



CHILD- AND ADOLESCENT FRIENDLY SPACES

PROVIDING CHILD PROTECTION AND EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES:
A CASE STUDY FROM THE 2015 NEPAL EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE

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EMERGENCY:
EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE

PROJECTTEAM:
NAIMA CHOCHAN, INDIRA THAPA AND SHIBA BANSKOTA, PLAN INTERNATIONAL
NEPAL

CASE STUDY AUTHOR:
GUSTAV LINDSKOG AND LOTTE CLAESSENS, PLAN INTERNATIONAL SWEDEN

“Child and adolescent friendly spaces are physically and emotionally safe places in the community where younger and older girls and boys and their caregivers can meet, play, learn and receive vital information and support after the earthquake”

SUMMARY

This case study describes how Child- and Adolescent Friendly Spaces set up by Plan International after the 2015 Nepal earthquake provided physical and emotional safety, information and integrated child protection and education services to children, adolescent girls and boys and their caregivers.

After a 7.8 magnitude earthquake hit Nepal on 25th April 2015, Plan International responded to the urgent needs of the affected girls and boys and their families. Immediate response included basic relief items and food as well as emergency child protection¹, psychosocial support² and education in five heavily affected districts. Plan International established 88 Child and Adolescent Friendly Spaces (CFS/AFS) that reached 8,543 children³ and adolescents⁴ with a range of recreational, psychosocial and learning activities. The spaces offered a safe and supervised environment for the children to play and learn, as an alternative for their destroyed homes and schools. When formal education resumed two months after the earthquake, some spaces transitioned into Temporary Learning Centres for primary schools while other spaces were used as Adolescent Spaces specifically for adolescent girls and boys to meet and receive support. Self-reported evidence by the

¹ PLAN INTERNATIONAL'S CHILD PROTECTION IN EMERGENCIES WORK AIMS TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO VIOLENCE, ABUSE, NEGLECT AND EXPLOITATION OF GIRLS AND BOYS IN DISASTERS. FOR EXAMPLE, THROUGH SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES TO DETECT CHILDREN AT RISK OF TRAFFICKING, AND BY ENGAGING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN AWARENESS RAISING ON PROTECTION RISKS AND SUPPORTING THEIR INITIATIVES TO MAKE COMMUNITIES SAFER.

² 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.

³ PLAN INTERNATIONAL DEFINES A CHILD AS A PERSON BELOW THE AGE OF 18 YEARS.

⁴ THE UNITED NATIONS DEFINITION OF AN ADOLESCENT IS A PERSON BETWEEN THE AGE OF 10-19 YEARS OLD (YOUNGER ADOLESCENTS: 10-14 YEARS OLD; OLDER ADOLESCENTS: 15-19 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. THE ACTUAL AGE GROUP OF TARGETED ADOLESCENTS VARIED DEPENDING ON THE INTERVENTION.

users show that the Child and Adolescent Friendly spaces have contributed to improved psychosocial wellbeing of children and adolescents. Girls and boys expressed that they felt safe and happy, that they had a place to meet their friends and talk about their experiences. Adolescent girls, some of them married, felt it was important to have a safe space to meet each other. Parents reported that they learnt how to talk with and care for their children after the disaster. The spaces served as a central point in the community where life-saving information was shared with both children and adults on how to stay safe after the earthquake.

Plan International’s long-standing presence in Nepal, strong relationships with local partners and engagement with communities in the protection and development of children and young people, enabled a swift and community-based humanitarian response tailored to local needs and capacities. Some of the key lessons from the initiative include the importance of early involvement of parents and caregivers in the activities to reinforce awareness raising and protection of children; pre-positioning of materials such as tents and play materials; and the importance of intensive capacity building and support to the community volunteers, who chose to offer their time as part of their own way of coping with the disaster.

BACKGROUND

A powerful earthquake (7.8 on the Richter scale) struck Nepal on 25 April 2015, followed by hundreds of aftershocks, including a second major earthquake measuring 7.3 in magnitude on 12th May, killing almost 9,000 people and injuring more than 22,000 people. Infrastructure and housing, including heritage sites, schools and health centres, have been damaged and over 30,000 classrooms have been 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.

