Business as usual?

Disasters, incompetency & corruption

Prof. Edwin van Teijlingen
Corruption is widely recognised: “Increasing corruption is another major challenge the government faces ...”
(National Planning Commission 2016, p.10).

- Pervasive corruption & weak institutions
- Leaders often enablers of corruption.
Health system of Nepal is chronically underfunded, has weak management & supervision systems and suffers endemic corruption (Levesque et al. 2013).
afno manchhe is not limited to familial relations. It may include people working in the same profession or the same field, business stakeholders or members of a particular organization. The way it has been used in Nepal indicates more than relationship; it may lead to the misuse of power and constitutes a unique path for corruption.

Corruption in Nepal has become so prevalent that it becomes the way of life of the society. Afno manchhe meant to obtain scarce consumer goods or to find a better job for one's children through the "back door". Today, afno manchhe is implicated in all big corruption cases and organized crimes. One particular feature is that corruption has evolved from individual wrong doings into institutionalized corruption that often involve a complicated afno manchhe network.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>2016 Score</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>90</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
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<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
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</table>
When I first visited Nepal 30 years ago, I wrote in the Financial Times that “deep-rooted corruption siphons off a large proportion of international aid and cripples the country’s economic growth and public administration.”

Members of the now-ousted royal family were heading the plunder ...

John Elliott writing in Newsweek (27 April 2015)

Who brings immediate help?

- Government of Nepal
- International agencies: International Red Cross, World Health Organization, EU, etc.
- Countries: India, China, USA, UK, the Netherlands, etc.
- Large non-governmental organisations: OXFAM, Save the Children, etc.
- Small charities in Nepal and abroad
Getting money & supplies to those in need

• India promised $2bn and send equipment & soldiers to help clear roads
• UK Government promised $58 million earthquake relief funding and more from UK general public.
• Others Asian Development Bank $600, China $483, EU $58 million,
• Immediate aid needs to be distributed to unknown people (‘those affected’), in difficult to access areas, under often chaotic socio-political conditions.
Linking to PHASE in previous session: “Disasters also offer opportunities!”

- Crisis in the project areas vs ‘crisis’ in the organization (disrupted ways of working with no time to reflect)

- Paradox of positive impacts for PHASE Worldwide as an organization. For PHASE Nepal the positives don’t replace what has been lost.

- Links into ‘crisis’ and ‘poverty providing ‘opportunity’ for development actors.
Corruption & opportunities:

• Aid can be claimed by ‘anybody’, not necessarily those (most) affected by earthquake/disaster.

• The organisation of the official ‘distribution’ resources is through already corrupt systems, all the additional resources offer an additional opportunity for ‘bettering’ oneself, organisation, ....
Bureaucracy as a barrier

• Incompetence & bureaucracy, the two can go together: the Nepali Government has US$ 700 million (=86% of current budget) set aside for reconstruction BUT less than one-third of that money was spent a year later (summer 2016).

• [Inter-agency competition between INGOs, NGOs is additional barrier]
Corruption & opportunity are not just poor countries which experience a disaster. 

Ariana Grande Example!
Consequences of corruption

- Due to widespread corruption and bureaucracy within the Government of Nepal, international donors like DFID have channelled their money into the big INGOs and UN agencies to deliver disaster relief programmes.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-32817748
The not-so-nice side of aid II

- High-income countries/individuals sending unwanted/inappropriate goods
- The global community pledges more than US$4 billion towards aid and reconstruction, and people are getting worried about the delay in spending the money appropriately.
High heels, handbags, chainsaws and carpets — these are just some of the goods donated to Vanuatu and Fiji following recent natural disasters. Photo by: Vanuatu National Disaster Management Office
References

• Levesque, JF, Harris, MF, Russell, G (2013) Patient-centred access to health care: Conceptualising access at the interface of health systems and populations. *Int J Equity in Health*, 12(1), 18


Any questions?

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