Independent Evaluation of Nepal Earthquake Emergency Response

2015

Abbreviations used

CCA Climate Change Adaptation
CHS Core Humanitarian Standard
CO Country Office
DEC Disasters Emergency Committee
DUDBC Department of Urban Development and Building Construction
DRR Disaster Risk Reduction
DWS Drinking Water System
FGD Focus Group Discussion
GBP Sterling Pound
HH Household
IR Inception Report
IRW Islamic Relief Worldwide
KII Key Informant Interview
LDRMP Local Disaster Risk Management Plan
LWF Lutheran World Federation
NPR Nepalese Rupees (GBP1=NPR 130)
NRA National Reconstruction Authority
PDNA Post-Disaster Needs Assessment
PDRF Post-Disaster Recovery Framework
ToR Terms of Reference
VDC Village Development Committee
$ US Dollar
£ British Pound

Glossary of terms

Dalit Oppressed; people belonging to the lowest caste hierarchy in India/Nepal
Ropani A unit of measurement of land in mountains of Nepal. 1 ropani = 5476 square feet, or 8 ropani = 1 acre
The project IRW-DEC recovery programme (phase 2b) being implemented by IRW/Batas/LWF
Report – Evaluation of Islamic Relief Worldwide Nepal Earthquake Response

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The devastating earthquakes of April-May 2015 in Nepal triggered a massive humanitarian response under the leadership of the Government of Nepal (GoN). The Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW) which did not have a presence in the country before the earthquake mobilised fast and launched relief operations within 24 hours of the disaster, with funding from its partners and the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC, UK). After the relief phase (first six months), IRW launched an 18-month recovery and reconstruction programme with funding from the DEC in one district, namely Rasuwa. The response during this phase focused on three outcomes, namely:

1. Increased access to disaster resilient permanent housing;
2. Increased access of affected households to safe water and proper sanitation;
3. Improved access to livelihoods opportunities for vulnerable women.

As the project is coming to an end in April 2017, IRW commissioned this independent evaluation to assess overall performance of the project with reference to the outcomes and outputs, as well as draw lessons for future programme. The evaluation was undertaken by one consultant using a mixed-method approach involving: (i) key informant interviews, (ii) site visits and observations and (iii) focus group discussions with communities and local government stakeholders. The evaluation used the internationally accepted standard Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) evaluation criteria for evaluating humanitarian action, and examined the quality of interventions, as well as aspects of accountability as per Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS).

Key findings

Access to shelter
Shelter remains the single biggest need of earthquake-affected communities. Notwithstanding delays in approval of IRW’s shelter programme by the Government of Nepal (GoN), the former was able to provide a timely response in partnership with the Lutheran World Federation programme in Nepal and a local NGO, Batas, both of which had a strong footprint on the ground. Despite the delayed start, the project is nearing completion of 151 permanent earthquake-resilient houses to highly vulnerable households in one remote village development committee (VDC) of Rasuwa district, and is credited by the GoN for having been one of the first to have completed shelter construction in the context of an overall dismal performance in all districts by the entire humanitarian system, including the GoN. Key factors that have enabled the project to ensure rapid construction have been the close monitoring and supervision provided by Batas and LWF, as well as material provision.

While undertaking house construction, the project trained a number of masons in two VDCs in earthquake-resilient construction techniques with the idea that this will contribute to long-term improvement in construction standards in the area.

Access to water and sanitation
Next to the housing sector, the most-affected sector relevant for the poor and vulnerable communities was the destruction of water supply and sanitation facilities. Due to limited resources, IRW had very limited intervention on this issue, and mostly focused on providing toilets for the houses being constructed. Apart from this, the project rehabilitated two small drinking water and two irrigation schemes in one VDC. Hygiene practices
regarding the use of stored water for drinking and washing purposes are far from satisfactory in the area. This is an area which the project has so far overlooked, having been preoccupied with delivering the hardware particularly related to house construction.

**Access to livelihoods**

The project targeted home-based income generating activities such as: (i) goat and chicken rearing, and (ii) village shops for women, particularly socially vulnerable groups like single women/women-headed households, widows, the elderly and those who are chronically poor. Although having 2 goats by itself does not make a substantial contribution to the survival needs of a family, these assets gave women some security in case of an emergency. For those receiving chicken, despite high mortality rates (25-30 per cent), beneficiaries were making a profit of about NPR 8,000 (£62) in a year. Petty business/village shops supported (20 highly vulnerable women beneficiaries) appear to be doing better in generating profits and contributing to family income. The project also provided occupational tools to local tradesmen (carpenters, electricians, unskilled masons). Beneficiaries selected were from those who had lost their houses and belonged to indigenous communities.

It needs to be noted that given the difficult terrain and remoteness of the area, its carrying capacity for developing businesses, as well as diversification of what is currently a subsistence farming and remittance based economy, is very limited. To this extent, NGO interventions at best have limited scope, and IRW has rightly focused on targeted interventions on a very limited scale. Most families have one or a few members who migrate to Kathmandu or other counties, and for this, they borrow at high interest from local money lenders. They also lose money when remitting funds back to their families as most use informal non-banking institutions that charge exorbitant rates. This is an area which, with systematic intervention, could save rural communities substantial amounts of money. The evaluator has not been able to find any study that estimates the amount of interest people pay to borrow or the leakage in the remittance system.

**Core humanitarian standards (CHS)**

The following Table summarises the evaluation's findings on CHS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Progress/Achievements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Humanitarian response is appropriate and relevant</td>
<td>Refer to discussion under OECD/DAC criteria in section 4 of the report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Humanitarian response is effective and timely</td>
<td>As above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Humanitarian responses strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects</td>
<td>Training of local masons, communities learning earthquake-resilient construction techniques, formation of user committees for irrigation and drinking water schemes are all examples of work that is contributing to building people’s capacity. Involvement of district officials and local communities in shelter construction ensured people’s cooperation and participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5. Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback</td>
<td>Good community feedback process and complaints mechanism established, with clear locus of responsibility and response mechanism. Information boards in local language clearly stating individual and community entitlements /budget act as ‘customer’ charter which people have access to.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary
   Necessary coordination with governments at the central and district levels prioritised. Scope for improving coordination and communication with other agencies exist

7. Humanitarian actors continually learn and improve.
   The project has demonstrated flexibility in its decisions and strategy, and utilised real-time learning to adapt its response.

8. Staff are supported to do their job effectively, and are treated fairly and equitably.
   Scant evaluable data for this evaluation as IRW did not have many in-country staff and relied of short-term staff.

9. Resources are managed and used responsibly for their intended purposes
   Refer to ‘efficiency’ under OECD/DAC criteria in section 4

Conclusions

Relevance and appropriateness
The project did well in ensuring that it identified vulnerable communities and their needs, including identifying women-headed households for various activities. For shelters, the implementation modality (material assistance, instead of all cash) the project took was a highly appropriate approach in the remote rural areas where transportation of material is costly. Although the project did very little on water and sanitation, considering the small budget it had, this was perhaps appropriate as bulk of the resources (over 50 percent) had to go on house construction.

Coverage
Overall, the project’s performance on coverage has been optimal and in accordance with the resources that were available. Given its small budget, the project focused on addressing the critical needs in one ward of one VDC for housing, and covered all houses that needed to be rebuilt in the selected ward and limited number of wards in 2 VDCs for livelihoods and WASH interventions.

Coherence and connectedness
The project has taken into account various government policies and international norms in planning and delivering its response, including IRW’s own guidance. IRW’s reconstruction work has been premised on the build-back-better principle so as to ensure that people build houses that are earthquake resilient. The project has emphasised on building local capacity through training of masons. The shelter (16.5 square metre covered area) provided by the project did meet the minimum requirements, though the WASH component merited better attention than it received. Migration and reliance on remittances are common livelihoods strategies in the area, and both are subject to exploitative rent extraction by middlemen; however, neither the government nor the humanitarian system currently addresses this issue.

Effectiveness
Despite delays in implementation of some of the activities (house and toilet construction), it is expected that all planned work will be completed by mid-April. Most notable outcomes are being realised in the provision of shelter, upgrading of skills of masons, access to drinking water and ensuring a source of income for at least 19 highly vulnerable women. Sanitation and hygiene outcomes have not been on par with Sphere standards as the project may have under-invested in this area. The project has done well on establishing a community feedback mechanism and targeting the vulnerable, particularly women-headed households, single women and

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the elderly. The project has been weak on prioritising sanitation needs of women in the reconstruction phase, and this is something that needs to be addressed in the remaining weeks of the project duration.

The house construction work in particular is rated highly by all external stakeholders including beneficiaries. Given the immense needs which remain unmet, and the fact that not many humanitarian organisations are prioritising house construction for one reason or another, the project needs to document lessons from shelter construction and, working with the Red Cross (which has also been fairly successful in reconstruction work) undertake advocacy with the GoN, NGOs and donors. Creative ways and options to encourage people to build safer and earthquake-resilient houses need to be thought of, including conditional cash subsidies to households, backed by good monitoring, to encourage people to use earthquake-resilient technology (like that used by the project) for construction of foundations and walls. Such open offer of subsidies will increase the range of choices people have and also help bypass the GoN’s one-size-fits-all approach which appears to be failing. For the organisations, it will also reduce the burden of delivering a completed house - from foundations to roof - though they will still need to provide technical support and quality-monitoring so that design specifications are adhered to.

**Efficiency**

Despite initial delays in commencing house construction – which was the main component of the project – the project will be able to complete the work in record time. This has been possible due to close supervision and monitoring by the project team on the ground. The phase 2(a) project budget shows an allocation of 26.1 percent (See Table 3) for all personnel and support cost for the implementation of the project. Given the close management and supervision the project has had to provide, the project has been highly cost-efficient. Despite not having an established presence or any prior experience in the country, IRW was able to take on the challenging task of house construction largely due to the partnership with Batas and LWF Nepal. The partnership has been built on transparent and open relations based on trust and mutual respect, through mechanisms such as: (i) a steering committee, (ii) joint monitoring, (iii) joint planning and budgeting, and (iv) joint learning processes. Regular monitoring by IRW and LWF country offices, as well as quarterly progress reports, ensured that the project implementation was on track.

