

Welcome to the third 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

BHIMKHORI, KAVRE

"After standing in queue for so long, I finally received the earthquake victim ID card. I have heard that the government will issue us passports and send us abroad for work. That's why I came here to get the card. I might be able to go abroad now. How else will I rebuild my house? If I can't go abroad for work, this card will be useless."



MANKHA, SINDHUPALCHOK

"I've heard that the Canadian government will allow the earthquake victims to work in Canada. What should I do to go to Canada?"

FACTS

The government has not made special provisions to send earthquake victims abroad for work.

Recently, the Ministry of Labour and Employment enforced a provision in which the employers of seven different destination countries must bear the visa fees and travel costs of labour migrants. This provision applies to all labour migrants.

A potential migrant wanting to work abroad must bear other costs related to a health check-up, orientation classes, service charges, passport acquisition and contributions to the welfare fund. The total expenditure amounts to around Rs 23,000.

Potential migrant workers should contact organisations like Safer Migration Project, Pourakhi and Shakti Samuha for information on travelling abroad for work.

The government has been trying to provide Nepalis employment opportunities in Canada. The issue was discussed during the informal visit of Canadian Labour Minister Kellie Leitch post-quake, based on which the Nepal government has dispatched a formal letter to the Canadian government. But, nothing concrete has happened so far.

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CONCERNS

PIPALDANDA, SINDHUPALCHOK

"The government should write off the loans it said it would."

IRKHU, SINDHUPALCHOK

"The government had talked about writing off the loans. We hope it does that. It should also provide us low-interest loans to rebuild houses."

PANGRETAR, SINDHUPALCHOK

"The government said it would provide low-interest loans to rebuild houses, but it hasn't started the process yet. We are a little confused."

SARADA BATASE, KAVRE

"We've heard that we will get money to build our houses. That the government will also provide us loans. But if the government does nothing, we will still have to find loans somehow and build permanent shelters. We cannot live like this forever."

SANO SIRUBARI, SINDHUPALCHOK

"The government should initiate the process of providing loans with no interest."



ANSWERS

In its Integrated Action Plan for Post-Earthquakes Response and Recovery released on 22 May, the government mentioned writing off up to Rs 50,000 owed in debts. So far, there have been no clear directives authorising this. Both the working guidelines issued by the Nepal Rashtra Bank and the new budget are silent on this issue.

The Rashtra Bank finalised the working guidelines to help earthquake-affected families receive low-interest loans and has already circulated it to banks and financial institutions.

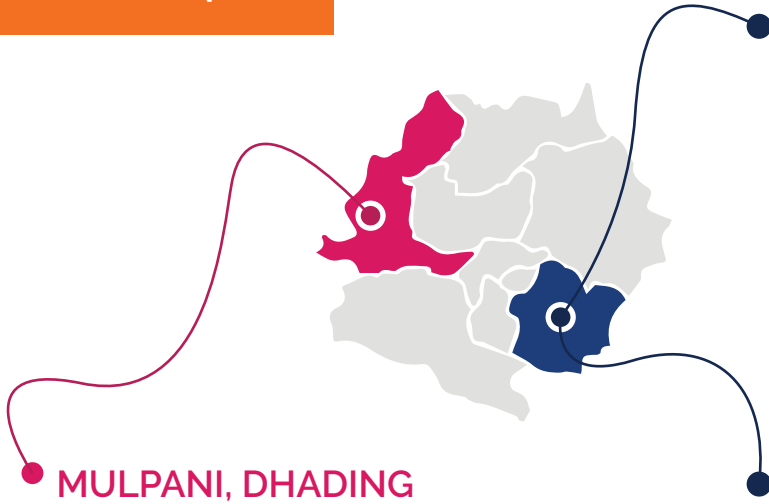
Earthquake-affected families in the Kathmandu valley can apply for a loan of up to Rs 2.5 million to build houses at two percent interest rates. Families from outside the valley can borrow up to Rs 1.5 million at the same rate.

Families affected by the earthquake can apply for the loan once banks and financial institutions start the process. There has been a delay in issuing loans because municipality offices have suspended the approvals of blueprints for new buildings until the government releases new designs and guidelines for earthquake-resistant structures. The government has yet to do so.

The loan will be provided in four installments based on the progress of the construction of the house.

Nepal Rashtra bank
Banks and Financial
Institutions Regulation
Department
01-4411407

CONCERNS



MAHADEVSTHAN, KAVREPALANCHOK

"We all have taken fields on rent to plant crops. The tents and tarps donated by the government have begun to develop holes and tears. How will we store our grains now? I think we will lose our grains this time."

MULPANI, DHADING

"Since we lost our houses to the quake, we don't know where to store corn this season."

SARADA BATASE, KAVREPALANCHOK

"It was so difficult to harvest rice this season. But looks like it will start sprouting into *jamaras* soon."

ANSWERS

The government and humanitarian organisations have donated thousands of super grain bags to store food and grains in earthquake-affected districts considered vulnerable to food insecurity. They will continue to distribute the bags in areas where people harvest rice in monsoon. A super grain bag can hold up to 90 kg of rice.

Such grain bags are also available for purchase for a few hundred rupees in the local market.

It is also possible to use locally available materials such as *khar* grass, straw, bamboo, plastic drums and zinc and CGI sheets, among others, to keep grains and other food items dry and safe.

Udaya Chandra Thakur

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of Agriculture Development
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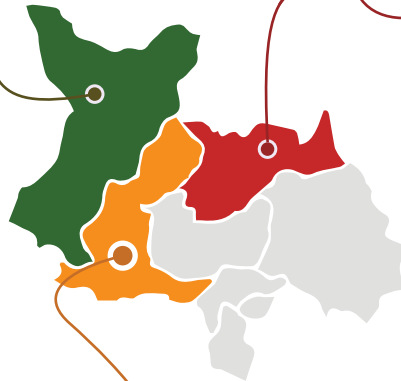
Mahendra Raj Koudal

District Agriculture
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CONCERNS

BUNGKOT, GORKHA

"We are frustrated by the lack of drinking water and toilets."



DHAIBUNG, BHORLE, RASUWA

"The water sources have gone dry. We lack drinking water now."

YARSA, SARAMTHALI, BHORLE, DHAIBUNG, GATLANG, GOLJUNG & CHILIME, RASUWA

"The shortage of drinking water has affected the sanitation of the villages as well."

SALANG, DHADING

"Two out of seven drinking water sources in Aarubas village have gone dry."

ANSWERS

The government has allocated budget to immediately repair and rebuild the drinking water sources damaged by the earthquake.

In the 14 most-affected districts, whenever a local user's group gets involved in the implementation of a drinking water project, the government will subsidise 30 percent of the cost that was to be borne by the local community.

In Gorkha, the government has already begun distributing water pipes in villages and water tanks in schools and camps to counteract the problems posed by drying water sources.

Other organisations agencies working under the WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) cluster are also helping with the distribution of water pipes and repair of water taps.

People needing support to set up and repair drinking water points and channels can contact District Drinking Water, Sanitation and Sewerage Division Offices via Village Development Committee secretaries.

Narayan Prasad Acharya

Division Office of District
Drinking Water, Sanitation
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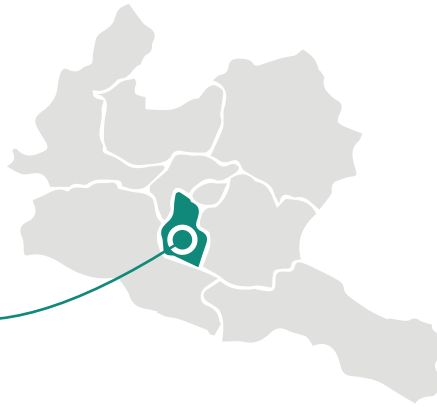
Anita Shrestha

Save the Children
Rasuwa
9841692809

RUMOURS

BADIKHEL, LALITPUR

"People here think that the earthquake victim ID cards are useless and, so, say that all they need is money."



FACTS

Earthquake victim ID cards are not useless. They help the government identify earthquake-affected families and plan relief and rebuilding work accordingly. The government has planned numerous projects around the earthquake, such as providing:

- Low-interest loans to the affected families to build their houses
- Rs 200,000 in aid to build houses
- Solar lamps and portable metallic rocket stoves
- Skill development training to affected families

The ID cards will determine whether a family is eligible for aid that the government and other organisations will provide in the future. The amount of money or material received in aid will be recorded on the ID cards.



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The rumours and issues presented here were collected by frontline workers from partner organisations and #quakedhelpdesk staff volunteers based on their face-to-face conversation with around 450 people in 10 districts between 8-16 July. The selection was done on the basis of prevalence and relevance.

Open Mic Nepal presented by:

