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# Linking Humanitarian Aid and Development through Local Capacity Building - Case Study on a Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Project in Post- Earthquake Nepal

GEO 511 Master's Thesis

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**Master Thesis GE0511**

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## **Abbreviations**

CDECF	Community Development and Environment Conservation Forum
DUDBC	Department of Urban Development and Building Construction
HRRP	Housing Recovery and Reconstruction Platform
I/NGO	International / Non-Governmental Organisation
LRRD	Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development
NC	Nepali Congress
NRA	National Reconstruction Authority
REAP	Rehabilitation of facilities of Earthquake-Affected People in Sindhupalchok
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
UC	User Committee
VDC	Village Development Committee
VMW	Village Maintenance Worker
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

# **1 Introduction**

On the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2015 a devastating earthquake hit Nepal. The 7.8 magnitude earthquake destroyed more than 600'000 houses completely and damaged around 285'000 houses. Further the earthquake lead to the death of more than 8'790 people and injured about 22'300 people (Lam and Kuipers 2018: 322; Paul et al. 2016: 1170). In the aftermath of such devastating disasters the international response is usually huge. Humanitarian aid organisations are ready to provide emergency assistance and help planning and reconstructing new homes and infrastructure for affected people, as such disasters usually cause losses and damages that the affected people can not cope on their own and makes them dependent on external support (Paul et al. 2016: 1171). The suffering of people attracts the need to help, but humanitarian response is usually only a short-term intervention and research on humanitarian aid points out that humanitarian aid in post-disaster situations often does not adequately address long-term effects, as the aid organisations only stay in the area of the disaster for a short time and afterwards leave the affected people on their own (Hollenbach 2013: 326). Those people often lack access to economic resources or knowhow to maintain for example the given houses and infrastructure in the long-term. Another point criticised in the literature is that the economic situation of affected people is neglected in the planning and reconstruction phase of new houses and villages, leaving resettled people without job opportunities or a secure income (Hollenbach 2013: 326). To avoid such unintended negative effects of humanitarian aid a more development-oriented approach might help humanitarian aid to result in more sustainable and resilient outcomes, helping people in the long-term as well as in short-term.

## **1.1 Post-Earthquake Response in Nepal**

The devastating earthquake that struck Nepal on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2015 with a magnitude of 7.8 had significant impacts on the population and infrastructure in more than 30 districts of Nepal (Lam and Kuipers 2018: 322; Cook et al. 2018: 535). According to Lam and Kuipers (2018) the earthquake lead to the death of approximately 8'790 people and injured about 22'300 people (Lam and Kuipers 2018: 322). The loss of property was also severe, as the earthquake destroyed more than 600'000 houses completely and damaged around 285'000 houses (Paul et al. 2016: 1170).

The international response to the disaster was overwhelming; around 70 countries and many international organisations and international NGOs offered their help by providing "immediate search and rescue personnel and support, medical aid, emergency relief items, as well as goods and services geared towards the recovery and rehabilitation phases" (Cook et al. 2018: 535).

Overwhelmed by the huge amount of humanitarian response, Nepal's government struggled to cope with the amount of response as there were so many actors willing to help and so many relief items offered, of which not all were suitable for the situation in Nepal or did not match ethical standards (Cook et al. 2018: 535, 543). To handle the huge amount of international response, Nepalese authorities insisted on several regulations and rules, as for example inspections and taxes on the imports of relief items, which was seen as an obstruction to deliver fast response by international responders (Paul et al. 2016: 1171). Although the Nepalese authorities were overwhelmed by the international response, the international response was critical to manage the situation and it was beneficial that many international organisations and NGOs already had been working in Nepal before. Cook et al. (2018: 536) for example point out that those organisations and NGOs often already had a head office in the country and were familiar with the local culture and geography, which helped to coordinate the humanitarian response and personnel. In addition they were also often already working with local partner organisations or had other contacts to communities and authorities (Cook et al. 2018: 536). Beside the struggle to manage the humanitarian process, Nepal faced several other challenges in providing humanitarian response to the earthquake victims. One of the biggest challenges was access to the most affected regions, as the earthquake destroyed roads and the geography of Nepal in general is quite mountainous. Therefore in the beginning of the relief phase most regions were only accessible by air, which reduced and delayed immediate response (Cook et al. 2018: 536, 542). Another logistical challenge was also that there is only one international airport in Nepal, the Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) in Kathmandu, meaning that all the relief items provided by international responders had to go through this airport (Cook et al. 2018: 542). As a result of this bottleneck and the destroyed access roads to more rural regions outside of Kathmandu Valley there was a concentration of international responders and relief items "within the Kathmandu valley area and its immediate surroundings" (Cook et al. 2018: 542). Other affected regions on the other hand had to wait for first response, some affected people in rural regions explain that it took emergency assistance more than a week to reach them (Paul et al. 2016: 1170-1171).

Those challenges are mostly related to the first phase of humanitarian relief where the preferences are on meeting basic needs in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. As for example saving lives, providing people with food and drinking water. Afterwards in a second phase of humanitarian relief the focus shifts more towards long-term needs such as rebuilding houses and infrastructure and helping people to find new ways to a normalisation of their everyday life. Four years have passed now since the devastating earthquake and as literature shows Nepal is still struggling in achieving resilience and struggling with the reconstruction process of earthquake affected buildings. Lam and Kuipers (2018: 322) for example point out that statistics



from June 2018 showed that from the government aid entitled houses only 21.7% out of a total of 781'733 damaged or destroyed houses have been rebuilt. But they also point out that lately a substantial rise in the rebuilding rate can be observed (Lam and Kuipers 2018: 322). Because of the delay in reaching out to affected regions and people for reconstruction support and also because of bureaucratic obstacles, people often started to rebuild their homes by themselves without the assistance of professional engineers and without following the building codes for earthquake resilient construction (Shrestha et al. 2018: 210).

Reasons, which affected and delayed the reconstruction and rehabilitation process, were often seen in political instability and the political transition from monarchy to a secular democracy during the relief process (Paul et al. 2016: 1170). In 2017 the first democratic elections in Nepal under the new constitution took place and led to a full decentralisation process of the country. The Nepalese government started to implement a federal system and therefore new local governments and state governments were built and replaced previous structures (Helvetas 2018: 4). This process was, however, politically highly controversial, especially the proposed delineation of administrative boundaries, which led to a further political paralysis. I will outline the political instability in Nepal in more detail in the political context section of this thesis.

## **1.2 Research Topic and Research Question**

In the aftermath of the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation Nepal started in cooperation with Swiss Solidar their Swiss Solidarity funded project "**Rehabilitation of facilities of Earthquake-Affected People in Sindhupalchok (REAP)**". Thereby they tried to link humanitarian aid with development aspects. The approach of linking humanitarian aid and development got awareness in the 1990s under the term "Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development" (LRRD) and is recently discussed under the term "Humanitarian-Development Nexus". Although there is already a discussion about the topic for almost three decades, there still seems to exist a lot of challenges such as difficulties to merge the different institutional and conceptual principles of the two fields, bridging funding gaps and finding a solution to the different coordination and partnership systems (Stammnes 2016: 2, Hinds 2015: 5). There is still a lack of clarity how to address the concept and so far there still does not exist a general definition of the Humanitarian-Development Nexus (Christopolos et al. 2014: 18). Although many humanitarian or development organisations started to publish policy papers on the Humanitarian-Development Nexus, there still exists only a small number of scientific researches about the topic, therefore the Humanitarian-Development Nexus can be understood as a research gap. By looking into the Helvetas REAP project as a case study for this master thesis I try to

contribute my part to the ongoing Humanitarian-Development Nexus discussion and can maybe contribute to find a solution.

To do so I will examine how humanitarian aid and development can be connected. As the topic of LRRD/ Humanitarian-Development Nexus is a rather broad topic and an overall examination of it lies beyond the scope of a master thesis, the research focuses on the aspects of **local capacity building**, and how local capacity building can link humanitarian aid and development.

Local capacity building entails strengthening local human capital, economic capital as well as community or physical capital (Christoplos et al. 2014: 18-19). In the context of the Humanitarian-Development Nexus local capacity building can help local people to better cope with disasters as well as to prepare them for future disasters and providing them a basis for further development (Collins 2009: 120). In this sense coping with disasters can be understood as aspect of humanitarian response, whereas preparing for future disaster is more developmental. But local capacity building in the context of linking humanitarian aid with development entails also challenges, as for example it is criticised in literature that capacity building is inherently political and therefore contradictory with the humanitarian principle of neutrality. Another challenge in linking humanitarian aid with development through local capacity building is seen in aspect that local capacity building sometimes leads to dependency rather than providing the local people capital to manage their own destiny and development. In addition it also sometimes seems to be unclear how sustainable the implemented local capacity building elements really are (Lautze and Hammock 1996: 4-5). To find a possible way to bypass these challenge I will look into the Helvetas REAP project as a case study to examine how they planned and implemented local capacity building elements and to examine how local capacity building can help to link humanitarian aid with development, what did work and what not so much. The Helvetas REAP project is an interesting case to examine these questions, as the organisation used to work previously mostly in development work, relief and humanitarian response is a rather new field for them. Through the project they tried to provide humanitarian response to the earthquake-affected people by linking the response with their experience in development and thereby tried to provide sustainable, long-lasting outcomes to the affected people. The project also planned to build local capacity through different approaches and on different levels. Therefore the multifarious project builds an interesting case for my research, whereby it is possible to look on different project elements in one setting.

In this master thesis I will try to answer the following research questions:

**Overall question:**

**How can local capacity building help to link humanitarian and development logics in reconstruction programs?**

**Sub-questions:**

Lessons learned from the project by Helvetas:

- How was local capacity building included in the project *design*? And how was it planned to do the link between humanitarian aid and development in their reconstruction program?
- How did local capacity building elements designed and implemented by the project contribute to long-term development aspects?
- How was the element of local capacity building *implemented* in practice? What worked, what did not work?
- What (intended and unintended) impacts can be attributed to this project element?
- What *lessons* do project personnel draw from their experiences in designing and implementing the project (with focus on capacity building)?
- What feedbacks have consulted project partners and beneficiaries given in project evaluations or in interviews conducted by the master student?

### **1.3 Structure of the Thesis**

The Introduction of this thesis provided an overview of the post-earthquake response in Nepal and the key points of the Humanitarian-Development Nexus, its challenges and how this master thesis will contribute to the ongoing discussion. I presented the research questions, which I will try to answer with this thesis and explained how the Helvetas REAP project provides an interesting case study to examine the questions. In the next section I will present the case, the Helvetas REAP project for reconstruction and rehabilitation of earthquake-affected people in Sindhupalchok. Thereby I will highlight the planned project outcomes and the by the project planned implementation approaches. In addition I will present the project and research area, Malamchi and Helambu in the district of Sindhupalchok. And then in a next section I will present the political context of Nepal and its influence on the project. To do so I will present relevant background information for a better understanding of the research topic and the situation of the case study. Further I will highlight the Humanitarian-Development Nexus, its historical

evolvment and its current debate and challenges. Followed by defining local capacity building and presenting how it is discussed in development and how in humanitarian aid. Afterwards I will present the used methodology of the research, describe the ethnographic approach of the fieldwork and critically reflect on them. Afterwards the results and findings from the fieldwork will be presented. Which will be further discuss and analysed in the following section by drawing back to the theoretical background and the research question. To close this thesis I will summarize my findings and analysis in the conclusion and present open questions for further research.

## **2 Helvetas REAP Project**

In the following section I will present the REAP project, “Rehabilitation of facilities of earthquake-affected population in Sindhupalchok”. I will present planned outcomes of the project and some insights on the background of the project organisations as well as the project area. The REAP project was planned and implemented by the Swiss NGO Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation Nepal in cooperation with the Swiss NGO Solidar Swiss and was funded by Swiss Solidarity.

### **2.1 Helvetas and Solidar in Nepal**

In Nepal Helvetas is a well-established international non-governmental organisation. The organisation is already present in Nepal for more than 60 years working on different development projects in the country. The five main thematic working areas in the country are Skills Development and Education, Water and Infrastructure, Environment and Climate, Rural Economy and Governance and Peace. In the region of Sindhupalchok Helvetas has been present for 15 years prior to the earthquake working on infrastructure and livelihood development projects. Therefore the organisation was at the beginning of the REAP project already well established and accepted in the project area and had built up relationships with communities and authorities in the area. Further in Nepal only a small number of expatriate staff is accepted in international NGOs, therefore Helvetas staff members in Nepal are mostly Nepalese people, this has the advantage that the staff is familiar with cultural and ethical circumstances and they speak the same language as the organisation’s beneficiaries and local stakeholders (Helvetas 2015: 3).

Before the REAP project Helvetas Nepal was working mostly in the field of development rather than humanitarian aid and had therefore little experiences in relief work in Nepal. Solidar Swiss, Helvetas project partner, on the other hand has extensive experiences in working on relief and reconstruction in similar contexts, as the organisation has been supporting permanent as well as temporary housing reconstruction and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programs in several other countries in the aftermath of disasters. But in contrary to Helvetas, Solidar Swiss has not been working in Nepal before; therefore it seems to be reasonable that the two organisations cooperated in the earthquake response in Nepal, as they have complementary knowledge and experiences (Helvetas 2015: 3). Helvetas provides local knowledge and networks and is experienced in development work, Solidar Swiss in addition provides knowhow about emergency work, and experiences as well as technical knowhow in shelter reconstruction and WASH programs. As the two organisations come from the working areas of humanitarian

aid and development it provides an interesting case to look at the Humanitarian-Development Nexus debate.

The REAP (I+II) project, which will be in the centre of this thesis, is only part of the overall earthquake response by Helvetas in Sindhupalchok. After the first relief and emergency response phase, the reconstruction and rehabilitation phase started in which the organisation beside the REAP project also initiated following projects; Economic Recovery of Earthquake Affected Populations (EREAP), Recovery of Agriculture Livelihood Project (ReAL) in Sindhupalchok and Rehabilitation of Earthquake Affected Schools (REAS) in Sindhupalchok (Helvetas 2019). At the time of my field work the projects EREAP and ReAL were already closed and the project REAS is lead by Caritas Switzerland with support from Helvetas, therefore in the scope of this thesis I only looked at the REAP (I+II) project.

## **2.2 The Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Project**

Helvetas and Solidar were amongst the first organisations that provided humanitarian aid in the municipalities of Melamchi and Helambu. In the immediate aftermath of the 2015 earthquake the organisations provided more than 9'000 households with relief items such as emergency household kits, tarpaulins, dignity and hygiene kits as well as rice seeds. Further they started in cooperation with Caritas Switzerland to build temporary water schemes for drinking water and irrigation and started to construct temporary learning centres (Helvetas 2015: 3, 9).

As these were only first response and temporary solutions, more long-term and resilient structures were needed to support the affected people. Thus three months after first basic emergency relief has been provided Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation started in cooperation with Solidar Swiss their Swiss Solidarity funded project "Rehabilitation of facilities of earthquake-affected population in Sindhupalchok (REAP)" to provide resilient and permanent structures. The general aim of the relief project was it to support affected people in shelter reconstruction and helping to provide the affected people to gain access to safe drinking water, irrigation, hygiene and sanitation (Helvetas 2015: 2). There were in fact two REAP projects, REAP I, which was planned from August 2015 to January 2018 and the REAP II, the continuation of REAP I, from July 2017 to June 2019 (Helvetas 2015 and 2017). Henceforth writing about REAP, I mean both projects, REAP I and REAP II, if only addressing to the specific project part I or II, I will mention it as REAP I or REAP II.

### **2.2.1 REAP I**

#### ***Outcome 1: Shelter Reconstruction and Skills Training***

The planned outcome 1 of REAP I was to better protect “1’000 affected households [...] through earthquake resistant permanent houses and sanitation facilities” (Helvetas 2015: 2). This means that Helvetas has planned to support the 1’000 “most vulnerable households”, who will not be able to recover on their own, to support them by rebuilding their completely destroyed houses as permanent earthquake-resilient houses. Thereby the project planned to provide trainings on “earthquake safe construction techniques in order to create skilled craftsperson and to strengthen the local construction capacity” (Helvetas 2015: 2). The shelter reconstruction project followed a participatory approach; thereby the house-owners have to reconstruct their houses by themselves with additional support of construction teams, which included by the project trained skilled craftsperson and beneficiaries and technical support from Helvetas field personnel. The REAP project provided the house owners with field technicians, skills training for reconstruction and with construction material (Helvetas 2015: 2). In addition the project also collaborated with the local NGO “Community Development and Environment Conservation Forum” (CDECF), which provided social mobilisers for social counselling of the project beneficiaries. In order to train skilled craftsperson the REAP I project collaborated with the Employment Fund, which is funded by the SDC and has extensive experience in skills training of young people in Nepal. The project’s aim was it to train more than 1’300 skilled craftsperson and provide them the opportunity to work on the project by applying trained skills in shelter reconstruction of beneficiaries houses (Helvetas 2015: 2).

#### ***Outcome 2: WASH***

The planned outcome 2 of REAP I was to “restore access to safe drinking water” for 2’300 affected households (Helvetas 2015: 1). To do so 32 damaged or destroyed community water schemes should get rehabilitated. The rehabilitation of the water schemes was planned to get realised through a participatory approach by the community. Therefore user committees were established. Those user committees were responsible to plan and implement the water schemes with support from the organisation. Further they were also responsible to mobilise the community members for and during construction. After the construction of the water schemes the user committees will also take responsibility for operation and maintenance of the schemes. The REAP I project supported the user committees with field technicians and supervised the planning and the construction. In addition the project also supported the user committees by formulating guidelines for operation and maintenance and by establishing maintenance funds through water tariff collection (Helvetas 2015: 1-3).

### **2.2.2 REAP II**

REAP II can be understood as a continuation of the REAP I project to support more households, therefore it capitalized on the REAP I project and used the expertise and experiences from REAP I. However there are also some different approaches applied than in REAP I (Helvetas 2017: 10). REAP II covers the area of the municipality Helambu and Melamchi and supports all households in the area with technical and social support by providing field technicians and administrative counselling for earthquake resilient reconstruction, whereas REAP I only focused on selected households. In this process Helvetas worked in close cooperation with other relevant reconstruction actors such as the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) and the Department of Urban Development and Building Construction (DUDBC) and joint technical resource centres were planned (Helvetas 2017: 2). REAP II also continued the WASH support, as communities demanded further support of additional water schemes. The earthquake destroyed 154 water schemes in the project area and two years after the earthquake there was still a need for reconstruction of water schemes. Therefore Helvetas decided to support additional water schemes in REAP II, again with a participatory community approach and the establishment of WASH user committees to build local capacity (Helvetas 2017: 2). For shelter assistance REAP II did not follow a specific beneficiary selection process as it was the case in REAP I. The reason therefore was that REAP II tried to cover entire villages, rather than selected households. Although there were selected priority groups, which mostly included elderly people, single households, poor households and very remote households. The priority group covers about 1'000 households. For the priority group reinforced assistance was applied, whereas other households could demand optional assistance at the installed recourse centres. The selection of water schemes support followed a survey, criteria's were for example the presence of disadvantaged households or the capacity and willingness of communities to contribute actively (Helvetas 2017: 18).

#### ***Outcome 1: Shelter***

The outcome 1 of REAP II aims to strengthen the community capacity to build earthquake-resilient permanent houses in the municipality Helambu. The project team assessed that many households, especially vulnerable, poor and very remote households, struggled to deal with the NRA demands and DUDBC standards or were lacking information about the building codes and formalities and therefore could not access the financial government grants, which they needed to reconstruct their homes. Therefore the REAP II project supported all people from the municipality by providing information and counselling about administrative and technical issues to help them receiving their grant for reconstruction (Helvetas 2017: 10).

Further sub-outputs are formulated as followed:



- “The needs in reconstruction support are identified and awareness of safe reconstruction is raised” (Helvetas 2017: 11)
- “Technical knowledge about earthquake resilient construction techniques is imparted through short mason training” (Helvetas 2017: 12)
- “A joint technical resource centre with NRA/DUDBC is set up, operational and known in the communities. ” (Helvetas 2017: 12)
- “Priority groups are enabled to access all instalments of reconstruction grant ” (Helvetas 2017: 14)

### ***Outcome 2: WASH***

The outcome 2's aim was it as in REAP I to support communities to get access to water supply and household sanitation. In this context REAP II also capacitated communities to get the knowhow how to reconstruct and maintenance water schemes and support them with field technicians in the process of construction. In addition the project also sensitized the households about hygiene and sanitation practices (Helvetas 2017: 14-16).

By helping reconstruct permanent and earthquake-safe houses and by training skilled craftsperson the REAP project tried to provide assistance to earthquake-affected people in the long term. By including the affected people in decision-making processes and including communities in the rehabilitation and reconstruction process the project tried to ensure that gained knowhow such as operation and maintenance of the water schemes or reconstruction skills stay in the communities. The idea behind this approach is that the affected people are familiar with the new technologies and constructions and know how to deal with it as soon as the rehabilitation project comes to an end and the affected people will have to deal with it on their own. Further it also tries to prepare the affected people in case of another earthquake. The Helvetas Swiss Solidarity project therefore tries to illustrate how humanitarian aid can be combined with development aspects providing the affected people a better future through humanitarian response.

The REAP project worked closely with local and national authorities. On national level namely with the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA), which was established in August 2015 after the earthquake. The NRA manages all the financial grants as well as strategic and policy decisions in regard of the reconstruction process. For the REAP project Helvetas had an agreement with the NRA. Further the project collaborated with the Department of Urban Development and Building Construction (DUDBC), which regulates, defines and inspects the technical standards, guidelines and designs for house reconstruction. And on the local level the

project coordinated with the District Disaster Response Committees (DDRC) until the state restructuring after the democratic elections in 2017. Due to the new federal power division also collaboration for the project were required, therefore after the new local government became effective the organisation agreed on a MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the new municipalities of Melamchi and Helambu (Helvetas 2015: 3-4, Helvetas 2017: 5-6).

### 2.3 Project area Melamchi and Helambu

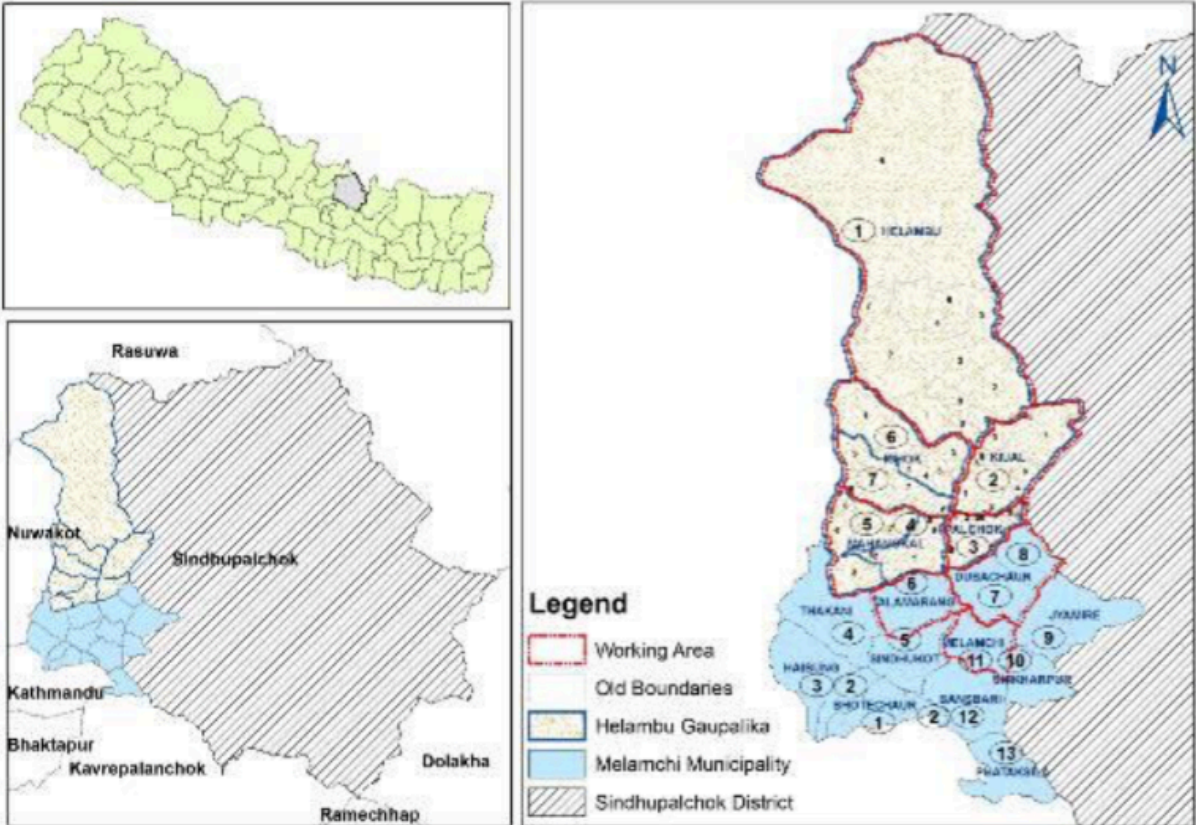


Figure 1: Overview of the project area with the new federal structure (Helvetas 2017).

The project area covers the (urban) municipality Melamchi and the rural municipality Helambu in the district of Sindhupalchok, which is situate northeast of the capital Kathmandu. Sindhupalchok is one of Nepal’s worst earthquake-affected districts. Of the individual houses in the district almost 99% were severely damaged or destroyed. The drinking water situation was also disastrous, as in the aftermath of the earthquake about 60% of the people in the district were without access to clean drinking water, because the earthquake not only destroyed water schemes but also shifted and disrupted water sources (Helvetas 2015: 2). According to the new federal constitution in Nepal the municipality Melamchi (Melamchi Nagarpalika) consist now of 14 wards and the rural municipality Helambu (Helambu Gaupalika) of 7 wards. In Helambu the project focused on all the wards, whereas in Melamchi the project focused mostly on ward 6, 7, 8 and 11 (Helvetas 2017: 4).

The Melamchi Valley is located in the central mountain region in the northeast of Kathmandu. The landscape in the valley is quite diverse, it contains high mountains up to 4000m in upper Helambu as well as hill slopes with terraces in the mid-hills, and river terraces and valleys in the lower part (Neupane and Rai 2018: 115). The local climate is changing with its topography and rainfalls occur mostly during monsoon season from June to August (Neupane and Rai 2018: 115). Melamchi bazaar, the urban centre of the municipality Melamchi is accessible from Kathmandu on a main road, which continues to upper villages in Helambu up to the Langtang National park. The road is of high importance for the people in the area, as it is the main transportation route for example for construction materials, agricultural goods and for travel. For the people in Helambu the road is the only connection to lower parts of the valley and to access Kathmandu (Neupane and Rai 2018: 115).

As diverse the landscapes in the valley, so diverse are the people in the valley. Many different ethnic and cast groups are settled there. The largest ethnic group in the area are Tamangs, followed by Hindus, mainly Brahmin and Chhetris, and the ethnic group of Yolmos. The Tamangs live mostly in the middle hills, the Hindus in the lower land and market places and the Yolmos in the high lands and mountain areas (Pokharel 2010: 69). The ethnic and cultural diversity in Melamchi Valley goes back to in-migration from different areas around Melamchi. The Yolmos for example migrated from Tibet around 250 years ago (Pokharel 2010: 70). The migration of the Brahmin and Chhetris on the other side took place in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as part of state substitute they were assigned land tenures in the Melamchi Valley (Neupane and Rai 2018: 115 and Pokharel 2010: 70).

The main livelihood activities in the area are agricultural activities. There is a high dependency on agriculture in the valley as there are only little other income possibilities. Due to Neupane and Rai about 65% of the population in the area is involved in agriculture (2018: 116). This means that most of the household members are involved in agriculture in some way. Especially during harvesting and planting season a high amount of workforce is needed. To handle the high amount of workforce during this time, additional workforce is needed. Therefore the so-called Parma system is applied. Whereby neighbours help out each other during the busy seasons and in return the host of the guest worker will provide similar work to the guest worker in the near future. This system is especially popular because no money is needed for additional workforce (Neupane and Rai 2018: 116). Agriculture is mostly for subsistence, but surpluses still are sold at the market centre or in the villages. As agriculture is such an important livelihood strategy in the area, land ownership is a status symbol and “primary source of livelihood and household security” (Neupane and Rai 2018: 117). Therefore land is a major asset to invest and own,

especially the so-called *khet*, irrigated land, is of high importance and has high economic and social value to the people in the valley. Owning *kharbari*, grassland, on the other side is of less value (Neupane and Rai 2018: 117-118). The main agricultural products of the Melamchi Valley are cereals, mostly paddy on irrigated land, followed by maize, millet and wheat (Neupane and Rai 2018: 118). In areas with better road access such as in the wards of Melamchi and Ichok (ward in Helambu), green vegetables and potatoes are cultivated, as they can be sold well (Neupane and Rai 2018: 120). Further Livestock is also quite an important source of livelihood in the area, as it is seen as a huge source of income (Neupane and Rai 2018: 120).

After the planting and harvesting season is over, male household members often look for wage labour outside the area (Neupane and Rai 2018: 116). Therefore seasonal migration to the capital city or other countries such as India or the Gulf States is quite common for people in the area and also an important source of livelihood (Pokharel 2010: 76). Other sources of livelihood in the area is also provided through the business sector, small shops as well as water and rice mills are located along the roadside, providing for example grocery, medical supplies, cosmetics, tea and clothes (Pokharel 2010: 78).

### **3 Political Context**

Nepal is a country with a long history of political instabilities and is struggling with its democratization and development process. In the following section I will present the political landscape in Nepal by providing a historical and political overview of major events and developments since the opening of the borders for foreigners and development organisations in 1950 until today. Further I will present how the political context influenced post-earthquake response and vice versa.

#### **3.1 Political Landscape and Development in Nepal**

In contrast to other South Asian countries Nepal was never colonized, but it was in a strong dependency relation to the British Raj in India. Until the year 1950 Nepal's borders were closed for foreigners. The country was ruled by the Rana dynasty, which tried to keep the country isolated from all kind of foreign influences and modernization. Thereby the Rana dynasty failed to recognize the global trend of democratization and national independence. The only open border was to India, where people were allowed to go for the purpose of education, political exile, recruitment to the British Army as Gurkhas or for pilgrimage. This loophole came to be fatal for the Rana dynasty, as a small group of Nepali, which lived in India with an educated middle-class background as well as some former Gurkha soldiers formed a political opposition against the Rana dynasty with the aim to promote democracy. The opposition was inspired by the Indian independence movement (Hachhethu and Gellner 2010: 2). The so-called Nepali Congress (NC), which was defined as a liberal democratic party, started in November 1950 a successful armed three-month revolution against the Rana system. At the same time there took also a diplomatic revolution between the Rana government and the Indian government in New Delhi place. The revolution was the starting point of Nepal's long and hard way towards democratisation and development (Hachhethu and Gellner 2010: 3). With the opening of the boarder in the 1950ies, Nepal also opened up for international development assistance. Nepal did almost got crowded by international aid when it opened the country for foreigners, as it was not in conflict with any other countries. Therefore in this early phase, Nepals development programs almost fully depended on foreign aid (Sharma 2014: 108). Amongst the many foreign development agencies and institutions starting to take action in Nepal was also Helvetas; the NGO started its first project in Nepal in 1956 (Helvetas 2019d).

The post-revolution period was shaped by a hybrid system of democratic structures and sovereign monarchy. In 1960 for example King Mahendra banned political parties, but could still manage to represent his monarchy "as a defender of democracy" (Hachhethu and Gellner 2010:

1). In 1962 then King Mahendra declared Nepal as a Hindu kingdom under the new constitution. The newly declared Panchayat regime (single party system), was constructed as a guided democracy, where the real power still remained with the monarch. With the new constitution, the opposition against the Panchayat system, again lead by the NC, started small armed resistance activities such as raids and hijackings (Hachhethu and Gellner 2010: 3). In 1972 after the death of King Mahendra, his son King Birendra took over the throne and continued the Panchayat system until the late 1980s, when new political agitations broke out as the royal leadership started to lose public faith (Sharma 2006: 560).

In 1990 then there took a people's movement (Jan Andolan I) against the ruling Panchayat system place. Through the non-violent movement Jan Andolan I, democracy could get reinstated and the Panchayat system could get overthrown, as a result the absolute monarchy was replaced by a constitutional monarchy (Pyakuryal 2008: 1). This meant that a multi-party system was reinstated with an elected government (Sharma 2006: 560). The people's movement was initiated by the NC in cooperation with some communist parties. The movement was seen as an outcome of rapid urbanization and as a result of a rising educated middle class (Hachhethu and Gellner 2010: 1). But with the reinstated multi-party system, new political instabilities occurred, as there were frequent changes in government, intra- and inter-party conflicts and rising poverty, inequality and corruption could be observe in the country (Sharma 2006: 560). In addition Nepal faced a decline of exports and decrease of agricultural productivity, which lead to further inequality and poverty and with it to further political instability. As an result of it, more and more mostly young disadvantaged rural people got radicalised and joined the Maoists, a radical left wing party, which aimed to fight the political and economic system (Sharma 2006: 553). The Maoist demanded to replace the constitutional monarchy with a republic state, a Marxist republic. In February 1996 they then declared a people's war to comply with their demand (Sharma 2006: 554).

The period of 1990 to 2005 was characterized by political instability and infightings of the political parties and by the Maoist insurgency. It was a time of following own party interests, corruption and manipulation, whereby the King tried to keep the upper hand through influencing the parties. In 2005 then the ruling King Gyanendra (2001-2008) dissolved the parliament and took all the power of the legislative and the executive himself. This political action by the King lead to a second people's movement (Jan Andolan II ) in April 2006. Thereby all the political parties including the Maoists, but except for the parties supporting the King, build a united movement against the King and signed a Comprehensive Peace Agreement to end the Maoist insurgency. As a result of this the King restored the parliament in 2006, the peoples

movement successfully dissolved the unitary system and reinforced democracy (Pyakuryal 2008: 1, Lawoti 2014: 131).

But even though the parliament was restored and the Maoist rebellions accepted peace, the political situation was still unstable and several attempts for a new constitution failed. In 2008 Nepal started to negotiate about a national transformation into a federal state. Seven years later, in September 2015 only a few months after the earthquake then the “Constituent Assembly promulgated a new, federal constitution” (Byrne et al. 2016: 1280). Meaning that the hierarchical, centralistic structure of Nepal is decentralised and restructured into a new federal constitution. As Nightingale writes, the earthquake and the following humanitarian crisis could have helped to push forward the transformation to a federal constitution due to geopolitical and national pressure and as it is believed by some people that the ruling political party saw in the humanitarian crisis an opportunity to argue for the importance of a federal constitution. They believed that a federal constitution will allow government to respond more effectively to the crisis (Nightingale et. Al. 2019: 7). To become effective the new constitution needed new occupations of the legislative, therefore in 2017 the first democratic election in nearly 20 years took place to build the new federal governments and parliaments (Helvetas 2019 (forthcoming): 9).

The new constitution was planned to divide administrative power on three different levels of governance, federal level, province level and local level. The previously 77 districts had no more administrative power and were newly constituted into seven provinces, which were further divided into total 753 local governments (Nightingale et. Al. 2019: 7). On local level the power devolution was shifting to urban municipalities (Nagarपालिकास) and rural municipalities (Gaupalिकास). The municipalities are further divided into wards. This had major impact on local level as now administrative power shifts towards the new municipalities and wards. Previous Village Development Centres (VDCs) are turned into wards; as a result the previous wards have no more administrative function. According to the new constitution a ward builds the lowest administrative unit (Helvetas 2017: 4). The acceptance of these new structures is still an ongoing process, for example the districts are often still retained, even though they were intended to get dissolved (Nightingale et. Al. 2019: 7).

The federalisation process in Nepal was politically highly controversial, as not all ethnic groups supported the new constitution and there still sometimes occur violent political protest and bandas, general strikes where no public or private transportation is allowed (Nightingale et. Al. 2019: 8). As a consequence of the dissatisfaction with the new constitution by some ethnic groups in the Terai, in late 2015 these groups, with support from India, blocked the border

between India and Nepal for four months. This border blockage also significantly influenced the post-earthquake relief and reconstruction work in Nepal, as it blocked important imports of necessary goods as for example fuel for transportation (Helvetas 2019 (forthcoming): 9). But this was not the only political event that influenced the earthquake reconstruction and rehabilitation process. The transformation to a federal constitution took place simultaneously to the post-earthquake rehabilitation and reconstruction process and came along with many uncertainties, which complicated project planning. Through state reconstruction processes the Helvetas REAP project was for example facing delays due to different events, such as already mention the boarder blockage to India which hindered the project process, but also the elections in 2017 or the many strikes, delayed the project process. In addition the state reconstruction and the establishment of new local governments was also challenging for the project. As the project was working closely with government authorities, it also had to shift their collaboration to the new local government (Helvetas 2019 (forthcoming): 9).



## **4 Humanitarian-Development Nexus Debate**

The discussion on linking relief, rehabilitation and development is an ongoing process for more than three decades now. To illustrate how the discussion evolved and how the discussion about it has changed over time, I will present in the following section a historical overview about the linking, relief, rehabilitation and development and the Humanitarian-Development Nexus debate. And in a next section I will present the current debate about the Humanitarian-Development Nexus, its possibilities, challenges and limitations. And then I will illustrate how local capacity building fits into this debate, by looking into how local capacity building is perceived in development and how it is perceived in humanitarian aid.

### **4.1 Historical Evolvement**

The discussions about linking relief and development emerged first during the African food crisis in the 1980s. In the 1990s then the concept of “Linking relief, rehabilitation and development” LRRD emerged, as a funding gap between the fields of humanitarian aid and development was identified (Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell 1994: 2, Hinds 2015: 1). One reason why the discussion on linking relief and development was understood as an important issue, was that there were “donor concerns about the increasing portion of aid budgets spent on emergencies” observed and concerns about “how to strengthen the links with development aid” (Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell 1994: 3). Another reason was seen in the importance of rehabilitation, especially in association with famine and war, which lead to an increasing number of displaced people and refugees at this time (Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell 1994: 3).

Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell point out in their Bulletin on “Linking relief, rehabilitation and development” in 1994 (1-2) that the sharp division between humanitarian aid and development became in some cases unsustainable. They identified increasing needs of emergencies and that many poor people faced to live with high risks. Further they also saw the tendency that emergencies are growing in numbers and intensity. As a result of this also the budget needed for emergencies has grown significantly, therefore they suggested to link short-term relief to long-term development. Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell described their ideal model of linking relief and development as followed:

„The ideal model is one in which relief and development interventions are implemented harmoniously to provide poor people with secure livelihoods and efficient safety nets, mitigating the frequency and impact of shocks and easing

rehabilitation. In practice, the different interventions may actually take place simultaneously, NGOs or government departments adjust their pattern of activity according to need“ (Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell 1994: 3).

They explain that a sharp division between relief and development has become unsustainable with the growing number of emergency needs and the growing number of people living with high risks (1994: 3). Therefore linking relief and development cannot only help to reduce “the frequency and intensity” of a crisis but also help to “reduce the need for emergency relief” (Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell 1994: 4). They also see the emergency as opportunity to develop or improve infrastructure, such as schools, roads, shelters or hospitals, which are needed by the affected population and will be of value to them in the long-term. The main challenge thereby is to ensure that the infrastructure can be sustained in the long-term (Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell 1994: 8).

First ideas of linking relief and development were also promoted under the term ‘relief-development continuum’, which saw the transition from relief to development as a linear process, whereby humanitarian response “can provide a foundation for recovery, development and the creation of sustainable livelihoods”. Further the concept pointed out that there is a gap in terms of funding and operation between humanitarian aid and development (Hinds 2015: 3).

The linear linkage between humanitarian aid and development was strongly criticised by humanitarian aid actors as they argue that the linkage of humanitarian response and development is rather an on-going and complex relationship than a linear one, therefore the concept of ‘contiguum’, also known as the development relief approach, emerged. For this approach the focus lies on immediate needs as well as on long-term solutions and shared responsibility (Hinds 2015: 3).

With ongoing protracted crisis such as the Syrian crisis, devastating natural disasters and the high amount of people living with insecurities and risks, a new debate emerged about the linkage of relief and development under the term Humanitarian-Development Nexus. As it is argued, that such crisis and disasters have immediate as well as long-term impacts, which have to be addressed both as there are more and more overlaps of the two working fields (Stamnes 2016: 1). In addition recovery after a disaster can take years, as it often is a long-term process to get back to a normalised life, therefore recovery depends also on sustainable development (Andrew 2009: 229)

The recent nexus debate also pays attention to linking humanitarian aid, development and peace. The so-called triple-nexus seeks to reinforce peace building by linking security objectives to humanitarian aid and development processes. The triple-nexus is mostly important in areas of human made crisis such as civil wars and refugee crisis (Hinds 2015: 4). As this master thesis focuses on response and rehabilitation of a natural disaster, I will not further address the peace building nexus aspect, as it is not of relevance for my thesis and as it was also not addressed in the case study project by Helvetas.

## **4.2 Recent Debate about the Humanitarian-Development Nexus**

The main challenges of linking humanitarian relief with development is often seen in merging the different institutional and conceptual organisation and principles, bridging funding gaps and finding a solution to the different coordination and partnership systems. The particular challenges will be explained in more details in the following section.

Humanitarian agencies and development agencies often follow different working **principles and values**. Ross et al. for example point out that humanitarian response often is seen as “short-term, [*and*] tended to be top down, donor dependent, inflexible and hierarchical” (1994:3), whereas development is often associated to be “long term, evolutionary, and emphasizes decentralized and participatory approaches” (Ross et al. 1994: 3). Further humanitarian response usually follows the principle of neutrality, impartiality and independence. Humanitarian aid organisations also try to bypass governmental institution to remain neutral (Lie 2017: 205). Development work on the other hand is seen as inherently political and connected closely with governmental institutions (Stamnes 2016: 1). Therefore it is often argued that it is difficult to combine the two working areas.

In terms of the **funding gap** Hinds explains that there is often a “lack of flexibility in funding arrangements” and compartmentalisation. Donors often struggle “to support projects across different forms of assistance” (Hinds 2015: 5). The increasing number of crisis and disasters and the more long-term crisis has generated a growing demand for financial resources and new funding solutions must be found to deal with this changing crisis and disasters (Stamnes 2016: 2). Andrew for example points out that with the increasing number of crisis and disasters there also goes along the concern of lacking enough available relief aid. Another concern he observed in this context is that funding might shift from development more towards relief aid (2009: 229).

According to Hinds, there is a risk that some donor’s implementing partners might not have the capacity or expertise to coordinate their activities or work across different response forms. He

further argues that organisations that used to specialise their work in only humanitarian aid or development might struggle to draw linkages to the other field of work (2015: 5). Therefore **coordination and partnerships** between humanitarian aid and development is seen as a challenge.

There is no clear guide how to link humanitarian response and development so far and in addition there is still no overall definition of the Humanitarian-Development Nexus concept. The concept can be interpreted quite differently by different institutions and organisations. However, it is often mentioned that elements such as participation, flexibility, detailed and joint assessment and capacity building can be essential to link humanitarian aid and development (Christoplos et al. 2014: 18).

### **4.3 Local Capacity Building in Development and Humanitarian Response**

As mentioned before the rehabilitation and recovery after a disaster is usually a long-term process. To support local people to better cope with a disaster and to guarantee successful long-term recovery, building local capacity might help. Post-disaster, affected people have to restore a “sense of safety” to recover, which can be achieved through adaptive and resilient capacity (Andrew 2009: 229). Therefore local capacity building can be understood as one aspect to link humanitarian aid and development. In consulted literature capacity building in development and in humanitarian aid was often defined separately. It was even criticised that capacity building is rather a development intervention than a humanitarian response intervention, as capacity building in humanitarian aid contradicts with the humanitarian principles of neutrality (Lautze and Hammock 1996: 5). Because of these separated perceptions of capacity building, I will in a first step present capacity building definitions of the separate fields and then in a second step summarize and combine them and explain how I define local capacity building in the context of this thesis.

#### **4.3.1 Capacity Building in Development**

In the literature there exist several definitions of capacity and capacity building. Sastre Merino and De Los Ríos Carmenado for example cite the Aspen Institute, which defined community capacity as a combination of a community’s resources, commitment and skills, which can be used to build a community’s strengths and which can help to address a community’s problems and opportunities (2012: 961). Another definition they provided is originally from Chaskin and defines community capacity as “the interaction of human capital, organizational resources, and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well being of a given community” (Sastre Merino and De

Los Ríos Carmenado 2012: 962). They further point out, that capacity is an elusive concept, because it is described as an outcome as well as a process and has various dimensions, such as individual levels or organisational and institutional levels (Sastre Merino and De Los Ríos Carmenado 2012: 962). Capacity building therefore is also a multidimensional and abstract concept with many definitions. Capacity building can be implemented top-down as well as bottom-up (Sastre Merino and De Los Ríos Carmenado 2012: 962). Capacity building is seen as a way to establish more stable structures and to get more adaptive to potential changes. Capacity building can be implemented on individual level to strengthen human capital, as well as on institutional and organisational level to strengthen social capital. Capacity building on institutional and organisational level can for example be provided by building financial, political or technical skills of the organisation/institution or by increasing the organisations/institutions transparency and equity and by building network and linkages (Sastre Merino and De Los Ríos Carmenado 2012: 961).

Sastre Merino and De Los Ríos Carmenado point out that it is recognized by many authors that community capacity can contribute to social development and economic growth in rural communities. Thereby community capacity building strengthens social and human capital, which further can get improved over time (Sastre Merino and De Los Ríos Carmenado 2012: 961). Capacity building is often implemented by providing specific skills to local people and communities, as for example in the form of training courses (Sastre Merino and De Los Ríos Carmenado 2012: 962-963). Increasing economic and social resilience of local communities and organisations is often defined as an outcome of capacity building. Implementation elements to strengthen such social capacities are for example “group visioning and enterprise planning; undertaking collective management activities, crafting an equitable benefits distribution plan; resolving internal management disputes; negotiating with outside funders or government agencies; crafting a business plan; applying accounting and fiscal management; undertaking marketing and communication; and maintaining quality control” (Sastre Merino and De Los Ríos Carmenado 2012: 962-963).

#### **4.3.2 Capacity Building in Humanitarian Response**

In the context of humanitarian response capacity building is mostly seen as a way to support communities and individuals to better cope with disasters or a crisis. Lautze and Hammock explain that it can often be observed that a crisis is only declared as disaster if the community does not have the capacity to cope with the crisis (1996: 3). They further points out:

“Where vulnerabilities are the identifiable weaknesses that make communities prone to disasters, capacities are the identifiable strengths upon which communities can draw to avert, mitigate or recover from disaster. It follows then, that capacity building is any intervention designed either to reinforce or create strengths upon which communities can draw to offset disaster-related vulnerability” (Lautze and Hammock 1996: 3).

Due to this definitions capacity building can be understood as a way to prepare communities for future risks, while on the same time support them to recover from an on-going event. Further capacity building can also include strengthening relationships and networks on different levels, local, national as well as international, with the intention to get prepared to respond more effectively to a crisis. Capacity building should support communities and societies in a way that they will be able to manage and control their own destiny and development process (Lautze and Hammock 1996: 4). There are also different forms of possible capacity building interventions. For example capacity building can happen as a top-down intervention, whereby an agency’s practices or policies get changed. Another approach might be more bottom-up, by providing skills training to an institution or organisation’s staff or other people. Further approaches target to strengthen relationships and networks between organisations or try to mobilise community members to establish new organisations or institutions or join an existing organisation or institution (Coupet et al. 2013: 11). But also aspect of raising awareness and providing knowledge and information can be understood as capacity building elements (Christoplos et. al. 2004: 18-19).

But as Latze and Hammock point out, can capacity building not only be supportive; if it is implemented badly it can lead to harmful effects in the long-term, even though it might seems promising in the short-term as for example dependency of a community or individuals on the aid organisation, as for the affected population “dependency may represent the best of several coping mechanisms”. Therefore it should also be important to support communities and individuals to regain independency in the process of intervention (Lautze and Hammock 1996: 4).

Due to Lautze and Hammock some humanitarian aid agencies criticise that capacity building is rather a development intervention than a humanitarian response implementation and therefore do not implement any capacity building elements in their relief work. Further some humanitarian agencies are concerned about the neutrality of aid organisation, as capacity building can have a political connotation and might be too much of an intrusion of the political landscape for their principle of neutrality (Lautze and Hammock 1996: 5).

### **4.3.3 Capacity Building in the Project Context**

The literature showed that capacity building can be defined in the context of development as well as in the context of humanitarian response as an multidimensional and abstract element. It can happen on various levels such as individual level, community level or organisational or institutional level. Capacity building can happen through different approaches, top-down or bottom-up. Common implementation approaches are different kind of trainings such as skills trainings or management trainings, but also building new networks, raise awareness or provide knowledge. Capacity building in development aims to strengthen social and economic capital to provide more stable structures to people and to make them more adaptive to changes. In humanitarian aid on the other side the main aim of building capacity is it to overcome disaster related vulnerabilities, to cope with a disaster and provide means for recovery. So basically the approach is the same, but the purpose differs. As in this thesis I will look into how to link humanitarian aid and development, I will also examine local capacity building as an approach, which should contribute to both purposes. Therefore in the case of this master thesis I will look into local capacity building as an approach that aims to offset disaster related vulnerabilities as well as it aims to provide more stable structures to the local people by strengthening social and economic capital, that helps them to recover from the disaster and provides them a basis for further development.

## **5 Methodology**

This master thesis followed a qualitative inductive case-study approach. The research consists of two steps: first, a comprehensive review of literature, project documents and reports, and second, an ethnographic field study to get insights in the everyday life of the case study project and to conduct interviews with project personnel, project partners and beneficiaries, and some key informants. For the data collection I used qualitative tools such as semi-structured interviews and participatory observation in the field. I achieved field access through Helvetas as a gatekeeper. The fieldwork was planned for a period of three months in close collaboration with Helvetas to get familiar with the Project of Helvetas and the working environment of an international NGO in the earthquake response. The field site is the municipality Melamchi and the municipality Helambu, in the district of Sindhupalchok, Nepal. The field site is similar to the project site, which is described in more details in chapter 2.2 Project Area.

### **5.1 Access to the Field**

As this thesis is based on a case study about the REAP project by Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation Nepal, I worked in close collaboration with the NGO. Field access was therefore provided to me through Helvetas as a gatekeeper. The NGO organised accommodation and transport relevant to the fieldwork. The fieldwork was planned for three months and took place from early April to the end of June 2019. I was based in Melamchi, where I could use the facilities of the Melamchi office (REAP I) or on some occasions the Chanaute office (REAP II), which was about a half-hour car drive away from Melamchi in the municipality of Helambu. When I was in Kathmandu for some days I could also work at the Kathmandu based project office or at the country office in Lalitpur. During my fieldwork I got the opportunity to attend different meetings, public audits and to join project personnel to the field, which helped me to get deeper insights to the project and helped me to get familiar with the project area and local circumstances. When not in the field or at a meeting I was free to work independently on my thesis. Overall I had to organise myself and it was up to me if I wanted to join the field or when I would like to conduct interviews, but the Helvetas personnel supported me in my work by letting me join them to the field, providing me their time for interviews, translation of interviews and getting access to external interview partners. To conduct the interviews I usually could join one of the field officers to the field and interview different actors during their field visit, thereby they could do their work and at the same time provided me the opportunity to conduct interviews. The field officer, who I could join, usually also translated the interviews I conducted during his field visit, because except for the project personnel most of the interviewees did not speak English. The choice of field site was determined by the REAP project and by Helvetas.



## **5.2 Data Collection**

For the data collection I used different qualitative research methods. The overall approach of my data collection was ethnographic; thereby I used a mix of participant observation, semi-structured interviews and project document analysis. In the following section I will explain and define the particular methods in more detail and make a link to the conceptual framework of ethnography of aid and its relevance for my thesis.

### **5.2.1 Ethnography**

This master thesis follows an ethnographic approach. Ethnographic research usually requires the researcher to spend longer time in the field, being part of the studied field itself and thereby focusing on how the field works. In the process of this kind of participation, further methods such as interviews and document analysis can be integrated (Flick 2018: 337). This means that ethnography as a research method goes beyond participant observation, it can be understood as a flexible strategy combining participant observation in the field with different other research methods, as for example interviews, informal conversations, documents, pictures, etc. (Flick 2018: 314). In the process of my ethnographic research I examined how development and aid works on a specific case study, by focussing on how local capacity building can help to link humanitarian aid and development. To do so I looked on the project design as well as on the implementation of the project and how it both contributed to the project. Thereby the project design can be understood as policy and the project implementation as practice. Further I also looked at how actors involved in the project perceived the project implementation and what their feedback was on the project. To examine how development works, I had to get access to inside information and processes of the project and the project organisation, therefore I was working in close collaboration with the organisation in the project field. I was not directly an employee of the project, but by sharing the office with the project personnel, joining them to the field, attending different meetings and living in the project area for three months I got part of the researched environment. I could get inside views, but still could look at it from an outside perspective. Three months is a rather short time to do ethnographic research, therefore the ethnographic approach of this thesis was limited. It took some time to get familiar with a for me totally new environment. For me it was the first time in Nepal, I was confronted with a new culture, many different ethnic and religious groups, new people and everyday situations. In the short time of three months I also could not really get part of the team, as they still saw me as an outsider, for most of the project personnel I remained the student from Switzerland and therefore most of them did not talk to me informally about unofficial daily project matters and

challenges, they usually only explained me official project matters and processes, but they did not really let me see behind it.

The data collection for this thesis included project document analysis, semi-structured interview and participant observation. Before I will further explain these research methods I will first provide some background information of the conceptual framework of ethnography of aid, which inspired my ethnographic approach.

### **5.2.2 Ethnography of Aid**

In the centre of David Mosse's ethnography of aid is the question about how development works. Mosse (2005: 8) writes, "The ethnographic question is not whether but how development projects work; not whether a project succeeds, but how 'success' is produced". Thereby Mosse analyses the relationship of development policy and practice. He argues that development practice produces policy rather than policy producing practice. He follows the opinion that there is a difference between good policy and good implementation of them, as good policy in theory not necessarily leads to a successful implementation of it in practice. Reasons therefore he sees in the interpretation and translation of policies (Mosse 2004: 646-447). In the context of humanitarian aid Hilhorst and Schmiemann define policies as the organisations principles, they also argue that policies "only come alive" through the way they are translated and interpreted in every day practice (2002: 493). In the context of this thesis policy can be understood as the project design and practise as the implementation of the project. And the ethnographic question is how capacity building can link humanitarian aid and development. Though I will look on project design as well as on the implementation and look how these interact.

Mosse points out that different actors support different interpretations of policies for different reasons as they all follow their own agenda, but even though they might have contradictory interests, they can still follow a unified development policy. To achieve this, "constant work of translation" by skilled brokers is required, as different actors follow different institutional languages. By translation he means the translation of "policy goals into practical interests" as well as the other way round, translation of "practical interests back into policy goals". For these translations skilled brokers are required, those skilled brokers can be different actors such as for example consultants, project managers, community leaders or fieldworker (Mosse 2004: 647). It is this kind of translation that can help to tie together all the heterogeneous entities such as all the different actors, interest or even objects and events of a development project. And it is the task of the ethnographic approach to examine how these translations work, to examine how all these heterogeneous entities can come together and result into a successful project, and in

Mosse's words, it is the ethnographic task to examine how "despite such fragmentation and dissent, actors in development are constantly engaged in creating order and unity through political acts of composition" (Mosse 2004: 647). Hilhorst and Schiemann also point out: "How they [principles] work in practice depends on how actors understand and employ them in the field" (2002: 494). In the context of my thesis there is also some kind of translations and brokers needed. For example in the process of promoting and applying earthquake-resilient techniques and the proposed house design, translation and brokerage is required to explain to the beneficiaries what the purpose of these techniques is, why they should apply them or to clarify why the project proposed these specific house designs. The same applies to other capacity building elements of the project, such as for example the skills trainings, where it also requires translation and brokerage of the purpose and the benefits of those planned policies.

As already shortly described in the previous section on ethnography, ethnographic research is multi-sited and multi-positioned. It usually requires that the researcher writes from within as well as from outside the research field. This means that the researcher him/herself is part of the researched environment for example as consultant or engineer, which puts him/her into a challenging situation. There might be competing or contradictory interest and further the researcher is required to be self-critical as s/he is a member of the researched environment and as the researchers interpretations and observations are shaped by his/her own positionality and perspective (Long 2004: 16). To understand how humanitarian aid and development works it is necessary to get an understanding of the social processes of an organisation and such an understanding you can get best from within the organisation (Mosse 2005: 12). It is important to get an understanding of everyday life and processes to understand how social practices and identities are shaped, noticed, negotiated or contested. A useful device for this purpose Long sees in social interfaces (2004: 15-16). He defines social interfaces as "a way of exploring and understanding questions of diversity and conflict inherent in processes of external intervention" thereby it "aims to elucidate the types and sources of social discontinuity and linkage present in such situations and to identify the organisational and cultural means of reproducing or transforming them" (Long 2004: 28-29). Mosse points out that for outsiders it is usually difficult to get inside views of development organisations, as a lot of inside information can be understood as "private good rather than a public asset". Nevertheless he points out that development organisations are often open for "criticism and questioning of their claims and actions" within the context of evaluations and reviews, but for research outside this context it is more challenging to get inside information, as such research might "not appear to be of practical relevance, is wasteful of time or adds complexity and makes the task of management harder" (Mosse 2005: 12). But letting a researcher inside the organisation, it can also provide them the

opportunity to be reflexive on their own work. This can happen for example through talking or interviewing personnel and other involved actors.

### **5.2.3 Participant Observation**

Observation is a qualitative research method that includes all senses, hearing, seeing, smelling as well as feeling. It can be distinguished between non-participant and participant observation, depending on how far the researcher plays an active role in the researched field (Flick 2018: 325). For the purpose of this thesis I used the method of participant observation. Flick explains that by doing participant observation the researcher observes “from a member’s perspective”, thereby the researcher himself/herself influences the observed field as s/he is part of it (2018: 329). Theory further identifies three phases of participant observation. In a first phase the researcher gets to know the field and starts to orient him-/herself in the field and generally describes the field, this phase is defined as descriptive phase. Second there is seen the phase of focused observation, which narrows the observation on research relevant aspects. Followed by the third phase, selective observation, this phase happens “towards the end of the data collection” and aims to find “further evidence and examples for the types of practices and processes, found in the second step” (Flick 2018: 330). When entering the field I first had to get to know the field, to do so at the beginning of my field work I joined shelter and WASH field officers to the field to observe what their work is about, how they interact with beneficiaries and also to get familiar with the field site and the project. Further I joined different meetings such as weekly and monthly meetings also with the purpose to get familiar with the field. In as second phase I went to the field to conduct interviews, to do so I choosed research relevant actors and also got the opportunity to observe the setting more focused on relevant aspects as for example the shelter beneficiaries newly constructed homes, or how different actors interact with each other. To document the data collection through observation I took field notes. Observation as research method was often challenging, there are so many impressions in the field everyday and you have to learn how to filter more relevant information from less relevant aspects, as you can not just write down everything. Further you must keep in mind that you as a researcher are also influencing the setting.

### **5.2.4 Semi-Structured Interviews**

For the interviews I prepared semi-structured interview guides. Semi-structured interviews do not follow a strict order of questions. The guide consists of a set of mostly open-ended and prepared questions; the guide is flexible and leaves room for additional questions and topics that come up during the interview. The exact course of the interview depends on what the interviewee tells (Flick 2009: 207). In the process of conducting interviews I revised the

interview guides from time to time, added, reformulated or removed some questions. As I was planning to interview different actor groups, I prepared different interview guides for every actor group.

Except for one interview, all the interviews were individual interviews. When conducting interviews in the field, beside the interviewee, the translator and the interviewer there were usually also other actors on the setting, like family members and neighbours of the interviewee, technical assistants and social mobilisers. They intervened from time to time or started some discussions with the interviewee or the translator. This could have influenced what the interviewee was saying and I did not always get translation of these discussions, thereby missing some maybe interesting information for my research.

One interview with a WASH user committee was held as a focus group interview, I planned it as an individual interview with a single member of the committee, but due to a misunderstanding almost the whole user committee was waiting for me. This theoretically provided the opportunity to get different opinions from different committee members, but in the end it were mostly the same two members, who answered the questions. The other committee members were just present and listened to the conversation.

One interview took place spontaneously; in this case I had to improvise and asked questions without any written interview guide. This was the case when I joined a shelter officer to the field and some social mobilisers joined us to support the beneficiary household we planned to visit. I had not planned to interview any social mobiliser as I thought this would not be of relevance to answer my research question as they are from the partner organisation, but during the field visit where two social mobilisers joined us, I realised that they might still be a relevant actor for capacity building and one of the social mobilisers wanted to share information about his work in the project with me, so I spontaneously decided to interview him.

### **5.2.5 Sampling and Sample Size**

Sampling is defined as the selection of individuals and cases that should get researched to be able to get findings relevant for the purpose of the research. Sample size on the other hand defines the size of this selection (Flick 2018: 173). As this master thesis followed qualitative research methods it focused on an in depth study of a relatively small sample size rather than on a large sample size for standardized information as it is usually the case in quantitative research. For the semi-structured interviews I planned to choose my interview partners through purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling intends to select information-rich cases for in depth

study (Patton 1990: 169). For the sample I identified nine actor groups, from which I tried to interview at least one person, but preferred to have two or three interviewees per group to get better insights. The small sample size per actor group is rather exemplary than representative. Within the actors group, the sampling followed purposeful random sampling (Patton 1990: 179), thereby I decided the actors group of interest and the project personnel selected random interviewees within this group according to their field work. One actor group, the social mobiliser was not planned from the beginning, but was identified as important during the process of fieldwork. Therefore the selection of this sample followed an opportunistic sampling, it was an on-the-spot decision, as I saw a new opportunity during already planned data collection (Patton 1990: 179).

Primary targets for the research were Shelter officers, WASH officers, by the project trained technicians, by the project trained masons or carpenters, WASH user committee members, ward office members, Shelter beneficiaries and WASH beneficiaries. The exact sample size per actor group is presented in the following table:

Sample	Number of informants	Remarks
Shelter officer	2	REAP II
WASH officer	3	1 WASH coordinator, 1 social safeguard and 1 officer REAP I+II
Trained field technician	3	2 REAP II, 1 REAP I
Trained mason/carpenter	2	1 mason, 1 carpenter, both are also shelter beneficiaries REAP I
WASH user committee member	2	1 focus group interview, REAP I, second interview was with a UC chairman only
Ward office member	1	Ward chairman
Shelter beneficiary	3	REAP II
WASH beneficiary	2	REAP I
Social mobiliser	1	Interview was conducted spontaneously on field visit, didn't follow a interview guide, REAP II
Total	19	

I planned in a first phase to conduct interviews with project personnel, not only to gain information to answer the research question, but also to get more information about the project and to make sure that the context of the project is well understood. The insight from these first interviews should have helped to prepare the interview guides for the other interviewees, such

as project beneficiaries, user committee members or trained masons and carpenters. But as the project was in the end phase and everyone was quite busy, I had to work according to the personnel's time schedule and be flexible; therefore some of the field interviews took place before I could interview the project personnel.

## **5.3 Data Analysis**

### **5.3.1 Translation and Transcription**

Except for the project personnel on the shelter and WASH officer level or above, the interviewees did not speak English; therefore field assistance for translation was necessary. In a first attempt I tried to get a student from Kathmandu University as an external field assistant for translation, first affiliations with the Kathmandu University were made, but due to difficulties to find a suitable date for a meeting and due to the fact that I was already in the field and had to proceed with my field work, the affiliation was not further proceeded. Instead the Helvetas project personnel offered to assist with translation during the interviews. The fact that they were part of the project influenced the interviews significantly. On one side they knew the interviewees very well, as they were supporting or working with them for a long time, which made it easier to motivate them to participate in the interview. On the other side it might have also influenced what and how they were talking about the project. For example very few people were critical about the project, it was often mentioned how happy they are about the project and that they would like that the organisation would stay longer or support other projects in the area. The fact that a Helvetas employee translated the interview made it for most of the interviewees difficult to understand that I am not a Helvetas employee and their answers will not have any influence on the project. With an external translator I would have been more independent, whereby I might have received more critical answers. Another problem regarding the translation with assistance from project personnel was, that the translator him/herself sometimes found it difficult to differentiate between his/her role as translator and his role as project personnel. In this regard sometimes the translator added his/her own opinion or added some project explanation to the translated answer from the interviewee.

In general a translation is always already some kind of interpretation, as the translator rephrases the answers in his own words and as interviewer you have no guarantee about how s/he translates the questions and answers and no control about how much s/he adds according to his/her own understanding. Further it was also the case that I had assistance from different translators. Therefore the different interviews were translated in different ways and the respective translator made his/her own interpretation of the translation. This makes it more difficult to analyse the data, as the translations did not follow a common structure.

Except for the first two interviews, all the interviews were recorded and later transcribed for further data analysis. I only transcribed the English questions and translations, the interviewees' answers in Nepali I did not transcribe, as I do not understand any Nepali and had no assistant for Nepali transcription. The transcription of the interviews was done by using a smoothed method rather than direct transcription. This means that expressions like ehm, hmm, and so on were left out and the phrase was smoothed in a way that it makes it more readable and understandable. The transcription and smoothing can be understood as a further interpretation of the content, as it is a replication of the translation, whereby some content can get lost, be misunderstood or reformulated (Kowal and O'Connell 2013: 65-66).

### **5.3.2 Coding and Categorizing**

Coding is a technique that helps analysing and interpreting data, in this process it does not follow a given formula, different researchers can select and interpret codes differently (Saldana 2009: 8). For coding I used the MAXQDA2018 program, which allowed me to easily try out different codes and provides good overviews of the codes for further analysis. Coding is an ongoing process, whereby I started by defining some codes and changed them continuously until I came up with some new codes that I could use well for further data analysis and categorization of the codes. To do so I followed the qualitative content analysis by Marying with inductive category development, the main idea of this is it to build criterions based on the research question and theoretical background. In the process of following this criterion, categories can be build by continuously repeating the procedure until main categories can be identified that help interpreting the data (Marying 2000: 4). To develop criterions for coding I used my research questions as a guideline. In the process of coding I developed different main categories, such as capacity building, long-term effects, Helvetas leaving, preparedness/other disasters, feedback as well as more specific categories like technical assistance, masons/carpenters, shelter beneficiaries, social mobiliser or WASH. Those main categories were subdivided into further different categories depending on the main category. Some examples for sub-codes are effectiveness of training, previous knowledge, gained knowledge, challenges, task/support. For some of the sub-categories I even made further sub-categories. The main categories were build on the one hand to analyse some more project general statements (categories long-term effects, feedback, etc.) and on the other hand to analyse more specific aspects of the project such as for example have a closer look only on the trained masons and carpenters. The following coding map will provide an overview of the categorisation and codings developed in the process of my data analysis.



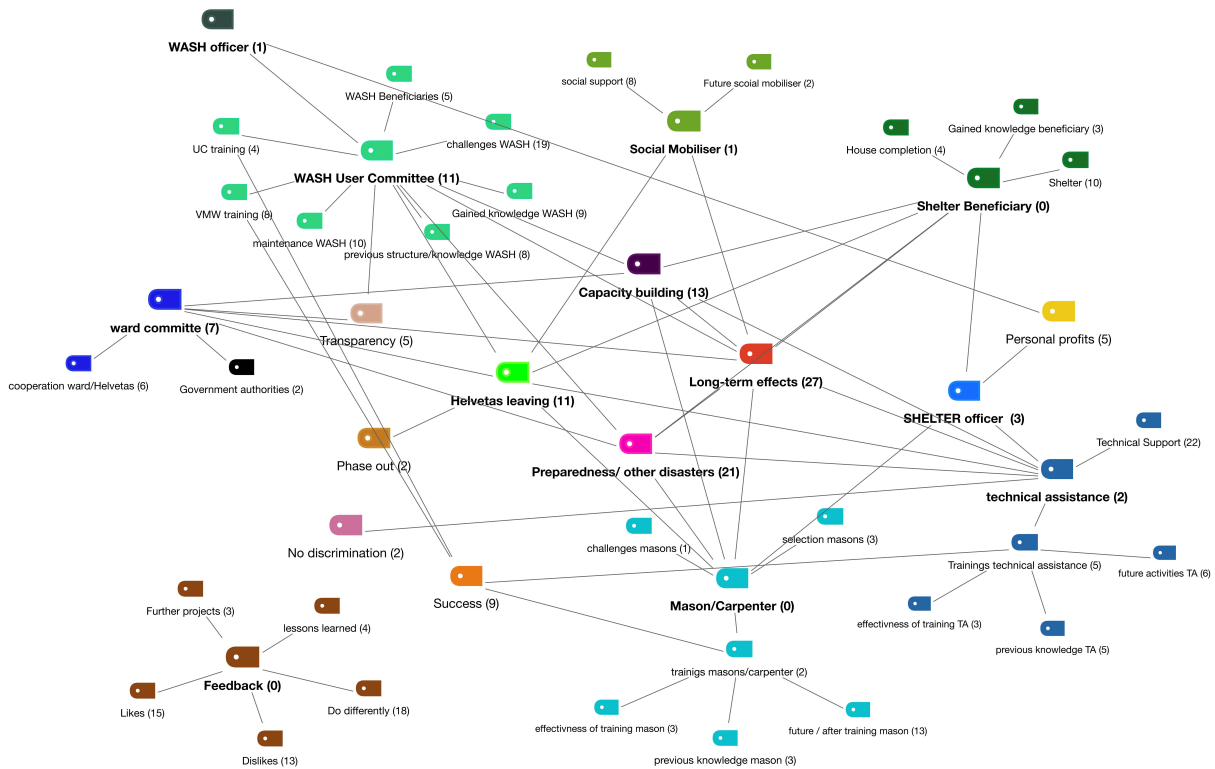


Figure 2: Coding Map produced with MAXQDA2018

## 5.4 Positionality and Reflexivity

In this section I will describe my positionality and critically reflex how it influenced my research. The term positionality in research is understood as the researchers identity and the way how this identity influences the process of research. This includes the researches perceptions of the researched field as well as how “we expect others will perceive us”. Researchers have “multiple overlapping identities”, therefore the researchers identity can be interpreted in different ways (Bourke 2014: 1).

My positionality as a young white female student from Switzerland influenced the outcome of my research and data collection mostly base on two aspects, the connotation with Helvetas and the connotation between me as a Swiss citizen and Switzerland as the donor country. Firstly, Helvetas was my gatekeeper and Helvetas personnel was always present during my interviews and assisted me by translating the interviews, thereby the interviewees saw me closely connected to the organisation, even though I clearly expressed that I am a student and my work has no influence on any activities of Helvetas or the interviewees position in the project. The interviewees therefore mostly did not express any critical opinions about the project or the organisation and they often told me that they would be happy if the organisation would support other things or if they would stay longer in the area. These expressions clearly signalled me, that they could not differentiate me from the project. Further the translators as personnel of the

project had also sometimes difficulties to differentiate their role as translator from their role as project employee, they sometimes started to add additional explanations of project elements to the translation and further as most of them were engineers they often used quite technical terms, which sometimes made it difficult for me to understand, as I was not familiar with all the technical terms of the used reconstruction techniques. With an outside assistant for translation with no knowledge about the project I would have been more neutral and might have gotten also some more critical feedbacks. I organised an external translator for the last interviews, but as the organisation of the last interviews was quite challenging and the date of the interviews constantly changed, in the end I was not able to arrange it with her.

Secondly, the donor Swiss Solidarity as well as the implementing organisations Helvetas and Solidar Swiss are all from Switzerland and as I am also a Swiss citizen, some interviewees made a connotation between me and the donor and the implementing organisations, although I was not involved in the project planning or implementation in any way. They often expressed their gratefulness towards Switzerland and the Swiss citizens. They associated me and all Swiss citizens as rich and generous and it seemed to be difficult for them to differentiate me as researcher from their image of Swiss people as donors. Therefore it for example happened after an interview that the interviewee asked me for medical supplies and food or another interviewee asked me if I could help them financing the reconstruction of their village stupa. In such situations I usually acknowledged their gratefulness towards Switzerland and the donors, but also had to keep my distance. In case I got asked for specific support or goods, I had to clearly express that I am not in a position to make such decisions and that I am only a student and can not provide any goods or money to them. Getting requests from interviewees, were always uncomfortable situations as they took their time to answer my questions and I could not provide them anything in return except for my appreciation. The interviewees' image of me as a Swiss citizen might have influenced the content of the interview also in a less critical way as the interviewees might have used strategically answers by expressing their gratefulness with the intention to get additional profits or support. During data analysis I had to keep in mind that some answers might have been strategically and I had to critically question why and how people answered my question in the way they did.

In addition my positionality also influenced my everyday life in the field office and interaction with the field personnel. I was a young woman in a male dominated project team in a country with different cultural perceptions. Therefore the interaction with the team members was sometimes a little bit reserved on a personal level, meaning that they supported me whenever I needed their help or had questions regarding my fieldwork, but as soon as the topic changed to something not directly related with my field work, I sometimes had the impression they tried to

keep their distance. As a result I sometimes did not feel very welcomed by all the personnel, I sometimes got the impression that some of the personnel also did not understand why a young Swiss student comes to Nepal for a thesis. Also three month is a rather short time for ethnographic research and I was not directly a project employee, therefore I somehow remained an outsider for the project team, even though I interacted with them on a daily basis.

## **5.5 Limitations**

The fieldwork and data collection was limited by the project personnel's capacity and time schedule. This means that I was strongly dependent on the project personnel, their time schedule and availability. My field work was planned during the last three months of the project period, therefore the project personnel was quite busy and it was for example difficult to organise the interviews with the WASH user committees and WASH beneficiaries, as most of the water schemes were already finished and only a few field visits and last public audits were planned during the time of my data collection. Further during the time of my field work there took also an external evaluation of the project place as well as field visits from the donor agency and Solidar Swiss for internal evaluations, during this visits and evaluations the project personnel was usually involved in these activities and could not support me with field visits. In addition there also took different staff trainings place, during the time of these trainings there was also only limited possibilities of field visits, which to some extent limited my timeframe of conducting interviews and I had to be very flexible in my time schedule. Due to this limitation of the time frame and access to interviewees, it was only possible to interview a limited number of interviewees, therefore the results are only exemplary and as this thesis followed a qualitative approach it was also not the aim to make generalisations that represents all the actors of an actor group. Further this master thesis is based on a case study and followed an ethnographic approach; therefore the findings from this thesis might not be representative for other reconstruction projects. In another setting, a different country, in another project or with another organisation the findings and outcomes can be quite different than the findings of this thesis.

Once again also the language can be understood as a limitation, as I did not speak any Nepali I was dependent on translations. In the process of translation relevant information might get lost. The language was not only a limitation for the interviews, but also for my general work and everyday life in the field, as the office language except for meetings with the project manager was Nepali and not all project personnel could speak English, this made it difficult to have informal conversations about the project and gaining further insights on the project and the working progress of the personnel. But even though there was a limitation in regard of the

language I could still observe the situations, as for example during monthly meetings, I could usually still understand the context of the meeting, as there were presentations and I could still observe how different actors interacted with each others.

## 6 Findings

In the following section I will present the findings from the desk study and the fieldwork. In a first step I will present the identified local capacity building elements and then further point out how the project implemented each of the elements and analyse the interviewees’ responses to particular project elements in consideration of my observations. In a second step I will present more general findings and feedbacks from consulted project partners, personnel and beneficiaries.

### 6.1 Local Capacity Building Elements of the Project

The REAP project tried to build local capacity on different levels. Based on the desk study of project documents and based on my first insights in the field and conversations with the project team in Melamchi and Chanaute, I identified the following local capacity building elements of the project:

Level	Project activity	Aim to strengthen
Individual level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Skills training for masons and carpenters</li> <li>- Skills training for field technicians</li> <li>- Skills training for WASH village maintenance workers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Human capital:</b> Beneficiaries gain knowledge, skills and ability to work</li> <li>- <b>Economic capital:</b> Waged income and long-term means of gaining a livelihood, decreased unemployment</li> </ul>
Institutional level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establishment of WASH user committees, management trainings for WASH user committees</li> <li>- Strengthen community capacity to reconstruct earthquake-resilient</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Social capital:</b> Community engagement, support each other, strengthening social and community networks</li> <li>- <b>Physical capital:</b> Earthquake resilient infrastructure, technical knowhow</li> </ul>

#### 6.1.1 Skills Training for Earthquake Resilient Shelter Reconstruction

Base on the project design (funding application), the aim of REAP I was it to train:

- 8 field technicians
- 220 master craftsperson

- 1'100 semi-skilled craftsperson

The trainings were composed of theoretical classes and on the job training. The trainings were planned to take about 50 days. The trainings were further planned to be on the house reconstruction of the project. The project planned to directly employ the trained field technicians once their training was completed. The trained craft persons were envisaged to build construction teams for the project and were supervised by trained technicians, in the process of their training they also got the opportunity to rebuild their own houses. At the end of the skills training all the trained craftsperson got the opportunity to absolve a skills test and if they were successful, they got a certificate. The skills trainings took place in cooperation with the Employment Fund Nepal, which provides vocational trainings for young Nepalese women and men, mostly from disadvantaged groups from whole Nepal (Helvetas 2015: 10, Helvetas 2019c).

### **6.1.2 Trained Technical Assistants**

The task of the technical assistants in the project was to provide the beneficiary households with technical support for earthquake resistant reconstruction of their shelters, as well as technical support for construction of toilets and improved cooking stoves. To perform their work well, Helvetas provided skills trainings to the technical assistants, as describe in the previous section.

The three interviewed technical assistants all got trainings in alternative building construction, alternative materials, retrofitting, earthquake resilient reconstruction techniques, basic Exel and safety and security. From the three interviewed technicians only one is from the district of Sindhupalchok, the other two are from different parts of Nepal. All of the interviewed technicians had previous knowledge in the work as technicians, two got previous trainings from other organisations and one worked with the NRA before, where he already got some first ideas about earthquake resilient techniques. Even though they all already had previous knowledge; they still thought the trainings from Helvetas were very helpful and useful for them, especially the techniques for earthquake resilient reconstruction where seen as very useful. They could learn new techniques and also could learn new practical aspects, which were essential for the project and also for future employments (Interview1, 3, 4).

As the project was about to phase out soon, it was also of interest what the trained technicians will do after the project and what their opportunities are in the long-term. At the time of the interviews, none of the interviewed technicians had yet found a new employment for after the project end, but they all mentioned that they would like to work as technicians again. Two had applied for a new employment, but not received an answer yet; one of them even applied in another country, as he thought it is difficult to find a similar job in Nepal, the other one

mentioned that he is willing to go everywhere in Nepal, if he finds a good offer. Although they are worried about unemployment after the project end, the shelter officers are optimistic that the field technicians will find another similar employment, as they think that the technicians are quite qualified and learned a lot through the project, which will help them to stand out during their application procedure (Interview 11: 55).

The interviews showed that the project managed well to build the capacity of the field technicians and that they feel well qualified for further employment. In regards of locality it must be said, that the trained technicians not necessarily were local people, therefore there is a high probability that the technicians will leave the project area once the project is closed. This argument is also supported by the interviewees' statements that they are willing to work at any place in Nepal or even in other countries, if they get the opportunity. As a result it can be said that the project managed to build capacity of field technicians through skills trainings, but not necessarily local capacity. This means that in case that local people and communities need any kind of technical support in the future, it might be more difficult for them to find a qualified person for this concern within the community and area. However the technical assistants can apply their skills and newly gained knowledge also in other parts of the country and thereby help to support the development process in other parts of Nepal, assumed that they will stay in the country.

### **6.1.3 Trained Masons and Carpenters**

For the masons and carpenter trainings the project selected local people based on a scorecard, thereby for example locality, previous knowledge, gender and willingness to work were criteria (Interview 10: 55, Interview 11: 15). In REAP I they provided a 50 days training for masons and carpenters, in REAP II they provided additional trainings of 7 days for already trained masons. After completion of the training the participants had to do an exam and got a certificate if they succeeded. The two interviewed trained masons and carpenters both got a 50 days trainings during the REAP I project phase, one as a carpenter and the other one as a mason. Both reconstructed their own house during or after the training and therefore can also be seen as shelter beneficiaries (Interview 5: 7, Interview 6: 7). Both interviewees have assessed the training as very useful, they pointed out that they got more technical knowhow and they learned how to construct in an earthquake resilient way. Before the trainings they both were not aware of earthquake resilient construction techniques. The carpenter also pointed out that he had no previous knowledge in the working field of a carpenter, he had little experiences as a mason but not as carpenter, but now he feels confident working as a carpenter (Interview 5: 15). After completion of the trainings and completion of their own houses both interviewees were

involved in reconstruction of other houses, but at the moment of the interview only one of the interviewees was still working as a carpenter. Interviewee 5 pointed out that after the training he got employed by a local construction company and he mentioned:

“This opportunity was given to me by taking this training, if I would not have had that type of training I would not have gotten that opportunity” (Interview 5: 23).

Interviewee 6 on the other hand does not work as mason anymore, he is now involved in farming, but he points out that he would work again as mason if he would get the opportunity, but so far he has not gotten any requests (Interview 6: 20). But according to his answer and the reaction of his wife it also seemed the case that he does not actively look for further employment in construction, but still he seems to be willing to do construction work if requested. When asking the shelter officers about the employment opportunities of the trained masons and carpenters after the training, they were very optimistic. Interviewee 11, a shelter officer, explains that they made a survey about six months after some trainings and by that time 70% of the trained masons and carpenters were still working in the construction field (27). The other interviewed shelter officer pointed out that he can not guarantee that the trained masons and carpenters will find an employment after the trainings, but he is sure that they developed sufficient skills for construction and that they will work in the community somehow with or without employment and thereby support the local community (Interview 10: 47). Both shelter officers also think that through the trainings and the certificates, the masons and carpenters will be acknowledged well by the communities and also by other wards, so that they will ask them for work if they need some skilled craftsman (Interview 10: 51, Interview 11: 35).

The interviews showed that the participants of the mason and carpenter trainings could learn a lot and got capacitated for working in construction on a professional level and also are quite aware now about the importance of earthquake resilient construction techniques. It further showed that the trainings qualified them well for further employment. I observed that there were still a lot of different constructions going on in the area, therefore I expect that there will be enough employment opportunities for them in the area in the next years, but it seems also unclear how long there will be demand for so many skilled masons and carpenter. It also does not seem that they do just get requests from employers if they behave passively, they have to actively look and apply for employment. The project provided the training participants a new income opportunity and if they can continue to work in construction this can help them to gain for their livelihood.



But I see also the possibility that in some year's when major reconstructions and improvements of infrastructure might be finished, the demand of qualified craftsperson will decrease. As a result the employment opportunity in reconstruction in the area will decrease and the trained masons and carpenters either have to move to other places farer away from their homes or they have to follow other income opportunities. But even thought they would follow other income opportunities, assumed they will stay in the area, in case of a future disaster, they would still be there and they probably still have the knowhow and skills learned through the project, so in such a case they could still help the community to better cope in case of a future disaster. Therefore it can be said that the local capacity building of the trainings of local masons and carpenters can be understood as sustainable, it not only helped the local people in the short-term for reconstruction but also can help them in the long-term as on one side it can provide an income opportunity and on the other side it strengthens preparedness in case of future disasters.

#### **6.1.4 Shelter Beneficiaries**

For shelter reconstruction the project planned to use designs similar to traditional local house designs with additional earthquake resilient construction elements such as plinth bands and foundation, vertical reinforcements and corner stitches. REAP I proposed four different house designs, which were all based on the principles and building codes of the 'Shelter Cluster Nepal and the National Society of Earthquake Technology – Nepal' (NSET). The shelter reconstruction also aimed to be based on local materials to make local people familiar with the construction materials and also to reduce transportation cost. The long-term aim was it that the local people get aware of earthquake resilient construction and are able to replicate the designs and reconstruction techniques in the area (Helvetas 2015: 9). Whilst REAP I only focused to support selected households, REAP II aimed to support all households in Helambu, not only with technical reconstruction support but also with counselling about the administrative requirements to access reconstruction grants by the NRA (Helvetas 2017: 10-11).

The shelter beneficiaries did not receive any training, but through the technical and social assistance they could also learn from the project and got aware of earthquake resilient construction. Interviewee 8, shelter beneficiary, for example pointed out that technical assistants stopped by from time to time and thereby he could also learn something about the techniques, such as for example the purpose of the bands and how to build stronger houses (15). Some of the interviewed shelter beneficiaries were also involved in the reconstruction of the houses together with trained craftsperson, even though they had no trained skills themselves. Two of the three interviewed shelter beneficiaries did not have completed reconstruction at the

time of the interview and still lived in temporary shelters with their families, but the owners of the not completed shelters were both confident to complete reconstruction during the project period. They all think the new constructed houses are safer and stronger than before and they are aware of the earthquake resilient techniques used, therefore they are confident that the people in the area will continue to construct houses with this techniques in the future (Interview 8: 38, Interview 6: 37, Interview 9: 47). In general people seemed to be quite proud of their new earthquake-resilient houses, the once that were still reconstructing their houses for example showed me the earthquake-resilient construction elements implemented, such as the vertical reinforcements and explained me how this makes their homes stronger and safer. This symbolised me that most of the visited house owners were really engaged in the reconstruction process and could also get capacitated in earthquake-resilience.

The interviews showed that the project achieved to raise awareness of shelter beneficiaries about the importance of earthquake resilient reconstruction techniques and that even the people that did not get any skills trainings could learn from the project. Therefore it can be said that the project also built capacity of the shelter beneficiaries, they could learn from the project as they were involved in the reconstruction process, worked close with the REAP and reconstruction personnel, further they trust in the earthquake resilient constructions and seemed to be confident to keep this construction techniques for future constructions in the area. In addition some of the shelter beneficiaries are also trained masons or carpenters. The interviews with the trained mason and carpenter showed that they also supported their neighbours in shelter reconstruction, therefore it can also be observed that there is some kind of community support. Even if a house owner is not familiar with earthquake resilient construction, there is a high probability that he knows someone in the community that got skills training or is informed well about it.

### **6.1.5 WASH User Committee and Village Maintenance Workers**

The WASH part of the project followed a participatory community approach, meaning that the community had to plan and implement the rehabilitation and construction activities as well as the operation and maintenance of the water schemes with the support and counselling of Helvetas (Helvetas 2015: 10 and Helvetas 2017: 15). To build local capacity of communities in construction, operation and maintenance of water schemes for drinking water and sanitation, WASH user committees (UC) were established. As these user committees were responsible to manage the construction as well as the maintenance of the schemes once they are completed, user committee members received trainings for pre-construction and post-construction management (Helvetas 2015: 10-12). Beside the **management trainings for UC members** the

project also **trained village maintenance workers (VMW)**, which are responsible to maintain the water schemes once the construction of the schemes was finished.

The WASH project followed 16 clearly defined steps, starting with a meeting to discuss the schemes on VDC level and since the new federal constitution on ward level. In a second step the user committee gets established and activated in a meeting including all the households of the respective community. The process is followed by further steps as for example, only to mention some of the steps, sanitation, hygiene and behaviour motivations, public hearings, construction and management trainings, establishment of operation and maintenance fund mechanism, VMW trainings, the actual rehabilitation of the scheme, and ends with step 15, the final commissioning, a public audit whereby Helvetas turns over the total responsibility of the scheme to the UC in presence of the water scheme users and members of the ward committee and a representative of the municipality. There is an additional step, step 16, which includes the monitoring of the scheme after the first monsoon, as there is a high risk of scheme damage due to landslides during monsoon season (Helvetas PowerPointPresentation by Jyoti R. Mishra, Social Safeguard Officer WASH).

During the interviews, WASH officer 1 mentioned that beside trainings for UC management and VMWs, the project further trained 22 people about latrine construction (Interview 15: 19). According to the WASH officer 1 most of the communities had no user committee for their water schemes before the project, the ones that already had a UC were rehabilitated and sometimes newly arranged. Due to the management trainings, they received the necessary business skills and could form or rearrange the user committee (Interview 15).

The size of the UC depends on the size of the water schemes, usually it consist of nine members of which at least 30% have to be women and two of them should be in a key position, such as chair person, vice chairperson, secretary or treasury (Interview 13: 36, Interview 14: 27, Interview 15: 39). The UCs were responsible to manage the construction of the water schemes with technical and social support from Helvetas. After completion of the water schemes, a public audit takes place where Helvetas officially hands over the water scheme to the UC in presence of the community, from this moment on the responsibility of the water scheme will be totally in the hands of the UC. To guarantee operation and maintenance of the scheme, the UCs establish maintenance funds, thereby they collect water tariffs from the community members. The water tariffs are defined by the UC, in most communities it cost about 50 Rupees (about 0.45 CHF) and is collected monthly by the UC. Further the community members had also to pay a pre-construction tariff of 1000 Rupees (8.5 CHF), which was necessary to cover the construction costs of their tap. In some cases, as for example on the water scheme of the interviewed UC 2, the

UC decided to install water meter with a specific tariff per used unit, so that every household has to pay tariffs according to their personal use, rather than a general tariff. In addition they also decided to collect additional 1000 Rupees per household during the process of construction (Interview 17: 16).

The project also trained village maintenance workers (VMW), one or two per water scheme, depending on the size of the scheme. The trainings took ten days and have been assessed as successful by WASH officers and the interviewed UCs. The WASH coordinator illustrates that at the beginning of the trainings most of the participants did not even know the working tools, but at the end of the training they all felt quite confident using all the different tools (Interview 14: 55).

Further the interviewed UC 1 points out that they did not only get capacitated from the management and the VMW trainings, they could also learn a lot about sanitation and hygiene, which they were not aware before. For example they explain that they were not aware how to filter drinking water or were not committed to wash their hands with soap, also the litter-burning places were a new thing for them, before they were not aware what to do with their litter and they had just thrown it somewhere. But now they know about different cost-efficient water purification techniques such as SODIS (Solar Water Disinfection), they got workshops about hygiene including hand-washing sessions and they constructed litter-burning places. The interviewed chairman from UC 2 also mentioned that before the REAP project they were not aware of the water quality, but in the process of the project Helvetas tested the water quality of their water sources and they got the feedback that their water quality is safe for drinking. The chairman of UC 1 for example told me:

“During this project, we have learned so many things, like, we were not completely aware of the drying rack, what purpose it has, the item, or about the sunlight and how it kills the germs, that kind of things we didn’t know before, they started this project ... and now if you see the village, you can see a little bit more, you can feel sanitation and hygiene” (Interview 13 WASH User Committee 1: 50, 87).

After the interview with the UC 1 members, the UC chairman showed me proudly the new water scheme in his community and explained me all the particular elements of the scheme such as the water tank, the source, the household taps and the drying racks as well as the litter burning places.

All the interviewed people from the WASH part, from WASH coordinator to UC and beneficiaries think that the UCs are trained and prepared well enough to operate and maintain the water schemes on their own. According to WASH officer 1 the water schemes are planned to last at least 20 years and with good maintenance they should last even longer. All the interviewees think local authorities and UCs got prepared well to manage the operation and maintenance of the schemes after hand over, they got management trainings, they have established mechanism for the maintenance funds and they have trained VMW, during the implementation phase the project tried to make these procedures their habit (Interview 15: 31, Interview 17: 36).

According to the WASH officers all of the 57 UCs work well at the moment and there have not been any significant changes of UC members so far. WASH officer 2 points out, how well the UC will work in the long term depends strongly on the leadership of the UCs, if there will be changes of UC members it can be critical who will be selected for the position, but the project has no influence on this anymore (Interview 16: 46). WASH Beneficiary 1 supports this argument, she is quite confident that the current UC will sustain the water schemes in the near future, as she experiences the current UC as very active and supportive, but she also sees future challenges in changes or inactiveness of UC members:

“There might be some challenges like members of the UC, they might be inactive, dismantle and another UC might be formed in the future” (Interview 18: WASH beneficiary: 47)

Another challenge for the UCs is seen in the seasonal migration in the area, as Melamchi and Helambu are located close to Kathmandu many people in the area seasonally migrate to Kathmandu or some also abroad as they get better employment opportunities there. Some of the UCs have faced the problem that some of their village maintenance workers have travelled to other places for work and the UCs could not finance a replacement of the VMWs or even if they could find and afford a replacement, these person probably did not receive any skills training for the work of a maintenance worker. Even though they somehow still managed the maintenance so far, this will be a challenge in the future especially after some years, when the condition of the schemes might get worse or when facing issues such as landslides during monsoon season (Interview 16: 31). The same challenge is also seen for the UC members, they might travel to other places for work or resign from their position in the committee and it will be a difficult task to find a capable replacement (Interview 14: 43).

A further challenge recognized by a lot of the interviewees is the risk of pipeline damages through road expansions. The WASH coordinator explains that there was already a water pipe

damaged during road extension works in one community and he thinks that such pipeline damages can happen as there is a lack of ownership of the water schemes, he thinks that some UCs as well as beneficiaries do not feel enough ownership of the water schemes (Interview 14: 35, 39). He further adds: “whenever there is some kind of incident, the owner does not see this is my tap, this is not my tap, this is Helvetas’s tap” (Interview 14: 39). The UC 2 chairman also sees the problem of damaged pipelines through road expansion works, but unlike the WASH coordinator he does not mention that he thinks this is a problem of lacking ownership (Interview 17: 40). In addition WASH beneficiary 1 and 2 also both pointed out that they are concerned about damages of the pipeline by road expansions and that this will have negative impacts on their taps (Interview 18: 47, Interview 19: 43). There seemed to be different perceptions of ownership of the water schemes, the WASH coordinator on the one side recognizing a lack of ownership and the UCs and WASH beneficiaries on the other side were all expressing how they feel responsible for the new schemes, which can be understood as a feeling of ownership. For example one of the UC members explained that before the earthquake there was only one public tap in the village and in case of disturbances no one felt responsible for it. But now after project implementation everyone has a tap by his or her house, therefore they feel more responsible to take care of it and the UC also mentions that the overall responsibility to maintain it and take care of the whole scheme is clear now (Interview 13: 75). According to this statement of the UC 1 member, there seems to be a feeling for ownership amongst the UC and the water scheme users. In addition WASH beneficiary 1 explained that even though she was not directly involved in construction work of the scheme, she engaged in other activities that were connected with the WASH project such as helping to clear the bushes in the intake area or distribution of fact sheets to the households. Although she did not mention her view of ownership towards the scheme and taps, her engagement for the scheme signals that she feels some kind of responsibility toward the water scheme (Interview 18: 15). Although the interviewed UCs and beneficiaries express their feeling of responsibility towards the water schemes, their perception of ownership of the water scheme might still be different than the perception of ownership of the WASH coordinator, as ownership in the understanding of the coordinator might also include the responsibility of the UC to prevent the water schemes from any possible damage, which for example also includes the communication with the municipality to avoid such damages through infrastructure improvements as road extensions. Further it is also to mention that I only interviewed two UCs and two WASH beneficiaries out of total 57 UC, therefore it can not be made an overall statement that all the UC feel responsible for their water schemes.

## 6.2 Long-Term Effects

The projects aim was it not only to provide the local people with emergency aid and the basic needs, but also to provide them long-lasting, sustainable solutions and to build back better, therefore the reconstruction followed earthquake resilient building codes and new techniques were developed. Most of the interviewees agreed that they think the new constructed earthquake resilient houses will be stronger than before and long lasting. Most of them believe that the houses will resist another earthquake and think the reconstruction is sustainable. Another point that contributes to the long-time livelihood perspectives of the local people is the simple fact that the beneficiaries now have new houses and access to drinking water, they do not have to bother anymore about reconstruction, they can now spend their time again for other activities such as farming or other income generating work as also the following quote by Interviewee 4 shows:

“Now the beneficiaries do know how to make the shelters and water supply and the project also supported for the ICS (Improved Cooking Stove), toilets and so the beneficiaries can focus on other activities, as they got a shelter, water supply, toilet, ICS and they will, they can invest their time for income generating things.”

(Interview 4, Field Technician 3: 36)

This further means that completion of the houses is seen as a big step towards normalisation of the beneficiary's everyday life as Interviewee 3 mentions: “shelter is one of the main things needed in human live” (Field Technician 2: 57). So if they have a safe house, they can focus on other things.

But not only has the project provided long-term effects by constructing resilient houses and water schemes, as a ward chairman points out, also the many trainings provided by the project will help the communities in the long term (Interview 12: 29). Local people got capacitated by different skills training and if they will stay in the community, also their knowledge will stay there with them and they can support local communities with their skills even when the project is over. But as the interviews showed, there can also be observed that some of the through the project trained people leave the area, as they get better employment opportunities elsewhere. In such cases the project might has successfully build capacity of people, but if they move to other places this capacity might not contribute to the local long-terms development, but might be supportive for people in other areas of the new homes of those people.

Even though the project has supported and satisfied people in many ways, the local people also have some concerns about the upcoming project end. The interviewed ward chairman for

example explains that even though reconstruction is almost finished, it is not completely finished and he is worried about those households that have not completed reconstruction yet. One of the field technicians is also concerned, that local people in the area might be lacking support in the future, for example if they have to expand some water schemes due to community growth, he is worried that by then the people do not get sufficient support or might not be able to do it without support (Interview 3: 75). But at this point it must also be mentioned, that especially the field technicians as well as some of the field officers were also concern about their own unemployment once the project comes to an end. Not only did some of them mention their concern about unemployment during their interviews, but also in informal conversations, some personnel told me that they do not know what they will do after the project and also that many of their colleagues are worried about unemployment, therefore in some cases they might wanted the project to stay longer also a bit to their own benefit. But it was also mentioned that people in the community still address many other problems, therefore they are not happy that Helvetas is leaving the area at this moment, they would have preferred if the project had stayed for a longer period. But still the interviewed ward chairman assured that they will do their best to deal with the situation by themselves and they are hopeful that people in the community with all the trainings and the things they learned through the project, they will manage the situation, but nevertheless they are worried that it will not be sufficient (Interview12: 37). Shelter officer 2 is confident that the local authorities are quite strong now and will be able to support the local people. He further says, that projects come and go, but the local authorities will stay there, so it is their responsibility to take care and support the local people in the long-term (Interview 11: 87).

For the phase out of the project there also exists an exit strategy, whereby the project coordinated a smooth phase out with the wards and informed the beneficiary about the project end and what this means for them (Interview 11: 83). The phase out aimed to work in close collaboration with the wards and municipalities and aimed to hand over still open cases and responsibilities. At the time of the fieldwork there took joint monitoring between Helvetas, the wards and municipality representatives place as well as at the end of the project an exit meeting in the municipality Helambu and one in the municipality Melamchi. In the process of the my field work I got the opportunity to attend the exit meeting in Melamchi, beside Helvetas field officers, project manager and project coordinator, the major of the municipality Melamchi as well as other representatives of the municipalities and representatives of the different wards in the municipality participated. The meeting was held in Nepali, and I had no translation, therefore I could not understand what they were saying, but from my observations and the power-point-presentations I assumed that they were discussing about the different project elements in



shelter and WASH and what was achieved by the project and what still open. At the end of the meeting, Helvetas handed over documents to the major of the municipality Melamchi.

Another long-term aspect is disaster preparedness including the improved infrastructure in case of another earthquake. In case of another earthquake the shelter officers think that the local people will be able to handle the situation better than after the 2015 earthquake, not only because they got stronger earthquake resilient houses, but also because they are now aware what is required for reconstruction, they have skilled people in the communities and in addition also there now exist government programs and government trainings for reconstruction, which was not the case immediately after the 2015 earthquake (Interview 10: 60). Shelter beneficiaries and the trained mason and carpenter do not worry about another disaster. Although they told that they have no preparedness in case of another earthquake, they still feel safe now and believe that their new houses will resist another earthquake (Interview 5: 39, Interview 9: 39, Interview 8, 46). Only one of them mentioned, that he thinks it depends on the strength of the disaster, he thinks in case of a strong earthquake, the whole area where he lives will be destroyed, but in case of a small earthquake he is sure that it will be no problem for them (Interview 6: 42). During the interviews I got the impression that not all the interviewees had the same perception of disaster preparedness. When asking them if they are prepared in case of another earthquake, many of the beneficiaries said no, they do not have any preparedness (Interview 7, Interview 9). But when asking if they think they will be affected by another earthquake as bad as last time, most people told me, that they feel safer no and another earthquake will not affect them as bad as last time. The project field officers on the other hand explained during the interview that through the many organisations intervening in the area immediately after the earthquake people could learn how to react in case of a disaster, they could learn what they should do and what better not. They also mentioned that disaster preparedness includes the improved infrastructure. Further also all the gained knowledge and skill throughout the project can help the people in the area to better cope with a future earthquake. (Interview 16: 47, Interview 15: 55). According to the answers by the beneficiaries in terms of preparedness, preparedness was more likely understood as some kind of guideline or training they could follow in case of another earthquake as the following example by Interviewee 8 shows:

“We don’t have preparedness on earthquake assistance and any disaster, we didn’t get any trainings or any motivation, so we don’t know how to prepare”.  
(Interview 8).

By constructing the water schemes they also applied earthquake resilient techniques, to make them more resistant in case of another earthquake (Interview 15: 55, Interview 16: 47). The interviewed UC mentioned that they are worried about landslides and other disasters, nevertheless they feel confident that they would be able to handle the situation and if not they would consult the ward for support (Interview 13: 65, 69). WASH beneficiaries also trust that the new water schemes will resist another earthquake (Interview 18). The UC also got management trainings for maintenance of the water scheme and established maintenance funds to cover maintenance costs as well as the salary for the VMW, who should take care of the water schemes. This should help to make the water scheme structures more sustainable as well as prepare the community in case of a future disaster such as landslides or another earthquake. The money from the fund can be used to repair possible damages in such cases. Therefore the maintenance of the schemes and the maintenance funds can also be understood as an aspect of disaster preparedness, it supports the community in case of another earthquake or even in case of landslides to better cope with the situation. As they have their own fund, they have some savings, which they could use immediately and independent from others in case of another earthquake and through the well maintenance the structures should not get as badly affected. During the 2015 earthquake one problem in regards of access to safe drinking water the water sources got disrupted and in some areas they had to look for new intakes. This could again happen in case of another earthquake; nevertheless this possible challenge was not mentioned by any interviewee.

Another long-term effect of the new water schemes mentioned by the interviewees is that the new water schemes also give the households the opportunity to operate semi-commercial vegetable production. This means that a lot of households now have their own kitchen garden, where they cultivate different vegetables. Those vegetables they can use on the one hand for self-supply and on the other hand they can sell the surpluses. In the long-term this helps the households to save money, as they can grow their own vegetables and in addition it provides also a small income opportunity. This opportunity is provided to them as all the households have now their own water tap, therefore it is easy for them to get access to water for vegetable cultivation and as both interviewed UCs further point out, the new water taps also help the households to save time, as before especially women sometimes had to walk long distances to go to the water sources and fetch water. The saved time they can now use for other activities (Interview 13: 44).

“Before we had public tap stands, where 7 to 8 households used to fetch water from one public tap, they used to have disputes in front of the tap stand about who can use the tap first, but now the project came and they have taps in front of every

house, now they don't have to go to public taps anymore and wait for their turn to fetch water, now it is timesaving, they have time to engage in other things, income generating things" (Interview 17, UC chairman: 28).

And not only can they now save time as they do not have to walk long distances and wait to fetch water anymore, as WASH beneficiary 1 points out they can also save time now, by washing their clothes at home, before they used to go to the river, what not only took more time but was also more dangerous (Interview 18: 27).

### **6.3 Feedback from Consulted Project Personnel and Beneficiaries**

In general the feedback to the project was very positive, all interviewees were quite happy about the project. Interviewee 7, Beneficiary 1, for example said:

"Helvetas is a very good organisation, it helped people with many things, just like water supply and reconstruction of houses and other things and motivated people in this area" (47).

The project personnel also mentioned that it was a good experience to be part of the project and they could also learn a lot on their personal level. One of the field technicians for example told me that he learned to be more self-reflexive or one of the shelter officers explained that through the project he learned to be more socially and got more confident in public speaking (Interview 1: 67, Interview 10: 109, 113). I further got the impression that the project personnel in general were proud to be part of this project and liked the working environment.

Although there were also some things that people did not like or that they would do differently about the project. Most of the interviewees disliked that the project comes to an end soon. Especially beneficiaries told that they would be very happy if Helvetas would stay in the area for a longer period or if they would come back with other projects (Interview 4: 43, Interview 8: 50, Interview 5: 43). Further some beneficiaries had some complains about by the project used construction materials, such as for example the wooden bands for shelter construction, as they were afraid that termites would attack it and this would lead to instability of the walls. Although project personnel tried to convince them that they have no reason to be concerned about the wooden bands, the interviewed shelter beneficiaries remained sceptical and would do these differently by hindsight (Interview 6: 37, Interview 8: 55).

Regarding the question what they would do differently about the project it was also often mentioned by project personnel, that they would do things differently on organisational level, for example they would have preferred to have only a small number of project personnel in Kathmandu as they think it is more important that most of the personnel, especially finance personnel, is based in the field as this would have helped to fasten some processes and communication (Interview 14: 71, Interview 15: 79, Interview 16: 63). Other things mentioned were for example that it would have been good to be more flexible with project designs or to provide the financial tranches directly through the organisation instead of through the government to fasten the process. But the government regulated the distribution of the tranches; the organisation did not have the power to do this by themselves. Further some interviewees also mentioned that they would have preferred to stay in the project area for a longer period (Interview 3: 70, Interview 10: 121, Interview 11: 99). And one of the WASH beneficiaries mentioned that he would have preferred if the field technicians had been locals, as this would be helpful for the community in the future (Interview 19: 47)

According to the WASH officer 2 (social safeguard) one of the main things learned through the project is the flexibility that such a reconstruction and rehabilitation project requires. He points out that it is important to be flexible, adapt everyday decision-making processes to local demands and situations and dare to think out of the box, try new approaches, rather than just follow a fixed log frame as it is usually the case in classical development projects (Interview 16: 51). WASH officer 1 also agrees that one of the main lessons learned from the project is it to work according to the local demand and local situation and thereby it is important to be flexible (Interview 15: 67). Shelter officer 2 on the other hand thinks that one of the most important things learned through the project is that the project should be honest and transparent for the beneficiaries and that the project should be able to answer any questions from beneficiaries (Interview 11: 103).

## **7 Discussion**

In this section I will discuss the findings by referring back to my research question. My aim was it to analyse how the project built local capacity and how this can help to make the link between humanitarian aid and development. Therefore I will discuss in this section how the project design and implementation contributed to short- as well as long-term outcomes and discuss how it is embedded in the Humanitarian-Development Nexus. In the first part by the project planned local capacity building elements and project assumptions will be discussed and how these project elements tried to link humanitarian aid and development. After discussing the planned project capacity building elements and assumptions the focus will be on the implementation of the local capacity building elements. I will discuss how local capacity building was implemented, how well the implementation worked and what future challenges were detected. Followed by a discussion on the long-term development aspect of the project. And to close the section I will discuss by the project personnel identified lessons learned and feedbacks from the interviewees.

### **7.1 Planned Local Capacity Building Elements and its Relevance for the Humanitarian-Development Nexus**

The Helvetas REAP project aimed to help the earthquake affected people in Melamchi and Helambu to cope with the aftermath of the devastating 2015 earthquake. The project thereby not only wanted to provide the earthquake affected people basic needs, such as food, drinking water or housing, their aim was it also to provide long-lasting sustainable project outcomes to the affected people. Therefore during the earthquake rehabilitation and reconstruction phase, the project planned to better protect households and strengthen local capacity of communities in earthquake-resilient house construction by supporting the communities and households with the necessary information and knowledge needed to reconstruct their homes in a earthquake-resilient way and to meet the NRA demands. The assumption of the project design was it, that they can achieve this by using a participatory and owner-driven approach. The participatory and owner-driven approach of the project should help to raise awareness of house owners for the importance of earthquake-resilient structures. Through the participatory and owner-driven approach the house-owner have to deal with the subject of house reconstruction and the NRA guidelines and requirements, they have to decide by themselves which house design they want to realise, even though the project provided them only limited choice of design. They are somehow involved in every step of reconstruction, as they will have to interacted with the Helvetas field officers, the field technicians and the social mobilisers, they have to organise workforce and some of the materials for reconstruction. With a participatory and owner-driven

approach the shelter beneficiaries are not only passive beneficiaries, rather they can be seen as active stakeholders, which have to contribute their part to the project outcome. Through this active role and inclusion in to the reconstruction process, the project can raise awareness for the earthquake-resilient reconstruction techniques and strengthen community capacity. By not only reconstruct fast simple shelters for the earthquake affected people, just to make sure they have a place to stay, but by reconstructing in a earthquake resilient way and by including the beneficiaries and other local stakeholders in the reconstruction process, the project can not only help the local people in the short-term, but support them in reconstructing sustainable, long-lasting houses, which can be understood as a basis for further development in the area. Thereby the project design element of earthquake-resilient reconstruction with a participatory and owner-driven approach can be understood as an element of local capacity building, which planned to link humanitarian aid and development by building back better in an earthquake-resilient way. Reconstructing with earthquake-resilient techniques was not only the idea of the project, it was also preconditioned by the DUDBC and the NRA, only who met the earthquake-resilient building codes was enabled to receive financial government tranches for reconstruction, on which most of the house owner depended. But the project also supported shelter beneficiaries to meet these standards and helped them to understand and meet the NRA requirements.

Skills trainings for craftsperson in earthquake-resilient construction techniques were another project element to build and strengthen local capacity. The project aimed to provide skills trainings lead by the Employment Fund for technical assistants, masons and carpenters. As a result of these skills trainings local capacity in earthquake-resilient reconstruction can be build, which not only is of importance and relevance for the reconstruction process in the area, but can also provide and income opportunity and a possibility for the participants to sustain their livelihood in the long-term. Thereby the project saw in the post-disaster need of craftsperson for reconstruction an opportunity to strengthen local human capital and economic capital of the earthquake-affected people, which can be understood as an element of linking humanitarian aid with development. Training and including local people in reconstruction rather than just hiring craftsperson from other places or volunteers for reconstruction can be seen as important for the local people to cope with the post-disaster situation and at the same time providing them a possibility of local economic development. Therefore skills trainings for earthquake-resilient reconstruction can be understood as a way to link humanitarian aid with development, as it provides local skilled workforce for reconstruction and at the same time provides new income opportunities to earthquake affected people, that can help them to cope with their situation in a sustainable way.

In the project field of water, hygiene and sanitation (WASH) the project planned to build local capacity by establishing WASH user committees (UC) and support them by rehabilitating or newly construct water schemes in selected communities. It was planned to provide the UC members pre- and post-construction management trainings as well as train some village maintenance workers (VMW) for maintenance work in the future. The project planned to apply a community approach, whereby the community and in this case particularly the UC has to mobilise the community for reconstruction and they had to plan and implement the construction by themselves with support from Helvetas. This approach can capacitate the community in organising themselves, they can gain important knowledge on community management and community mobilisation and they can learn to take responsibility of a common good through the project. After the hand over of the water schemes the UC should be able to manage and maintenance the water schemes in their community without additional support. This on the one side should help the community to make the water schemes more sustainable and long-lasting, because if they take good care of the water schemes and maintain them, then the water schemes will work well for a longer time period as if they use them without investing anything in its maintenance. The project aspect of establishing user committees can be understood as element to link humanitarian aid and development, as the project not only provides new infrastructure to get access to safe drinking water to the community, the project expects the community to engage actively in this process. By establishing a new entity that has to take responsibility and execute managerial tasks of the construction, operation and maintenance of the water schemes, the project also helped to establish more long-lasting structures, which can support the development process in the area. On the one side the new water schemes are also constructed in an earthquake-resilient way and therefore should be more sustainable as previous structures. On the other side the UC is a community entity that can strengthen community support and community engagement. Further local people can learn from this method of community planning and they could theoretically also adapt the structure of a UC to other community activities.

Another aspect of the WASH project that can be understood as linking humanitarian aid and development are the aspects of raising awareness and capacitate local people on the importance of hygiene and sanitation. The WASH project planned also to provide motivation courses on hygiene and sanitation for the communities, where they for example can learn about the importance of proper hand washing, how to get rid of domestic waste without polluting the village and its surrounding or how to treat water to make sure that it is safe for drinking purposes. By raising awareness about hygiene and sanitation aspect the project can contribute to the health of the local people and thereby contributes to the long-term development of the local people.

## **7.2 Implemented Local Capacity Building Elements**

The findings showed that the project managed to build capacity on different levels, such as on individual level through skills trainings for masons and carpenters, skills trainings for field technicians and skills training for village maintenance workers (VMW). On an institutional level the project build local capacity through the establishment of WASH user committees (UC), management trainings for the UC and also raised awareness and strengthened the community capacity in earthquake-resilient construction. In addition to these planned capacity building elements, the project also managed to build capacity that was not directly planned in the project design, as for example it also strengthened the capacity of the project personnel and of local authorities such as the municipality and the wards authorities.

### **7.2.1 Capacity Building on Individual Level**

The skills trainings of the masons and carpenters, field technicians as well as the VMW helped to strengthen human capital in the project area, as through these trainings the participants could gain new knowledge and skills. In addition after successful completion of the trainings and a final exam they could receive a certificate to prove their achievements and qualifies them for further employments. Thereby the trainings enabled the participants the ability to work. And through the ability to work also the economic capital could get strengthened, as the trainings offered the participants the possibility of a waged income, which provided them the possibility of long-term means of gaining a livelihood. As result the skills training can also help to decrease local unemployment. A post-disaster situation usually puts affected people into an economical difficult situation, as in the aftermath of a disaster many people are affected by the loss or damage of material goods and property such as houses or agricultural land. Reconstruction for example of houses does not only require financial assets, but also workforce and time. Things that people might lack in such a situation. Therefore the training of skilled craftsperson for reconstruction could to some point adjust to this situation. It helped people in the area one side to develop new earthquake-resilient construction techniques, which further helped to reconstruct in a more sustainable way. The learned techniques the trained people can also apply in future construction work. For some of the skills training participants this can provide new employment opportunities even once the project is over, as the example of the interviewed carpenter showed. He pointed out that he owes his current employment at a local construction company to the skills trainings he receive by the project, he believes that without the training he would not have gotten this opportunity, as before the training he had not been working in construction and did not have much previous knowledge of construction work. Therefore it can be said that through the skills trainings the project provided the participants a opportunity



which enables them to control and manage their own destiny and development, as thought strengthening their capacity in reconstruction work they could earn a waged income which can help them to be more financially independent and invest in their future.

But through the trainings the project not only built local capacity, some of the trained craftsperson might not stay in the area in the long term. This might especially be the case in regard of the field technicians. For the field technicians the project selected a mix of local people and non-local people, therefore especially the non-local technicians will probably leave the project area once their contract is over. By going to other places they have the opportunity to implement and apply learned earthquake-resilient techniques on other places as well as transfer their knowledge of earthquake-resilient techniques to other people, therefore the capacity remains but not necessarily in the project area where it might be still needed in the future. The fieldwork showed, that one of the interviewees criticized that there were not more local technicians involved in the project. He mentioned that for his community it would have been better if there were a local technician in the area, in case there will be issues in the future where they will need technical support. This would make things easier for them. I did not receive any information about the total number of local technicians, therefore it is difficult to say how big of an issue this really is, but I guess it will be clearly an advantage for the local communities if they still could rely on local technical support in some way after the project closing. Two of the three interviewed field technicians were non-locals and mentioned that they will leave the area and look for new employment somewhere else after the project end, whereas the third technician was a local and assured that he will continue to support people in the area with technical advice, when they need it.

### **7.2.2 Capacity Building on Institutional Level**

On the institutional level the establishment of the WASH UC and the management trainings for the UC members helped to strengthen social capital. The UC establishment followed a participatory approach, whereby the UC members had to mobilise the community and actively engage in the process of water scheme construction, they had to establish maintenance mechanism and had to organise meetings. Through these activities community engagement got strengthened, as they had to work together and support each other, include all the community members in the process and had to be transparent about their work. In addition the construction of the water schemes and establishment of the UC also strengthened community networks. The water schemes, construction as well as operation and maintenance, can be understood as a common community project, all the community members can profit from the water scheme as long as it works properly, therefore it should be the interest of all the

community members that the water schemes are maintained well to be long-lasting, therefore they have all to contribute to the scheme. The project provided management trainings to the UC member for pre- and post-construction management, through which the UC member learned all the processes necessary to perform their function in the committee. Further project personnel accompanied the UC members throughout all the steps of the realisation of the scheme, from the first public hearing to the public audit with an additional monitoring visit after the first monsoon after completion, to make sure that the UC is capable to manage the schemes by themselves and to support them in the process. The results from the field work showed that this was evaluated as very successful, the interviewed UC members felt very confident to perform well without any support of Helvetas, this was supported by the WASH beneficiaries, which also both believe that their UC is very capable and supportive to the community. In addition also the WASH officers and coordinator agreed that so far all the UC work well and seemed to be well capacitated after the scheme handover. Although the UCs seem to work well at the moment, the challenge will be to maintain the UC in the long-term. It seems obviously that soon after a public audit of the handover everything seems fine, otherwise it might have been too early for a handover. More interesting will be how the UC can manage to keep the UC and the water schemes and its maintenance fund mechanism running. One of the biggest challenges for the UCs in the long-term, identified through the fieldwork, will be its leadership and the member composition. For example in the UCs which I looked into during my field work, there were mostly still the same members as got trained by the project and which were part of the UC throughout the establishment of the water schemes, they seemed to be well capacitated for their task in the UC by the project, they know all the processes and they learned to work together in their team. But at some point there will be changes of UC members, new members will join the UC, replace resigning members, and those new members most probably did not receive any training for this task, as the project will be over by then and there is also no opportunity for such trainings in the future. Therefore it will be a challenge for the UCs to well integrate new members and it will be their task to pass on their knowledge and experience to them. Another challenge in this context mentioned might be inactive UC members, as some members might not take full responsibility for their task in the UC.

Another local capacity building element on institutional level is the community capacity for earthquake-resilient reconstruction. The strengthening of the community capacity for earthquake-resilient reconstruction happened through the field visits and talk form field officers and field technicians as well as through the skills trainings for the masons and carpenters. By raising awareness of earthquake-resilient reconstruction techniques and by including project beneficiaries in the whole reconstruction process the communities' social capital could get strengthened. The reconstruction process required interactions between different actors as for

example interactions between project personnel, local authorities, craftsperson for reconstruction, local suppliers, beneficiaries, neighbours and other community members. Through these interaction new social and community networks could got build or already existing networks could got strengthened. Especially the house owner had to be active throughout the reconstructions and connect with others, beside the project personnel, as for example with neighbours, craftsperson, local material providers, to successfully reconstruct their houses in an earthquake resilient way. In addition some of the beneficiaries even did some of the reconstruction work by themselves. The results from the fieldwork showed that through this active role of beneficiaries, they got aware of the importance of earthquake-resilient construction and they believe that the people in their communities will continue to construct houses with earthquake-resilient techniques. They feel safer in the new houses than before and believe that the newly constructed houses are stronger than before and can resist another earthquake. This does not mean that they are able to reconstruct a house by themselves, this was also not the aim of the project, but they had to deal with the subject of earthquake-resilience, they had to interact and discuss a lot with the project personnel, which lead to awareness of earthquake-resilient construction. In addition they also know people in the community that got skills training in reconstruction by the project, therefore they would have access to skilled people if they have to do further constructions such as house expansions or in case they would have to build a new house. In addition the project also strengthened physical capital in the communities, as the shelter beneficiaries as well as the WASH beneficiaries now have earthquake resilient infrastructure and local people gained technical knowhow about earthquake-resilient reconstruction techniques. On these community capacities the communities can draw to offset disaster relevant vulnerabilities and prepares them in case of another earthquake.

Beside the capacity building elements planned by the project, the project could also indirectly build capacity of the project personnel and the organisation. The findings showed that most of the interviewed project personnel mentioned that they themselves learned a lot about earthquake-resilience, about working in a post disaster situation, but also could strengthen their capacity on personal level as for example by getting more confident in public speaking or by learning to be more flexible and adapt to specific situations. On Helvetas Nepal's institutional level they could strengthen their capacity in humanitarian response, as the organisation previously only had small experiences in humanitarian response in Nepal, therefore they could also learn a lot through the project and through the cooperation with Solidar Swiss. These capacity building elements of the organisation and its personnel, can not be seen as local capacity, but still contributed to an improved well being of the local people and might be of advantage in case they engage in another humanitarian response related project.

In addition the project also build capacity of local authorities. Nepal was undergoing a state restructuring during the project period. Due to the new federal constitution of Nepal, the previously centralistic and hierarchical structure of the state was restructure into a federal, decentralised state with power devolution to local levels. Under the new constitution the district level have no more administrative power and the administrative power of the previous village development centre shifted towards new urban and rural municipalities, which got further divided into wards. Thereby now the wards represent the lowest administrative power. The new local governments became operative after democratic elections in 2017, two years after the earthquake. For the newly structured local governments it must have been a challenging situation to get administrative power in times of post-earthquake reconstruction. Helvetas collaborated closely with the new (urban) municipality Melamchi and the rural municipality Helambu as well as with the ward authorities. And strongly include them in the phase out of the project, for example through joint monitoring and exit meetings. Through the collaboration with the local governments and authorities their position as new entities with administrative power could be strengthened and they could also get capacitated for earthquake-resilient reconstruction issues.

### **7.3 Long-Term Perspective**

The results showed that the project can contribute to many possible positive long-term effects and could help the local people to cope with the aftermath of the earthquake by providing them sustainable long-term solutions. But how long lasting are the project outcomes really? In case of the skills trainings for masons and carpenters for example, the project assumed that there is a high demand in the area for skilled craftsperson, as the households depend on them and on their availability for the reconstruction of their houses. This was indeed the case during the project phase and demand for reconstruction will most probably stay high in the near future, but what will happen with all these skilled craftsperson once major reconstruction in the area is done? Will there still be enough demand for their work? One of the shelter field officers told that they made an evaluation, according to which 70% of the skilled masons and carpenters still worked in construction, but how will the situation be in 5 to 10 year? It is undoubted that these skills trainings were important for the reconstruction process and for the local people. The findings from the field study also showed that the trainings for technicians as well as for the masons and carpenters were evaluated as very successful, they all could learn a lot new things, most of them had no previous knowledge of earthquake-resilient techniques and amongst the masons and carpenters there were also people with no previous knowledge of construction at all. The shelter field officers also pointed out that the skilled masons and carpenters are well capacitated for

future employments. In addition not only could the trainings capacitate the craftsperson, but it also provided them an income opportunity, which helped them and their families to sustain their livelihood especially in the difficult post-disaster times. But still, the question if they can rely on this income opportunity in the long-term stays open. Beside house reconstruction, some people might also want to expand their houses or build new houses for other family members, which will require skilled craftsperson. In addition there are also people in the area that have not yet started reconstruction of their houses, but it is unclear if they will ever start and if, they might not be able to afford skilled craftsperson for reconstruction. Even though there will be some construction work in the area in the future, I do not assume that the demand for skilled craftsperson will be as high as it was the case the last four years after the earthquake. Therefore I assume that many of the by the project trained masons or carpenters will go back to their previous labour or look for some other income generating possibilities and some might even migrate to other places for better employment. The results from the fieldwork also showed that from the two interviewed trained mason and carpenter for example, only one is still working in construction whereas the other went back to his previous labour in farming. The one not working in construction anymore, explained that he would like to work in construction again, but he did not get any request. But it must also be mentioned that he did not actively look for further employment in construction and that the result from the fieldwork were only exemplary and do not speak for all the trained masons and carpenters. Therefore a generalisation from these findings cannot be made. But it showed that for some of the participants the skills trainings was only a short-term solution. But in any case they still got their skills and gained knowledge. Therefore they could still help out other or still have the possibility to work temporarily in construction if they get requested or if there will be a need for additional craftsperson or in case of another earthquake, even if construction work is not their main income activity anymore.

In case of the established WASH user committees the situation is a little bit different. As already mentioned before, how well the UCs will work in the future depends strongly on their leadership and on how well they can manage to keep up the committees structure and how well they can transfer their through the management trainings and through their experience gained knowledge and capacity to new member. Another aspect that influences their sustainability are the by the UC hired village maintenance worker. The findings from the fieldwork showed that some UC face the problem, that the by the project trained VMWs have left the area for seasonal migration and the UCs were not able to find capable replacement for them yet. Seasonal migration is quite common in the area of Melamchi and Helambu, as many households depend on the remittances from the seasonal migrants and as the area is quite close to Kathmandu, where better income opportunities exist. But for the UC this is quite a challenge as they depending on the size of the

water scheme only have one or two trained VMW, if their leave they have no one left who has all the technical knowhow and skills for possible maintenance work. Particularly during monsoon season, when the most damages occur, this will be a critical situation for the UCs, as they then depend the most on them. Throughout the process of reconstructing the water schemes maybe other community members could also learn about the construction and maintenance of the schemes and support possible maintenance work, but it will not be guaranteed that this person will be as qualified as the VMW. But that seems not to be the only challenge, in general as the project was funded as a humanitarian project and had a project period of only four year, there is also no possibility for further trainings or advanced training courses. This is not only the case for the VMW, but for all the skills trainings provided by the project, meaning the skills trainings for masons, carpenters and technicians as well as the management trainings for UC members. In this regard the skills training were a “one-time” opportunity for people in the area. And it raises the question how long lasting this will be. Local people might manage to continue for example the UC structure or continue to apply earthquake-resilient techniques, but I guess it would be more sustainable if there were possibilities for further trainings. For example if every new UC member could do a management course or if every new VMW will get skills trainings, to guarantee those skills and knowhow will not get lost over time. But of course this was not possible in the scope of the Helvetas project as the project period was limited to only four year, as it was not designed to be a classical development project. Therefore they tried their best to do as much as possible in this short time frame.

Even though it is unclear how the demand for skilled craftspeople will be in the long-term, their work during the project period helped local people to build a basis for further development, as reconstruction of the houses for earthquake-affected people as well as having access to safe drinking water can be understood as a first step towards normalisation in their everyday life. Housing is a basic need and the reconstruction process is time and energy consuming and can people hinder to comply with other activities such as for example farming or following other income generating activities. Therefore finalising reconstruction is quite important for people to go back to a more or less normal everyday life. Once the earthquake affected people do not have to worry about their house and access to safe drinking water anymore, they can start to focus fully on other activities, they then can invest their time for example in income generating activities or spend more time with their families.

In addition the results also showed that the new water schemes improved the well being of the communities and entails positive long-term effects. For example with the new water schemes, every household got its own water tap, therefore people do not have to walk long distances to public taps or water sources anymore to fetch water. Before the earthquake in the communities

of the interviewed WASH user committees and beneficiaries, as well as probably in many other villages and communities, there were no systematic water systems. Particularly women and girls used to walk long distances to fetch water. They not only had to walk a long time to go there and to return, often they also had to wait in queue for a long time and there were often disputes about whose turn it is to fetch water first. In addition they also had to walk to the next river to wash clothes, which took them a lot of time and could also be dangerous for them. But now with their own taps, they can spend the saved time for other activities, the girls for example now have more time to learn for school and spend time with their families. For this reasons the new water taps improved the daily life of the WASH beneficiaries, it is easier, safer and time-saving now to get access to drinking water. Due to the easy access to water many households also started to cultivate their own little kitchen garden, were they grow vegetables and small amounts of cereals, mostly for their own consume, but small surpluses can also be sold at the local market place to gain some extra money. By growing food for self-supply just next to their homes, on one side they can save money as they have to buy fewer vegetables and on the other side they have also the possibility to sell surpluses to gain a small additional income. Therefore this possibility can also support the beneficiaries' livelihood in the long term.

With the WASH project the earthquake-affected people also got hygiene and sanitation motivation courses, were the beneficiaries could learn about how they can improve their hygiene, they could learn different methods to purify the water, built litter burning places in their village and every household created a drying rack for their dishes, which they could place outside next to the water tap, to make sure there will not be formed any mold or germs between humid dishes. In addition the project also planed in the process of reconstructing to supplement every reconstructed house with a toilet to avoid open defecation. All these aspects and implementations can help to improve local peoples health and hygiene in the long-term.

The earthquake-resilient structures for shelter reconstruction as well as for the water schemes in itself contribute also to the long-term development of the area, as the newly structure should be stronger and more sustainable than the previous once. Through the implementation of earthquake-resilient reconstruction techniques the new structure are be more resistant in case of another earthquake and therefore the local people can probably rely on this new structures for a long time. But still especially in the case of the water schemes it is also important to maintain them well to keep it resilient. Although the earthquake-resilient reconstructions are stronger than previous once, I sometimes got the impression that people have too much trust in these structures. It was often mentioned that they do not worry about another earthquake, because of the earthquake-resilient houses they will not be affected as bad as last time, as their houses are safer and stronger now and another earthquake will not be a problem for them. Only

a few expressed that it might depend on the magnitude of the earthquake. Because even though the structures are earthquake-resilient, this does not mean that they are completely resistant in case of an earthquake, it for sure will be more resistant than the houses they had before, but there is no guarantee that there will not be any damages. In case of a future earthquake also other conditions than only construction techniques can influence the extent of damage by an earthquake. Therefore in case of a future earthquake for example with the same magnitude as the 2015 earthquake, some people might be a bit disappointed when their house will not completely resist.

#### **7.4 Disaster Preparedness**

The project also contributed a lot to disaster preparedness in the area. Also some of the interviewed beneficiaries had different understandings of disaster preparedness and mentioned that they do not have any preparedness in case of another earthquake. It is true that the project did not give any instructions or trainings to beneficiaries how they should behave in case of another earthquake, but the project managed to build disaster preparedness on other levels. Firstly, the earthquake-resilient structures implemented for shelter reconstruction as well as for the water schemes can be understood as disaster preparedness. The earthquake-resilient structures can minimize damage in case of a future earthquake. The main purpose of these implemented earthquake-resilient structures is to prepare the local people for future disasters by building their houses back better with more resilient and stronger constructions. The aim was it that in case of a future earthquake with the same magnitude as last time, the local people will not be as badly affected as last time. It prepares local people in a way that a future earthquake with the same magnitude not necessarily leads to a crisis anymore. With the earthquake-resilient structures there might still be damages in such a case, but hopefully less and with less damaged and destroyed houses it should also be possible for local people to better cope with a future earthquake. Secondly, through the skills trainings local capacity for reconstruction was built. Therefore in case of a future earthquake with the same magnitude, there would be enough skilled craftsperson for reconstruction in the area with the necessary knowhow for earthquake-resilient reconstruction as the human capital for earthquake-resilient reconstruction is higher now as after the last earthquake. As a result the local communities might better cope with reconstruction work in the future and might not depend as much on external aid as it was the case in the aftermath of the 2015 earthquake. Therefore the skills training can also be understood in terms of disaster preparedness. The gained skills and workforce in reconstruction might not only be useful in case of an earthquake, but can also be useful for local communities in case of smaller events such as damages due to landslides. Especially during monsoon season landslides are quite common in the project area, therefore



the additional skilled workforce might be handy for reconstruction of damages caused by landslides. And thirdly, also the WASH user committees can be understood an element of disaster preparedness. This might not be as obvious as the earthquake-resilient structures and the skilled craftsman, but through the building of the community entity of the user committee, community networks could get strengthened. Further through the establishment of the UCs they could learn to manage collective issues and find solution by working together and supporting each other. These strengthened community structures and networks can also be beneficial in case of another earthquake with the same magnitude or other disasters, as they could adapt their experience and strengthened community capacity also to overcome other disaster related issues and vulnerabilities. Therefore the established user committees can help the communities to better cope with future disasters and prepares them in terms of organisational capacity for future disasters.

In addition also the collaboration with local authorities and government entities such as the NRA can be seen as element for earthquake preparedness. After the earthquake in 2015 Nepali government developed different entities to cope with the earthquake as for example the establishment of the NRA or the DUDBC, they could learn from the event and develop these entities through the process of rehabilitation, therefore in case of a future earthquake in Nepal, government institutions will be better prepared than last time, as they now have necessary institutions, developed earthquake-resilient reconstruction techniques and can learn from the last earthquake. Through the collaboration with government entities, there could have happened an exchange of knowledge and experiences between Helvetas and the government entities, which could also strengthen their capacity in earthquake resilience and preparedness. The same applies to the collaboration with local authorities such as municipalities and wards. They also had the opportunity to learn a lot about earthquake-resilience, had to deal with earthquake related government regulations and got insight to the REAP project and how it addresses the issues. In case of a future disaster in the area the local governments will be the firsts that will have to react and coordinate the situation on site. Therefore it is important that they also get capacitated to be prepared to some extent in case of another earthquake.

## **7.5 Feedback from Consulted Project Actors**

The findings showed that the overall feedback of the project was very positive. Consulted project beneficiaries from the shelter as well as the WASH part, consulted ward chairman and project personnel all express how happy they are with Helvetas work in the area and the project outcomes. But most of them also mentioned that they would have preferred the organisation to stay longer or pointed out that they still have other problems in the area and would be happy to

receive additional support or would very appreciate it if Helvetas would support the area with other projects. This demand by local people for more and more support might be caused by the high inflow of aid organisation immediately after the earthquake. Sometimes I got the feeling that some local people were so used to get external support for everything that they do not really try to achieve things by themselves anymore as it is easier for them if someone else does it. Or maybe they just try asking for more support in hope someone at sometime will feel sympathy for them and will actually support them. I do not deny that the earthquake-affected people did depend on external support in the aftermath of the earthquake and many projects in the area were crucial for them to cope with the devastating earthquake. Many good things happened in the area to support the local people to go back to a more or less normalised everyday life, but I think at some point it will be time for them to take their fate into their own hands. The REAP project for example managed to strengthen local capacity on many different levels, which can be understood as a basis for further development for the local people. And I am sure that local people can build on this basis and can manage their own destiny and development. The consulted ward chairman also pointed out that he believes that the local people got well capacitated and can build on the learned skills and structures and they will try their best to take things in their own hands.

Beside their gratefulness towards the project and Helvetas and besides demanding for additional support, I received not much feedback from the project beneficiaries (including not only shelter and WAH beneficiaries but also the trained masons/carpenters, WASH UC members) also did they not have much to add or not mentioned that they would do this differently about the project. Project personnel on the other hand was more critically about feedback, lessons learn and things that they would have done differently. The findings showed for example that many of the consulted project personnel wanted more flexibility in project design and implementation or mentioned that it was one of the most important lessons learn, that a project in the post-earthquake response needs to more flexible than classical development projects. From the other interviewees only few mentioned that they wanted more flexibility. And in the cases that they mentioning that they wanted more flexibility, flexibility was only in regards of construction materials. They did not mention lack of flexibly towards other project elements or processes. In REAP I the project provided the beneficiaries four different house designs, which were planned to be built with wooden bands. But some shelter beneficiaries were quite sceptical of these wooden bands. Although the project personnel tried to convince them that the wood is treated and there is no risk of termite infestation, the consulted interviewees remained sceptical and pointed out that they would have used other materials if they had the choice. That mostly just project personnel expressed during the interviews that they wanted more flexibility does not necessarily mean that the project beneficiaries not shared

this thought. Because analysed project documents showed that many house owners wanted more flexibility in house design choice and that many house owners disliked the use of wooden bands. At the beginning of the project some people even resigned from the project, as they wanted to realise other house designs. So maybe I consulted mostly beneficiaries that were satisfied with provided designs and materials or they did not tell me about their scepticism. In general I sometime got the feeling that interviewees, except for the project personnel, were not very critical about the project, therefore they maybe just did not mention toward me if they did not like something about the project.

## 8 Conclusion

The aim of this master thesis was to examine how local capacity building can help to link humanitarian aid and development logics in reconstruction projects and thereby contribute to the ongoing Humanitarian-Development Nexus debate. Thereby I looked into the Helvetas reconstruction and rehabilitation project REAP “Rehabilitation of facilities of earthquake-affected population in Sindhupalchok” in post-earthquake Nepal as a case study. My research approach was ethnographic including participant observation and semi-structured interviews during my three-month fieldwork in Nepal.

In 2015 a devastating earthquake with a magnitude of 7.8 hit Nepal and caused a humanitarian crisis. In the district of Sindhupalchok about 99% of the houses were severely damaged or destroyed and more than 60% of the people in the district were without access to safe drinking water and in need of humanitarian response (Lam and Kuipers 2018: 322, Helvetas 2015: 2). The Helvetas REAP project aimed to support the earthquake-affected people in the municipality of Melamchi and Helambu by reconstructing earthquake-resilient houses. They provided the earthquake-affected people in the area technical and social support for reconstruction, provided skills trainings for masons and carpenters in earthquake-resilient reconstruction techniques for local people and also trained skilled technicians in earthquake-resilient construction techniques, which later were employed by the project to support the local people in their reconstruction process. In addition the project also supported the local people in restoring their access to safe drinking water, by establishing WASH user committees, which were responsible to organise reconstruction of new water schemes with the support from the project team. Further they are responsible for operation and maintenance of the water schemes. Thereby they received management trainings from the project as well as support throughout the whole process. In addition the project also trained village maintenance worker for the purpose of maintenance work of the water schemes.

The Helvetas REAP project (including REAP I and REAP II) was planned for four years and was closed in June 2019. At the time of the project implementation Nepal was undergoing state reconstruction, in 2015, only a few months after the earthquake, a new federal constitution was promulgated and in 2017 then elections took place to build the new local governments. As a consequence Nepal got restructured and decentralised, following new administrative power divisions on local level. As the state restructuring came along with the rehabilitation and reconstruction process, the project was facing reconstruction delays due to political instabilities, strikes and political uncertainties. And as the organisation was working in close collaboration

with local authorities, through the state restructuring they also had to adapt to the political context and shift their collaboration towards the newly built local administrative powers.

The aim of linking humanitarian aid and development is to connect the usually rather short-term humanitarian response with more sustainable, resilient, long-lasting aspects to provide the local people a basis for further development and a basis to overcome their disaster or crisis related vulnerabilities. The findings from my research showed that the project managed well to build local capacity on individual level as well as on institutional and community level. The findings showed that the project tried to involve local people as much as possible in the post-disaster reconstruction and rehabilitation process. All the beneficiaries of the project had an active role and task throughout the project. The local people were not seen as vulnerable victims that are not capable to get along; rather the project identified their potential capacity. They saw in the post-earthquake reconstruction and rehabilitation a possibility to cope with the disaster and at the same time providing a basis for improvements of the affected peoples lives in the long-term and further development. By training skilled craftsperson, using an owner-driven and participatory approach for the shelter beneficiaries and through the establishment of the WASH user committees local capacity could get build. This helped the local people on the one side to cope with their earthquake related vulnerabilities, as they now have safe houses, access to safe drinking water, have the possibility to follow again an income opportunity and they can develop towards a normalised everyday life. On the other side this also can help them in the long-term, as the local people not only have new houses and water schemes, but also stronger and more resilient ones, the masons and carpenter not only got an employment and income for the project period, they received trainings and certificates, which provides them the opportunity to continue working in construction, thereby the project provided them a new income opportunity. And the establishment of the WASH user committees also not only was for the purpose of reconstructing the water schemes, it builds a new community entity that can maintain the structures and that can strengthen the community network in the long-term. In addition as the project worked closely with the new local governments, the project could strengthen the new local government and they could learn from Helvetas way of supporting the local people.

The findings showed that capacity building can help to connect humanitarian aid with development. But there were also limitation and uncertainties. Firstly, the project was funded as a humanitarian project for a total project period of four years, which can be seen as long for a humanitarian project but rather short for a development project. Therefore local capacity building on some levels was somehow limited by a timeframe, meaning that the project for example managed well to build local capacity of craftsperson and VMW during the four years of the project, but it is uncertain how the local people can maintain these capacities in the long-

term. And it also stays unclear how much demand for skilled masons and carpenter there will be in the future. Also as the project is closed there probably will not be any further skills trainings on earthquake-resilient construction for future masons and carpenters or VMWs, meaning that the skills trainings were somehow a one-time possibility during the project period. In terms of strengthened physical capital, such as the earthquake-resilient houses and water schemes it is clearer that these project outcomes will be more long lasting and sustainable. For the UCs there is a high probability that they can manage to keep their structures running, but there will not be any monitoring or support in case a committee does not work well in the future. Therefore at this moment it is also uncertain how well they will manage to maintain the water schemes. And it is uncertain how well they can manage to maintain the organisational structure of the user committee as there might be member changes of the committee in the future and as there will also not be any future management trainings for them.

In conclusion it can be said that the findings from my research showed that the project managed well to build local capacity on individual as well as on institutional level. The project managed to strengthen human, economic, community as well as physical capital of local people and communities. This helped them to cope and recover from the earthquake and at the same time provided them a basis for future development, improved their well being and also helped them to be better prepared in case of a future earthquake. Thereby the project managed to link humanitarian aid with development aspects. The project contributed to possible long-term developments, but how long lasting and sustainable they really are cannot be said at this moment and would require further research. The project just closed this summer after a four-year project period. My research took place in the last three months of the project and at this moment the outcomes seem to be quite promising and successful. But long-term development cannot be assessed in such a short time frame. Therefore to assess how long-lasting implemented capacity building elements are, it would require further research over a longer time period to examine how local people can maintain the strengthened capacities and to observe how the people and communities develop in the long-term. In addition this was only a case study and my findings might not apply to another project, as every project is embedded in a unique setting that can lead to different outcomes by applying same approaches. Therefore how well capacity building can link humanitarian aid and development logics might be different from case to case. Further several aspects limited my research, as for example for ethnographic research, the fieldwork was rather short and I was not really a member of the project team, therefore I might got only limited insight of the project and I had to get involved with the complexity of the project and its design and implementation quite fast. In addition the language also limited my research, as I did not speak any Nepali and therefore was possibly lacking important insights and information.

## List of Figures

Front Picture: Ongoing reconstruction in Melamchi Valley (Charlotte Lienhard)

Figure 1: Overview map of the project area (Helvetas 2017)

Figure 2: Coding map made with MAXQDA2018 (Charlotte Lienhard)

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## Appendix

### List of Interviews

	Actor	Date	Place/Municipality	Project phase
1	Field Technician 1	7.5.2019	Helambu	REAP II
2	Social Mobiliser 1	7.5.2019	Helambu	REAP II
3	Field Technician 2	8.5.2019	Melamchi	REAP II
4	Field Technician 3	8.5.2019	Melamchi	REAP I
5	Trained Carpenter 1 /Beneficiary	9.5.2019	Melamchi	REAP I
6	Trained Mason 2 / Beneficiary	9.5.2019	Melamchi	REAP I
7	Shelter Beneficiary 1	10.5.2019	Helambu	REAP II
8	Shelter Beneficiary 2	10.5.2019	Helambu	REAP II
9	Shelter beneficiary 3	10.5.2019	Helambu	REAP II
10	Shelter Officer 1	15.5.2019	Chanaute	REAP I+II
11	Shelter Officer 2	15.5.2019	Chanaute	REAP II
12	Ward Chairman	15.5.2019	Helambu	REAP I+II
13	WASH User Committee 1	20.5.2019	Melamchi	REAP I
14	WASH coordinator	20.5.2019	Melamchi	REAP I+II
15	WASH officer 1	21.5.2019	Melamchi	REAP I+II
16	WASH officer 2	23.5.2019	Melamchi	REAP I+II
17	WASH User Committee 2	19.6.2019	Melamchi	REAP I
18	WASH Beneficiary 1	19.6.2019	Melamchi	REAP I
19	WASH Beneficiary 2	19.6.2019	Melamchi	REAP I

## **Interview Guideline**

### **1) Field Officers Shelter**

#### **About the interviewee**

- Please introduce yourself, tell me about your work in this project, what is your job in this project about?

- How long have you been part of this project?

#### **About the project in general**

- Do you think the project was successful?

- What did work? What were the challenges?

- What do you think are the long-term impacts of this project?

- How has this project helped beneficiaries?

### **3. Capacity building**

- How was local capacity building planned in the project design?

- How was local capacity building implemented in practise?

- What do you think are the long-term impacts of the implemented capacity building element?

- Which elements could be implemented successfully? Which not?

- Were there any unintended outcomes? If yes, what kind of unintended outcome? And is this assessed positive or negative?

- Was there cooperation with local government? If yes, to what extend?

- Did the project also build capacity of local authorities? If yes, how?

### **SHELTER**

- How did the project support the reconstruction of earthquake resilient shelters?

- How did the project provide knowhow about earthquake-resilient reconstruction techniques to local people?

- What do you think, how successful was the implementation of earthquake resilient reconstruction techniques?

- What did work? What not so well? Where were the challenges?

- Do you think the targeted people of ongoing construction work will be able to manage reconstruction once the project comes to an end?

- What is the phase out strategy for the shelter reconstruction project?

- Do you think the project helped to prepare local people in case of a future disaster?

### **SKILLS TRAINING**

- Tell me about the skills training, how did it work?

- Where the trained people paid during the training phase?

- What do you think, how successful was the training of masons and carpenters?

- What did work? What not so well? Where were the challenges?

- Had the trained people previous knowledge in construction?

- Do you think the skills training helped the trained personnel to find other jobs in construction?

## **Interview Guideline**

- How do you think has the skills training influenced/changed the livelihood of trained people?

- Do you think the skills training helped to prepare local people in case of a future disaster?

### **Technicians**

- The project has also trained field technicians, who were the targeted people for technician trainings? Are they local people?

-What previous technical knowledge did they have?

- What are the employment opportunities for them in the area after the project?

### **Future / Lessons learned**

- Now the project is almost finished, what do you think, what are the main lessons learned from this project?

- What did you like about the project? What not?

- What would you do differently?

- Is there any thing you would like to add?

## Interview Guideline

### 2) Field Officers WASH

#### About the interviewee

- Please introduce yourself, tell me about your work in this project, what is your job in this project about?
- How long have you been part of this project?

#### *About the project in general*

- *Tell me about the project, what were planned outcomes of the WASH project*
- *Do you think the project was successful? What did work? What were the challenges?*
- *What do you think are the long-term impacts of this project?*
- *How has this project helped beneficiaries?*

#### Capacity building

- How was local capacity building planned in the project design?
- How was local capacity building implemented in practise?
- How did the project help to build local capacity?
  
- What do you think are the long-term impacts off the implemented capacity building element?
  
- Which elements could be implemented successfully? Which not?
  
- Were there any unintended outcomes? If yes, what kind of unintended outcome? And is this assessed positive or negative?

#### WASH

- *How did you establish the WASH user committees?*
- *Who is part of the user committees?*
- *How many people are part of the committee?*
- *What is their task?*
- *How do they finance operation & maintenance?*
  
- What do you think, how successful was the implementation of WASH user committees?

- What did work? What not so well? Where were the challenges? Could you give specific examples?

- Do you think the user committees will be ready to operate and maintenance the water schemes by themselves once the project comes to an end?

- What kind of future challenges do you see?

- If another earthquake of the same magnitude hit tomorrow, how do you think local people and communities would be affected compared with last time?

#### Maintenance workers

- The project also trained maintenance workers for the WASH committees, was this successful?
  
- *What is the idea about this? Are they only responsible for operation and maintenance of the water schemes or is it also their responsibility to provide other user committee members with knowhow about it?*
- *Do they earn something for this activity? Do they follow other livelihood incomes?*

#### Future / Lessons learned

- Now the project is almost finished, what do you think, what are the main lessons learned from this project?
- What did you like about the project? What not?
  
- Is there anything that you would do differently if you had responsibility to advise another project in similar circumstances? Could you give specific examples to explain your answer?
  
- Is there any thing you would like to add?



## **Interview Guideline**

### **3) Trained Technicians**

#### **About the interviewee**

- Please introduce yourself, tell me about your work in this project, what is your job in this project about?

- Are you a local citizen?

#### **Training / Job**

- What kind of training have you got from Helvetas?

- How did you know about the skills training?

- How did you get into the training program?

- What was your previous experience/ knowledge in this field of work?

- How useful do you think was the training?

- Do you have some other income opportunities? If yes, what?

- What will you do after the REAP project is closed?

- Do you think you will find another employment as technical assistant?

- Do you like working as technical assistant?

- What do you think how has your work in this project helped people in the long-term?

- How do you think will the people in the area get along once the project is over?

#### **General**

- Overall, how happy are you with the work of Helvetas in this project?

- What did you like about it? What not?

- What would you do differently if you had the chance?

- Is there any thing you would like to add?

## **Interview Guideline**

### **4) Trained Masons and Carpenters**

#### **About the interviewee and his work**

- Please introduce yourself and tell me about your skills training and work as a mason/carpenter

- Are you a local citizen?

#### **Training**

- How did you know about the skills training? How did you get into the skills training?

- Did you have any previous knowledge/skills in masonry or carpentry? If yes, which?

- What do you think about the training? Did it help you to improve your skills/knowledge? How useful was the training?

- Has the skills training changed your life? Changed something about your living situation? If yes, what and how?

- Do you still work as mason/carpenter?

- Do you have some other income opportunities? If yes, what? If no, can you live with the income as mason/carpenter?

- Do you like the work as mason/carpenter?

#### **Future**

- What will you do after the REAP project is closed?

- Do you think you will find another employment as mason/carpenter?

- What do you think, how has the project helped people in the area in the long-term?

- Do you think you would be prepared in case of another disaster?

#### **General**

- Overall, how happy are you with the work of Helvetas in this project?

- What did you like about it? What not?

- What would you do differently if you had the chance?

- Is there any thing you would like to add?

## Interview Guideline

### 5) WASH User Committee members

#### About the interviewee

- Please introduce yourself and tell me about the WASH user committee
- *How does the user committee work?*

#### Committee

- Who is part of the committee? How can someone get included into the committee?
- How is the user committee organised?
- How do you mobilise your members?
- How does the user committee finance the operation and maintenance of the water schemes?
- What is the user committee's motivation? How willing were/are the members to participate in the WASH construction?
- *How did you manage WASH before the REAP project?*
- *Was there something similar to the User Committee before?*
- *Has the WASH project changed something in the community? If yes, how/what?*
- *How effective do you think is the user committee?*
- *What did work? What not?*
- *What role played Helvetas for the user committee?*

#### Phase out

- The Helvetas REAP project comes to an end soon, how do you think will this influence the user committee?

-Do you think it will have an impact on the operation and maintenance of the WASH schemes?

- *Do you think the user committee is ready to deal the operation and maintenance without the support from Helvetas?*

- *How do you see the long-term development of the user committee?*

- What are the main challenges for the user committee in the future?

#### General

- What have you learned from the Helvetas project?

- *Overall, how happy are you with the work of Helvetas in this project?*

- *What did you like about it? What not?*

- If another earthquake of the same magnitude hit tomorrow, how do you think local people and communities would be affected compared with last time?

- Is there anything that you would do differently if you had responsibility to advise (make suggestions to) another project in similar circumstances? Could you give specific examples to explain your answer?

- Is there any thing you would like to add?

## **Interview Guideline**

### **6) Ward chairman**

#### **About the interviewee**

- Please introduce yourself and tell me about the ward committee

#### **Committee**

- How does the ward committee work?

- Who is part of the committee?

- How is the committee organised?

- What is the role of the ward committee in regard to shelter reconstruction?

- What service in regard to shelter reconstruction do you provide to the people living in the ward? How do you support them?

- What kind of cooperation was there with Helvetas?

- Does the ward committee get any support from Helvetas? If yes, what kind of support? How?

#### **Phase out / Future**

- The Helvetas REAP project comes to an end soon, how do you think will this influence the people in the ward?

- Do you think the people in the ward are ready to deal with the shelter reconstruction without the support from Helvetas?

- What are the main challenges for the committee in the future regarding shelter reconstruction?

- How do you think has the project helped to build local capacity?

-How do you think will the local people get along in the long term?

#### **General**

- Have you learned something from the Helvetas project? What?

- Overall, how happy are you with the work of Helvetas in this project?

- What did you like about it? What not?

- What would you do differently if you had the chance?

- Is there any thing you would like to add?

## **Interview Guideline**

### **7) Beneficiaries Shelter**

- Please introduce yourself, tell me about your living situation

- How have you been selected for the project?

- How could you profit from the REAP project?

- How did Helvetas support you?

- What do you think about the REAP project?

- What did you like about it? What did you not like?

- Where you involved in the reconstruction of your house? Did you have support from trained masons/carpenters?

- Did you or somebody of your household receive skills training?

- What kind of knowledge about shelter reconstruction did you have before the project?

- What did you learn through the REAP project?

- What do you think about the used earthquake resilient construction techniques? Do you think they will resist another earthquake?

- Do you think your house is safe now?

- Is your house reconstruction complete? If no, what are the next steps? What do you still have to do?

- If the house is not completed yet, do you think you are able to complete your house without the support from Helvetas?

- How prepared do you feel in case of another disaster?

- How will people in the area get along once Helvetas has left?

- What do you think, how has the project helped people in the area in the long-term?

- Has the project changed your life? If yes, how?

- Overall, how happy are you with Helvetas work in this project?

- What did you like about it? What not?

- What would you do differently if you had the chance?

- Is there any thing you would like to add?

## Interview Guideline

### 8) Beneficiaries WASH

- Please introduce yourself, tell me about the water scheme in your community

- *How could you profit from the REAP project?*

- *How did Helvetas support you?*

- What do you think about the REAP project?

- What did you like about it? What did you not like?

- Where you involved in the construction of the water schemes?

- Did you get any training?

- What did you learn through the REAP project?

- Are you part of the user committee?

- How did you get access to drinking water before the earthquake?

- *How effective do you think is the user committee?*

- If another earthquake of the same magnitude hit tomorrow, how do you think you and your community would be affected compared with last time?

- *What do you think, how has the project helped people in the area in the long-term?*

- *Has the project changed something in your life? If yes, what?*

- Helvetas is leaving soon, how do you think will the community manage the water scheme once the project is over?

- How will people in the area get along once Helvetas has left?

- *Do you think the user committee can manage the operation and maintenance of the water scheme in the long-term?*

- *How do you see the long-term development of the water schemes?*

- *Overall, how happy are you with Helvetas work in this project?*

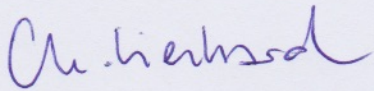
- *What did you like about it? What not?*

- Is there anything that you would do differently if you had responsibility to advise (make suggestions to) another project in similar circumstances? Could you give specific examples to explain your answer?

- Is there any thing you would like to add?

**Personal declaration:**

I hereby declare that the submitted thesis is the result of my own, independent work. All external sources are explicitly acknowledged in the thesis.



Charlotte Lienhard

Aarau, 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019