



Housing Recovery and  
Reconstruction Platform



# Women in Reconstruction Research Report

May 2018

## About HRRP

The Housing Recovery and Reconstruction Platform (HRRP) was established in December 2015 to take over supporting coordination of the post-earthquake housing reconstruction from the Nepal Shelter Cluster, as it returned to the pre-earthquake format as a standing cluster. The platform provides coordination support services for the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA), Building and Grant Management and Local Infrastructure (GMAIL) Central Level Programme Implementation Units (CLPIUs), other relevant government authorities, and Partner Organisations (POs). Phase 3 of the HRRP was approved by the Government of Nepal (GoN) at the beginning of March 2017 and will run until the end of February 2019. HRRP3 is primarily funded by DFID Nepal and CRS Nepal. Other financial contributors and implementing partners include Oxfam, Caritas Nepal, Plan International, National Society for Earthquake Technology-Nepal (NSET), and Habitat for Humanity.

The HRRP has 12 District Coordination Teams (DCTs) primarily focused on the 14 districts most affected by the 2015 Gorkha earthquake (1 team covers the three districts in the Kathmandu Valley) and providing support to the 18 moderately affected districts where feasible. The DCTs are made up of a Coordinator, a Technical Coordinator, and an Information Management Officer. The DCTs are supported by a District Management Team (DMT) made up of a Coordinator, Technical Coordinator, and Information Manager. The DMT provides day to day guidance and support to the DCTs as well as targeted capacity building and has a roving presence across all districts. The national team includes general coordination, technical coordination, and information management expertise and supports the link between national and district level.

## Areas of Focus

The HRRP has four main areas of focus:

- Monitoring and documenting the housing reconstruction process
- Improving coverage and quality of socio-technical assistance
- Addressing gaps and duplications
- Advocacy and Communications

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# I.0 Executive Summary

In the context of Nepal's traditionally patriarchal society where women are marginalised and face discrimination and the continuous reports of women not being effectively engaged in the housing reconstruction, HRRP launched research on women's experience in reconstruction with the following objectives:

- To document women's experience in the reconstruction
- To assess the participation of women in reconstruction
- To explore the reconstruction issues and challenges that affect women
- To analyse the gaps, strengths, and opportunities for women's engagement in reconstruction

This research has tried to collect and document the experiences of women in reconstruction at community level, district level, and national level. Quantitative data was collected from 679 respondents; 304 respondents who are going through, or have completed, the reconstruction of their house, 226 respondents that have taken part in mason training, and 150 respondents that were both going through, or have completed, the reconstruction of their house and taken part in mason training. Qualitative data was collected through interviews with women at district level (15 women in each district) and with 10 women at national level.

The findings indicate that the reconstruction has provided an opportunity for many women in terms of employment, training, and increased confidence. However, many women also face discrimination in the reconstruction, indicating that concrete and consolidated effort is required to ensure effective engagement of women; if more than 50% of the population are not engaged in the reconstruction it is impossible for it to be successful.

Some of the major findings from the research are as follows:

## Households

- 92% of respondents have signed the Partnership Agreement with the Government of Nepal (GoN) and of these 44% have signed the agreement in their own name

- 77% of household respondents have started reconstructing their house and of these, 41% are illiterate. Of those that have yet to start reconstructing their house, 44% are illiterate. Whilst illiteracy is certainly a challenge for people reconstructing their houses, it is encouraging that 41% of illiterate respondents have started their reconstruction.
- The main sources of information on the reconstruction are engineers (55%), government officials (55%), friends and relatives (72%), masons (11%), and media (19%). Just 37% of respondents understood all the information that they received.
- 25% of respondents reported having had more than 2 visits from Government of Nepal (GoN) inspection engineers, 28% report having had 2 visits, and 27% report having had 1 visit. 15% reported that the engineers visited on request whilst 5% reported that they had never had a visit from GoN inspection engineers despite requests. Of those that reported having had 2 visits, 64% have received the first tranche of the GoN housing reconstruction grant, 28% have received the second tranche, and 8% have received the third tranche.
- 32% of respondents that have received the second tranche and 45% that have received the third tranche live in wards that have not received any socio-technical assistance support.

## Mason Training Participants

- 30% of respondents had difficulties with the training, for example language barrier or poor-quality training, but it is very positive that 90% of these people felt the difficulties had been addressed.
- 52% of respondents are currently working and just 2% of these respondents felt that the training had not contributed to them securing work. Of those currently working, 50.9% are working as labourers and 31% are working as assistant masons.
- 23% of respondents reported that they are not paid equally to men doing the same work

The interviews conducted with women working on the reconstruction at district and national level reflected

many of the findings above, and further highlighted the discrimination that many women face working in the reconstruction.

The report concludes by recommending a set of next steps to address the issues identified through the research. These include:

- Launch efforts to ensure that women receive equal pay for equal work
  - Continue to document women's experiences of reconstruction and create platform for exchange between women involved in the reconstruction
  - Socio-Technical Assistance (STA) needs to be adapted and improved to meet women's information needs
  - Offer mason training opportunities for women in women led, women only, trainings which run for a longer duration with shorter days allowing women to better manage competing priorities and tasks.
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## 2.0 Background

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Nepal is a traditionally patriarchal society with many constraints imposed on women's lives in a variety of ways. The country has consistently ranked in the fourth quartile of the Gender Inequality Index Ranking<sup>1</sup> and the Global Gender Gap Ranking<sup>2</sup>.

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, 78.4% of houses are owned by men and 21.6% by women across the 14 districts most affected by the April 2015 earthquake. 26% of houses in Makwanpur are owned by women, the highest amongst the 14 districts, and just 16.9% of houses are owned by women in Rasuwa, the lowest amongst the 14 districts.

Participation in politics has improved with only 3.4% of seats filled by women in 1998, compared to 29.5% in 2015, however this was a reduction from 33.2% in 2013. The 2011 census conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) found that the literacy rate amongst men was 75.1% whilst the literacy rate amongst women was 57.4%<sup>3</sup>.

A 2011 report by the National Women's Commission of Nepal on 'Nepal's Implementation Status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)' states that gender relations in Nepal are "defined by a patriarchal value system, which perpetuates women's subordination" and that "women in Nepal are discriminated several times over". The report highlights that despite women's contribution to agricultural production being more than 60%, women only own 8% of agricultural land, 70% of women are confined to self-employed, unpaid, and low wage informal activities, only 12% of positions in the civil service are filled by women, and just 1.76% positions in the judicial service are filled by women.

Other issues faced by women in Nepal include maternal mortality, which has improved dramatically since 1998<sup>4</sup> but has gotten worse in recent years, child marriage is still widely practiced which removes girls from school and puts them in danger due to pregnancy at a young age<sup>5</sup>, and social taboos around menstruation and childbirth.

In April 2015 when the Gorkha earthquake struck, women found that the issues outline above, as well as new ones specific to the earthquake, left them again marginalised and therefore struggling to participate in the reconstruction. Early on, during the process to enroll in the Government of Nepal's (GoN) housing reconstruction programme, women were often unable to sign the programme agreement due to issues with documentation, land ownership, and male family members either not present or given preference. Since then, women have often been unable to access the tranches of the Government of Nepal (GoN) housing reconstruction grant due to banking issues related to their names not being put on the bank account or other documentation issues.

The Inter-Agency Common Feedback Project reported in November 2017 that when asked if they felt men and women were equally engaged in the reconstruction process 60% of men felt they were, compared to only 49% of women. When asked why women were not equally engaged 57% believed it was because men are given preference in beneficiary lists, 36% felt it's due to low participation of women in training, and 32% say it's because women are not as strong as men<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Human Development Index Report 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016

<sup>2</sup> Global Gender Gap Report 2006, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017

<sup>3</sup> Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), National Population and Housing Census 2011, National Report

<sup>4</sup> Human Development Report Nepal, UNDP, 1998

<sup>5</sup> UNFPA publication on ending child marriage in Nepal and OECD Development Centre Social Institutions and Gender Index

<sup>6</sup> Clearing away the rubble: Moving beyond blockages to reconstruction progress, HRRP & CFP, November 2017



A joint advocacy report published by the Common Feedback Project (CFP) and HRRP in November 2017<sup>7</sup>, highlighted that “women consistently report not having

been meaningfully engaged in the reconstruction process, or treated as agents of the recovery”.



*Common Feedback Project team conducting a focus group discussion with Dalit women from Darshantar, Nuwakot. Photo credit: Bronwyn Russel/CFP.*

In this context, the HRRP launched this research on women's experience in reconstruction with the following objectives:

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- To analyse the gaps, strengths, and opportunities for women's engagement in reconstruction

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<sup>7</sup> *Clearing away the rubble: Moving beyond blockages to reconstruction progress, HRRP & CFP, November 2017*



*Amita Maharajan from Gamcha Village, Ward No. 4, Kirtipur Municipality, Kathmandu.*

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## 3.0 Methodology

Qualitative and quantitative research methods were used for this survey. Quantitative research was used to collect data from women who are going through, or have completed, the reconstruction of their house and women that have taken part in mason training. One questionnaire was used with two sub-sections where the relevant sub-section was completed based on the profile of the respondent. The questionnaire can be found in Annex A. Data collection took place from 1-15 March, across the 14 districts most affected by the 2015 earthquake, and was carried out using KoBo Collect; a mobile application based system. Where HRRP teams were unable to collect data using the mobile application due to connectivity or other issues, paper based data collection was used. The cleaned, and anonymised, dataset is available for download here.

Qualitative data was collected at district and national

level through a combination of one-on-one interviews. This approach was used to collect the experiences of women working in reconstruction at national and district level, including Government of Nepal (GoN) engineers, International / National Non-Governmental Organisation (I/NGO) staff, HRRP staff, district and national GoN staff, GoN and I/NGOs social mobilisers, and country directors. The questions used for these interviews are available in Annex 2.

### Sampling Procedure

A simple random sampling method was used for this assessment and the online resource 'Sample Size Calculator' was used to determine the sample to a 95% confidence level. The target sample size, and the number of interviews completed, by district was as follows:

District	Sample size		No. Interviewed		
	Household	Trainee Mason	Household	Trainee Mason	Both (HH+ Mason)
Bhaktapur	28	26	25	11	15
Dhading	28	26	26	25	3
Dolakha	28	26	20	20	8
Gorkha	28	26	8	11	16
Kathmandu	28	26	33	23	4
Kavrepalanchok	28	26	23	21	5
Lalitpur	28	26	30	24	2
Makwanpur	28	26	29	16	11
Nuwakot	28	26	19	6	21
Okhaldhunga	28	26	4	4	24
Ramechhap	28	26	29	27	1
Rasuwa	28	26	20	18	7
Sindhuli	28	26	14	3	24
Sindhupalchowk	28	26	23	17	9
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>150</b>

For the qualitative interviews and discussions, 15 women in each district were interviewed and 10 people were

interviewed at national level.