**Impact**

The most significant impact of the project is likely to be on ensuring safer houses as well as in upgraded skills of local masons who are now building earthquake-resilient houses for others. Other areas where people are feeling some impact are: (i) women having to spend less time fetching drinking water, (ii) at least 19 women deriving their main livelihood from petty businesses, and (iii) 15-20 women deriving a small supplementary income from poultry support provided by the project. The project’s impact in areas like sanitation and hygiene has so far been minimal.

**Sustainability**

The project has set up user groups who have been trained in maintenance of drinking water/irrigation systems, and owners are taking full responsibility for the housing and petty businesses. In the next phase, the project intends to focus – should it receive funding – on evidence-based advocacy to scale up reconstruction work building on lessons from the current phase and promoting disaster preparedness at community level.

**Recommendations and lessons**

**R1**

The project needs to speed up toilet construction for individual houses to ensure that each household has a toilet when houses are handed over to owners.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R2</th>
<th>Sanitation and hygiene education components of WASH need attention in future.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R3</td>
<td>The project needs to document lessons from shelter construction and, working with the Red Cross, undertake advocacy with the GoN, NGOs and donors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4</td>
<td>Going into the future, shelter will need to be prioritised by agencies, despite the challenges in implementation. Creative ways and options to encourage people to build safer and earthquake-resilient houses through conditional cash subsidies and incentives, backed by good monitoring, will be needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R5</td>
<td>Water and sanitation will need stronger focus in the next phase, should IRW be able to mobilise resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R6</td>
<td>Conduct systemic research on mechanisms for borrowing by aspiring migrants and leakages in the remittance system to estimate household economy loss, and design appropriate response which may involve advocacy, development of inclusive financial /microenterprise system and awareness creation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 1

Introduction, Purpose and Methodology of the Evaluation

1.1 Introduction

1. The devastating earthquakes of magnitude 7.8 and 7.3 that struck Nepal in April and May of 2015 were the biggest disasters of any kind Nepal had experienced since the earthquake of 1934. The two earthquakes over a period of less than three weeks killed 8,891 people and injured 22,302, besides completely destroying 498,852 private houses and 2,656 government buildings, and partially damaging another 256,697 private houses and 3,622 government buildings. Additionally, roads, bridges, water supplies, schools, hospitals in the main cities and in rural areas across more than two-third of Nepal’s 75 districts suffered severe damages.

2. The humanitarian consequences from the earthquake triggered a large-scale international humanitarian response under the leadership of the Government of Nepal (GoN). The international humanitarian cluster system was formally activated immediately after the first earthquake by the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) of the United Nations. The Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW) started its earthquake response operations in Nepal within 24 hours of the disaster by deploying its Disaster Response Team (DRT). An amount of £2.7 million was received/committed by IRW partners and Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC, UK) for the overall earthquake response. Responding in four districts (Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Sindupalchok and Kathmandu), IRW partnered with two local implementing agencies: Ram Prasad Seti Maya Batas Foundation (Batas) and Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Nepal.

3. Following the relief phase (first six months), IRW launched a recovery and reconstruction programme with funding from the DEC in one district, namely Rasuwa. The funding for recovery came under DEC’s phase 2(a) funding which has a duration of eighteen months that ends in April 2017. As per agreement with the DEC, IRW is required to conduct an evaluation of this phase of its response before applying for an extended phase (2b) for another one year.

1.2 Purpose, scope and objectives of the evaluation

1.2.1 Purpose and scope

4. The purpose of this evaluation was to assess overall performance of the project with reference to the outcomes and outputs as well as draw lessons for future programme. While assessing performance of the programme using the internationally accepted standard OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, the

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3 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
4 Relevance/appropriateness; Connectedness; Coherence; Coverage; Efficiency; Effectiveness and Impact
evaluation also examined quality of interventions and aspects of accountability as per Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) as presented in Box 1 below.

**BOX 1: CHS – The Quality Criteria in Humanitarian Action**
- Humanitarian response is appropriate and relevant
- Humanitarian response is effective and timely.
- Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects.
- Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation, and feedback.
- Complaints are welcomed and addressed.
- Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary.
- Humanitarian actors continually learn and improve.
- Staff are supported to do their job effectively, and are treated fairly and equitably.
- Resources are managed and used responsibly for their intended purposes.

5. The scope of the evaluation covered various activities undertaken since November 2015 funded through DEC phase 2(a) allocations.

1.2.2 **Objective of the evaluation**

6. The evaluation examined results, achievements and challenges faced in the course of implementation, with emphasis on learning and accountability. Specifically, the evaluation had the following sub-objectives/deliverables:

- Review and assess the extent to which planned outputs and related outcomes have been achieved or are likely to be achieved by the end of current project, using the *criteria*: relevance and appropriateness, coverage, coherence and connectedness, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability
- Comment on the *primary and secondary effects* of the interventions, alongside any direct or indirect contributions to any lasting change
- To identify opportunities and challenges in relation to design, implementation and management of the project and suggest any *course correction* that may be necessary
- Analyse the extent of engagement and collaboration of partners and stakeholders in the project, and assess the *strategic partnerships and linkages* created
- Examine the strategic *value addition and distinctive contribution* of IRW in realising the outputs and outcomes
- Assess the *key innovations*, if any, in the project that improved or worsened delivery of project goals, outcomes, outputs, and deliverables, and how the learning was used in improving project performance
- Identify *lessons and good practices* from the project, with potential for replication or inclusion in similar programmes.
1.3 Organisation of the evaluation

7. The evaluation was commissioned by the Asia desk of IRW which oversees the Nepal response from its headquarters and managed by the Senior Impact Evaluation Officer. An international consultant was hired to carry out the evaluation, field visit for which took place from February 25 to March 9, 2017. The IRW office and LWF team in Nepal provided support in arranging meetings and interviews, field visits and ensured that the evaluator had access to necessary documents.

8. An inception report (IR) was produced in advance of the field visit and finalised prior to departure for Nepal in consultation with the IRW evaluation manager. Besides key informant interviews in Kathmandu, for site observations and discussions with communities and local government stakeholders, the evaluator travelled to Rasuwa district which is about eight hours drive from Kathmandu.

9. The full schedule of the evaluation is attached as Annex 3.

1.4 Methodology

10. The methodology followed by the evaluation is described in detail in the IR (Annex 2) which presents an evaluation matrix outlining evaluation questions and sub-questions against each evaluation criteria, as well as methods of data gathering and analysis. As is customary with mixed-method evaluations, this evaluation ensured that opinions, views and perspectives offered by each interviewee or key informant were tested against information obtained from other interviewees and documents. Triangulation with multiple sources of data comprising field observations, key informant interviews (KIIs) and desk reviews was crucial for developing the evidence-base for the evaluation. During the inception phase, the evaluator undertook desk-based research, analysis of secondary data and a preliminary stakeholder mapping exercise. Documents such as project proposal, project progress reports, annual reports and general contextual and policy documents on the earthquake response were studied via internet searches. The mapping of key stakeholders in the IR formed an initial list for key informant interviews which was refined and added to as the data gathering progressed.

11. A mixed-method approach was followed as the evaluation questions were more amenable to qualitative analysis supplemented by quantitative data using multiple sources. For data gathering and analysis, the evaluation followed a contribution approach, instead of an attribution approach, whereby attempt was made to identify the contribution made by an intervention under the project and the process that made this possible. This was appropriate as the evaluation did not envisage any randomised control trial based methodology which would not have been relevant for this project which is still under implementation.

12. As outlined in the IR, the key questions examined in the evaluation were as follows (Box 2):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOX 2: Key Questions Examined by the Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RELEVANCE AND APPROPRIATENESS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has IRW been able to design the response within the context of humanitarian needs and overall earthquake response in the country? Have there been changes to the project context and needs of beneficiaries? Were implementation approaches, resources, inputs and scale of programming relevant to achieve the intended outputs and outcome? Has the assistance provided by IRW met needs, including protection needs, of the affected communities, and were these appropriate in the local context? Is there a clear rationale in the programme logic in terms of linkage between activities, outputs and outcome? Have interventions made by IRW responded to the needs and priorities identified by target groups and local authorities?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COVERAGE
How was the assistance allocated geographically, and has it been in proportion to the needs? How were beneficiaries selected – what criteria of vulnerability assessment used? Which group has benefitted most/least from the intervention? Has the response reached target groups? Has the response reached target groups? Have the interventions affected these groups and men/women/boys/girls/specific groups differently?

COHERENCE AND CONNECTEDNESS
Was IRW's response coherent with relevant IRW policies, international principles and standards? To what extent have interventions been coordinated with national/local government and international humanitarian system? Are there internal coordination/communication challenges that affected the project? How have these been addressed? Were the interventions carried out taking into account longer-term and interconnected problems, and capacity of communities/local authorities?

EFFECTIVENESS
To what extent the planned outcome has been or is likely to be achieved by end of the project? What were the major factors influencing achievement or non-achievement of project objectives? What were the unintended results? To what extent were relevant international standards for humanitarian response met (SPHERE, CHS standard)? Examine the extent to which needs of the vulnerable were taken into account in planning and implementation of the response, and assess if the interventions were effective in addressing the needs of the most vulnerable, especially women, children and disabled, and were they involved in implementation of activities? What measures were taken to ensure accountability to beneficiaries? To what extent the tools, lessons and good practices developed by this project render themselves to use, acceptance and replication in similar responses elsewhere?

