EUROPEAN COMMISSION
HUMANITARIAN AID OFFICE (ECHO)

MISSION REPORT

Subject: Monitoring mission – Makawanpur district, NEPAL

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Participants:

- ECHO: Tapan, ECHO New Delhi, Suman, ECHO Kathmandu, and Luc, ECHO Islamabad
- Partners: DanChurchAid (DCA) consortium with ICCO Cooperation and Centre for Community Development Nepal (CCDN), and Plan and Community Energy and Ecology Development Forum (CEEDF)

Places visited & Interlocutors:

Thaha Municipality, Wards 10 and 12, with DCA

3 VDCs (Village development committee), Chitlang, Markhu and Kulekhani, Makwanpur district, with Plan

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY / HIGHLIGHTS

2 projects being **well carried out**,

DCA very well with a real humanitarian spirit and a great added value and some technical aspects to be well taken care of,

Plan professionally but a bit 'cold'

2. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Monitoring of projects in **response to 25 April 2015 earthquake** (EQ)

Cash grants by the government to the EQ affected very slow to be distributed and in installments conditioned on permanent reconstruction – **ECHO enables to bridge gaps and cover needs** before developmental long term reconstruction is effective

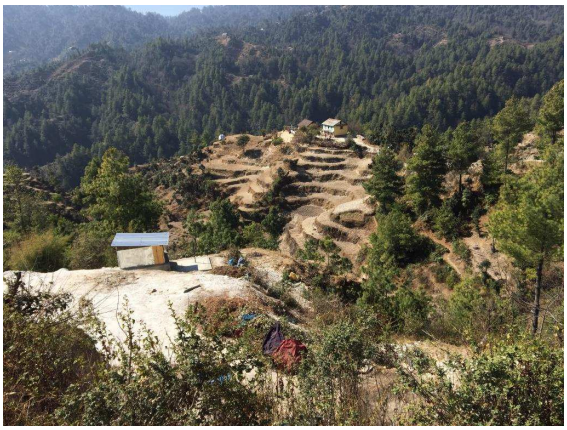
3. ISSUES DISCUSSED, COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ENVIRONMENT

New rules / policies, limitations were setup by the government: transitional shelter, cash were not accepted anymore. Everything needs to be approved by all authorities, ministries and departments, at the national and district levels, with high rotation of government staff. Those facts caused **great delays**, 3 to 4 months for Plan, 5 months for DCA, with more or less significant modifications, **DCA shifting their support from shelter to improved living conditions**.

Coordination is made especially at the local level, on a daily basis.

DCA toilets: the government limited a priori the budget for toilets at 5 000 Nepali rupees (# US$50); DCA fought to be allowed 10 000 rupees. Temporary toilets were forbidden, the means did not enable permanent ones: that is how the concept became semi-permanent.

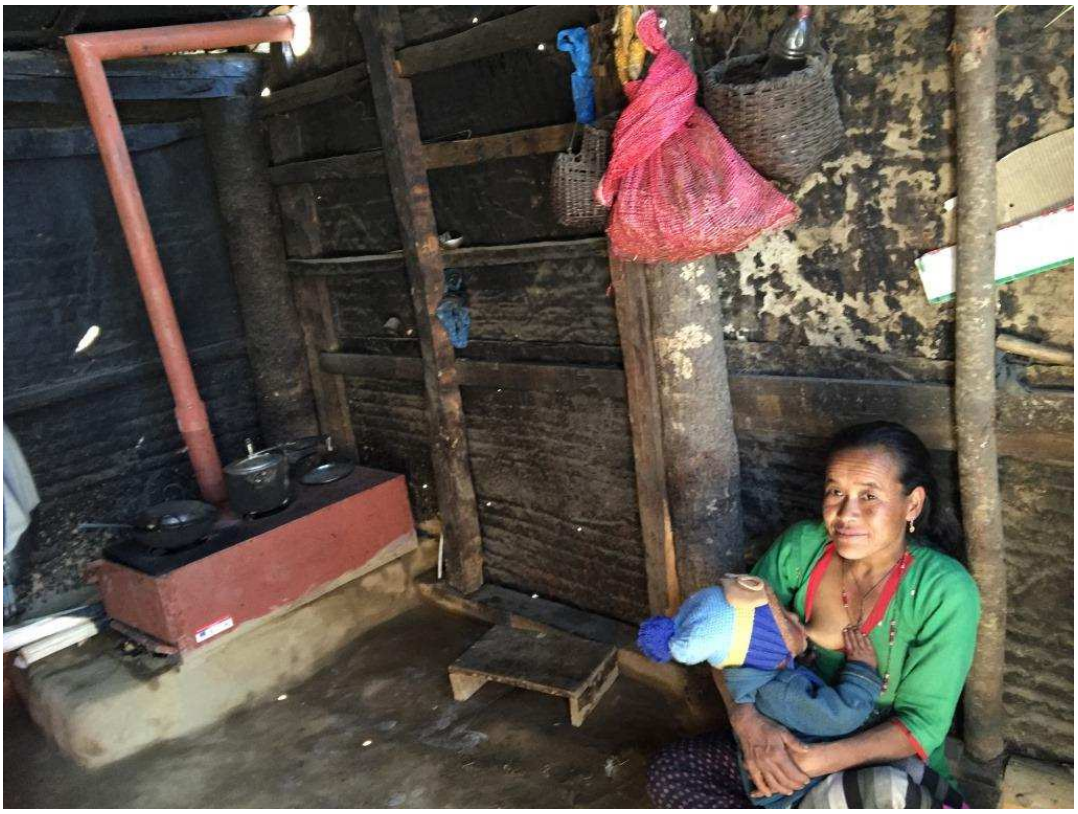


The sanitation facilities also contain a bathing area.

As illustrated on the pictures, the environment is mostly hilly if not mountainous, with slopes more or less steep. Access was also taken care of – stairs and ramp are visible on the left -, particularly for disabled people, targeted vulnerable beneficiaries.

A very good aspect is that the pits normally should not require to get desludged / emptied, given their capacity / volume for the number of users. The washing grey waters waters are led to an independent soak-away pit.

OPERATIONAL ISSUES



Improved ovens / cooking stoves were introduced by DCA. Those significantly reduce domestic accidents like hot water falling onto and burning a young child, smoke and health issues. We were told that firewood consumption was decreased by up to 50 %. Additionally, equipped with a valve on the chimney, they enable to heat the home – witnessed with numerous holes and openings – at night while the temperature is below freezing outside. Eventually, they are liked as they enable to heat 3 pots at the same time. Ashes are recuperated, collected on a bottom plate and can be used later for washing / cleaning or fertilizing.

The stoves are applied a layer of mix of earth, cow dung and straw for insulation on their inside faces – foreseeably, the latter does not hold well or long and was witnessed damaged, given the heat and the shocks. ECHO suggested to try to reinforce the insulation protecting with the same mix mortar the outside accessible faces of the stoves, which is easy to implement and whose maintenance and repair is equally easy.

The ECHO representatives were nicely impressed; they farther suggested to document / quantify the improvements / savings regarding health, firewood consumption – other donors could show interest; neighbors and the rest of the communities could see a positive return on investment. Additionally, ECHO suggested to introduce and promote traditional improved stoves, made of available local material, common in other areas of Nepal while they do not seem so in the project area.

Water supply technical aspects

Signboards show sketches of the water supply systems; they were made as PRAs, Participatory rural appraisals; although they were told to have been prepared on

AutoCAD, they are unfortunately not scaled, do not show the reality – location of items - nor the rest of the environment, the other water supply schemes, the wells; easy correction or progress for the future.

On the other hand, good communication and transparency, seemingly at all levels, with all parties, showing, for example, the investment costs borne by the project and those by the community; the latter are usually as high as those brought by the project or can even be significantly more, illustrating not only the participatory approach but the appropriation and the lead by the community.

The DCA consortium team mentioned us that lime could sometimes obstruct pipes – we definitely could see white soil, very rich with lime. When it happens, they would knock the pipe to break and chase the lime deposits. ECHO suggested to check the water flow and to size, mainly the pipe and its diameter, so that velocity is close to 1 m/s or in the range 0.5 to 2 m/s enabling deposits not to happen or to be minimized.

