communicated to the target groups and then organized in various locations, such as community centers, schools and squares. They vary in length, topics and approach of engaging community members.

📈 THE ATTITUDE PERCEIVED

Beneficiaries, workers and organizations all find trainings useful to transfer knowledge and raise awareness. Beneficiaries in Dhungetar were especially happy with the CSEB making trainings as they could use the skill to earn money. Similarly, beneficiaries in Bungamati were pleased with the livelihood trainings and cash grants that supported starting small businesses for the same reason. The mason we interviewed in Bungamati also stated that he had received more work because of the masonry training organized by NRCS.

📄 THE CONTENT DELIVERED

The content differs based on the participants and organizers. The different trainings that organizations and government entities gave for beneficiaries and other participants included: CSEB production, reconstruction, health and sanitation, name writing, leadership and negotiation for women and livelihood training. Reconstruction and livelihood trainings were the most popular amongst organizations, and the different livelihood trainings included: liquid soap making, jewelry making, goat farming, poultry and animal husbandry and vegetation farming training.

📍 GENERAL INFORMATION

The trainings can be more participatory and involve learning a new skill through practice (e.g. learning how to make CSEB) or then being used to raise awareness (e.g. health trainings).

COMMUNICATION EXAMPLES

RECONSTRUCTION TRAINING



“I would’ve built a mud and stone house again unless I had been to the trainings [by ICIMOD] and learned that they are not safe.”

Beneficiary in Dhungetar

ICIMOD trained beneficiaries in the village how to build CSEB houses as well as how to make the bricks. The training last approximately three months. Some beneficiaries stated that they felt confident they could build a house without any outside help because of the training they received. ICIMOD is looking to find a partner in Battar through which the community members could sell their bricks based on market demand. The training contributed to reconstruction efforts in addition to supporting the financial sustainability of the village.

NRCS gave masonry training to 297 people and will train up to 330 people in Bungamati. They also gave carpentry training to 19 people and will train one more. NRCS trained new carpenters and masons due to the demand in reconstruction after the earthquake. Carpenters are especially needed in rural areas since the houses are built with different materials than in the city. In addition to training new masons and carpenters, NRCS also trained existing professionals to learn the new standards and how to build safer buildings.

CIUD trained local engineers, architects and technicians on old traditional construction systems in Bungamati to equip them with skills to build traditional structures in a cost-effective way instead of RCC buildings which have been popular after the earthquake.

COMMUNICATION EXAMPLES

LIVELIHOOD TRAINING



“Even when ICIMOD leaves, the women are ready to lead the way!”

Beneficiary in Dhungetar

The livelihood trainings organized by ICIMOD in Dhungetar were targeted to women in order to empower and assist them in learning skills that they could earn their own money through. The trainings were open to all the women in the community.

Typically, in the Nepalese culture, only men are earning a living while women do housework or animal husbandry. These livelihood trainings offered women the opportunity to make their own money and be more self-sufficient. However, even though people were generally happy with the trainings, some beneficiaries stated that they don't have time to spare for new ventures as they are fully occupied with work or taking care of the household.

NRCS also organized livelihood trainings to support beneficiaries start small businesses and earn more capital that way. The trainings were targeted to everyone, not just women.

In addition to executing the trainings, both organizations (ICIMOD and NRCS) offered financial support and ICIMOD is searching for markets where the beneficiaries could sell their products. ICIMOD is trying to cooperate with another non-profit so that the jewelry and soap could be sold on their online store. NRCS gives initial conditional cash grants (CCG) to beneficiaries looking to start their own small business.



COMMUNICATION STORIES

A NEW HOME

He lives a bit further away from the centre of the village with his wife, daughter-in-law and three young grandchildren. His son is a guest worker in Saudi-Arabia and they took a lot of loans to be able to send him there. He himself is a farmer but he is already older and the work in the fields is causing him to have pain in his hands.

