



COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS IN **POST-EARTHQUAKE** NEPAL

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INTER-AGENCY COMMON FEEDBACK PROJECT Nepal Earthquake 2015



Local Interventions Group
data-driven development



GROUND TRUTH
SOLUTIONS

Community Perceptions in Post-Earthquake Nepal

Learning from major emergencies demonstrates the critical importance of two-way communication between communities and responders. ***By listening to people's needs, opinions, suggestions and complaints, the humanitarian community can adapt its response to their specific circumstances and concerns.*** Although challenging during an emergency response, enabling the local population to have a say in critical aid decisions increases this population's ability to be stronger and more resilient after the crisis. Funded by DFID and supported by the Inter Agency Common Feedback Project, Accountability Lab, Local Interventions Group, Nepal Scouts and Ground Truth Solutions are working together to collect feedback from communities in Nepal and provide ***substantive analysis to allow humanitarian partners to better understand how communities feel about the response and how to better target community needs and concerns.*** This ongoing process will provide critical insight, over time, on community perceptions and how humanitarian partners can adapt response efforts to address community concerns.

The survey aims to gather representative results on a national basis, with the qualification that they will only be representative of some of the most affected districts and VDCs. Around 100 people per district will be surveyed, for an aggregate overall sample size of 1,400 people. At the district level, results can be viewed as indicative rather than representative due to the size of the sub-sample. Responses in this analysis are reported as weighted percentages of the total. In some cases, responses such as 'don't know' and/or 'refused' are excluded from the calculations, thus totals used for these analyses may be different than total number of respondents. For the purposes of this survey, Janajati is defined as a minority ethnic group other than Tamang, Gurung or Newar, as those groups were separated out because they have large populations across the affected area.

This round of micro-surveys collected data from 1,304 respondents across 13 of the affected districts (100 surveys per district +/-5). Due to logistical difficulties, Okhaldhunga is not represented in this survey. While the micro-surveys offer national level representation, logistical barriers make it hard to capture perceptions from people in some of the most affected areas, particularly in mountainous regions. Data collection in some of these locations is therefore limited.

For each of the following questions, citizens were asked to respond on a scale of 1 to 5, where each number shows how much the respondent agrees with the question.

An answer of 1 means "not at all"

An answer of 2 means "not very much"

An answer of 3 means "neutral" or "I have no opinion"

An answer of 4 means "mostly yes"

An answer of 5 means "completely yes"

For many questions, those choosing a negative or neutral response (1, 2, or 3) received follow-up questions to identify their most significant needs and challenges.

While the program-level micro surveys are being conducted by Accountability Lab and Local Interventions Group, with the support of Ground Truth Solutions, the project aims to expand partnerships with organizations to conduct surveys at specific points of service, such as distribution points, and for targeted groups. Organizations interested in participating should contact Giovanni Congi at Giovanni.congi@one.un.org.

Overall observations:

The district of Dhading has the highest combined positive response rate, followed by Gorkha and Ramechhap. Makwanpur has the highest combined negative response rate, followed by Rasuwa and Sindhupalchowk.

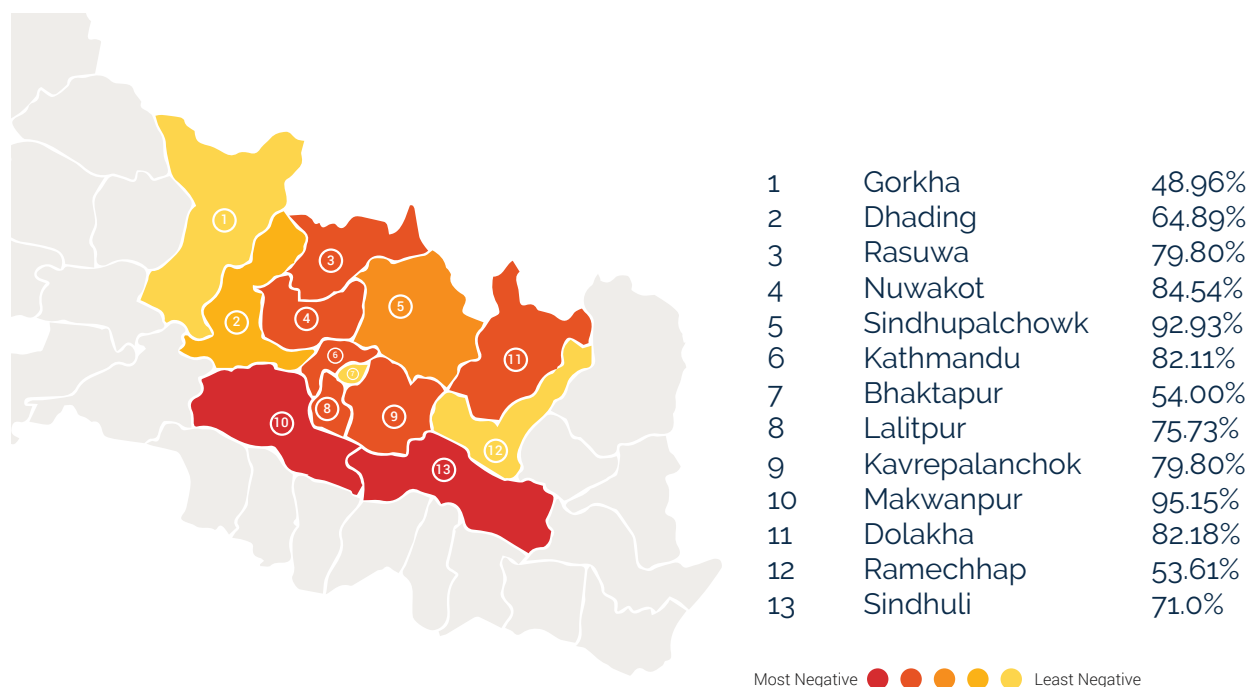
Farmers and laborers represent the bulk of those who responded to the survey, and are usually the most negative compared to NGO workers, business people, skilled workers, and those in government service.

People 55 years and over are the most negative age group right across the survey, suggesting significant levels of vulnerability.

Gurungs are generally the least negative/most positive ethnic group, with a big gap on most questions between them and other ethnicities. Janajatis, Newars and Tamangs are most negative.

01

ARE YOUR MAIN PROBLEMS BEING ADDRESSED?

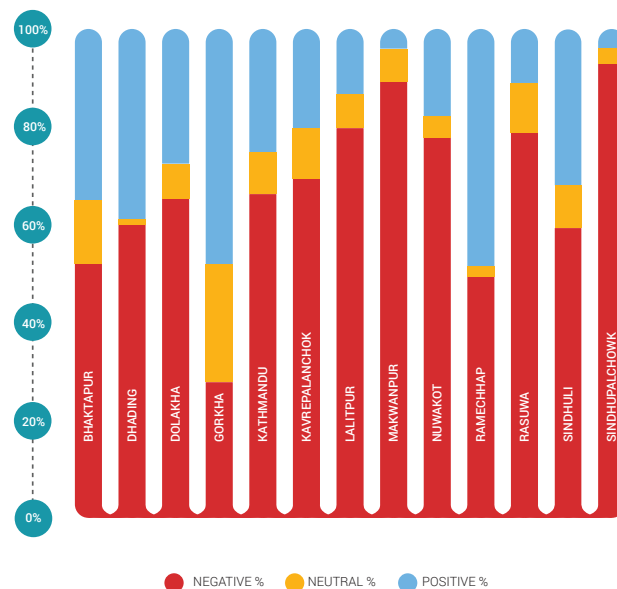
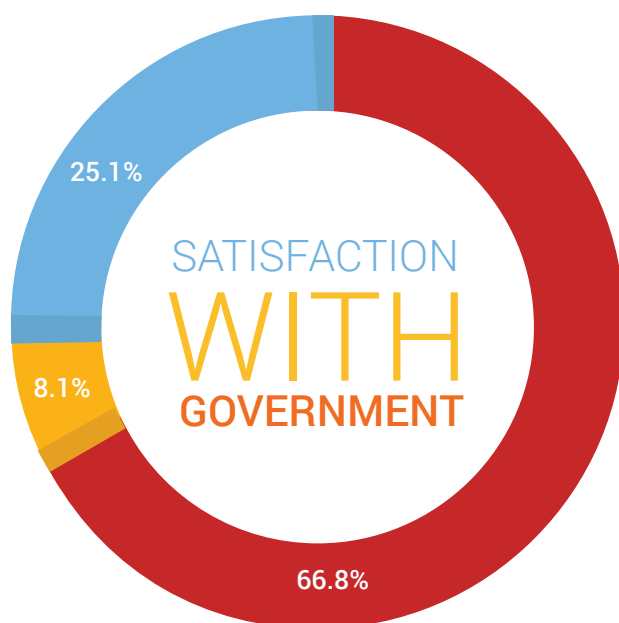


- The majority of respondents do not feel their most important needs are being addressed, with 74% of people across all 13 districts providing a negative response.
- Of those who provided a negative response, their two biggest problems are:
 1. Shelter, either long- or short-term housing
 2. Financial support
- In Makwanpur – the most negative district, with 95% answering “not at all” or “not very much” – the greatest needs after shelter are psychosocial counseling and health care.
- Those who belong to the Newar ethnic group are more positive than others. with 22% responding positively. Janajatis are the most negative, with 80% responding “not very much” or “not at all.”

Recommendations:

- Work with colleagues in the shelter cluster and other responders to unpack the problem and expedite recovery activities in this sector, especially in districts where scores are lowest.
- Examine provision of financial assistance and the relevance of cash-based programs.

02 Are you satisfied with what the government is doing for you after the earthquake?



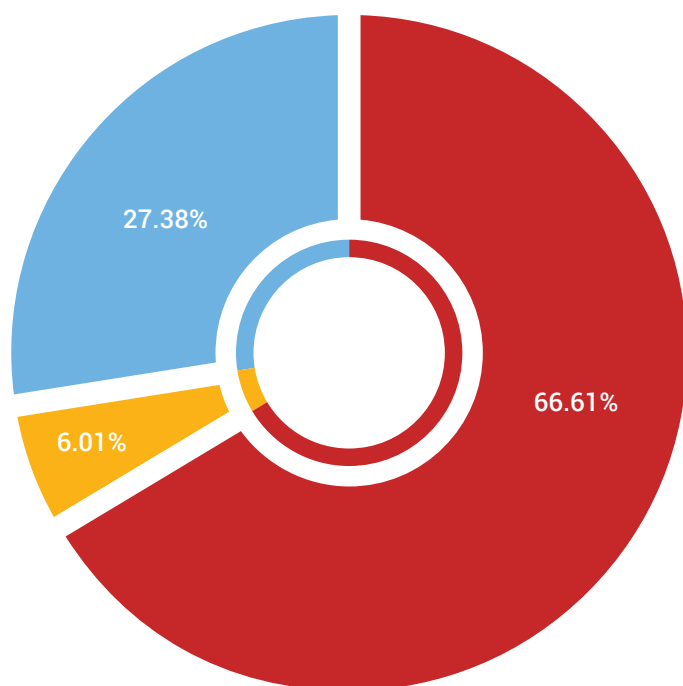
- Of those surveyed, 67% are not satisfied with what the government is doing for them after the earthquake.
- Of those who provided a negative response, the top two things that are needed from the government are:
 1. Building materials
 2. Cash for work
- Ramechhap and Gorkha are the most positive districts, with 48% in each responding positively when asked about their satisfaction. Respondents in Sindhupalchowk (93%), Makwanpur (89%) and Lalitpur (80%) are the most negative.

Recommendations:

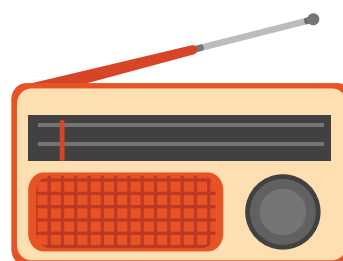
- Encourage dialogue between humanitarian agencies, government and affected people in the most negative districts and communicate how the government plans to act on this feedback.
- Explore reasons behind positive views in Gorkha and Ramechhap with a view to applying lessons elsewhere.

03

Do you have the information you need to get relief and support?



● NEGATIVE % ● NEUTRAL % ● POSITIVE %

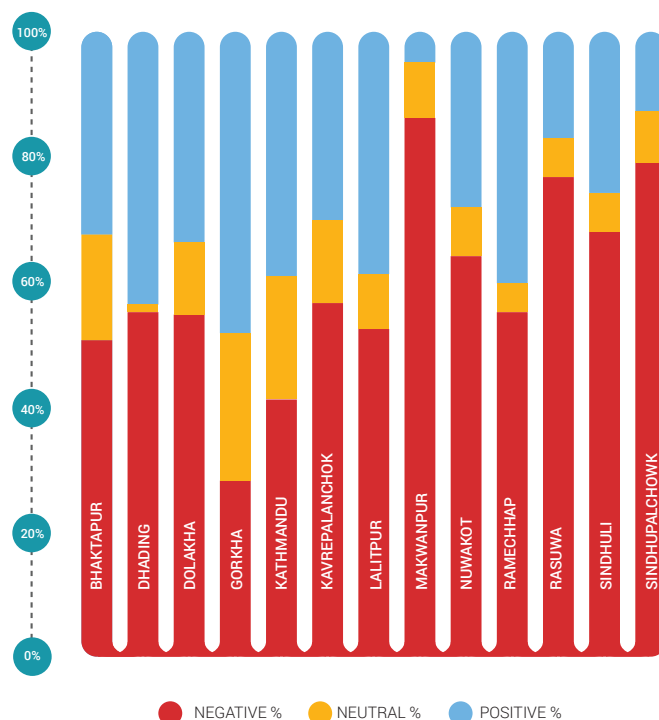
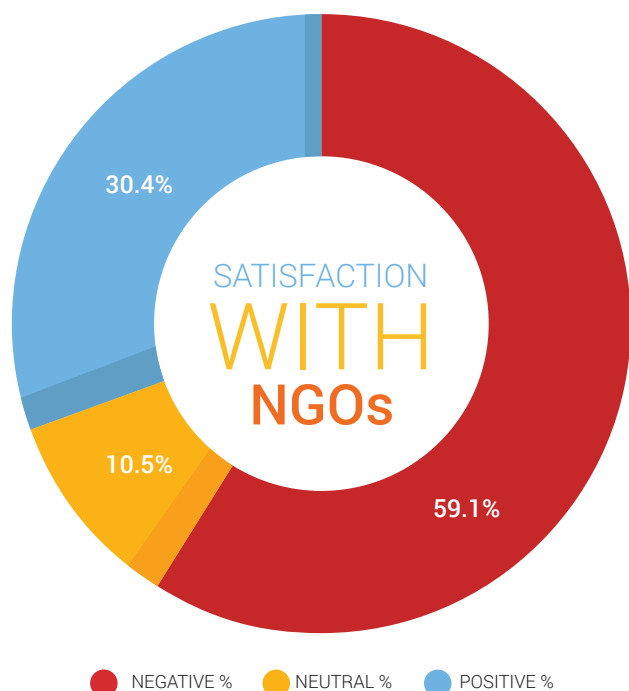


- When asked if they have enough information, 67% of citizens said “not at all” or “not very much.”
- Of those who provided a negative response, the top two things that people need information about are:
 1. News about government decisions
 2. How to get shelter materials
- How to register for and/or access support was also a significant concern.
- The data indicates that women feel slightly less informed than men: 70% of women provided a negative response, and only 65% of men provided the same answer.

Recommendations:

- Explore why people in Dhading, Bhaktapur and Gorkha seem to be better informed – or at least perceive themselves to be better informed.
- Apply good communication practices from Dhading, Bhaktapur and Gorkha in districts where people say they lack information.
- Explore some kind of rapid communication response in Rasuwa, Makwanpur and Nuwakot where people feel especially uninformed.
- Work with the CDAC Network members, including BBC Media Action to improve outward communication.

04 Are you satisfied with what non-governmental agencies are doing for you after the earthquake?

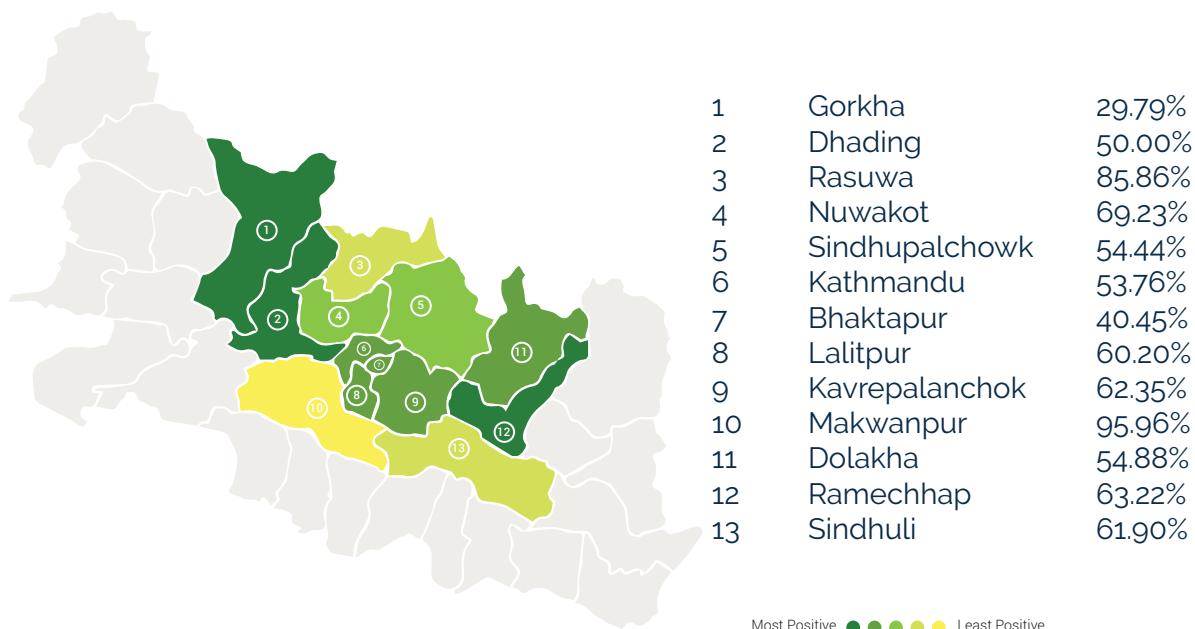


- 60% of respondents are not satisfied with the relief efforts of NGOs. This is a slightly better response than in Question 2, where 67% of respondents are not satisfied with government relief efforts.
- The top two things needed from NGOs are the same as the top two things needed from the government:
 1. Building materials
 2. Cash for work
- While respondents in Gorkha and Dhading are fairly satisfied with NGOs (48% and 44% responded positively), only 5% of those in Makwanpur feel the same way. 86% of people in Makwanpur responded quite negatively, as well as 79% in Sindhupalchowk and 77% in Rasuwa.
- Farmers and laborers are the most negative compared to other occupations, with 63% choosing "not very much" or "not at all."

Recommendations:

- Encourage NGOs to engage in dialogue with affected people to explain both what they plan to do and the limits on what they can provide.
- Investigate what lies behind the negative views of people in Makwanpur, Sindhupalchowk and Rasuwa with a view to stepping up support (building materials and cash for work).
- Prioritize empowering local capacity to allow people to help themselves.

05 Is support provided in a fair way?

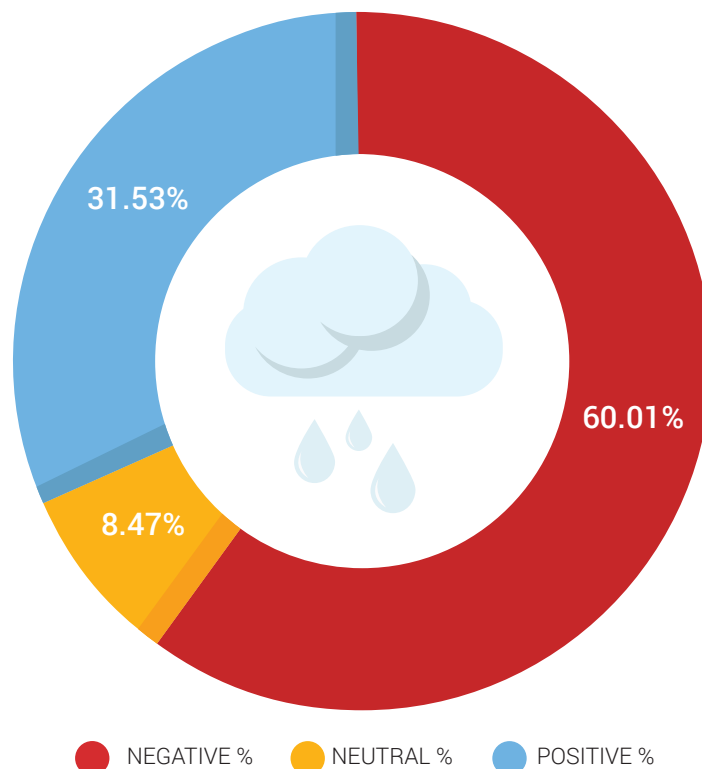


- 61% feel support is not provided fairly, while 32% feel that it is. The rest (7%) are neutral.
- The top two reasons people give to explain why aid is not provided fairly:
 1. Based on political parties
 2. First come, first served
- In more than half of the districts surveyed (Bhaktapur, Dolakha, Gorkha, Nuwakot, Ramechhap, Rasuwa, and Sindhuli) distance from the main road was identified as a significant reason for inequitable support.
- The districts with the most negative responses are Makwanpur (96%) and Rasuwa (86%), while people in Gorkha, Bhaktapur, and Dhading feel much more positively about the fairness of relief (56%, 49%, and 48% positive responses, respectively).

Recommendations:

- Increase monitoring of who gets what, and on what basis.
- Ensure more focus on actual need in service provision - and less on party affiliation.
- Introduce some kind of vulnerability focus to displace 'first come, first served' approach.

06 Are you prepared for monsoon season?



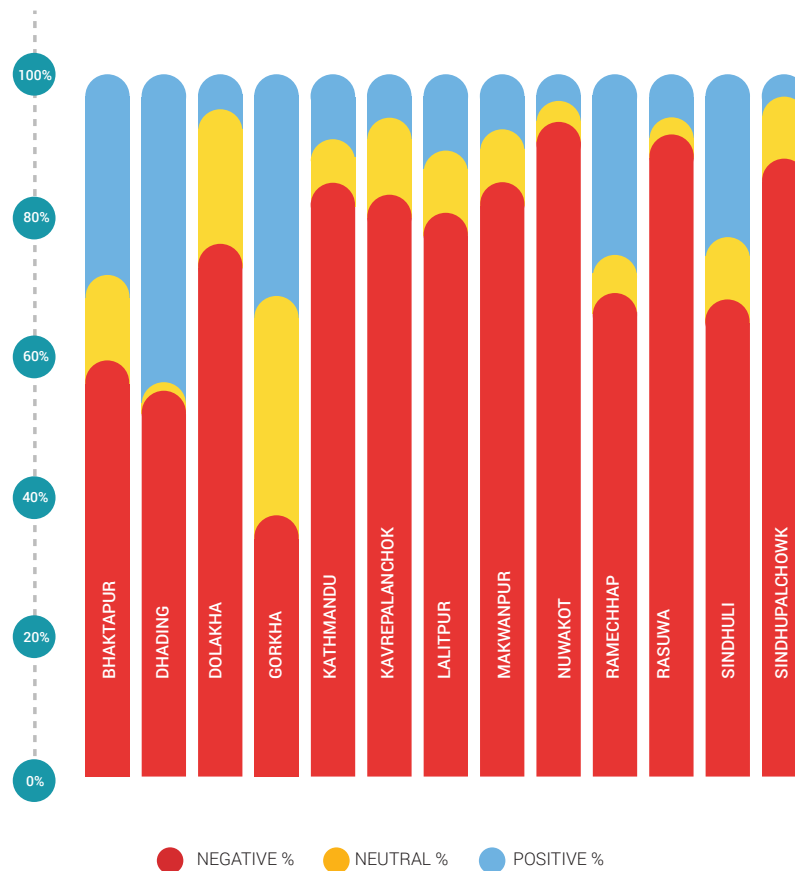
- Only Dhading returned an overwhelmingly positive response about monsoon preparedness, with 79% of respondents answering “mostly yes” or “completely yes.” All other districts returned largely negative responses, with a 60% negative response rate overall.
- Across all 13 districts, people 55 years or older feel the least prepared, with 66% answering “not at all” or “not very much.”
- The most negative districts are Makwanpur (83% responding “not at all” or “not very much”), Dolakha (82%), and Sindhupalchowk (78%).
- Dalits are the most negative of the ethnic groups, with 67% responding “not at all” or “not very much.” Gurungs are the most positive, with 41% responding “completely yes” or “mostly yes.”

Recommendations:

- Look for lessons of what is being done in Dhading, where people are relatively positive.
- Apply best practices in other districts, if relevant.
- Act quickly. This is a time-sensitive issue.
- Probe discrepancy in Dhading between people saying priority needs are not being met (Q1) and their more positive sense of preparedness for the monsoon.
- Explore in follow-up discussions what citizens feel they need to be better prepared.

07

Do you feel you have been heard?



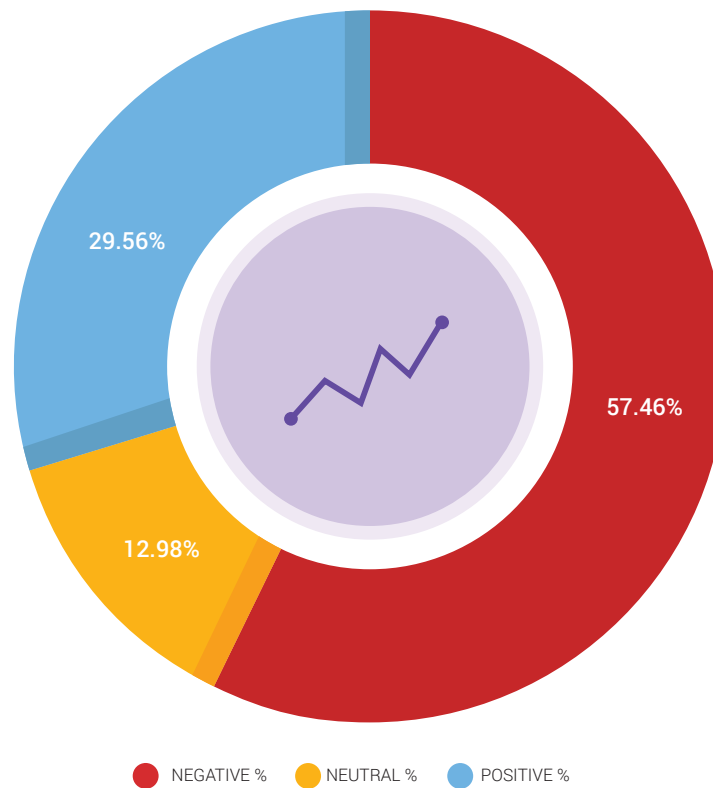
- 75% of respondents answered “not at all” or “not very much” when asked if they feel they have been heard.
- Across all 13 districts, 78% of those aged 55 and above answered negatively or extremely negatively about whether or not they feel heard.
- The districts where people feel the most alone are Nuwakot, Rasuwa and Sindhupalchowk, with 93%, 91%, and 88% respectively answering “not very much” or “not at all.” In these three districts - as well as Dolakha, Kathmandu, Kavre, and Makwanpur - positive response rates were all below 10%.
- The districts with the most positive responses are Dhading and Gorkha, with 44% and 32% respectively feeling “mostly” or “completely” heard.

Recommendations:

- Encourage dialogue with affected populations
- Strengthen linkages to broadcasters and other forms of outward communication.
- Increase programing on issues of central importance/concern to affected people.
- Design programing to explain/demonstrate how feedback is analyzed and considered.

08

Overall, is the post-earthquake relief effort making progress?



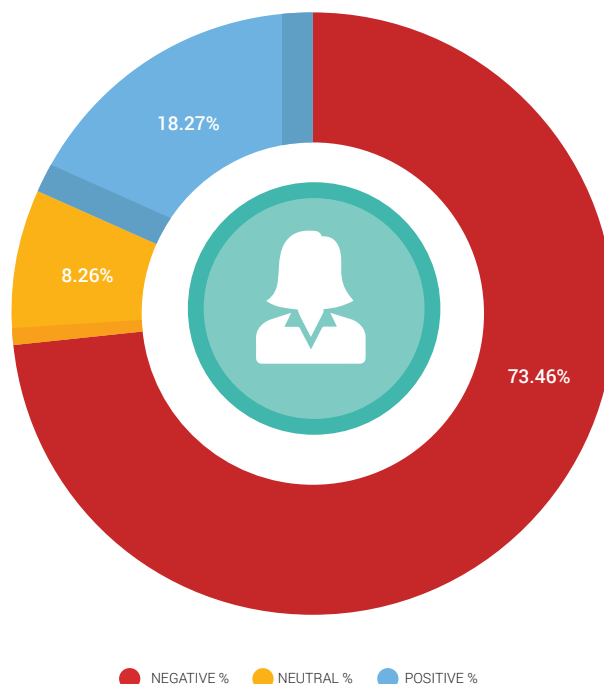
- 58% of those surveyed feel the response is making no progress or very little progress, while 29% feel more positively about the progress being made.
- Kathmandu, Nuwakot and Sindhuli feel the most negatively about the response, with over 70% of respondents answering “not very much” or “not at all.” The most positive districts are Gorkha (54% responding “completely yes” or “mostly yes”) and Dhading (51%).
- Among the ethnic groups, Gurungs (39% responding “completely yes” or “mostly yes”) and Dalits (34%) are most positive, while Newars (72% responding “not at all” or “not very much”) and Janajatis (60%) are most negative. 65% of those who say they do not belong to any of the suggested groups also responded negatively.

