

HELP AND PROTECTION DESKS

TO PROVIDE MULTI-SECTOR INFORMATION AND PROTECTION IN EMERGENCIES: A CASE STUDY FROM THE 2015 NEPAL EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE

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EMERGENCY:
EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE

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“The Help and Protection Desks provided the most isolated communities with crucial information on how to stay safe and where families could receive assistance after the earthquake. Girls and boys in need of urgent support, such as orphaned children or adolescent girls at risk of trafficking, were immediately linked to available services by Help Desk staff.”

SUMMARY

This case study describes how Help and Protection Desks set up by Plan International after the 2015 Nepal earthquake provided critical information and emergency assistance to children, adolescent girls and boys and their families.

After the earthquake in Nepal on 25 April 2015, Plan International responded to the humanitarian needs of affected children and adults. In the first response phase, Plan International established Help and Protection Desks at 42 distribution sites to provide communities with real time information about the humanitarian assistance, to connect families to (government) services, and respond to concerns and feedback. The Help and Protection Desks included a shaded space where Plan International staff provided information about their entitlements in the relief phase and explained to families how to use the distributed items. In addition, sessions were organised for children¹, adolescents² and caregivers to raise awareness on key messages on how to stay safe after the earthquake and where families could get support. Children and adults with more severe psychosocial distress, children at risk of trafficking, or other urgent support needs were connected to appropriate services by Plan International.

After two months, at the end of the distribution phase, the Help and Protection Desks were moved to central locations in the community such as transportation hubs or the local government (Village Development Committee, VDC) office. Throughout the relief and recovery phases, the Help and Protection Desks continued to fulfil a function of a central information and prevention point.

¹ PLAN INTERNATIONAL DEFINES A CHILD AS A PERSON BELOW THE AGE OF 18 YEARS.

² THE UNITED NATIONS DEFINITION OF AN ADOLESCENT IS A PERSON BETWEEN THE AGE OF 10-19 YEARS OLD. YOUTH ARE DEFINED AS 15-24 YEARS OLD. THE AGE RANGE FOR ADOLESCENTS THAT PLAN INTERNATIONAL APPLIED IN NEPAL DURING THE RESPONSE WAS 12-18 YEARS, AND THE AGE RANGE FOR YOUTH WAS 15-25 YEARS OLD.

In the first six months, 42 help desks and mobile outreach staff provided information on humanitarian services and child protection in emergencies to 56,352 individuals including 44,008 children. The Help desks supported 22,865 vulnerable children and adults directly in accessing humanitarian services. Specialised referrals were made for 843 vulnerable girls and boys, to child protection³, psychosocial support⁴, health assistance. The role these Help and Protection Desks played in the early detection of child protection issues such as trafficking and child marriage, led some villages to adopt this intervention as part of their community services.

Key lessons identified by Plan International Nepal included the importance of intensive capacity building of and daily support to the Help Desk volunteers, establishing linkages between the Help and Protection Desk teams and humanitarian and child protection services and the police, ensuring follow-up to child protection cases such as trafficked children, and the integration of monitoring and evaluation and feedback mechanisms from the beginning.

BACKGROUND

A powerful earthquake (7.8 on the Richter scale) struck Nepal on 25th April 2015, followed by hundreds of aftershocks, including a second major earthquake measuring 7.3 in magnitude on 12th May 2015, killing almost 9,000 people and injuring more than 22,000 people. Infrastructure and housing, including heritage sites, schools and health centres, were damaged and over 30,000 classrooms were destroyed. The earthquake affected over three million children, 1.5 million children were left homeless and more than 1 million children were unable to return to school.

The needs of boys and girls after the earthquake

After the earthquake, children and their families in the most remote mountainous areas severely lacked access to information and basic services. Access to reliable information is crucial in the aftermath of a disaster, to help people to protect themselves, access humanitarian services and take decisions about their own safety. A lack of information could cause or worsen distress. The emergency compounded several pre-existing barriers

to access to information, including language, low literacy levels and lack of access to technology, especially among women and girls. Social groups that typically had less access to information and assistance included young girls and boys, adolescent girls, people with disabilities, women and 'lower caste' groups, such as the Dalit (about 13% of the population of Nepal belong to Dalit caste groups who as a result of the lowest social status face extreme discrimination and lack of access to services). Information commonly sought

³ PLAN INTERNATIONAL'S CHILD PROTECTION IN EMERGENCIES PROGRAMMES AIM TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO VIOLENCE, ABUSE, NEGLECT AND EXPLOITATION OF GIRLS AND BOYS IN DISASTERS. FOR EXAMPLE BY ENSURING THAT VULNERABLE CHILDREN RECEIVE INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT; THROUGH ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS FOR TRAFFICKING RISKS; OR BY SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S INITIATIVES TO MAKE THEIR COMMUNITIES SAFER.

⁴ PLAN INTERNATIONAL'S PSYCHOSOCIAL WORK AIMS TO STRENGTHEN GIRLS' AND BOYS' SKILLS TO COPE WITH DAILY CHALLENGES AFTER A DISASTER, THROUGH A VARIETY OF CHILD-CENTERED CULTURAL, RECREATIONAL, INFORMATION AND GROUP ACTIVITIES.

after included information about distributions (date and location), eligibility of services, support from government and humanitarian agencies, and who to contact for support.

Some villages were completely cut off from roads and other infrastructure after the earthquake, which hampered access to basic needs such as shelter, food, or clean water. The majority of schools were damaged or totally destroyed, leaving children without the daily routines and protective information they would normally receive in school. In the aftermath of the disaster, protection risks for children increased, especially physical dangers and injuries, psychosocial distress, family separation, heightened risk of child trafficking, early and forced marriage and sexual and gender-based violence. At some distribution sites, community members reported to Plan International that foreigners were seen, who attempted to get the names of children from distribution lists. In other villages, parents reported that offers were made to children for paid work

in Kathmandu. Furthermore, children and adults experienced recurring stress caused by the experience of the first massive earthquake, as well as the hundreds of aftershocks, and the immense loss of homes, livelihoods and loved ones.

Plan International puts children and communities at the centre of its humanitarian response. As a child-centered community organisation Plan International believes that engaging local communities in delivering assistance leads to more relevant, appropriate and effective results. In Nepal, many affected youth, men and women between 18 and 24 years old, were highly motivated to contribute to relief and recovery efforts in their communities. In Plan International’s response many youths volunteered as community facilitators in their local communities. This did not only lead to more effective reach to marginalised children, but also contributed to internal sources of information and support in the community, and increased community access humanitarian services.

