

Welcome to the twelfth issue of **OPEN MIC NEPAL** bulletin. The Open Mic project captures rumours and perceptions on the ground to eliminate information gaps between the media, humanitarian agencies and local people. By providing local media and outreach workers with facts, Open Mic aims to create a better understanding of the needs of the earthquake-affected communities and to debunk rumours before they can do any harm.

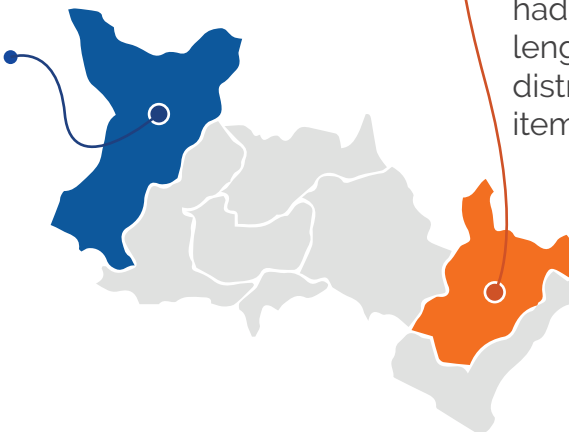
RUMOURS

GORKHA BAZAAR, GORKHA

"There are rumours that the DDRC is not allowing organisations to distribute support materials to the earthquake affected."

KABRE, DOLAKHA

"They say that the food brought in as relief material had to be buried after a lengthy dispute over its distribution caused the food items to decay."



FACTS

Organisations do not get permission to implement programmes as they wish.

In order to avoid duplication of relief efforts and distribute relief based on need and priority, the District Disaster Relief Committees (DDRCs) are coordinating all relief and recovery work.

Currently, DDRCs and supporting organisations are moving on to the recovery phase. Subsequently, their focus has shifted from immediate relief to work-based programmes for longer-term benefits to the affected communities.

The DDRC in Gorkha is working with organisations to implement programmes, such as food-for-work and cash-for-work schemes. Distribution of relief items will now happen in exchange for work on fields, roads and irrigation channels, among others.

In Dolakha, the food security cluster is coordinating food distribution and makes recommendations to the DDRC to approve food distribution programmes.

The food security cluster coordinator in Dolakha said that they haven't received reports of food items decaying because they could not be distributed in time. Organisations have been distributing food items to the affected communities since the earthquake.

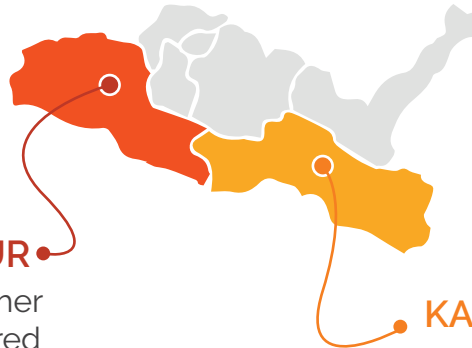
Jiwannath Poudel

INGO Coordinator
DDRC, Gorkha
9856050557

Bouwalal Chaudhary

Food Security Cluster Lead
Dolakha
9854045020

CONCERNS



CHHATHIWAN, MAKAWANPUR

"Children here are scared of another earthquake. This fear has hampered their education."

KAMALAMAI, SINDHULI

"It's difficult to send children to schools. The aftershocks and the damaged structures have scared them. Wish this could be solved."

ANSWERS

It is normal for children to be experiencing emotional trauma after a disturbing event.

Guardians and teachers should look out for signs of psychological trauma in children. They may be withdrawn, nervous, aggressive, talking more or less than usual, refusing to play or only wanting to play outside.

If children you know are suffering from these symptoms, listen to them if they want to talk, talk with them, provide them with reassurance and emotional support, and let them play and socialise with others. Speaking to children about earthquakes as a natural phenomenon, about their earthquake-related experiences and what they can do to be more prepared for the next one can also help reduce the anxiety and fear.

Organisations, such as Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation Nepal (TPO) and Centre for Victims of Torture Nepal (CVICT) are currently providing psychosocial counselling services to affected children in Sindhuli and Makwanpur. They also organise group orientation programmes to help adults detect signs of mental trauma in children.

Severely affected children should be referred to a psychosocial counsellor. Psychologists can be reached at the toll free hotline number, 16600102005, run by TPO Nepal.

Anjita Shrestha

Psychosocial counsellor
TPO Nepal
Makwanpur
9845038024

Nirmala Sharma

Psychosocial counsellor
CVICT Nepal
Sindhuli
9844147288

CONCERNS



GHUNSA, OKHALDHUNGA

"Pregnant women and new mothers living in cold tarpaulin shelters have had their bodies swollen and are suffering from headaches."

ANSWERS

Mild swelling and headaches are common during and after pregnancy.

Hormonal changes, enlarging uterus, increase in volume of blood and fluid to nourish the pregnant woman and the child normally causes the swelling. Cold as such does not cause the swelling or headaches.

Swelling can occur all over the body but is more noticeable in ankles and feet. The swelling goes away a few weeks after delivery.

The increase in blood volume and hormonal surge are also linked to headaches during pregnancy.

Drinking lots of water, engaging in a moderate form of exercise, elevating the swollen feet and avoiding standing up or sitting down for a long period of time help reduce the discomfort brought on by the swelling. Eating healthy food, with small amount of protein and lots of fruits and vegetables is also important.

If the swelling is excessive, seen in hands and face, and the headache is severe and persistent, pregnant women and new mothers should be immediately taken to the nearest health facility. Doctors recommend at least four antenatal checkups, which can help detect any medical issues early.

There are transition homes for pregnant and new mothers in all 14 earthquake-affected districts. Please contact your local District Health Office to find out more about this service.

Dr Shilu Adhikari

Reproductive Health Specialist
UNFPA
9801056033

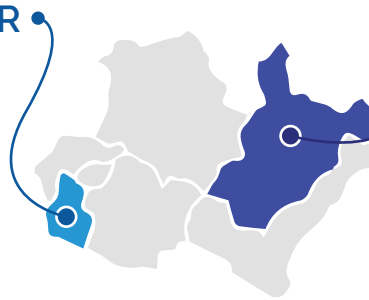
Gyan Bahadur Basnet

District Health Office
Okhaldhunga
9851073878

CONCERNS

JHARUWARASI, LALITPUR

"When we go to get loans, the banks say that they have not received the directives for dispensing loans. We are worried."



BHIMESHWOR, DOLAKHA

"We've heard that the government will only give loans and Rs 200,000 in aid to those households who had houses alongside the road."

ANSWERS

The Nepal Rashtra Bank has already issued a directive instructing all banks and financial institutions to provide loans at 2 percent interest rate to families who lost their houses in the earthquake.

Different commercial banks may draft their different procedures to provide the low-interest loan to affected families.

For example, Nepal Banijya Bank has issued a new set of guidelines and has already forwarded them to its branch offices. Nepal Bank Limited, on the other hand, will use its existing home loan guidelines to provide loans.

Banks and financial institutions will determine the amount of individual loans based on the amount needed to build a new house and on the family's ability to repay the loan. The family will have to submit a letter from local agencies certifying that the house has been completely damaged.

An approved blueprint of the house is also required for the loan application. The process of disbursing loans has been delayed because the government has not released all earthquake-resistant house designs and the VDCs have not yet set up a procedure to approve the blueprints.

The government will provide Rs 200,000 to all completely destroyed houses, whether or not they are by the side of a road. The amount of loan approved for houses that are not alongside a road might be low based on individual banks' assessments.

Krishna Shrestha

Loan Department
Nepal Bank Limited, Central
Office
01-4239888, ext:241

Ramesh Kumar Pokharel

Loan Department
Rashtriya Banijya Bank,
Central Office
01-4252595, ext: 3766

CONCERNS

TOKHA, KATHMANDU

"People whose houses were partially damaged in the earthquake are waiting for monetary relief."



PRAPCHA, OKHALDHUNGA

"We know that the families whose houses were partially damaged will get Rs 25,000 from the government, but we don't know when."

KAMALAMAI, SINDHULI

"We've heard that Rs 25,000 will be provided to those households whose houses were partially damaged in the earthquake, but we haven't received it."

ANSWERS

The government has decided to provide Rs 25,000 to families whose houses were partially damaged in the earthquake and could be habitable after repair.

In order to receive this support, families will need to have an earthquake victim ID card, which proves that their houses were partially damaged.

The families will then need to submit an application to their respective DDRCs with the ID card.

Eknarayan Aryal

Chief District Officer
Kathmandu
9851207777

Yadav Subedi

Chief District Officer
Okhaldhunga
9852877777

The rumours and issues presented here were collected by frontline workers from partner organisations and #quakehelpdesk volunteers based on their face-to-face conversation with around 360 people in 14 districts between 10 - 17 September. The selection was done on the basis of prevalence and relevance.

Open Mic Nepal presented by: