

EARLY SURVEY

REPORT

NAME OF THE PROJECT	EU Aid Volunteers - Sustainable Development through Humanitarian Aid Volunteers (SuD HAV)
NAME OF THE SENDING/HOSTING ORGANIZATIONS	Association pour le Développement des Initiatives Citoyennes et Européennes (ADICE) / Volunteers Initiative Nepal (VIN)
NAME OF THE PROGRAM	VIN Disaster Risk Management (DRM)
NAME OF THE VOLUNTEERS	Carmelo Triolo and Jac Carter
NAME OF SUPERVISOR/MENTOR	Dr. Laxmi Prasad Ghimire
LOCAL FIELD STAFF	Deepak Ghimire
ASSESSMENT PERIOD	October 2018/January 2019
LOCATION OF THE VIELD VISITS	Kakani/Okharpauwa of Nuwakot and Jitpurphedi of Tarkeshwar

INTRODUCTION

This early survey report is based on a qualitative and gender approach, been conducted through interviews with local beneficiaries and stakeholders, in collaboration with the local field staff. For this purpose, a customize questionnaire has been developed by the above-mentioned volunteers, annexed to this report. Moreover, the volunteers, in order to have a deeper insight on the DRM awareness among the communities where VIN is involved, have conducted several visits on the field, gathering data for a need assessment regarding the risk/disaster topic.

NOTE: *The report has to be intended as a first basis of need assessment conducted in the rural communities of Jitpurphedi and Okharpauwa. Therefore, it shall not to be considered a comprehensive report nor an exhaustive need assessment, lacking still relevant data for an overall insight.*

Final purpose of the document is:

1. to assess local communities' needs and awareness/knowledge on DRM/Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR);
2. to review and monitor hosting organization's status of the ongoing phase of its Disaster Relief and Response program, feed backing the reconstruction process on a technical level;
3. to analyse the reconstruction process and how relevant national stakeholders are involved and taking part in the above-mentioned rural communities;
4. to evaluate the project/program follow-up against the objectives, work plan, activities and expectations settled with the supervisor/mentor at the beginning of the deployment;

BACKGROUND

Nepal is an underdeveloped country with over 30% of the population living below the poverty line.

After the devastating Gorkha earthquake of 25th April 2015, the situation in Nepal was desperate. Over 8500 deaths, thousands of people injured. Over 600 hundred thousand houses were destroyed. Nepal is in need of estimated 7 billion \$ for reconstruction. The communities, VIN has been working are badly affected by the earthquake. Almost 90% houses are destroyed. Jitpurphedi, Kavresthali and Okharpauwa alone have witnessed more than 40 deaths and over 3 dozen injured! About 553 houses and 6 schools are damaged and more than dozen people are injured in the three ex VDCs in Okhaldhunga.

The latest update from Nepal Reconstruction Authority (NRA) has shown that out of 69289 houses need to be reconstructed at Nuwakot 5479 are completed and 38384 are under construction, about 40% of damaged houses have not started to rebuild. In Kathmandu about 80% of houses have not started rebuilding. Similarly in Okhaldhunga about 20% of damaged houses have not started rebuilding yet.¹

Most of those families who started rebuilding houses need more financial assistance including government relief package for house construction. Many families who have received first instalment of 50,000 NRs from the NRA haven't started yet. There are many families who have received second instalment and are waiting for third.

There is also significant number of families who have started rebuilding houses but couldn't finish because of financial issues. VIN has provided financial assistance to those families who have low income and are unable to start rebuilding.

The Nepali NRA has so far spent Rs 186 billion for reconstruction work, of which Rs 67 billion has come from donors.

National reconstruction authority (NRA) is granting reconstruction financial support to legal eligible households (300,000 NRs), in three instalments: NRs 50,000 on first, 150,000 NRs in second and 100,000 NRs at last.²

However, on November 2018, the NRA reviewed its mid-term priorities, addressing Rs 400 billion for the funding gap.³

It is found that many families in the worst affected districts relied on loans, in order to rebuilt their homes, while it is almost three years that people are still living on temporary shelters/houses.⁴

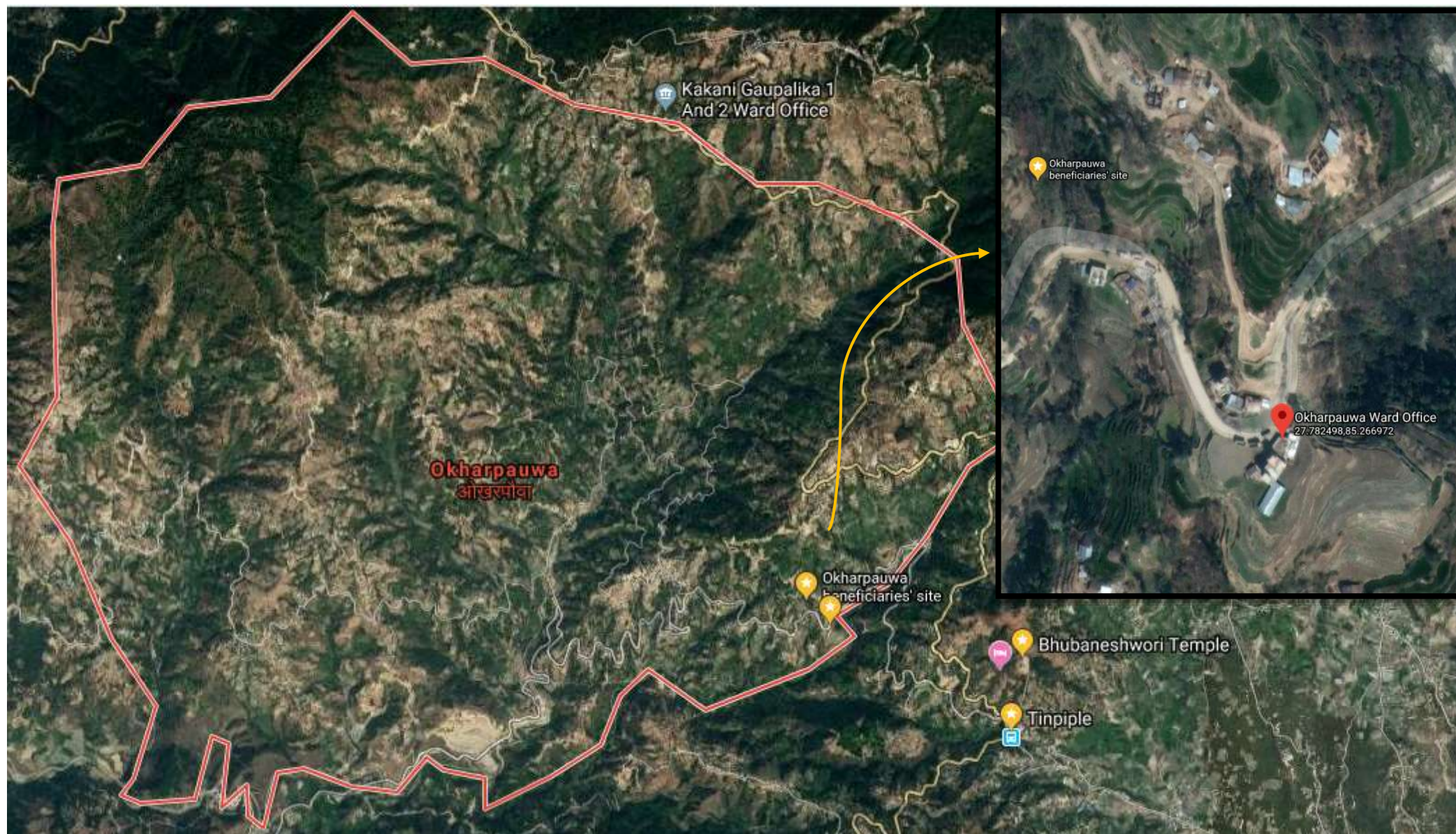
¹ (MOUD- CLPIU; <http://202.45.144.197/nfdnfis/clpiu/index.htm>).

² <http://nra.gov.np/en>;

³ <https://thehimalayantimes.com/business/national-reconstruction-authority-mid-term-review-to-realign-priorities/>;

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2018/dec/05/kathmandu-earthquake-debt-nepal>;

FIELD VISIT TO KAKHANI BENEFICIARIES & WARD OFFICE
13TH AND 14TH OF NOV 2018



- THE BENEFICIARISES

The field visit to Okharpauwa community has been realized the 12th of November 2018, thanks to the presence of the social worker, Deepak Ghimire, as a translator, and of Niki, volunteer from Macao within the VIN journalism program.



We have visited and interviewed two women belonging to different households in Nuwakot, yet both of them are neighbours. Situated in a slippery slope area where the main road was under construction, the area of future intervention we visited present at first glance typical aspect of hazards, due to the land erosion and to the closeness exposure of the buildings to landslide areas, factors that contribute to the vulnerability towards risks.





VIN approached this community the first time in 2015, helping build up transitional shelters in the Gorkha earthquake's aftermath. VIN has understood that the village was totally undeveloped; people were unaware about health and hygiene and for these reasons why VIN conducted campaigns on WASH, improving sanitation conditions and toilet construction.

The first woman interviewed is Ms. Chalimaya, 70 years old widow, under treatment for kidney transplant and dialysis. She has a 29 years old son, living with her and being the only human source of income in the household, having no permanent job or constant income for living. The second woman instead is Ms. Maila 23 years old, married with 2 children.



Chatting with them and addressing the questionnaire content, we have been able to deepen our knowledge about the reconstruction process. They started rebuilding at the same time but with different labourers. The 1st instalment (received in July 2018) and private loans have been needed for the house foundations and pillars, started to be constructed after one month from the instalment receipt. It has been the local government request to VIN to identify potential beneficiaries and help them in the

reconstruction.

Since then, several beneficiaries have been targeted, but only these two household have been willing to be helped, while others are primarily looking for government reconstruction instalments. The difficulty to hire skilled labour (high costs that families often cannot afford), led to paying volunteers from VIN to help as unskilled labour workers.

In details, we learnt that 1000 NPR per unskilled labourer per day and 1500 NPR per skilled labourer per day are required; they usually from the same community, trained from Nepali Red Cross Society (NRCS) on safe construction techniques. Usually, families are the one in charge of choosing their labourers autonomously, adapting the criteria that they belong to the same community and are skilled. Their old houses are completely destroyed, made out of stones and mud bricks and they are not aware of why their houses collapsed. They both witnessed loss of livestock, while no human loss or injuries have been registered.



Talking about disaster preparedness and awareness, they stated that the land is stable and they do not notice any risks for them or in the area, out of seismic activities. The new houses are constructing in a new close place, because of more space; in this sense, no technical counselling for choosing the soil (quality control missing) has been conducted. Finally, damaged bricks from the previous collapsed houses are being used into the new ones.





The local engineer from govt is in charge of following up, granting 2nd instalment. Only if local family will ask for more supervising, he/she will come by, otherwise only for check-in building status for next instalment. Families are also in charge to choose autonomously which kind of materials they need; they know some local providers and suppliers, acceding so to some kind of discounts.

After concluding the reconstruction process, their priorities are to give education for children and to make the house seismic resistant, totally relying on the skills of the labours for a safe resistant house (they are not aware that reconstruction process is the only critical phase in which a safe house can be successfully built). Other priority is financial support for reconstruction, since they are blocked for lack of financial resources, waiting for the already applied 2nd instalment from government.

EMPOWERED COMMUNITY



- THE LOCAL WARD SECRETARY

The interview process continued the 14th of November 2018, having the opportunity to arrange a meeting with the local ward office secretary, Mr. Indrajit and the ward chief, Mr. Chandra Shrestha, at the Government of Nepal's Kakani/Nuwakot Gaunpalika.



Mr. Indrajit is the secretary of the Kakani/Nuwakot ward office since 14 years and thanks to his interview and to the contribution of some local dwellers that were present, we have been able to better understand the geographical area of intervention of the ward, its role in the community and the previous experience with NGOs and VIN.

The gaunpalika (rural municipality) office is the local lower administrative division of the national Nepali government in the area, following the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development decision to dissolve the existing village development committees (VDC), in March 2017. In order to keep data and records as well as to

manage administrative works, a village secretary is chosen.

Mr. Indrajit explained us that until present the ward office has not implemented any action in the DRM area, while other organizations are involved in the educational development, like Lions Club and Little Star (?).

During the Gorkha earthquake, the local office provided to the local population temporary shelter tents and food aid distribution; he doesn't recall any further involvement or actions in the area taken by local associations.

He explained us that the role of the National Reconstructing Authority (NRA) is to collaborate with the ward office, for the instalments process at its administrative and financial level.

In his view, the office team does not identify any relevant risk, out of some landslide on the roads. In this case, they will contact the central government, who will provide the trucks for clearing the area.

There 4 local engineers selected by the government, looking after the several construction process in every household that applied for the NRA instalments.

He underlines the relation between the gaunpalika office and VIN. The association has been involved in the area even before the earthquake, in several WASH programs and cleaning environment programs. VIN brought in the area relief assistance during the Gorkha earthquake, with donation for food aid and shelter. Lately there are not current contacts between the office and VIN,





while during the past relations were closer, with Deepak and Dr. Laxmi Prasad Ghimire (VIN program coordinator, *note of the author*).

He states that the office priority is WASH and toilet use awareness, suggesting that VIN should address some other (6-7) households who have not yet received the NRA assistance, while the community struggles with safe drinking water

supply and lack of education regarding hygiene. VIN in this case could provide assistance, according to his statements, conducting awareness campaign in hygiene and sanitation.

Some dwellers joined the conversation, stressing that after their relocation from their original hilly place (called Nayabasti), following the earthquake, their priority is access to drinking water. Talking with them, we realize that they show some knowledge and concern about DRR and hazard (forest fires among others, usually fought back by the Nepali army, in absence of fire brigades), acquired after the earthquake, while they are more focused in the WASH issue. We concluded the conversation, acknowledging that there are no community committees in the area.

- THE LOCAL WARD CHAIRPERSON

Mr. Chandra Shrestha Balami is the local ward chairperson, in charge since 18 months.



After presenting himself, he went straight to the issue, telling us that 12 households are in difficulty for the reconstruction process, dealing with scarcely income and legal problems over land possession (i.e. several families are living in the same land, but the NRA cannot recognize it for the instalments), that would prevent them to access the government support.

He kept saying that the priority in the community is access to safe drinking water. It is mainly due to the fact the population is augmenting, overcoming the water supply. He finally asked us which contribution we could provide to this issue.

He concluded the interview sharing with us that trainings in entrepreneurship are needed; this way the local farmers will acquire the relevant knowledge in accessing the local market and selling their agriculture product. Among the youth in the community, the most vulnerable are the young women, lacking trainings in skilled jobs.

- THE SUB ENGINEERS

We finally interviewed two local sub-engineers, Ms. Amrita Bista and Himala Sunam.

Their role task is to regularly follow-up the ongoing reconstruction process for the households in the area. The follow-up procedure that are implemented and checked relies in NRA standards provided officially by the national government authority,⁵ in their opinion a good standard.

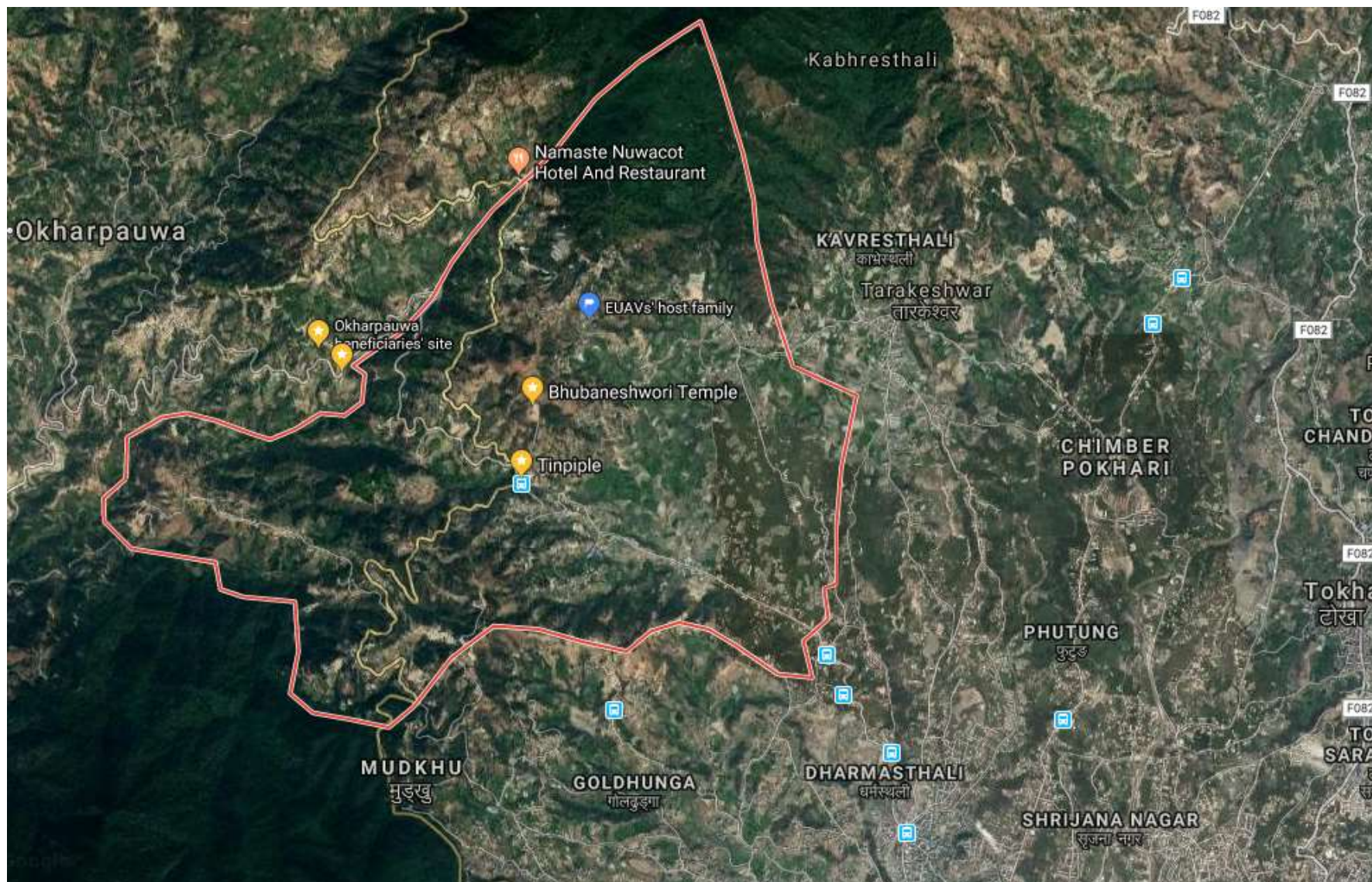
Inquiring more on a technical level, they said that they do not have any authority over the material quality that are used by the households, remarking that so far there are no cases of bad quality materials of which they are concerned...



On a financial level, they stressed that mostly the issues are based on bank account numbers and names of the beneficiaries: sometimes those data are wrong, leading to further delays in the instalments distribution. Finally, they admitted that the money provided in the 3 NRA's instalments are not sufficient alone for completely constructing a house.

⁵ <http://nra.gov.np/en/content/guide/0;>

FIELD VISITS TO JITPURPHEDI BENEFICIARIES & WARD OFFIC





- THE BENEFICIARISES

During last October and November 2018, accompanied by the local field staff Deepak Ghimire, we went to visit several households in the area of Jitpurphedi.

These field visits aimed at investigate and analyse the concluding reconstruction process led by VIN in the area. Again, the criteria of beneficiaries identification adopted by VIN targeted those households with the most concerned social and economic situation. Throughout our visits, we appreciated the efforts made by VIN staff, its volunteers that come in Nepal joining VIN in the Disaster Relief and Response program, the local masonry workers as well as the local households. All these forces had joined, leading to an almost complete and successful reconstruction process. The vast majority of the beneficiaries have met their biggest need, moving from temporary shelters to an ultimate home.

Yet, several concerns have come to our eyes, staring at each house and having some chat with the targeted families. In some cases, houses demonstrate signs of bad construction, as the previous photos show.

Steel rebar come out of the wall without have been proper plastered, exposing the structure to an early damage from external factors (water infiltration that will lead to oxidation, weakening the rebar, pillars and rooftops). Bricks often are not regular and uniform in shape and size or worse are reused from the old collapsed structure, due to the economic impossibility to afford buying them brand-new. This way, the unproved texture of bricks cannot guarantee the required safety against seismic activities.

Sometime household owners do not follow the procedures indicated by the skilled masonry workers: an example is the early removing of the wooden formwork from the yet fresh cemented pillars or foundations. This way, the cement had cracked, exposing hazardously the rebar that it is supposed to be covered from the cement itself.

Another weak point identified is the wall construction; often the consistency of the sand-cement-water/mortar showed inhomogeneous distribution of mortar between brick lines, leading to little pasting power for the brick walls. The subsequent plastering is allegedly supposed to cover and strength the wall.

While respecting the NRA guidelines on structure patterns, little attention is paid to quality material, an equally important factor for a safe construction against earthquakes. Due to logistical issues, we could not be able to meet skilled mason worker at work, preventing us form witness and inquire more on the materials and construction procedures.

- THE LOCAL WARD CHAIRPERSON



(To be kindly completed by Jac Carter, since Carmelo Triolo was absent that meeting for health reasons.)

CONCLUSIONS

A conclusion can be drawn, focusing on the technical, awareness and internal aspect.

-TECHNICAL ASPECT

This early survey report highlighted the need for a more technical expertise, when it comes to the several process of starting and following-up the construction process. Beneficiaries, government engineers and mason workers fail to check the quality material, while just attaching to the NRA guidelines on structure models required for the instalments. A lack of awareness on safe constructing by both beneficiaries and mason worker, regarding soil condition and exposure to hazard leading to vulnerability, might affect the overall safety of the house and livelihood of the families.

-AWARENESS ASPECT

This early survey report aims to stress the importance of awareness raising. To meet safe construction parameters is not enough, since a lack of awareness among beneficiaries and communities on Disaster Risk Reduction will expose them to disaster of several nature. An awareness raising campaign on natural hazards (like wildfires, earthquake, landslides and floods) and man-made ones (waterborne disease among others) should couple the reconstruction process, but not only that. Community contingency plans, family emergency plans, evacuation routes and water-sanitation-hygiene good practices are among the necessary actions to be implemented, following the communities' stressed needs and poor level on DRR awareness and knowledge.

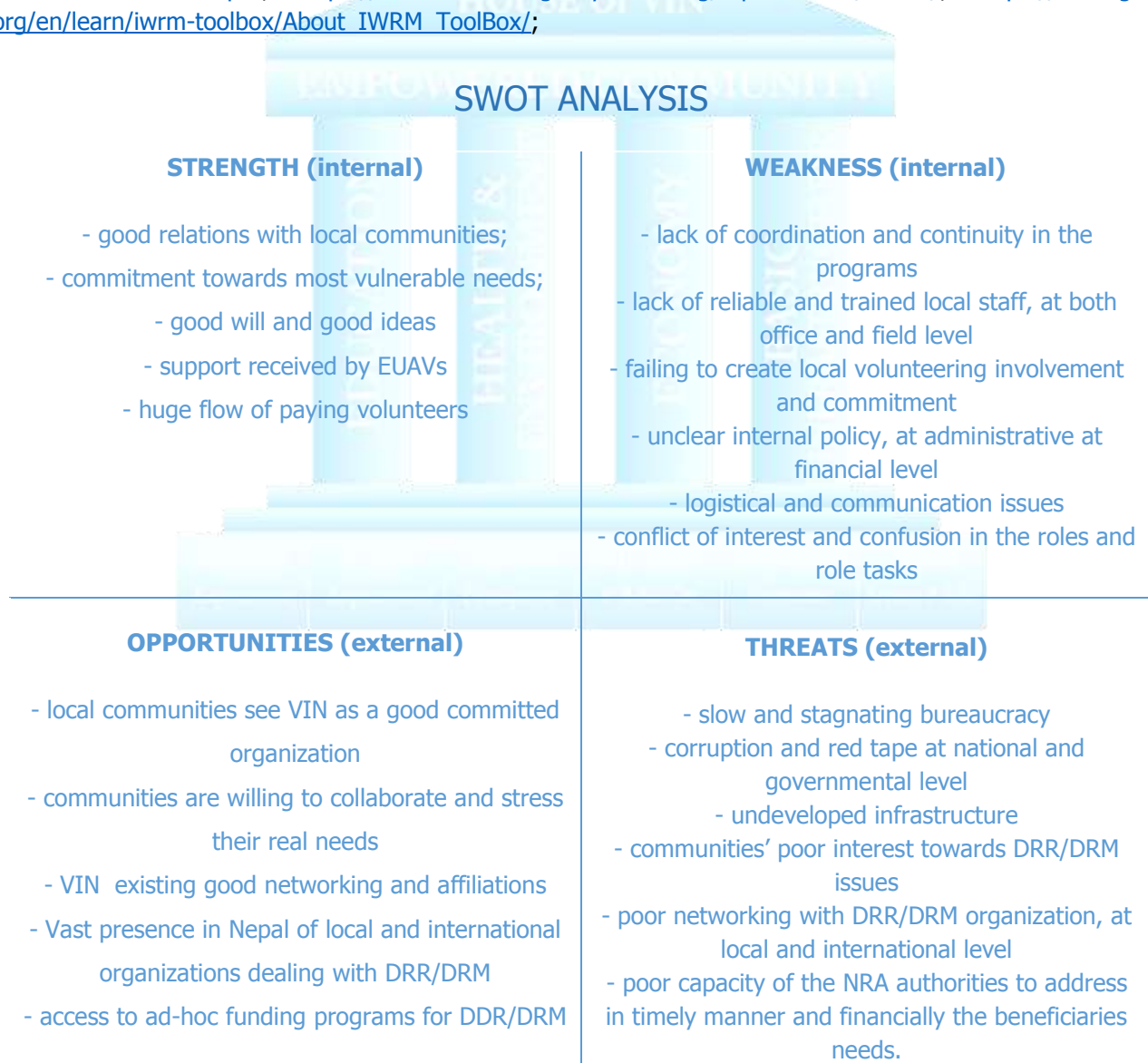
- INTERNAL ASPECT

A clear and committed contribution by the supervisor/mentor and VIN staff in general is needed, since after 5 months of EUAV/VIN DRM project implementation, objectives, work plan, activities and expectations settled with the supervisor/mentor at the beginning of the deployment are not yet fully met or achieved.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND USEFUL SOURCES

- Link DRM transversally into ongoing VIN livelihoods, WASH and waste management programs; e.g. <https://nepal.oxfam.org/oxfam-producing-skilled-masons-reconstruction>; this will ensure meeting beneficiaries' needs, while creating awareness in a sustainable way on the long-term.
- Conduct extensive, inclusive and updated need assessments, by using digital tools for data collection (ODK) and participatory approach methodologies: e.g. <https://www.ifrc.org/vca>; <http://flagship4.nrrc.org.np>; http://www.nrcc.org/sites/default/files/resources/NRCS_VCA_Guidelines_.pdf; <https://opendatakit.org>; <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/applications/kobotoolbox>; <https://www.danchurchaid.org/where-we-work/nepal/excitement-of-digital-transformation>.
- Create and update relevant financial and administrative tools, at the VIN core level: the establishment of a clear and sustainable project/programme planning (PPP) and its monitoring and evaluating (M&E/MEAL), as well as budget planning enable VIN team to form a precise idea of the project's likely costs. It ensures that they are realistic in terms of the funds needed to implement activities to achieve the intended results, while provide robust accountability for the decision-making process of both recipients and donors, for granting proposals. A result-based project cycle management and its related tools (logical framework among others) are potential ways to ensure a good project throughout all its steps;
e.g. <https://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/monitoring/PPP-Guidance-Manual-English.pdf>; <http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/monitoring/IFRC-ME-Guide-8-2011.pdf>; <http://www.ifrc.org/en/who-we-are/performance-and-accountability/monitoring-and-evaluation/>.

- Harmonize VIN's DRM strategic plan in line with the Sendai Framework, the recent national Nepali DRR/DRM Act, National Disaster Management Policy and Strategic Action Plan (2018-2030) and with the upcoming National Disaster Risk Management Authority; e.g. <http://www.adpc.net/igo/contents/Media/media-news.asp?pid=1467>; <http://drrportal.gov.np/exrules>; <http://drrportal.gov.np/document/category/ndrrpsap>.
- Identify all the relevant local and international stakeholders involved in the DRM/DRR, especially when ongoing or past similar projects are implemented in the same geographical areas of VIN's intervention. Strengthening VIN's network with them, in order to boost organization's capacity building and visibility, while avoiding to overlap or to replicate actions; e.g. <https://www.danchurchaid.org/where-we-work/nepal>; <https://www.ndrcnepal.org>; <https://www.buildchange.org>; <https://www.usaid.gov/nepal/factsheets/sustainable-action-resilience-and-food-security-sabal> (intervention in the Okhaldhunga and Nuwakot area); <https://nepal.oxfam.org/oxfam-producing-skilled-masons-reconstruction> (intervention in Nuwakot area).
- Establish a solid network with all relevant national/governmental actors involved in the reconstruction process, namely local engineers/sub-engineers and NRA offices.
- **USEFUL LINKS FOR A STRATEGIC DRM PLAN DRAFT:** <http://flagship4.nrrc.org.np/knowledge-library>; http://www.actionagainsthunger.org/sites/default/files/publications/DISASTER_RISK_MANAGEMENT_FOR_COMMUNITIES_01.2010.pdf; <https://www.careemergencytoolkit.org/topics-issues/34-drr/>; https://www.gwp.org/en/learn/iwrm-toolbox/About_IWRM_ToolBox/;



ANNEX

VIN/EUAV questionnaire
(Edited by Jac Carter and Carmelo Triolo)

Meet Deepak Monday 12th at ten AM by Tinpile police station

- Meeting local govt official - ward office
- Meeting beneficiaries
- Document - photographs, videos, informal interviews, formal interviews

Message Deepak

Questions for Deepak

- Info on which beneficiaries have been selected?
- How?
- Is there a VIN District Project coordinator for Nuwakot? Is it Deepak?
- How long have VIN been working in Nuwakot?
- What DRR work has VIN done in Nuwakot so far?
- Do community meetings or a committee made up of the general public meet in Kakani?
- What geographical area VIN works in (boundaries)
- What is VINs construction target/beneficiary target for Nuwakot

Questions for local govt official(s) - ward office

Kakani village council ward 1 and 2

- Name, position, length in post (ask Deepak about politics of area, person in post)
- Is anyone in charge of DRM in ward / Has the ward done any work on DRR/ worked with any other organisations
- What's wards involvement/collaboration with NRA
- Ward/others doing any work to reduce risk/vulnerability
- What does he think are the hazards facing the ward? Biggest hazard facing ward?
- Does ward inspect building standards
- When did you first hear about VIN? How?
- What percentage of the community do you think has heard about/of VIN?
- How does the ward office communicate with VIN? With whom?
- Any suggestions on how cooperation with VIN could be improved?
- What do you see as the biggest challenges in ward?
- How does the ward office work with VIN? Relationship?
- What NGO's/charities/**organisations** are active/working in the ward?

Questions for beneficiaries

- Name, age, family, occupation, (monthly income *ask at end*)
- Other impacts of earthquake on family- property damage, death, injury, trauma?
- Why do you think your property was damaged? - How was it damaged?
- What do you consider the risks are in this location to your property?
- When then How did you start the reconstruction process?
- Why did you decide to collaborate with VIN? How did it come about?
- Expectations of working with VIN?
- Caste (ask Deepak afterwards)
- At the moment how would you describe your level of vulnerability to hazards -

0 being not vulnerable at all and 5 being highly vulnerable

- ***How much personally do you get involved in the reconstruction process – design, supply, labourers etc. Selection criteria*** Needs rewording/rewriting
- Have you done a ground foundations survey or research to find out if construction on this ground is suitable?
- What do you see as the challenges facing you in your reconstruction? What do you think is the biggest challenge facing you in rebuilding?
- Who built your temporary house/who do you currently live with?
- What are you looking forward to most when your property is built?

Photograph

- Beneficiaries
- Temporary shelters
- Construction site
- Any bad construction practices
- Good construction practices
- Hazards