When the earthquake hit, their home collapsed which caught them by surprise as they thought they would be safe in their house. They had to live in temporary shelter made of bamboo and galvanized iron sheets but soon they were visited by government officials who gave them the 'red card' status and the first instalment to build. ICIMOD visited them to collect information on their needs before they offered financial support and material to build a CSEB house. He thought RCC would be better but as they did not have enough money, they chose to build the CSEB house which they now live in. They did not have enough technical understanding of the blocks, so ICIMOD reconstructed the CSEB house. During the construction work the social mobilizers working for ICIMOD visited them two to three times a day to check on them.

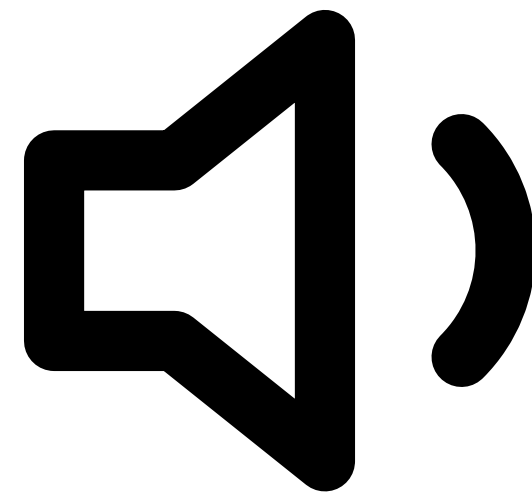
His daughter-in-law did a 2,5-month block training and they are hopeful to sell the CSEB blocks to earn some money, but they also feel that in order to be successful

with the block selling there is a need for collaboration with the women in the community. The daughter-in-law has not been able to participate in other trainings as she needs to take care of her children and household. She has neither seen the 'Demo House' in person, even though it is only a 30-minute walk from home. She is part of the Mother's Committee, but she has not been able to attend the meetings frequently for same reasons as stated before. She feels trust towards the other women though and gets information from them.

They have no space for a biogas, so they cook food with firewood. The daughter-in-law heard from the other women that the solar cooker is inefficient because it can only be used during the day and it takes a long time to cook. They fetch all the water for drinking, washing and cooking from the river close by but they do not experience that the river water causes any health problems. The children are constantly sick though, but they say this is because of unsanitary conditions and a lack of windows and doors, which makes the home cold at night.

He has received the second instalment now and the next step is to build a toilet, one of the requirements to receive the last instalment. Their plan is to use the third instalment to buy aluminium doors and windows. In case of another earthquake, they feel they are better prepared and will be safe in their new home.

COMMUNICATION MEANS WORD OF MOUTH



i GENERAL INFORMATION

Word of mouth might be the most obvious way of communication but is also probably the most important one. It presumes a relation between the communicating individuals and therefore inherently holds a degree of mutual trust. This trust is crucial for acceptance and therefore also for the adoption of the content, that is communicated. And it holds a cultural familiarity which allows the transport of an already interpreted message, therefore facilitating communication of unaccustomed topics.

In a country with an illiteracy rate above 60%, and even higher figures in rural areas, the word is mightier than the pen who is mightier than the sword. Culture, tradition and knowledge has been passed on by oral communication for centuries. It is therefore no surprise that even today a lot of information is still transported this way.

Content wise, basically everything possible was shared in one way or another. Reconstruction techniques, financing aspects, social structures, gossip - there is virtually no limit in the nature of the message.

⚡ EXAMPLE ACTIONS

In Dhungetar, multiple beneficiaries told us about their experience of sharing the ongoing recovery projects in the village with friends or relatives in the region.

The content varied from just sharing personal progress to transporting key factors such as CSEB technologies or community-based micro-loan concepts. But also, the general awareness of earthquakes and what the best behaviour in case of emergency is, was widely discussed.

On the other hand, it is also possible to communicate wrong information via word of mouth. In one case, an older beneficiary called his son who lived in Kathmandu for advice on how to rebuild his house. His son then encouraged him to rebuild using reinforced concrete because he thought the new CSEB technology was not stable enough.



COMMUNICATION STORIES

ETHANOL AND ETHICS

“I think drinking during the day is not good for the society. It gives a bad impression of our village to outsiders and causes many other problems in the families. I even go myself and tell them to stop drinking if I see them sitting there.”

