

Nepal Earthquake: Communicating with Communities Update

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Period Covered:	28 -30 April
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Situation Overview

- Broadcast infrastructure of key stations in Kathmandu (KTM) is intact. Most stations are running on generators so fuel shortages are anticipated to become an issue. The majority of local newspapers continue to publish online.
- Initial assessments by [ACORAB](#) (Community Radio Association of Nepal) indicate that around 108 community radio stations in 30 districts have been affected. Most are off air but have advised they could resume broadcasting if minor spare parts or simple devices like mixers and cables were replaced.
- Mobile networks in KTM remain functional, although network outage and overloads remain common. Power throughout the city is limited, many households and offices are relying on generators. Mobile Network Providers report that 99 of 460 sites are down in KTM but are slowly being restored.
- Less is known about connectivity in rural areas (Mobile Operator NCELL has lost 400 sites outside KTM)
- Telecommunications companies are offering free credit and SMS to users in Nepal. ATNT, Sprint, TMobile, Viber, and Vodaphone are offering free overseas calls and texts. Skype are offering free calls in and out of Nepal. Using texts rather than calls is being suggested to avoid congestion.
- Facebook is proving to be a key channel for information sharing, with requests of help from affected communities in rural areas coming through on facebook pages, as well as local groups organising fundraising efforts and relief missions to remote areas where needs have been identified.
- The [UN Flash Appeal](#) was launched on 29 April and highlighted the importance of community engagement and making sure communities are informed and able to inform relief efforts. The fifth strategic objective outlined is to establish an inter-agency common service two way communication service, and proposals to achieve this are currently being developed.

CwC Response

Information on agencies' responses and contact details are being constantly updated in this 4W GoogleDoc: <http://bit.ly/1ba5p0K>. The following summarises CwC initiatives.

Assessments

- Key questions on information and communication needs to include in needs assessments have been translated into Nepali by Translators without Borders and are available [here](#).
- A request has been submitted to the Digital Humanitarian Network to map the current status of media stations and areas which are cut off from telecommunications, as well as track rumours and identify people's information needs on social media.
- BBC Media Action and Internews researchers are coordinating and will begin carrying out information and communication needs assessments in affected areas on Friday 1 May.
- Save the Children is planning assessments including communication questions in coming days in three new districts - Dhading, Makwanpur and Chitwan.

Media initiatives

- **BBC Nepali Service** is broadcasting twice daily Lifeline programmes with humanitarian content which can be listened to on over 300 local stations and on shortwave. BBC Nepali is asking for information from audiences on needs and aid being received, as well as how people are receiving information, and what they need information about on their [facebook page](#). This is for mapping purposes to identify areas of need.
- **Internews** is setting up a small response team with humanitarian liaison capacity.
- **First Response Radio (FRR)** is deploying to provide support to the World Federation of Community Radios (AMARC) and providing capacity support, wind-up radios and suitcase radio equipment. It is aiming to support rural areas which are currently cut off from information.

Translation

- **Translators without Borders** has assembled a team which is available for translation into Nepali, Newari and Hindi, as well as from these languages into English. Contact rebecca@translatorswithoutborders.org for translation support. Translated messages, crisis words and tweets available here: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/vsnqinr47wajus1/AAByebVhtB7Di3lhu6QqAWUka?dl=0> This tool helps with pronunciation by translating Nepali text into spoken Nepali: <http://tts.kaushalsubedi.com/>

Feedback Mechanisms and Mapping of Needs

- The Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) in the UK being contacted by families of Nepalese nationals asking for help, as people are unaware of which number to call to request report needs.
- The Government set up a hotline number 1234 but it is currently operating at low capacity. International agencies are liaising with the Government and working on plans to set up a common service two way communication service for the whole response.
- Numerous online crowd-sourcing platforms have been set up, intended to give the public a place to report needs, and relief actors to identify where needs are greatest. CDAC Network Members are working to coordinate these efforts so information is being gathered in one place and referred to appropriate responders.
- ICRC has set up its #familylinks website in English and Nepali: <http://ow.ly/3xM0sr>
- Mobile Networks TeliaSonera & Ncell are collaborating with www.Flowminder.org, aiming to support relief efforts by analysing data to try and assess how many people have been affected, and/or displaced by the earthquake. Analyses will be provided for free to all relevant aid agencies through established UN and humanitarian channels as they become available.

CwC Coordination and Contacts

A Communications Working group, led by UNICEF, met on 28th and 29th April, and will continue to meet.

Contact UNICEF's Rudrajit Das rdas@unicef.org or OCHA's Stewart Davies davies1@un.org for information and to be added to the contact list.

CwC Landscape (prior to the Earthquake)

Adult Literacy Rate	57.4% (lower in rural areas)	UNICEF 2012
Number Mobile Phones users per 100 population	52.8 (more in urban areas where people often have SIM cards for 2 operators)	UNICEF 2012; infoasaid 2011
Mobile Network Coverage	Usually 100% (but mountainous terrain means patchy coverage)	
Number Internet Users per 100 population	11.1	UNICEF 2012
Languages in affected areas	Nepali; Newari Hindi understood in Kathmandu valley Local language communications critical in foothills of KTM and Bhaktapur and Gorkha areas. Audio preferable to written text.	Translators without Borders 2015
Media preferences	Television now the preferred option for news in urban areas (15 stations on air 2011) Radio continues to dominate the countryside. Traditional forms of media – like street dramas, speakers on a van & posters still popular in the countryside. 100 daily newspapers countrywide.	Infoasaid 2011 Media Landscape Guide: http://bit.ly/1ba8yO6

For more information or to contribute to this update please contact nicki.bailey@cdacnetwork.org