

Review of School and School Library Situation in Nepal Following April 2015 Earthquakes

prepared by:

Sharada Siwakoti, President

The Nepalese Association of School Librarians (NASL)*

This is a preliminary review of the very very serious school and school library situation in Nepal following the very destructive earthquakes that occurred in late April 2015. There currently is a very very bad situation in Nepal for children, their parents, teachers, staff, school buildings, classrooms, and school libraries, following the two great earthquakes that hit the country in late April 2015 and destroyed or seriously damaged many school buildings, classrooms, and school libraries throughout the entire country, and has left children idling among the rubble, distraught parents, unemployed teachers and staff, and puzzled school administrators and higher authorities.

The Nepalese Association of School Librarians (NASL) respectfully requests potential international helpers to consider this appeal and proposal carefully with a view to how they may be able to support the children who were victims of these massive earthquakes, the rebuilding of school buildings, the resupply of educational materials, and other kinds of related assistance.

1. Background - The Massive Nepal April 2015 Earthquakes

On April 25, 2015 a 7.8 magnitude massive earthquake struck Nepal at 11:56 local time causing widespread destruction of property and loss of life. The epicenter was located 81 km. northwest of the Nepal capital Kathmandu at Barpak in Gorkha District at a depth of 10 km. The earthquake also caused a number of landslides, which may well continue as the rainy monsoon season begins. Most of these areas are remote, isolated, mountainous, and very difficult to access because the roads are treacherous, and turn to mud with wet weather.

Strong aftershocks, including a second, 6.7 magnitude quake, hit the country on 26 April and a third, 6.8 magnitude quake hit on 12 May 2015 and continued to cause great damage and widespread panic. Rain and thunder storms followed the quakes, potentially leading to more landslides.

Over 8 million people were affected by these quakes and aftershocks in 41 of Nepal's 75 districts, based on the latest earthquake intensity mapping. Over 2 million people live in the 11 most critically hit districts. The Central and Western Regions, including the Kathmandu Valley districts, are the worst affected. The full impact of the earthquake in the mountainous and hilly areas is still being determined because the region is so inaccessible.

According to estimates relying on data from the 2011 census and other government figures, around 50 per cent of the total population of earthquake-affected districts has been affected. The school buildings and the children are in great difficulty because they are themselves often been left homeless, many have lost their parents or caregivers, and they cannot go to school because

their school buildings and classrooms were either totally destroyed or severely damaged, and require replacement or repair. Not to mention loss of educational materials like books and writing and drawing materials.

The earthquake caused 8,465 deaths and injured over 14,355 people, according to government figures as of 15 May. Among them 157 teachers and more than 1500 students also have been casualties. These figures are expected to increase as more remote areas are finally reached. Already, search and rescue teams have saved at least 16 people from the rubble. Fifty three teams from 23 countries have brought people to safety and provided first aid. We thank them from the bottom of our hearts for their efforts.

Key educational and other basic structures - including schools, health facilities, bridges, access roads, temples and heritage sites and telecommunications systems - have been damaged or destroyed. Over 3,000 schools are located in the 11 most severely affected districts.

The situation for women and girls is particularly very bleak. Girls are suffering very badly during their menstruation. Most of them have very poor knowledge about how to be safe given this natural disaster.

However, access to people in need remains a challenge and airlifts are required to deliver aid to rural areas. Efforts are underway to overcome the bottlenecks in the delivery and distribution of supplies.

This proposal appeal calls for USD\$1 million to respond to the most urgent life-saving and protection needs for helping children by providing at least temporary educational facilities of some kind (e.g. tents as classrooms, repairing or rebuilding schools and school libraries, temporarily if need be, for the next six months to a year. Our aggregate estimate covers the costs to: establish a mobile library filled with toys, interesting books and publications, and related resources for the children, teachers, and their parents living in the isolated and remote communities most severely impacted by the earthquakes. The targets presented in this document are based on preliminary assessments and calculations as to what can be produced, delivered and made operational in six months to one year.

2. Objectives of this proposal

1. To build and equip at least one, but hopefully more than one mobile school library and provide "mobile counseling" to students, teachers and parents by providing each mobile library with a counselor;
2. To begin to reestablish libraries in some of the schools which have been the most severely impacted, keeping in mind the government of Nepal's policy for "One School One Library"; and

3. Organizing and implementing appropriate programs, services and events, including, for example, "Living Value Educational Programme" (LVEP), and language literacy skills.

3. Overview of Priority Target Areas

Here is a brief, largely anecdotal review of the most severely affected different districts, with first hand input provided from various NASL members and education authorities based in these districts:

A. Chitwan District

The government announced plans to reopen schools in this district by May 15, but because of so much serious damage to school buildings, and loss of educational materials, the prospects of meeting this target date are very very dim. Most of the school buildings in the Chitwan district have been badly damaged. As a result, the District Education Office (DEO) said, studies of thousands of students have been adversely affected.

Uttam Bhatta, a teacher in the Rashtriya Primary School, said they have been running the daily classes in two rooms that are relatively safer than the other rooms.. The school building has developed many cracks and could give way completely at anytime.

Rupa Pandey, the school's headmaster, said the school cannot go on operating in its current situation. "It would be a lot easier for both the teachers and the students if the authorities only built temporary bamboo classrooms," Bhatta said.

District Education Officer Damodar Acharya said that around 60 percent of the school buildings in Chitwan have been badly damaged.

B. Makawanpur District.

In Makwanpur, the earthquake destroyed 11 school buildings and caused damage in as many as 162 schools. There are a total of 520 government schools in the district.

C. Nawalparasi District.

Similarly, 97 percent schools in Nawalparasi have been damaged. According to District Education Officer KhadakBahadur Kamal, seven schools have collapsed as a result of the earthquake.

Bijay Development Resource Centre has pledged 30 tents to those schools whose buildings were destroyed in the quake.

Chief District Officer HariMainali said that he has already requested that the authorities approve a budget to reconstruct the school buildings.

D. Dolakha District.

In the Dolakha district, nearly 90 percent of the schools have been damaged by the quakes, according to the initial report of the District Education Office.

District Education Officer Lok Bahadur Lopchan said that 75 out of 82 higher secondary and regular secondary schools, 70 out of 76 lower secondary schools and 200 out of 218 primary schools have been damaged or destroyed by the earthquake. Lopchan said that they need around 3,000 tents to resume classes in the quake-hit schools.

E. Sindhupalchowk District.

This is perhaps the most severely affected district. Ninety percent of school buildings have been destroyed in Sindhupalchowk district in the deadly earthquake that struck the nation on April 25.

Although the government initially decided to reopen all the schools in the earthquake affected districts from May 17, the fate of around 88,000 students remains uncertain as so many school buildings have been completely destroyed.

As per the preliminary report of the District Education Office (DEO) Sindhupalchowk, 90 per cent of the community school buildings collapsed in the quake." "The report includes the damage of school buildings as of Tuesday, and it may increase," said Assistant District Education Officer Sewant Raj Koirala.

According to DEO Sindhupalchowk, 383 of total 557 school buildings have been completely destroyed in the earthquake. There were altogether 4,113 classrooms in these school buildings.

Likewise, most parts of 174 school buildings have been damaged. Though some classrooms can be repaired in those schools, 1,566 rooms have turned into rubble.

The DEO informed that the office has already collected the details reports of the damage in 208 schools. The remaining damage will also be figured out soon by deploying the DEO's mechanism, said Assistant DEO Koirala.

Most of those, among the damaged schools, are in the western parts of Melamchi area.

A total of 848 primary and secondary schools were in the operation in Sindhupalchowk. There were a total of 87,947 students enrolled in these schools.

Likewise, 2,124 teachers were working in these schools. However, the DEO does not have any record of teachers appointed through private resources.

16 school teachers die

"As per the reports received as of Tuesday, a total of 16 school teachers have died in the earthquake" "Details of the deceased teachers have yet to arrive, while search for the missing is still under way," Assistant DEO Koirala said. Most of the deceased teachers were female, he further informed us.

Meanwhile, the School Management Committee (SMC) of Ratna Ganga higher secondary school located in the district headquarters Chautara decided to reopen from May 17. It took such a decision even as the school's buildings have been completely destroyed in the earthquake.

The situation of the schools in Sindhupalchok is very poor. In Sindhupalchok, almost all school buildings in the northern region, including Golche, Gumba, Pangtang, Hagam, Baruwa, Baskharka, Bhotang, Gunsu, Helambu have been damaged or destroyed.

According to the preliminary assessment, 2,000 out of 2,347 classrooms in the district have been destroyed while the others have been deemed unsafe.

F. Gorkha District.

It is the earthquake's epicenter district. Nearly 400 out of 495 schools in the district have lost their buildings and 3,052 out of 4,600 classrooms have been destroyed.

Apart from human casualties, the devastating earthquake of April 25 has caused massive damages to most of the buildings of schools, police posts and health posts in the Gorkha district. With the damages to the buildings, service seekers are finding it difficult to obtain essential services.

SharanBayalkoti of Mankamana-4 is a 10th grader at Manakamana Higher Secondary School (HSS). One of the brightest students in his class, he too, like many, lost his home and belongings to the devastating earthquake. However, the collapse of most of the school buildings worries him the most. "I'm worried that school might take a long time to resume classes," he said.

School teacher JanakAdhikari, said, "The school building is badly damaged. We cannot say when we might be able to resume classes."

The building of DhubraJyoti Higher Secondary School of Asrang village was also badly damaged in the earthquake. With more than 200 students, the school says it cannot resume classes until a new school building is constructed.

All government and private schools remain closed in the district following the earthquake. Many schools are hesitant to reopen as their buildings have multiple cracks. Locals fear these buildings may collapse if there is another strong aftershock. Students spend their days idling amid the debris of houses.

According to the District Education Officer Hari Aryal, around 3,000 classrooms of 695 schools have been completely destroyed in the quake. School operators do not want to take chances. Aryal informed 57 teachers and four students were killed in the quake.

Similarly, the quake damaged 31 police posts out of 41 in Barpak, injuring five personnel. Ten of the posts are partially damaged, while 15 others have been completely destroyed, according to Police Inspector Deepak Shrestha. "After the destruction of many police posts, we have been staying under tarpaulins," he said.

Sub-inspector Homnath Adhikari said, "Although we are here to provide service to others, we are in no better condition."

Ganga Bahadur Pariyar of Saurpani-4 has not received treatment through he has been sick for the last two weeks. As health posts of his village has collapsed, the village has neither health workers nor medicines, even for common diseases like cough, cold and fever. Almost 80 percent health facilities have been rendered dysfunctional.

Thirty-one health centers in the district have been completely destroyed, 42 are badly damaged and only eight are currently operating, according to Health Assistant Nawaraj Khadka of district health office.

The government is preparing to reopen schools across the country from Friday (May 19) and has said that the classes would be informal until the students are able to come prepared for full-fledged studies.

The schools are going to be opened for the first time after the devastating quake that hit country on April 25.

Speaking at a press conference on Monday, the Ministry of Education (MoE) spokesperson Hari Lamsal said that the children would be given a favorable environment to express their experiences about the earthquake at the schools.

"The teachers will have to listen to the students and first address their curiosity about the earthquake, so the initial classes will be informal in nature," he added. The reopening of the schools is the government's first step toward sending the earthquake victim children back to schools.

While over 5,000 schools and around 15,000 classrooms in various districts have been destroyed in the earthquake, most of the classes would be conducted under tents. To make temporary arrangements for running the classes and education material, the Department of Education has already started providing between Rs 75,000 and Rs 300,000 per school.

G. Dhading District.

The teaching and learning activities in the schools of Dhading, which were halted following the April 25 quake, are to resume soon and that is under tents on the grounds of the schools.

Ganesh Prasad Dhakal, District Education Officer (DEO), Dhading said that although 2,746 classrooms of 587 schools were in poor condition due to the damage, the District Education Office (DEO) Dhading was going to resume classes soon in view of continuation of the academic activities of the new academic session.

DEO Dhakal further informed that of total 5,373 classrooms in the 587 schools in the district, 2,107 were ravaged by the 7.8-magnitude earthquake whereas 729 classrooms were "tilted" while 1,150 classrooms sustained partial damages.

He shared that the DEO, Dhading decided to run classes outdoor on the ground under a tent, tarpaulin sheet and other materials.