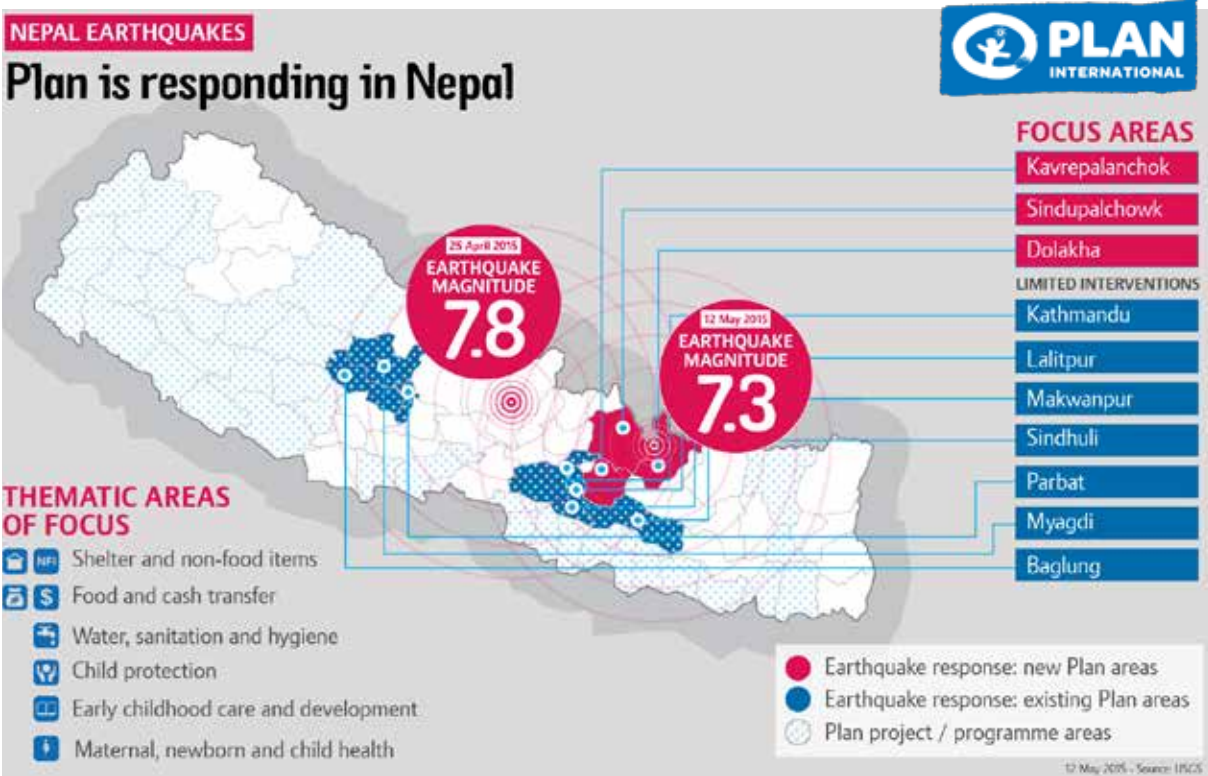


Figure 1: Visual as displayed to communities in the first six months of the response

Plan International has been operating in Nepal since 1978 and has strong relationships with local partners and communities. Its presence in the communities and knowledge of cultural context enabled Plan International to respond to the most urgent needs of children and their families in its own programming areas and beyond.

[The needs of children after the earthquakes](#)

After the earthquake, children and families in rural communities, especially those in remote and mountainous areas were among the most vulnerable. Many people lacked access to basic humanitarian services including health, shelter, water and sanitation, emergency education, protection and psychosocial support. Some villages were completely cut off from roads and other infrastructure after the earthquake. The majority of schools were damaged or totally destroyed, leaving children without the daily routines and life-saving information they would normally receive in school. 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).

In the aftermath of the disaster, protection concerns for children emerged, especially physical dangers and injuries, psychosocial distress, family separation, heightened risk of child trafficking, forced marriage and sexual and gender-based violence. 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. Behavioural signs of distress such as crying, fear, clinging to parents and withdrawn behaviour were not uncommon among children.

While initial needs assessments did not provide insights in the ways adolescents were affected by the earthquake; a nation-wide inter-agency child consultation⁵ held in May 2015 revealed major protection concerns, compounding pre-existing vulnerabilities for girls and boys between 12 and 19 years old. School drop-out and child labour became common. The subsequent worsening of the financial situation of the poorest families compelled many parents to wed off their girls to lessen the financial burden on the affected family. Sadly, most married girls faced social isolation, abuse and exploitation in their marital families. They lacked access to educational or income generating opportunities, increasing their dependency on their husbands or family in-law. On the other hand, adolescent girls in the displacement camps reported lack of safety and privacy and a need for safe water and sanitation facilities and general hygiene materials.

⁵ [FULL CONSULTATION REPORT AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE: NEPAL'S CHILDREN SPEAK OUT](#) (JULY 2015) AND PLAN INTERNATIONAL'S [PHOTO STORY](#)

PLAN INTERNATIONAL'S ACTION

Child and Adolescent Friendly Spaces as a strategy to protect girls and boys

The purpose of the Child Friendly Spaces was to provide immediate life-saving information, psychosocial, learning and protection support to girls and boys affected by the earthquake, in a physically and emotionally safe environment. In the first three months after the earthquake the spaces provided mainly recreational, social and non-formal learning activities for children to regain a sense of normalcy and routine in their lives. Gradually, more structured activities were integrated such as child and youth club activities, life skills, and sexual and reproductive health sessions.

Initially all Child Friendly Spaces were intended for all: younger children, adolescents and caregivers. However, during the children's consultation in May 2015 held in all affected districts, the need for specific spaces and interventions for adolescent girls and boys became clear. Many adolescents were out of school and facing particular challenges such as lack of privacy to discuss issues affecting them, early marriage, school drop-out and child labour. Adolescent girls would not be allowed to attend at the same time as boys. Therefore, once primary school aged children returned to schools nearly half of all spaces transitioned into Adolescent Friendly Spaces.

Key activities:

- ◆ Provision of critical information related to safety, humanitarian services and aftershock preparedness;
- ◆ Provision of psychological first aid and linking vulnerable families to available services such as water, sanitation, shelter, food and livelihoods;
- ◆ Supporting the identification of vulnerable or at-risk children such as separated, unaccompanied and orphan children, and referral to appropriate social and protection services through the community leadership;
- ◆ Community awareness raising on key child protection issues to prevent and respond to protection issues;
- ◆ Organising recreational, psychosocial and life skills sessions for primary school aged children and adolescent girls and boys;
- ◆ Organising Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) for children between 3-5 years old coupled with parenting sessions for their caregivers;
- ◆ Organising child clubs and child-led activities;
- ◆ Distribution of menstrual hygiene kits for vulnerable adolescent girls and baby kits for young mothers;
- ◆ Vocational trainings for out-of-school, married adolescent girls, with support to start their own business after the training.

Establishing Child and Adolescent Friendly Spaces

In the first two months of the emergency response, in total 88 Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) were established for 8,543 girls and boys and their caregivers in the districts of Sindhuli, Makwanpur, Dolakha, Sindhupalchowk, Lalitpur and central Kathmandu. In the first week after the response, the first spaces were set up in Kirtipur, Kathmandu valley, with support from Plan International's local partner organisation. Within two months, over 80 other spaces were established across all districts. Some spaces were quickly established from temporary materials, later replaced by semi-permanent structures.

The first spaces were operated by Plan International during at the sites where initial food and relief item distributions took place. The spaces were set-up only for the day as part of the Help and Protection Desks that operated during distributions. While community members received their relief items, Plan International staff provided information and play sessions for girls and boys of all ages and their caregivers. This was an initial response to the immediate emotional needs of children after the disaster, which was greatly appreciated by both children and their parents.

After the initial distribution phase, semi-permanent spaces were constructed in central places in the community. In each village, a community meeting was held to identify the specific needs and appropriate locations for the establishment of CFS. The CFS were implemented by Plan International's local partner organisations, in coordination with community members, locally recruited CFS facilitators and local authorities.

Many CFS were initially constructed with simple materials such as plastic tarpaulins and bamboo poles. As soon as more local construction materials became available in

the market, these temporary spaces were replaced by semi-permanent structures made of wood, bamboo and aluminium sheets. Where possible, the construction of the spaces was facilitated by community Cash-for-Work programmes, facilitating the economic empowerment of the most vulnerable households.

Where possible, CFS were established in safe school premises so that as soon as formal education resumed the spaces could serve as Temporary Learning Centres (TLC) during school hours. Two months after the earthquake, when schools re-opened, about half of all CFS functioned as class rooms during the day, while after school hours and on weekend days the psychosocial, recreational and awareness raising activities continued. The integrated CFS-TLC approach helped to get children back to school more easily as they were already attending sessions in the school premises on a daily basis, which made the transition to official school hours easier.

Local community facilitators and youth volunteers

Plan International believes that emergency response through community engagement contributes to more relevant, effective and sustainable humanitarian services. The spaces were therefore operated by local community volunteers from the very start. These volunteers, mostly young people between the age of 18 and 24 years old, were highly motivated to contribute to the relief and recovery of their communities. The youth facilitators were identified locally to ensure they knew the community, understood the situation and challenges, and were able to provide regular support. Some of them said that they chose to offer their time and support as part of their own coping as illustrated by the extract below. Thus, supporting others enabled them to overcome their own stressful experiences after the earthquake.



“Volunteering helps me and keeps my focus on the children, rather than worrying about myself and my family. I love being with children, seeing them laugh and play,” **says Bibash, a 23-year old youth facilitator at the space.**

For each space a team of ten facilitators was recruited. The size of the team enabled facilitators to work in pairs, which was useful in the beginning when they started working with large groups of children. Although the CFS were open all day, the facilitators worked in shifts, so that they could spend sufficient time with their families at home. They were provided with a personal facilitator kit and a small financial incentive to cover the costs of their transport and meals.

The teams were supervised by the VDC facilitator, a local community member hired by Plan International’s partner organisation. The VDC facilitator was in charge of supervising Plan International’s activities including community- based child protection activities, Help Desks at community level and Mobile Outreach

teams that worked closely with the Child and Adolescent Friendly Spaces. The VDC facilitators were trained by Plan International to supervise all ongoing response activities and ensure they were all connected. The VDC facilitator met with the Child Friendly Space facilitators on a weekly basis to discuss successes, challenges and solutions and to facilitate referrals of at-risk children. Subsequently, the VDC facilitator met with Plan International and partner staff on a bi-weekly basis to report on the activities and identify support needs.

Running of Activities

In the first two months the main focus of the CFS activities was on recreation, play and provision of psychological first aid (PFA) as a form of basic support to children and adults with signs of distress. An important function of the CFS was to

disseminate the life-saving messages that were developed and disseminated through the clusters in the first three months of the response. CFS facilitators raised awareness on priority issues such as physical safety, health and hygiene and disaster preparedness, adapted for children of different ages and their parents.

After two months when all spaces were established, more structured, psychosocial and life skills activities were organised and child and youth club initiatives were supported. Recreational kits included sports, games and play materials for boys and girls of different age groups. A daily schedule was developed, initially for all children at the same time, and later in separate sessions according to age (3-5, 6-12 and 13-17 years old) and sometimes separately for girls and boys.

In the third month after the earthquake, Adolescent Friendly Spaces were created with a tailored curriculum for adolescent girls and boys. Girl and boy groups engaged in life skill programmes that included topics such as emotional wellbeing and social relations, sexual and reproductive health and financial numeracy. Vocational training opportunities were offered to married adolescent girls, who were often out of school and socially isolated.

Plan International conducted risk mapping as a starting point to explore and talk with children about their concerns and protection issues in the communities. Child trafficking is a major concern in Nepal but especially in Sindhupalchowk district, whose residents were permitted to freely cross the border to China. In all programmes Plan intensified awareness raising on the risks of trafficking, including to Kathmandu, and actively involved parents in the identification of causes and possible solutions and community-based prevention actions, among other more direct services such as trafficking interception at transport hubs and border

controls.

CFS facilitators were trained to identify and refer children with severe medical or protection concerns. However, this was not without challenges. In Kathmandu, a referral mechanism for children with protection concerns existed. But there were no child protection services in rural districts away from the capital. In such remote areas, CFS facilitators who identified children who required immediate support referred them to Plan International or they sought assistance locally in the community.

Child participation

Girls and boys participated in planning of activities, indicating their wishes and preferences in the CFS programme, as well as in the implementation. Older girls and boys organised or led activities of their choice, such as sports competitions, drawing or dancing classes. Later, child and youth clubs were linked to CFS and AFS and were supported to organise their own activities and awareness initiatives. For example, Plan International supported a girl-led advocacy event leading up to International Day of the Girl Child on 11 October 2015, whereby adolescent girls collectively called upon Government authorities to increase safe access to humanitarian services for girls in rural districts.

Plan International implemented a community feedback system that included the Child Friendly Spaces. Regular activities were organised to engage children in planning of activities and provision of feedback on Plan International's response. Plan International's community engagement teams collected feedback on ongoing response activities and cooperated closely with CFS facilitators to collect feedback from children and their caregivers. Regular meetings were held with children, caregivers and facilitators to monitor and



Plan International children's consultation held in a Child Friendly Space, May 2015]

evaluate ongoing activities.

In May 2015 the CFS were the central place in the community to meet and consult with children during a nationwide children's consultation. Children and adolescents were asked for their views and opinions about the relief and recovery efforts after the earthquake. Children participated in body-mapping exercises to explore their experiences in the aftermath of the earthquake and took part in discussions to explore solutions to the identified challenges.

[Specialised services for adolescents](#)

Following the revelation of specific concerns for adolescent girls and boys from the consultations, Plan International decided to transition almost half of all

CFS into spaces specifically dedicated to adolescents where specific times were reserved for adolescent girls to meet. This happened three months into the response phase. The Adolescent Friendly Spaces (AFS) focused on greater integration with other sectors and more structured activities focusing on gender awareness, hygiene promotion, sexual and reproductive health and life skills. Existing life skill methodologies developed in Nepal were adapted to the emergency settings, highlighting relevant topics in life after the earthquake such as health and hygiene, sexual and reproductive health rights, and protection risks such as early marriage and protection referral services.

Weekly sessions were conducted by trained youth workers who at the same time functioned as peer mentors for the

girls. The trusting relationship they built with the girls led to increased reporting of intended child marriages, which would then be discussed with parents or mediated with community leaders with support of Plan International’s local partner organization and the local child protection committee. The AFS also provided parenting and ECCD support to the adolescent mothers and linked the most marginalized married adolescent girls to livelihoods support such as vocational training and support with starting up their own businesses. Furthermore, dignity and baby kits were provided, including sanitary napkins. Sessions were held for parents on how to

support their adolescent daughters during their periods.

[Linkages with other child protection in emergencies interventions](#)

In the targeted districts, there were almost no pre-existing child protection committees or other dedicated groups working on child protection issues. Few villages had existing women’s and youth groups, but they were either not active directly after the earthquake, or not officially mandated to respond to children’s issues. Only a few of the most affected villages in Dolakha and Sindupalchok had Village Child Protection Committees (VCPCs). Where such existed, they were the official Government



mandated community structure for the protection and welfare of children. However, majority of the pre-existing VCPCs were not functioning after the earthquake. Therefore, Plan International prioritised its support to re-activate and/or establish and support these committees to identify community-based assistance for vulnerable children and work closely with the CFS facilitators to identify and refer cases. Plan International provided cash assistance to the most vulnerable families, and the VCPCs with support from the village administration were responsible for the verification and follow-up with the families to ensure that children benefitted from this assistance.

Mobile outreach services

Due to the remoteness of many affected villages, it was impossible to reach all children through centre-based activities. Therefore, Plan created Mobile Teams that were connected to each CFS who focused on outreach activities in more remote parts of the communities. The Mobile Teams consisted of trained community volunteers who worked as a roving team to reach the most vulnerable children living in remote mountain areas with basic education, child protection, health messaging and psychosocial support. They functioned as an outreach team connected to each CFS and the teams shared materials and experience. Another intervention that was closely connected to each space, were community-based Help and Protection Desks that Plan International established after the earthquake. They functioned as central information points to disseminate life-saving messages, link people to services and receive feedback and complaints about humanitarian services provided by Plan and other actors⁶.

Positive Impact

Reaching the unreached

The spaces reached over 44,000 children on a daily basis through structured group activities as well as community events and awareness events. In total 26,123 parents and caregivers received direct support in linking them to humanitarian services including parenting sessions. Awareness sessions held in all the communities reached an additional 12,437 community members. The spaces were connected to Help Desks and Mobile Teams and contributed to the successful identification and referral of 843 at-risk children and families to available services.

Integrated child protection and education spaces

The integrated approach of the CFS with Temporary Learning Centres (TLC) was an efficient and cost-effective way of providing emergency psychosocial support to affected children after the earthquake, and to mobilise children to go back to school as soon as formal education resumed. By that time, children were not afraid to return to the school premises and ready for learning activities. However, an important barrier to the integrated approach was the fact that non-school children such as working children, married girls or children from the Dalit community did not always feel comfortable to go to the space, as they were not used to enter the premises of formal education. More active outreach as well as mobile services were required to provide the CFS services to these children.

⁶ DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THESE INTERVENTIONS? GO TO WWW.PLAN-INTERNATIONAL.ORG TO READ OUR CASE STUDIES ON PLAN INTERNATIONAL'S MOBILE TEAMS AND HELP AND PROTECTION DESKS.

Long-standing presence and community engagement

Plan International's long-standing presence in Nepal and existing relationships with partners and the Government enabled a swift response to the emergency. Plan International's prior child protection, education and life skills programmes could be easily adapted to the emergency. The engagement with local youth and village leadership structures helped to make the Child Friendly Space programme and curriculum culturally appropriate, relevant and effective.

Reaching adolescent girls

The Adolescent Friendly Spaces (ASF) made it possible for adolescent girls to meet and interact in a safe and confidential way, in a place that was known by their parents and families. The trusting relation between the CFS/AFS facilitators and the girls made it possible to detect and confidentially report child protection concerns such as trafficking, early marriage and abuse. The spaces were also an important venue for awareness raising among parents on child protection and adolescent girls' rights. Cases of child marriage were reported to the local partner organisation or local authorities who could mediate between families and negotiate on behalf of the girl.

Parenting sessions

In addition to recreational, psychosocial and awareness activities for children and adolescents, the CFS also organised parenting sessions for parents and caregivers. Priority child protection issues after the earthquake were identified and discussed with parents. To be able to address more sensitive issues, such as child marriage or child labour and

trafficking, the parent circles started off with first several basic information sessions to create trust between the facilitator and parents, after which the more sensitive topics were introduced. During the project evaluation children expressed that they felt a difference in parent's behaviour as a result of the parenting sessions. They reported that their parents were more concerned about school attendance and more aware of how to respond to their children's concerns.

Exit strategy

The spaces that had functioned as integrated CFS-TLC, were handed over to schools in December 2015. The Adolescent Friendly Spaces continued to function as community spaces, partly supported by Plan International's recovery projects for adolescent girls and boys including child protection, life skills and non-formal learning activities for married and pregnant girls.

CHALLENGES

Engagement of parents

Initially it was challenging to mobilise parents as they were occupied in the distribution of relief items or busy rebuilding their homes. Some parents did not see the value of the "soft activities" offered in the CFS. Because some CFS were established in the school compound, it was a common understanding among parents that CFS only carried out activities for primary school-going children. The child protection committees that were later activated became key in raising awareness in the community and explaining the purpose and importance of the CFS activities for girls and boys of all ages.

Technical capacity requirements

While Plan International Nepal had established CFS in previous, smaller emergency responses, most local partner organisations were new to this approach, and were mostly not familiar with concepts related to child protection in emergencies. Plan International therefore had to orient and train partners at the same time as the community facilitators in the communities. Trainings on basic notions on child protection in emergencies and how to run a CFS were held to build capacity and prepare the volunteers to take lead in CFS activities. The high number of new community volunteers, about 200 volunteers per district, and over 500 facilitators had to be trained. Given the high numbers, it was challenging to provide qualified training to everyone at the same time. As one solution, smaller groups of volunteers were trained on more specific issues. For example, whereas all volunteers were trained to identify children, a smaller group of facilitators was trained to do the child protection registration and referral.

Youth engagement

While the involvement of young people as community facilitators was an important asset in Plan International's child protection response, they also faced challenges. The facilitators were at times not taken seriously by parents and caregivers when they discussed sensitive issues because of their young age (18-24 years old).

Referral of children in need of special protection

A big challenge in the referral of child protection cases was the lack of specialized services at district level. When children needed specialised mental health, child protection or health support, often

these services were not available. Main gaps were seen in ambulance services for health emergencies, aids for children with disabilities and protection support for children rescued from trafficking. The Government had their own pre-disaster vulnerability criteria and (financial) support packages for children in need of protection. But it did not meet to the exacerbated levels of child protection concerns after the earthquake, such as a rapid rise of trafficking, child labour and early marriage. Most protection services such as safe houses were provided by local, non-Governmental organisations but they did not meet the high demand. In cases where government support was not available or sufficient, Plan International provided short- to medium term cash assistance to vulnerable families. The community Child protection committees were involved in planning the support to the child and the family and Plan International's local partner monitored how the money was spent.

Logistics and procurement

CFS programming requires materials such as construction materials for quality temporary and/or semi-permanent spaces, recreational and learning materials. However, very few agencies had pre-positioned goods readily available because no one anticipated large scale emergency. Both local and central markets were stretched due to a high demand for construction materials after the earthquake, which led to severe delays in the construction of CFS. During the monsoon season that started about six weeks after the earthquake, the temporary spaces were often not of sufficient quality to provide a safe space for children. This affected the opening hours of the spaces during the monsoon season.

Key lessons learned

Preparedness:

- ✓ Pre-position Child Friendly Spaces programming guidance and train (partner) staff on the establishment of CFS in rapid onset emergencies. This may include: a TOR for CFS teams, individual job descriptions, awareness raising materials with interagency agreed key safety messages, CFS activity manuals and training materials that include sessions on child safety, child development, psychosocial and parenting in emergencies;
- ✓ Pre-position CFS materials to enable a rapid response, e.g. CFS tents or construction materials, CFS kits with local toys and materials, mobile CFS kits (back packs) for outreach teams, first aid kits, facilitator kit bags with basic stationary and supplies;
- ✓ Pre-position strong local or national NGOs with capacity to respond in an emergency. Similarly, preparing and strengthening local child protection groups and networks such as the village child protection committees (VCPCs) to respond in emergencies is crucial preparedness work that can save lives.

Human resources:

- ✓ It is essential to recruit an equal number of male and female community mobilisers from the same community, who are selected and trusted by children and parents. They should represent the community, speak same language, know the community structures, and be familiar with the community service providers;
- ✓ Ensure sufficient technical staff is available to support partner staff as well as community facilitators and volunteers in the initial phase of the response. Provide intensive mentoring and make psychosocial support available to volunteers working directly with affected communities;

Outreach:

- ✓ Ensure life-saving messages reach the affected communities as soon as possible after a rapid onset emergency. Develop child-friendly versions of messages and referral pathways and disseminate these already during the assessment phase;
- ✓ Provide orientations for parents and teachers on the purpose of the CFS/AFS versus TLC and formal schools and provide clarity on activities, target groups and opening hours;
- ✓ Engage parents and caregivers, especially those taking care of the most vulnerable children, from the start of the intervention by organising awareness raising activities and parenting groups. This is crucial to ensure the participation of the most vulnerable children as well as increased community ownership of the space;
- ✓ When the most vulnerable children are not naturally reached by the centre-based activities, an effective strategy is to deploy mobile outreach teams who can target the most vulnerable children, and provide off-site, smaller-scale activities with specific groups, such as adolescent girls or children with an impairment.

Programming:

- ✓ Start programming for adolescent boys and girls from the onset of an emergency response. A tailored programme should be based on a specific assessment of the girls' and boys' needs and built on their capacities and interests;
- ✓ Ensure the Child- and Adolescent Friendly Spaces are embedded in a wider child protection, ECCD and/or education programme and ensure existing systems are strengthened and supported by the CFS/AFS;
- ✓ Ensure the CFS/AFS programme is at all times connected to the referral pathways and service providers including more specialised support and case management services for at-risk children. Ensure budget and technical capacity is available to provide direct services or support to a family where referrals are not possible;
- ✓ In locations where some children or adolescents cannot reach a CFS space, establish Mobile outreach teams to provide psychosocial, protection and learning activities, in addition to the centre-based activities.



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.