Beneficiary in Dhungetar

She and her husband have one daughter who lives far away with her husband and three sons. All of them are married, and all of them work in the hotel business, so they are not living in the village any more. As the marriage celebrations of her youngest son are yet to come, she is making wine out of millet together with some other women in the village. Buying alcohol from the bazaar, is far more than they could afford, so they use open fire to boil the fermented millet and catch its evaporation in an adventurous looking ensemble of pots and cans.

The production of alcohol without a license is illegal in Nepal. And even in the remote village of Dhungetar, the people know that the police might show up eventually one day or another. That’s why they only do it know, for their own use and for their son’s wedding. And because they don’t really have another option - besides showing unappropriated hospitality by not serving any alcohol during the celebrations at all.

But there is more than only the police control that stops them from making a living out of distilling, which is tempting as they could easily make a small fortune with little effort by just doing that. It is the awareness of what alcohol can do to people, can do to families, can do to communities. Especially after disastrous events and the havoc they cause in their aftermath. Misuse of government instalments that were intended to be used for buying materials but end up being spent on festive events is not a rarity at all. Groups of men gambling and drinking throughout the day are not a rarity either. Therefore, a strong sense in the community to stand up against the misuse of alcohol is as important as empowering those who can’t stand up against it themselves.

04 REALMS OF SUSTAINABILITY

Overview of sustainability aspects and their relation to reconstruction practices.



REALMS OF SUSTAINABILITY

THE SOCIAL REALM

This section will systematically highlight different communication means of the study and how they refer to aspects in the realm of social sustainability.

Establishing or building upon *existing committee- or meeting-culture* is a key factor for enabling social equity and thereby community development: The inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable community members can help overcoming inequalities on different levels (e.g. gender, age, status) and helps establishing social justice.

This is especially important if operating in a traditionally male dominated society based on a complex caste system, that is still present in rural Nepal. Overcoming those barriers does not only satisfy the need for equity but also increases the community's ability to thrive for more resilience through better cooperation, mutual responsibility and support – factors that improve the social capital of a community. And it enables more beneficiaries to take part in active decision-making.

Improving the accessibility of information through means such as *house visits, the work of social mobilizers or even information hubs* can be equally linked to more social equity, support and responsibility. But they also hold the possibility for improvements in cultural competence of any involved external party such as development organizations. Essentially, all kinds of *feedback*

mechanisms that render communication bidirectional, allow for better design of context-specific information and knowledge transfer.

Enhancements in beneficiaries' skills and capabilities – through *co-creation workshops and trainings* – simultaneously feed back into building higher social capital and giving space for individual community development. Implementing new sources of skills and knowledge can then lead to more resilience since less external inputs are required. Sustainable livelihood, which can be facilitated through the mentioned communication means above, also reduces poverty and helps overcoming some of the biggest health issues found in our study: irregular eating habits due to lack of food supplies and access to fresh water.

The level of *education* in rural communities seems to be increasing as beneficiaries of younger generations stated they attend public school for more years than their parent's generation on average. Accessibility and quality of education, especially secondary education, is yet highly affected by social inequalities and availability. Where the latter can not be overcome by the communication means showcased here, those means can indeed help bridging educational gaps between generations through better *community-internal communication and knowledge sharing*.

Besides actively improving social sustainability in rural communities, we also showed ways of empowering people to step up against poor social standards. One example is *community journalism* that gives space to inform on the state of social standards to highlight traditional and newly developed injustice.

REALMS OF SUSTAINABILITY

THE ECONOMIC REALM

Before 2015, 'half of Nepal's 28 million population didn't have access to improved sanitation and lived below the poverty line, around one in three of them in severe poverty' (Chughtai, 2015). As a result of the earthquake, another one million people (3% of the population) fell into poverty. This has made the reconstruction process even more complex as construction is an expensive investment that not all Nepalese can afford.

The government offers housing grants equivalent to 3000 USD (2545 EUR) to people whose houses were damaged by the earthquake. After the earthquake, government officials came to assess the affected areas and provided a 'red card' to people whose houses were damaged. This means that the 'red card' holders are eligible to the housing grant. The first instalment (500 USD) is given after the red card is issued. The second (1500 USD) and third (1000 USD) are given after certain building requirements are met and if the houses are built according to National Reconstruction Authority's (NRA) regulations.

The issues related to this have been manifold. Some have been related to miscommunication and confusion regarding the requirements. They vary between regions and the grants are given only if the houses are built in line with new building regulations. The new regulations were not all formed in line with traditional building styles

but rather with future earthquakes in mind. We did not meet anyone that had received all three instalments yet, and according to the Kathmandu Post, by April 2018 the NRA had only rebuilt 14.43 percent of the houses that were damaged.

Organizations that are working with beneficiaries play a huge role in communicating the government regulations, building requirements and assisting beneficiaries in getting the government instalments. In our case sites, most of the communication regarding government requirements was done through *committee meetings, information hubs, house visits and trainings*.

In order for development work to be sustainable in the long term, it is vital that beneficiaries become less dependent of assistance from external organizations or ideally, fully independent. In the development work concerning reconstruction, many projects we observed, addressed the financial issues people were facing by offering physical materials, expertise, labor and trainings.

Based on our interviews, it seemed that beneficiaries were mostly pleased with *reconstruction and livelihood trainings*, financial support and other means that aimed to help them improve their own financial situation in the long term. The trainings were relevant and took into

consideration the local context. Beneficiaries felt that the trainings were effective and that they learned new skills they could utilize and improve their livelihoods, for instance by selling jewelry they learned to make.

In addition, it is important to empower beneficiaries and give them confidence and sense of independency. ICIMOD helped set up a microcredit scheme for the women in Dhungetar, and then gave the power over it to the women. In the *Women's committee meeting*, the same amount of money is collected from every household, which ICIMOD then matches. The money will be used to buy material needed to make earth bricks, jewelry, soap or other products the women want to start selling. The profits will be then divided amongst the women.

REALMS OF SUSTAINABILITY

THE ENVIRONMENTAL REALM

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Burning plastic waste is common practice to get rid of it. Even in Bungamati, where the municipality manages the solid waste that they take with vehicles to landfill sites in Kathmandu, most of the locals also burn their waste. The reason for it is because people think that even if it is bad to burn it, it does not matter because they burn so little amounts. To have the municipality car picking up trash twice a week would cost 350 Nepalese rupees/household. Another solution for community members, especially in rural areas such as Dhungetar without a municipal waste management system, is often dumping trash to ditches and sides of plots. Cardboard and paper are often burned as fuel and metal sold to recyclers.

After the earthquake, there was a waste management problem with the extensive amount of debris. In Bungamati it was dumped in an unofficial landfill site at the border of the neighbourhood.

USE OF FORESTS AND FUEL

Biogas plants are getting more common in the rural areas which reduces the amount of wood used as a fuel, even though it is rarely enough to replace all the wood. To get wood people tend to first take it from trees in their yard and only then from forest if it is barely enough. They mainly collect fallen branches from the woods as cutting down trees is prohibited and sanctioned. Some locals have also planted trees to protect soil from erosion and to give shade and for harvest later.

Usually cow manure is composted or used for the biogas plant. The amount of land and livestock limits people's possibilities to have a sufficient amount of manure to maintain a biogas plant. Some of the wealthier households have solved the problem of not possessing livestock by buying manure from the others.

ICIMOD has recently introduced a solar cooker through the Demo House in Dhungetar. It costs 20,000 NRP and solar cooking seems not too attractive for the locals because cooking is usually done in the evening when it is already dark, but the cooker needs to be used during the hottest hours of the day.

AGRICULTURE

Commonly cultivated crops are millet, potato, rice, wheat and corn. Although crops seem to be often rotated according to seasons and people are aware of the importance of it, the land is usually not allowed to rest without cultivation. Mostly organic fertilizers are used but in addition to these many locals use chemical pesticides.

WATER & HYGIENE

The overall water situation in Nepal is rather good. There were few problems in the water quality reported during the dry season in some families in Dhungetar. We had no chance to perform water quality tests, so we don't have exact results on this topic. In Dhungetar, most families used springs as a water source for their water pipes - at least one of those was running low during our stay, bearing the risk of drying out.

