



LEARNING BRIEF

The Comprehensive Approach to School Safety



Creating a school environment that is safe for students and teachers requires a “whole school” approach, including everything from safer buildings and hazard-free grounds, to practices like emergency drills to prepare for what to do in a disaster, mechanisms to deal with harassment and bullying, to local government contingency plans detailing how to keep students safe and continue learning in emergencies, and more.

All of these aspects are included in the Government of Nepal’s vision for school safety. The Nepal Safer Schools Project [NSSP] aimed to support implementation of school safety activities, including:

- 1) Safer learning facilities, particularly through seismically-resilient retrofitting and rebuilding;
- 2) School-level disaster management and resilience [DRR] education and awareness;
- 3) National-level technical assistance for safer learning facilities and disaster risk reduction



PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

52

Project schools fulfilled multiple aspects of the Comprehensive School Safety Minimum Package [CSSMP]

4

Schools completed all 16 CSSMP requirements, including retrofitting/ construction of buildings to improve seismic resilience

497

Teachers trained in school safety

36

small-scale, non-structural disaster risk mitigation issues identified and address with Project support

50

School Improvement Plans drafted or updated to include DRR components

48

School-level Complaint Response Mechanisms [CRM] put in place



LESSONS FROM THE PROJECT

Viewing schools from a “safety” lens is a new practice for many

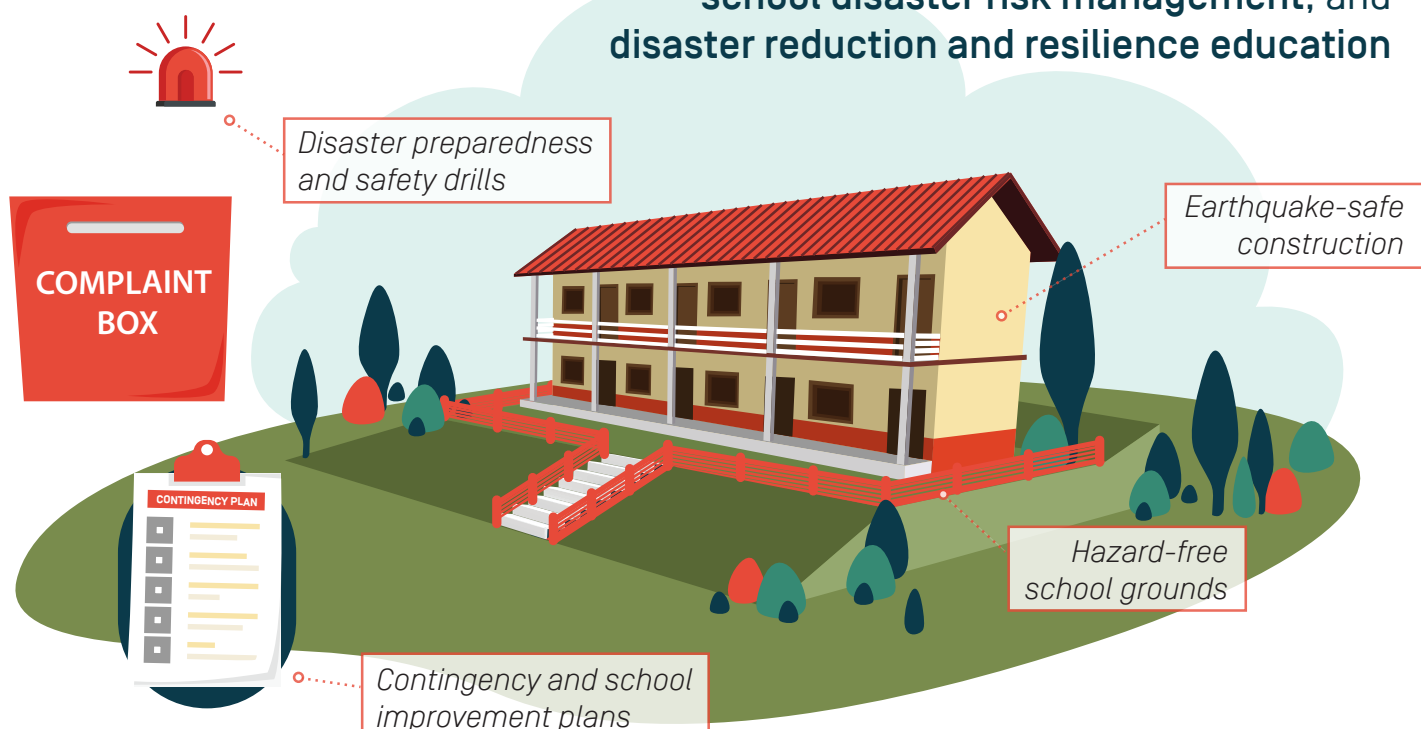
Many project participants had never considered the entire school environment from a “safety” mindset before, and noted that it was a significant shift in thinking to look at school conditions both large and small from this point of view. This included everything from large issues like vulnerability of buildings to earthquakes, landslides or flooding, to the dangers of smaller problems like exposed wiring, unsecured white boards, or trip and fall hazards on school grounds. Project staff observed that once teachers were trained in school safety and school teams began identifying risks in their environment, there was a strong motivation from within schools to address these issues as soon as possible.



This school safety program has become very impactful for us in terms of understanding the importance of a safe environment and the ways to become safe.

*Khadga Prasad Gautam
Head Teacher, Surkhet*

The whole school approach includes a range of activities that improve the **safety of facilities, school disaster risk management, and disaster reduction and resilience education**





Safety issues are not the same everywhere, and those spending the most time at schools are best placed to identify them

Having NSSP-trained teachers and School Management Committee [SMC] members proactively identify risks in the environment by leading the VCA and subsequent SIP drafting (or re-drafting) to include DRR elements yielded ideas and identified issues that were most relevant to their school. Project staff noted how some safety issues highlighted in VCAs were not ones that outsiders might have easily considered. One staff member gave the example of being surprised when one school proposed a dedicated school parking area as a safety activity, but then understanding when visiting the school and seeing how motorbikes were being driven through groups of students and parked haphazardly around the school grounds.



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Head Teacher, Surkhet*



SCHOOLS EXPRESS ACTIVE INTEREST IN SCHOOL SAFETY ACTIVITIES

Achievements for activities like completing Vulnerability and Capacity Achievements [VCAs], CSSMP orientations, and School Improvement Plan [SIP] drafting processes were more than 70% above the Project stated targets. This included higher than expected initiation and completion of activities like setting up Complaint Response Mechanisms [CRM] and small-scale non-structural risk mitigation activities. There was very strong interest, initiative, and ownership from teachers who had received training in school safety, and a strong drive from school management to use the support and resources offered by the Project to carry out these activities.

Continuous communication, coordination, and ensuring common understanding and goals is key

Multiple participants in the SMCs and Palikas expressed their appreciation for the time the Project took in the beginning to establish communication and coordination for the project, including encouraging SMCs, teachers, and parents to gather together. It was also helpful that as the NSSP was designed to support the realization of the Government of Nepal's planning and vision, messaging about the importance and expectation to conduct these activities was coming strongly from government sources as well. For instance, the release of an official Government circular directing schools to set up Complaint Response Mechanisms coincided with the Project's offer to help schools in creating these, and there was a much stronger response.

Links between relevant, well documented planning and school resources

Project participants appreciated the training, discussion, and support to help draft DRR-related aspects of the School Improvement Plans. SMC members and teachers highlighted how useful this was, especially as the links between including DRR needs in these SIPs and the ability to request funding for these activities became clearer. Following work to incorporate DRR into Project schools' SIPs in one municipality, the municipality then stipulated that any requests made for DRR activities must be outlined in SIPs to be considered.



MOBILIZING LOCAL FUNDING THROUGH SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS

After NSSP helped incorporate DRR into the SIP of schools in Birendranagar, the municipality stipulated that all requests for DRR activities from these schools must be included in plans. Shree Saraswati Primary School in Ghumantar identified safety hazards during the VCA process, and based on this process the ward allocated 7 lakh for the construction of a boundary wall.



On the school grounds, even small things – like small stones on the playing field – can cause accidents and are a hazard.

Around our school, there's been a growth in awareness in the teachers, students and local community about retrofitting as well as how these activities can be promoted, and how they make us safer.

*Dhan Kumar KC
DRR Focal Teacher, Achham*



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