

Nepal Earthquake: Communicating with Communities Update

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Situation Overview

- Broadcast infrastructure of key stations in Kathmandu (KTM) is intact and 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. Community Radio broadcasters are coordinating to assess damage and get at least one station back on air in each of the four most affected districts.
- Mobile networks in KTM remain functional, although network outage and overloads remain common.
- The communications system is now more stable in rural areas. Communications has been reinforced by the private sector which has donated cash and free telecommunication services in Nepal.
- Rumours are circulating about unfair distribution of aid, and security for relief distributions has become an issue in some areas.
- 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 volunteers](#) organising fundraising efforts and relief missions to remote areas where needs have been identified.
- [Humanity Road SitReps](#) (incorporating data from social media and local reports) are providing in depth information about the communications environment and the response as a whole:.
- A Map showing requests for power for lights and mobile phone charging (from social media) is available [here](#).

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

- Three teams of community radio broadcasters including technicians and production experts left KTM on 1 May to assess damage to radio stations in remote areas, and support where possible. This was coordinated by [AMARC](#) (World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters) and included colleagues from Internews. Assessments in Chautara and Kavre found relief had not arrived 6 days after the quake, and electricity and communication were cut off. Both radio stations visited were broadcasting but in need of shelter, food and water for volunteers, and support with emergency content. Full details and updates available on the AMARC [Facebook page](#).
- Save the Children is planning assessments including communication questions in coming days in three new districts - Dhading, Makwanpur and Chitwan.
- 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.
- 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](#).
- World Vision has been talking to communities to determine the most appropriate feedback mechanisms to use and will share information at the next working group meeting.

Communications and Power

- The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster has been activated and meetings are being chaired by NetHope. Anyone involved in ICT aspects of the response is welcome. [ETC updates and meeting minutes on their website](#).
- [NetHope's Emergency Response Working Group](#) was activated on 26 April and initial assessments are underway. The group will seek funding for generators and satellite phones for 3 months.
- [Microsoft Disaster Response](#) is offering services and support.
- Ericsson Response is sending a team with equipment to ensure [emergency communications remain active](#).
- Telecom Sans Frontieres will set up [mobile wireless networks donated by Vodafone](#).
- 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.

Media

- **A Development Communicators coordination meeting** was held at the [AMARC](#) (World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters) Regional Office in KTM on 30 April. Four districts were identified as needing at least one radio station to be bought on air immediately to support relief operations. They estimate needing 7 suitcase radios required and 500 receivers for the emergency phase. Rebuilding of stations will take place in the second phase. Three teams deployed on 1 May including technical and production experts to assess damage and support the stations.
- **First Response Radio (FRR)** team arrived to provide support to AMARC with capacity, wind-up radios and suitcase radio equipment.
- **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.

Translation

- **Translators without Borders (TwB)** 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 available on message library:
<http://bit.ly/1c1Kyhv>
This tool helps with pronunciation by translating Nepali text into spoken Nepali:
<http://tts.kaushalsubedi.com/>
- TwB is looking for Tamang translators, as Tamang makes up a large part of the affected area, where Tamang is the preferred language.

Feedback Mechanisms and Mapping of Needs

- Discussions to develop an interagency common service feedback mechanism are moving ahead quickly following the [UN Flash Appeal](#) which included 'establish an inter-agency common service two way communication service' as its fifth strategic objective. The common service project will systematically collect and analyse feedback from the affected communities through a number of platforms including face to face, radio broadcasting, online and by phone. Development is being led by the CwC Working Group.

- 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.
- BBC Nepali is asking for information on need and relief being provided on its facebook page, which WFP is mapping in order to organise its response.
- 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.
- An interesting platform is the Kaha Needs and Supply website (<http://www.kaha.co/#/app/about>) where people can post their needs and what they can offer.

CwC Coordination and Contacts

A Communicating with Communities Working group, led by UNICEF, met on 28th and 29th April, and will continue to meet. It plans to map two-way communication needs of the affected communities. A [4W](#) has been developed including contact details and responses of partners. The Working Group is developing a common service project to systematically collect and analyze feedback from the affected communities through a number of platforms including face to face, radio broadcasting, online and by phone.

Contact the Resident Coordinators Office Public Information Officer Giovanni Congi (giovanni.congi@one.un.org), 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.

A Development Communicators Meeting was initiated by Search for Common Ground on 1st May, realizing the need for coordination and accurate media messaging. It aimed to design common messages and discuss collaboration in dissemination of information in remote areas. Invited organizations: Equal Access, BBC, Association of Community Radio Broadcasters Nepal (ACORAB), Broadcast Association of Nepal (BAN), Antenna Foundation Nepal (AFN), Radio Nepal, and The Story Kitchen (TSK). This group will meet again Monday 4th May and has identified a focal point to liaise with cluster system on messages and stories from the community.

For more information or to contribute to this update please contact
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