Most of the pipelines we encountered were on-ground pipelines, but there were also ongoing projects for building better water infrastructure for the village. Overall sanitation in the rural areas we visited was good. There were usable toilets in almost every house that were mostly clean.

COMMUNICATING NEW SOLUTIONS

People have shown interest in new technologies and sustainable solutions such as the solar cooker and biogas plant, and the constraint seems to be rather the money than lack of information. Offering even a partial funding provokes interest and in case of new projects in the area this could be an effective way to enhance the communication of the project.

05 PROJECT DISCUSSION

Limitations of the projects and a brief outlook into possible future studies.



LIMITATIONS OF THE PROJECT



This was the first time that a group did a project in Nepal as part of the SGT Studio course. There were only few limitations in the course itself. We were given free hands to design our project around the topic of sustainable post-disaster reconstruction. One of the main limitations is the narrow scope of our project. However, by focusing the project on communication and sustainable reconstruction, we made the project reasonable and possible to execute within the given time frame.

In total, we had 7 months to conduct and finalize the project: 8 weeks prior to the course and 19 weeks of coursework. The time limit was our biggest challenge. Having no earlier experience in doing projects in a development context and having other study duties simultaneously, it was challenging to get everything done as scheduled. Prior to our field trip, we only had a few months to define our objectives, plan the project and field trip as well as get in contact with stakeholders.

The two weeks we had in Nepal was a short time for making a comprehensive study and we recognise several limitations related to this. We were not able to interview all the beneficiaries in the case sites and some of the information might have gotten lost in the translation. Existing power relations might have also influenced the information beneficiaries shared with us. In this report,

we have drawn many conclusions, but we are aware of the aforementioned limitations and therefore, we cannot make any generalizations.

Another limitation of our project was the funding. A part of the project was finding sponsors by ourselves. Especially before the field trip, we had some uncertainty regarding how much money we would need during the trip. Finding information and contacting possible funders took a lot of time that could have been spent on planning the field trip more in-depth. Luckily, we got one sponsor that provided us with enough money to cover our flights. Travelling, living and eating in Nepal was also cheaper than we expected.

One important aspect to always keep in mind, is that no matter how much we try to be objective, we will always bring our biases and assumptions into what we do. This is as true for our perception of what social equity or sustainability in general should look like, as it is for every other believe we bring from our side of the world to the other.

PROJECT DISCUSSION

FUTURE PERSPECTIVE



Our pilot project opened up many new possibilities for the SGT Studio course. Based on our experiences on working in Nepal, it suits well to be one of the target countries of the course. Openness and hospitality of the Nepalese people make it easy to cooperate and work together, even though there is limited time to get to know each other. There is a huge need to make the development of the country sustainable, and there are many things to learn as students but at the same time also possibilities to make an impact. The current phase of reconstruction has engaged a lot of organizations to work on development on different levels in Nepal. The country is a good place to study post-disaster reconstruction for the following few years at least. Several of the contacts we made during the field trip, showed interest in collaborating and working with students on similar projects in the future.

Communication has a huge role in humanitarian work, and lack of it reduces the impact of the available resources. It is not just about the communication between the organizations and the beneficiaries but also how the organizations communicate with other organizations and authorities. The role of communication in promoting sustainable reconstruction is a topic that could be studied even more, and our project gives just one framework on this.

In case that Nepal is adopted as a project country for the SGT course, future groups of students can base their projects on our work and continue from there or choose topics of their own using our project more as background information. The material we have produced during the course is very diverse and might be useful for future projects on Nepal.

A course like the SGT Studio course provides the opportunity to learn a lot of new things not just for students but also the partners of the projects. We have adopted new knowledge and enhanced our skills and capacities as individuals to work and communicate efficiently in multidisciplinary teams on complex issues related to sustainability and development. Hopefully it is possible to enable other students to have similar experiences and learnings as we had, not only at Aalto University but also partnering universities in Nepal.

