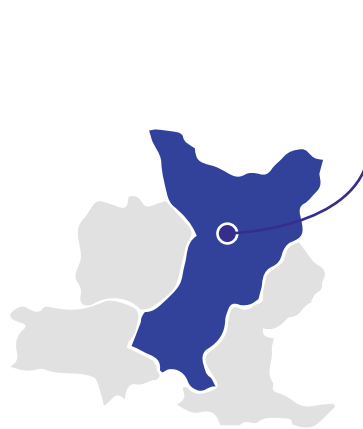


Welcome to the twenty-first issue of **OPEN MIC NEPAL** bulletin. The Open Mic project captures rumours and perceptions on the ground to eliminate information gaps between the media, humanitarian agencies and local people. By providing local media and outreach workers with facts, Open Mic aims to create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

CONCERNS



SAURPANI, GORKHA

"They say all the earthquake-affected farmers will get wheat seeds."

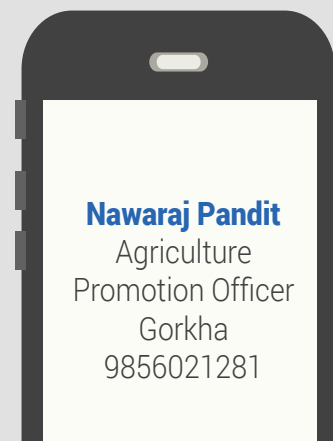
ANSWERS

Organisations such as Care Nepal and Food and Agriculture Organisation, in coordination with the District Agriculture Office in Gorkha, are distributing wheat seeds for free to earthquake-affected farmers in certain Village Development Committees (VDCs).

Families whose houses were completely destroyed in the earthquake will be prioritised.

The organisations, however, could procure seeds that can only grow in low altitudes. The transportation problems have hindered the procurement of seeds that can grow in high altitudes.

As a result, although Saurpani is on the list of beneficiaries, farmers there might not get the seeds.



CONCERNS

NARESHWOR, GORKHA

"They say those who used to be tenants before the earthquake will not get Rs 10,000 for winter."

TRIPURESHWOR, DHADING

"We just heard that Rs 10,000 will be distributed to families, but it seems like we might get the money only after winter."

MANAHARI, MAKWANPUR

"People are forced to withstand the cold. They are waiting for support from the government, but no one knows when the distribution will begin."

PANCHKHAL, KAVREPANCHOWK

"They say we will now receive Rs 10,000 for winter. Well, the government had said it would give Rs 35,000 before Dashain. That didn't pan out. This too seems like hot air. It's all only assurances to console victims."

MAHADEVSTHAN, KAVREPANCHOWK

"At first they gave us Rs 15,000. Now, there is talk of distributing Rs 10,000 for winter. They say this is how the government is trying to avoid the disbursement of grant for reconstruction."

ANSWERS

The government has announced to provide Rs 10,000 to help affected families purchase warm clothes for winter.

This amount will not be deducted from Rs 200,000 that the government will provide for reconstruction later.

Those whose houses were completely destroyed in the earthquake and those who do not have an alternative place to live in will qualify for the winter support. Families will have to show their earthquake victim ID cards to collect the money.

According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Central Disaster Relief Committee has begun releasing the funds to District Disaster Relief Committees (DDRCs).

Before releasing the funds further to VDCs and municipalities, DDRCs will need to draft guidelines for the disbursement.

The government plans to complete the process of disbursement by mid-December.

Contact your District Administration, VDC or municipality office to update yourself on the process of disbursement.

Baburam Bhandari

Under Secretary
National Emergency
Operation Centre
Ministry of Home Affairs
9851113424

Madan Bhujel

Chief District Officer
Kavrepalanchowk
9851237777

CONCERNS

TASARPHU, DHADING

"If the government would release and implement the criteria for building houses on time, those who can would begin rebuilding right away. If the government wants to give money to them, it can do so later. How long are we to wait for the government grant?"



SHANKHU, KAVREPALANCHOK

"They say not everyone who received Rs 15,000 in immediate relief will qualify for the grant for reconstruction. Only those who will rebuild houses will get the grant of Rs 200,000."

HANDIKHOLA, MAKWANPUR

"The government should decide soon whether it is going to provide us building materials or money in grant."

ANSWERS

The government has decided to provide Rs 200,000 and not building materials equivalent to the amount in grant.

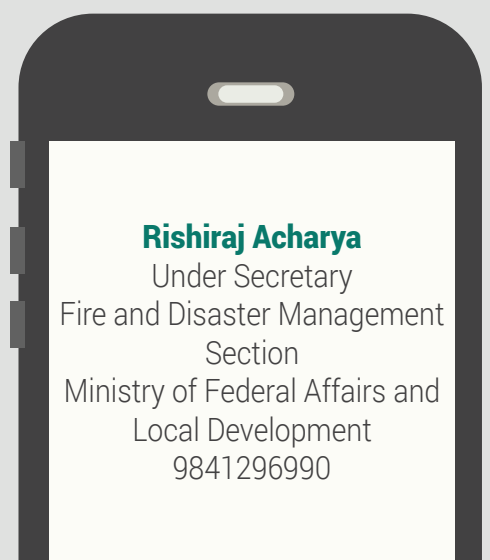
It recently announced that the first instalment would be released soon. Exactly how much and when will be determined after the government amends the mechanism for the disbursement of the grant.

The grant is to help affected households rebuild their houses. If a household decides not to reconstruct the damaged house, it will not qualify for the grant.

A catalogue of designs for rural houses was recently released. The government is preparing to send it to local bodies soon, where a household can take a look at the designs and choose a model.

Before starting the construction, however, the household has to get the design approved by the VDC or the municipality office. Most VDCs do not have the approval mechanism set in place yet.

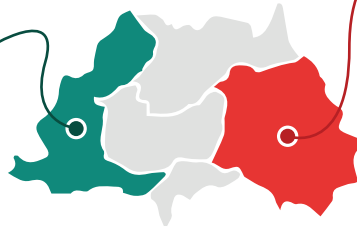
The current draft of the mechanism for the disbursement of the grant does not mention whether a household which builds its house now will qualify for the grant later.



CONCERNS

TRIPURESHWOR, DHADING

"Before Dashain, we cleared walking trails as part of 'Cash for Work' programmes run by organisations such as Oxfam. We were told we would be paid Rs 15,000 for 22-day long work, but we haven't been paid yet."



PHULPINGKOT, SINDHUPALCHOK

"They said if we worked on repairing roads, we would get Rs 8,000 before Dashain and Rs 8,000 after Dashain. And so, we worked, but we haven't received a rupee. Are they now thinking that because we worked on our own roads, we need not be paid?"

ANSWERS

Some organisations mobilised community members under 'Cash for Work' schemes to repair damaged roads and trails, among other things, in earthquake-affected areas.

In Sindhupalchok, Sebac Nepal, with support from World Food Programme, implemented the scheme in 21 different VDCs.

Sebac Nepal says that the payment procedure got delayed after it decided to use local banks to transfer the payment. Even then, workers in some VDCs have now been paid Rs 5,000 each (first instalment) while in others the cash will be transferred in a few days.

In Dhading, Oxfam implemented a similar programme before Dashain. But since the participants worked for around 6-7 days, less than the usual length of 15-22 days, the organisation decided to combine the payment with another grant that they are planning to distribute within the next few days.

Oxfam says that the verification of the beneficiaries for the grant took longer than expected, as a result of which the process of paying workers under the 'Cash for Work' scheme in Dhading got pushed as well. The payment will begin soon.

Prerana Marasini

Media and Communications
Lead
Oxfam Nepal
9851222666

Remant Nath

Chairperson
Sebac Nepal
9851087664

CONCERNS



KAMALAMAI, SINDHULI

"How much money has been allocated to VDCs under different projects after the earthquake? How are we to get this information?"

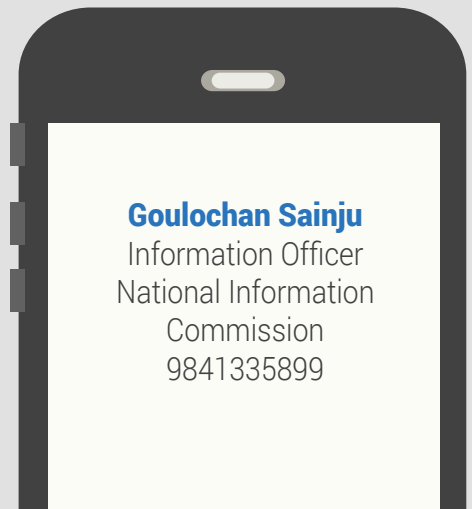
ANSWERS

Records of budget allocation, income and expenditure--related to post-earthquake relief and reconstruction or otherwise--of a VDC can be found at the Committee's office. Audit reports too contain information on income, budget allocation and expenditure.

Interested individuals can get the information on a VDC's finances from the VDC office. Ward Citizen Forums or Citizen Awareness Centres can also help the individual get the information.

One can also file an application, using their right to information, at the VDC and get a written reply within 15 days.

If the information sought cannot be obtained from the VDC office, an individual can file a written complaint (through fax, email, mail or in person) with the National Information Commission.



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 280 people in 7 districts between 26 November - 4 December. The selection was done on the basis of prevalence and relevance. The information presented here is correct at the time of issue.

Open Mic Nepal presented by:

