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HOW DO AUSTRALIA-BASED MIGRANTS HELP IN TIMES OF CRISIS?

*A case study of the Nepalese diaspora's response to the 2015
Gorkha earthquake*



April 2024



The research team is very grateful to members of the Nepali community in Australia who participated in this study for their generous contribution of time and valuable insights.

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About the research

In 2022, researchers from the University of Melbourne and Australian National University undertook a project exploring how Australia-based migrants (diasporas) help in times of humanitarian crises overseas. The project involved community researchers from eight diaspora communities (Afghanistan, Indonesia, Lebanon, Myanmar, Nepal, Pacific Islands, South Sudan and Syria) to co-design methodology, engage communities and collect data to find out how, why and what was done by communities in Australia in response to specific crises or events. The project aims to better understand the strengths and challenges faced by Australia-based migrants responding to different kinds of crises (disasters, conflicts and complex crises), and to identify potential tools that can support diaspora communities in their responses in the future. More information about this project can be found at <https://diasporahumanitarians.com/>.

About this report

This report is a summary of findings for the case study on the **Nepalese diaspora's response to the 2015 Gorkha earthquake**. Prerana Malla was the community researcher leading the research for this case study, in collaboration with Professor Bina Fernandez (Chief Investigator), Dr Louise Olliff (Research Associate), Lorenza Lazzati (Project Officer) and Dr René Rejón (Research Associate). Data was gathered using the following mixed methods:

- **Interviews:** 18 in-depth semi-structured interviews with participants from diverse backgrounds (age, gender, ethnicity, migration experience and years living in Australia). Interviews took place by Zoom, phone or Google Meet between July and October 2022. 14 of the interviews were conducted in Nepali and 4 in English. Interviews were audio recorded and then translated and/or transcribed. Transcripts were thematically coded using Nvivo.
- **Survey:** 60 community members participated in an online survey in either Nepali or English (see appendix for survey sample). 31 survey responses were discarded for not meeting eligibility criteria, bringing the final sample to 29. Data was analysed using Qualtrics.

The names of participants quoted in this report have been changed.



Crisis context:

How did the nature of the crisis shape diaspora responses?

A large 7.8Mw earthquake — known as the ‘Gorkha earthquake’ due to its epicentre’s location near the Gorkha district, 85km northwest of central Kathmandu — shook Nepal on the morning of 25 April 2015. The earthquake was considered one of the worst disasters to strike Nepal for many decades and had **devastating human and economic consequences**. The earthquake killed just under 9,000 people, over 20,000 people were injured, and hundreds of thousands were left homeless across several districts. The poor state of buildings at the time meant wide-spread and significant destruction of homes and infrastructure.

The **suddenness of the event and sheer scale of destruction had a significant impact on the mobilisation of the diaspora and what was achieved**. Interviewees spoke about how the response was fuelled by powerful emotions within the community, and that this created significant momentum when it came to fundraising and collecting donations. At the same time, the fact that people acted ‘from the heart and not the head’ at the start meant that mistakes were made. For example, some community organisations started by collecting

in-kind donations (i.e., food, clothing, etc.) and soon had warehouses full of goods; however, no one considered that the cost of sending donations to Nepal would be too expensive.

There wasn’t a very clear process at all. There wasn’t a clear guidance either. People were very emotionally connected. People were very overwhelmed. Everybody

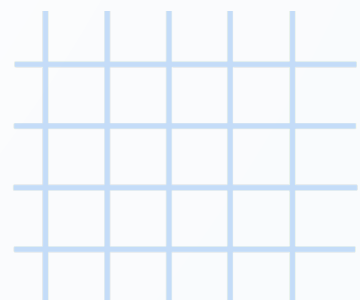
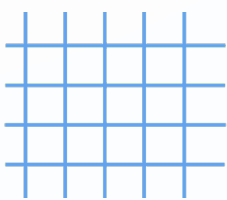
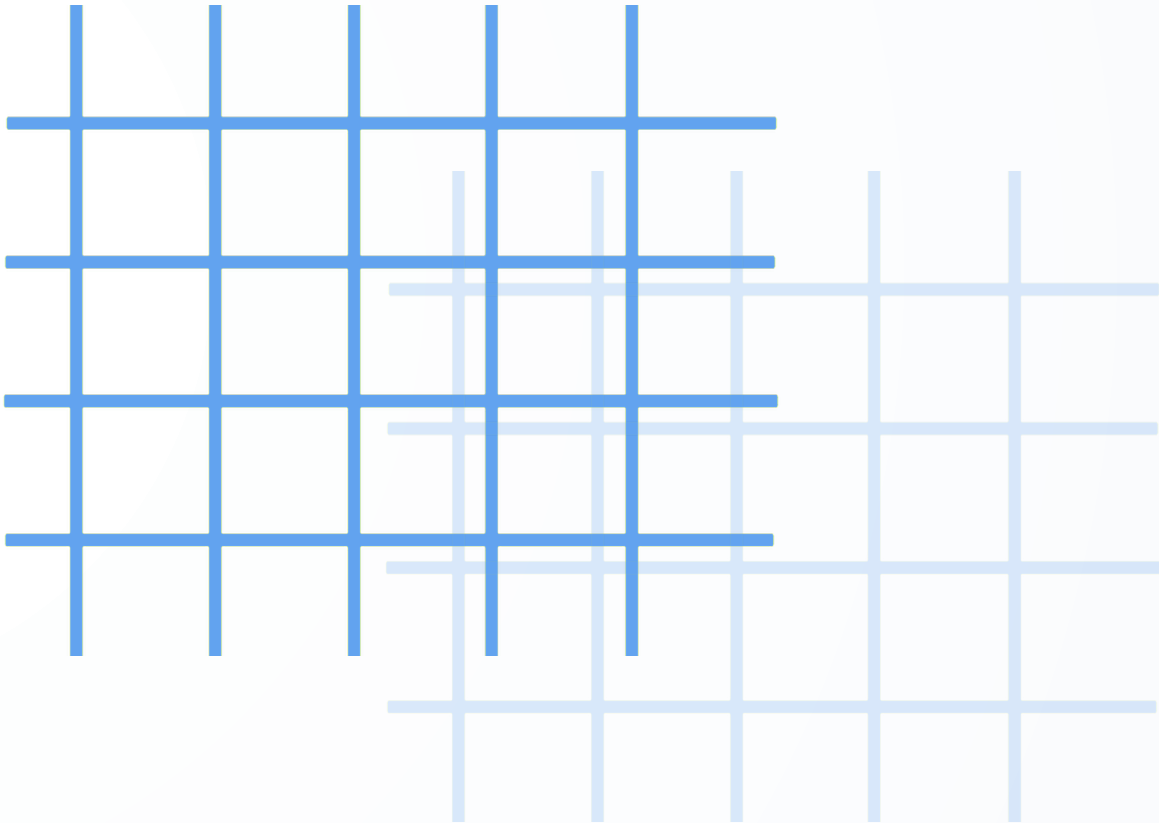
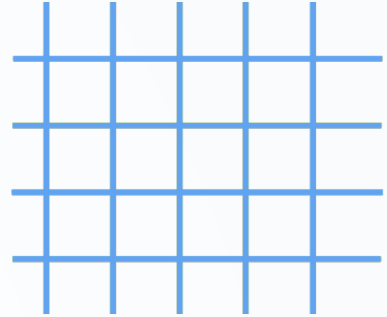
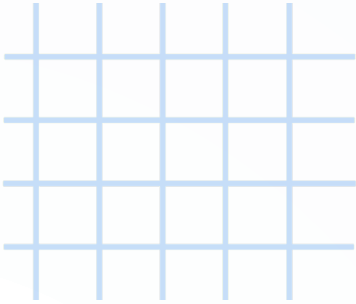
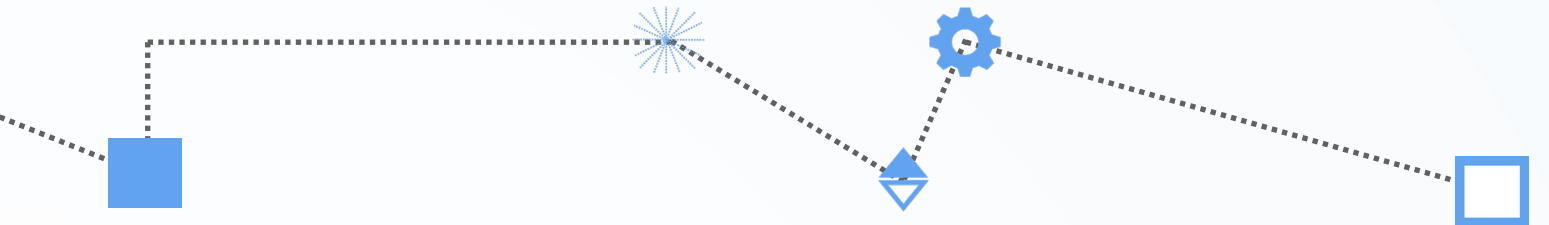
wanted to help and support. But nobody knew it cost more to send a can of beans than to give a can of beans. Nobody knew it cost more to send a bag of rice than to give a bag of rice. Our warehouse was full up to the ceiling within a matter of two weeks. (Hari, translation)

In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, people in the crisis-affected area were hesitant to go back into their houses until the structural integrity of buildings could be verified. Car parks and public squares became places of temporary shelter. As many electricity poles had fallen and cables were loose, the government cut off power. This made it difficult for people to communicate with their loved ones, including those in the diaspora. As a result, participants spoke about how **there was a delay in people in Australia being able to understand the magnitude of the devastation** and this caused **significant anxiety and stress**.

Nobody could get a hold of people in Nepal. So, there was a lot of misinformation. Everybody was thinking about their immediate family, to try and contact them. I think everybody was in a state of confusion, panic, anxiety; people were feeling really anxious. (Bikas, translation)

The news that there was earthquake in Nepal was on social media. The first thought was: ‘What happened to my parents?’ That was my first question, about my parents. So, I gave them a call. And then, later on— I couldn’t contact my parents at all. Phone lines, networks, everything was destroyed. The landline was not working... That panicking, oh, I can’t forget about it. (Ritesh, translation)

¹ See: Chidanand Rajghatta, Is this the ‘Big Himalayan Quake’ we feared? *Times of India*, 26th April 2015





Diaspora context:

How did characteristics of the diaspora in Australia shape responses?

The Nepalese diaspora in Australia is **sizeable and reasonably diverse** in terms of age, migration experience, class, and ethnicity. While some of the participants in this research had been living in Australia for more than a decade, nearly all were born in Nepal and were representative of a community that is still relatively new and emerging in Australia and where its members have strong personal links to and direct experiences of living in Nepal. **Responses to the earthquake were informed by these personal experiences and strong and active transnational social networks.**

Participants spoke about how a large group of Nepalese in Australia were on **temporary or international student visas** at the time of the earthquake and how this impacted the focus of their response. Community leaders reached out to students and universities to offer support:

Because there were a lot of kids here whose parents were affected. In Nepal, other international bodies are going to support there. Who is going to support here? That was the initial question we asked. [...] Within the university spaces, we told them what to do and how to do it. We gave them information about what was happening. Universities were also contacting us. 'Now what should the counsellors do? They don't know.' We talked to student associations. (Krishna, translation)

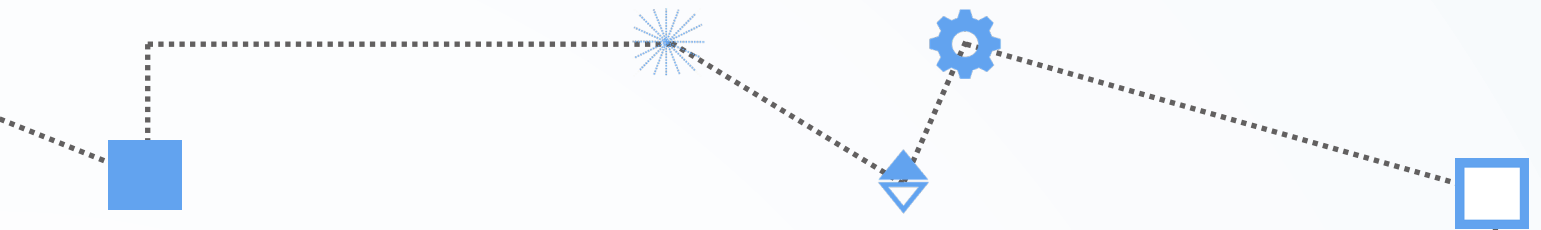
When asked about how the characteristics of the Nepalese diaspora shaped responses to the crisis, there were mixed views on the extent to which the community was united. Several participants commented on the

openness and transparency of the deliberation process. For instance, some interviewees mentioned that the community organised in committees, which were open forums where people could share their concerns and priorities. Others provided a more qualified view, noting that the community was **dispersed across Australia and not necessarily well coordinated at first.** Different organisations, such as the Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) and the Nepalese Association of Victoria (NAV) worked independently at the start. This meant that the generosity and good intentions of people did not always translate into a coordinated humanitarian response.

Part of the early disorganisation could be explained, perhaps, by the **distrust people had of official channels and other sociocultural challenges.** Some interviewees framed this in ethnic terms, but others in terms of power and class. For instance, people in Australia would call the authorities and ask for special treatment for their families, regardless of the level to which they had been impacted. Others thought that prejudices or parochialism hamstrung the response of the Nepalese diaspora:

We can't just go and give our fund to whoever. Who do we want to give the fund to? How do we want to give it? There was high chance of funds being misused during that time. They might just give the materials to their own families and give nothing to the community. (Dhriti, translation)

² The 2021 Population Census found 122,506 people in Australia were born in Nepal. The majority (76.6%) having arrived between 2011 and 2021, suggesting a very recently arrived population.



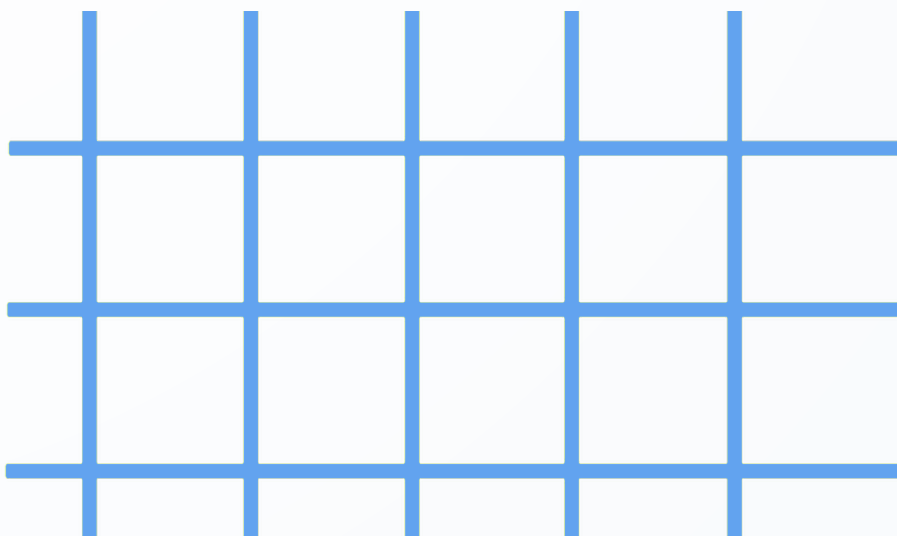
... if something happens to Brahmin/Chettri, then only the Brahmin/Chettri respond. If something happens to Gurung/Magar, Gurungs and Magars are those who react. If something happens to Newar, then Newars— I think this kind of racism is a weakness for Nepalese people. (Sujal, translation)

Other interviewees, however, attributed this initial disorder to the commotion that came with the realisation of the magnitude of the earthquake and its suddenness. Everyone's natural response was to **first make sure their family and friends were safe**; not many could think past that initial concern at first.

... everybody was trying to get a hold their own family. So, there was no sort of discussion at that point, that immediate day to say: 'Oh, we need to do something for Nepal' or anything like that, right? [...] I think it was just after a couple of days, and as more information and

the pictures came through the news, or the social media outlet, that actually brought more attention to it. We started thinking: 'Well, we have to do something about it.' (Bikas, translation)

After the initial shock, some members of the community took the lead and aimed to organise better. Leaders of the Nepalese community in Melbourne decided to create a work hub, initially in someone's living room. This group of 20-25 people decided that the Nepalese diaspora was not well-placed to contribute to the immediate needs, such as search and rescue efforts, but that **they could assist with mid- and longer-terms needs**: on the one hand, food, shelter and medical attention; on the other, recovery and reconstruction. They also decided that small, disorganised efforts were unlikely to have significant impact, so **they sought a one door policy**. That is how the 'Australia stands for Nepal' initiative was born.





Main Activities

What did the Nepalese diasporas do?

Fundraising and financial transfer

Most interviewees spoke about their involvement in **significant fundraising efforts**. While many people sent individual remittances to friends and family in Nepal, most also contributed to collective efforts. Different committees and organisations in different suburbs and cities, organised their own efforts and collected goods and money. Some Nepalese community events organically turned into fundraising events. Most of these micro-level fundraising efforts were funnelled into the global effort of the Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA), with those in Australia reportedly contributing \$1.1 million to the NRNA global appeal.

All these organisations were doing their own fundraising by themselves from the first. It was in the news; there was massive publicity in terms of what was happening in Nepal. The whole of Australia knew what was happening in Nepal or Kathmandu. So, these fundraising events were all spontaneous [...] and there was a real show of support for the Nepalese community. (Yogesh, translation)

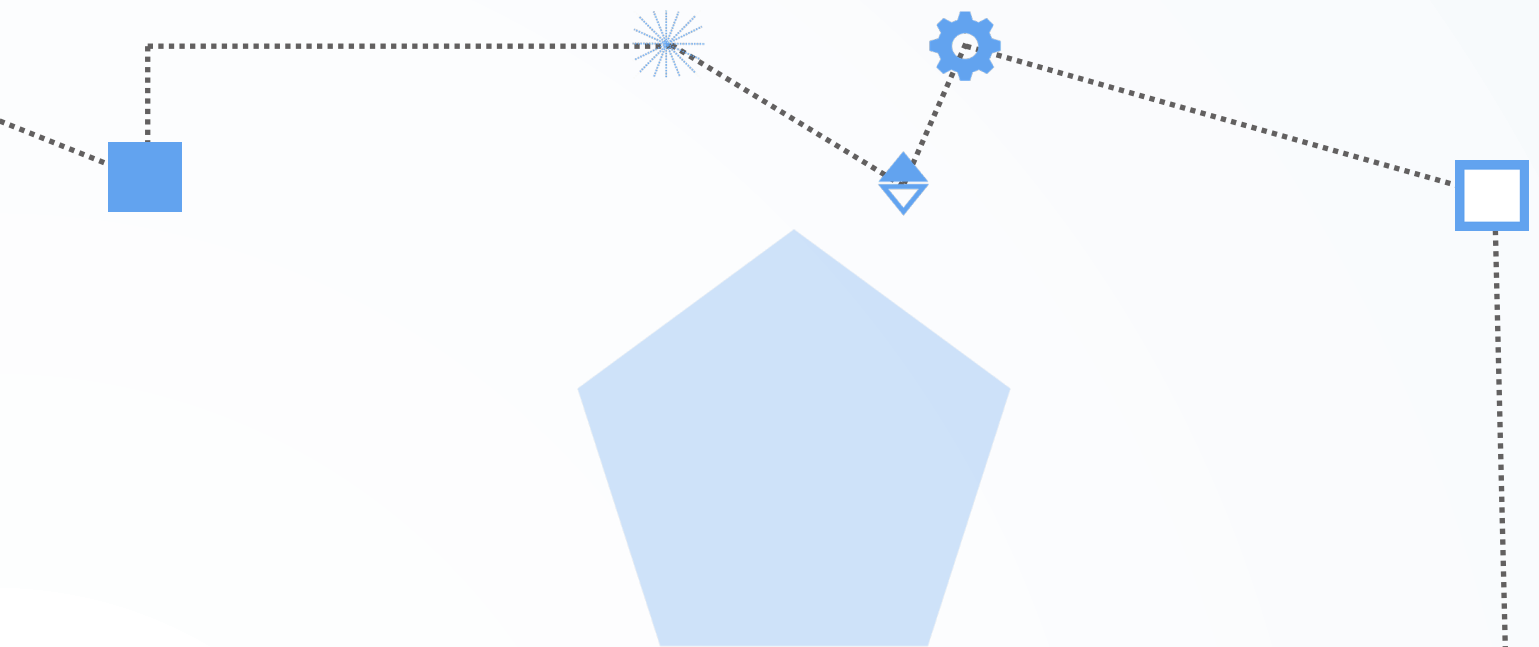
There was [a] concert on 26th April in Melbourne [the day after the earthquake]. That concert basically became a grieving session; a mourning session and musical tribute session. ... Altogether, we went into helping mode, and on that night we raised donations. ... We raised plenty on that day [and] donated \$25,000 to the earthquake relief fund. (Hari, translation)

Material aid

One of the initial and major activities of the diaspora was to **collect material goods** that could be sent to Nepal. The first wave of donations was huge. People donated clothes, food, medicine, tents and blankets. Interviewees spoke about whole warehouses being filled, to the point where organisers had to stop accepting donations. While a vast number of goods were collected, **the community soon pivoted away from collecting material aid** when it became apparent that the cost and difficulty of transporting goods was greater than the value of the goods themselves. Some of the items that had been donated were later sold or auctioned and funds used for relief and recovery projects.

... the response was so overwhelming. There were all physical donations, like blankets, tents, medications, cans of foods and all that. They all had to be stored and they all had to be transported. Unfortunately, we were not able to send all those donations to Kathmandu because of the logistics. Because they had to fly it in, and it was going to be very expensive. (Yogesh, translation)

Some of the challenges of sending material aid were overcome thanks to the **influence and advocacy efforts** of key diaspora organisations. Community members had contacted airlines and shipping companies to explore cooperation avenues to transport the goods they had collected. This resulted in the transportation of 2-3 freight containers, and Thai Airways committing to allow 50kgs in extra luggage for passengers flying to Nepal, so long as they brought with them donations. At some point, the Nepalese government opposed these efforts and were stopping these goods at the airport. Then, the Nepalese diaspora displayed its strength again. As Govind recalls:



If I remember correctly, those goods were also stopped at the airport. You remember, they introduced a one door policy? I think they didn't let it through. That's when brother Shesh went on TV and [advocated for diaspora aid to be able to enter Nepal]. After that, the government said they would let in the goods brought in by NRNA. That was the power of the NRNA... (translation)

Psychosocial support

Another frequent diaspora activity discussed in interviews was the provision of **psychosocial support**. This turned out to be a crucial action, not only for reaching out to people impacted by the earthquake in Nepal, but also for community members in Australia who were in shock, distressed and anxious. Having a support network to rely on was spoken about as extremely important. As some interviewees remembered:

All of us went through shock [...] During that time, we were providing psychosocial support to everyone. Checking in: 'Are you okay? How are your family members doing?' [...] We were very connected during that time [...] We felt like we were one family [...] Getting a cup of tea, talking to each other, it was all part of healing... That created a secure and safe environment. It was amazing. (translation)

I think at first it was trying to console each other, [because] a lot of community members were affected. Their houses were wiped out. So, trying to console the people around you, firstly. And then, we had to try and understand the devastation and really try to figure out: what can we do? (Bikas, translation)

Knowledge and labour transfer

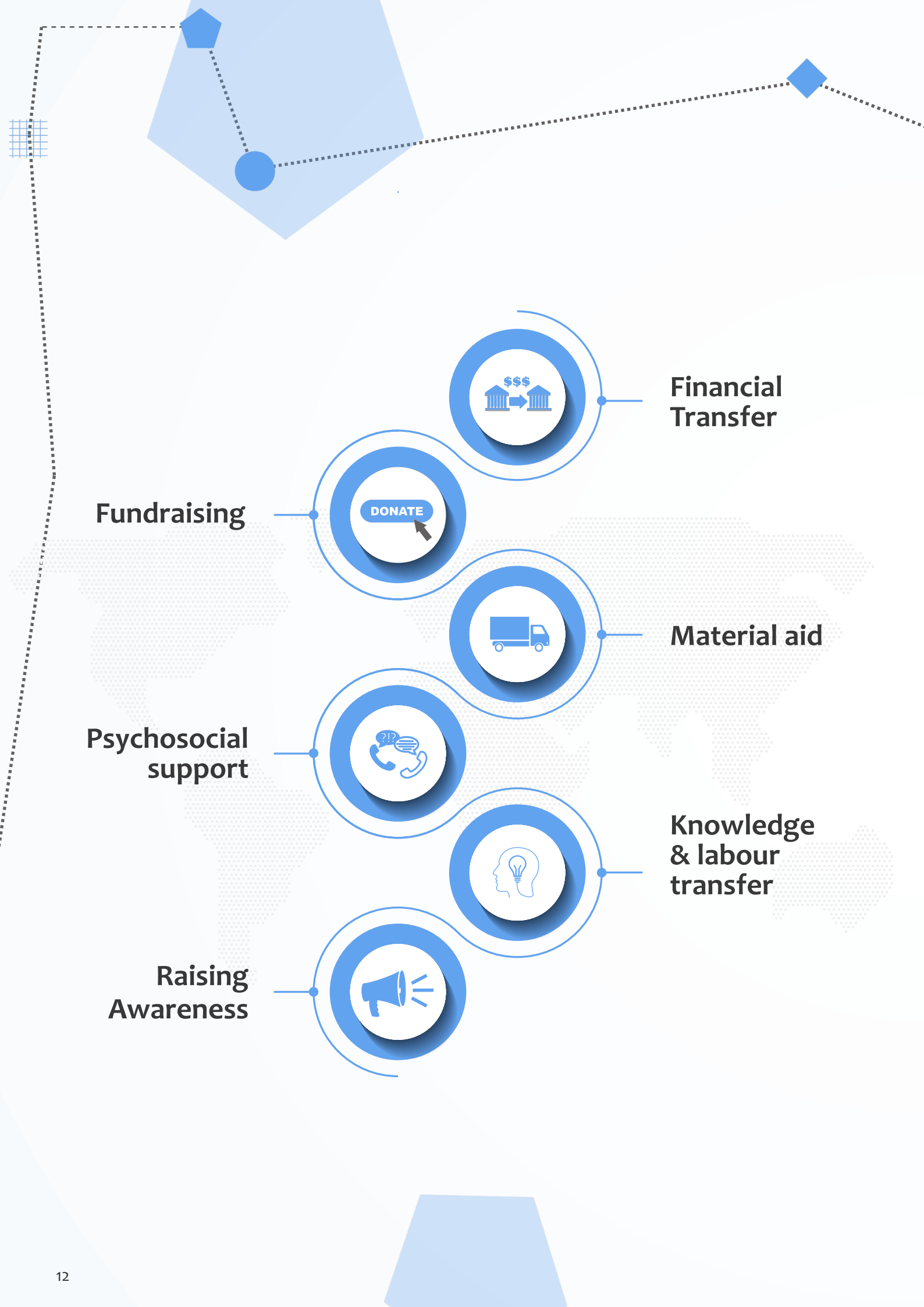
Members of the Nepalese diaspora also remembered how they opened an avenue for knowledge transfer; what they called '**expert volunteering**'. Some members of the diaspora community travelled to Nepal, especially those with qualifications in health services, such as doctors and nurses.

They came from around the world. When our team gathered in Nepal, I think we had more than 400-500 volunteers. We started one medical team camp, purchased medical supplies, and took them. (Sujal, translation)

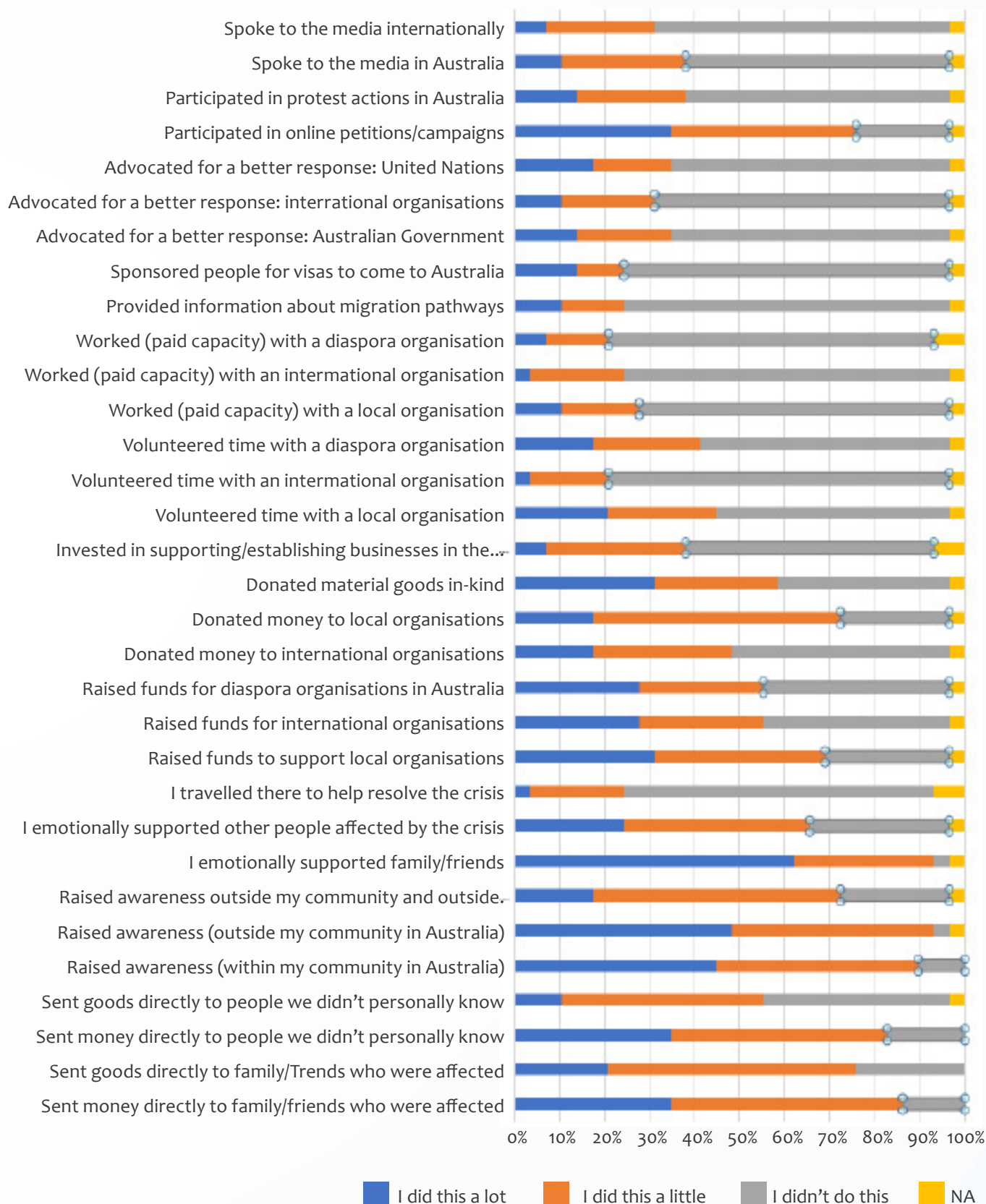
During that time, a number of people were traveling to Nepal in different regions. Many experts went to Nepal as well, especially medical personnel and engineers. We sent those materials in their luggage. It all happened on trust and sentiment. (Hari, translation)

Survey Responses

Activities described in interviews were generally reflected in survey responses. The most common response to the crisis indicated in survey responses was to provide **emotional support to family and friends**. Only 3.45% of respondents did not provide this kind of support at all. **Raising awareness in Australia** was the next most common responses to the crisis, followed by **raising funds for local, diaspora and international organisations**, with half of the respondents stating they had done this at least a little. **Sending money to people affected by the crisis** was a very common responses too, regardless of whether the sender knew the recipients of the donations or not. More than 80% of people said they had sent money to people affected by the crisis at least a little.



Q. What did you do to respond to this crisis?





Needs Addressed

What needs within crisis-affected communities were addressed?



Food and essential items – much of the remittances, both collective and individual, were used to provide food and essential items for crisis-affected communities in Nepal.



Health – medically-trained personnel travelled to Nepal to provide medical care and brought medical supplies with them.



Shelter – In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, the diaspora contributed to efforts to provide temporary shelter, including the purchase or provision of tents and camping mattresses. Funds collected by the NRNA were also used for longer-term reconstruction efforts, including the construction of houses.



Education – Money was raised to support a local radio station to be able to re-start broadcasting. Radios were also sent from the diaspora to communities.



Wash – provision of hygiene products, such as toothbrushes, soaps, sanitary pads.





Modalities

What tools helped to facilitate diaspora responses?

Working through trusted social networks

Social networks were central to diaspora responses, with family, friends, professional, student and community groups key to receiving and sharing information, fundraising, sharing knowledge and skills, and general organising. Interviewees spoke in some detail, for instance, about how fundraising events were facilitated through social networks, with small clusters of people organising their own events and fundraisers and then transferring money raised to other (larger) organisations. From suburban community groups to student clubs in universities, many organised performances, film screenings, concerts and other in-person events to raise funds. Furthermore, raising funds was only one of the benefits of having events in person; the interaction with other Nepali people at the events also offered some degree of relief for their distress and anxiety. As Ram recounts:

I remember the vigil; it was such an emotional evening. It was in Federation Square. I don't know who organised it. I think it was NRNA who organised it. Maybe there were more than 10,000 people. It was such a wonderful event. I was new. Most of us were very tearful. Many monks also attended. They were chanting for everybody's health, wellbeing, peace. (translation)

A key theme when talking about social networks was the need for **trust**. Some interviewees expressed a **lack of trust in formal institutions** (particularly, the Nepali government) and the need for 'people' to step into the void to provide social assistance. This suspicion did not prevent people from helping, but it did influence their decision making on which channels to use to provide aid. People preferred to

go through community-based organisations rather than through formal institutions. As Yogesh explained:

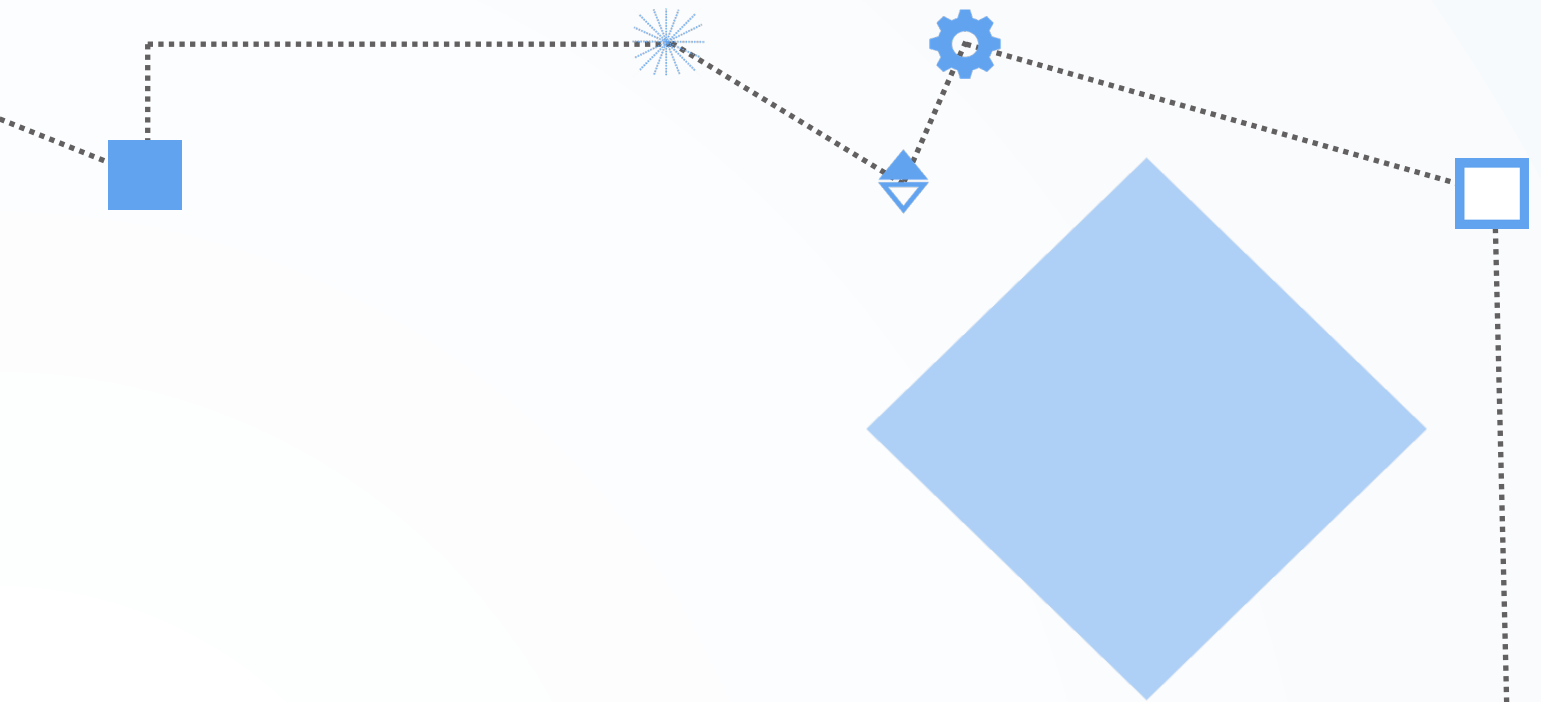
The government did say that they're distributing tents. But in Nepal, it's a thing; it's about who has power gets priority first. So that was another classic case of the way our Nepal works. Those who know people will get tents immediately. Those who don't know people don't get tents even if they stayed in queue. (translation)

Digital tools

Social media platforms played a significant role in the coordination of community responses. After a few in-person coordination meetings, a Facebook page ('Victoria stands together for Nepal') was set up, which soon became a national info-hub for the Nepalese diaspora in Australia. This Facebook page would promote events, provide updates about the crisis, and link to online fundraising. Funds were raised through **crowdfunding platforms** such as GoFundMe.

The website was up within three hours. So, by next day, it was all up. We put up a Facebook group/page right after... All the queries could come through the website, through that Facebook page, and we were answering. So, we can say we sort of started a call centre. Information plus discussions were right then and there. (Krishna, translation)

When we opened an account and started the fundraising from the next day, massive funds were raised. It was so massive. We should be proud as Victorians ... A good amount was raised in just one day through GoFundMe. (Govind, translation)



Travel

The characteristics of the crisis allowed for **visits or travel** as part of the diaspora's response. In the days and weeks following the earthquake, many people – especially doctors, nurses and engineers – travelled to Nepal. They brought with them donations, such as tents and medical material, and volunteered to provide medical care and technical advice.

At NRNA's initiation, a team was set up where a few doctor and nurse friends volunteered to go urgently. They flew there. Friends who are in that sector started coordinating that one... while we were involved in fundraising. (Bhintuna, translation)

And, with this notice, lots of non-resident Nepalis came home to volunteer as well, doctors, nurses and all that. They were volunteers who flew back to Kathmandu for this purpose. (Yogesh, translation)





Motivations

Why did the Nepalese diaspora in Australia respond?

When talking about what prompted those in Australia to respond to the earthquake in the ways that they did, interviewees shared some different perspectives on motivations. Some framed their efforts in terms of **moral obligation**, as a response to the perceived accusation that their status as migrants in Australia made them ‘traitors’ or ‘runners’ who therefore had a special moral responsibility to help their motherland. In Govind’s words:

I support that project because as a Nepalese diaspora, we needed to have some presence. We are accused of running away; leaving the country. That’s reasonable and understandable. However hurt we may be, that is the truth to some extent. That’s why, to show our presence, we have built this... it is important. That’s why Laprak’s settlement will be our model village. We need that name of ‘Laprak, built by Nepalese living abroad’. (translation)

Other interviewees described the morality that motivated them more in terms of an obligation or duty to their family, friends and community and **an emotional response to alleviate the suffering of the people and the country they love.**

During that time, we are involved with all our hearts, touching people’s hearts. Like, we melted. We felt like we have to do something in our hearts. We felt like, even if we don’t have much, we have to do it... I think everybody felt that way. (Shyam, translation)

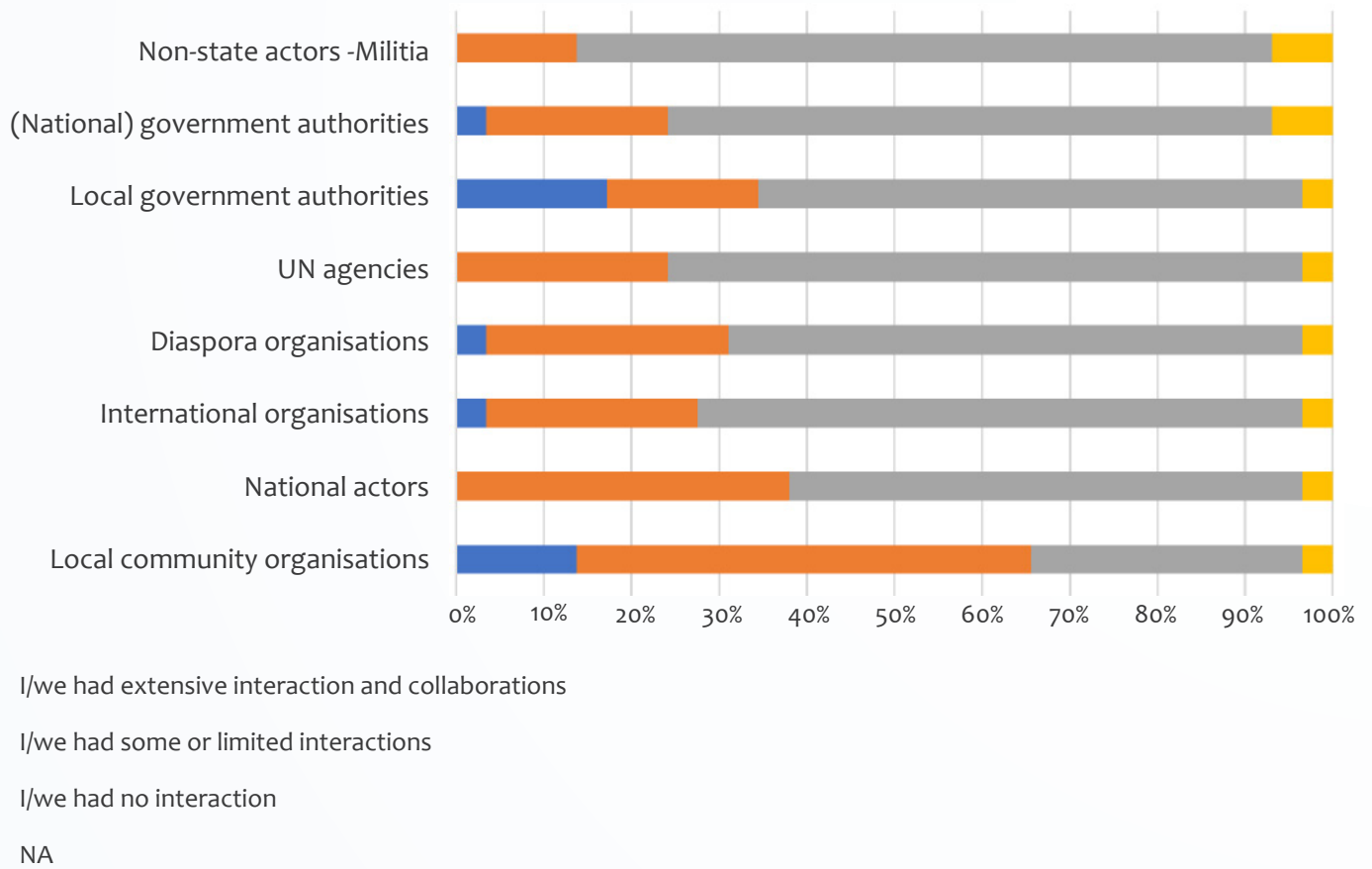


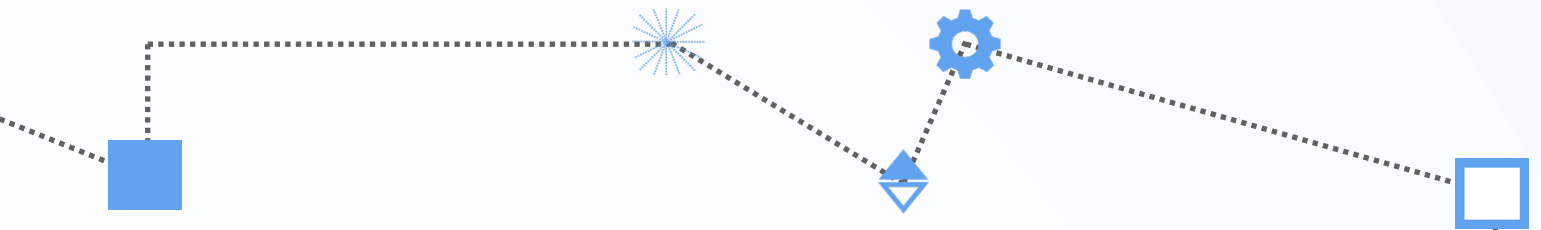
Collaboration

How did the Nepalese diaspora connect with other actors?

In terms of relationships between the Nepalese diaspora in Australia and other actors responding to the earthquake, the Nepalese diaspora reported very limited interactions with other actors in their response to the crisis. Survey responses suggest the diaspora had minimal interactions with UN agencies and national actors; with only 3.45% of respondents reporting extensive interactions with national government authorities, diaspora organisations and international organisations. Most interactions reported were with **local government authorities** and **local community organisation in Nepal**.

Q. How would you assess the level of interaction you (or your community) had with other actors responding to the crisis?





One pattern that emerged from interviews about other actors responding to this crisis suggested a **lack of trust in the Nepal government**. This lack of trust was not based necessarily on suspicion of corruption or nepotism, but on a perception of incompetency. Many interviewees expressed doubt about the efficacy of the government response to the earthquake, arguing it was completely overwhelmed and therefore not a reliable or preferable collaborator.

The Nepal government— We could see that goods weren't reaching their destination. Goods were more than they could manage. (Shyam, translation)

But the Nepal government was very slow. They didn't know what they were doing. We knew what we should be doing. They were refusing to do it. (Govind, translation)

We used to hear more about how rarely the relief reached the needy people when it was distributed by the Nepal government... That was the reason why instead of handing it over to the government, we distributed it ourselves. So that it reaches directly to the one who is needy. That's why we adopted a direct approach. (Narayan, translation)

While the level of collaboration with humanitarian organisations was reported as low by survey respondents, some interviewees did refer to **established and larger humanitarian organisations and/or UN bodies** when it came to contributing funds to the emergency relief efforts. Organisations such as the Red Cross, Oxfam, World Vision and UNICEF were referred to as helpful for those who wanted their donations to be tax-deductible. Although not seemingly a structured or formal collaboration between diaspora and these organisations, some

respondents were confident that money raised would be channelled to larger organisations who could do a better job at getting assistance to the affected areas, although this optimism was not a constant across all interviewees.

When Australians give a donation, they first think whether that organisation has tax [deductibility status] or not. So, to the Australians, foreigners or even Nepalese people, we told them that they had options. They could either deposit the donation to NRNA. Otherwise, there are other organisations like Red Cross, UNICEF, they definitely have fundraising for the earthquake in Nepal... We were happy that all that donation will reach our country in the end. (Bibek, translation)

This concern about who diaspora members chose to connect with was well-phrased by Bhintuna:

Although I was part of Victoria Stands For Nepal... what we said was: 'You can donate to whoever you trust. But, rather than donating to small organisations, give it to bigger organisations.' They trusted Red Cross, so they contributed to Red Cross. (translation)

Finally, some interviewees spoke about how the Nepalese diaspora worked with **Australian civil society organisations**, such as the Salvation Army. These local organisations could not commit to financial donations but donated goods (i.e., sleeping mattresses and sleeping bags) that were being coordinated by diaspora organisations.

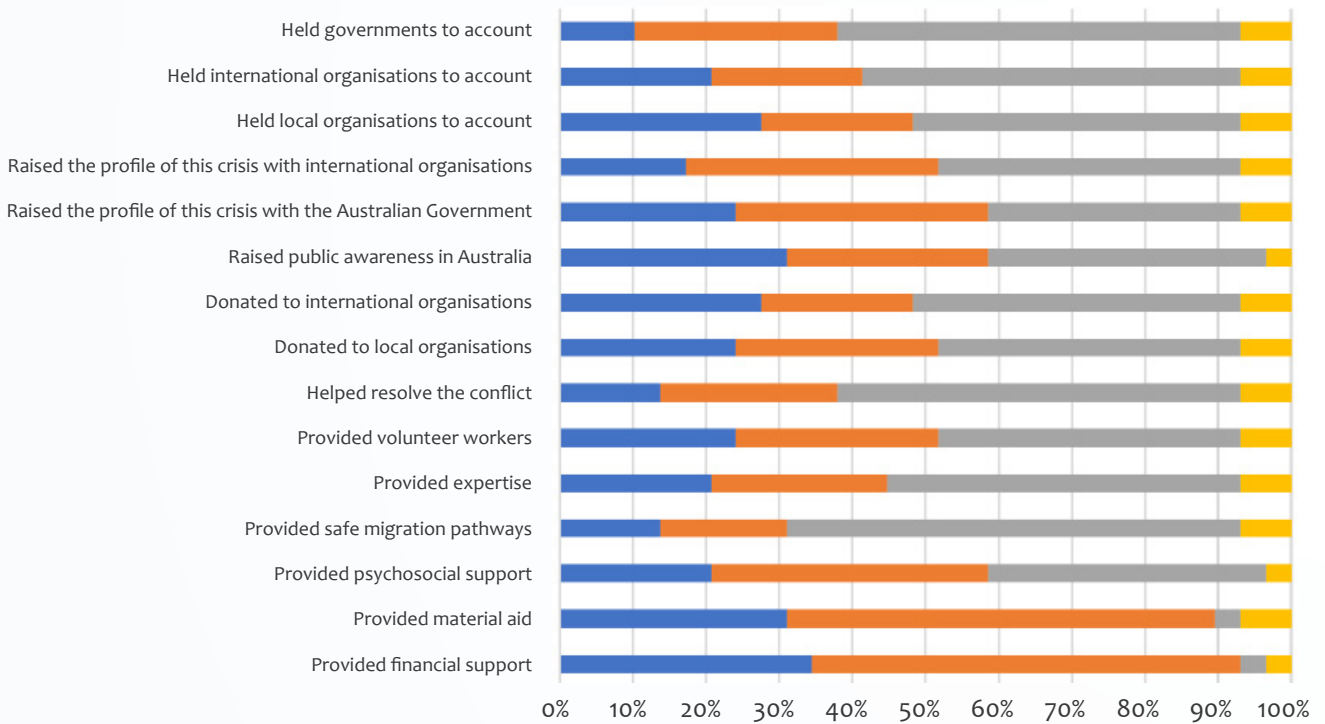


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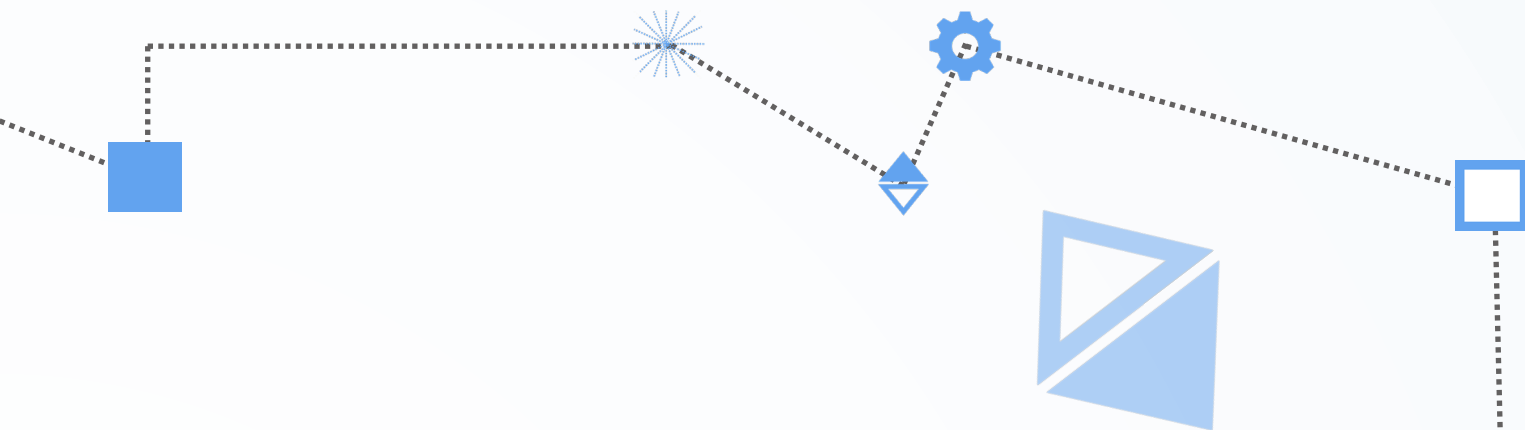
What made a difference?

According to survey respondents, the greatest highlights of the diaspora’s response to this crisis were, by far, **providing financial support and material aid**. 90% of respondents said the community did this at least fairly well. Raising awareness with the Australian public (31%), the Australian government (24%) and with international organisations (17.2%) were also identified as highlights of the diaspora response to the crisis.

Q. Would you assess this as a highlight of your community’s response to the crisis?



- This was a highlight / We made a positive difference
- We did this fairly well / We made some difference
- I don't know / This was not a highlight
- NA



Interview participants reflected in some detail about effective and impactful practices. Many felt that the initial response of the Nepalese diaspora in Australia to this crisis was diligent but siloed. Small organisations and community groups independently organised fundraising events and collected important but still relatively small amounts of money. While these efforts were laudable, **impact and effectiveness improved when smaller organisations and groups came together** in a more coordinated way.

The way in which the **diaspora communicated and coordinated online** was seen as particularly effective. The ‘Victorians Stand for Nepal’ Facebook page that managed to become the focal point for the Nepalese diaspora played a crucial role in facilitating the success of their response. For many reasons, some of them merely circumstantial, this Facebook page gained traction and went viral. Not many dared to disrupt that momentum and even major organisations such as NRNA decided to ‘jump on that train’ rather than set up something in competition. The Facebook page not only channelled the crowdfunding campaign, but it acted as an information hub for all things related to the earthquake: it provided updates and news about the earthquake; it promoted fundraising events, rallies and demonstrations; it directed people to a variety of organisations able to receive donations; and it provided clarity to what/how to donate at a time when processes were lacking. Given its success, the site soon converted to ‘Australia stands for Nepal’.

Interviewees also highlighted how beneficial it was to have **established diasporic networks and organisations** before the earthquake occurred, such as the NRNA. This kind of pre-existing network was very helpful in terms of disseminating information and raising funds.

Several interviewees made reference to the **empathy and support of other communities in Australia**. Locals and members of other diasporas in Australia showed generous solidarity, not only expressing interest in the wellbeing of their Nepalese colleagues and their families but contributing financial resources.

Another thing is, during this time, the supportive organisations that are here in Australia, [...]. Like, from my personal link, my office supported \$3,000-4,000. Ivanhoe Girls’ Grammar supported \$8,000-9,000. There were supports like that. (Alok, translation)





Challenges

What was difficult or didn't work?

One of the most obvious challenges in the response of the Nepalese diaspora in Australia to the 2015 earthquake was the **initial lack of guidance and coordination**. The community was generous and willing to help, but their initial actions were more emotionally driven than well-thought through. When people heard that many in Nepal were without shelter, the initial response was to provide in-kind assistance, in the form of tents, mattresses and blankets. However, at that point, no one considered that the logistic complications of sending all that material aid would be more expensive than merely transferring the financial resources.

We learned many lessons. The ones that I learned; we were overwhelmed. We were excited. We started reaching different organizations without knowing if we'll 100% benefit from the goods that we receive from them, will those goods be properly utilised. We started reaching out to organisations without exploring any of those factors. (Ram, translation)

The biggest limitation for the crisis management at that time was lack of experience. Because till now, people living in Australia had not had to manage crisis of that level and we hadn't faced it. Because of that, there were emotional decisions made in the beginning, about what we should collect and what we shouldn't collect. Later, that itself became a problem for us. We used sports centre of certain sports group as our venue and storage. After certain time, they were panicking as well. They said we had to vacate their place. Where do we take them? Who do we donate them to? Where to dump them? We were having that problem. (Narayan, translation)

Another challenge after the initial wave of generosity was the **lack of volunteers** that followed. Once all the donations were gathered, they needed to be sorted, packed and distributed. There were no human resources to do that. These initial mistakes resulted in full warehouses that soon became a liability and a safety hazard rather than actual aid. Donations had to be sold, auctioned or re-donated.

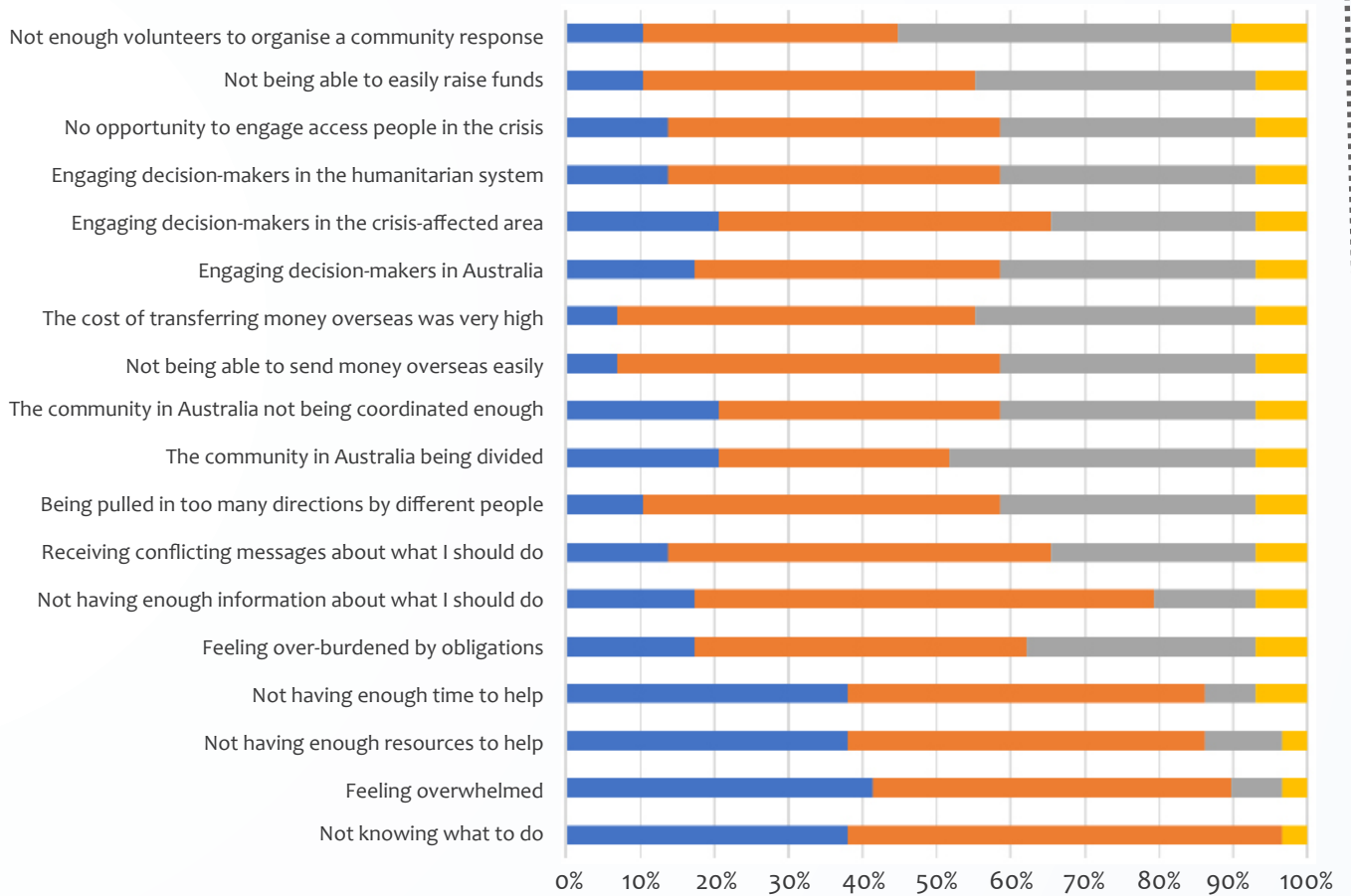
We did the collection. The challenges come after the collection. Like, we sent it from here. Could we send it in time? After collection, people are not available. They all work. We need volunteers. We have to find volunteers. We have to lobby about how to send them and where and how to deliver them to specific places. Many problems arise. (Shyam, translation)

...at some point, the materials were a burden to us. To speak honestly, it became a burden for us because we could not actually take it to the people who we intended to send it to. (Hari, translation)

In survey responses, **not having enough information or resources to help** appear to be the biggest challenges that the Nepalese diaspora faced in responding to the crisis. People reported feeling overwhelmed (89%), not knowing what to do (96%), and not having enough time (84%) and resources to help (86%).



Q. Was this a challenge you faced in making a positive difference to the lives of people affected by the crisis?



- This was a major challenge that I faced
- This was somewhat of a challenge that I faced
- This was NOT a challenge that I faced
- NA





Recommendation

What could help diasporas respond to humanitarian crises in future?

Several themes emerged from participants about what could help the Nepalese diaspora in Australia to respond to humanitarian crises in future. This included:

1. Streamlining efforts into one single body would maximise impact and enable accountability.

Interviewees were overall satisfied with the humanitarian response of the Nepalese diaspora in Australia. However, they recognised that some errors could have been easily avoided. Inexperience was costly for the diaspora's response. Some of the challenges and obstacles the diaspora faced could have been easily predicted by someone with expertise in disaster management. Furthermore, scattered efforts are not only less likely to make significant impact, but it was also harder to assess their impact. One interviewee mentioned that there are around 80 Nepalese organisations in Australia, but they are small. Strengthening the capacity of umbrella organisations to facilitate coordination and cooperation in the event of a future humanitarian crisis was recommended.

2. Stronger collaboration with humanitarian sector and engaging with (already-existing) expertise

Some interviewees noted that mistakes or negligence that occurred during the initial phase of the response could have been easily avoided. They observed that the diaspora should not try to rely so much on themselves and should be able to reach out to experts to guide future responses, with a recommendation that stronger collaboration and connections be made with humanitarian organisations with expertise in disaster response. There was a suggestion of diaspora organisations actively seeking needed expertise by hiring consultants. There were moments when the diaspora had enough financial and human resources

to respond in a good way, but it lacked expertise and helpful guidance; this, unfortunately, sometimes resulted in inefficient processes and bad decisions.

3. Formalising and institutionalising organic collaboration

Many of the interviewees highlighted the role that organic grassroots movements, such as Australia Stands for Nepal, played in the response that the Nepalese diaspora in Australia was able to provide to the 2015 Gorkha earthquake. Some noted that this body is still active and continues to provide aid for Nepal in other crises. Therefore, it makes sense to formalise this kind of community effort. If the organisation is formally established, it will be able not only to be more efficient in their processes but gain legitimacy and fundraising potential, by issuing tax-deductible receipts, for instance. Going through a formalisation process would also give the organisation a better structure and policy library, making it more resilient and sustainable in the long term.

4. Globalising the scale of effort/Maximising the impact of existing resources

Organisations such as the NRNA have access to the global diaspora and representatives on the ground as well. If these organisations had an emergency relief procedure or protocol, it would be much easier to act quickly in the future; both on their own or in collaboration with local authorities. This would provide relief to people without any delays.

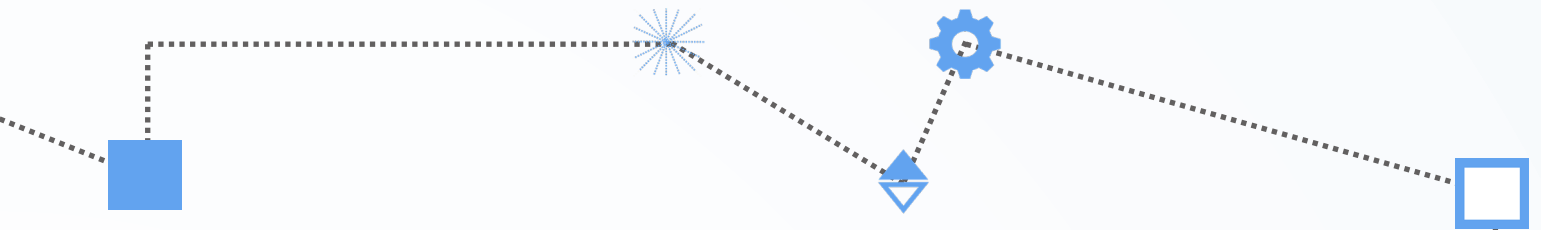




Appendix | Quantitative data report

Data: The Nepal Survey was created in English and in Nepali. The survey in English received 48 responses between June 10 and September 28. The Nepali version got 12 responses, between June 25 and July 19. 31 out of these responses were discarded for not meeting eligibility criteria (i.e., substantially incomplete, consent, aware of the crisis, living in Australia), bringing the final sample to 29.

Demographics: Our sample consists of mainly women (75.9%), with 24.1% of respondents declaring to be male. Most of the respondents were born in Nepal (96.6%), about half of them have been living in Australia for 11 years or more (51.7%), and 93.1% of the respondents have been in Australia for at least 6 years. The sample is young, 89.7% of the respondents are younger than 44. The majority of our respondents (62.1%) came to Australia on a student visa, 10.3% were skilled migrants, and 17.2% came as dependents.



Nepal		
Country of birth	Origin	28 (96.6%)
	Third	1 (3.4%)
	Total	29 (100.0%)
Gender	Female	22 (75.9%)
	Male	7 (24.1%)
	Total	29 (100.0%)
Age	18-24	4 (13.8%)
	25-34	12 (41.4%)
	35-44	10 (34.5%)
	45-54	2 (6.9%)
	55-64	1 (3.4%)
	Total	29 (100.0%)
Years living in Australia?	6-10 years	12 (41.4%)
	11-20 years	12 (41.4%)
	20 + years	3 (10.3%)
	3-5 years	2 (6.9%)
	Total	29 (100.0%)
In which visa did you first come to Australia?	Student	18 (62.1%)
	Dependent	5 (17.2%)
	Temporary skilled migrant	2 (6.9%)
	Not sure	2 (6.9%)
	Permanent skilled migrant	1 (3.4%)
	Visitor	1 (3.4%)
	Total	29 (100.0%)



School of Social and Political Sciences