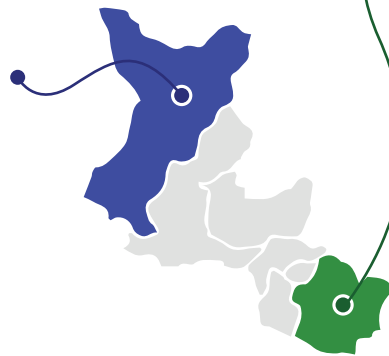


Welcome to the twenty-second issue of **OPEN MIC NEPAL** bulletin. The Open Mic project captures rumours and perceptions on the ground to eliminate information gaps between the media, humanitarian agencies and local people. By providing local media and outreach workers with facts, Open Mic aims to create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

RUMOUR

GORKHA BAZAAR, GORKHA

"They say the Canadian government had decided to take in people affected by the earthquake, but the Nepali government refused."



MANGALTAR, KAVREPALANCHOWK

MANGALTAR GAUN

"They say that the earthquake victim ID cards will make it easier for us to go abroad for work."

LAKPAL GAUN

"They say children of families with the cards will get to study in boarding schools for free."

THAAKLE GAUN

"They say the earthquake victim ID cards are of much more significance than landownership certificates."

FACTS

The earthquake victim ID cards have been distributed to identify the affected households, record the distribution of relief material and other support and to make the distribution efficient for both the government and non-governmental organisations.

The government and non-government organisations also use the ID cards to determine the eligibility of households for programmes targeted at earthquake-affected communities.

The Department of Foreign Employment has said that there are no special plans or programmes to send affected persons for employment abroad. It has also said that the government of Canada has not made any proposal to receive earthquake-affected Nepalis to the Nepal government.

The Private and Boarding Schools' Organisation has said that most private schools have adopted a policy of admitting children who lost their parents in the earthquake on full scholarships. This enrolment is on humanitarian grounds and is made at the discretion of relevant schools. The schools do not have a policy to admit students on full scholarship based on the ID cards.

Janak Raj Regmi

Spokesperson
Department of Foreign
Employment
9851180566

Lakshya Bahadur KC

Chairperson
Private and Boarding Schools'
Organisation, Nepal
9851038312

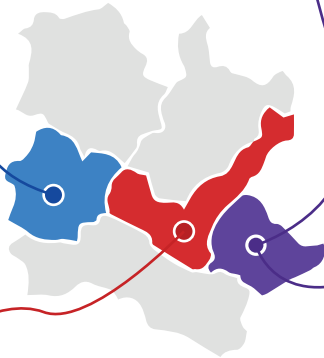
CONCERNS

MANGALTAR, KAVREPALANCHOWK

"When will we get Rs 10,000?"

PHULASI, RAMECHHAP

"Is the government's decision to provide Rs 10,000 just talk or for real?"



CHYANAM, OKHALDHUNGA

"Is it true that only those whose houses were completely destroyed by the earthquake will get Rs 10,000? Why won't those whose houses were partially destroyed get the amount?"

BIGUTAR, OKHALDHUNGA

"We heard on the radio that the Red Cross will distribute Rs 10,000 in six VDCs. Why won't people in other VDCs get the amount? And how come people whose houses were partially destroyed in those six VDCs won't get the money?"

ANSWERS

The government recently released funds through the District Disaster Relief Committees (DDRCs) to support families to purchase warm clothes for winter in 21 earthquake-affected districts.

Households whose houses were completely destroyed in the earthquake are eligible for a non-conditional grant of Rs 10,000.

Disbursement of this grant has already begun in some districts and was expected to be complete by mid-December. Please contact your Village Development Committee (VDC) secretary or DDRC office if this fund has not been distributed in your area.

The Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) is working as an auxiliary to the government to provide Rs 10,000 in winter support to families in some areas of the earthquake-affected districts, including Okhaldhunga. In order to avoid duplication, the NRCS coordinates with the DDRC to identify VDCs and municipalities where they will distribute these funds.

Families who receive this support from the NRCS will not get Rs 10,000 from the government, and vice-versa. Please contact the local chapter of the NRCS to learn more.

Baburam Bhandari

Under Secretary
National Emergency
Operation Centre
Ministry of Home Affairs
9851113424

Mohan Shrestha

Okhaldhunga Chapter
Chairperson
Nepal Red Cross Society
98410 72101

CONCERNS

BORLANG, GORKHA

"Is it true that the government is going to give us Rs 500,000 to build houses?"

GAIRIBISAUNA, KAVREPALANCHOWK

"Is it true that the government will not provide any more support after giving us Rs 10,000?"

MAHADEVSTHAN, KAVREPALANCHOWK

"Is the government going to deduct Rs 10,000 from Rs 200,000 in the same way it is subtracting Rs 15,000 from the grant?"

SANKHU, KAVREPALANCHOWK

"They say the government will give us Rs 10,000, but that amount will be deducted from Rs 200,000. How is this going to work?"

PIPALDANDA, SINDHUPALCHOK

"Locals believe that Rs 15,000 that was provided to help build a temporary shelter will be deducted from Rs 200,000."

MANKHA, SINDHUPALCHOK

"They say the government will deduct Rs 15,000 and Rs 10,000--in total, Rs 25,000--from Rs 200,000."

ANSWERS

The government has made plans to provide Rs 200,000 to every household whose house was rendered uninhabitable by the earthquake.

The procedures for the disbursement of the grant has been submitted for review to the cabinet after new amendments were made to include provisions on a loan of up to Rs 300,000 to most vulnerable families. The interest rate for this loan will be subsidised and community members will have to stand in as the guarantors.