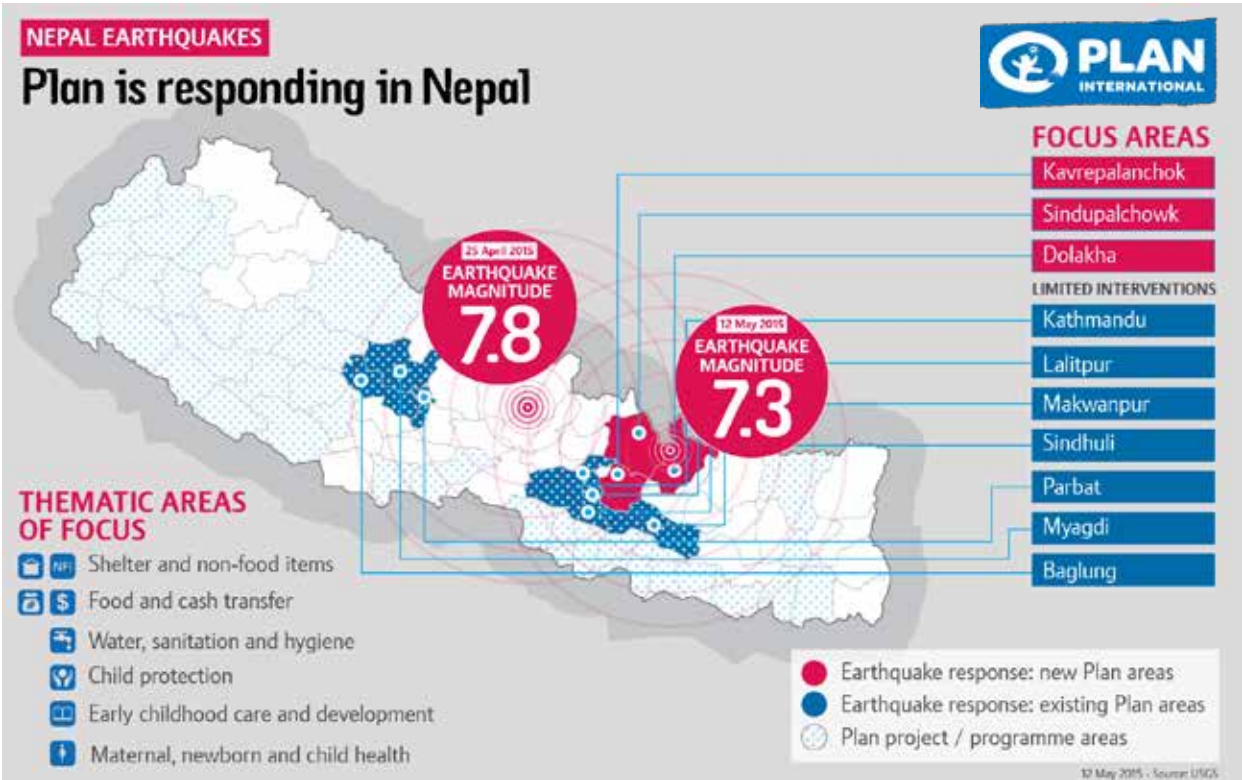


Figure 1: Visual as displayed to communities in the first six months of the response

PLAN INTERNATIONAL'S ACTION

Help and Protection Desks as a strategy to provide information and child protection support

The concept of Help and Protection Desks was newly developed in the first two weeks of the earthquake response, when it became clear that communities lacked basic information about humanitarian assistance and as a result often had no access to these services. At the same time, children faced serious safety and protection concerns such as psychosocial distress, risk of trafficking, and lack of privacy in makes-shift shelters. These necessitated the Help and Protection Desks, which were to disseminate critical information on how to stay safe, to link vulnerable children and families to available services, and to collect community feedback. After the distribution phase was over, the Help Desks were relocated from distribution sites to other central locations in the communities such as bus stops and the village administration office to continue to provide these critical services.

Key activities included:

- u Provision of information about Plan International's assistance in the response;
- u Dissemination of life-saving information related to safety and available humanitarian services, eligibility and where to access these services;
- u Receive and respond to concerns, complaints, feedback and suggestions from the community;
- u Provision of psychological first aid and linking vulnerable families to available services such as water, sanitation, health, shelter, food, livelihoods and formal education;



- u Community awareness raising on child protection to increase prevention and adequate response to issues such as trafficking;
- u Supporting the identification and/or interception of vulnerable or at-risk children such as separated children or trafficked children, and referral to child protection services.

During distributions:

- u Provision of information on how to use the function and set-up of distributed items, such as water purification tablets and water kits;
- u Recreational sessions and awareness raising for girls and boys (5-18 years);
- u Parenting sessions⁵ for parents of vulnerable children (0-18 years) to provide them with information to care for and protect their children after the disaster.

Operating the Help and Protection Desks

In each village, called Village Development Committee (VDC), a Help and Protection Desk was established as part of a wider community-based humanitarian response programme. Plan International applies a community empowerment approach to all its work including humanitarian assistance. Plan International has a long-term commitment to disaster affected communities and believes that child participation, youth engagement and partnerships with local organisations are key for effective delivery of aid and crucial for successful transition into recovery and rehabilitation.

To ensure a speedy set-up in two new districts, areas where Plan International had been requested to respond to the needs of the population, the help desks were initially operated by Plan International staff. After the first month agency staff later replaced by trained community volunteers, supervised by the local partner organisation and technically supported by Plan International. The volunteers were mostly young men and women between 18 and 24 years old, selected from the local community, who were highly motivated to

contribute to the relief and recovery of their communities. Gender-balanced teams of young men and women were established, to serve as many people as possible.

The Help and Protection Desk consisted of an indoor or outdoor shaded space with a help desk. The Help Desk operators were provided with a volunteer kit bag with recreational and communication materials. They also received a small incentive to cover the costs for transportation and meals. The financial and material contribution both helped the community volunteers to carry out their work and served as a reward for their dedicated work. The Help and Protection Desk Help and Protection Desks was supervised by the VDC facilitator, a local community member hired by Plan International's partner organisation. The VDC facilitator was in charge of supervising all other Plan International child protection in emergency interventions in the same communities including Child- and Adolescent Friendly Spaces, community-based child protection, and Mobile Teams who conducted outreach work in the far-flung areas of the community level to ensure all interventions were inter-connected.

⁵ DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THESE INTERVENTIONS? GO TO WWW.PLAN-INTERNATIONAL.ORG TO READ OUR CASES STUDIES ON MOBILE TEAMS AND ON CHILD- AND ADOLESCENT FRIENDLY SPACES.

Initially the Help and Protection Desks were located at emergency distribution sites. Later, when the distributions ended, they were moved from to other central areas of the community such as the administration office or main transportation hubs, which were the main areas to detect and intercept trafficking of girls and boys. Gradually the Help and Protection Desks became a key service in the community and local authorities requested the Help Desk staff to collaborate with them in community awareness raising and help the Government officials in making announcements to the community.

Activities

During distributions, the Help and Protection Desks teams disseminated information about the distributed relief items, ongoing relief work in the village, and about Plan International's overall response. They also shared information on where to get support related to safety and social services. Information was mainly provided in written form on pamphlets and large posters, as well as verbally through mass awareness sessions and smaller meetings around the distribution sites.

The Help and Protection Desks had an indoor or shaded outdoor space attached to it where during distributions staff members organised community meetings and sessions with children where key messages were shared about how to stay safe during aftershocks, and topics related to child protection, education, water, health and hygiene in the aftermath of the disaster. For children and adolescents these messages were integrated in sessions that also included games, songs, and discussions about issues affecting children. Sessions for parents included key messages related to caring for children after a disaster, how to use play and household objectives to promote young children's psychosocial well-being, and health and nutrition for children and families.

Plan International's Feedback officers, who were responsible for feedback collection,

worked closely with the Help and Protection Desks to strengthen accountability of humanitarian assistance. Children and adults were informed about the possibility to raise complaints or ask questions at the Help and Protection Desks. During their activities alongside distributions Help Desk staff held feedback sessions with children and parents to encourage community members to raise concerns. Plan International's Feedback teams would collect and analyse the feedback and ensure a response from the organisation or referral to other agencies. On a monthly basis, feedback reports were provided and based on emerging concerns or recurring themes the Help and Protection Desk teams developed messages and reinforced awareness raising. For example, people often sought clarification about distributions: the items, eligibility, dates, times and frequency of distributions. Also rumour control was a reoccurring theme, as many communities had limited first-hand information from outside, so rumours and incorrect information was easily spread.

Training and supervision

Plan International staff, partner staff and the community volunteers were all trained on the Help and Protection Desks, as this was a new concept developed in the first two weeks of the response. In line with Plan International's community empowerment approach, the community facilitators who replaced the Plan International staff in the Help Desk after the first month of the response, were intensively trained and supported throughout the relief and recovery phases to ensure local ownership of information provision and support to families.

First, the concept was internally introduced in the Plan International response team. In the first month of the response, different technical specialists in child protection, education health, and WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) organised a staff workshop to develop the concept and train all staff on the function and key activities

of the space. A toolkit was prepared with key messages and activity guidance on the different themes. This was followed by training for all local partner staff and community volunteers who were also oriented on the Help and Protection Desks and key activities. Training topics included Plan International's child protection policy and code of conduct, key messages from different sectors and how to communicate them with children and their parents, Psychological First Aid (PFA), the basics of child development and early learning and the child protection referral pathway. In addition, the Help Desk volunteers were informed and introduced to Plan International other humanitarian actions in shelter, water and sanitation, cash programmes, education and child protection interventions such as the Child and Adolescent Friendly Spaces and Mobile Teams.

Following the initial training, the VDC facilitator met on a weekly basis with Help Desk volunteers to discuss successes, challenges and solutions and to facilitate referrals of at-risk children. Children in need of case management services were referred to available government or non-governmental services, and where these did not exist, supported directly by Plan International, for example through cash assistance or financial support for medical referrals. The VDC facilitator met with Plan International child protection staff and partner staff on a bi-weekly basis to report on Help Desk activities and identify support needs. Based on this, technical specialists developed follow-up trainings and coaching sessions.

