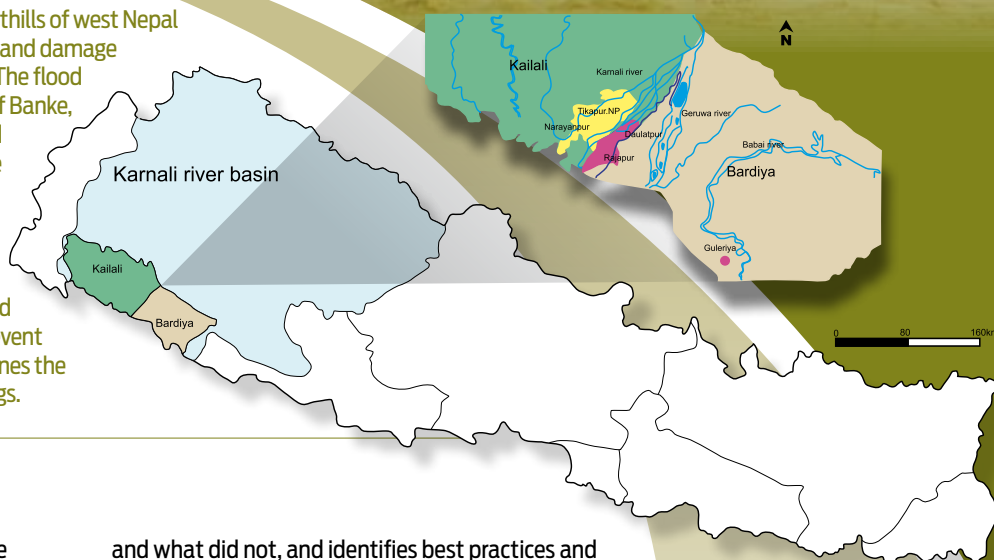


Post Event Review of Karnali River Floods 2014

March 2015, Kathmandu

Background

Three days of continuous rainfall across the foothills of west Nepal in mid-August 2014 led to widespread flooding and damage along the Karnali River and its tributary Babai. The flood affected and displaced thousands of families of Banke, Bardiya, and Kailali districts and over a hundred people lost their lives. Hundreds of houses were damaged along with roads, bridges, local markets, transport infrastructure, livestock, crops and daily consumables. Government and aid agencies were involved in rescue and relief. Zurich, ISET-International, ISET-Nepal and Practical Action collaborated to conduct post-event review of the 2014 Karnali flood. This brief outlines the importance of the study and preliminary findings.



Importance of the Study

This study is a part of Zurich's Flood Resilience Program, the Post Event Review Capability (PERC) that conducts research and provides independent reviews of large flood events. This study seeks to answer questions related to aspects of flood resilience and flood risk management. The study reviews meteorological/hydrological aspects of the flood and its history, analyzes what worked well

and what did not, and identifies best practices and opportunities for further improvements. The analysis includes an assessment of flood risk management cycle - prevention and risk reduction, structural measures, mitigation of loss potential, early warning and intervention as well as recovery and the outlook for future. Finally, it gleans out opportunities from this flood and makes recommendations.

LEGEND

- Budhi Kulo
- Linkage kulo
- Study VDCs of Bardiya
- Study VDCs of Karnali
- Bardiya
- Kailali
- Karnali river basin

Preliminary Findings

- Early warning system (EWS) saved a lot of lives in Kailali and Bardiya.
- The EWS and the larger national disaster response mechanism hinge on gauge readers.
- Inter- and intra-organizational communication and coordination were weak.
- Limited disaggregated census data made relief distribution difficult.
- Implementation of disaster plans and guidelines is limited.
- Systems, particularly rain and flow monitoring gauges, do not have safe failure mechanism if one system fails.
- Frequent transfer of government employees such as CDOs, police, and army makes it challenging to maintain institutional memory.
- Embankment sections failed and irrigation canals flooded, leading to flooding in unexpected areas. The relationship between sedimentation, infrastructure measures and flood risk is not well understood.
- Recovery is focused on rebuilding damaged infrastructure. There are no long-term recovery mechanisms in place.
- Lessons from past disasters such as the 2008 Kosi floods are not used to improve the flood management system.

The final report will be available by June/July 2015 at websites of the organizations involved in the study. For more information please contact Institute for Social and Environmental Transition-Nepal, Kathmandu. Tel.: +977-1-440854, 4426728 Email: iset@ntc.net.np