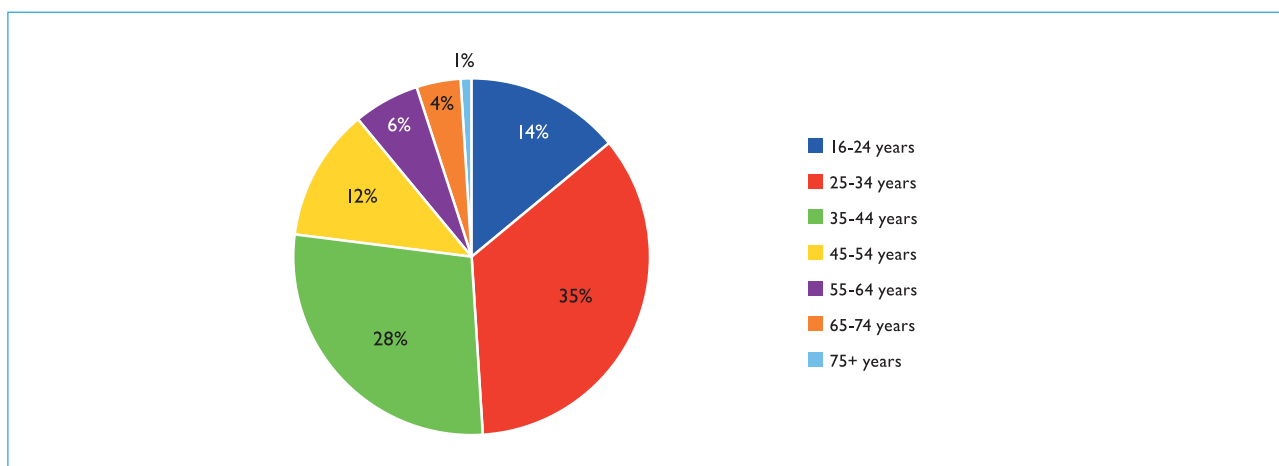
## 4.0 Data Presentation and Analysis

Data was collected from a total of 679 respondents, with:

- 303 respondents who are going through, or have completed, the reconstruction of their house,
- 226 respondents that have taken part in mason training, and

- 150 respondents that were both going through, or have completed, the reconstruction of their house and taken part in mason training.

Respondents ranged in age from 16 to 87. The chart below provides an overview of the number of respondents by age group

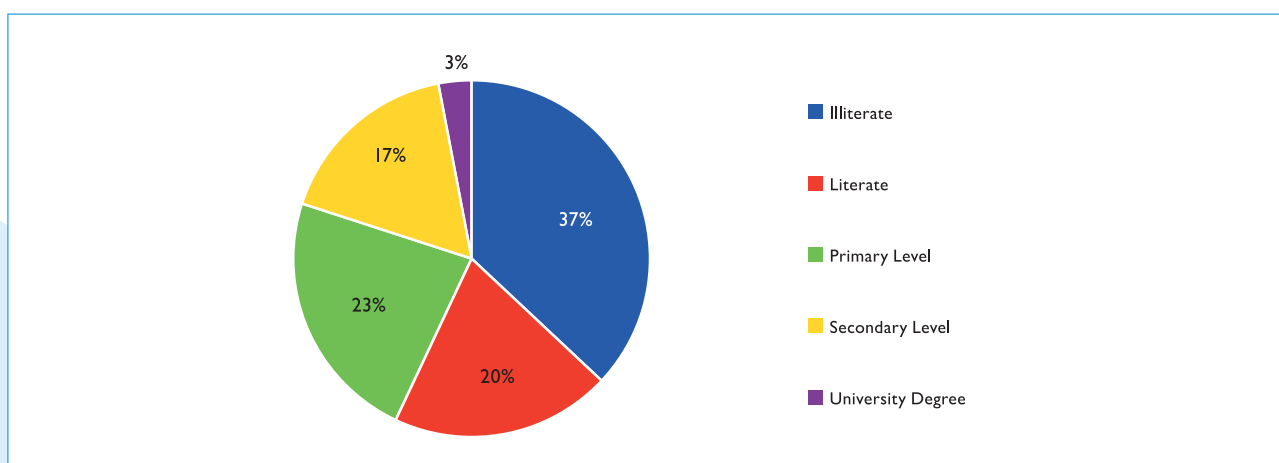


87% of respondents are married, 10% are widows, and 2% are divorced. There was just one single woman amongst the respondents.

The average family size across all respondents was 4.9, ranging from 1-30. 49% of respondents have less than 5

members in their family, 48% have 5-10 family members, and 2% have 11 or more family members.

More than a third of respondents (37%) are illiterate, but the majority are literate with varying levels of education as shown in the pie chart below:



### 4.1.1 Income and Employment

Across all respondents, an average of 1.8 family members are working and earning, ranging from 1 to 12. All respondents have at least one family member that is earning.

55% of respondents reported that agriculture is a source of income for their family. Other sources of income include working on the reconstruction (as skilled labour,

mason, labourer, and contractor), old age pension, tailor, shop owner, driver, and remittances.

Of the 67% respondents that responded to the question 'is there anyone working abroad in your family?', only 28% reported that they have a family member working abroad. Of those that reported having a family member working abroad, 69% reported that remittances are a source of income for them.



*Aitimaya Rai from Botgaun Village, Ward No. 1, Bagmati Municipality, Makwanpur.*

### 4.1.2 Housing Reconstruction Process

Note: this section reflects the responses from the 453 respondents involved in constructing their house.

64% of respondents reported that their house was completely damaged as a result of the earthquake. 26% reported severe damage to their house and 10% reported only moderate damage.

92% of respondents have signed the Partnership Agreement with the Government of Nepal (GoN) and of these 44% have signed the agreement in their own name. For 39% of respondents, the PA was signed by their husband, and for 17% by another family member.

77% of household respondents have started reconstructing their house and of these, 41% are illiterate. Of those that have yet to start reconstructing their

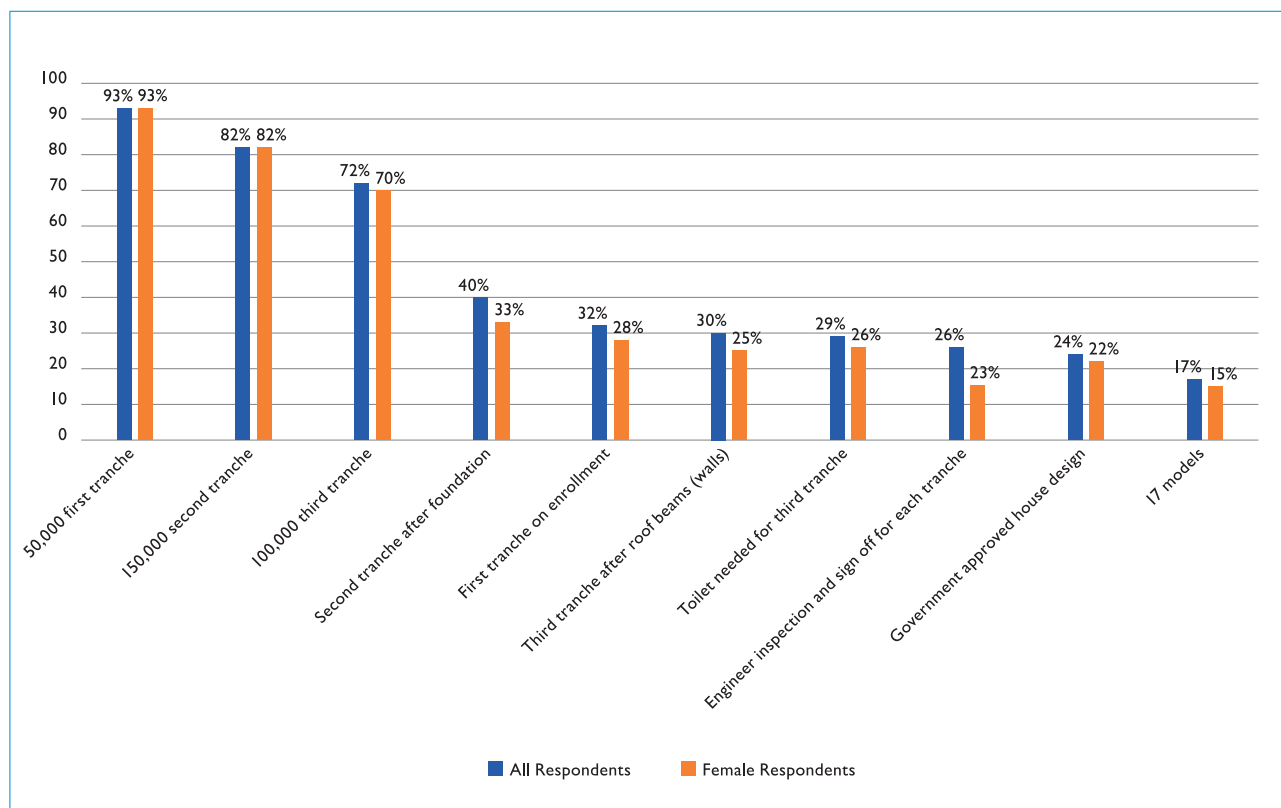
house, 44% are illiterate. Whilst illiteracy is certainly a challenge for people reconstructing their house, it is encouraging that 41% of illiterate respondents have started reconstruction of their house.

90% of respondents that have not started reconstruction said this was due to not having enough money available. Other reasons for not starting were that the tranche process is complicated (30%) and there not enough trained workers available (7%).

69% of respondents feel that they know who to consult for information regarding the reconstruction process. The main sources of information are engineers (55%), government officials (55%), friends and relatives (72%), masons (11%), and media (19%). Just 37% of respondents understood all the information that they received. Whilst only 1% reported that they did not understand any of the information, it is worrying that 42% only partially understood the information and 20% understood very

little. Other pieces of research that have looked at access to, and understanding of information, including from BBC Media Action and the Inter-Agency Common Feedback Project (CFP) have had similar findings. The most recent

round of CFP surveys from May 2018 found the following results in relation to the question 'what do you know about the grant process?':



All of this data on access to, and understanding of information highlights that there is not enough information available to households and that there are major differences between genders in terms of who they get information from, and their preferences and

limitations in accessing information, e.g. women often can't attend orientation sessions during the day due to housework, women generally have a lower level of literacy than men so written materials are less useful, etc.





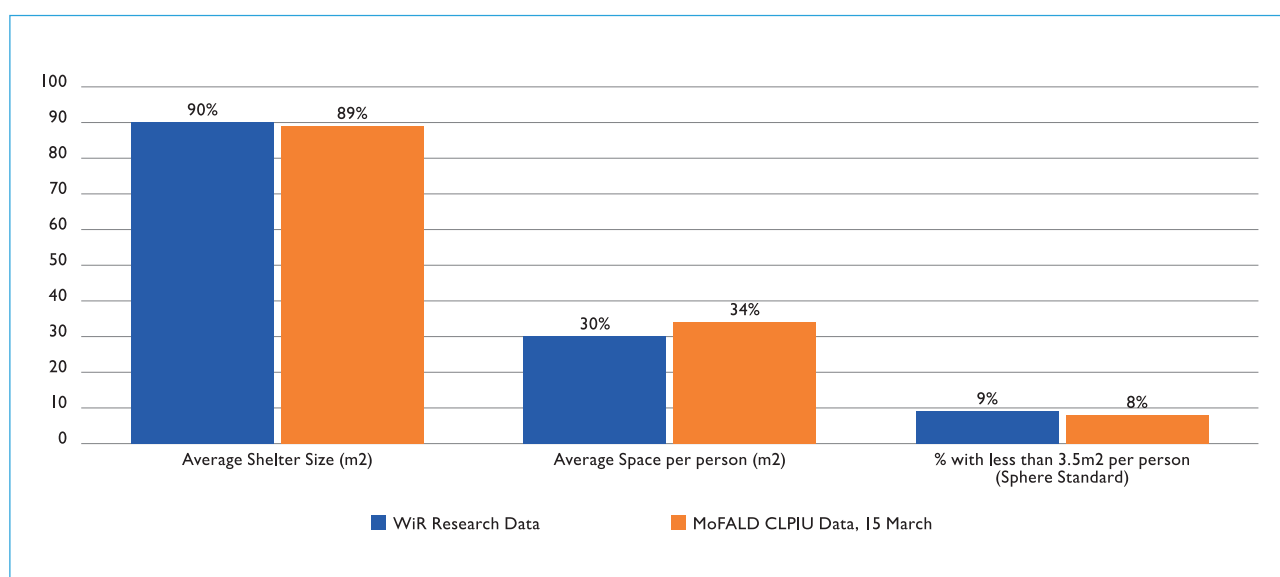
*Bhagbati Pahari from Gairigau Village, Ward No. 5, Bhumlu Municipality, Kavrepalanchok.*

38% of respondents reported that they found the process to get their house design approved easy and fast. However, 23% reported that the process was time consuming, 25% reported that it was complicated, and 14% reported that it was not easy.

25% of respondents reported having had more than 2 visits from Government of Nepal (GoN) inspection engineers, 28% report having had 2 visits, and 27% report having had 1 visit. 15% reported that the engineers visited on request whilst 5% reported that they had never had a visit from GoN inspection engineers despite requests. Of those that reported having had 2 visits,

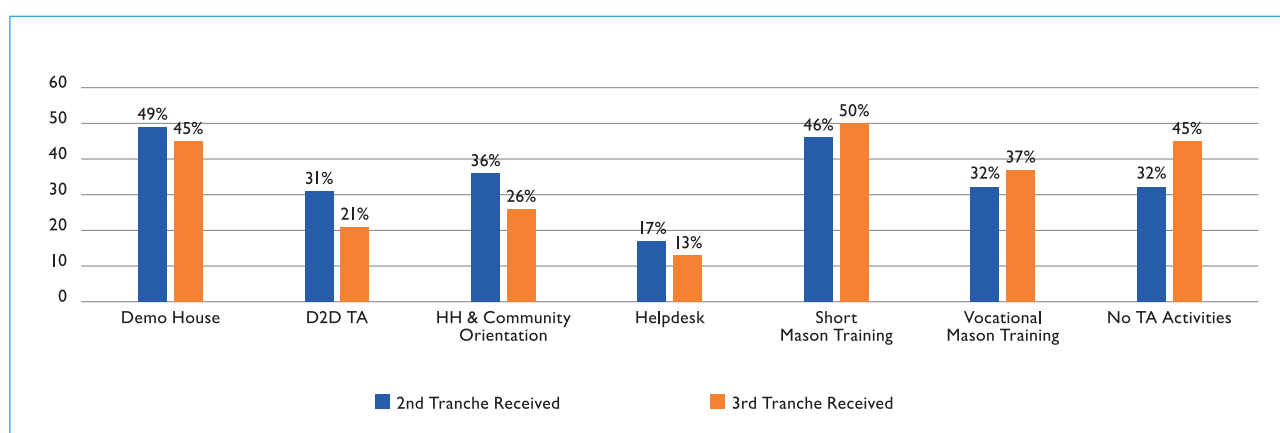
64% have received the first tranche of the GoN housing reconstruction grant, 28% have received the second tranche, and 8% have received the third tranche.

90% of respondents reported that they had received the first tranche of the GoN housing reconstruction grant (50,000 NPRs), 30% reported that they had received the second tranche (150,000 NPRs), and 9% reported that they had received the third tranche (100,000 NPRs). These percentages are very similar to those at national level as shown in the chart below (HRRP data collection was completed on 15 March so the comparison is with MoFALD CLPIU data from this date).



Using the HRRP 4W data on coverage of socio-technical assistance, it is possible to what level of coverage the wards that respondents come from have received. The graph below presents this in relation to respondents

that reported receiving the second tranche of the GoN housing reconstruction grant, and those that reported receiving the third tranche of the grant.



It is interesting to note that 32% of respondents that have received the second tranche and 45% that have received the third tranche live in wards that have not received any socio-technical assistance support.

48 respondents reported that they were unable to access the GoN housing reconstruction grant. There were a variety of reasons for this:

- 4% – Partnership Agreement was in another person's name
- 4% – Did not understand the process
- 23% – Land issues
- 48% – Grievance registered but not resolved

- 21% – Not on the list of eligible households

55% of respondents reported that their household consults with the local government office regarding the housing reconstruction grant process. Of these, 58% of respondents visited the offices themselves, for 32% of respondents their husbands' visit, and for 9% other family members conduct the visits. 71% of respondents reported that government officials are positive and helpful, 10% reported that they are not supportive, 5% reported that they provide timely and efficient support, and 14% reported that they do not provide timely and efficient support.

78% of respondents reported that as women they face specific challenges in the reconstruction. The most



common challenges reported were as follows:

- Managing household / family needs – many respondents reported this had become very challenging after the earthquake with an increase in the time required to collect water, not having proper facilities for cooking and cleaning, not having toilets, not having storage space, etc.
- Stress and security concerns – the Asia Foundation, Independent Recovery Monitoring Phase 3 report found that women (and other vulnerable and marginalised groups) “are more likely to suffer psychological impacts” and are “more likely to be worried about landslides”. This is also reflected in the data collected by HRRP, with many respondents reporting that they have experienced stress as a result of the impacts of the earthquake, especially the challenges of living in a temporary shelter. Several respondents reported security concerns because of living in temporary shelters or in damaged houses. Several respondents also reported fear of landslides in their area.
- Construction materials and labour – many respondents reported that they have faced challenges in accessing materials and skilled labour to build their house either because of financial constraints, difficulties with transporting materials, or contractors / masons being dismissive and discriminatory.
- Other reported challenges include gender violence, difficulty visiting / accessing government offices, lack of trust in women, and the GoN housing reconstruction grant process is complicated and time consuming.



### 4.1.3 Mason Training

Note: this section reflects the responses from the 376 respondents that had participated in mason training.

57% of respondents have taken part in short mason training (7 days) and 43% of respondents have taken part in vocational mason training (50 days). 74% heard about the training from friends / family, 27% through government officials, 3% through newspapers, 53%

through I/NGOs working in their area, and 6% through radio.

30% of respondents had difficulties with the training, for example language barrier or poor-quality training, but it is very positive that 90% of these people felt the difficulties had been addressed. 94% of respondents completed their mason training and 95% of respondents had their family's support for their participation in the training course.

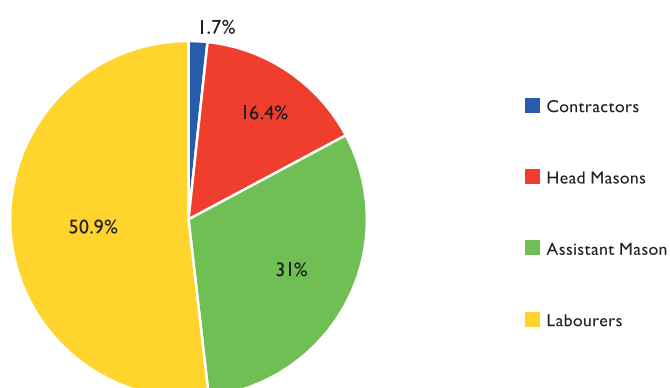




Parwati Gale from Kamrang Village, Ward No. 2, Siddhalekh Municipality, Dhading.

52% of respondents are currently working and just 2% of these respondents felt that the training had not contributed to them securing work. Of those currently

working, 50.9% are working as labourers and 31% are working as assistant masons:





Given women have traditionally been constrained to labourer or assistant mason roles, it is a shame to see that even following training most women are still in these roles. The small number of women that have become contractors have had to overcome a lot of discrimination. For example, Sharada Danuwar (who shared her story on the BBC Media Action Sajha Sawal programme). Sharada is a trained mason who has constructed over 100 houses and is working towards becoming a contractor. Her initial experience of working in construction was not positive as the men that she was working with would hide her equipment, or damage her work with the intention of discouraging her from being a mason. But she persevered and when the masons took part in a test of their skills, she came second out of 56 where all the others were men. She is now a highly respected mason and is looking forward to a bright future.

Just 5% of respondents reported that their family does not support them working outside of the house on the reconstruction.

Worryingly, 23% of respondents reported that they are not paid equally to men doing the same work.

The main challenges that women reported facing in conducting mason training and working on the housing reconstruction are as follows:

- Balancing household chores with construction work – this was particularly highlighted in relation to absence of childcare options, family not supporting their choice to work on construction, and having to manage their time so that they can complete household chores before going to work in construction.
- Discrimination from community / households – respondents reported that often community members / households did not trust women masons, and as a result they could not get employment.
- Discrimination from male colleagues and contractors – as mentioned above, 23% of respondents reported that they are not paid equally to men doing the same work. Respondents also reported that male colleagues and contractors do not respect them or work collaboratively with them.
- Absence of backup and further training – several respondents reported that they struggle as there was no follow up after the training course and they have nobody to contact with questions. Many also reported that the training was quite short and they would like to have further training so that they can get a refresher on key points, and expand their knowledge.

## 5.0 District Level Experience

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In each of the 14 districts most affected by the 2015 earthquake, interviews were conducted with 15 women working on reconstruction in that district. The women interviewed included social mobilisers, engineers, architects, programme officers, project supervisors, project coordinators, and section officers from both Government of Nepal (GoN) and Partner Organisations (POs).

The questions discussed during the interviews are provided in Annex 2.

Many of the positive aspects that interviewees identified were also reflected in the qualitative presented above, including that women are visiting government offices themselves to access information or raise issues and that women were keen to participate in mason training.

The social mobilisers that were interviewed felt that their work provided them with a very positive platform from which to interact directly with households reconstructing after the earthquake and it provided a chance for them to provide information to women and act as an example that women can work in the reconstruction. They also felt that women-led training events were more effective for women and provided examples of women that had completed these trainings and then worked on rotation ('parma') basis to construct each of their house. Social mobilisers felt that there was a significant proportion of women were taking an equal decision-making position on the reconstruction of their house with male heads of household, or acting as the main decision maker due to migration of men or being single women / female headed households.

However, interviewees also highlighted (as was also found through the survey data presented above) that participating in mason training, and then working as a mason, is difficult for women when they have to manage household work and childcare. The interviewees also felt that women struggle to access proper information on the reconstruction and are very dependent on family and friends for information. Many interviewees felt that women take earthquake resilient construction more seriously than men, both as masons and homeowners, and that women are better

at convincing people to adopt safer building practices than men. Others felt that even though there is a high level of participation from women in trainings and meetings, this is not reflected in implementation of the reconstruction.

Several participants in the discussions raised concerns about the potential impact on social and family structures of the trend of constructing very small houses (1 or 2 rooms and 1 storey) which in many places are leading to the traditional joint family living system falling away. It was felt that this had the potential for positive and negative impacts on women's lives, but it would take time to really see the impacts.

All interviewees felt that the reconstruction had provided them with an opportunity to expand their knowledge and capacity and felt that having women working across many different roles in the reconstruction, especially traditionally male dominated roles such as engineers or masons, was having a positive impact on changing perceptions of women's abilities. Despite this, interviewees felt that the conservative mind set of society makes people unwilling to hear women's voices. Many had experienced discrimination during their work with male masons / contractors / engineers / community members refusing to follow instructions from women or accept information provided by women and often using harsh and inappropriate language. Many of the engineers interviewed reported that people assume that only men can become engineers and therefore did not trust or respect them. Transport can be very challenging and many of the interviewees are reliant on male colleagues to get around. The lack of proper water and sanitation facilities in many areas was challenging for women working on the reconstruction, especially if they were based in very remote areas. Sometimes staff felt intimidated by people that were trying to pressurise them to sign off on construction that was non-compliant or to recommend them for benefits that they were not eligible for.

All interviewees felt that the reconstruction can be an opportunity for Nepalese women, especially in terms of gaining employment and improving their economic status. This is building women's confidence and changing

how they are perceived by society. The increased involvement of women in decision-making was seen as very positive. It was highlighted that women not only have useful skills and knowledge to contribute, but also relevant social information about their communities. Because of their extended social network, their contributions can strengthen the collective resilience to future shocks and disasters.

The main suggestions from interviewees on how gender impacts on reconstruction can be mitigated (where negative) or scaled up (where positive), were as follows:

- Create an enabling environment for women to work in and enable women to feel motivated and supported in their work, and to ensure that they have a safe working environment
  - Utilise a participatory approach, to ensure the equal and gender-sensitive participation of women and men in risk analysis, leading to better policymaking and programme design
  - Gender Equality should be mainstreamed in every reconstruction activity
  - Advocate for equal pay for women, and initiate actions to ensure that women have support to campaign for and access equal pay for equal work
  - In mason training, it is required to have at least 33% of participants be women and a similar approach should be used for other jobs / training opportunities in reconstruction
  - Provide training to support women to secure employment. If women are employed, they will support the reconstruction, lift their economic status, and support their family.
  - Vulnerable women from disadvantaged and rural communities should receive additional support for reconstruction
  - Field staff should have adequate transportation, water and sanitation, and other facilities to enable them to have a proper work place and manage their tasks
  - Create a platform where women can exchange experiences and success stories so that we can all learn from each other's experience in the reconstruction
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## 6.0 National Level Experience

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At national level, interviews were conducted with ten women working at NSET, CFP, PLAN Nepal, Humanity for Habitat, NRA, and UNDP. A set of nine questions were asked to the interviewees and these can be found in Annex 2.

The interviewees at national level reported similar views to those interviewed at district level, particularly that it was very positive that women were being provided with opportunities to step out of domestic work and into the very male dominated construction sector, thereby breaking stereotypes about women's limitations.

However, interviewees felt that there was not enough follow up for women that had taken part in mason trainings (as also reported by women that had participated in mason training), that reconstruction is not women friendly due to a lack of child care facilities / support and insufficient consideration for how women have to balance their time between reconstruction activities and household work, and that there is a worrying communication gap that means women cannot access the information they need or are affected by misinformation. They also recognised that there is an issue with women not receiving equal pay for equal work.

There were also concerns that despite increased participation from women in training, meetings, or other reconstruction activities there is a lack of real participation and engagement, and there often isn't space or encouragement for women to truly participate and engage in the reconstruction. There are many women that have an increased sense of independence and confidence because of taking responsibility for rebuilding their house, completing training, and being able to provide information to others on the reconstruction. Whilst this is very positive, it was not seen as the norm and more effort is required to support other women to have space and support to engage in this way. There was a feeling that the reconstruction provides an opportunity for all Nepalis to internalise and practice the principle of equality and create spaces to facilitate sharing of power, decisions, visions, and collaboration amongst all genders that will create a more positive future for the country.

The main suggestions from interviewees on how gender impacts on reconstruction can be mitigated (where negative) or scaled up (where positive), were as follows:

- Create a platform where women can exchange experiences and success stories so that we can all learn from each other's experience in the reconstruction, including exchange visits between wards / municipalities / districts
- An enabling environment needs to be created for women to engage in the reconstruction and special assistance should be provided to vulnerable women through flexible policies
- Orientations must be provided to men and women so that it is understood that reconstruction is not just men's responsibility
- Distribution of information needs to be adjusted so that women can access and understand information provided and have access to the information that they need
- More effort needs to be made to retain experienced and capable women in organisations involved in the reconstruction as well as in key roles related to the reconstruction
- Identifying gaps together with women, men and other genders (important to have an intersectional approach) and seeking and implementing solutions together
- Valuing local knowledge and experiences and treating them with dignity
- Advocate for equal pay for women, and initiate actions to ensure that women have support to campaign for and access equal pay for equal work
- Long term strategy to sustain livelihood opportunities for women who are currently working in reconstruction



## 7.0 Case Studies

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### 7.1 Chenga Tamang, Kailey Tole, Ward No. 3, Gatlang, Rasuwa

Chenga is a single mother with four children. Her house was completely destroyed in the 2015 Gorkha earthquake and she has been living in a temporary shelter constructed with CGI and timber since then. Chenga took a loan to finance the construction of the temporary shelter that she and her family are living in and has been unable to repay it due to her low income.

Like many women in Gatlang, Chenga is illiterate and as a result she found it difficult to follow the processes involved in the GoN housing reconstruction grant process. The process was made more difficult for her because when her husband left her he did not transfer the property into her name so she had no legal ownership of her house. However, since the inspection engineers started visiting Gatlang more frequently, her confidence level has increased and, with the help of her relatives, she has been able to transfer land ownership into her name and register for the GoN housing reconstruction grant. She has since received the first tranche of the grant and has completed the foundation of her new house.

Chenga is also among the few Tamang women who were invited to take part in the 7-day Mason training program organised by NRA at district level. Since completing the training, Chenga has been unable to get any masonry work. She feels that the main reason for this is the presumption that women are physically weaker than their male counterparts and there is a preference to hire skilled masons from outside the district, mainly from the Terai region, who are known to be highly skilled in construction.