Approximately every two months the Help Desk staff received a follow-up training directly from Plan International technical specialists. While the intervention was initially supported by the child protection in emergencies team, later the monitoring and evaluation and community engagement

teams played a greater role in the monitoring and technical support to the Help Desk.

Linkages with other humanitarian interventions

At the start of the intervention the Help Desk team members supported a community service mapping exercise led by the VDC facilitator, to list all available humanitarian services and their criteria for eligibility. It helped the team to connect to these services and establish relations with locally active NGOs for referral.

The Help Desk teams were closely linked to Plan International's other child protection and education interventions such as the Mobile Teams⁶, CFS/AFS, Temporary Learning Centres (TLC) and Plan International's distribution teams. For example, the Help Desk teams would receive information from the mobile teams or from teachers about issues affecting children and their families in the community. They would then provide information to these teams about available services, or intensify community awareness raising on these issues. Because the Help and Protection Desks were in contact with vulnerable families seeking support, they could play a crucial role in helping Plan International and other humanitarian service providers to identify and target the most vulnerable families for Plan International's emergency interventions in shelter, water and sanitation, education and livelihoods.

When the Help Desk teams identified child protection concerns, they referred the cases to the VDC facilitator, who was responsible for follow-up: a home visit to the family, assessment and documentation of the needs of the child and the family. For cases that were not eligible for Government's protection services, Plan International provided direct (financial) support, for example by covering transportation costs for trafficked children, or psychological or medical costs.

⁶ FOR A DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE MOBILE TEAMS, SEE: PLAN INTERNATIONAL (2016) MOBILE TEAMS DELIVERING CHILD PROTECTION AND EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES: A CASE STUDY FROM THE NEPAL 2015 EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE. WOKING, UNITED KINGDOM: PLAN INTERNATIONAL.

Positive impact

Increased access to life-saving information and assistance

The most positive impact of the intervention was the fact that the Help and Protection Desks helped to reach large numbers of people with reliable, life-saving information and connect them to humanitarian assistance. In addition, the Help and Protection Desks helped 22,865 vulnerable children and adults get access to services to humanitarian services. Specialised referrals were made for 843 vulnerable girls and boys, to child protection⁷, psychosocial support⁸, health assistance.



“Help and Protection Desk staff were able to reach children and adults with crucial information on how to stay safe after the earthquake. They shared messages on various topics, for example how to stay safe during aftershocks, how to make safe drinking water, and how to detect and respond to trafficking risks” – Naima Chohan, Child protection in Emergencies specialist.

⁷ PLAN INTERNATIONAL’S CHILD PROTECTION IN EMERGENCIES PROGRAMMES AIM TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO VIOLENCE, ABUSE, NEGLECT AND EXPLOITATION OF GIRLS AND BOYS IN DISASTERS. FOR EXAMPLE BY ENSURING THAT VULNERABLE CHILDREN RECEIVE INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT; THROUGH ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS FOR TRAFFICKING RISKS; OR BY SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S INITIATIVES TO MAKE THEIR COMMUNITIES SAFER.

⁸ PLAN INTERNATIONAL’S PSYCHOSOCIAL WORK AIMS TO STRENGTHEN GIRLS’ AND BOYS’ SKILLS TO COPE WITH DAILY CHALLENGES AFTER A DISASTER, THROUGH A VARIETY OF CHILD-CENTERED CULTURAL, RECREATIONAL, INFORMATION AND GROUP ACTIVITIES.

Holistic approach

The integrated, multi-sectoral approach made sure that vulnerable families received information they required and were linked to available services, no matter whether it concerned their health, food security, protection or education. The Help and Protection Desks also helped strengthen the accountability of Plan International's humanitarian response by collecting feedback and responding to complaints. However, this component became more effective in the third month when dedicated community engagement staff were recruited to support this work. Where the Help and Protection Desk couldn't reach communities, for example in remote and mountainous areas, Plan International's mobile teams were able to reach out and disseminate the information on behalf of the Help and Protection Desk.