Similarly, some 227 drinking water projects that were in operation in the schools of Dhading were also destroyed by the quake. It has also caused damages to some 272 toilets of the schools in the locality, according to the DEO Dhakal.

Six teachers teaching in different schools in Dhading have lost their life due to this disaster, Dhakal. RSS informed us.

H. Khotang, Morang and Terhathum Districts.

The quake has damaged over 300 schools in these 3 districts. As the date set by the government to resume schools across the country draws closer, teachers and parents feel that many schools with damaged buildings are not prepared to conduct classes.

The government had originally instructed education institutions to begin classes from May 17.

In Khotang alone, a total of 122 school buildings were damaged in the earthquake, as per District Education Office (DEO), Khotang.

According to district education officer, Ganesh Prasad Bhattarai, 255 classrooms of 122 schools have been damaged. "Most of the damaged school buildings are situated in remote parts of the district," he said.

"At the schools that were damaged by the earthquake, we'll create temporary learning spaces to resume classes," he added.

Likewise, Morang DEO has informed that 98 schools have been affected by the earthquake in the district. Most schools in Morang have suffered damages to their boundary as well building walls.

Two teams have been deployed to collect data on damaged schools in the district, according to assistant district education officer, Rajendra Budhathoki.

As per their report, 10 school buildings have developed cracks in their walls and the teachers of those schools have been warned not to conduct classes inside the buildings.

"Such schools are full of risks and we've asked them not to let children into the classrooms," he said. "We have yet to prepare a complete and detailed report on the damages."

Similarly, over 100 schools have been damaged in Terhathum due to the earthquake. "However, the number may go up by the time we complete our report in a few days," District Education Officer, Dirgha Dhwoj Chapagain.

J. Kathmandu a District.

In Kathmandu most of the older, historically significant schools have been destroyed and completely damaged. The Durbar High School, the first established school of Nepal is collapsed and Tindhara Pathsala, the oldest school of Kathmandu was also destroyed due to the massive earthquake.

Most affected school areas in this Kathmandu district:

- KMC: Hanumandhoka, Naya Buspark, Swoyambhu, Ason, Kalanki, Sunar Gaun
- Kageshwori Manahara: Alapot, Gagalphedi, Bhadrabas and Danchhi
- Tokha: Gangabu, Jhor Mahankal, both Tokhas
- Budhanilakantha: Chunnikhel, Kapan, Khadwa, Budhanilakantha
- Tarkeshwor, Dharmasthali, Dagoldhunga, Jeetpur Fedi, Sangla, Kavresthali
- Nagarjun: Bhimdhunga, Ramkot, Sitapaila, Ichangu, Syuchatar (upper part)
- Kirtipur: Panga, Taukhel, Champa, Gutha, Wards 13, 14, 15 and 19
- Gokarneshwor: Tarebhir, Sundarijal, Baluwa, Nayapati, Gokarneshwor
- Shankharapur: Nanglebhare, Sankhubazar, Lapsi Phedi, Indrayani
- Chandragiri: Satungal, Matatirtha, Sano Masine, Thulo Masine, Thankot, Balambu
- Dakshinkali: Bosan Kshetra, Chalnakhel, Dakshinkali (lower part), Chhaimale

4. Report of UNICEF

Nepal Earthquake: Education for nearly 1 million children in jeopardy - UNICEF

KATHMANDU, Nepal, 7 May 2015 – At least 950,000 children in Nepal will not be able to return to school, unless urgent action is taken to provide temporary learning spaces and repair damaged school buildings following the 25 April earthquake – according to UNICEF. Almost 24,000 classrooms were damaged or destroyed in the 7.8 magnitude quake that hit the country 12 days ago, with many suffering further damage in subsequent aftershocks.

The scale of the education crisis is expected to grow over the coming days and weeks as additional information flows in from remote areas. Schools are due to reopen on 15 May.

“Almost one million children who were enrolled in school before the earthquake could now find they have no school building to return to,” said Tomoo Hozumi, UNICEF’s Representative in Nepal.

“Children affected by the earthquake need urgent life-saving assistance like clean water and shelter, but schools in emergencies – even in a temporary setup - play a vital role too. They minimise disruption to children’s education, protect them from exploitation and abuse, and provide them with messages to keep them safe and healthy. Going to school also allows children to regain a vital sense of routine that can help them come to terms with their experiences.”

In the severely-affected districts of Gorkha, Sindhupalchok and Nuwakot, it is estimated that more than 90 per cent of schools have been destroyed, while around 80 per cent of school buildings have collapsed in Dhading. In some areas, including Kathmandu and Bhaktapur, approximately nine in ten surviving school buildings have been used as emergency shelters.

UNICEF is concerned that great strides made over the last 25 years in increasing primary school enrolment in Nepal – from 64 per cent in 1990 to more than 95 per cent today – could suffer a serious setback in the aftermath of the earthquake.

Nepal’s high dropout rate was already a major concern. Around 1.2 million Nepali children between the ages of five and 16 have either never attended school or have dropped out. UNICEF’s experience shows that children who are out of school for extended periods, including during emergencies, become less and less likely to ever return to the classroom.

“There is a desperate need to set up alternative learning spaces, assess and repair buildings, and mount a public awareness campaign encouraging families to send their children back to school and preschool,” said Hozumi.

“Prolonged interruption to education can be devastating for children’s development and future prospects.”

UNICEF and partners are doing everything they can to get children back to education as soon as possible – including working to set up child friendly spaces and temporary learning spaces in 14 districts affected by the earthquake. Work to establish a system to assess the structure and safety of school buildings that are still standing is also underway, while UNICEF is supporting the government to prepare national guidelines on the use of schools as shelter during emergencies.

UNICEF has launched a US\$50 million appeal to support its humanitarian response to the earthquake in Nepal over the next three months, as part of a wider inter-agency flash appeal.

Source: http://www.unicef.org/media/media_81802.html

5. NASL Guidelines, Principles and Policies

A. Here are the general guidelines, principles and policies which NASL will follow in implementing its role if this proposal is adopted, funding found, and actions can begin.

NASL will establish "*one school one library*" to provide early childhood development (ECD) and access to protective learning spaces, including value based education, psychosocial support and life-saving messages, for school-aged children (3-18 years of age) in the schools of 13 districts at first phase like Chitwan, Makwanpur, Dolakha, Sindhupalchok and Gorkha, Khtang, Morang, Terathum, Kavre, Ramechhap and Kathmandu, Lalitpur Bhaktapur.

Learning materials, including ECD kits, ‘NASL in a box’ and recreation kits will be provided. Teachers will also be oriented on psychosocial support and life-saving messages. More pads will be provided to the girls during menstruation.

B. NASL Priority Actions

- 1: Provide temporary early childhood and learning spaces for the most affected children aged three to 18 years in identified districts to ensure children are in a safe place, can access gender-sensitive health facilities and protection services
- 2: Provide essential education in emergency supplies to support teaching and learning activities and recreation opportunities to help children continue their education and ensure they are

provided with a sense of normalcy and recover from the stress and disruption caused by the earthquake.

3: Orient teachers and facilitators on psychosocial support and life-saving messages relating to disaster risk reduction, protection, sanitation and hygiene promotion, nutrition and health.

C. Strategies to help this proposal succeed.

1. First of all, the mobile library(s) will be spquickly launched in each and every earthquake affected district.
2. Establish Libraries for protective emergency education of children in the 12 most severely impacted areas such as the VDC of Nuwakot and Makawanpur district.
3. Establish libraries with provision of protective emergency education for earthquake affected children in Sindhupalchok, Kavre, Kathmandu, and Rasuwa District.
4. Distribute more new pictorial story books in most of the affected 20 districts.
5. Distribute the pads to the school girls.
6. Give effective counseling to regain the child's motivation to love school and education, and to help them to understand that the earthquake was an impersonal natural disaster, and not a punishment directed to Nepalis because they are "bad people."
7. Provide Living Value Educational Programme (LVEP) to change person to personality and to mobilize the community through the students of most affected districts.
8. Language is most powerful to share the experience. Most of the children from the remote areas are very weak in English. So NASL will help them to develop English language classes in each level from grade KG to 12 with coordinating Nepal English Language Teachers Associations (NELTA).

*Sharada Siwakoti

President

Nepal School Librarians Association (NASL)

Kathmandu, Nepal

Contact: +977-1 4437457, 9818502203 (Cell)