



## DISASTER RISK REDUCTION in focus

### REDUCING DISASTER RISK FOR LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT

Nepal is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world with annual floods and landslides, periodic drought and epidemics, and a high-level of seismic activity. Climate change has a direct impact on glacial melt and weather patterns, impacting agricultural productivity, flooding, and disease outbreaks. People's vulnerability to disasters is exacerbated by poverty, unplanned urbanization, and sub-standard construction techniques.

U.S. interests in Nepal are very clear. We support a prosperous, stable, and democratic country. But disasters can undermine worker productivity, destabilize affected areas, and disrupt governance structures. Therefore, it is crucial to support governance structures and communities that are resilient to all types of human and natural shocks.

To address some of these issues, USAID and the Embassy created an interagency Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Office to coordinate investments across USAID, the State Department, the Government of Nepal, and the American and Nepali Militaries. In September 2011, this Office, heavily supported by the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), led an interagency assessment and the development of a DRR Strategic Framework that allowed for the integration of USG DRR investments and helped to mobilize new resources.

Over the past 18 months, we have supported: the development of joint military disaster response plans with corresponding exercises; training of first responders in light search and

rescue and medical first response; and activities to increase the awareness of risks and how to prepare. We have engaged the private sector and the media to help them establish appropriate roles before, during and after disaster strikes; and taken measures to secure key infrastructure like the airport. Across our development programs, DRR is being mainstreamed into operations and activities.

Aligned with several key policy priorities, USAID/Nepal is changing the paradigm for U.S. Government engagement in DRR. The USAID Policy Framework (2011-2015) lays out Seven Core Development Objectives, including building resilience and preparedness with respect to disasters and climate change.

There is a broad realization that creating resilient communities is part of long-term development and involves investing development resources to complement the great work of OFDA. By mainstreaming DRR into USG engagement, we are one step closer to bridging the gaps along the relief-to-development spectrum, a long-term struggle for development practitioners. We are proud of the leadership and foresight of U.S. Ambassador DeLisi and USAID Mission Director David Atteberry on this issue, adopting an approach that will help foster sustainable development, while also saving lives and reducing human suffering.

Sheila Roquette,  
Director, Disaster Risk Reduction Office  
U.S. Embassy/USAID Nepal



### SNAPSHOT: Disaster Overview in Nepal (1980-2010)

No. of events: 78  
No. of people killed: 11,112  
Average killed per year: 358  
No. of people affected: 5,165,810  
Average affected per year: 166,639  
Economic Damage (US Dollars): 1.3 billion  
Economic Damage per year (US Dollars): 43 million  
Floods are the most frequent and account for most of the economic damage. Nepal ranks 11th and 30th respectively in terms of its relative vulnerability to earthquakes and floods.

Source: *Preventionweb.net; UNDP Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Programme*



# DISASTER RISK REDUCTION



## DRR PROGRAM SUMMARY

The U.S. Government works to enhance Nepal's capacity to prevent, mitigate and respond to disasters, and address the needs of vulnerable populations through programs that:

- Improve preparedness for, and response to, natural disasters by improving and exercising disaster plans; enhancing the capacity of first responders; improving communities' ability to respond; and working with regional actors to cooperate on disaster risk reduction.
- Increase the understanding of the importance of disaster risk reduction measures by mainstreaming them into government planning and budgets; increasing private sector engagement; enhancing the capacity of media to cover all aspects of disasters; and increasing people's understanding of risks and how to protect themselves against hazards.
- Protect investments and people through improved implementation of disaster risk reduction measures by helping communities to be more resilient and ensuring that targeted infrastructure is resistant to natural disasters.

Click here for more information: [DRR Office](#)

## DRR PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS: A CONSTANT EFFORT TO IMPROVE DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

### DRR MASCOTS

Similar to the character, "Smokey the Bear" used for decades to raise awareness of the need to prevent forest fires in the United States, the Red Panda, a Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) mascot, will provide safety messages for earthquakes, floods, landslides, fires, and other hazards in Nepal. After a survey, the Nepali public (including school children and youth) chose the Red Panda, an endangered species endemic to the temperate forests of the Himalayas. The DRR mascot will soon be launched by the Government of Nepal at the Regional Asia International Search and Rescue Advisory Group meeting in Kathmandu. At that time, the official DRR logo will also be unveiled and will be used by all partners in DRR messages (the logo will be displayed on our social media sites after its launch). The character depicted on the left shows the Red Panda's female counterpart, the Snow Leopard. In collaboration with the Ministry of Home Affairs, the U.S. Government supported the development of a DRR Mascot to be used by the Government of Nepal, NGOs, donors, and the private sector in promoting disaster awareness and preparedness campaigns.