This support will be in addition to Rs 200,000 in grant. However, it is not yet clear when these grants and loans will be provided.

The letters issued by the Home Ministry on 18 and 26 May clearly say that Rs 15,000 will be deducted from the grant. The current draft of the procedure, however, does not specify whether this amount will be deducted.

The white paper issued by the government on 24 November does not mention whether the winter support of Rs 10,000 will be subtracted from the grant of Rs 200,000.

Padam Kumar Mainali

Spokesperson
Ministry of Urban
Development
9851005219

CONCERNS

NALANG, DHADING

"It's getting colder and difficult to live in tents. Children are suffering from pneumonia. The elderly are suffering as well. And then the blockade has brought even more problems by creating a shortage of medicines."



KUBHINDE, SINDHUPALCHOK

"It's difficult for children, new mothers and the elderly to live in tents because the floor is cold and dew drips from the tent every night. Because the dew collects on beds themselves, surviving winter is going to be tough."

MAHADEVSTHAN, KAVREPALANCHOWK

"Dew drips from the roof of the tent every night. The blankets feel drenched every morning. We dry them out in the sun during the day, but at night the blankets are back to being soaked."

ANSWERS

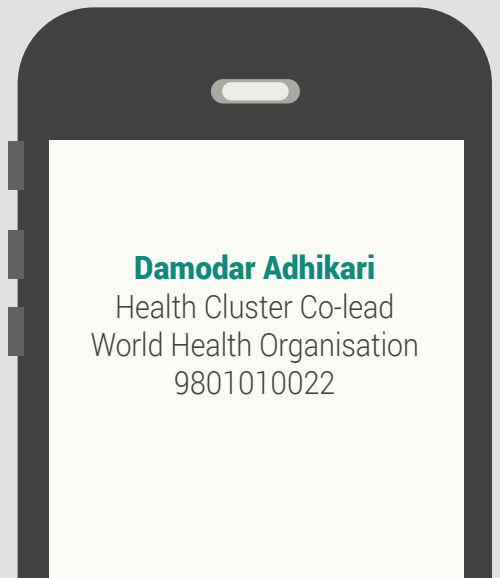
Our immune systems function at sub-optimal level in winter; therefore, infections are more frequent. Pneumonia is caused by the bacterial, viral or fungal infection of the lungs. Anyone can get pneumonia, but children under 5 years and people above 65 years of age are more susceptible to the disease.

Good hygienic habits such as washing hands help in preventing pneumonia. Avoiding contact with people who have the cold or the flu can also help by preventing the spread of germs.

Children should wear warm clothes that cover their heads and ears. They should be given hot water and food. Since smoke irritates the airways and lungs, they should be kept away from it. It is important to ensure that there is proper ventilation wherever a fire is going.

Families can use materials such as tarpaulin and foam sheets to prevent dew from dripping on to the floor and beds. They can also place locally available materials such as straw, mats, grass, sacks and other similar material under the roof to trap the dew.

Bedding can be kept warm by raising it off the floor by using foam sheets, straw, wooden planks and other similar material.



RUMOUR



PAANCHKHAL, KAVREPALANCHOWK

"We've heard that an organisation called Caritas is going to build houses for the earthquake-affected families in Paanchkhal."

FACTS

Organisations that want to rebuild houses for the earthquake affected will have to work in coordination with the government. The nature of the support they can provide for the reconstruction of permanent shelters will depend on the agreement signed with the government.

Caritas Nepal has said that it is looking to help rebuild houses in earthquake-affected districts, but the plan has not yet been finalised. Neither has it signed an agreement with the government in this regard.

The organisation has said that its budget will determine the number of houses it will help rebuild. The districts it will work in have not yet been fixed. Therefore, Caritas Nepal does not have plans to rebuild houses in Paanchkhaal, Kavrepalanchowk, right now.

Manindra Malla

Head of Programme
Department
Caritas Nepal
01-5538172

FOLLOW-UP



• 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 even a rupee. Are they now thinking that because we worked on our own roads, we need not be paid?"

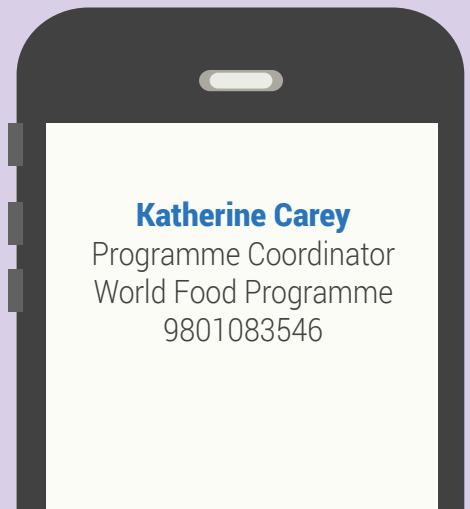
ANSWERS

Last week (Issue #21) we covered an issue concerning a delay in payment in cash-for-work programmes implemented by the World Food Programme (WFP), with support from local partners, in Sindhupalchok.

We reported that the delay in payment was due to the local banks' capacity to process the payments.

The WFP has since clarified that any delay in payment was due to a combination of factors, including lead time required to verify work attendance sheets, conditionality not having been met in some cases, and data entry errors at the time of registration which meant that payment lists were not fully accurate.

The WFP has said that as of 4 December, 32 out of 34 VDCs in Sindhupalchok have received the first instalment of Rs 5,000. Participants in Phulpingkot and Thanpalkot VDCs who have completed 13 days of work were expected to receive the first instalment by 10 December.



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 185 people in 6 districts between 3-10 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:

