

# Report on thematic visit to Nepal 27.November -9.December 2017

## 1. Background

### The thematic visit

Thematic visits are done to ensure that CISU keeps up to date with new developments and trends that are important to provide qualified and relevant services to its member organisations. Through thematic visits staff at CISU develops their personal and professional competencies.

For this specific visit, the plan is to learn from practical examples about the potentials and challenges of **nexus between humanitarian interventions and development work**. More specifically, the experience of the Civil Society funded activities before, under, and after the humanitarian situation caused by the earthquake in 2015 provide an opportunity from where learning can be drawn in the area of nexus. Furthermore, an area of professional learning for the thematic visit is to explore the DERF grants in relation to moving from development to emergency aid and vice versa.

## 2. Objective

B. The objective for the thematic visit is to learn from past experiences of nexus between humanitarian and development work and to better understand the application of the **Core Humanitarian Standards in practice**.

## 3. Observations and learning on thematic issues

The observations are based on a 1 day 'Experience sharing workshop' in Katmandu where 16 representatives from 9 CSO's attended (see annex 1 for program and participation list). At the workshop the presentation by CISU was structured in line with the nine Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) with a focus on localization, local participation (ownership) and building local capacities.

As a preparation for the workshop, the participants were requested to consider the following in an oral presentation based from the experiences from the CISU funded activities before, under and after the humanitarian situation caused by the **earthquake in 2015** and **Floods and Landslides in 2017**:

- What were your interventions before, during and after the earthquake / landslides? (Nexus between development and emergency aid). Any potential (nexus between development/humanitarian Aid) - or challenges?
- Which challenges have you experienced going from Development - to Emergency Aid and possibly back to Development or vice versa?
- How did the relief efforts affect the partnership?

## Main observations and learning at three levels:

### Target group level

Most frequently mentioned challenges and learning were:

- How to get the right information from the 'hard to reach areas'?  
How to select victims? CSOs were under heavy pressure from target group to get help. The need and expectations from target group exceeds the resources available from most CSOs
- How to get access to the most vulnerable people in the most remote areas?
- The disabled were a specific challenge since they cannot go to the distribution centres. In future this group need specific attention when developing the selection criteria for most vulnerable among target group
- How to ensure that the 'right' people get the support and to avoid conflict during distribution
- The communication with the target group was difficult, so that CSOs could understand who are the most vulnerable. Disabled groups cannot go to the distribution centres.
- How to get the right information from ground level. The need for creating partnerships at local level or identifying local coordinators was stressed as very important
- Competition was new for most CSOs. As noticed by participants: "Some were more concerned about their visibility than doing the real work"
- Participation/Involvement of target group was an issue of major concern.
- How to get an overview of which organisations are already in the area? First response was not coordinated, and may have created more dependency than help.
- A major challenge has been to work with the traumas after the earthquake and as a consequence of that there is a need for expert help for e.g. organizing health camps
- Local communities need to be trained in Disaster preparedness e.g. in how to identify most vulnerable. Even though it is only 2 years ago, communities seem to have forgotten the training they received. We need continuously ToT in communities.

### Organisational – Partnership level

- None of the CSO (all involved in development work) have been trained in Disaster Preparedness. As we know that disasters like earthquakes and floods will happen again, it is important as an organisation to invest more in disaster preparedness.
- We know only little about the CHS, so we might not have been timely, appropriate and relevant. In future we want to be better in translating them into practise.
- Burnout of staff during and after earthquake was a major obstacle in being effective in the disaster work.
- Linking project and new demands from disaster victims was a challenge. Decided to give staff training in disaster risk management. Challenge was that they had no technical expertise about this within the organization.
- A disaster management fund should be part of the CSOs

Generally all participants stressed the following obstacles at organisational level in redirecting their planning and implementation plan **from development – to emergency work:**

- Tedious Government rules and regulation – they were very slow. Many CSO's had signed MoU with the districts, but work started too late
- Start new selection of needy people
- More coordination and communication
- Lack of networking/coordination = added burden

- Facing difficulties to accessibility
- Lack of experiences and expertise
- No contingency fund
- No coordination among humanitarian organisations (risk of duplication)
- Difficulties in bringing the victims into normal life: "Where to send back the victims?"

Some good advices for the future management of Disasters:

- Important to establish separate committee within the CSO
- Skills for training and focus on preparedness

#### Challenges in **going back to development after emergency work**

- How to continue the capacity building of the established Local Committees?
- How can we finance the clearing of the flooding affected houses and start up the construction work?
- How to continue the support for the most vulnerable families?
- We need Disaster Response Team development
- We need improving FSL, Hygiene and sanitation promotion
- Strengthening of health service system
- During the emergency work, the regular development halted. More effort to restore previous development status
- As CSOs we still need to do something on emergency – also after the emergency!

Here is an important reminder from the final discussion when going back to Development work:

- "Within our normal activities, we should now give communities the space and time to heal also, not demanding results without consideration."

#### CISU level

- Continue to be flexible as CISU was during the earthquake, and ensure that partners can redirect activities as well as capacity building and advocacy activities and be able to use contingency in budget.
- Delay in approval so that immediate support could not be done.
- That CISU will provide some sort of capacity building and skill development in a) disaster preparedness b) emergency work c) anxiety management for implementers. (this should be for all Nepalese CSO's functioning with CISU funds)
- We could not use project funds to support our own mental health (but we used our partnerships to support own mental health issues).
- As CSOs we need some flexibility of the back donors!
- CISU only focus on capacity building, but needs to support more on emergencies

#### **How has the disaster situation affected your partnership with the Danish Partner?**

- More emotional bonding with Danish Partners happened and this strengthened our partnerships
- Danish partners adopted the situation and provided situation guidance
- More dialogue and trust building with Danish CSOs
- Danish partners became flexible and changes took place in operation, modality and strategy
- Gave us support for networking
- Since CISU could not support our mental health, a Danish partner collected internal funds to help the staff

**Annexes:**

- ToR
- Invitation for Experience Sharing Workshop
- Program and participation list for workshop 8. December
- Background documentation (full record of the workshop)