

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**O**n 25 April 2015, a powerful 7.8-magnitude earthquake struck Nepal. Thousands were killed, tens of thousands were injured, and hundreds of thousands of homes were damaged or destroyed. A second major earthquake struck less than three weeks later, killing hundreds more and adding to the destruction.

National and international aid providers quickly responded with emergency aid. But developing effective plans for long-term sustainable recovery requires learning from relief efforts to date and understanding the needs and challenges that lie ahead. The Independent Impacts and Recovery Monitoring for Accountability in Post-earthquake Nepal (IRM) project contributes to this by assessing five interrelated issues—aid delivery and effectiveness; politics and leadership; social relations and conflict; protection and vulnerability; and economy and livelihoods—through two research components.

## **Impacts of the earthquake**

The two earthquakes caused substantial damage to infrastructure. The survey findings support the accuracy of the government's initial assessment of damage to property; in

This report is based on quantitative survey research conducted between 15-29 June 2015. It focuses on four areas: the impacts of the earthquakes; the nature of the aid delivered and satisfaction with it; immediate and short-term needs; and security, social relations, and politics. The second report, which is based on in-depth qualitative field research, is published in parallel.

The survey comprised face-to-face interviews with 2,980 respondents randomly selected from 240 Village Development Committees (VDCs) and municipalities across 14 of the 26 earthquake-affected districts, along with 298 ward leaders. Data collection took place in six high impact districts, five medium impact districts, and three low impact districts. The household sample was distributed equally among men and women. Respondents were individuals over the age of 18 who are involved in household decision-making. Findings are representative of the full population of the 26 earthquake-affected districts.

our high impact districts, 86% of respondents report that their house was destroyed or still uninhabitable two months on from the first quake. The scale of destruction is partly

a result of the poor quality of housing in high impact districts. Most houses in high impact areas are made from mud mortar and collapsed, while the relatively few concrete and pillar houses were rarely substantially impacted. The poor are most likely to have lost their homes with those who farm their own land, daily wage laborers and those with livestock the most affected. Amongst public infrastructure, schools are reported to be the most affected.

## Aid

There is evidence of substantial mistargeting of aid both for immediate and longer-term assistance. Aid appears to have largely been targeted by district with the likelihood of receiving aid proportionate to the district-level impacts of the earthquake. Ninety-eight percent of people in high impact districts, 39% in medium impact districts, and 17% in low impact districts report receiving immediate assistance (tarps and/or food). However, people whose houses were badly damaged or destroyed in medium and low impact districts are far less likely to say they have received such assistance than those in high impact districts. Similarly, those in high impact districts who have seen substantial housing damage are far more likely to have received corrugated iron sheets than have those with similar housing damage in lower impact districts. Only 10% of people report that they directly received corrugated iron sheets, which provide more solid shelter, by late June.

Forty percent of people in high impact districts say they have received cash, with more flowing to those most affected, although at lower levels than expected given government policies. Again, people who have

The incomes of businesspeople are reported as being the most affected, despite them suffering less damage to their houses than many other occupational groups. The income of low caste groups has been affected less than that of others. Borrowing has increased, particularly in highly affected districts and wards and for those who suffered major housing damage. People are most frequently turning to relatives or moneylenders for cash with few taking loans from banks.

similar levels of damage to their houses are far more likely to receive cash if they live in high impact districts.

Aid is reaching areas that are difficult to access, including remote areas. Rural areas are more affected and have received more aid than urban ones. Lower caste people appear just as likely to get most forms of aid as others, cash being the exception.

The government is the main agency seen as providing relief materials. Levels of contentment with the central government and local government's disaster response are mixed. There is higher satisfaction with the conduct of VDCs and municipalities in allocating aid. People in affected areas are highly satisfied with the performance of Nepal's security forces who provided a prompt response after the earthquake. Foreign agencies and NGOs receive mixed responses with political parties seen as performing the poorest in responding to the disaster. Men are more likely to be dissatisfied with aid providers than women. Low caste groups are also more likely to be dissatisfied, despite receiving as much aid as others, particularly with INGOs.

### **Immediate and short-term needs**

Two months on from the earthquake, affected populations still have many needs. In high impact districts, only 2% of the population state that they do not require any further assistance. The nature of needs differs by the level of earthquake impact. In the most affected areas, the immediate reported priority of people was for corrugated iron sheets, followed by cash and foodstuffs.

Other goods that were commonly distributed in the early period after the quake, such as medical support and sanitation packages, are in less demand. Over the coming few months, respondents prioritized the provision of cash, suggesting markets are functioning and people can buy what they need.

### **Security and politics**

Violence and crime are not reported to be major issues in the two months following the earthquake. Most people feel safe, few report violence as having occurred, and these figures are similar for potentially vulnerable groups such as women and those who lost their homes. However, where people now live appears to be a determinant of perceptions of safety, with those in community shelters feeling the least safe.

The survey finds that in the early post-earthquake period, the disaster has had little impact on people's reported political

preferences. Most people say they will vote for the same political party as they previously did, or say they have not decided yet, despite high levels of dissatisfaction with the performance of parties in responding after the earthquake. However, those who are less satisfied with the responses of political parties to the disaster are more likely to either state they will change the party they vote for or that they have not made a decision on this. Overall, we find high levels of political apathy, in particular amongst youths, women, and the less educated.