

Implementing Building Codes to Save Lives

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Based on an estimated current population of three million inhabitants in Kathmandu, experts believe that a large earthquake would result in at least 100,000 deaths, 300,000 injuries, and 1.6 million displaced in the capital city alone. In 2000, a study carried out by Geohazard International as part of the Global Earthquake Safety initiative in the Kathmandu Valley revealed that more than two-thirds of that earthquake risk comes from poorly constructed buildings not built to seismic codes, provisions intended to ensure that structures can adequately resist seismic forces during earthquakes. The study found that rapid urbanization, with its resulting unplanned growth and inadequate enforcement of regulations, has led to substandard and unsafe housing patterns.

The most crucial factor in reducing a community's risk from an earthquake is the adoption and enforcement of up-to-date building codes. To survive and remain resilient, communities must strengthen their core infrastructure and critical facilities so that these can withstand an earthquake or other disaster and continue to provide essential services. Understanding this crucial need to create and enforce building codes specifying the minimum acceptable level of safety for structures, the Government of Nepal endorsed the National Building Code about a decade ago. However, its actual implementation at the municipality level has been progressing very slowly, putting lives at risk.

As a part of its broader assistance to reduce disaster risk in Nepal, USAID/Office of Foreign Disaster

Assistance (USAID/OFDA) is currently supporting a three-year project titled 'Building Code Implementation Program in Municipalities of Nepal' (BCIPN), which started in October 2012. The National Society for Earthquake Technology-Nepal (NSET) is implementing this project in 24 municipalities or urban centers of Nepal and will help increase the capability of municipal governments to develop and administer an effective building permit and control system for ensuring improved seismic performance of all new building construction. Through a series of training programs and awareness-raising activities for the community, the project will help the municipalities to develop an effective mechanism for building code implementation, and will work toward increasing public awareness and technical knowledge of the residents, municipal officials, and technical professionals on aspects of earthquake risk management including earthquake-resistant design and construction.

During the project period of three years, BCIPN expects to enhance the safety of two million Nepali people (24 municipalities, each with a population of approximately 100,000 people) through construction of earthquake-resistant buildings. The project will also train at least 400 engineers and 1,800 masons on seismically sound construction and increase the awareness to earthquake risk of 20,000 residents.

WORKSHOP: BUILDING CODE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM IN MUNICIPALITIES OF NEPAL:

As part of its Disaster Risk Reduction assistance, USAID/OFDA supported a workshop organized jointly by the Government of Nepal, Ministry of Urban Development and the National Society for Earthquake Technology-Nepal (NSET) on 'Building Code Implementation Program in Municipalities of Nepal'. The event took place on September 17, 2013 in Kathmandu, Nepal and was opened by Peter W. Bodde, the United States Ambassador to Nepal. The purpose of the workshop was to provide a forum in which key stakeholders could discuss the key issues, challenges and future course of action related to building code implementation in Nepal. The 100 plus participants included senior government officials, municipality officials and engineers, national and international experts, representatives from professional societies, NGOs, academia, practitioners and media.



Be aware, be prepared

Earthquake Preparedness Tip:

Leave the interior doors open in your home as often as possible (even just a crack) to prevent them from jamming shut during an earthquake and trapping you inside.

And if you are in a vehicle during an earthquake, safely come to a stop and crack open your door for the same reason.



UPCOMING USAID NEPAL PUBLIC EVENTS

Interested in participating? Let us know. Email - usaidnepal@usaid.gov

November 25 - December 10: 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

As part of this year's 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, the U.S. Embassy's Public Affairs Section and USAID are organizing a calendar of events to mark, highlight, and seek solutions to key issues surrounding women's rights and gender-based violence in Nepal. Here are few highlights:

December 1: **WORLD AIDS DAY** - Marking the 26th anniversary of World AIDS Day and commemorating two decades of partnership between USAID and the Government of Nepal to mitigate the effects of HIV in the country.

December 2: **INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSON WITH DISABILITIES** - A discussion on global and local disability priorities with special guest Shudarshan Subedi.

December 9: **Panel Discussion: Bringing Women Rights and Gender-based Violence (GBV) to the Frontlines** - An event to help increase awareness of the key issues related to women's right and GBV in the constitution, influence public debate, and build pressure for a gender-sensitive constitution.

December 5: Female Community Health Volunteers Silver Jubilee Celebration

The Female Community Health Volunteer (FCHV) Programme in Nepal was started in 1988 by the Ministry of Health and Population in order to improve community participation and to enhance the outreach of health services through local women working voluntarily in their ward. 2013 marks 25th year of the Program and USAID together with GON and other donors is organizing an event to celebrate the Silver Jubilee Celebrations. USAID will produce a multimedia package including a short video, multi-media slide show, photo exhibition, stories and articles.

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Questions,
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