### ATM MESSAGES

The DRR Office is working with leading banks in Nepal to include disaster preparedness messages on ATMs. This low-cost method is one of many ways the U.S. Government is helping to increase awareness of disaster risk among the general public. USAID supplies the content (pictures and messages), and the banks display the messages on their machines, rotating them every couple of days. Banks are providing these messages as part of their corporate social responsibility. This public-private collaboration is occurring at no cost to the U.S. Government.

*By Failing to Prepare for Emergencies, you are preparing to fail!*

*Earthquakes can strike Nepal at any time ... Do you know what to do? Prepare Now!*

### DISASTER PREPAREDNESS TIPS

Leave the interior doors open in your home as often as possible (even just a crack) to prevent them from jamming shut during an earthquake and trapping you inside.



If there is a major earthquake while we are at work and we are not able to return to our homes before we are evacuated, it would be very helpful to maintain a backpack with the essential items in your workspace for you and your family such as extra (seasonally appropriate) clothing; sturdy footwear; copies of important documentation (on paper, flash drive, the cloud, etc); money or access to money (USD, NPR, credit/debit cards, etc); essential prescriptions; and flashlight/whistle.



# USAID/NEPAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM : GATEWAY TO SUCCESS



Sheila Lutjens,  
Deputy Mission Director,  
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In 2007, USAID/Nepal initiated an internship program with the objective to provide opportunities for professional experience and development to individuals from traditionally excluded groups (Dalit and Disadvantaged groups). I was pleased to be a part of the design of the initial program and can now appreciate how it has grown and flourished over the past five years under the leadership of the USAID Executive Office, and specifically, Roshan Kafle. The program started with five individuals from the Dalit community, who were placed in various technical and support offices and assigned mentors who provided them with professional experience tailored to each individual as well as English language classes and other basic administrative computer skills training.

Now, in 2012, the program is still going strong with an increased number of interns, and with the program now lasting nine months. USAID/Nepal believes that this program provides plenty of opportunities for professional growth, and while we are not able to guarantee employment after the internship, we do work with each intern to prepare them for the job market. In fact, several have been hired by USAID, the Embassy, and other organizations. Read their stories below:



First Batch of Interns



## TESTIMONIALS & SUCCESS STORIES

“The USAID Internship program has proven to be a great platform for me. It was a gateway to my career, and I’m thankful to this program for helping me come this far. Apart from learning useful skills, I had plenty of opportunities to meet and work with great people who were really helpful and supportive. I got to know a lot about USAID programs. I took part in different events and got a chance to show my talents and share my views. The new onward coming interns should be ready to utilize every opportunity that will come their way and be willing to engage in as many activities out there. It will be truly fruitful.” *Alisha Lowagan, Currently works at World Education, Inc.*



“When I first joined, I had many expectations in terms of professional growth and I wasn’t disappointed. This internship program is all about learning by doing. You are exposed to professionals working in the field from whom you can learn a lot. Here, I gained knowledge about Nepali society, its history, rule of Law, human trafficking, conflict and governance, diversity and social inclusion, strategic planning, implementation and evaluation of projects, etc. They also teach you basic but crucial skills such as interacting with people, writing skills, language, photography skills, computer and presentation skills, and the list goes on. And, after you graduate, they will provide you with professional references. Overall, I feel really lucky to have gotten the opportunity to do an internship in USAID/Nepal.” *Shanti Rasaili, Currently works at US Embassy, Nepal*



“Before my internship at USAID, I was lost, frustrated, and strapped by financial problems to pursue higher education. Fortunately, I got selected for the USAID/Nepal Internship program and since then, I have not looked back. This program provided me the much needed light to seek my career path. I remember my intern days when I grabbed every opportunity that came my way and learned about different program offices, communication and records, human resources, management, shipping and property. I was able to pursue my further education, got English language training, participate in meetings, trainings, conferences, etc. After my internship, I worked for MercyCorps, Winrock based in Nepalgunj, and traveled almost all of the districts of the Mid and Far Western development regions of Nepal. Eventually, I ended up getting a job at USAID/Nepal. This internship program is an excellent opportunity for Dalits and disadvantaged people, therefore, I would like to emphasize the fact that a genuine and a truly needy people coming from traditionally excluded groups should be selected for this program as it can completely change their lives for the better.” *Bijay Nepali, First Batch, Currently works at USAID/Nepal*



“The most important thing that I learned from the internship program is that there are no boundaries to how much you can learn - it is endless and everyone can play a role in the process regardless of their position, experience, and age.