EFFICIENCY
Were programme resources/ funds efficiently applied? Were implementation capacities of partners adequate to deliver activities in a timely and efficient manner? How well did the internal management and decision-making processes work together to support the various interventions? To what extent were partnership modalities conducive to delivery of outputs? To what extent were human resources capacity, administrative, finance, and logistics/supply systems able to meet demands of the response? Have resources for interventions been efficiently used to achieve relevant outputs? Were the interventions implemented within intended deadlines and cost estimates? What M & E system and reporting mechanism were put in place and how effective were these? Were issues that negatively affected performance identified and dealt with in a timely and effective manner?

IMPACT
What difference have interventions made to the lives and livelihoods of beneficiary communities? To what extent have the recovery interventions of IRW contributed to Build Back Better policy?

SUSTAINABILITY
What mechanisms/arrangements have been put in place to sustain the outcome of the programme in future? Is there an exit strategy? What will happen at the end of the project? To what extent beneficiaries and communities have participated in various activities of the project and taken ownership of activities?

13. The evaluator interviewed a total of 20 key informants through a semi-structured process and held discussions with 17 (8 house construction, 9 livelihoods support) project beneficiaries during visits to the villages. Besides these, at least four group interviews/focus group discussions were held with beneficiary groups namely, masons, drinking water/irrigation committee, poultry and goats beneficiaries. Additionally, the evaluator interviewed three randomly selected families who did not receive any support from IRW and its partners.

5 Three interviews were conducted over phone, while the rest were face-to-face meetings.
Table 1: Details of interviews and site visits conducted by the evaluator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary data sources</th>
<th>No. of key informants/groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IRW staff</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government officials</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LWF</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batas</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other organisations (NGOs)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual interviews with community members/beneficiaries</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus group discussions with project staff (LWF/Batas combined)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus group discussions/group interviews with community/beneficiaries</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Compiled by evaluator from interview notes and itinerary)

14. A full list of all interviews/focus groups is provided in Annex 4. Data from these were supplemented with those obtained from desk research carried out by the evaluator. A list of the key documents consulted is attached as Annex 5. On completion of field visits, initial findings and conclusions were presented to IRW Nepal and partner agencies (LWF and Batas) as part of validation process.

1.5 Evaluation ethics and quality assurance

15. At every stage of the evaluation, the evaluator followed the following protocols in all his interactions with stakeholders:
   - Informed consent - all participants gave their consent to participate in any activity related to the evaluation;
   - Respect of rights of those involved in any evaluation process or activity; participants were duly informed of the purpose so that they participated freely and equitably;
   - Respect dignity and autonomy: interviews and data-gathering were conducted in semi-loosely structured to give interviewees room to raise their own questions and ideas so that they were not overwhelmed by the evaluators’ structured questions;
   - Ensuring inclusivity – all voices were heard and ensured respect to privacy and confidentiality

16. Further, the evaluator was guided by the following set of values in his work with all stakeholders:
   - Conduct the information gathering, analysis and assessments in a participatory way that provides learning for all involved;
   - Be objective and analytical, and cross-check findings as a means of validating the information and conclusions;
   - Be independent, but have a bias towards the affected communities who are directly or indirectly intended to benefit from the response;
   - Share and triangulate all findings and conclusions with key stakeholders and relevant project staff/managers;
   - Value the process of carrying out the evaluation as much as the outputs of the evaluation for the unique learning opportunity the process offers to all engaged in implementation of the programme;
   - Ensure successful execution of the evaluation in an independent manner, so as to ensure credibility of the evaluation findings and recommendations, and be respectful of the client and stakeholders involved in the process.
17. Broadly the following three criteria were used to ensure quality of the evaluation:

- Generate robust findings that can be clearly linked to various data sources through the quality-assurance process adopted;
- Establish clear links between evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations on the specific criteria outlined in the ToR;

1.6 Limitation

18. The evaluation's conclusions on impact of the project can only be speculative as the single largest component of the interventions, shelter, was still being implemented at the time of the evaluation. Therefore the evaluator has extrapolated potential impact based on the outputs and community response observed on the ground.

\(^6\) These provide comprehensive ethical principles for evaluations, and are extensively used as industry standard.
Section 2

The Earthquake Recovery Context and IRW Response

2.1 Earthquake response context

19. The context within which this project is being implemented is described in detail in the project documents, Phase 2 Narrative Plan (DEC Form 7) and progress reports. Soon after the earthquake, as the relief operations were in full swing, the Government of Nepal (GoN), in partnership with the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) undertook a Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) in order to identify critical needs for recovery and reconstruction and develop an overall recovery strategy. Although the PDNA was completed in June 2015, a recovery framework took another eleven months to come on stream. One reason why a long-term recovery strategy following the PDNA took several months to develop was the fact that political landscape in the country was in a state of turmoil after the promulgation of a new Constitution, as well as the country having to contend with a blockade on the its border with India. It was only in the first half of 2016 that a Post-Disaster Recovery Framework (PDRF) was drawn up. The PDRF estimated a total financing need of $8.37 billion (£6.7 billion), of which the international community pledged up to $4.5 billion (£3.6 billion). Data available shows that the GoN mobilised $1.9 billion (£1.52 billion) by May 2016.

20. All these delayed recovery response in the country as government policies were unclear, especially with regard to funding and the implementation modality for construction of private houses. The Department of Urban Development and Building Construction (DUDBC) came up with house designs for reconstruction in October 2015, but it was not until July 2016 that the NRA began approving proposals of NGOs to undertake reconstruction. Using the modality prescribed by the NRA, NGOs were required to provide cash assistance to households up to a maximum of Nepalese Rupees (NPR) 300,000 (£2,308) to be paid in three installments – NPR 50,000 as first installment for laying the foundation, NPR 150,000 on raising the wall up to plinth level, and NPR 100,000 on completion. Besides the policy environment which significantly affected nation-wide progress on shelter reconstruction, the overlapping roles and responsibilities of multiple government agencies (NRA, DUDBC) has been challenging in terms of receiving approvals for project implementation like shelter design and masons’ training.

21. At the time of the earthquake, IRW did not have any ongoing activity or footprint in Nepal. In line with its humanitarian imperative, IRW mobilised rapidly to launch a response in the wake of the extensive devastation caused by the earthquake on 24 April 2015. IRW’s country office in India took the lead and immediately deployed a rapid response team in coordination with IRW headquarters. The relief phase which was funded through DEC phase 1 allocation continued for the first six months through to October 2015, following which IRW secured DEC funds under the latter’s phase 2(a) allocation.

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8 Initially the provision was for only NPR 200,000 per household which was later changed to NPR 300,000 in October 2016
9 Islamic Relief Worldwide (2016). DEC FORM 7 Phase 2 Narrative Plan
22. As the response unfolded, it became clear that IRW needed a local partner to carry on its response as NGOs needed to be registered locally and operate through local NGOs in the country. IRW therefore developed a partnership with the LWF Nepal which has a nation-wide presence and substantial capacity through its long history of work in the country. IRW’s ongoing global partnership with LWF may have also helped in establishing a strong relationship in Nepal. Subsequently, IRW brought in Batas which, as new offshoot of a large company house in the country, demonstrated substantial delivery capacity during the relief phase to work jointly with LWF.

23. During the recovery phase, IRW concentrated its activities in two remote VDCs - Yarsa & Ramche – in Rasuwa district where IRW also worked during the relief phase (first six months) in the immediate aftermath of the disaster. The mountain district of Rasuwa is one of the most severely earthquake-affected districts. About 82% of the district’s population were badly affected, 660 people died and 753 injured. There was widespread destruction of residential and government buildings, heritage sites, schools and health posts, rural roads, bridges, water supply systems, agricultural land, trekking routes, hydropower plants and sports facilities. It was reported that 11,376 houses were totally damaged and 271 were partially destroyed in the district.

2.2 IRW activities (DEC funded)

24. IRW’s response through DEC funds focused on three key outcomes in two VDCs, namely Ramche and Yarsa in Rasuwa district. The initial outcomes and targets proposed were:

| OUTCOME 1 | Increased access of 250 earthquake affected households (HH) to disaster resilient permanent housing by the end of April 2017. |
| OUTCOME 2 | Increased access of affected households to safe water and proper sanitation by April 2017. |
| OUTCOME 3 | Enhanced livelihoods through improved access to livelihoods opportunities by the end of April 2017. |

25. A few significant factors that affected the initial project target during the course of implementation were: (i) the high inflation in the country caused by blockade at its border with India; and (ii) a drop in exchange rate as a fallout of Brexit in the summer of 2016 - value of British Pound fell by over 20 percent from NPR 161 at the end of October 2015 to 128 in July-August 2016. Both these forced IRW to reduce the target for construction of permanent houses (outcome 1) and water/sanitation (outcome 2) to 151 households.

26. Project outputs and results: The project document outlines the following specific outputs and indicators intended by the project (Table 2):

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10 In the subsequent section of this report, reference to IRW (or “the project”) implies the tripartite partnership between IRW, LWF and Batas.
11 Islamic Relief Worldwide (2016). DEC FORM 7 Phase 2 Narrative Plan
### Table 2: Project outputs and indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Outcome 1: Increased access to shelter** | **Output A1:** 250 (later revised to 151) earthquake resistant permanent houses constructed | • 250 (revised to 151) resilient permanent houses constructed.  
• 60 masons and carpenters trained on EQ resilient construction techniques.  
• Training on improved cooking stoves for shelter beneficiaries.  
• DRR and CCA mainstreamed in detail assessment, shelter design and construction practices. |
| **Outcome 2: Increased access to drinking water and toilets** | **Output B1:** 250 (later revised to 151)  
**Output B2:** Clear water and drinking water system (DWS) rehabilitated  
**Output B3:** VDC level Local Disaster Risk Management Plan (LDRMP) prepared, endorsed and implemented | • 250 (revised to 151) gender and age friendly latrines constructed.  
• 2 DWS schemes and water collection points rehabilitated.  
• 3 water samples tested and sources treated.  
• 2 VDC level vulnerability capacity assessment (VCA) completed.  
• 2 LDRMP prepared with VDCs. |
| **Outcome 3: Increased access to livelihoods options** | **Output C1:** Productive assets created for EQ affected people  
**Output C2:** Promotion and rehabilitation of Agriculture and Livestock based enterprise opportunities created  
**Output C3:** Off farm income generating opportunities to women and occupational caste groups provided. | • 2 irrigation systems rehabilitated and targeted farmers have access for irrigation/farming.  
• Rustic store house established and operated for local farmers.  
• Collection centres established for market promotion of local crops.  
• Affected HHs participated in vegetables and potato farming and marketing trainings  
• Provided affected HH with 100 Goats and 800 poultry for re stocking.  
• 30 HH provided tools for off-farm income  
• 20 women supported in establishment of petty businesses. |

*(Source: Compiled by evaluator from Islamic Relief Worldwide (2016). DEC FORM 7 Phase 2 Narrative Plan)*
Table 3: Phase 2(a) budget and expenses - IRW-DEC response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome/Purpose</th>
<th>Approved budget (£) (percentage of total)</th>
<th>Expenditure12 (£)</th>
<th>Per cent (%) utilisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Shelter</td>
<td>449,817 (50.9)</td>
<td>365,151.53</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Livelihoods</td>
<td>32,788 (3.7)</td>
<td>26,989.76</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Water &amp; sanitation</td>
<td>£ 17,623 (2)</td>
<td>4,226.54</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Other activities</td>
<td>£ 18,525 (2.1)</td>
<td>11940.85</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Logistics</td>
<td>£ 67,625 (7.6)</td>
<td>67,305.00</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Personnel cost &amp; support</td>
<td>£230,707 (26.1)</td>
<td>131,249.01</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Capital cost</td>
<td>£ 9,126 (1)</td>
<td>7,940.85</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Overhead &amp; management support</td>
<td>£ 57,833 (6.6)</td>
<td>33,817.90</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£884,045 (100)</td>
<td>648,621.44</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Data provided by IRW)

12 As of March 31, 2017
Section 3

Evaluation Findings – Outputs, Outcomes and Cross-Cutting Issues

3.1 Access to shelter

Implementation process and timeline

27. Shelter remains the single biggest need of earthquake-affected communities, with nearly 800,000 houses totally or partially destroyed having to be rebuilt. As discussed in section 2.1 earlier, uncertainty over government policy and delay in establishing the NRA meant that organisations could not start building permanent shelters well until the later half of 2016. IRW and its partners began implementing part of the phase 2(a) allocation on livelihoods and water and sanitation from late 2015, completing these activities by the summer of 2016, but approval of its shelter programme by the NRA came only in June 2016.

28. Subsequent to NRA approval, the project13 had to still seek technical design approval from the Department of Urban Development and Building Construction (DUDBC). IRW initially proposed interlocking brick technology for house construction and a model house was constructed in Ramche village in Rasuwa district in anticipation of government's approval, but DUDBC did not approve this design as it was not mentioned in the national building code. In the interest of timely implementation, IRW/LWF had to choose a design from those already approved by DUDBC which was further adapted and finalised following discussions with the community. It is understood that subsequently, the interlocking brick design was also approved and included in the national building code, though by that time IRW/LWF had already completed procurement as per the revised design and started building houses.

29. The project had already been working in two VDCs, Yarsa and Ramche, of which the former is very remote and located in harsh mountainous terrain. In July, the District Development Committee (DDC) approved and allocated ward no 7, Yarsa VDC to the project for shelter construction activity. Initially shelter was to be constructed in both VDCs and the beneficiaries were selected based on vulnerability criteria; however, DUDBC in the district advised taking a blanket approach and select one of the ward/VDC and cover all houses in the area. IRW and partners chose ward no 7 Yarsa VDC which was geographically remote with 100% of the population being marginalised ethnic minorities and dalits. As access to Yarsa remains cut off during monsoon, construction work could only begin at the end of September, interrupted by national festivals in October. In other words, work began in earnest only in late October-early November, though the project utilised this time to ensure that all materials were procured.

30. Initially implementation was slow as the project found it difficult to get cooperation from all households as people were still not fully informed of government policy and their entitlement. The IRW project was based on proving shelter materials to households with some component of cash for unskilled and skilled labour, while the GoN’s policy was to provide a conditional grant of NPR 300,000 to be paid in three installments.

13 Throughout the document, the phrase ‘the project’ refers to the IRW-DEC recovery response (phase 2b) being implemented by IRW/Batas/LWF.
based on progress made by house owners in building their houses. However, a visit by senior district officials to the VDC to clarify how the government grants were being implemented put paid to all speculation and paved the way for householders to fully participate in the project.

31. At the time of the evaluation mission, at least 22 houses were nearly completed and 10 had been handed over to house owners. The remaining 129 were in various stages of construction, with all house construction likely to be completed by mid-April. Discussions with house owners indicated good satisfaction among all beneficiaries at the pace of construction which is one of the fastest in the country. The government shelter programme is moving at a slow pace and the first installment of NPR 50,000 was released only in September/October 2016. Key informant interviews with government officials revealed that nationwide, progress in actual construction has been very slow. In Rasuwa district, of the 11,376 houses which were destroyed, only about 300 were nearing completion and these were the houses being built by IRW and Red Cross. According to one senior official, of the roughly 9,900 first installments (NPR 50,000) paid out in the district, only a small number have been found to be eligible for receiving 2nd installment. So far, only 22 people have been awarded their 2nd installment and another 300 applications are under consideration. Key informant interviews revealed that the situation is largely the same across the country, and no more than 5-10 per cent of the houses are currently under construction through government grants or approved designs.

32. The main reason for such dismal progress is that the installments are reportedly not enough to cover the costs in different phases of construction. As material prices have significantly increased, and transportation costs being high in most of the mountainous terrain, poor people cannot afford to bear the extra expenditure that will be needed to conform to the Government design. Many people have therefore taken the first installment made available to them and utilised it either to rebuild their house in the traditional way without using any earthquake-resistant design, or used up the money for other purposes. IRW’s approach whereby, under close supervision, the project provides materials (bricks, steel, cement, roofing materials) and a cash grant for labour cost totaling a maximum of NPR 372,000 (£2,862) per house appears to have been received well by people, especially in a remote location like Yarsa where transportation cost of material is high. The house owners provide unskilled labour, mud and stones, as required.

33. A key factor that has enabled the project to ensure rapid construction has been close monitoring and supervision by Batas and LWF, besides material provision. Initially Batas and LWF staff were based in a small town about two hours drive from the village. From October 2016, Batas and LWF have a team of six engineers/technical staff, manager and community mobilisers based in Yarsa, and this has helped ensure full involvement and participation of house owners, besides close monitoring and technical supervision of construction work. The project has also set up a shelter construction committee with members from amongst the villagers who assist in social mobilisation, materials management and construction monitoring, including ensuring that all households use trained masons and earthquake-resilient designs.

Selection of village and targeting
34. As discussed above, initially the project targeted both Ramche and Yarsa VDC for house construction. However, as the target for houses had to be drastically cut down from 250 to 151 (see section 2.2), only Yarsa VDC was selected. The village is dispersed over a large area in seven clusters over various altitudes of the mountain, with steep terrain and no motorable roads to connect the village with the outside world during rainy season. IRW opted to undertake house construction work only in cluster 7 of the village where they identified 151 households needing assistance. The cluster had 171 households, but the project's own assessment showed that at least twenty of them were living in Kathmandu and had access to alternative resources of their own. The community comprises a mixture ethnic minority group and dalits.

35. Amongst the 151 households, while there were many who can be called extremely poor and vulnerable (women-headed HH, elderly, daily wage labourer), the rest were of a standing that can not be called prosperous by any standard and depended on seasonal migration, remittances and daily wages in farm sector. While most families are engaged in farming (potato, wheat, rice), given the very small land size, production from farming does not sustain families for more than a quarter to a third of the year. The project developed beneficiary selection criteria (Box 3) and households in Yarsa VDC very closely matched these, though there were several families who were better off than others. The project assistance is meant for a one-bedroom house with a covered area of 16.5 square metres. Some households who had access to additional resources, have been able to build 2 and 3 bedrooms, though the value of assistance from the project remained the same.

**BOX 3: Beneficiary Selection Criteria for Shelter and Livelihood**

1. Resource poor and socially marginalised families (Dalits and ethnic minority).
2. Women headed Households, single women and widows.
3. Households having physically, mentally challenged members.
4. Households having chronically ill or elderly people.
5. Households having orphan children.
6. Households who lost head of family or the main breadwinner.
7. Households whose house is totally collapsed and have very limited assets to cope with the situation.
8. Households who lost their means of livelihoods totally and have very limited assets to revive it.

(Source: Islamic Relief Worldwide)

Design and quality control

36. The house design is based on DUDBC approved concrete structures reinforced at the foundation, plinth, windowsill and lintel levels with steel rings. The project has provided 7-days accredited training to 60 local masons from the two VDCs and ensured that villagers hired only trained and certified masons to undertake construction work, supervised on a day-to-day basis by the project engineer. All masons were trained through a DUDBC approved curriculum and certified trainer. Batas have dedicated procurement staff who handle material delivery and utilisation at site. Round-the-clock presence of engineers ensured that construction materials delivered by suppliers were of acceptable standard – initially there were several instances where materials were found to be of inferior quality and was returned to the supplier.

BOX 4: Shelter

Pemba Lahmo Tamargni is a 71-year-old widow whose house was totally damaged during the earthquake. Her son and his family live in India where he works. She has just moved into her new house built by the project. She is very happy with the construction and thinks that this house can withstand any earthquake as it was unlike her previous house which was built with stones and without any cement or steel. When she moved in (at the time of the evaluation mission), the house still needed plastering which she plans to do later when her son visits her. The toilet is not yet constructed. The project had given her NPR 10,000 for construction of the toilet – at the time of the evaluation mission, only the septic tank was ready, though she has moved in already.

37. The house design does not envisage plastering of external walls which if desired by households can be done on their own. The design includes a toilet for each house, although construction of these have lagged behind as the main priority is now to get construction of houses completed.

38. District NRA and DUDBC officials who have seen the work of Batas/LWF and were interviewed during the evaluation rated the project’s construction work very highly in terms of quality, design, speed and beneficiary participation, so much so that a senior district official has been recommending DUDBC engineers and NGOs to visit Yarsa to see modus operandi of the project. A senior official from a national NGO platform interviewed separately also corroborated this.
39. The project did succeed in mobilising partial support from one large private construction company in the country that provided cement for this project at about 40 per cent less than the market rate. One criticism however that may be made about the project’s house design is that it did not use stones which are available aplenty in the area for construction and instead, used bricks which had to be transported long distance increasing the cost. LWF engineers opined that they had initially explored this option, but traumatised by devastation caused by the earthquake, people did not want to use stones. Moreover, the project staff report that not enough stones were available for all the houses and stone masonry would have involved significant amount of labour to cut the stones to right size, delaying construction work. However, government officials interviewed during this evaluation suggested that stone masonry is a feasible and viable option that has been adopted in some districts, and this probably needs a thorough cost-benefits analysis should IRW decide to undertake more house construction in the next phase.

Oversight

40. The construction committee helps project staff in communication with the villagers/beneficiaries on technical design, quality control mechanism, individual entitlements and dealing with any complaints. Individual beneficiary interviews and focus groups revealed that people were fully aware of their entitlements in terms of material and cash, as well as who to contact in case they had any complaints or concerns. In the work sites, information boards display details of work, people’s entitlements, total cost and quality specifications so that people are fully informed. The project staff being located in the community meant that they were easily accessible for the villagers.

41. Shelter construction is complex and requires intensive monitoring and oversight. As mentioned earlier, Batas has put in place a sizeable team with a full-time programme manager operating out of Yarsa. LWF has also ensured that one of their senior managers who is responsible for programme monitoring and evaluation visits the project site regularly to provide managerial support to the project team. Besides these arrangements at operational level, a steering committee comprising IRW (Country Director and Senior Programme Manager), LWF (Country Director, Finance and Administrative Coordinator and Governance and Regional Programme Coordinator) and Batas (Chairperson, Programme Coordinator and Finance Officer) was set up which has been functioning since May 2016. The steering committee provides high level guidance and advice to the operational team and ensures that any policy bottlenecks in implementation are dealt with as they arise. Joint monitoring visits by the three agencies have also been undertaken which, besides providing support to the field team, ensured that all three partner agencies have a common understanding of the shelter programme, challenges and needs on the ground.

3.2 Access to water and sanitation

42. Next to the housing sector, the most-affected sector relevant for the poor and vulnerable communities was the destruction of water supply and sanitation facilities which have had a direct negative impact on women and girls as they now have to fetch water from a greater distance. The work burden on women, and the disproportionate cost borne by them in the household economy, not only limits the time they can
spend in economic activities, but restricts them spatially and culturally to activities that are compatible with their domestic obligations. The PDNA estimated the nation-wide damage and loss to the water and sanitation sector at NPR 11.4 billion (£87.7 million) at pre-disaster prices, and damage to irrigation system was estimated at NPR 383 million (£2.9 million). The PDNA findings of the sector assessment showed that out of a total 11,288 water supply systems in the 14 most-affected districts, 1,570 sustained major damages, 3,663 partial damages, and that approximately 220,000 toilets were partially or totally destroyed.

43. The project aimed at building 151 toilets, one for each house being rebuilt. As discussed in section 3.1 above, toilet construction has been lagging behind and it is expected that these will be undertaken in March and April. This is not ideal, given that damages to sanitation facilities such as toilets and latrines caused by the earthquake led to an increased practice of open defecation which was observed among the households in Rasuwa in 2015. It was observed during the evaluation that some toilets were already constructed with plastic covers, some private and others for common use, which people who have moved in their newly built houses are continuing to use.

44. The project rehabilitated two drinking water schemes, one each in Yarsa-6 (Thangdur cluster) and Ramche VDC. Drinking water supply in the region is sourced from natural water springs in the mountains and conveyed using gravity flow systems to villages. The evaluator visited Thangdur village which is about two hours trek up fairly steep mountainous terrain. The earthquakes and subsequent landslides destroyed the reservoir tank and pipes conveying water to the village. The project has constructed an intake and reservoir tank at source, laid pipes from the source and installed tap stand in the village. The villages contributed labour and mason cost for the work while the project provided all materials. At a direct cost of NPR 230,226 (£1,771), the water system is now bringing drinking water to 65 families in this remote village, the average investment being about £27 for each family. Until this rehabilitation of water system was done, women and girls had to trudge for about 1.5-2 hours each way at least 2-3 times a day to fetch drinking water. As the water is sourced straight from natural springs in the mountains, the quality of water is as good as one could get, though this will require monitoring during the rainy season.

45. Villagers have been trained by the project in repair and maintenance of the water scheme, and a user group has been formed. The tap stand does not have a regulator – a surprisingly common practice in the area – and so a lot of water is wasted and water keep flowing throughout the day. It was observed in

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15 Islamic Relief Worldwide (2016). DEC FORM 7 Phase 2 Narrative Plan
villages and towns visited during the evaluation that most of the taps had no regulator, perhaps indicating a mistaken notion that there was no point in stopping the free flow as water was coming directly from perennial springs.

46. The project has also rehabilitated an irrigation scheme in Yarsa-7 (Gejet irrigation scheme) at a direct cost of NPR 430,000 (£3,308), not including community contribution in the form of provision of stones, labour support and local transportation. The scheme has potential to irrigate about 8 acres (100 ropani) of land. Although the evaluator was unable to verify, progress report states that this benefitted 165 households. Even though land size is small, availability of irrigation enables households to grow potato during winter season which this area is known for.

47. Overall sanitation practices in the villages in the project area are satisfactory. Open defecation is now rare and use of toilets common. However, hygiene practices in terms of use of stored water for drinking and washing purposes are far from satisfactory. This is an area which the project has so far not paid much attention to, being preoccupied as it has been with delivering the hardware particularly related to house construction. Hygiene education and efficient water utilisation ought to be a significant focus of any future intervention.

3.3 Access to livelihoods

48. The earthquake has had a serious impact on agriculture-based livelihoods in the affected districts, increasing the vulnerability of rural communities to food insecurity. As agriculture in Nepal is dominated by women as a consequence of an increase in migration of men to cities in Nepal and beyond, more women than men in the rural areas felt the full brunt of effects of the earthquakes. Families were deploying different coping mechanisms to deal with the disaster, including distress sales of assets, besides reliance on remittances from family members and relatives. The loss of assets combined with the loss of family houses, and desperation for alternate livelihoods can have disastrous consequences on women, girls and children facing heightened risk of sexual and gender-based violence, human trafficking, child marriage, and child labour.

49. The project has therefore targeted home-based income generating activities for women particularly socially vulnerable groups like single women/women-headed households, widows, elderly and those chronically poor. In both Ramche and Yarsa VDC, 25 women were selected in each VDC and provided 2 goats. In Ramche the beneficiaries were all displaced families who lost their land and houses due to landslides caused by the earthquake. At the time of the evaluation, the families were living in temporary shelters made with tins and plastic on government land, not knowing if and when they will be allotted any land and assistance for permanent house construction. Although having 2 goats by itself does not make a substantial contribution to the survival needs of a family, these assets gave women some security in case of an emergency. Additionally, ten women in each VDC were provided 40 chicken each for meat production. The assistance included one month’s supply of feed as well as basic training in poultry care. Interviews with 4 beneficiary families revealed that some 12-15 (about 30 per cent) chicken died of disease, and they were able to sell about 15-20 of these at the age of 3-4 months, making a profit of about NPR 8,000 (£62).

50. A more successful intervention appears to have been the support for petty shop/ microenterprises provided to 20 highly vulnerable women – 10 each in Yarsa and Ramche VDC. In Yarsa-6, the evaluator visited two petty shop dealing in grocery who were each provided support worth NPR 20,000 by the project to open the shops. One woman had lost her husband during the earthquake and her shop now

16 It is variously estimated in studies conducted by the International Livestock Research Institute that, if relying solely on livestock for survival, a family of five needs at least 200-260 tropical livestock units (for example a sheep or goat) to meet its basic need.
provides the only source of income for the family. Though she does not maintain a record of income, expenditure and cash flow, she estimates that she makes a profit of about NPR 1,000-1,200 every week. This is a small remote village with about 70 households living here. In Ramche VDC which has far better access to nearby towns and villages, the evaluator met three women who started village shops cum eating joints serving tea and food. Here they make slightly higher profit (NPR1,500 on an average day), though during some months (July-August) the profit can be almost double. The shops in Ramche, though started at the same time as in Yarsa, were better stocked indicating the women entrepreneurs were building on the capital, besides meeting their household expenses needs. The six of the 20 petty business activities visited by the evaluator appear to be generating profits and contributing to family income, and it is reported that only one of the twenty women assisted through the programme failed to sustain the business.

51. Besides women, the project provided occupational tools to 15 trained carpenters, electricians and semi-skilled masons in Ramche and 20 masons in Yarsa. At an average cost of £85 per participant, the project trained 30 local masons from Yarsa-7 on earthquake resistant building construction techniques. Beneficiaries are from those who had lost their houses and belonged to indigenous communities. Focus group discussions and individual interviews indicated that they now earn on an average NPR 800-1,000 per day and work at least 25 days a month as skilled construction workers and carpenters are in high demand due to ongoing reconstruction work in the district.

52. The project has also assisted villagers in Ramche-4 and Yarsa-6 in setting up collection centres with the idea that locally produced vegetables will be collected here for transportation to towns for sale. The evaluation cannot comment on the utility of this initiative as the facilities are only being completed now, and it will be some time before it is known whether or not these help the local growers in reaching their produce to market.

53. The project has done well in its limited and targeted livelihood interventions. It needs to be borne in mind that most of the rural communities in Rasuwa live in mountainous terrain, often remote and difficult to access. The land size is also very small and agricultural practices in such physical conditions can only be conventional, with limited scope for diversification and intensive farming. Unsurprisingly, the main survival strategy historically has been for people, especially young men and now women, to migrate, leaving mostly women and elderly in the villages – a trend that is only likely to keep growing as climate change factors also push people out of rural sector. Some of the migration is seasonal and some long term. Discussions with villagers showed that most of the families borrow at fairly high interest rates from local moneylenders to pay for their travel, especially those migrating outside of the country. When they return or visit home during holidays, they have to pay hefty interest, and sometimes even borrow more money. Further, if and when they remit money to their families back home, they have to pay a substantial commission varying from 10-30 per cent at both ends. This is an area which, with systematic intervention, could save rural communities substantial amount of money. The evaluator has not found on web search any study that estimates the amount of interest people pay to borrow to migrate or the leakage in the remittance system.
3.4 Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS)

54. CHS 1 (appropriateness and relevance), CHS 2 (effectiveness and timeliness) and CHS 9 (resource utilisation/efficiency) are discussed in section 4 that follows. In relation to CHS 3 which relates to strengthening local capacity and do-no-harm, the project has taken several initiatives namely, training of local masons, and setting up of user committees for irrigation and drinking water schemes, with training provided to committee members in maintenance of the schemes. It is worth noting that the value of assistance provided by the project for shelter is higher than that provided by the GoN and this could have led to potential tension between villages. However, with good communication and full involvement of the district officials, the project was able to avert any tension in the area. The fact that they covered all the houses (and offered a choice of 1, 2 or 3 room houses if HH contributed additional cost) in the selected ward of the village may have also helped get people's acceptance as this ensured that everyone in the village received the same level of benefit.

55. As discussed previously (section 3.1), the project has done well in terms of putting in place a community feedback process (CHS 4) and complaints mechanism (CHS 5). Any complaint received, either orally or in writing, is forwarded to LWF country office and each complaint acknowledged and responded to. So far all complaints have been in relation to individual entitlements which were easily dealt with as the shelter construction committee is also involved.

56. CHS 6 requires that humanitarian action is well coordinated and complementary. Coordination was weak among all DEC member agencies. The project has coordinated with the NRA at national and DUDDBC at district level for obtaining their approval. Further the project participated in the monthly meetings of Distract Disaster Response Committee as well as the ones organised by Housing Reconstruction and Recovery Platform where it shared details of progress. However, one district government official expressed concern that the project did not coordinate with his office which was responsible for quality control of construction work, though he knew that the project’s work was of high standard. The project staff partly admitted that this may be a fair perception as they have in the past several months exclusively focused on house construction work and may not always have had the time to visit district headquarters, which is about 3 hours drive from Yarsa.

57. Given that project management is located close to the ground, learning (CHS 7) is continuous. At least two learning events in the form of after-action reviews immediately after the relief phase and a reconstruction project learning event were held involving all project staff and IRW/LWF/Batas managers. The second event (February 2017) led to lessons being drawn which informed development of a new proposal for the next phase from April 2017. Several examples were cited to show how experiential learning helped the project change and adapt its systems, for example:

- Initially when reconstruction work began, the project followed IRW procurement policy that stipulated that for any expenses above NPR 10,000, approval had to be sought from the steering committee comprising IRW, LWF and Batas directors. As this delayed procurement and purchase, the limit was later increased to NPR 150,000.

- The project office was moved from Kalikastan to Yarsa-7 in October 2016 as it was realised that monitoring implementation of house construction would require close supervision and quality control which needed staff to be operating out of the construction site.

- After the project failed to receive approval on the interlocking brick technology, it was quick to change the design drawing on LWF’s previous experience of working with DUDDBC design in another district.

- Joint monitoring visits (IRW, LWF and Batas) by senior managers/directors of the three organisations to project sites were instituted to ensure that there was a common understanding among all parties involved and any outstanding issue could be resolved quickly.
58. On staff support and equitable treatment of staff (CHS 8), the evaluation does not have much evaluable data to go by as at the time of evaluation, IRW had only one staff (senior programme manager) in the country. Staff continuity appears to have been a problem for the reason that as IRW is not registered in the country, and any expatriate staff (with the exception of Indians) can visit the country on a tourist visa for a maximum of 5 months in a calendar year. Initially IRW had envisaged hiring a shelter coordinator which it found difficult to fill as it did not find a suitably qualified national candidate, nor could it bring anyone from outside. Instead, a logistics person from one of IRW’s Asia offices was seconded for a few months. Efforts are now afoot to ensure that IRW gets itself registered in the country.
Section 4

Assessment Against Evaluation Criteria

4.1 Relevance and Appropriateness

59. Relevance is concerned with assessing whether projects are in line with local needs and priorities and refers to the overall goal and purpose of a programme. Appropriateness is about the need to tailor humanitarian activities and inputs to local needs, and examines the correspondence between input / resources and the intended result.

60. The project proposal was based on needs that were identified through IRW’s own assessment at the end of the first phase (6 months) and the GoN’s PDNA. Shelter was – and still is – the biggest single need of the earthquake-affected communities, and therefore, IRW rightly prioritised this component over WASH and livelihoods which were also identified as needs. With nearly half a million houses totally destroyed and over another quarter of a million partially damaged by the earthquake, it was clear that house construction ought to be a priority. The scale of the need was so immense that even after nearly two years of the earthquake, it is variously estimated that no more than 10 percent of the houses have been built at the time of the evaluation,\(^\text{17}\) including those rebuilt by households themselves.

61. If anything has changed in the context, it is that uncertainties over government policies and the way reconstruction initiatives were being vetted by the GoN may have slowed down the process to an extent. Many large NGOs generally have shied away from reconstruction work, and instead focused on other softer assistance in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), livelihoods, healthcare and education. In Rasuwa district, for instance, besides IRW/LWF/Batas, it is only the Red Cross and Samaritan’s Purse which have focused on house construction. It is reported that the situation is the same in other affected districts, with perhaps Red Cross being the only organisation which has undertaken to construct 6,000 houses. The evaluation considers IRW’s (and its partners in Nepal) involvement in house construction a bold step and in keeping with its humanitarian imperative. Granted that house construction is a complicated business, and the government’s policy uncertainty in the country made it more complex; but simply ignoring this need means condemning about 3.5-4 million people still living in transition and temporary shelters, with little hope of ever being able to build a house, let alone building back better. ‘Do Nothing’ about this enormous need was perhaps never an option, though many NGOs did exactly that. Credit goes to IRW for taking this challenge on, and doing it fairly successfully (section 4.4 below), within the limitations of its resources.

62. The implementation modality (material assistance and part cash for skilled/unskilled labour) the project took was a departure from what the GoN had prescribed in its policy. To its credit, the project successfully negotiated with the GoN approval of its modality which included close supervision and monitoring of each individual house construction. This was a highly appropriate approach especially for two reasons: (a) in remote rural areas transportation of material is costly and (b) without guaranteed quality of material and close supervision, people would have ended up building houses which were similar to what they were used to build traditionally.

\(^{17}\) Source: A senior official of NRA in a personal communication. Official data on houses completed nation-wide have not been compiled yet.
63. One could argue that the project did very little on water and sanitation; however, considering the small budget it had (See Table 3), this was perhaps appropriate as bulk of the resources (over 50 percent) had to go to house construction. Conceptually, although the project touched the need for shelter, WASH and livelihoods, the main focus was on shelter, and that was highly appropriate approach, considering the budget limitations.

4.2 Coverage

64. Coverage is about the need to reach major population groups facing life-threatening suffering wherever they are, providing them with assistance and protection proportionate to their need and devoid of extraneous political agendas.

65. Given its limited budget, the project focused on addressing the critical needs in one ward of one VDC for housing and limited number of wards in 2 VDCs. As discussed in section 3, besides selecting villages which were remote and isolated, the project targeted women and elderly for its livelihoods programme, and covered all houses that needed to be rebuilt in one ward. Overall, the project’s performance on coverage has been optimal and in accordance with the resources it had.

66. As discussed above, needs are huge, especially in shelter and WASH. The principle underpinning humanitarian-response-in-proportion-to-needs implies that collectively the humanitarian system addresses or makes significant contribution to addressing the needs. That certainly is not happening in Nepal at the moment, the commendable efforts of IRW/LWF/ Batas and Red Cross notwithstanding. The GoN is partly to blame for its inability to provide effective leadership and direction, and partly on the tendency of humanitarian agencies to stay clear of complexities of house construction in particular.

4.3 Coherence and connectedness

67. Coherence refers to the need to ensure that there is consistency in policies and practices and that the programme design is informed by needs, resources and capacity. Connectedness is about the need to assure that activities of a short-term emergency nature are carried out in a context which takes longer-term and interconnected problems into account.

68. IRW’s reconstruction work has been premised on the build back better principle so as to ensure that people build houses that are earthquake resilient. Besides construction methods and materials geared to this end, the project has emphasised on building local capacity through training of masons with the hope that these masons will not only work on ongoing construction work undertaken by the project, but will also assist other households in improving the quality of construction when they build their houses. The project’s coordination with the GoN has taken place at federal level as well as in the district. As discussed in section on CHS, the project has ensured reasonable communication and coordination with local authorities some of who have paid glowing tributes to it on record.

69. Comment has been already made about how the project attempted to address CHS, though the latter did not fully come on stream at the time of the project inception. In relation to Sphere standards, the shelter (16.5 square metre covered area) provided by the project did meet the minimum requirements, though the WASH component merited better attention than it received (section 3.2).

70. Migration and reliance on remittance are critical for the household economy in most parts of Nepal, including the project area. This sector needs greater attention as borrowing for migration at usurious rates
of interest and high leakages in remittances are common, losing people substantial potential income/savings every year.

4.4 Effectiveness

71. Effectiveness measures the extent to which an activity achieves its purpose, or whether this can be expected to happen on the basis of the outputs.

72. Progress in relation to outcomes is discussed at length in section 3. Despite delay in implementation of some of the activities (house and toilet construction), it is expected that all planned work will be completed by early April. As mentioned previously (section 3.1), shelter construction has been timely and relatively faster than those being undertaken by most other agencies. Most notable outcomes being realised are in provision of shelter, upgrading of skills of masons, access to drinking water and ensuring a source of income for at least 19 highly vulnerable women.\textsuperscript{18} Sanitation and hygiene outcomes have not been on par with Sphere standards as the project may have under-invested in this area, focusing instead on hardware provision during this phase of response.

73. As discussed in section 3.4, the project has done well on establishing a community feedback mechanism, both formal and informal. In terms of targeting the vulnerable, the project has ensured that women, particularly women-headed households and single women were targeted in its programme. The drinking water schemes and livelihoods were particularly aimed at addressing issues women faced in the earthquake-affected villages. The project however has been weak on prioritising sanitation needs of women in the reconstruction phase and this is something it needs to address in the remaining weeks of the project duration. There is no evidence that apart from these practical needs, the project has attempted to address any gender issues in the area, for example: trafficking, sexual exploitation, land rights, etc. It is understandable that within the limited time the project had, its primary attention was on shelter construction. However, going into the future, the project needs to strengthen its gender analysis and go beyond targeting vulnerable women.

74. One area where the project needs to do more is document lessons from shelter construction and undertake advocacy with the GoN, NGOs and donors. The GoN’s approach to cash distribution certainly is not working, going by the accounts of villagers, NGOs and government officials interviewed for this evaluation. As IRW/LWF/Batas’ housing and Red Cross’ work were cited by most external stakeholders (government and NGOs) as exemplary, the project may do well to work together with the Red Cross to see how they can draw the lessons and help reshape GoN policy on the one hand, as well as advocate for greater effort by all agencies in supporting house construction in the coming 2-3 years.

75. House construction is a complex and demanding business and appetite for undertaking this, especially when government policies are less conducive, understandably may be low. However, humanitarians simply cannot sit back and wish the problem away – this would mean millions people would continue to build unsafe houses as before. Creative ways and options to encourage people to build safer and earthquake-resilient houses need to be thought of. Agencies which cannot undertake construction work the way IRW/LWF/Batas or Red Cross is doing now, could offer conditional cash subsidies to households, backed by good monitoring, to encourage people to use earthquake resilient technology (like the one used by the project) for construction of foundations and walls. This partial subsidy would still mean that the very poor might find it difficult to access such options, as they would need assistance towards the entire or large part of the cost, but it will ensure that bulk of the houses which people are already trying to build on their own are built to good quality standards. Such an open offer would increase the range of

\textsuperscript{18} Assistance was provided to 20 women; however, it was reported by project staff that one of the businesses folded up as the beneficiary failed to run it properly and left the village.
choices people have and also help get around the GoN’s one-size-fits-all approach which appears to be failing. It will also reduce for the organisations the burden of delivering completed houses from foundations to roof, though they will still need to provide technical support and monitoring of quality so that design specifications are adhered to.

4.5 Efficiency

76. Efficiency measures how economically inputs (funds, expertise, time) have been converted into outputs. Timeliness is factored in while assessing efficiency.

77. In terms of timeliness, despite starting implementation of the main component of project (housing) late for reasons beyond the control of the project, it will be able to complete the work in record time. This has been possible due to close supervision and monitoring by the project team on the ground. The phase 2(a) project budget shows an allocation of 26.1 percent (See Table 3) for all personnel and support cost for implementation of the project, and the actual cost on this has been a low 20 per cent of total expenditure as of March 31, 2017. Given the close management and supervision the project has had to provide, the project has been highly cost-efficient. In NGOs, even normal operations which do not require the kind of intensive ongoing supervision and monitoring like shelter construction needs, personnel & support cost can be as high as 25-30 percent, if all costs are taken into account. GiveDirectly, an online charity platform which connects donors with recipients directly reports that it spends between 9 and 15 in administration – beneficiary vetting, funds management, etc - for every dollar it receives. The project relied mostly on local staff. The only international staff have been IRW’s deployment of senior Project Manager since the middle of 2016 and periodic missions by finance and other key support staff from the Asia region for several weeks to 3-4 months.

78. The project ensured that beneficiaries contributed for all work delivered in the community, for example, labour for house construction and water supply installation, owners constructing of sheds for poultry, travel and time cost for participation in masons’ training. As discussed in section 3, with this approach, the average direct cost of these activities was kept low as the following Table summarises (Table 4).

Table 4: Per unit cost of various outputs delivered by the project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No</th>
<th>Activity/Output</th>
<th>Cost per unit (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Individual house construction</td>
<td>2,862 per house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Thungdur drinking water supply</td>
<td>27 per household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Masons’ training for 7-days</td>
<td>85 per participant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Evaluation findings based on data provided by project team)

79. It is noteworthy that despite not having an established presence and any prior experience in the country, IRW was able to take on the challenging task of house construction. In this regard, the partnership with Batas which is a growing organisation with young staff bringing good understanding of local issues and LWF Nepal with an established nation-wide presence was crucial for successful delivery of the outcomes. LWF brought its long established work experience in the country as well as its contacts with GoN authorities which was critical for getting the house construction work off the ground. The triangular partnership has been built on transparent and open relations based on trust and mutual respect, through
mechanisms like steering committee, joint monitoring, joint planning and budgeting, and joint learning processes. Additionally, the project team being located in the community to implement various activities contributed to effective delivery of the shelter and livelihoods outcomes. Regular monitoring by IRW and LWF country offices as well as quarterly progress reports ensured that project implementation was on track.

4.6 Impact

80. Impact looks at the wider effects of the project - social, economic, technical, and environmental - on individuals, gender, age-groups, communities, and institutions.

81. The most significant impact of the project is likely to be on ensuring safer houses for the beneficiaries in Yarsa-7, as well as in upgraded skills of local masons who are now building earthquake-resilient houses for others. As discussed previously, the needs in the country are enormous, and IRW-DEC’s limited funds have contributed in a small way towards building-back-better. Other areas where people are feeling some impact are: (i) women in two villages having to spend less time fetching drinking water, and (ii) at least 19 women deriving their main livelihood from petty businesses and (iii) 15-20 women deriving a small supplementary income from poultry support provided by the project. The project’s impact in areas like sanitation and hygiene have so far been minimal.

4.7 Sustainability

82. The housing and petty businesses are owned by individuals who are already taking full responsibility to sustain these, and for communal infrastructure like water supply systems, the project has set up user groups who have been trained in maintenance of the system. How far the user groups take responsibility in future is early to say. The project is currently in the process of submitting a proposal for a next phase of the response which will focus on evidence-based advocacy to scale up reconstruction work, building on lessons from the current phase and promoting disaster preparedness at community level.
Section 5

Key Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Overall Finding

83. Given that shelter was (still is) the biggest single need of the earthquake-affected communities, IRW rightly prioritised this component over WASH and livelihoods which were also identified as needs. Despite delays in implementation of some of the activities (house and toilet construction), it is expected that all planned work will be completed by mid-April. This has been made possible by the fact that IRW was able to forge a good partnership with LWF Nepal and Bata’s which together brought significant country experience and operational capacity. Most notable outcomes that have already been realised are in provision of shelter, upgrading of skills of mason, access to drinking water and ensuring a source of income for at least 19 highly vulnerable women. Sanitation and hygiene outcomes have not been on par as the project may have under-invested in this area.

5.2 Conclusions

Relevance and appropriateness

84. The project did well in ensuring that it identified vulnerable communities and their needs, including identifying women-headed households for various activities. For shelters, the implementation modality (material assistance, instead of all cash) the project took was a highly appropriate approach in the remote rural areas where transportation of material is costly. Although the project did very little on water and sanitation, considering the small budget it had, this was perhaps appropriate as bulk of the resources (over 50 percent) had to go on house construction.

Coverage

85. Overall, the project’s performance on coverage has been optimal and in accordance with the resources it had. Given its small budget, the project focused on addressing the critical needs in one ward of one VDC for housing and covered all houses that needed to be rebuilt in the selected ward and limited number of wards in 2 VDCs for livelihoods and WASH interventions.

Coherence and connectedness

86. The project has taken into account various government policies and international norms in planning and delivering its response, including IRW’s own guidance. IRW’s reconstruction work has been premised on the build-back-better principle so as to ensure that people build houses that are earthquake resilient.

19 Assistance was provided to 20 women; however, it was reported by project staff that one of the businesses folded up as the beneficiary failed to run it properly.

The project has emphasised on building local capacity through training of masons. The shelter (16.5 square metre covered area) provided by the project did meet the minimum requirements, though the WASH component merited better attention than it received. Migration and reliance on remittances are common survival and livelihoods strategies in the area and both are subject to exploitative rent extraction by middlemen; however, either the government or humanitarian system does currently not address this issue.

**Effectiveness**

87. Despite delays in implementation of some of the activities (house and toilet construction), it is expected that all planned work will be completed by mid-April. Most notable outcomes are being realised in provision of shelter, upgrading of skills of masons, access to drinking water and ensuring a source of income for at least 19 highly vulnerable women. Sanitation and hygiene outcomes have not been on par with Sphere standard as the project may have under-invested in this area. The project has done well on establishing a community feedback mechanism and targeting the vulnerable, particularly women-headed households, single women and elderly. The project has been weak on prioritising sanitation needs of women in the reconstruction phase and this is something it needs to address in the remaining weeks of the project duration.

88. The house construction work in particular is rated highly by all external stakeholders including beneficiaries. Given the immense needs which remain unmet and the fact that not many humanitarian organisations are prioritising house construction for one reason or another, the project needs to document lessons from shelter construction and, working with the Red Cross (which has also been fairly successful in reconstruction work), undertake advocacy with the GoN, NGOs and donors. Creative ways and options to encourage people to build safer and earthquake-resilient houses need to be thought of, including conditional cash subsidies to households, backed by good monitoring, to encourage people to use earthquake-resilient technology (like the one used by the project) for construction of foundations and walls. Such open offer of subsidies will increase the range of choices people have and also help get around the GoN’s one-size-fits-all approach which appears to be failing. It will also reduce for the organisations the burden of delivering full house from foundations to roof, though they will still need to provide technical support and quality-monitoring so that design specifications are adhered to.

**Efficiency**

89. Despite initial delays in commencing house construction which was the main component, the project will be able to complete the work in record time. This has been possible due to close supervision and monitoring by the project team on the ground. The phase 2(a) project budget shows an allocation of 26.1 percent (See Table 3) for all personnel and support cost for implementation of the project. Given the close management and supervision the project has had to provide, the project has been highly cost-efficient. Despite not having an established presence and any prior experience in the country, IRW was able to take on the challenging task of house construction due mainly to the partnership with Batas and LWF Nepal. The partnership has been built on transparent and open relations based on trust and mutual respect, through mechanisms like steering committee, joint monitoring, joint planning and budgeting, and joint learning processes. Regular monitoring by IRW and LWF country offices as well as quarterly progress reports ensured that project implementation was on track.

**Impact**

90. The most significant impact of the project is likely to be on ensuring safer houses as well as in upgraded skills of local masons who are now building earthquake-resilient houses for others. Other areas where people are feeling some impact are: (i) women having to spend less time fetching drinking water, and (ii) at least 19 women deriving their main livelihood from petty businesses and 15-20 women deriving a small supplementary income from poultry support provided by the project. The project’s impact in areas like sanitation and hygiene has so far been minimal.
Sustainability
91. The project has set up user groups who have been trained in maintenance of drinking water/irrigation systems and owners are taking full responsibility for the housing and petty businesses. In the next phase, the project intends to focus – should it receive funding - on evidence-based advocacy to scale up reconstruction work building on lessons from the current phase and promoting disaster preparedness at community level.

5.3 Recommendations and lessons

| R1 | The project needs to speed up toilet construction for individual houses to ensure that each household has a toilet when houses are handed over to owners. |
| R2 | Sanitation and hygiene education components of WASH need attention in future. |
| R3 | The project needs to document lessons from shelter construction and, working with the Red Cross, undertake advocacy with the GoN, NGOs and donors. |
| R4 | Going into the future, shelter will need to be prioritised by agencies, despite the challenges in implementation. Creative ways and options to encourage people to build safer and earthquake-resilient houses through conditional cash subsidies and incentives, backed by good monitoring, will be needed. |
| R5 | Water and sanitation will need stronger focus in the next phase, should IRW be able to mobilise resources. |
| R6 | Conduct systemic research on mechanisms for borrowing by aspiring migrants and leakages in the remittance system to estimate household economy loss, and design appropriate response which may involve advocacy, development of inclusive financial/microenterprise system and awareness creation. |
Islamic Relief Worldwide Management Response to DEC Nepal Emergency Response Program Phase 1 and 2 Evaluation, April 2017

Overview
Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW) is committed to improving the quality and accountability of its humanitarian programmes. As part of its accountability to the DEC, IRW conducted an external evaluation of its Phase 1 and 2 DEC funded Emergency programme in Nepal. The purpose of this evaluation was to:

- Assess the extent to which the programme objectives were achieved.
- Facilitate self-analysis of overarching lessons learned.
- Make recommendations that will influence future interventions of IRW as well as other countries, and guide future humanitarian strategy.

This was an external evaluation that went through a competitive bidding process. The intended users of this evaluation are: IRW, IRW’s Nepal Country Office, the DEC, and the Humanitarian community. IRW implemented this project through its own country office in Nepal. The evaluation lasted for a period of thirty days and included travel to project areas.

Overall response
How do you generally feel about the evaluation and the findings?
The evaluation adopted a participatory approach. Meetings were held with all the relevant stakeholders. The evaluation fairly well captured the project successes and challenges. The evaluation reflected on the areas which needs improvement. The evaluation suggested to prioritise shelter reconstruction process of the Government, sanitation and hygiene education component of WASH and advocacy on shelter with Government, NGOs and donors in the phase 2b of the project.

The project has taken into account all these suggestions which were incorporated in the phase 2b planning and implemented. The details are provided in the table below.

Details of how IRW will action the recommendations can be found in the table below. Please complete the table below where relevant to the region and country.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation recommendation s</th>
<th>Do we accept, partially accept or reject the recommendation?</th>
<th>Reasons for response</th>
<th>Priority level</th>
<th>Actions to be taken</th>
<th>Who is responsible for doing it</th>
<th>Who is accountable for ensuring action takes place</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The project needs to speed up toilet construction for individual houses to ensure that each household has a toilet when houses are handed over to owners.</td>
<td>Accept</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>All the toilets have been constructed and handed over to beneficiaries along with shelter. In 12 cases where the toilets were already there in operational condition, the beneficiaries preferred bathrooms. In all such cases the bathrooms have been constructed and are in use by the community.</td>
<td>SPM</td>
<td>HoM</td>
<td>Completed Before the end of the project in April 2017</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitation and hygiene education components of WASH need attention in future.</td>
<td>Accept</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>This has been enhanced in the Phase 2b project which is under implementation. 2,448 people have easy access to safe drinking water after the construction of 4 drinking water schemes. 104 HHs, 295 students and 16 teachers from 4 schools have access to inclusive toilet. The project was appreciated by District WASH CC for contributing to declare Rasuwa district as Open Defecation Free. Construction of 10 bathing cubicles have benefitted 590 HHs, mainly adolescent girls and women. They now feel more protected. Before the construction of these cubicles, even if they feel shy they had no option than bathing in the open and thus had to wait until all the men went away. Messages on safe handling of water and hand washing has been painted in the walls of bathing cubicles, to disseminate learning. 30 local WASH volunteers who received ToT in WASH are regularly delivering sanitation and hygiene promotion.</td>
<td>SPM</td>
<td>HoM</td>
<td>All WASH related hardware and community awareness activities completed before April 2017.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
By the end of the project period, they reached a total of 600 individuals and 278 students.

4 WASH entrepreneurs are also promoting sanitation and hygiene materials in the community and earning their income simultaneously.

7 awareness campaigns organised in coordination with local child clubs.

4 street dramas on WASH awareness organised in the community.

Radio jingles on WASH was broadcasted for more than 6 months once in a week.

A video documentation was completed which captured the whole process of shelter construction as well as the other components of livelihoods and WASH and their concerted impact.

A Lesson Learnt Workshop was conducted which was attended by DEC partners, Other INGOs and Government officials.

Further under DEC phase 2b, 3 media advocacy events on Build Back Better under shelter and other sectors like livelihoods and WASH was televised on the national channel. One television event included strategic discussions on shelter reconstruction and lessons from DEC 2a with the head of national reconstruction Authority (NRA).

Compendium of case studies on best practices including shelter published.

| The project needs to document lessons from shelter construction and, working with the Red Cross, undertake advocacy with the GoN, NGOs and donors. | Accept | High | SPM | HoM | The LLW was conducted on 3rd of May. The video was also screened during the LLW. |
## Report – Evaluation of Islamic Relief Worldwide Nepal Earthquake Response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Going into the future, shelter will need to be prioritised by agencies, despite the challenges in implementation. Creative ways and options to encourage people to build safer and earthquake-resilient houses through conditional cash subsidies and incentives, backed by good monitoring, will be needed.</th>
<th>Facilitated high level visit of NRA and HRRP to the project field area.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IRW decided not to go into physical shelter construction in the DEC 2b phase since the Government shelter reconstruction scheme had set in motion, therefore we shifted our focus to other areas. The project supported mason training to support the Government shelter reconstruction (60 masons- 37 males 23 female trained as mason) and building. Further, the trained masons will complement the Government efforts for shelter construction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water and sanitation will need stronger focus in the next phase, should IRW be able to mobilise resources.</td>
<td><strong>High</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accept</strong></td>
<td>WASH has got 31% weightage against the programme budget which is appropriate to the needs. Further under phase 2b, the project also successfully mobilised funds from the Government for joint implementation of few drinking water projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All project activities completed by end of April 2017</td>
<td><strong>HoM</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Water and Sanitation

**High**

1. **Accept**

   - WASH has got 31% weightage against the programme budget which is appropriate to the needs. Further under phase 2b, the project also successfully mobilised funds from the Government for joint implementation of few drinking water projects.

---

### All project activities

**Completed by end of April 2017**

- SPM
  - HoM
| **Conduct systemic research on mechanisms for borrowing by aspiring migrants and leakages in the remittance system to estimate household economy loss, and design appropriate response which may involve advocacy, development of inclusive financial/microenterprise system and awareness creation.** | **This is outside the scope of the present response. However the DEC 2b project is focusing in consolidating the learnings through research with focus on build back better.** | **Low** | **SPM** | **Reject** | All activities completed by the end of DEC 2b project in April 2017 |