Sustainability

The Help and Protection Desks helped early detection of child protection concerns such as trafficking and child marriage, after which Plan International or local community authorities such as the police could intervene. Several village authorities saw how the Help and Protection Desks supported their efforts to prevent protection concerns and decided to make the Help Desks permanently part of their community services. The Help and Protection Desks were then installed in the local government

offices and used to disseminate key information and to promote protective practices such as birth registration and marriage registration. The fact that the Help and Protection Desks had already been run and supervised by community members, ensured that their knowledge and experience did not get lost and enabled continuation of services without change of staffing.

Youth empowerment

Most of the Help Desk staff were local youth volunteers, who gained both personally and professionally from their involvement in the response. Their meaningful engagement in the humanitarian response activities helped them with their own coping with the situation. Moreover, through the provided training and their progressive experience of managing Help desks they gained important skill sets for future jobs such as community mobilisation, communicating with children, assisting vulnerable families and awareness of child rights and humanitarian response systems. The engagement of youth also contributed to local ownership and sustainability of the work as they continued to work in the Help and Protection Desks that were adopted as official community services, or continued volunteering in youth networks.



Challenges

Testing a new approach

The concept of the Help and Protection Desk was new to both Plan International and the partner and therefore it took time to develop all programming guidelines, curriculum, training materials, key messages and other tools to run a Help and Protection Desk. Evaluation with the Help Desk volunteers showed that they initially they didn't know what information they were supposed to deliver; they had very little knowledge on child rights issues, no access to information, education and communication (IEC) materials on CR issues, and they didn't know what or how to record feedback. For example, at the start of the intervention the mapping of services was not complete, so the Help Desk staff couldn't adequately inform communities or refer them to services. Some agencies delivered their information directly to the Help and Protection Desks. With additional capacity building and support this was later strengthened and improved. Additionally, as both Plan International and the local partner staff were new to Help and Protection Desk's functions such as emergency communication messages, community engagement and feedback collection, several internal capacity building efforts were required. It took a few months before the Plan International and partner staff such as the VDC supervisor could adequately support the Help Desk volunteers.

Reaching the unreached

During the distribution phase, the outreach and awareness activities had the potential to reach all community members as everybody gathered to collect relief items. However, cultural and social barriers posed challenges to fair and equal access to the Help and Protection Desks for all community members.

Actively seeking support from the Help and Protection Desk was an action that may have been too intimidating for some community members, such as women, Dalits and other 'lower caste' community members, while the most vulnerable families may have struggled to find the time to leave their home/work/tasks and travel to the community office to lodge a complaint or seek support. In some localities, feedback surveys conducted by Plan International showed that people did not feel comfortable approaching the Help Desk staff due to cultural and social barriers but also due to lack of privacy and confidentiality as the spaces were in a public space. Other possible barriers such as literacy levels may have prevented children from seeking support from the Help and Protection Desks. Lastly, there was only one Help and Protection Desk in each community, sometimes far away from the far-flung areas of the community.

Some of these challenges were addressed by coordinating with Plan International's other interventions such as Child and Adolescent Friendly Spaces to disseminate information specifically to children and young people, or with the Mobile teams who did outreach activities to the most remote villages and the most marginalised families, including Dalit families. Nevertheless, an important lesson learned was to ensure both community-based staff and agency staff were recruited and trained to address and overcome the deeply rooted social barriers, and not to reinforce them. Other mediums to reach the unreached could have been employed to share crucial information, messaging or service details.

Lastly, some of these cultural barriers were reflected in the human resourcing of this project. For example, recruited staff

members were not from Dalit community as services provided by this social caste would not have been accepted by the community. Instead, in the selection of the local partner organisation and community volunteers a track record in working with marginalised groups and sensitivity to social and cultural barriers was a key criteria and topic of conversation. Community volunteers were at times reluctant to tell Plan International or their supervisor about the challenges they faced, or admit that they didn't know something. This showed the importance of building a trusting relationship through providing ongoing training, support and close supervision.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability

The involvement of Plan International's monitoring, evaluation and accountability team started after the Help and Protection Desks were already set-up, mainly due to the timing of staff recruitment. When community engagement officers were recruited to support the Help and Protection Desks this work improved substantially. For the Help Desks this was a critical component to know what the most pressing challenges were that existed in the community and what actions they

therefore had to prioritise. With dedicated staff in place to support the analysis of data collected through the monitoring, evaluation and feedback mechanism for the Help and Protection Desks, this component could have been stronger from the start.