## 7.2 Kanchi Rana Magar, Gimdi Besi, Gimdi VDC, Ward No. 7, Lalitpur

Kanchi, whose husband left her for a second wife, has five children but only her 15 year old son still lives at home. She has never had opportunity to attend school and is illiterate. Her economic condition is very poor as her income from agricultural work has been affected due to her arthritis which limits the amount of work she can do.

The 2015 earthquake completely destroyed her house and since then Kanchi and her son have been living in a temporary shelter constructed from CGI and timber. She received 25,000 NPRs from the Government of Nepal (GoN) to support the construction of her temporary shelter. In addition to this, Kanchi took a loan from her relatives to cover the labour costs for the construction of the shelter and has been unable to repay this to date. She has twice modified her temporary shelter to increase the cooking and living space.

Kanchi has already received all three tranches of the GoN housing reconstruction grant (a total of 300,000 NPRs) but has only constructed the walls of her house and has not installed the roof. She says she has not completed her house because the 300,000 NPRs received from the GoN is not sufficient to fully cover the costs and at the moment she cannot afford to build the roof. The labour and materials costs are very high and she does not have enough income to fund the rest of the reconstruction.

Kanchi is worried about the toilet and access to water for her new house. She does not have sufficient funds to build her own toilet and currently there are only community toilets and taps in her village. She hopes that as a single woman, she will be able to receive further financial assistance from the GoN so she can finish her reconstruction, including a toilet, and return to living comfortably in a house she can feel safe in.



### 7.3 Lakpa Yangjen, Gatlang, Ward No. 3, Rasuwa

Lakpa is 70 years old and lives alone in her temporary shelter in Gatlang village. Her husband has died and her daughter is married and no longer lives with her but is still in the area and able to visit regularly. The 2015 earthquake caused severe damage to Lakpa's house so she has been living in her temporary shelter since then. The shelter has been built with CGI sheets and timber, and is just one room. Lakpa's main source of income is agriculture but she is not able to work much as she is elderly and therefore her economic condition is very poor.

Lakpa has signed the partnership agreement with the Government of Nepal (GoN) in her name and has received the first tranche of the GoN housing reconstruction grant (50,000 NPRs) but she has not started rebuilding her house. She feels that she cannot build her house alone and with no one to support her she now feels that she will live out the rest of her life in her temporary shelter. Her daughter feels frustrated with the lack of support for elderly people like Lakpa, and is unable to provide on her own the level of support her mother requires to reconstruct. Like many women in Gatlang, Lakpa is also illiterate and speaks only Tamang language. She doesn't know where to go or who to contact to get reconstruction support. Since she hasn't started building her house the inspection engineers do not visit her.

Lakpa feels that the biggest challenges she is facing in rebuilding after the earthquake are being elderly and the lack of support available to her.





#### 7.4 Mithu Nepali, Bidur Municipality, Ward No. 5, (formerly Srikhali VDC), Nuwakot

Mithu is from a Dalit community living on the banks of Trishuli River in Bidur, Nuwakot. Before the 2015 earthquake, she was living in her house with her two children and husband. Their main source of income was agriculture, including raising livestock. Their house was completely destroyed in the earthquake and since then they have been living in a temporary shelter constructed out of CGI and bamboo.

Mithu has completed a 50 day On the Job Masons Training and now works in construction earning 800 NPRs per day – compared to 1,000-1,500 NPRs per day which the male masons earn. This difference in pay is because some contractors still believe that women are not capable physically, or skilled enough to work as masons. Despite this discrimination, Mithu is persisting with her work as a mason and would like to break the prejudice towards women masons and encourage more women from her community to join hands and learn masonry skills.



## 8.0 Conclusion and Next Steps

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The data collected during this research, and presented above, indicates that reconstruction presents opportunities for women to take part in new types of employment, improve education and training, and increase their income. However, what has been seen is that these opportunities are not being grasped and many women are being left behind and have little or no chance to engage in the reconstruction. All stakeholders involved in the reconstruction must give this serious strategic consideration. If more than 50% of the population are not encouraged and supported to take part in the reconstruction it is unlikely that the expected results can be achieved.

The following are a proposed set of next steps to address the issues raised in this report:

- Launch efforts to ensure that women receive equal pay for equal work
- Continue to document women's experiences of reconstruction and create platform for exchange between women involved in the reconstruction
- Socio-Technical Assistance (STA) needs to be adapted and improved to meet women's information needs, including timing of information (women often cannot attend orientations during the day due to household chores), language used and avoiding written materials (women are less likely to be literate and less likely to speak Nepali), and sources of information (STA field staff, local officials, inspection engineers, etc. need support and training to be able to communicate effectively with communities and with women in those communities)
- Offer mason training opportunities for women in women led, women only, trainings which run for a longer duration with shorter days allowing women to better manage competing priorities and tasks. Mason training must be accompanied by follow up including other STA components such as door to door technical assistance to make sure that masons are supported once they start working. The 'parma' system of groups building each other's houses one by one has worked well in many areas. CFP found that many groups of women don't want mason training to work as masons but just to be able to work with other people in their area to construct their house in this way. Providing support for these groups may be a useful approach.

## 9.0 Annexes

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### Annex 1: Survey Questionnaire

The Survey questionnaire can be found in the following link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1va7zkmGj2u8nvP5l6ZsGasjKCFzPuPdo/view>

### Annex 2: District and National Level Discussion Guide

1. Full Name:

2. Work station

(a) National

(b) District

3. Current position

(a) .....

4. Can you share some of the positive experiences you have had whilst working on the reconstruction?

5. Have you had any negative experiences whilst working on the reconstruction?

6. Do you feel that gender has any impact on your work in the reconstruction, and on the reconstruction overall?

7. What do you think is the major challenge for the post-earthquake reconstruction in Nepal?

8. Do you think the reconstruction is also an opportunity for Nepalese women? How?

9. Do you have any suggestions or feedback on how gender impacts on reconstruction can be mitigated (where negative) or scaled up (where positive)?

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