

Workshop on Nepal's post-earthquake challenges and opportunities

Date: 17 July, 2016

Time: 14.00 -17.00

Venue: Blue Orchid Restaurant and Civil Engineer Bar,
500 Ruislip Rd, Northolt, Middlesex UB5 6AT

Since the devastating earthquakes in April and May 2015, Nepal has achieved significant milestones including, a [new constitution](#) and a legislative Act relating to Reconstruction of Earthquake Affected Infrastructures Act, 2015 which paved the way for creation of [National Reconstruction Authority](#) with an extra-ordinary jurisdiction and mandate to complete the reconstruction work of the structures devastated by the earthquake. In the one-year commemoration of the disaster last month, various national and international organisations highlighted their contributions in rescue and relief efforts as a means to memorialise the tragedy. However, long after the rescuers returned home, the media found another interesting story and humanitarian workers departed, the earthquake survivors continue to suffer and historical monuments still remain scattered in rubbles. In order to commemorate the misfortune and show a long term commitment to Nepal's post-earthquake reconstruction, [Nepalbritain.com](#), jointly with the [Society of Nepalese Highly Skilled Professionals – UK](#) is organising a workshop on *Nepal's post-earthquake challenges and opportunities* to bring together academics, professionals and members of the NRNA to revitalise the debate about establishing a mechanism through which highly skilled Nepalese professionals living abroad could contribute to Nepal's post-earthquake reconstruction efforts. The workshop is organised on the occasion of 9th anniversary of Nepalbritain.com and supported by [Non Resident Nepalese Association - UK](#), [Centre for Nepal Studies – UK](#) and other Nepalese professional organisations in the United Kingdom.

The workshop will focus on the following four areas:

1. **Reconstruction of damaged structures:** It was reported that 498,000 private houses and 2,656 government buildings were completely destroyed and 3 out of 7 world heritage sites in Kathmandu were severely damaged. Reconstruction of physical infrastructure is the main task of National Reconstruction Authority. While there is a major task of rebuilding the structures of historical importance including the temples, stupas and our own Dharahara which have a very special space in our hearts, even more importantly, many poor families in rural areas are still waiting to get support for rebuilding their homes. There are emotional difficulties with regards to translocation of families whose traditional homes have been destroyed and of course, the ecological challenges of resettlements in terms of people's access to water, forests, shrines and farmland. The issue of rebuilding private homes also involves setting up reconstruction mechanisms, allocating resources and ensuring the quality of the micro-physical infrastructure that are so vital for local livelihoods. The discussion around this topic will explore the current scenario including, successes and challenges for reconstruction.
2. **The complexity of international and charitable aid to support rebuilding:** The world generously pledged humanitarian aid to support relief and rescue operations but also to rebuild Nepal after the earthquake. The Nepalese diaspora worked tirelessly to raise funds, collect relief materials and to provide support to rescue teams in the disaster-hit regions.

Disaster Emergency Committee in the UK alone raised £87 million through Nepal Earthquake Appeal. Many national governments pledged aid to support post-earthquake reconstruction. There is also a fundamental debate about institutional arrangements and associated efficacy in the delivery of relief and reconstruction works (competition and complementarity of state and non-state agencies). This also relates to the issue about governance and the lack of elected bodies at local levels. We will discuss the extent to which relief and reconstruction fund is being used and the complexities around effective utilisation of international aid aimed at post-earthquake reconstruction.

3. **Post-disaster health response and current situation:** Over 22,000 people were injured during the earthquake which resulted in a havoc in hospitals, some of which were hugely under-resourced and were not technically equipped to deal with large-scale injuries and fatalities. How is the health sector in Nepal coping with the medical needs of injured people and what mechanisms have been established to provide long-term care for people who have become disabled due to their injuries? To what extent is the government responding to this crisis and what mechanisms have been established to address health crises that often lead to economic and social problems for families? What lessons have been learnt in the health sector after the devastating earthquake? We will explore these questions through a research presentation, followed by a discussion.

4. **The impact of earthquake on education and reconstruction initiatives:** The earthquake had a debilitating impact on education with over 24,000 damaged classrooms, leaving hundreds of thousands of children out of school. While there were some immediate responses from humanitarian agencies such as Save the Children and UNICEF who set up temporary learning spaces to continue teaching and learning, the government response to rebuilding safe classrooms has been very slow and significantly inadequate. It is crucial that the education system is reconstructed with strong components of disaster risk reduction and preparedness for potential disaster in the future. Quality education is the foundation of Nepal's equitable development and social transformation and thus, an avenue for strengthening peace and democracy. We will discuss how education play a crucial role in emergencies and discuss opportunities for Nepalese highly skilled diaspora in rebuilding education.

Finally, the workshop will identify specific avenues through which the NRNA could develop appropriate mechanisms and facilitate partnerships between the Government of Nepal and highly skilled professionals who are living and working abroad.

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