To mark the International Women’s Day, I created and led a snapshot story on “A Day in a Nepali Woman’s Life” and together with other interns, we wrote a story of five Nepali women, and today, I feel very proud that one of them is a nominee for the CNN Heroes Award. The opportunity of traveling to different parts of the country was not only adventurous but also an eye-opener showing different aspects of Nepali people, and this experience still helps me today at my current job when I have to think of various issues concerning human rights, politics, and trafficking especially in remote corners of Nepal. One of the impressive and motivating factors of working in USAID was recognition of our accomplishments. I had rarely heard of interns being awarded during their internship period. For me, it was a genuine motivation factor for working harder and be more dedicated. Interns are allowed a free environment to work independently under the guidance of mentors. In a Nepali society, where voices of the marginalized are still suppressed, I was able to contribute equally along with my seniors at USAID, which was yet another unique experience for me.” *Jay Ram Nepali, Currently works at USAID/Nepal*

“The best part of my internship term at USAID/Nepal was my field visits and exposure to different USAID-funded health projects. I learned how to write reports, enhanced my English language skills, administrative skills, which boosted my confidence level and helped me both personally and professionally.” *Laxman Nepali, Currently works at CRS Company*

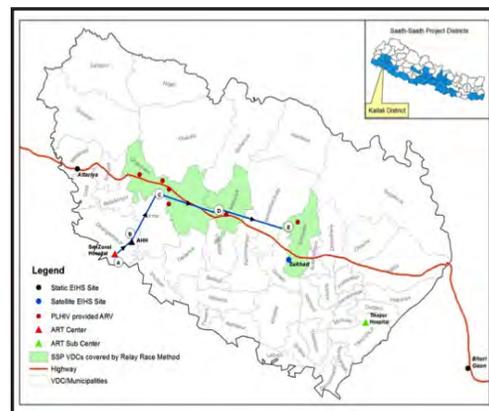


## Racing to Save Lives during Bandhs

Nepal's Far Western region went through continuous bandhs (general strikes) called by various political and ethnic factions for more than 26 days. The prolonged bandh, which began in late April, gravely affected local inhabitants, offices, schools, and medical supply distributors—a life threatening situation for people living with HIV (PLHIV). With local transportation halted, most PLHIV living in remote areas could not gain access to Anti-Retroviral (ARV) medicines from government Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) centers. The USAID-funded Saath-Saath Project (SSP) and its local NGO partner *Asha Kiran Pratisthan* (AKP) took additional precautionary steps to ensure the wellbeing of HIV-positive individuals by coordinating with Seti Zonal Hospital (SZH) to deliver medicines to PLHIV via Saath-Saath Project's (SSP) Community Home-Based Care (CHBC) team. CHBC staff worked tirelessly to ensure the wellbeing of those infected with HIV even during the ongoing deteriorating security scenario. SSP carried out mapping exercises to locate all HIV-infected individuals needing ARV and used an innovative Relay Race method, similar to passing a baton in a Relay Race (see example) to distribute supplies. The dedicated CHBC team members have been reaching client's homes on bicycles, motor

bikes and even on foot carrying banners that read "Delivering essential ARV medicine to PLHIV". One client residing in the Chaumala VDC shared, "I was worried since my medicine was running low. The bandh made it impossible to travel to the hospital for my medicine. But the CHBC team came to my aid on time. I am thankful for their tireless efforts in ensuring my wellbeing."

The CHBC team members are unsung heroes, constantly overcoming geographical boundaries and political instability to ensure healthy living among PLHIV across Nepal. The team continues to provide ARV medicine to more than 35 PLHIV homes in Godabari, Hasuliya, Basauti, Chaumala, Masuliya, Ramshikarjhal Sandepane VDCs of the Kailali district.