CONCLUSION

There is a vast range of different approaches towards communication in post-disaster reconstruction. Even though all of them focus on transferring knowledge of reconstruction or recovery, there are significant differences in the resulted knowledge adoption and integration of sustainability aspects.

It is clearly visible, that the transfer of knowledge and its successful adoption works best if the receiver of the message has a deeper interaction with the source and content of information. It seems that the more participatory and inclusive the way you transfer knowledge is, the more likely it will result in a desired action. Even though this could be considered self-evident, many means of communication observed during this study were rather unidirectional. Keeping this in mind will allow for even better design of communication means in the future. A good example is the explained 3D mapping workshop, that aimed for self-established location awareness in the participants instead of only handing out printed maps.

Another relevant factor is establishing new sources of knowledge within existing social structures. Equipping individuals with increasingly deeper understanding of a certain topic makes it more likely to have an impact since you enable peer-to-peer communication of knowledge. The key-factor in here is trust, that is already existing between individuals of a community. While building up

trust between organizations and beneficiaries is crucial in the first phase, using existing trust relations might be even more effective for successful knowledge transfer. The demo house in Dhungetar enabled its owner to be a source of knowledge for e.g. solar-powered cooking. Hence, this knowledge can spread further from inside the community instead of being applied from the outside.

Concerning the aspect of sustainability, we come to similar conclusions. Steering change in different fields of sustainability requires a profound understanding of underlying mechanisms and dependencies. Therefore, sustainable decision-making and actions require deep understanding of the subject. A comprehensive example is the treatment of waste in villages: After the beneficiaries in Dhungetar were told that burning waste is harmful, most of them stopped burning it in their house. The communicated message was that it has a negative impact on human health - which is of course true - but the impact on the environment was never elaborated. Therefore, the community members still burn their waste outdoors or bury it in the ground.

Even though this might seem an arbitrary example in relation to the fact that earthquake affected villagers are trying to recover from a devastating disaster, it is highly relevant: Degrading the environment equals to degrading the present and future living-environment

and may result in immediate effects such as polluted soil and drinking water, something that can affect rural communities severely.

Including sustainability-related knowledge into communication usually requires a relatively small additional effort but tends to lay foundation for long-term improvements in resilience. The problems of complexity and awareness in Sustainability are equally visible and ubiquitous in Western societies.

Enhancements in social sustainability, especially in terms of equality and the empowerment of vulnerable and marginalized community members seems to hold key potentials towards assumed resilience. Establishing a deeper sense of connection and handing over tools of self-governance to a community creates redundancy in a web of interdependencies that is harder to disrupt by e.g. future disasters. Consequently, communication in post-disaster recovery should not only focus on the content of the message (e.g. reconstruction) but also on the methods for effective communication. This means using communication methods that already exist in the communities and also implementing new means of communication if necessary.

Our report has highlighted various communication means that we observed through our study and field trip that organizations can use to enhance knowledge transfer and adoption.

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APPENDIX

Sources and additional content on background research, planning and execution of the project.



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53 Beneficiaries; Dhungetar; 06. - 12.03.2018

5 Beneficiaries; Bungamati; 15. - 16.03.2018

APPENDIX

OTHER SOURCES

Fonts:

Noto Sans

<https://fonts.google.com/specimen/Noto+Sans>

Merriweather

<https://github.com/EbenSorkin/Merriweather>

Graphics:

Aalto University Logo

<https://www.aalto.fi/>

Sustainable Global Technologies Programme Logo

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Uponor Logo

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Feather Icons

<https://feathericons.com/>

APPENDIX / DATA GATHERING

ONLINE SURVEY

The survey was created using Google forms and got answered by 19 experts in the field of disaster recovery.

- 1) Briefly describe your area of expertise.
- 2) Do you have any personal experience with the reconstruction work in Nepal after the earthquake in 2015?
- 3) What do you feel is lacking the most in humanitarian projects, if anything?
- 4) What was the most motivating experience during your work?
- 5) What was the most frustrating one?
- 6) What would you define as the most important aspect to be taken into consideration when doing humanitarian work?
- 7) The communication between my project team and the beneficiaries was effective.
5 Point Likert-Scale, Completely disagree / Completely agree
- 8) The transfer of knowledge between my project team and the beneficiaries was efficient.
5 Point Likert-Scale, Completely disagree / Completely agree
- 9) The beneficiaries perceived the information we shared with them as trustworthy.
5 Point Likert-Scale, Completely disagree / Completely agree
- 10) The beneficiaries perceived our project and staff as trustworthy.
5 Point Likert-Scale, Completely disagree / Completely agree
- 11) The beneficiaries adopted the information we shared with them.
5 Point Likert-Scale, Completely disagree / Completely agree
- 12) Is there anything else you would like to share or discuss?

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW: BENEFICIARIES

0) Introduction

- Information about interviewer and project
- Explain that this is free to do and anonymous
- Ask for taking pictures

1) Personal Information.

- Age / Gender / Status / Household
- Wellbeing / Health / Finances
- Education / Employment

2) Recovery or Reconstruction Projects.

- In what recovery solutions are you involved (social/economic/ecologic)?
- What solutions do you plan for the future and why?
- How successful do you perceive your effort?

3) Source of Knowledge.

- Where did the knowledge come from?
- How much do you trust this source?

4) Way and Content of Communication.

- What kind of information was communicated?
- How was the information communicated?
- How accessible was the information?
- What would be your preferred way to receive information?

5) Actions taken.

- How much did you understand the information?
- How much do you approve the information?
- What did you do with this information?

6) Decision making.

- What encouraged you to implement this?
- What stopped you from implementing this?

7) Actors and Responsibilities.

- What was your involvement and responsibility?
- Who else and how were they involved and for what were they responsible?
- How much do you trust everyone involved?

8) Materials and Resources.

- What kind of resources were needed (materials/people/knowledge/skills)?
- Were those resources accessible?

9) Do you know any other recovery projects?

10) Safety, Awareness, Preparedness.

- How safe do you feel in general?
- How safe do you feel towards future natural disasters?
- What would you like to change for the future?

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW: EXPERTS

0) Introduction

- Information about interviewer and project
- Explain that this is voluntary
- Ask for taking consent to record (consent paper)

1) Personal Information.

- Age
- Education / Profession
- Current employment situation
- Organization + project

2) Recovery or Reconstruction Projects.

- In what recovery solutions are you involved (social/economic/ecologic)?
- What solutions do you plan for the future and why?
- How successful do you perceive your efforts?

3) Way and Content of Communication.

- What kind of information was communicated?
- How was the information communicated?
- How accessible was the information?
- Did you gain their trust? Why/why not?
- How was the internal communication in your team/organization?

4) Actions taken.

- How much did the beneficiaries understand the information?
- How much did they approve the information?
- What did they do with this information? // Did they adopt the knowledge you transferred?

5) Actors and Responsibilities.

- What was your involvement and responsibility?

6) Materials and Resources.

- What kind of resources were needed (materials/people/knowledge/skills)?
- Were those resources accessible?

7) Preparedness

- Do you feel like the beneficiaries are more prepared after your project for future natural disasters?
- Which were successful elements in your project and which were unsuccessful?

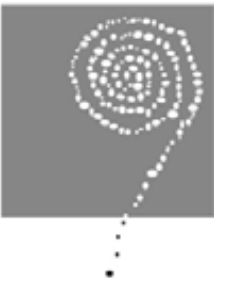
Other: financial aspects - any projects directly with beneficiaries e.g. micro credit, cash-for-work etc. How was it funded? What's in the future?

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

- 1) Separate water points for humans and livestock?
- 2) Are latrines and fenced livestock located downstream from water source?
- 3) Is dirty water disposal separated from clean water supplies
- 4) Is animal manure recycled / utilized?
- 5) Is agriculture practiced on steep (>20°) slopes?
- 6) Is rainwater/irrigation water runoff controlled?
- 7) Is erosion controlled?
- 8) Are there drained wetlands / other habitats because of construction?
- 9) Describe waste management:
 - a. Is cardboard / paper recycled?
 - b. Is hazardous waste burned?
 - c. Is there packaging with metal?
 - d. Is waste collected?



LEGAL INFORMATION



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