Recommendations:

- Communicate plans for recovery and reconstruction in a structured and systematic way, with regular updates in the media and public pronouncements.
- Consider developing some kind of ‘progress index’ that media and the public can track over time.
- Create opportunities to interact face-to-face to interpret and discuss the feedback.
- Communicate how feedback is influencing decision-making.
- Focus on empowering communities.

09

As a woman, are your particular problems being addressed?



- When asked if their particular problems are being addressed, 73% of women responded “not very much” or “not at all.”
- The two biggest problems that women face are the same as those faced by the overall population:
 1. Shelter (long- and short-term housing)
 2. Financial support
- Across all 13 districts, an average of only 18% of women responded positively, with no districts reaching positive response rates of 30% or higher. The districts with the most positive responses are Bhaktapur and Dhading, each with only 29% responding mostly or completely yes.
- Out of 501 women surveyed, 361 answered negatively or neutral and were asked about their needs. 21 of these women were in Nuwakot, and 8 of them (38%) identified gender-based violence as one of their top two greatest issues. While the number of respondents is low, this was also identified as an issue by women in Dolakha, Gorkha, Lalitpur, Makwanpur, Ramechhap, Rasuwa, and Sindhupalchowk

Recommendations:

- Enable separate dialogue sessions on underlying issues and listen to the stories of women.
- Increase opportunities for individual and group counseling.
- Improve targeting to ensure support reaches women and their concerns are better taken into account.
- Work with other agencies and those doing community outreach to raise women's' issues and their specific needs.

Methodology Annex

Project Purpose

The goal of the micro-surveys is to systematically collect the views of affected people in Nepal on key aspects of the humanitarian response, analyze what they say, work with them on how to translate the feedback into a more effective response, and communicate the resulting insight to the local government and the broader humanitarian community. Through this feedback, ***the project aims to provide the humanitarian community the necessary data to support informed decision-making and strengthen the response efforts.*** If the sequence of collecting information, learning and course correction is repeated at regular intervals, it can become a powerful tool of both accountability and performance management.

Constituent Voice: This is the essence of the Constituent Voice (CV) methodology that measures ***real progress against intended results while fostering trust between implementers and the affected population.***^[1] CV draws on the participatory development thinking of people like Paulo Freire and Robert Chambers as well as A.O. Hirschman's study on the way people exercise choice in non-market situations.^[2] Likewise, it embraces techniques borrowed from the customer service industry. Adapting aspects of the customer service approach to humanitarian work does not simply mean asking earthquake victims whether they are satisfied. Questions work best when they relate desired program results to things worrying the affected people — are their priority needs being met? Do they feel better prepared for another natural disaster?

The focus of inquiry is on people's perceptions concerning four themes that, based on preliminary evidence from Ground Truth Solutions' work in a diverse range of programs, offer insight into how effective and efficient they are. These four themes are:

- **Relationships:** this measures the nature of the relationship between 'benefactor' and 'beneficiary' through questions concerning trust, acceptance, competence, respect, responsiveness and so on.
- **Services:** this relates to the nuts and bolts of humanitarian action -- perceptions on the quality, timeliness and relevance of services such as protection, shelter, WASH, medical services, the distribution of food and non-food items and cash-transfer programs.
- **Agency:** this establishes whether people feel able to help find solutions or see themselves as passive recipients of aid.
- **Results:** this covers disaster-hit people's viewpoints on the outcomes of aid programs, by asking how they rate progress relative to improvements in their living conditions and other desired program results.

Data Collection

The approach is rapid-cycle and asks a representative sample of the population a few questions – 8 or 9 questions per survey – on a frequent and consistent basis. By requiring respondents to score questions – on a 1-5 scale in Nepal – answers become a measure that can be tracked over time. Each new round provides aid managers with an updated sense of what is working and what isn't. Understanding why comes from responses to drill-down questions in the questionnaire and from further insight provided by affected people during follow-up dialogue sessions designed to make sense of the feedback. ***As the data set builds up over time, the story becomes clearer and provides an increasingly robust guide to action.***

Enumeration: Of the 75 districts in Nepal, 14 have been identified as the most severely impacted by the earthquake. Of these 14 districts, #quakeHELPDESK – a joint initiative of the Accountability Lab and Local Interventions Group – is working in 10 (Bhaktapur, Dhading, Dolakha, Gorkha, Kathmandu, Kavrepalanchowk, Lalitpur, Nuwakot, Rasuwa, and Sindhupalchowk). In these 10 districts, trained #quakeHELPDESK volunteers conduct the monthly surveys. Volunteers are community members who live in the districts (and often in the VDCs) where they serve. In the 4 districts where #quakeHELPDESK does not have a presence (Makwanpur, Okhaldhunga, Ramechhap, and Sindhuli), the Nepal Scouts serve as enumerators.

Survey Development

Designing the right questions is the starting point. It requires understanding the “theory of change” of the program and what it sets out to achieve. The next step is checking with the affected people themselves. The aim is to craft questions likely to bring out issues that are at once important to affected people and amenable to action by aid managers. The former want aid that is more responsive to their needs and enables them to play their part in finding solutions. The latter want feedback that informs their decision-making and helps them run better programs; in other words, they want perceptions to which they can respond.

The nine questions in the current version of the citizens' micro-survey were developed through a two-month process of community-based testing and consultations with key stakeholders, including responders, enumerators, and affected citizens. As described above, the questions aim to gather insights on relationships, services, agency, and results. In June 2015, a test survey collected feedback from 1,064 citizens across 10 districts using an initial set of perceptions questions.

Insights from this survey were combined with stakeholder feedback on the questionnaire and tested in smaller groups over the course of a month. After taking all feedback into account, two focus group discussions were conducted with affected people and the questionnaire was finalized. This process led to the current version of the micro-survey. The questionnaire can be adapted with each round in to drill down into priority issues and incorporate further feedback, but many of the same questions will remain in the survey in order to track response trends over time. Questions will be retired if they are no longer relevant, and others may be added to capture perceptions on emerging issues.

The pace of data collection can be adjusted to **balance relief agencies' ability to digest and act on feedback with the need to adapt the line of inquiry to a changing situation.** The right frequency depends on both the volatility of the situation and agencies' capacity to process feedback and act on the findings. In emergencies, changing survey questions to take account of fast-moving challenges ensures fresh insight and a more compelling narrative, which in turn helps drive interest and action. In protracted situations, the pace of collection is less frequent, providing enough time between rounds of data collection for aid agencies to digest the information and act on it.

Sampling Methodology

The goal is to gather the perceptions of the most affected populations in Nepal. Within each district, some Village Development Committees (VDCs)[3] were hit harder than others. The focus is on collecting data from VDCs where citizens are hardest hit. ***Need is determined by initial reports of mortality and destruction, as well as consultations with district-level government officials, police authorities, and civil society organizations.*** Through partnership with the scouts, the project has also been able to target many of the hard-hit areas in the remaining 4 districts.

Below the VDC level, random sampling is used, with VDCs segmented into clusters (4 to 5 per district) based on geographic location. From each of these clusters, 4 to 5 wards are randomly selected. Because the selection is random, wards may be grouped together in one VDC, or spread across several. Excel is used to generate this random selection.

Within each of the selected wards, ***trained volunteers use a random sampling methodology to select households.*** Starting at a common gathering point (primary school, water source, meeting area, etc.), the volunteer spins a pen or stick on the ground to select a direction. Following the path of the pen, the volunteer visits the first household in that direction. Upon finishing the interview, the volunteer stands with his/her back to the doorway of the house and turns to the right, skipping two homes to visit the third for the next interview. This process continues until the volunteer reaches a set number of households (around 5 per ward), interviewing every third household. This sampling method is more difficult in some areas than others – particularly in mountainous regions – so there may be some flexibility in interpreting the guidelines. In order to capture a more diverse set of perceptions, volunteers do not only interview the head of household; rather they interview a different demographic from one household to the next.

As previously stated, the survey aims to gather national-level representation of some of the most affected districts and VDCs. At the district level, results can be viewed as indicative rather than representative due to the size of the sub-sample.

The number of wards each volunteer visits is based on the random selection for that round of surveys, with each volunteer assigned to specific VDCs. On average, each volunteer will visit 4 wards, conducting 5 surveys per ward, for a total of 20 surveys per round. In this way, the survey will gather data from some 100 respondents per district.

Challenges

The micro-surveys are an excellent and compelling tool to gauge overall perceptions on the response effort and offer insight to inform decision-making. In addition, findings from the survey support monitoring and evaluation of response efforts. However, further investigation and in-depth questioning is essential to make sense of survey findings and determine how to respond to feedback provided by the affected population. It is important to see the surveys as one part of a longer sequence of collecting information, learning and course correction.

There is a role here for individual agencies; firstly, we ask you to ***consider these findings in your own internal discussions*** and to include the feedback data alongside other sources when planning and evaluating your programs. Secondly, we ask you to ***discuss the findings with affected populations*** themselves, to help understand some of the reasons behind the scores. This can happen as part of your own ongoing engagement and communication activities. Thirdly, we ask you to ***share any thoughts or insight on the data***, underlying issues identified or any other reflections that emerge through the previous two steps.

Without these follow-up steps in the cycle, the generic nature of the questions may make it difficult to identify specific programmatic interventions (though they will provide some indications on actions that can be taken or explored).

Feedback

We welcome feedback on the project, survey questions, and methodology. Please direct your questions and feedback to Giovanni Congi at Giovanni.congi@one.un.org, Narayan Adhikari at Narayan@accountabilitylab.org, Quincy Wiele at quincy@localinterventions.org.uk or Nick van Praag at Nick@keystoneaccountability.org.

Findings and recommendations outlined in this report represent the views and analysis the Accountability Lab, Local Interventions Group and Ground Truth Solutions. These findings do not necessarily represent the views of the United Nations or DFID.

[1] *Constituent Voice*, 2015. See: <https://www.keystoneaccountability.org/analysis/constituency>

[2] *Exit, Voice and Loyalty* See: <http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674276604&content=reviews>

[3] *Nepal's 75 districts are subdivided into localities known as village development committees.*