



World Vision

# Building Back Better (BBB) from COVID-19

*World Vision Policy Brief on Building Back Better from COVID-19*

Submitted to  
**Government of Nepal**  
**National Planning Commission (NPC)**  
**Nepal**

**25 May 2020**



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## Contents

Introduction .....	1
BBB and COVID-19 Recovery.....	1
The Building Back Better Framework.....	2
The Immediate Impact of COVID-19 in Nepal .....	3
A BBB Framework for Nepal’s COVID-19 .....	5
Building Back Better Propositions – Learning from Previous Crises .....	6
Recommended Policy Options for Recovery .....	7
Economic Policy .....	7
Social Policy.....	7
Effective Implementation.....	11
Monitoring and Evaluation .....	11
Conclusion .....	11
The Role of Local and International Non-Government Organisations.....	12
World Vision Contributions.....	12

## Introduction

The National Planning Commission (NPC) commissioned a study to assess the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 in Nepal. The NPC has invited feedback and recommendations from key sectors and development partners, including International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs), to help design and develop possible policy options to support the bounce-back from the consequences of COVID-19.

One of the topics that is being looked at is **Building Back Better (BBB)** from COVID-19. In response, this brief has been developed by World Vision International Nepal (WVIN). WVIN is a child-focused development, humanitarian and advocacy organization, which has been working in Nepal since 2001. WVIN was also a frontline responder in Nepal's Earthquake response and currently in the COVID-19 pandemic. This policy brief aims to complement the work being done by Government Ministries, Donors, UN agencies, INGOs and other research organisations on the socio-economic impact of COVID-19. It is based on desk study review of relevant research papers and reports and World Vision International's experience in BBB, both in Nepal and other countries, in particular in the Asia Pacific region.

The structure of this brief is as follows: first, the existing BBB Framework will be reviewed, then a revised BBB Framework is proposed, which is contextualized for Nepal and focuses on economic and social recovery. Evidence of the immediate socio-economic impact of COVID-19 from a field rapid assessment and relevant desk review relevant to BBB will be presented. It will conclude with suggested recommendations for BBB policy, programming and implementation.

## BBB and COVID-19 Recovery

After the 2004 Asian Tsunami, BBB has become a prominent term of post-disaster reconstruction and recovery<sup>1</sup>. It aims to reduce vulnerability to future disasters and build community resilience to address physical, social, environmental, and economic vulnerabilities and shocks<sup>2</sup>. Since its emergence, it has been adopted by state and non-state actors to support recovery and bounce-back for safer and sustainable societies. Furthermore, BBB recognises disaster and crisis as opportunities for change and improvement. Although the magnitude and gravity of the COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented and its impact is being deeply felt, BBB should encourage **building back stronger, building back faster** and **building back more inclusively**.

BBB is not new to Nepal. This country has previously adopted BBB for housing reconstruction and recovery<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, past experiences and lessons learned can be used to inform BBB for COVID-19.

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<sup>1</sup> Building Back better approach to disaster recovery; research trends since 2006; Glenn Fernandez and Iftekhar Ahmed, 2019

<sup>2</sup> Building Back Better in Post-Disaster Recovery, Global Facility for Disaster Reductions and Recovery

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

## The Building Back Better Framework

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction adopted in 2015<sup>4</sup>, identified BBB as one of four priority areas of actions. BBB advocates a holistic and sustainable approach to restoring, rehabilitating and improving housing, infrastructure, services, economies, livelihoods and living conditions in a way that makes communities and societies less vulnerable to future shocks. As such, whilst BBB includes practical measures such as better reconstruction and siting of buildings and infrastructure, the wider concept encompasses much more than this and relates to a general process of strengthening resilience through all aspects of society.

To expand on the traditional concept of “Building Back Better” the World Bank<sup>5</sup> (Diagram 1 – below) highlighted three critical areas: i) Building back stronger, ii) Building back faster, iii) Building back more inclusively.

- **Building back stronger** aims to ensure that rebuilt assets can resist hazards and prevent well-being losses due to natural disasters over a 50-year return period. In terms of recovery, focus on infrastructure investment should be on avoiding increased exposure and vulnerability.
- **Building back faster** means accelerating reconstruction through measures such as contingent reconstruction plans, pre-approved contracts and financial agreements. For recovery, it highlights the need to facilitate people’s ability to generate income, as well as finding ways to make it easier for affected people to cope with shocks.
- **Building back more inclusively** means that post-disaster support should reach all affected population groups, especially low-income households which are typically more exposed, and those more vulnerable. For recovery, it requires adaptive social safety nets that ensure inclusive recovery and that can react to shocks with appropriate delivery mechanisms to the most vulnerable populations.

The Sendai Framework and World Bank work have largely focused on disaster risk reduction (DRR), which is a different situation to dealing with a global pandemic. Therefore, a refined and contextualized BBB framework for COVID-19 recovery in Nepal is required, to incorporate local concerns and issues.

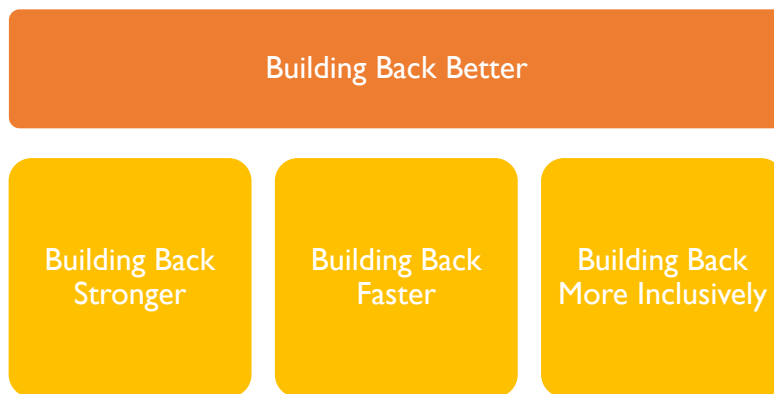


Diagram 1 – BBB framework (Adapted from World Bank Document, 2018)

<sup>4</sup> Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, United Nations

<sup>5</sup> Building Back Better: Achieving resilience through stronger, faster and more inclusive post-disaster reconstruction. The World Bank, 2018

## The Immediate Impact of COVID-19 in Nepal

**Covid-19 will have a severe impact on the national economy.** According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (2020), Nepal's economic growth is expected to fall, bringing it down from targeted 8.5% to 2.27% this fiscal year<sup>6</sup>. This is the lowest it has been in the past four years. There is also a projected 20% decline of remittances<sup>7</sup>, which account for around one-third of Nepal's GDP. Remittances remain the lifeline for Nepal economy and family livelihoods. It is a concern that millions of migrant workers have lost their jobs. Returning home may further jeopardize their families' lives and livelihood.

**There is likely to be widespread increase in food insecurity.** While food security in Nepal has improved in recent years, the World Food Programme (WFP) is concerned that a widespread increase in food insecurity is likely to occur over the coming months. The WFP, in a survey of food security in Nepal, has said that although there is sufficient stock to last until the monsoon, it predicts significant reductions in the harvest of wheat and other winter crops. This is in part due to the impact of lockdown is having on agricultural work taking place.<sup>8</sup> The closure of borders will also have an effect on the level of food being able to be imported into the country. Combined with significantly reduced income levels, this will worsen the food security situation in the country.

**Major reductions in income levels are affecting people's life and livelihoods.** The COVID-19 pandemic has caused an unprecedented impact and there is hardly any area that has remained untouched. A World Vision-led rapid needs assessment<sup>9</sup> in 13 districts in Nepal in late April 2020 showed that COVID-19 has had significant secondary impacts. This is evidenced by 89% HHs having experienced over 2/3 (77%) drop of their monthly average income from NPR 14,455/month (USD 1,194) prior to the pandemic and lockdown, to NPR 3,324 (USD27).

Furthermore, 85% of the HHs acknowledged that they will not have sufficient food over the next few months. As a coping mechanism, 48.3% reported contemplating taking a loan and 28.4% are reducing their food consumption.

Some 60% of these food-insecure HHs also acknowledged that they are struggling to feed their Under-2 and Under-5 children. HHs of daily wage earners reported that there was food available for purchase, but 53.7% of them reported that the price of agricultural products like foods has significant increase in the recent days. The infographic below shows the high-level findings of the rapid needs assessment (Diagram 2).

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<sup>6</sup> National Accounts Statistic Release of 2019/2020, Central Bureau of Statistics

<sup>7</sup> National Accounts Statistic Release, 2019/2020, Central Bureau of Statistics

<sup>8</sup> Nepali Times, April 19, 2020

<sup>9</sup> Briefing Paper Cohesive Response to COVID-19 in Nepal. World Vision International Nepal - <https://reliefweb.int/report/nepal/rapid-need-assessment-cohesive-response-covid-19-nepal-may-7th-2020>

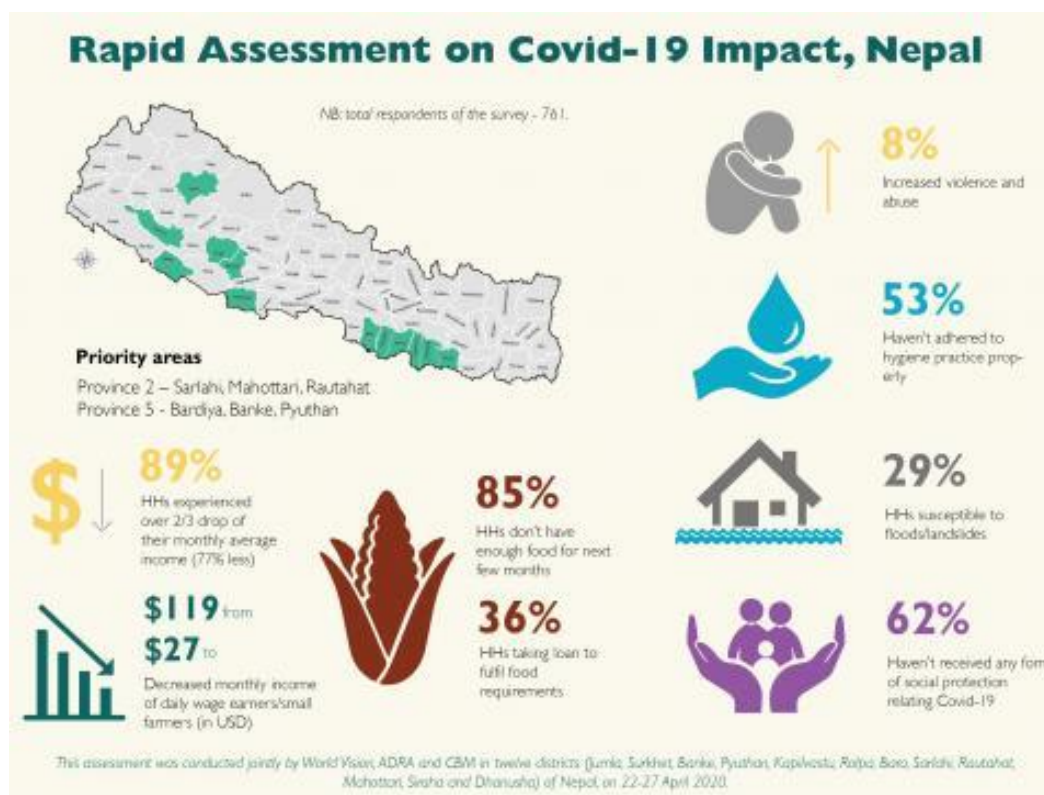


Diagram 2 – Rapid Needs Assessment Findings (World Vision International, Nepal, 2020)

The closure of schools has affected the education of around seven million students. In Nepal, around seven million students from 36,000 schools and around half a million university-level students have been deprived of education due to the lockdown<sup>10</sup>. Where shutdowns have been implemented previously, evidence has shown that schoolchildren, and especially girls, who are out of school for extended periods of time are much less likely to return when classrooms reopen. The closure of schools also prevents access to school-based nutrition programmes, driving malnutrition rates upwards<sup>11</sup>.

**Women, Children and People with Disabilities are particularly at risk.** A recent needs assessment<sup>12</sup> showed that of those people with disabilities that were sampled, 49% responded that they did not have any stocks of masks and soaps. Almost 40% mentioned the needs for specific sanitary/hygiene materials (sanitary pads, catheter, adult diapers for people who are suffering from spinal cord injury). Half the respondents said they needed caregivers to support them in their daily activities, but over a third mentioned that services usually provided by caregivers had to stop because of the lockdown.

<sup>10</sup> <https://kathmandupost.com/national/2020/04/16/education-ministry-plans-online-instruction-as-lockdown-halts-teaching-learning-activities>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/nepal/press-releases/dont-let-children-be-hidden-victims-covid-19-pandemicunicef>

<sup>12</sup> Rapid Need Assessment: An inclusive response to COVID-19. Handicap International in Nepal

## A BBB Framework for Nepal's COVID-19

Given the wide ranging impact that COVID-19 is having across these many areas in the Nepali context – economy, food security, livelihoods education and protection – an expanded BBB framework has been conceptualized. This incorporates the areas of focus for economic and social recovery, as well as consideration for DRR and setting out the enabling factors for effective implementation (Diagram 3).



Diagram 3 - Contextualized and updated from works of Mannakkara and Wilkinson, 2014

- **Economic recovery** requires short-term, medium term and long-term schemes with micro-economic responses that support the recovery of small and medium size enterprises as well as job recovery.
- **Social recovery** demands assurance of basic health services that protects lives, alongside strong social cohesion and community resilience. International evidence, for instance from the Ebola crisis in West-Africa, suggests that primary and community health system strengthening, availability of essential medicines and health commodities, preventative and promotive health measures, as well as surveillance mechanisms should be integrated into general health systems<sup>13</sup>. Attention also needs to be given to the mental health problems faced as a result of the pandemic.
- **Disaster Risk Reduction** emphasizes the need to improve disaster resilience by improving the resilience of both the environment and physical assets. With the COVID-19 pandemic, since the situation is evolving so rapidly, emphasis needs to be put on ensuring that risk communications cascade down to community-level.
- **Effective implementation** is essential to execute the BBB framework and plans. This requires strong institutional mechanisms, up to date legislation, and regulations that leverage rapid implementation with agile monitoring and evaluation systems in place.

<sup>13</sup> Building Back Better: priorities for Ebola-affected countries. Dhillon and Yates, 2015



## Building Back Better Propositions – Learning from Previous Crises

A number of key propositions were set out in the early BBB Framework<sup>14</sup>. These were based on experience from the Asia Tsunami recovery operations, and incorporated significant feedback and input about lessons learned from Governments, NGOs, and local communities. A number of these propositions are relevant to the current COVID-19 crisis, and should underpin Nepal's BBB response:

**1) Recovery must promote fairness and equity.** Evidence suggests that the pandemic is exposing the frailties and inequalities of our societies<sup>15</sup>. It is likely that the poor and most vulnerable will bear the brunt of the impacts of COVID-19 and be exposed to poverty and starvation. Hence, the core focus of the recovery should be on minimizing the effects on the poor and most vulnerable. To ensure the fairness of recovery programmes, there needs to be strong leadership by local governments and stakeholders around social audits and public hearing mechanisms.

**2) The post COVID-19 response must initiate broader risk mitigation planning.** COVID-19 demands a multisectoral risk mitigation preparedness plan to protect its citizens, economy, and environment. Now is also time to plan for future health pandemic preparedness by capturing the lesson learned from COVID-19. Future preparedness planning may include: early warning/alert systems; early border controls; a national emergency declaration process; determining political parties' and civil society roles; stockpiling of medical equipment and medicines; transportation and logistics for stranded migrants (both domestic and returning from overseas); screening processes; building better health facilities in cities and in rural areas; educating the public on hygiene, cleanliness and WASH; incorporating learning about pandemics as part of the curriculum; IT infrastructure for virtual/remote education and working; and food stockpiling.

**3) Local governments must be empowered to manage recovery efforts.** Worldwide and in Nepal, local governments are leading the COVID-19 response. Studies have demonstrated that local government preparedness, infrastructure and human capital capabilities, access to emergency funds, and coordination and communication flow with central government, are key measures to containing the spread of virus and ensuring speedy recovery<sup>16</sup>. As local governments are closer to communities and are an early responder, donors and I/NGOs should devote more resources to strengthening the implementation capacity of local governments. This could include capacity and capability for logistic and supply chain management; coordination with federal and provincial government, development partners and I/NGOs; air lifting; distribution of relief materials; and reporting.

**4) Good recovery planning and effective coordination depends on good information.** Tackling misinformation and disinformation is also essential. The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority needs to be further supported in developing capacity around health crises, to allow the right information to be communicated in a coordinated way. Further, an information centre should be established within local government to continue to provide and mobilize risk

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<sup>14</sup> Lessons learned from tsunami recovery: key propositions for building back better. Office of the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery, New York. Clinton, WJ (2006)

<sup>15</sup> COVID-19 pandemic exposes global 'frailties and inequalities': UN deputy chief, May 2020

<sup>16</sup> COVID- 19 Emergency Response: Local Government Finance, UNCDF

communication and information.

5) The policies and programmes developed by government and non-government organizations should provide support to the most vulnerable families affected by COVID-19 pandemic. These policies and programmes provide an opportunity to help those most affected improve their socio-economic condition and secure a positive future.

## Recommended Policy Options for Recovery

Based on the available literature (taking into account that evidence continues to emerge rapidly, and that larger scale impact assessments are yet to be undertaken) World Vision recommends the following policy options:

### Economic Policy<sup>17</sup>

As the national economy is being severely affected by COVID-19, in order to deliver BBB, the government needs to consider both short-term and long-term economic policy and measures. Based on the available evidence, the following recommendations are put forward:

1) **Focus on short-term and long-term growth-led interventions** that enable local production and have the scope to impact positively on the national trade balance. Any game-changer schemes need to assess whether the project is able to generate a stimulus and employment benefits. This is important as we need to garner our population dividend for growth. Consideration should also be given to whether projects or programmes have potential for long-term growth by mobilizing human, natural and physical capital.

2) **Interventions need to be resilient to future shocks.** Before COVID-19, there was a tendency to focus on natural disasters and future climate change impacts. With the COVID-19 situation, interventions need to build capacity of societies and economies to cope with and recover from other external shocks as well. Lesson learned from the Asia Tsunami suggest that community accountability and agency, government coordination, and the integration of disaster-risk reduction into programmes, are critical for BBB<sup>18</sup>. Hence, when developing a stimulus package, this needs to be carefully integrated into the community alongside long-term programmes. Also, care should be given to ensure that any stimulus package does not impose a large stranded asset cost on the economy in coming decades.

### Social Policy

1) **Build high-level political and technical consensus around a common recovery strategic framework.** Studies suggest that scale and depth of COVID-19 impacts is unprecedented. Given this, a sub-national level framework needs to be developed that are sufficiently resilient and capable of responding effectively at large scale. This could include mapping of: population groups and local government areas that are most at risk of food insecurity, local government areas with poor WASH facilities coverage, the capacity of primary health-care centres, potential hotspots of disease outbreak. The framework also needs to set out roles and responsibilities of different actors and agencies to respond and report effectively. The core of the framework must **have a strong focus on building more equal, inclusive and sustainable economies and**

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<sup>17</sup> Planning for the economic recovery from COVID-19: A sustainability checklist for policymakers, World Bank

<sup>18</sup> World building back better: The Asia Tsunami- 10 years on. World Vision International.

**communities that are resilient in relation to the COVID-19 context.** It also has to reflect that a new narrative of resilience needs to be defined in relation to COVID-19.

**2) Programmes should revolve around the health, agriculture and food sectors.** These three sectors are being hit hardest and have a direct impact on lives and livelihoods. COVID-19 has further exposed the fragility and weakness of the health system.

**Health:** For decades, the health sector has remained underfunded. In FY2019/20, the share of the health sector budget was 5.1% of the total national budget and government spending on health as a percentage of GDP was 1.8%. The recommended spend for universal health coverage is 5%<sup>19</sup>.

The number of nurses and midwives is low (27 per 10,000 people). Similarly, the number of hospital beds in Nepal is also low (3 beds per 10,000 people)<sup>20</sup>. Taking this into account, allocating at **least 10% of total national budget to health system strengthening** is recommended.

Evidence suggests that primary health care can help diagnose, track and stop local outbreaks while providing essential health services to communities. The infrastructure development for building secondary and tertiary hospitals, strengthening primary health care services, surveillance and testing in the sub-national level should be priority for all tiers of government.

**Agriculture & food:** Since the value-chain of agricultural products remains a challenge, government needs to **invest in strengthening the availability of agricultural products in the market by providing transport vouchers and facilitating commercial relationships.** Further, any scheme should also focus on food security (availability, access, utilization and stability), as well as agriculture production as this sector is the backbone for our economy and production levels are likely to drop.

**3) Focus on the poor and most vulnerable - female-headed households, the elderly, those with disabilities and youth.** The poorest and most vulnerable are likely to be hit the hardest by the pandemic. The World Bank forecasts that the share of the world's population living on less than \$1.90 per day is projected to increase from 8.2% in 2019 to 8.6% in 2020 meaning an estimated 665 million people worldwide will be living in poverty<sup>21</sup>.

In South Asia, around 16 million people are projected to be pushed into poverty.<sup>22</sup> Studies indicate that the pandemic may exacerbate poverty and inequality in developing nations. In turn, this will affect human development progress. In the absence of proper safety-nets, there will be incremental increase in impoverishment. This will directly hit the target of the 15<sup>th</sup> approach paper and affect progress towards SDG targets.

**4) Re-design the social protection systems.** To mitigate increases in poverty rates, there is an opportunity to integrate the fragmented social protection schemes such as **health insurance programmes, social security fund, social security allowances, and government employee health insurance.** By doing this, the breadth and depth of coverage and facilities to the poor and informal workers could be extended. Any redesign should

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<sup>19</sup> Budget Analysis of Health Sector, MoHP and DFID/NHSSP, 2019

<sup>20</sup> COVID-19 and Human Development. Exploring Global Preparedness and Vulnerability. UNDP

<sup>21</sup> The impact of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) on global poverty: Why Sub-Saharan Africa might be the region hardest hit, World Bank

<sup>22</sup> Share responsibility, global solidarity: responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, March, 2020, UN

ensure a protection system that is responsive to shocks, including climate shocks and include strengthening primary health care systems. This type of reform **should be gender responsive, disability responsive, elderly responsive, youth responsive<sup>23</sup> and promote human rights for all.**

**5) Systematically map the most vulnerable and poor.** Often, the identification of poor and vulnerable remains contentious in Nepal. The pandemic has shown the need for a proper targeting mechanism for response and recovery. Previously, the Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation identified poor families in 25 districts of Nepal, with the idea of channelling appropriate support mechanisms to help them out of the vicious cycle of poverty.

The COVID-19 recovery needs to be targeted to make sure that scarce resources are used efficiently and reach those in need. Although not all districts have identified poor households, recognizing the power and authority of the sub-national governments, the federal government could develop a quick and simple framework to identify those households which should be targeted.

The stimulus and recovery package needs to be developed with greater consultation of local government. An economic recovery strategy should be created that is tailor-made to each community based on data obtained, and government schemes should carefully and deliberately focus on the poor, small business and informal workers, who constitute up to 80% of the workforce.

**6) Invest in digital technologies and systems.** For response, recovery and to achieve the SDGs targets, investing in digital technologies – internet connectivity and networks for mobile-phone based platforms- is paramount. This will enable social delivery mechanisms and create trust in the public system. Nepal Telecom Authority's report indicates that Nepal has 72.16 % broadband penetration and access to internet is largely driven by mobile phones and mobile data (55%)<sup>24</sup>. Mobile phone subscriptions per 100 people in Nepal is high (139.4), whereas fixed broadband subscriptions is low (2.8%)<sup>25</sup>. Hence, the government should provide subsidies to the poor and vulnerable for broadband facilities and internet access by negotiating with the private sector. Schools and public places could also use it for virtual/remote teaching and learning, and communication.

**7) Mobilize youth for economic boost and recovery.** The youth population (16yrs-40yrs) is 40.3% in Nepal<sup>26</sup>. The pandemic has crippled the economies of emerging markets and developed nations. As a result, thousands of migrant workers (most of which fall in the youth age bracket) have, or are on the verge of, losing their jobs and livelihoods. This has led many to return home and this may put an ongoing strain on the public health system and impact food poverty in Nepal. It is therefore critical to develop schemes that **guarantee jobs and basic services**. The government should provide opportunities for agricultural production, distribution and marketing. Furthermore, **loans for small enterprises and agri-products, which are distributed fairly and with minimal bureaucracy, should be rolled out to address the scale of demand**. In this way, the youth population can be made central to building back better.

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<sup>23</sup> Sendai Framework emphasizes that women and disability people should be center of recovery.

<sup>24</sup> Annual Report 2019. Nepal Telecom Authority

<sup>25</sup> COVID-19 and Human Development. Exploring Global Preparedness and Vulnerability. UNDP

<sup>26</sup> National Population and Housing Census 2011, CBS

**8) Focus on women' economic opportunities to bounce back family income and livelihoods.** Emerging evidence shows that since the outbreak of COVID-19, **violence against women and girls and particularly domestic violence has intensified in several countries**, which costs estimated at approximately 2% of global GDP<sup>27</sup>. In Nepal, according to Nepal Police, in the last 40 days (until May 1st), at least 158 girls and women have reported rape cases, 272 people have committed suicide, and 182 other cases of domestic violence including child abuse have been reported.<sup>28</sup>

The pandemic has also had a disproportionately negative social-economic impact on women. Women are victimized as a result of domestic violence, have lost their jobs and also carry the burden of household chores. This has resulted in reducing women's economic opportunities. Government should **consider supporting women's economic opportunities by providing soft loans, subsidies and grants to incubate small enterprises, promote agriculture and food production**. Additionally, production of goods and services directly needed to strengthen the health system, such as local soap and liquid manufacturing, would provide further economic opportunities for women. For this, the Prime Minister's Employment Fund should be engaged and strengthened.

**9) Introduce Cash and Vouchers Assistance (AVP) schemes to support those most at risk.** According to one report, 56.6% of total population in Nepal are without social protection or labour programmes<sup>29</sup>. In addition, over 80% of the working population is engaged in informal sectors such as construction sites, agriculture, labour intensive factories, and other menial jobs, which are not protected by Nepal's social security scheme<sup>30</sup>. This demonstrates that the safety-net is poor in Nepal. In addition to the economic impacts of the pandemic, this means that **post-disaster recovery efforts such as 'cash for work', cash transfer programmes, provision of business grants, programmes to provide industries with necessary resources and job creation, are essential**.

A recent World Bank report showed that as of May 8, 2020, a total of 171 countries have planned, introduced or adapted 801 social protection measures in response to COVID-19. Social assistance transfers are the most widely used class of interventions (60% of global responses). Cash transfers also make up a significant proportion (32.4%) of total COVID-related social protection programs<sup>31</sup>. There also seems to be growing acceptance in some local governments in Nepal of cash-transfer schemes.

The Rapid Need Assessment showed that around three in four Palikas (73.6%) were positive about potential cash support from local NGOs. 59% of local representatives were in favour of conditional cash support programmes (e.g. cash for work), and 41% in favour of unconditional cash support programmes<sup>32</sup>. These interventions should be backed-up with policies and legislations. Rebuilding of businesses must also be facilitated through special fast-tracked permit procedures. Incentives such as subsidized accommodation must be provided to attract builders from other areas to participate in rebuilding. Every COVID-19

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<sup>27</sup> COVID-19 and Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, UNWOMEN

<sup>28</sup> COVID-19 Nepal Response, SitRep V, 4<sup>th</sup> May, DCA,

<sup>29</sup> COVID-19 and Human Development. Exploring Global Preparedness and Vulnerability. UNDP

<sup>30</sup> Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A statistics picture, ILO (2018)

<sup>31</sup> Social Protection and Jobs Responses to COVID-19: A Real-Time Review of Country Measures, "Living paper" version 7 (World Bank - May 1, 2020) - Gentilini, U. et al

<sup>32</sup> Briefing Paper Cohesive Response to COVID-19 in Nepal. World Vision International Nepal - <https://reliefweb.int/report/nepal/rapid-need-assessment-cohesive-response-covid-19-nepal-may-7th-2020>

response plan and recovery package and budgeting of resources needs to address gender, the impact on girls, disability impacts, and the impact on informal workers.

**I0) Preposition health related materials and non-food items at the different levels of government.**

Considering the vulnerability of natural disasters, establishing prepositioning centres at all levels of government is crucial, and will enhance a timely and smooth response in times of crisis.

**I1) Develop hazard maps of the country to support response to disasters.** Nationwide multi-hazard mapping, including possible disease outbreaks, is needed to save the lives and properties of the most vulnerable population.

## Effective Implementation

In Nepal, there is a significant challenge in terms of the gap between policy and implementation.<sup>33</sup> Given impact of the pandemic is essential that government makes a coordinated effort, alongside necessary reform, for effective implementation.

It is likely that the fiscal space for recovery may contract due to the national economy. The government therefore will need to acquire international cooperation and funding from multi-lateral agencies. In addition, implementation of schemes has to be innovative and quick to minimize the consequences.

Smart project implementation is required, together with expertise of government units. Evidence suggests that during crises, there is always a chance of ambiguity of roles between stakeholders and rushing fast to minimize the risks<sup>34</sup>. Therefore, a common set of standards, approaches and goals has to be in place and agreed. Better management of stakeholders and supportive legislations and regulations are also essential. Finally, grass-roots level implementation should be led by local governments.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The role of monitoring and evaluation is critical while executing BBB. Through monitoring, recovery activities can be tracked against the framework and plan. For this, a digital system can be adopted to ensure fast and timely information gathering and evidence-based project management. At the same time, lessons learnt from diverse context can be captured. Through effective and agile M&E systems, participation by the poorest and most vulnerable can be ensured and this makes certain that no one is left behind. With regards to monitoring and evaluation, sub-national government's capacity needs to be developed so that effective service delivery is guaranteed.

## Conclusion

The aftermath posed by the COVID-19 pandemic means that the economy and livelihoods need to be restored. This has brought an opportunity for re-engineering Nepal's economy and social system so that it is resilient for future crises, is sustainable, and its development is environmentally friendly. Risk reduction

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<sup>33</sup> Exploring how policy change happens in Nepal. Harry Jones, Nirjan, Rai, Danielle Stein and Barbara Befani (Palladium), 2017

<sup>34</sup> Lessons learned from tsunami recovery: key propositions for building back better. Office of the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery, New York. Clinton, WJ (2006)

schemes, psychological recovery and economic recovery should be integrated with effective programme design and implementation which is backed up by strong monitoring and evaluation system.

## The Role of Local and International Non-Government Organisations

After the declaration of public health emergency by the WHO, global humanitarian and development agencies are at the forefront of responding to government and community needs. To tackle the deep reaching socioeconomic consequence posed by the pandemic requires a coordinated effort between government, donors and I/NGOs.

In response, I/NGOs have supported distribution of medical equipment and relief materials. In addition, public service announcement as part of risk communication have been mobilized. Further, many of the INGOs have repurposed their funds to meet immediate and long-term needs.

## World Vision Contributions

World Vision recognizes that BBB is an important step in a long road to recovery. As part of the COVID-19 response to date, WVIN has supported the provision of 1000 PPEs and 120 Infrared (IR) thermometers to the Government of Nepal on 22 April amidst concerns about spread of COVID-19 in the country<sup>35</sup>. WVIN's first 30 days of the response focused on preparedness by supplying much need PPE to health facilities and medical professionals and supporting government on preventative messaging through traditional and social media.

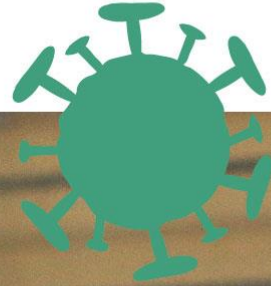
The focus is now moving onto addressing the immediate needs of the affected families and communities and supporting them to restore their livelihoods through multi-sectoral (health, education, protection and livelihood) initiatives. Keeping children at the core, the response will be implemented across 14 working districts of WVIN initially with room for expansion to other districts/areas depending on need.

World Vision will continue to support the government of Nepal on strengthening of health systems, education systems, economic recovery and livelihoods of most vulnerable children and family by creating job opportunities through its long-term development as well as humanitarian programmes.

*Acknowledgements: World Vision International Nepal developed this brief with contributions from its staff: Purna Bahadur Thapa, Janes Ginting, Kunal Shah, Shyam Adhikari and Santosh Dahal.*

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<sup>35</sup> Briefing Paper Cohesive Response to COVID-19 in Nepal. World Vision International Nepal - <https://reliefweb.int/report/nepal/rapid-need-assessment-cohesive-response-covid-19-nepal-may-7th-2020>



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