



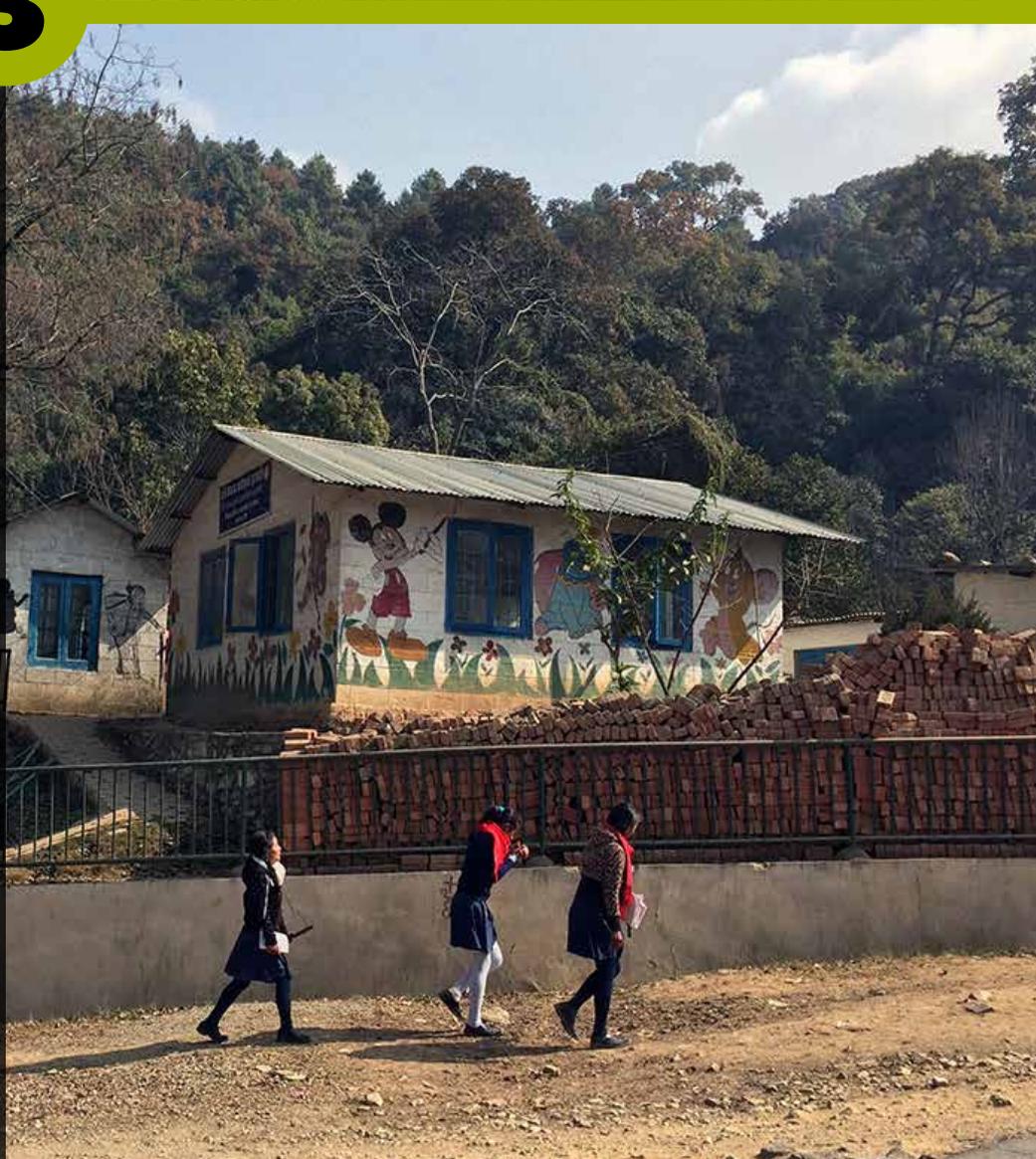
United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

EVALUATION OF UNESCO'S ROLE IN EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES AND PROTRACTED CRISES

CASE STUDY

3

UNESCO Kathmandu Office's Education Response to Natural Disaster in Nepal



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ABSTRACT

This case study is part of an evaluation of UNESCO's role in education in emergencies and protracted crises. It examines the institutional response of UNESCO to the earthquakes that hit Nepal in spring 2015 and, more specifically, the frameworks and capacities that underpinned it. To a lesser extent, the case study also focuses on UNESCO's participation in the system-wide response to the earthquakes. The Organization's Kathmandu Office engaged in the education response immediately after the first earthquake hit Nepal on 25 April 2015. Despite its modest budget and human resources, the Office was able to implement an efficient and relevant response, even on a limited scale, and engage in a number of mechanisms set up by the international community, including the Education Cluster, the post-disaster needs assessment and flash appeals. The success of UNESCO Kathmandu's education response was shaped by ad hoc factors and the initiatives of a few individuals, rather than by an institutional commitment. The office also faced a number of challenges that highlight the absence of a guiding organizational strategy for education in emergencies and of special frameworks and procedures for emergency response.

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ACRONYMS

BFM	Bureau of Financial Management
BMR	Section of Budget & Monitoring & Reporting, Bureau of Financial Management
CapEFA	Capacity Development for Education for All
CFS	Division for Cooperation with Extrabudgetary Funding Sources
CLC	Community Learning Centre
CPR	Crisis and Transition Response Unit, Office of the Director-General
DoE	Department of Education
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EFA	Education for All
EiE	Education in Emergencies
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EPR	Emergency Preparedness and Response Unit, UNESCO Culture Sector
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
HQ	Headquarters
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MoE	Ministry of Education
NCED	National Centre for Educational Development
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NFEC	Non-Formal Education Centre
NPC	National Planning Commission of the Government of Nepal
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODG	Office of the Director-General
PDNA	Post-Disaster Needs Assessment
SISTER	System of Information on Strategies, Tasks and the Evaluation of Results
SSRP	School Sector Reform Program
SWAp	Sector-Wide Approach to Programming
TLC	Temporary Learning Centre
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
WFP	World Food Programme
UNICEF-WCARO	UNICEF-West and Central Africa
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WoS	Whole of Syria Approach
YES	Youth Education for Stability

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

On April 25, 2015, an earthquake registering 7.8 on the Richter scale struck Gorkha, Nepal. The country had not faced a natural disaster of comparable magnitude in over 80 years.¹ Severe aftershocks followed, including a 6.7 magnitude quake the next day. On May 12, a new 7.3 magnitude earthquake struck northeast of Kathmandu, in an area that had already been severely affected by the first earthquake. By June 3, the Government of Nepal confirmed that the earthquakes had destroyed over 500,000 homes and claimed the lives of 8,700 people, 55 percent of which were women and children.² Over 18,000 more people were missing and, 2.8 million were in need of humanitarian assistance.³ These events affected almost half the country, especially poorer, vulnerable rural areas as well as hard-to-reach, mountainous regions. Staggering damages and losses were suffered in terms of infrastructure, including to homes, water wells, cultural and religious monuments, all of which caused food insecurity and large-scale displacement.⁴

The education sector in particular was severely impacted. The first earthquake occurred on a Saturday at midday, when people were awake and schools were closed. Had students and teachers been in school, loss of life would have been much higher. Nonetheless, damages and losses to the education sector were estimated at USD 313.2 million. Roughly USD 280.6 million of this total accounted for damage to infrastructure and physical assets.⁵ Close to 36,000 classrooms were destroyed and 17,000 additional classrooms damaged. Many more were used as shelters or community aid distribution centers. Though insufficient data is available for damages and losses to the private sector, the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) estimated that 92 percent of total damages and losses were in the

public sector. In total over two million children were kept out of school as schools closed down for over a month, from 26 April to 30 May, 2015. The PDNA reported major emerging risks including dropout of children, especially of those with disabilities, repetition and non-completion, anxiety, and loss of motivation and confidence to study.⁶

Relief efforts swung into action almost immediately. The government launched a large-scale relief and rescue operation with the support of humanitarian partners and international assistance – more than 450 aid organizations responded to the emergency. UNESCO's Kathmandu Office was one of the many actors supporting the education sector.

Since its establishment in 1998, the Kathmandu Office's work in education had concentrated on preparedness, largely by supporting disaster risk reduction (DRR) management and activities. The Office did not have experience in responding to natural disaster or humanitarian situations. Nevertheless, in the immediate aftermath of the crisis, education in emergencies (EiE) became a top priority area for the Office. As a development actor with limited resources, UNESCO was able to develop a small scale response to the earthquake by focusing on a number of niche areas. The Kathmandu Office's and UNESCO's overall response capacity were tested in many ways.

This case study aims to uncover sources of support and internal challenges faced by the Organization in its education response to the Nepal earthquakes. It does not seek to evaluate the effectiveness of the education response, nor the comparative advantage of UNESCO's education portfolio vis-à-vis other actors. Rather, this case study provides for an interesting opportunity to examine the institutional response to a recent natural disaster by focusing on UNESCO's emergency response frameworks and capacities as well as the Organization's participation in humanitarian coordination mechanisms.

This case study is part of a broader evaluation of UNESCO's role in EiE and protracted crises. The evaluation involves a mapping and analysis of UNESCO's strategic positioning, its emergency

1 NPC 2015.

2 OCHA 2015b.

3 OCHA 2015a.

4 NPC 2015. The Post-Disaster Needs Assessment on the socio-economic impact of the disaster (Vol. A) estimates total damages of the earthquake at roughly USD 5.15 billion, losses at USD 1.9 billion and recovery needs at USD 6.6 billion, roughly a third of the economy.

5 NPC 2015.

6 NPC 2015.



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response frameworks, and its participation in international coordination mechanisms in the field of education. Within the framework of this evaluation, four case studies are being prepared for more in depth illustrations of these three dimensions. This case study, on UNESCO's education response following the 2015 Nepal earthquake, focuses on the second dimension (emergency response frameworks), and to a lesser extent the third (participation in the humanitarian system-wide response).⁷

Both the broader evaluation and this case study aim to inform UNESCO's future work in EiE and its participation in joint UN mechanisms in view of the Education 2030 development agenda.

1.2 KEY QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The key questions guiding the case study are as follows:

- 1 How did the UNESCO Kathmandu office respond to Nepal's education sector needs following the earthquakes in April and May 2015?
- 2 What was the sequence of events? How did the Office respond within the first 72 hours, two weeks, month, and 3 months?
- 3 What were the sources of guidance and support for the Office's education team?
- 4 What challenges did the education team face in terms of its internal response capacity in the implementation of activities?

⁷ For potential comparative advantages of UNESCO as a non-humanitarian actor in emergency contexts please refer to the case studies on the Syrian refugee crisis and on South Sudan.

METHODOLOGY

The data collection methods for this exercise consisted of a desk study, interviews with UNESCO staff and partners, and site visits. Information was sourced from a wide variety of literature, including project documents and reports from the System of Information on Strategies, Tasks and the Evaluation of Results (SISTER), project proposals, research reports, grey literature, relevant government policies, sector plans, data from the Government of Nepal's Education Management Information System (EMIS), and humanitarian strategy documents (see Annex B). The desk study of relevant documents and data took place prior to, during and after the field mission.

A field mission to the UNESCO Kathmandu Office during 25-29 January 2016 allowed for interviews with Office staff and external stakeholders, which included government officials, implementing partners, leaders of Nepal's Education Cluster, and beneficiaries (see Annex C). Both the UNESCO Kathmandu Education Team and Culture Team were interviewed to gain a more complete picture of internal processes and constraints, as the Office's Culture sector work following the earthquake attracted more funding than EiE and was larger in scale. The field mission also included a visit to the Shikharapur Community Learning Center project site.⁸

⁸ The mission also included a field visit to cultural restoration sites such as the Hanuman Dokha and Swayambhu World Heritage Sites.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 EDUCATION CHALLENGES IN NEPAL

Prior to 1951, Nepal had no public education system. The country was closed off to the world by the Rana dynasty, and schooling was limited to the children of the caste-based elite.⁹ The literacy rate was an estimated 5.3 percent (population age 6 and above) and less than 1 percent for women and girls.¹⁰ The Ministry of Education (MoE) was established in 1952, one year after the unseating of the Rana rulers. Over time, an increase in government allocations to the education budget and foreign donor support permitted the spread of education across the country. However, successive governments neglected to adequately address historic, institutionalized discrimination against rural communities and religious and ethnic minorities, and failed to provide broad-based development. This paved the way for the Maoist insurgency (1996-2006). The political and social roots of the insurgency were also manifest in education through the centralized nature of the education system, curriculum content, language of instruction, and issues of access and governance.¹¹

During the insurgency, Maoists and the Royal Nepalese Army also targeted education for political purposes. Close to 22,000 students and over 10,000 teachers were abducted and enrolled in indoctrination camps,¹² and by 2003 an estimated 30 percent of Maoist forces were aged 14 to 18.¹³ In 2006, a Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed and since then Nepal has been moving towards working with development partners through a sector-wide approach to programming (SWAp). The School Sector Reform Program (SSRP) 2009-2015 involved the restructuring of the education system into eight years of basic and four years of secondary schooling, decentralizing the management of schools, and implementing changes to teacher recruitment and training.

⁹ MoE / UNESCO Kathmandu 2015.

¹⁰ MoHP 2013.

¹¹ Much has been written about the role of education as a source of conflict in Nepal. See Novelli and Smith 2011; Pherali 2013.

¹² INSEC 2007.

¹³ Hogg, 2006.

In spite of 60 years of development aid, major education challenges remain. Large access gaps persist in terms of gender, ethnicity, caste, geographic location, disability, and income levels. Quality continues to be a concern, as less than 44 percent of grade 10 public school students passed the School Leaving Certificate in 2014.¹⁴ Teacher attendance and deployment to remote rural schools, and teachers' strong affiliation to political unions continue to be sensitive issues. Critics of the SSRP and the adoption of global policies on decentralization and privatization warn against the reproduction of historical structural and educational inequalities which run counter to peacebuilding needs.¹⁵

2.2 UNESCO SUPPORT TO NEPAL'S EDUCATION SECTOR

UNESCO has been present in Nepal and supporting the MoE since 1998. Its contributions to the education sector demonstrated important implications for the earthquake response, including its work in the area of DRR, the country's EMIS, and non-formal education (NFE) via Community Learning Centers (CLCs). In 2004, UNESCO's Kathmandu Office also funded the translation and distribution of the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies' (INEE) Minimum Standards Handbook in Nepali.

In the 1990s and 2000s, UNESCO financial and technical support enabled the MoE and its newly established Non-Formal Education Center (NFEC) to institute the CLCs programme. Today over 2,150 community-based NFE institutions are managed by local communities to promote basic literacy, livelihood skills training, and environmental management, and deliver early childhood, health and civic education.

The initial establishment of EMIS and its related flash reporting are also widely attributed to UNESCO.¹⁶ The Flash Report system was established in 2004 to

¹⁴ MoE 2015.

¹⁵ See Pherali 2012; Shields and Rappleye 2008.

¹⁶ Correspondence with development partners and Ministry of Education.



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monitor the progress towards the Education for All (EFA) goals and the SSRP. Data on education, down to the school level, is collected and reported twice yearly (Flash 1 at the beginning of the school year, and Flash 2 at the end). A Consolidated Report, tracing the progress of SSRP indicators, is released annually.

In 2010, UNESCO Kathmandu conducted a mapping exercise of all actors and initiatives related to DRR in education in Nepal. With Education Cluster partners, UNESCO organized a workshop for government officials and development partners on mainstreaming DRR into education policy and planning, teaching and learning, and safe school facilities in January 2012.

UNESCO was also named a member and designated a supporting role in the Government's Contingency Plan for the Education Sector.¹⁷ The plan was developed in January 2015, to support preparedness and coordination for effective education response to seasonal floods in the Terai region, and large-scale earthquakes in the Kathmandu valley and elsewhere. As an office with close ties with the MoE, UNESCO was a natural partner for the Government to reach out to following the spring 2015 earthquakes.

¹⁷ Education Cluster / MoE 2015.

3. OVERVIEW OF UNESCO'S EDUCATION RESPONSE TO THE 2015 EARTHQUAKES

UNESCO's Kathmandu Office had never experienced an emergency of such a scale nor had its staff ever been involved in emergency response. In the days and weeks following the earthquakes, UNESCO was very much present alongside the government and other development actors in the education response. The Kathmandu Office was able to contribute largely due to its Education Unit's extensive experience in the national education arena and strong relations with the MoE that had been built since the Office's establishment, along with some support from UNESCO Headquarters. No emergency procedures were in place (except for security measures) to help the Office respond, such as simplified courses of action or emergency personnel rosters for surge support. In the absence of a UNESCO EiE strategy to refer to for guidance, the Education Team engaged in activities in line with its mandate and already established areas of expertise. The activities proposed and undertaken following the earthquake are recounted below.

3.1 CHRONOLOGY OF UNESCO KATHMANDU'S RESPONSE TO THE EARTHQUAKES IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

Within the first month of the earthquake response, the UNESCO Kathmandu Office was involved in needs analyses, Education Cluster activities, and its own programmatic work. In order to capture NFE in the MoE's rapid assessment of infrastructure damage, the Office advocated for the inclusion of damage to CLCs and contributed by developing a survey to collect the necessary data. Meanwhile, humanitarian actors were setting up the international response to the disaster (see Box 1 below) to which UNESCO was an active contributor. UNESCO was as a core member of

the team conducting the Education PDNA and submitted a Flash Appeal for education activities.¹⁸

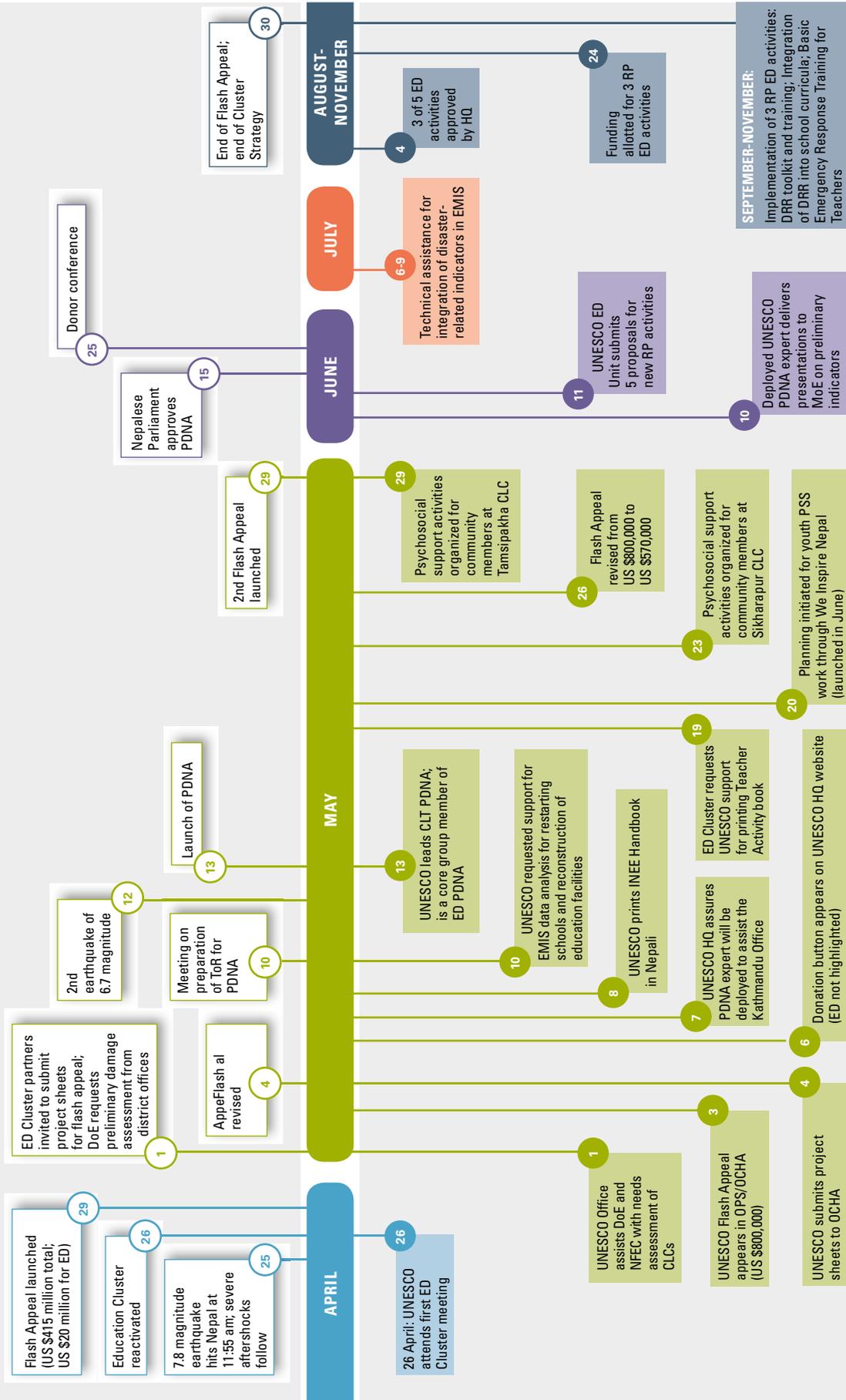
As a member of the Education Cluster, UNESCO's Education Unit provided technical and financial assistance for the printing of Teacher Activity Books in time for the reopening of schools. It also developed self-learning materials in DRR targeting communities, especially women and children, and disseminated these through trainings in CLCs. Financial support was provided for a Back to School Campaign video message, and for the reproduction and dissemination of the INEE Minimum Standards Handbook in Nepali.

Within its own work programme, the UNESCO Kathmandu Office focused both on relief and preparedness. It facilitated technical assistance on EMIS for the integration of disaster-related indicators therein. The Office also organized psychosocial support sessions in CLCs and the training of community youth in psychosocial support to reach children in schools. Curriculum developers were trained in the integration of DRR in school curricula and DRR toolkits were prepared for policy-makers, teachers, and community members. Activities in response to the earthquake continued to be implemented up to the end of 2015.

The timeline in Figure 1 depicts the key external events and UNESCO's activities in education between 25 April and December 2015. The white boxes in the upper half of the timeline indicate key external events, and the coloured boxes in the lower half indicate UNESCO actions or implemented activities. For a detailed chronology of UNESCO activities and events, see Annex A.

¹⁸ UNESCO also led the PDNA on Cultural Heritage and participated in a flash appeal for cultural heritage in the Early Recovery sector.

FIGURE 1. TIMELINE OF EVENTS IN RESPONSE TO THE NEPAL EARTHQUAKES IN 2015



Source: Authors

BOX 1. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE TO THE NEPAL EARTHQUAKES

A number of key events characterized the humanitarian relief efforts and education response. The Education Cluster was re-activated the day following the first earthquake. On 29 April, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and humanitarian partners launched a Flash Appeal seeking USD 415 million, in order to provide over eight million people with life-saving assistance and protection. Following the second earthquake on 12 May, the Appeal was revised to USD 423 million. Within the framework of the Appeal, the education sector called for USD 24,064,072 in order to reach 1.5 million school-aged children. A PDNA, including for the education and cultural heritage sectors, was launched on 13 May. A donor conference subsequent to the publication of the PDNA was held on 25 June. The Flash Appeal and the Education Cluster Response Plan concluded at the end of September 2015. A transition process then began to transfer the Education Cluster's coordination responsibilities to the Project Implementation Unit within the Department of Education (DoE) within the MoE.

Source: Authors

3.2 UNESCO'S PARTICIPATION IN THE WIDER HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

The following section outlines UNESCO Kathmandu's contribution to early response activities in coordination with partners in the context of the wider humanitarian response. It describes the guidance and mechanisms that enabled and, in some cases, constrained UNESCO's response.

UNESCO's education response was made possible due to the personal initiative of its staff both in Kathmandu and at Headquarters. The Kathmandu Office's Education Unit was instrumental in assisting the MoE with initial needs assessments and other activities, largely due to a long-established working relationship between UNESCO and MoE staff, but also due to the proactive and flexible approach of the Office. UNESCO was also an active member of the work of the country's Education Cluster. The Kathmandu Office participated in the Flash Appeals for Education and Culture, was a key contributor to the PDNA for Education, and led the PDNA for Cultural Heritage.

Early response and coordination with UNESCO Headquarters and MoE

Immediately after the earthquake, the Head of Office and the Education Unit sought contact with UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. Uncertain about who they should reach out to in the Education Sector (the Desk for EiE had not yet been officially set up at the time), initial contact was made with the Crisis and Transition Response (CPR) Unit within the Office of the Director-General (ODG). During the days and weeks that followed, the CPR Unit provided the Kathmandu Office with important guidance on the steps to be taken in response to the emergency. This included direct support for the Flash Appeal process, the PDNA, and the mobilization of funds for emergency activities.

Within days the Education Unit was also in contact with the MoE. Its DoE was coordinating an initial rapid assessment of damage to school buildings through the mobilization of district resource persons. UNESCO advocated with the DoE for the inclusion of CLCs in the assessment, and designed a survey to collect data through the NFEC. The inclusion of CLCs in the initial rapid assessment and the overall inclusion of NFE is largely attributed to UNESCO.

Education Cluster

The Education Cluster, which had been established in 2008 after flooding and lay dormant ever since, was reactivated the day following the first earthquake (26 April). It was led by the DoE under the supervision of the MoE and co-led by UNICEF and Save the Children. Overall, the Cluster included 130 national, international and government organizations, UN agencies and donors among its membership with Education Cluster focal points assigned to the 14 most affected districts for overall coordination. Its Response Plan prioritized the setting up of Temporary Learning Centers (TLCs), the distribution of Early Child Development kits, and School and Recreation kits, as well as the training of teachers in psychosocial support and life-saving messages.¹⁹

UNESCO Kathmandu's Education Unit was present at the initial Cluster meeting the day after the first earthquake and attended most other meetings organized by the Cluster throughout its period of activity. These were initially held daily, then every other day, weekly, bi-weekly and monthly. Besides the preparations of the Flash Appeal, the Cluster's initial focus was largely operational, and a number

¹⁹ Nepal Education Cluster 2015a.

of joint activities took place to which UNESCO was able to contribute despite its limited resources. As early as two weeks after the first earthquake, UNESCO funded the reproduction and distribution of copies of the INEE Minimum Standards Handbook in Nepali,²⁰ which it had adapted and translated several years back. These were seen as a vital first step in informing the MoE, especially at the district level, of the steps to be taken in an emergency education response.

At the same time, the National Centre for Curriculum Development (NCED) requested the Education Cluster to develop a Teacher Activity Book with guidance on restarting schooling after the earthquake. The book provides direction on classroom management activities during the first days back after the earthquake by focusing on lifesaving messages and earthquake preparedness, as well as on psychosocial support for students. UNESCO Kathmandu's Education Unit was a core member of the technical team that developed the materials and the Office provided funding for the first print run of the books. As a result, the books were ready and distributed to all schools in the affected districts in time for their reopening on 31 May. UNESCO's technical expertise and ability to quickly mobilize funding for this activity were highly valued by Cluster members and the MoE. Without UNESCO's participation the elaboration and distribution of these materials were likely to have been delayed.

Within the Education Cluster work and upon request of the NFEC, UNESCO also developed DRR self-study materials targeting communities and especially mothers and children through CLCs. Booklets with graphics, stories and poems to convey potentially life-saving lessons in EiE were developed in partnership with the NFEC and UNESCO once again provided funding for their printing and distribution in communities in all 14 heavily affected districts. The books were later used in UNESCO's post-earthquake activities in CLCs.

UNESCO Kathmandu's contribution to the work of the Education Cluster was only made possible by the availability of limited regular programme and extrabudgetary resources within the Office. The Education Unit was able to use them to fund activities of the Education Cluster, as these fell within the scope of the Office's original work

²⁰ The INEE Minimum Standards comprise 19 global standards, each with accompanying key actions and guidance notes that articulate the minimum level of educational quality and access, from the initial emergency stage through to recovery.

programme for the biennium. Despite attempts to raise funds via the Flash Appeal (see below), no additional funding for UNESCO's activities in the Education Cluster was raised. Had the regular programme funding not been available and with no emergency fund to turn to, UNESCO's contribution to the Education Cluster's response would have been minimal.

Flash Appeal

The magnitude of the disaster incited the preparation of a Flash Appeal.²¹ The Kathmandu Office learned from UNESCO Headquarters that UNICEF had already initiated a Flash Appeal for the education sector. As it needed to be prepared within 24 hours, UNICEF did not consult all Education Cluster members regarding the content and UNESCO's Kathmandu Office was initially left out. The first round of the appeal showed a strong focus on support to early childhood development and basic education.²²

With the support of the CPR Unit in ODG, UNESCO Kathmandu's Education Unit developed a proposal for the second round of the appeal focusing on the integration of DRR into the country's EMIS. Having provided critical assistance to the initial establishment and further development of the country's EMIS, the Education Unit advocated for the inclusion of this topic in the Flash Appeal. UNESCO considered that supporting the MoE to integrate DRR into EMIS could bring together the emergency response and the planning cycle. This first version of UNESCO Kathmandu's proposal for the appeal was, however, not included in the appeal. The Education Cluster was under pressure to justify its appeal by promoting education strictly as a lifesaving approach, and targeting an age range between 3 and 18. UNESCO's EMIS proposal did not fall into this category.

In response, UNESCO agreed to develop a new proposal on psychosocial support to parents and CLCs in order to reach out-of-school children and communities, especially girls and women, persons with disabilities, members from the poorest families and disadvantaged castes and ethnic groups. It proposed the training of 800 CLC facilitators who would then orient parents, teachers and community

²¹ A Flash Appeal seeking USD 415 million was launched on April 29th, in order to provide over 8 million people with humanitarian assistance. Following the second earthquake in May the Appeal was revised to USD 423 million.

²² Within the framework of the Appeal, the education sector called for USD 24,064,072 in order to reach 1.5 million school-aged children. As of 3 February 2016, 46.9 percent of the education sector appeal has been funded (OCHA Financial Tracking Service 2015).

members in the provision of social and emotional services for out-of-school, earthquake-affected children. Other psychosocial support proposals by the Cluster focused on children already in school. The original proposal for USD 800,000 was lowered to USD 570,000 following a reduction in funds allocated to the education sector by OCHA.

No UNESCO staff in the Kathmandu Office had ever participated in a Flash Appeal or prepared a proposal for such an exercise. Interviews with Education Cluster members showed that prior knowledge and experience are needed for the drafting of relevant proposals and in the absence of the former, extensive guidance and coaching are needed from staff at Headquarters. While the CPR Unit assisted the Kathmandu Office with the Flash Appeal, prior training and further support would have facilitated the proposal development. Overall, UNESCO's participation in the Flash Appeal for education was made possible by the rapid drafting of a proposal by Kathmandu's Education Unit with a clear focus on NFE and CLCs with valuable guidance from the CPR.

In the end, UNESCO's proposal was not funded under the appeal.²³ One possible explanation for this is that its focus was not on children in formal schooling. However, the proposal for the appeal served as a useful basis for the development of project proposals for donors by the Education Unit.

Post Disaster Needs Assessment

Within three days of the second earthquake that took place on 12 May 2015, the Nepal Government's National Planning Commission (NPC) requested the carrying out of a PDNA under its leadership. The UNESCO Kathmandu Office was informed of the PDNA process by the Government and UNESCO Headquarters. It immediately indicated its interest to participate in the social sectors covering education and cultural heritage. UNESCO had to mobilize funding and expertise quickly to make sure that it was not excluded from the process. Contrary to the PDNA on cultural heritage, which was conducted almost exclusively by UNESCO, the PDNA for the Education sector was led by UNICEF and included staff from the European Union, the World Bank, USAID, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and the World Food Programme (WFP). UNESCO was able to raise the resources and expertise in order to participate as a core member in the exercise.

²³ Out of the USD 11,297,059 received by the Education sector, UNICEF received USD 10,359,043.

To strengthen UNESCO's contribution, the Kathmandu Office's Education Unit requested the participation of a UNESCO expert who had previously worked extensively with the Nepalese government on the EMIS system. As this person was unavailable, the EiE Desk at Headquarters found a researcher working in UNESCO on the development of a new instrument for assessing educational needs in post disaster and post conflict countries who was willing and available to participate in the PDNA exercise during the three-week period. The CPR Unit mobilized extrabudgetary funding for the mission and the expert arrived in Kathmandu for the start of the PDNA on 19 May for a total stay of three weeks. The expert participated in all phases of the PDNA along with two staff from Kathmandu's Education Unit, which included preliminary training in PDNA methodology, data collection in the field for three days, and report writing. The expert drafted a number of sections in the final PDNA report, with a special focus on baseline data and emerging vulnerabilities, which assessed the risks to loss of learning in the earthquake-affected districts. Interviews with the MoE and members of the PDNA education team indicated much appreciation for the social impact perspective that the UNESCO expert brought to the PDNA through the vulnerability analysis that paid special attention to at risk groups including children with disabilities, girls and minority groups.²⁴

UNESCO's participation in the PDNA of the education sector was made possible by the rapid mobilization of resources by the CPR Unit as well as of expertise by the EiE Desk. However, the expert that was sent to Nepal on behalf of UNESCO was not a staff member of the Organization and did not have any prior experience in PDNAs. The expert did nonetheless have extensive experience in needs assessment instruments and had acquired knowledge on the PDNA methodology. UNESCO could not call on internal expertise for the PDNA due to the absence of a roster²⁵ of experienced staff and due to the lack of mechanisms to enable the quick deployment of fixed-term staff to an emergency area. While stakeholders are unanimous in recognizing the important contribution by the expert sent by Headquarters, UNESCO's participation in the PDNA was not supported by

²⁴ UNESCO's input into the PDNA was considered so valuable that the MoE requested the same expert develop a preliminary list of indicators to be used for conducting a more comprehensive needs assessment of the education sector.

²⁵ A roster of education staff willing to be deployed to crisis countries was developed in UNESCO years back. An E-Network list on Educational Planning & Management (EMAP) was also created. Both systems were discontinued.

an institutional investment and an opportunity to build capacity²⁶ for the Organization's permanent staff was lost.

3.3 OPERATIONAL AND PROGRAMME SUPPORT FUNCTIONS AND PROCESSES

This section describes the Kathmandu Office's direct response to the earthquakes, as well as the institutional mechanisms that either enabled or hampered its work in education. Comparisons are at times made with the work of the Office's Culture Unit, as the latter was facing some similar challenges in its response.

Security

Security protocols and procedures were activated immediately following the earthquake to ensure the safety of staff and their family members. When the first earthquake hit the Kathmandu Valley, the primary responsibility of the Office's three security focal points was to confirm the whereabouts and wellbeing of all staff and their family members. With the help of the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), they were able to establish that all staff were unhurt and safe, except for one staff member whose whereabouts were unknown for one week. Emergency preparedness kits were distributed to Office staff, which included basic foodstuffs and other emergency items. UNESCO's Safety and Security Management Section at Headquarters provided valuable guidance to the Office's security focal points.

Media

In the days following the earthquake the international community was coming to terms with the extent of damages incurred to Nepal's schools, villages and cultural heritage sites. The Kathmandu Valley's seven World Heritage Monument Zones were severely damaged and many monuments had completely collapsed.²⁷

As the leading international organization for culture, UNESCO and its office in Kathmandu were flooded with multiple media requests on the state of the Nepal's World Heritage and other cultural sites. The Culture Unit indicated that it initially received up to 20 interview requests per day. Two

days after the first earthquake, UNESCO issued a press release on its forthcoming assessment of the disaster's impact on Nepal's cultural and natural heritage. In the coming weeks, the Head of Office spent much time giving interviews and responding to international media on the damage and actions to be taken.

Managing the numerous media requests proved to be extremely time consuming for the staff of the Kathmandu Office, as they were simultaneously handling other important priorities, which included the initial assessment of damage, the coordination of the immediate response with national and international experts, and the immediate planning of recovery efforts. The Culture Unit did not have guidelines for handling media requests, including what should or should not be communicated to journalists. More assistance from the UNESCO Secretariat in handling media requests would have relieved pressure on the Office and allowed it to concentrate solely on its immediate operational response.

Management structure (internal coordination) and Human Resources

The Office's portfolio grew following the earthquake and necessitated the hiring of temporary additional personnel. The expansion raised issues such as insufficient office space, a lack of a roster of staff specialized in EiE, and limited delegation of authority to staff in case of absence of the Head of Office. The lack of a roster of staff with specialist expertise (in PDNA and other areas) or related deployment mechanisms to fill crucial human resource gaps was keenly felt by the Office.

The UNESCO Kathmandu Office is a small national office with only four²⁸ fixed-term staff. It relies heavily on short-term assistance (consultants, volunteers, interns, etc.) to implement its projects, especially in the Culture and Communication & Information sectors, which do not have any fixed-term staff. Following the earthquake, the Head of Office who is a culture specialist, was tasked with coordinating not only the Office's overall response, but also that of the much solicited Culture Sector.

In the weeks and months that followed, the Office's activities grew at an exponential rate: its activities in education, assessing damage to cultural heritage, coordinating the national response and preparing

²⁶ The participation of the expert in the PDNA did, however, constitute an important input into the development of a new needs assessment instrument.

²⁷ NPC 2015.

²⁸ These include the Head of Office (the only international staff post), a Secretary to the Head of Office, a National Programme Officer for Education, and a National Administrative Officer.

BOX 2. PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITIES IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE EARTHQUAKE

In May the UNESCO Kathmandu Office organized two psychosocial support sessions in CLCs. The sessions brought together CLC members, community members, mothers and children at Sikharapur CLC and Tamsipakha CLC in order to raise their awareness of the important role of education in the aftermath of disasters and of the role that CLCs can play. The sessions focused on creative expression therapy, relaxation and meditation, therapeutic games, singing and dancing, as well as counselling. By conducting these sessions, UNESCO was responding to an important need and filling a gap in communities whose CLCs it helped to establish years back. Other Education Cluster members focused on psychosocial support in schools.

Source: Authors

proposals for donors added to the workload of its staff. To carry out activities the Office hired 21 consultants for the Culture Unit alone and eight for the Education Unit. As the teams grew in size, the Kathmandu Office did not have enough space to accommodate everyone. A request was made to Headquarters to rent an additional building adjacent to the current office, which was declined. The Bureau of Financial Management (BFM) was reluctant to finance the rent of additional premises from the regular programme office running costs, as the extra space would only be needed on a temporary basis due to the fact that the consultants employed by the Office would be working mainly on extrabudgetary projects with a limited duration. Furthermore, at the time of the request, the extrabudgetary projects had not yet been fully approved. No alternative solution was provided to the Kathmandu Office.

The Office's Education Unit was relatively well staffed to coordinate and implement UNESCO's education response. The Unit was able to actively participate in the initial meetings and activities of the Education Cluster, draft proposals for the Flash Appeal, participate in the PDNA with the help of the expert sent from Headquarters, and formulate requests for new activities in response to the earthquake. However, limited human resources in the month that followed the earthquake made it difficult for the Education Unit to participate in all international coordination meetings. The Unit was able to provide technical assistance and voice its position by email and telephone.

The absence of international staff besides the Head affected the Office's ability to respond to the

emergency. UNESCO's rules prohibit a National Programme Officer to take on the responsibility of interim Head of Office in the absence of the latter. Formally, an official of another UN agency is to assume this duty, though his responsibilities exclude entering into new commitments on behalf of UNESCO.²⁹ In the weeks and months after the earthquake, the Head of Office was heavily solicited for numerous matters, which at times required him to be absent from the Office. This caused delays in the signing of contracts and other administrative procedures, as the National Programme Officer for Education had only limited delegated authority to act on behalf of the Head of Office. The absence of special rules and mechanisms for emergency situations was therefore seen as yet an additional challenge by office staff to perform their duties in a time-sensitive manner.

Programme design and implementation

The Kathmandu Office's project design in response to the earthquake and its subsequent implementation was not in any way guided or facilitated by institutional mechanisms or strategic guidance on EiE. UNESCO has no EiE strategy, nor any written guidance on Flash Appeals, the PDNA, or any other emergency processes. Design and implementation of activities (psychosocial support sessions through CLCs and advice to the MoE on the institutionalization of DRR in EMIS) were determined by available funding, Headquarters' approval and the Office's already established activity areas. The Education Unit was not guided by an organizational strategy nor could it turn to a repository of knowledge/experience from other colleagues in the Organization who had faced related challenges.

Though UNESCO's Flash Appeal proposal was unsuccessful, the Kathmandu Office was able to implement its intended psychosocial support programme on a smaller scale with a cascading effect using less than USD 20,000 of funding from the Capacity Development for Education for All (CapEFA) project designated for NFE activities. Following the earthquake, the provision of psychosocial support to communities and especially to women and out-of-school children could not wait, as it was important to address the trauma experienced by individuals as soon as possible (see Box 2 below). Had the existing extrabudgetary funding not been available, the Education Unit would not have been able to

²⁹ UNESCO 2011.

implement any significant activities in response to the earthquake.

The PDNA for the education sector highlighted the importance of not only a well-functioning EMIS, but also an EMIS that takes into consideration risks posed by disasters. As mentioned earlier, UNESCO had supported the establishment of the MoE's EMIS several years back and it is largely thanks to this system that the government had reliable education data to work with for the PDNA. (The data came from EMIS's biannual flash reports.) Recognizing that the EMIS is not responsive to crisis management, the MoE requested further technical assistance from UNESCO in this regard. In response, UNESCO sent an expert on a five-day mission to Kathmandu. The expert, who had previously worked on Nepal's EMIS from UNESCO's Bangkok Office, held a number of meetings with national stakeholders and organized a half-day workshop on strengthening the education information system for better crisis management. A number of immediate and longer-term actions were proposed and shared with national development partners. The implementation of these would be subject to additional resources that the Kathmandu Office would request from Headquarters.

In planning ahead to ensure continuity of action, the Education Unit began submitting proposals to Headquarters for new activities and extrabudgetary projects focussing on the earthquake response. The following five regular programme activity proposals were submitted in SISTER in early June for a total of USD 175,000:

- ▶ Developing a DRR Management toolkit on preparedness and prevention of disasters for schools (USD 60,000)
- ▶ Basic Emergency Response and First Aid Training Program for School Teachers (USD 45,000)
- ▶ Integration of DRR in School Curricula (USD 25,000)
- ▶ Improving Planning in Education by Strengthening EMIS through Integration of Pre- and Post-disaster needs (USD 15,000)
- ▶ Empowering Communities to Develop and Implement Strategies to Improve their Health and Hygiene during Disaster through Community Based Health Education (USD 30,000)

BOX 3. DISASTER RISK REDUCTION TOOLKITS

In collaboration with the Curriculum Development Center, UNESCO developed a DRR Management Toolkit on preparedness and prevention of disasters in schools. Four separate modules were prepared targeting policymakers, school teachers, and primary and secondary students. Self-learning materials were also developed with the NFEC, targeting people in non-formal education through CLCs with the aim of addressing the most vulnerable - illiterate, socioeconomically marginalized, people living with HIV/AIDS and orphans. The toolkits were regarded as relevant and useful both by government stakeholders and CLCs, who also participated in capacity-building activities around them. One such programme in Shikharapur Community Learning Center brought together 28 CLC managers from the 14 most earthquake-affected districts. Using the Self-Learning Materials for NFE Learners, the three-day training consisted of awareness raising around DRR and practical exercises such as emergency drills, fire extinguishing and the use of Go Bags. The participants were encouraged to go back to their communities to replicate the session, materials in hand.

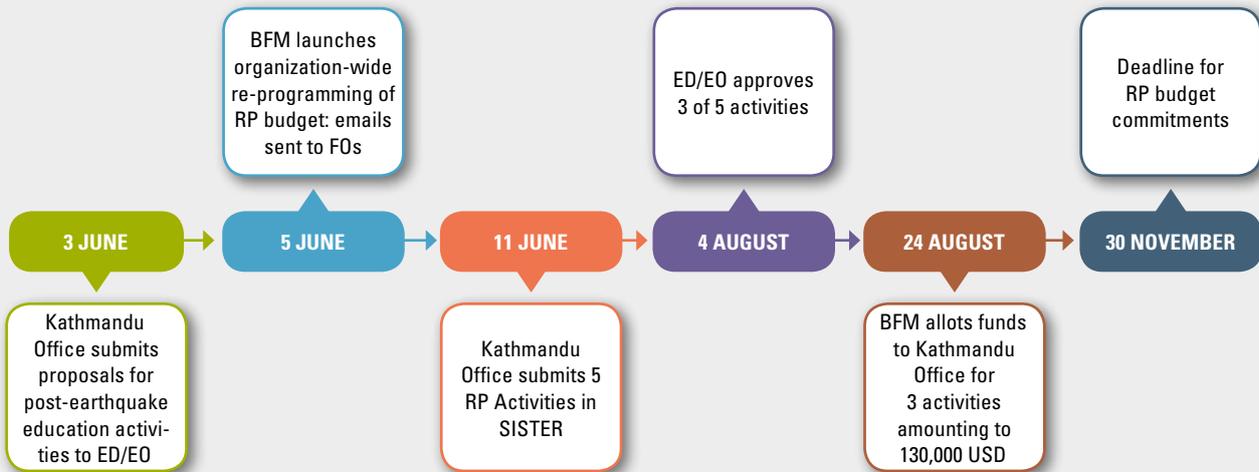
Source: Authors

While small in scale, the Education Unit's proposed activities focused on UNESCO's core mandate of providing policy support through guidance materials to policy-makers, teachers and communities as well as related capacity-development initiatives. All were planned on a small scale, but with the aim of introducing a cascading effect. Three months following their submission, only the first three of the above proposed activities were funded, despite an initial green light received from UNESCO Headquarters for all five. (Timing and budget issues are discussed in the next section.) No explanation was provided as to the reasons behind this prioritization of activities by Headquarters. The activity focusing on EMIS was not funded nor was the activity on health education through CLCs. The Education Unit was left with just three months to implement the three activities for which it received funding, before the end of the biennium. An example of one such activity is described in the box below.

Funding UNESCO's earthquake response

The Kathmandu Office's initial response to the earthquake (through the Education Cluster as well as the Psychosocial Support to CLCs) was funded through limited regular programme and extrabudgetary funds for education, which were originally intended to be used for other projects focusing on related themes. Contrary to the Office's Culture Unit, which received funds from

FIGURE 2. TIMELINE FOR BUDGET ALLOTMENT AND COMMITMENTS



Source: SISTER 37C/5 Budget operation requests; emails.

UNESCO's Bangkok Office as early as 7 May and additional funds from the Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) Unit of the Culture Sector at Headquarters throughout the summer months, the Education Unit had to rely on existing funds for its earthquake response until some regular programme money was reallocated to the Office in late August, that is over four months after the first earthquake (see Figure 1).

As mentioned above, the Office's Education Unit developed five activity proposals that were submitted in SISTER during the first week of June (see Figure 2). The requests were examined in the context of an Organization-wide reprogramming exercise that was seeking to reallocate unused funds before the end of the 2014-2015 biennium. The timing of this exercise was purely coincidental. At the time of their submission, the Executive Office of the Education Sector had given Kathmandu's Education Unit the green light for these activities, indicating that funds would be granted. The preapproval of these activities was not guided by any formal guidelines that took into account the nature of the emergency to which they were responding. It was, however, facilitated by the prioritization of the activities proposed by the Kathmandu Office by staff in the Executive Office who had previously worked in Nepal and were aware of the context that Nepal was facing.

In early August, the Education Unit was informed that only three out of five activities had been approved, however, the Kathmandu Office would

receive more funds for these activities than the amount initially requested. In total, USD 130,000 was allotted to the Kathmandu Office, but only during the last week of August. Overall, the reallocation of regular programme funding for the education activities in response to the earthquake took nearly three months, awaiting validation by the Education Sector for two months and then awaiting processing by BFM during August. Had the reprogramming exercise not been ongoing at the time of the earthquake, Kathmandu's Education Unit may not have received any additional regular programme funds at all.

Once the Kathmandu Office received funds for its education programme, it was able to implement the activities for which planning had begun in late spring. The Education Unit was obliged to spend all the funds received in just three months, prior to the deadline for commitments for regular programme funds at the end of November. It therefore had to scale down its planned activities and was under time pressure to implement them. By the end of the year, all were fully implemented.

The same challenge was faced by the Culture Unit, which had to first spend the reallocated regular programme funds before using newly raised extrabudgetary sources. The pressure to spend regular programme funds led to a delay in the implementation of one of the extrabudgetary projects in culture, which was initially foreseen to be completed by January 2016.

UNESCO's financial regulations do not include provisions for derogations for commitments in case of emergency programming. Consequently, the same financial rules and deadlines applied in Nepal after the earthquake as for normal programming. If the earthquake had occurred later on in the year, the Kathmandu Office would have not have received funds on time and would it not have been able to implement activities prior to the deadline for commitments.

Fundraising

A number of fundraising avenues were explored to finance the Office's activities, including a Special Account for emergencies within the ODG and the Education Sector, a donation button on the UNESCO website, the Flash Appeal and donor conference, as well as proposals to bilateral, multilateral and private funding sources. However, UNESCO's policies on the mobilization of extrabudgetary resources, which do not take into account special circumstances related to emergencies, or foresee any mechanisms to speed up fundraising, significantly impeded the Organization's response to the natural disaster.

Within UNESCO, responsibility for the mobilization of resources lies with both programme staff in Field Offices and the Division for Cooperation with Extrabudgetary Funding Sources (CFS) within the Bureau of Strategic Planning at Headquarters. The latter division deals with bilateral government and multilateral as well as private funding sources. Prior to the finalization of any donor agreement, it must also be verified by BFM's Section of Budget & Monitoring & Reporting (BMR). Consequently, the fundraising process often involves programme staff in sectors, Heads of Offices, CFS, BFM and at times other internal actors such as ODG. The multiplicity of actors and complexity of procedures often leads to delays.

A number of fundraising initiatives took place immediately after the earthquakes in Nepal. The CRT Unit at ODG was able to mobilize contributions for Nepal to UNESCO's Special Account for Emergencies. These were used to fund the participation by the UNESCO expert in the PDNA exercise and a mission by another Programme Specialist for technical assistance to the MoE. An appeal for the Nepal crisis was also published on UNESCO's website;³⁰ however, its focus was solely on the destruction caused to cultural heritage. No funds were therefore raised via this appeal for the Organization's work in education.

The UNESCO Kathmandu Office participated in OCHA Flash Appeals for both education and culture, but neither of the proposals were successful. Following the publication of the PDNA by the Government, an international donor conference for the reconstruction of Nepal was held on 25 June 2015. The Head of Office attended; however, this also did not result in any additional funding for the Office.

Since the earthquake, the Kathmandu Office's Education Unit has produced numerous concept notes for donors. To date, none of these have been taken up. The Office's culture portfolio has, however, grown significantly due to extrabudgetary funds for the consolidation and restoration of heritage sites, given that UNESCO is the only UN agency with a mandate in cultural heritage.

A Special Account for EiE was created under UNESCO's Education Sector in autumn 2015 with limited extrabudgetary resources. However, it became operational too late to be able to contribute to the education response in Nepal in the months following the earthquake. Still, the Special Account modality with funds that are only loosely earmarked and not tied to the Organization's biennia would have the potential of acting as an efficient mechanism to channel funds to an office dealing with an emergency.

³⁰ See, <http://www.unesco.org/donate/nepal2015>.

4. CONCLUSIONS

UNESCO's Kathmandu Office was able to design and implement an efficient response in the field of education to the spring 2015 earthquakes, despite its limited budget and human resources, the lack of a guiding organizational EiE strategy, and the lack of special procedures and frameworks for emergency response. Consequently, the success of the Office's response to the earthquakes in the field of education was significantly shaped by ad hoc factors and the initiatives of a few individuals both in Kathmandu and at UNESCO Headquarters.

By staying loyal to its mandate, UNESCO was able to make modest but important contributions to mainstreaming DRR in a number of education initiatives, empowering CLCs in their outreach to communities through NFE, contributing technical and financial assistance to Education Cluster activities, and adding a valuable social impact dimension to the PDNA for the education sector that paid special attention to children with disabilities, girls and minority groups. The Office's established reputation and previous work in a number of areas (such as EMIS and NFE) guided valuable, relevant programme design. However, the scale and timeline for their implementation were constrained by the availability of funding and delays in Headquarters' approval.

Coordination and implementation of early response activities was enabled by steadfast, direct support and attention from Headquarters, a long-established working relationship with the MoE, the availability of (limited) flexible and timely funding to contribute to Education Cluster activities, as well as the rapid mobilization of resources and expertise for the PDNA by the CPR Unit and EiE Desk. Participation in Education Cluster activities and in the PDNA was however constrained by the lack of clarity regarding the principal emergency contact person at Headquarters, the absence of a roster of experts or related deployment mechanisms to support a staff base with limited experience in EiE, the lack of a knowledge repository on EiE that colleagues could turn to for programme design, and a deficiency of training and assistance for preparing Flash Appeal proposals.

UNESCO's education response in Nepal tested the performance of the Organization's operational and programme support functions and processes in an emergency setting, revealing a number of areas for improvement. Regarding personnel, issues arose such as the availability of office space for consultants offering surge support, the lack of fixed-term staff and flexible managerial regulations, and the absence of a roster of deployable EiE experts. Regarding the financing of activities, the Nepal experience shows that the channeling of funding to the Office for its response was ad hoc and not guided by any strategic considerations for the emergency that the Kathmandu Office was responding to.

The timing of the emergency coincided with an ongoing reshuffling of funds within the Organization. The Kathmandu Office was therefore able to receive funds for its emergency response, but at the same time, it was limited to implementing its activities during a three-month period. Had the earthquake occurred later on in the year, after the Organization's reprogramming exercise and closer to the deadline for committing regular programme funds in the biennium, the Kathmandu Office would have found itself paralyzed by UNESCO's financial rules and procedures and probably unable to implement activities in a timely manner. The lack of a (sufficiently replenished) fund for education emergency response and inflexible policies on the mobilization of extrabudgetary resources in special circumstances such as natural disasters, impeded the Organization's ability to respond in the field of education in a timely manner and with interventions of an adequate scale.

5. ANNEXES

ANNEX A: CHRONOLOGY OF THE OFFICE'S RESPONSE IN 2015

Date	Key external event	UNESCO activity or action
25 April	7.8 magnitude earthquake hits Nepal at 11:55am, severe aftershocks follow	Kathmandu Office in contact with Crisis and Transition Response Unit in the Office of the Director-General
26 April	Education Cluster reactivated	UNESCO attends first Education Cluster meeting
27 April		Kathmandu Office informed of Flash Appeal and PDNA processes
28 April		Kathmandu Office in contact with Education in Emergencies Desk at Headquarters regarding the preparation of a Flash Appeal proposal
29 April	Flash Appeal launched (USD 415 million total, USD 20 million for education sector)	Headquarters initiates an online donation button for Nepal on the UNESCO website
1 May	Education Cluster partners invited to submit project sheets for Flash Appeal; Department of Education requests preliminary damage assessment from district offices	
3 May	UNESCO Flash Appeal project appears in OPS/OCHA (for USD 800,000)	
4 May		UNESCO submits approved project sheets to OCHA
6 May		Donation button appears on UNESCO website with a focus on cultural heritage (Education sector not highlighted)
7 May		Education in Emergencies Desk confirms the participation of an expert in the PDNA of Nepal's education sector
8 May		UNESCO funds print run of INEE Minimum Standards Handbook in Nepali
12 May	Second earthquake of 6.7 magnitude hits Nepal	
13 May	Launch of PDNA	UNESCO is a core group member of the Education PDNA and leads the Cultural Heritage PDNA
15 May	NFEC request to UNESCO for support on production of DRR book for NFE learners	

Date	Key external event	UNESCO activity or action
19 May	Education Cluster requests UNESCO support for development and printing of Teachers' Activity Book	
20 May		Planning initiated for youth PSS work through We Inspire Nepal, launched in June
23 May		Psychosocial support activities organized for community members at Sikharapur CLC
25 May		UNESCO and NFEC produce "Education in Emergencies: Self-learning Materials for Non-Formal Education". These materials are then distributed in CLCs in 14 most affected districts.
26 May	PDNA data collection for Education sector ongoing until 29 May	UNESCO Education Flash Appeal revised from USD 800,000 to USD 570,000
29 May	Second Flash Appeal launched	UNESCO Culture proposal in Flash Appeal for USD 350,000; Psychosocial support activities organized for community members at Tamsipakha CLC
10 June		Deployed UNESCO expert (for PDNA) delivers presentation to MoE on preliminary indicators for a social impact study
11 June		Education Unit submits 5 regular programme activity proposals in SISTER
15 June	Nepalese Parliament approves PDNA	
25 June	Donor Conference	Head of Office attends Donor Conference
6 July		6-9 July: Technical assistance mission by UNESCO expert to MoE for the integration of disaster-related indicators into EMIS
4 August		Kathmandu Office is informed by the Executive Office of the Education Sector that only 3 of 5 regular programme activities in response to the earthquake would be funded
24 August		Kathmandu Office receives allotment of regular programme funds for 3 education activities
30 September	End of Flash Appeal; End of Education Cluster Response Plan	
September – November		Implementation of education activities
30 November		Deadline for commitments using Regular Programme funds for the 2014-2015 biennium

ANNEX C: LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

- David Adolfo**, Consultant, Culture Unit, UNESCO Kathmandu
- Shashi Sharma Aryal**, Founder and Advisor, Shikharapur Community Learning Centre
- Aagat Awasthi**, Consultant, Education Unit, UNESCO Kathmandu
- Lava Deo Awasthi**, Joint Secretary, MoE
- Saunak Bhatta**, Executive Director, We Inspire Nepal
- Debendra Bhattarai**, Archaeological Officer, National Focal Point for Cultural Heritage Nepal, Department of Archeology
- Giovanni Boccardi**, Chief, Unit for Emergency Preparedness and Response, Culture Sector, UNESCO Headquarters
- Shyam Bdr. K. C.**, Chairperson, Shikharapur Community Learning Centre
- Lionel Chabeau**, Budget Officer, Budget Monitoring and Reporting Section, Bureau of Financial Management, UNESCO Headquarters
- Cristeena Chitrakar**, Consultant, Culture Unit, UNESCO Kathmandu
- Mekdes Edjigayehu-Grandclaude**, Senior Finance Officer, Field Operations Support Section, Bureau of Financial Management, UNESCO Headquarters
- Borisa Falatar**, Coordinator Crisis and Transition Response, Office of the Director-General, UNESCO Headquarters
- Louise Haxthausen**, Senior Coordinator Crisis and Transition Response, Office of the Director-General, UNESCO Headquarters
- Marian Hodgkin**, Education Specialist (former Co-Coordinator for the Education Cluster), UNICEF Nepal
- Kerstin Holst**, Programme Specialist, Desk for Education in Emergencies, Executive Office of the Education Sector, UNESCO Headquarters
- Amol Khisty**, Chief, Budget Monitoring and Reporting Section, Bureau of Financial Management, UNESCO Headquarters
- Lalita Lamichhane**, Social Mobilizer, Shikharapur Community Learning Centre
- Rodolfo Lujan Lunsford**, Conservator-Restorer of Paintings and Architectural Decorated Surfaces, UNESCO Kathmandu
- Christian Manhart**, Head of Office, UNESCO Kathmandu
- Jimi Oostrum**, Co-Coordinator, Education Cluster, UNICEF
- Gopini Pandey**, Co-Coordinator, Education Cluster, Save the Children
- Tap Raj Pant**, National Programme Officer, Education Unit, UNESCO Kathmandu
- Youb Raj Paudyal**, Civil Engineer, MoE
- Shantha Retnasingam**, Chief, Section for Mobilizing Resources from Multilateral and Private Partners, Bureau of Strategic Planning, UNESCO Headquarters
- Serena Rossignoli**, Loaned Expert, Section of Education Policy, Education Sector, UNESCO Headquarters
- Nisha Shah**, UN Trainee, Education Unit, UNESCO Kathmandu
- Thomas Schrom**, Consultant, Culture Unit, UNESCO Kathmandu
- Nipuna Shrestha**, Programme Officer, Culture Unit, UNESCO Kathmandu
- Niroj Shrestha**, Executive Member, Shikharapur Community Learning Centre
- Sarina Shrestha**, Administrative Officer, UNESCO Kathmandu
- Suresh S. Shrestha**, Under-Secretary (CAO) World/Cultural Heritage Management, Head World Heritage Conservation Section, Department of Archeology
- Kamleshwar Kumar Sinha**, Deputy Secretary General, Nepal National Commission for UNESCO, MoE
- Nyi Nyi Thuang**, Programme Specialist, Education Unit, UNESCO Islamabad
- Balaram Timalisina**, Secretary, Nepal National Commission for UNESCO, MoE
- Amita Vohra**, Regional Education Programme Coordinator (formerly in the Executive Office of the Education Sector), UNESCO Beirut

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