Water pipeline connections were seen sometimes makeshift – pipe heated and forced joined or PE (polyethylene) pipe forced into GI (galvanized iron) fittings -, resulting in leaks: ECHO advised to use the right fittings, which are surely available.

The concrete walls of a spring catchment were seen wet. After being answered that no watertight adjuvant had been added to the concrete, which is not impermeable on its own, ECHO advised to add a waterproof finishing layer on the inside of the walls of the catchment, using what is common, Sika or latex.

A new pipe was observed leaking. The explanation was that a hole had been pinched for aeration purpose. Acknowledging air release is needed in all high points of the pipeline – to avoid airlocks -, ECHO advised to do it the right way technically, also to avoid possible contamination when the pipe is not under pressure, installing a tee with a piece of elevated pipe or a tap or an air-release valve.

More and most importantly, **the spring catchments are to respect the technical norms, mainly protect from contamination and never put the spring under pressure**. Those were thoroughly reminded and explained – all the resurgences are to be caught, possibly individually and then joined in a collection chamber; water cannot be left running on the ground without protection and then collected downstream; it usually includes a lot of excavation and digging works until to reach the rock or a clean environment; filter proposed by local Implementing Partner CCDN, made of stones laid in the collection chamber, then shows itself not necessary.

The partners showed very interested in the technical recommendations, listened carefully and seemed to understand; they promised to put them into practice and pictures would be shared. The timing of the mission was right, enabling the recommended corrections and improvements to be implemented in the remaining two and a half months of the project.

Survey applications on smartphones

Welcome appropriate use of Akvo Flow app for survey and RSR, Really simple report, although more is possible and was explained, notably in terms of GIS.

Pretty much same for Plan that used KoBo app on smartphones and tablets unfortunately seemingly without follow-up.

Plan shelter

759 transitional shelters are getting constructed with the support and guidance of Plan International and their Implementing partner Community Energy and Ecology Development Forum (CEEDF) in 4 VDCs that count a total of 3838 HHs – representing a coverage of 20 % that seems normal.

Plan did not mess with the corrugated galvanized iron sheets, providing better quality than recommended by the Nepal Shelter cluster for roofing, 0.475 mm thickness, 250g/m2 of zinc coating, 75 +/- 0.5 kg per bundle of 16 sheets; for walling, lesser but fine quality is used, 0.35 mm thickness, 56 +/- 1 kg per bundle of 18 sheets.

The bottom-line of the project is reached as **beneficiaries say themselves satisfied and secure** as they did not feel secure with their previous shelters.

On the other hand, we did not feel that the ownership by beneficiaries was really achieved as the product appeared mainly as donated.

We also shared that the design and size was unique, whatever the beneficiary household is, then possibly a bit large for little number households and small for greater households – for example, in Afghanistan, a project is currently implemented with 3 area sizes.

We could notice that the beneficiaries had no idea of the actual cost of the shelter they received, # 100 000 Nepali rupees or 1000 EUR – as they were never told. We advised to have the most transparent communication possible, communicating all information.

We also could notice that the staff and the implementing partner and the masons were put under pressure to complete the construction by the deadline of 28 February. Until 16 February, they were not told that Plan had asked ECHO for a one-month no cost extension until 31 March and thought they were out of job after 28 February. We recommended better, more fluid and transparent communication within Plan, between management and the staff, with the implementing partner and the masons, to share all information as it develops, to create a possible most conducive environment.

Eventually, ECHO suggested to have the transitional shelter structure tested in / by a laboratory to see how it actually behaves / deforms under what load in actual circumstances.

Meeting with PIN, People in need, in Kathmandu, with Tapan as follow-up. PIN cited increasingly difficult non-constructive relations with government authorities: authorities are directive, imposing partners lacking capacity, imposing locations; increase of fees and bribe – corruption.

OTHER

Nepal has not had any elections for 20 years – since democracy took over from the king; the latter regime is missed as there used to be more little corruption.