Exit strategy

The exit strategy of the Help and Protection Desk was planned together with local authorities. In the district of Sindupalchok Plan International and the partner organization handed over the Help and Protection Desk to the VDC office. VDC staff are managing the booth where they disseminate information about protection issues such as birth registration and early marriage and how to access community services. The Help and Protection Desk has a clear preventative function.

The VDC Secretary is the coordinator of the local child protection committees, ensuring the linkage is made between all project elements. In other communities, child and youth club members will continue provide key information through their activities.

Key lessons learned:

Preparedness:

- 3 Pre-position a clear and written Terms of Reference and staffing plan that reflect the multi-sectoral approach of the Help and Protection Desk and communicate this to children, parents, communities and other service providers;
- 3 Pre-position Help and Protection Desk kits and develop step-by-step programming guidance, activity manuals and child-friendly and gender appropriate awareness raising materials as part of preparedness;
- 3 Pre-position and or develop child-friendly key messages related to protection, health, hygiene and disaster risk that can be adapted and rapidly disseminated during an emergency. Engage communications specialists in identifying effective ways of spreading the messages e.g. through visuals, radio, SMS, pamphlets, or in creative means such as community theatre.

Human resources:

- 3 It is essential to recruit community mobilisers from the same community, who are trusted by children and their parents, represent the diversity of the community and who are sensitised to support the most marginalised people without discrimination;
- 3 Ensure the involvement and technical support from Plan International area supervisors, child protection and other sector specialists, communications and monitoring & evaluation staff in training and supporting the Help Desk staff;
- 3 Provide ongoing training, supervision and intensive support in the first weeks;
- 3 It is essential to provide Help desk staff with adequate support to carry out their work. Provide a facilitator kit with basic stationary, means of communication such as a mobile phone, budget for transportation and meals if required, as well as access to staff care and psychosocial support.

Programming:

- 3 In large scale emergencies when people have lost their homes and other belongings, it is recommended that Help and Protection Desks are always integrated distribution teams and other services to ensure that people's basic needs are met and that the information provision is linked to and integrated with the broader response and humanitarian services;
- 3 It is essential to inform the community about the purpose of the Help and Protection Desks versus other types of assistance provided by Plan International. This will help to manage expectations of the community about what type of assistance can be provided directly by the Help and Protection Desk;
- 3 Ensure monitoring, evaluation and feedback systems are integral part of the Help and Protection Desk intervention from the start and ensure adequate registration, validation and response to community feedback;
- 3 Make provisions for specialised information and protection sessions about sensitive topics such as child abuse, reproductive health and early marriage, and child-sensitive and confidential reporting mechanisms bearing in mind that privacy will be required in the request for information. These sessions may be adapted to female-specific information sessions or offering the possibility for one-on-one sessions;
- 3 Conduct a mapping of existing community resources and services, train the Help Desk team on the eligibility criteria for each service and link the volunteers to the service providers and police, to ensure effective referral to services;
- 3 Ensure the Help and Protection Desks are embedded in a wider response programme and access to (budget for) urgent case management services for high risk cases;
- 3 Where appropriate, involve local authorities from the start to ensure Help and Protection Desks are linked to Government services and to increase the possibilities to embed the information and protection services into longer-term community services during recovery and development phases where relevant.



About Plan International:

Plan International strives to advance children's rights and equality for girls all over the world. We recognise the power and potential of every single child. But this is often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion and discrimination. And it's girls who are most affected. As an independent development and humanitarian organisation, we work alongside children, young people, our supporters and partners to tackle the root causes of the challenges facing girls and all vulnerable children.

We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood, and enable children to prepare for and respond to crises and adversity. We drive changes in practice and policy at local, national and global levels using our reach, experience and knowledge. For over 75 years we have been building powerful partnerships for children, and we are active in over 70 countries.