## Relay Race Method Example

- Point A:** AKP obtains ARV medicines from SZH (Point A) and keeps it at AHH (an NGO) overnight (Point B).
- Point B:** Next morning, CHBC team in Dhangadi takes the medicine from AHH and deliver it on bicycle to the CHBC team located at Chaumada VDC (Point C).
- Point C:** CHBC team at Chaumada VDC (Point C) delivers ARV medicine to PLHIV clients in the VDC and deliver the remaining medicine to CHBC team in Masuriya VDC (Point D).
- Point D:** CHBC team in Masuriya VDC (Point D) delivers ARV medicine to PLHIV client in the area and then takes the rest to CHBC team in Sadepani VDC (Point E).
- Point E:** CHBC team in Sadepani VDC (Point E) delivers ARV medicine to PLHIV clients in the region.

**USAID Saves Mothers' Lives by Integrating Family Planning (FP) into Maternal and Newborn Care (MNC):** USAID extended a cooperative agreement with Health Right International for 14 months to pilot the integration of FP services into a successful MNC program in Arghakhachi district in southern Nepal. According to a baseline survey in 2010, only 26 percent of recently delivered women received FP counseling during their antenatal care visits. To avoid this missed opportunity, USAID has integrated FP messages in MNC-related health worker training, community education, and radio broadcasts, reaching over 6,000 people. In addition, USAID has increased access to FP services through two approaches: (1) supporting 13 health facilities to provide long acting FP methods as part of their MNC services, and (2) convening the district government offices and Nepal Army to organize 12 FP mobile camps across the district. The Clientele consists of 62.5 percent inclusion rate from low-caste and ethnic minority groups historically underserved by Nepal's health system. To assess the effectiveness of FP/MNC integration, USAID has worked with the district health office to establish service standards and incorporate them into a more robust quality improvement monitoring tool and process. While the district will continue to integrate the implementation of FP/MNC communication activities and services, USAID will support the expansion of these approaches into other districts over the next five years.

**USAID Supports Training to Disaster Response Agencies to Better Integrate their Systems and Increase Efficiency:** From May 1-3, USAID's Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA), with the US Forest Service (USFS), conducted a three-day training on the Incident Command System (ICS) at the Armed Police Force Training Center in Kurintar, Nepal. The ICS is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazards disaster management system that allows emergency response organizations to integrate within a common organizational structure in order to prioritize disaster response objectives and maximize the efficiency of emergency response and relief efforts during disasters. The training in Nepal was conducted in coordination with the Ministry of Home Affairs, Disaster Management Section and the Armed Police Force, with logistical support provided by the National Society for Earthquake Technology (NSET).

**Main Feed The Future Nepal Request For Proposal Publicly Released:** On May 17, the Request For Proposals (RFP) for Feed The Future Nepal's flagship integrated agriculture and nutrition program was released. The RFP is posted on the [www.fbo.gov](http://www.fbo.gov) website and at <http://nepal.usaid.gov/working-with-us/business-opportunities.html>. The closing date is July 2.

**Inauguration of the Electoral Education and Information Center:** On May 24, the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) inaugurated the Electoral Education and Information Center (EEIC) in Kathmandu. The EEIC was established to help Nepalis understand the importance of free and fair elections, the electoral process, and encourage them to exercise their right to vote. The Center's facilities include multimedia exhibits that actively engage visitors including, a training center, a mock polling center, traditional and e-libraries, and an exhibition hall. President Ram Baran Yadav, Chief Election Commissioner Neel Kantha Uprety, and DGO were among the representatives in attendance. The EEIC was funded by the Australian government and received technical support from the USAID for the libraries and webpage and brochure design.

**The Carter Center (TCC) collects Citizen Views on Voter Registration and Federalism:** In May, the Carter Center (TCC) shared critical insight into citizen views on voter registration and federalism as well as reported on the bandhs that crippled the country. TCC visited over 15 districts this month, focusing on the mid and far west of Nepal. Since June 2009 USAID has supported TCC to deploy teams of international and Nepali Long-Term Observers (LTOs) to each of Nepal's five development regions to monitor the country's progress toward a consolidated post-conflict democracy. LTOs meet regularly with citizens, political parties, government officials, and others to understand district and local level concerns. The observers then share their findings with government stakeholders and the international donor community in Kathmandu.

