

# INDUSTRY DEMAND FOR SKILLED CONSTRUCTION WORKERS REMAINS HIGH FOUR YEARS AFTER THE 2015 EARTHQUAKE

## Summary

Through a Post-Disaster Needs Assessment conducted in 2015, the Government had identified a need for 70,000 construction workers to support the reconstruction effort. However, findings from a new study conducted in 2018 by Dakchyata on post-earthquake skills demand show that there are still less than 50% of the required number of trained workers available in the market, and that locals as well as contractors are facing acute shortage of skilled workers.

Moreover, most of the local workers that were trained during the reconstruction efforts are now either overseas or are planning to migrate. In a further finding, the study shows affected house owners were provided short term trainings, mainly in masonry under the 'owner-driven' reconstruction process which to some extent alleviated labour requirements but did not contribute to the long term skill requirements of the construction sector. A sustainable approach

to address these shortages would be to empower and provide long term skills training to locals that not only address immediate requirements but also meet the needs for skilled construction workers.

The findings from the study provide useful recommendations that can be generally applied to support skills development in the construction sector.

## Key Findings

### Demand for skilled masons is still to be met:

According to training data on post-earthquake reconstruction by the Housing Recovery and Reconstruction Platform (HRRP), during the period 2016-17, development partners by the end of December 2017 had trained 59,555 local people out of a planned number of 80,119 in the 14 most affected earthquake districts of Nepal. However, these figures do not give an accurate picture of the numbers subsequently employed in reconstruction efforts.

### Different types of mason training provided by development partners during the period of 2016-17.

**69%**

Short term Mason trainings (7-10 days)

(Curriculum prescribed by Department of Urban Development and Building Construction-DUDBC)

**29%**

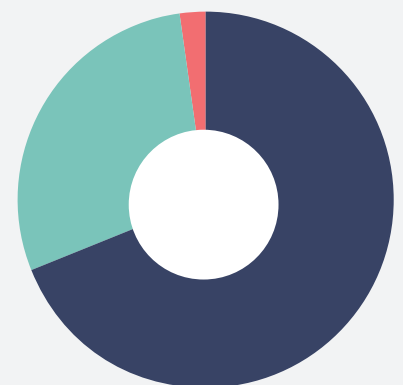
50 days Mason Training including On the Job Training (OJT)

(Curriculum prescribed by CTEVT L-1)

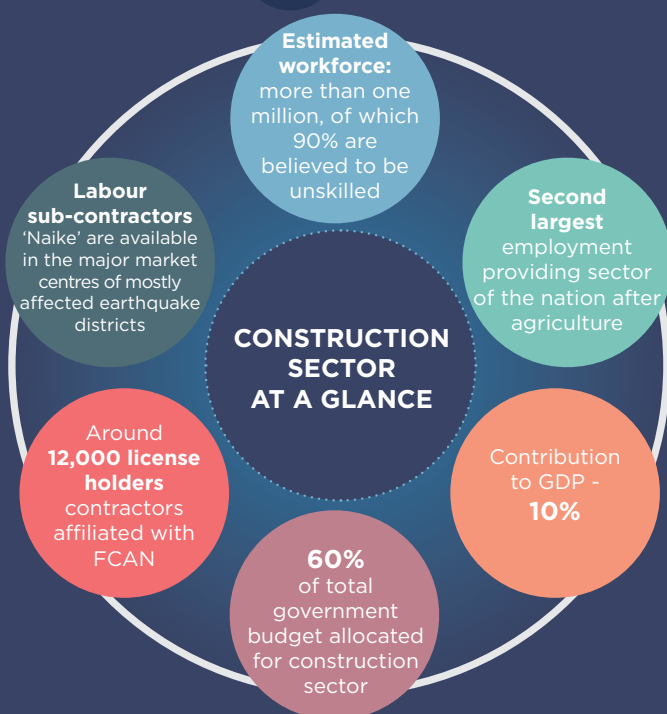
**2%**

New Mason trainings upto 45 days

as prescribed by Cottage and Small Industries Development Board (CSIDB)



Data source: Housing Recovery and Reconstruction Platform (HRRP) 2018



Trainings were mainly in masonry, followed by carpentry, electrical, plumbing and few in other reconstruction skills. However, most of these trainings were short-term (7-10 days) provided to household owners in response to early recovery efforts. But, trainees of this type often do not seek to subsequently enter the profession for which they have been trained. Given the significant challenges faced in selecting relevant trainees for each type of training course, and the need to retain of those who have been trained in the labour market demand, therefore, is still significantly under met.

**Demand for other construction skills is high:** In the period assessed, almost 60% of the workforce had undertaken short-term masonry training courses which offer limited prospects of long term employment. Other construction-related occupations such as carpenter, electrician and plumber comprised only 5% of the total trained in the period following the earthquake. Additionally, the study showed there is high demand for welders, house painters, scaffolders and bar benders. Even though, these skills are in high demand and also can lead to regular employment, a higher priority and training provision is required to create and support demand.

**Limited local employment prospects:** Construction work is mostly led by sub-contractors (also known as “Naike”) through main contractors. However, most of the labour sub-contractors are from other districts, thereby do not benefit local employment opportunities. As such, opportunities for increasing local employment prospects are being missed. In terms of retention, it is more effective to train local mason workers as labour sub-contractors.

## Recommendations

**Training additional mason workers:** Study findings suggest that there is still high demand for skilled mason workers. However, it is important to ensure these trainings are high quality of 50 days (390 hours) with a compulsory provision for ‘On the Job Training (OJT)’.

**Focus and increase training in other construction skills:** The study show that following the 2015 earthquake, demand for carpenters, electricians and plumbers remains high. Additionally, demand for welders, house painters, scaffolders and bar benders were evidently high as well. Therefore, TVET projects should also focus on creating a broader range of these construction skills.

**Appropriate selection of trainees:** Trainees should be carefully selected, especially to prioritise existing mason workers and migrant returnees. During the early recovery process, mostly house owners participated in short-term (7 days) mason training to rebuild their own damaged houses, rather than developing their skills as a means of employment.

**Hire local sub-contractors:** Based on the findings of the study, it can be thus recommended that hiring and mobilising local trained mason workers will contribute to a more diverse and improved local job market.

The full post earthquake skills demand report can be accessed from [Dakchyata](http://Dakchyata) website. For further information, please email [dakchayta@britishcouncil.org.np](mailto:dakchayta@britishcouncil.org.np).

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