



This district profile, which is based on a review of secondary data and primary data collection in the northern areas of the district, outlines the current humanitarian needs in Gorkha and existing information gaps.

SHELTER

90% of the district population – 240,000 people according to the 2011 census – are not living in the same shelter as before the earthquakes according to a Shelter Cluster assessment. While around 5,000 people reside in spontaneous settlements, the large majority are staying in makeshift shelter close to their homes (p.3). Gorkha is one of the most-affected districts in terms of damage to shelter. 98% of households report housing damage as a result of the earthquakes. This includes any form of damage, including minor cracks. 55% of houses were reportedly heavily damaged or completely destroyed. Only 6% of those have started repairs and durable construction materials, particularly corrugated galvanised iron sheets, and labour are needed (p. 5).

VULNERABLE GROUPS

The district has a relatively high proportion of female-headed households (37% according to the 2011 census). Elderly-headed households were identified as the most vulnerable group, followed by female-headed households, in a survey of key informants during a multi-sectoral assessment of seven northern VDCs (p.3).

FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS

In May, 31 of the 67 VDCs in Gorkha were classified as highly or severely food insecure during a Food Cluster Assessment. The situation is expected to improve with the current rice, maize, and potato harvests. However, lack of storage space and inputs such as seeds and labour are likely to curtail agricultural activities. Markets in most southern and central parts of the district are functional. In the northern, traditionally hard-to-reach areas, shops are largely closed and key informants indicate that the majority of needs cannot be covered by cash. With limited means to prepare for the monsoon season (between June and September), communities are concerned about food security and have adopted coping mechanisms (p 6.).

HEALTH

The widespread damage to infrastructure has significantly affected health facilities. Only 11 of the 67 VDC health posts reported no damage during the PDNA. However, communities in northern VDCs indicated that existing health facilities were adequate and had the capacity and resources to address existing issues. No major disease outbreaks have been reported (p. 8).

EDUCATION

Despite damage to infrastructure, the Department of Education reported that 60–65% of enrolled students attended school on 2 June, the day after functional schools re-opened. Attendance rates appear to be lower in the remote northern VDCs, with the risk of landslides and blocked roads the main reasons why children cannot reach schools (p. 9).

WASH

More than half of VDCs, or 38 out of 67, were classified as a high priority for WASH interventions. As a result of the widespread damage to sanitation facilities, an increase in open defecation has been reported (p. 10).

HAZARDS

The earthquakes have seriously impacted the stability of land in mountain regions. Since 25 April, over 800 landslides were recorded in the hilly and mountainous areas of Gorkha and more are expected during the monsoon season (p. 4).

Although all areas of the district have been covered by at least one assessment, several information gaps remain. Most assessments are one-off and there is limited insight on the evolution of needs over time (p. 11).

METHODOLOGY

The epicenter of the 25 April earthquake occurred in Barpak VDC, Gorkha district, and district, with a population of almost 270,000, is one of the worst-affected. This district profile is an update of the [9 May Gorkha district profile](#) and outlines what is currently known on the needs within Gorkha.

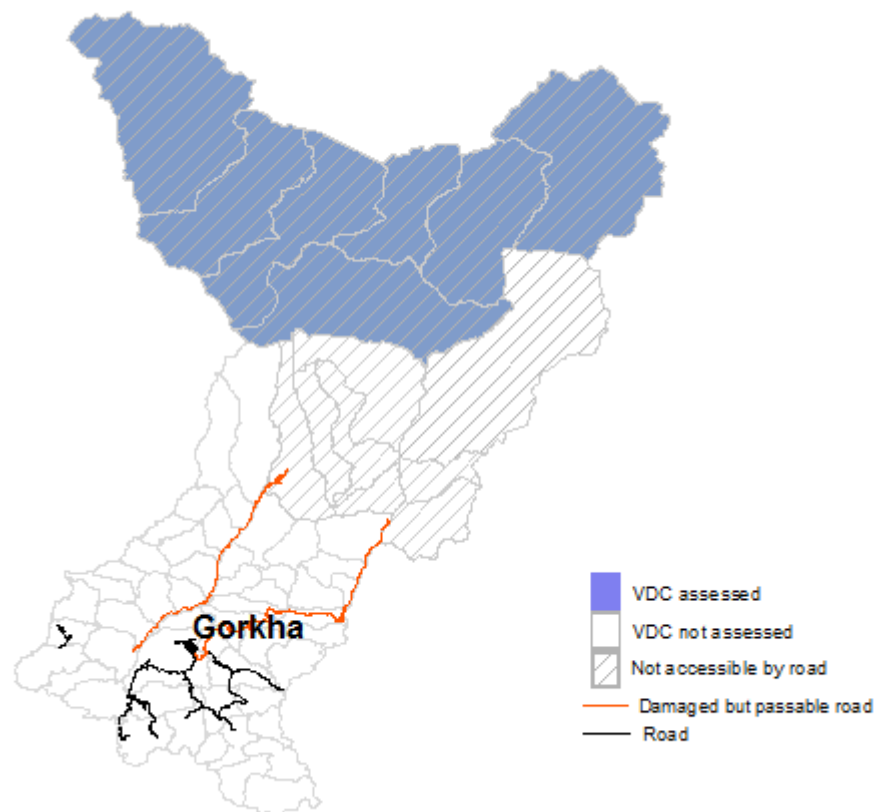
The profile is based on a desk review of secondary data and a [district government led multi-sectoral needs assessment of seven northern VDCs](#).

Recent assessments and baseline data were analysed during the desk review. The list of information sources was prepared with support of the Clusters at the district and national level. The main information sources that have fed into this report are:

- The [Post Disaster Needs Assessment](#), led by the Government of Nepal and supported jointly by the Asian Development Bank, European Union, Government of Japan, United Nations and the World Bank
- [Shelter Recovery Assessment](#) by the Shelter Cluster/REACH
- Education Situation Update by the Department of Education
- WASH Assessment by the WASH Cluster
- The [Displacement Tracking Matrix](#) – Round II, IOM
- [Food Security Assessment](#) by the Food Security Cluster
- [2011 Census](#), Government of Nepal

To capture the specific needs of those residing in the remote northern VDCs, a district government-led multi-cluster joint assessment coordinated by OCHA was conducted between 1 and 8 June 2015. Two teams of enumerators and guides were transported by helicopter into remote areas of Gorkha and travelled by foot between the VDCs. One team covered the western VDCs of Chhekampar, Chumchet and Siribas; the other team covered the eastern VDCs of Bihi, Samaguan, Lho and Prok. In total, 13 communities were assessed, or 6,000 people (almost 90% of the total population in the 7 VDCs according to 2011 census figures).

Areas covered during district government-led multi-cluster joint assessment



DISPLACEMENT PATTERNS

A Shelter Cluster assessment found that approximately 240,000 people in the district are not living in the same shelter as before the earthquakes. This constitutes 90% of the district population, one of the highest proportions among the districts covered by the assessment. Households are primarily residing in close proximity to their shelter, mostly on the land of the damaged house (68% of those displaced) or open ground (22% of those displaced). The median travel time from the current shelter to the original is only 2 minutes by foot. Only 1% of households are staying 10 minutes or more from their original house.

Only a small number of displaced are residing in sites with more than 50 households. The [IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix](#) (DTM) has recorded almost 5,000 people from Gorkha residing in four priority spontaneous sites in Gorkha district. Some communities left Gorkha district to settle in Chitwan district, presumably out of fear of aftershocks.

Spontaneous sites in Gorkha

Site name	Gupsepakha, Laprak	Mandre, Barpak	RCB, Barpak	Chomder, Barpak
Number of IDPs	2,475	387	268	237
Support provided	Food, Education	None	WASH, Health	None
Shelter situation	>75% of HH in tents	>75% of HH in makeshift shelters	>75% of HH in makeshift shelters	>75% of HH in tents
Evidence of open defecation	Yes	No	No	Yes

Source: [IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix 12/06/2015](#)

The main reported reason for displacement is damage or destruction of shelter, followed by fear of aftershocks, according to the Shelter Cluster assessment. This is in line with the DTM findings, which recorded damage to housing and infrastructure as the main reason for displacement.

Hard-to-reach areas: During the multi-sectoral assessment, key informants identified 85% of the population as displaced, ranging from 20% in Phillim to 100% in Chhekampar and Chunchet VDCs. People whose houses were damaged or destroyed were primarily sleeping under tarpaulins close to their residence (2–3 minutes away), with the exception of Sipchet village, where communities had moved 10 minutes away.

VULNERABLE GROUPS

There is a strong tradition of outward migration of young males in Gorkha district. According to the national census, 32% of the population migrate at least once in their life and at the time of the census, 18% of the district populated had migrated outside of the district, compared to 6% nationally ([UNFPA 2014-I](#)). As a result, the demographic make-up in the district differs from the rest of the country.

According to the 2011 census, 55% of the population is female (compared to 51% wide) and 37% of households are female-headed (compared to the national average of 26%). In contrast, the recent Shelter Cluster assessment found that 22% of households are female-headed. This discrepancy could be explained by the fact that some men have returned to support reconstruction ([Census 2011, Shelter Cluster Assessment 29/06/2015](#)). However, during a multi-sector assessment in seven northern VDCs, communities did not perceive female headed households to be the most vulnerable group, but rather prioritised elderly-headed households.

In the seven northern VDCs, key informants identified elderly-headed households as the most vulnerable group, followed by female-headed households, during the multi-sectoral assessment. Across the district, 27% of the households were elderly headed at the time of the 2011 census ([Census 2011](#)).

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

Except for the northern VDCs, the district is largely accessible, with only a few reports of humanitarian access constraints. However, this may change during the upcoming monsoon season ([LogCluster 05/2015](#)).

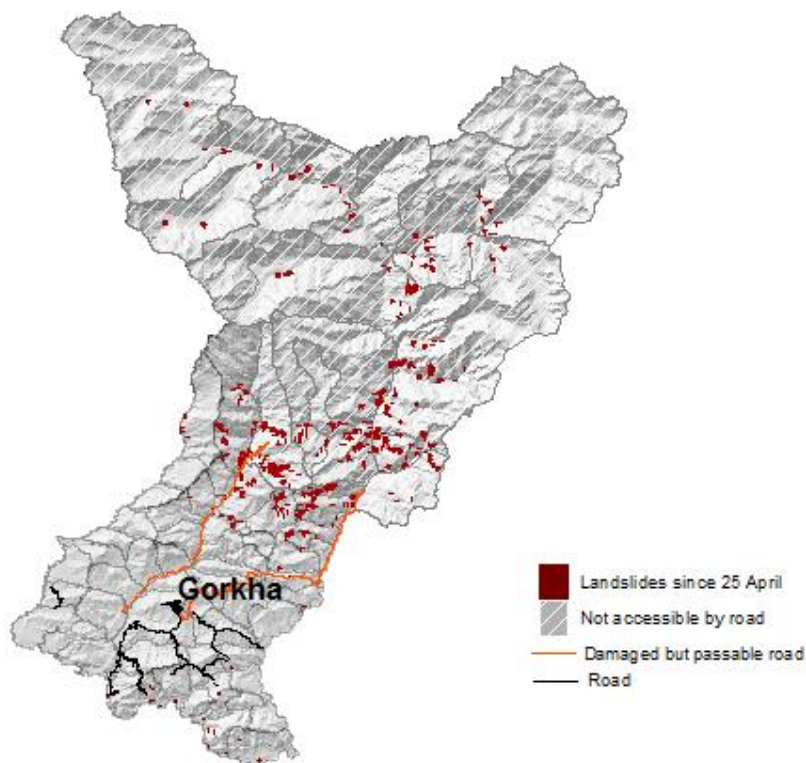
The main impediments to humanitarian aid delivery are physical, with landslides and damaged roads hampering movement of goods and staff. 800 landslides in Gorkha have already occurred since the 25 April earthquake, according to a mapping exercise from satellite imagery by scientists and volunteers at ICIMOD, Durham University, BGS, NASA, NGA, MDA, Cardiff and UEA Universities. These areas are particularly susceptible to additional rain induced landslides during the monsoon.

Hard-to-reach areas: All seven northern VDCs assessed are normally inaccessible by vehicle. Settlements are normally connected by trails, accessible only by foot or with pack animals. Large active landslides in Chhekampar and Chumchet VDCs have rendered existing trails impassable; the two VDCs can only be reached by helicopter. The five other VDCs are accessible by foot.

Respondents to the multi-sector assessment reported relatively similar access constraints

throughout all communities, related to both the capacity of humanitarian actors to provide aid and the ability of beneficiaries to access aid. Constraints were predominately related to environmental challenges: communities remain afraid to move, given the risk of landslides. Landslides have also blocked road access, limiting the provision of aid. Communities also expressed a concern for aid worker safety due to hazardous trails and active landslides.

Physical access constraints



Sources: WFP (road status), OSM roads, and Nepal food Security Monitoring Programme (NeKSAP) via WFP / Logistics Cluster prior to 25 April (access status). Limitations landslide coverage: please note that cracks, fissures, and small landslides were not mapped. In some areas it was not possible to map all landslides due to persistent cloud cover.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

Word of mouth, followed by radio and telephone, are the main ways of receiving public information, according to the Shelter Cluster assessment ([Shelter Cluster assessment 29/06/2015](#)). Information about available government support, shelter support, and earthquakes were identified as the most important information needs, in an Accountability Lab and Local Interventions Group assessment of 96 individuals in Gorkha.

Hard-to-reach areas: the preferred sources of communication were telephone, followed by radio. However, not all areas receive telephone signals. Damaged telephone towers were reported in Samagaun and Bihi VDCs. In Bihi, Prok, and parts of Samagaun, telephone was not mentioned as a main source of information.

Access to information sources was hampered by the lack of electricity across the north. Approximately 35% of the population in the assessed VDCs did not have access to electricity, with five communities in Lho, Chhekampar, and Chumchet VDCs reporting no or very little access to electricity.

SHELTER AND NFI

Pre-crisis facts and figures

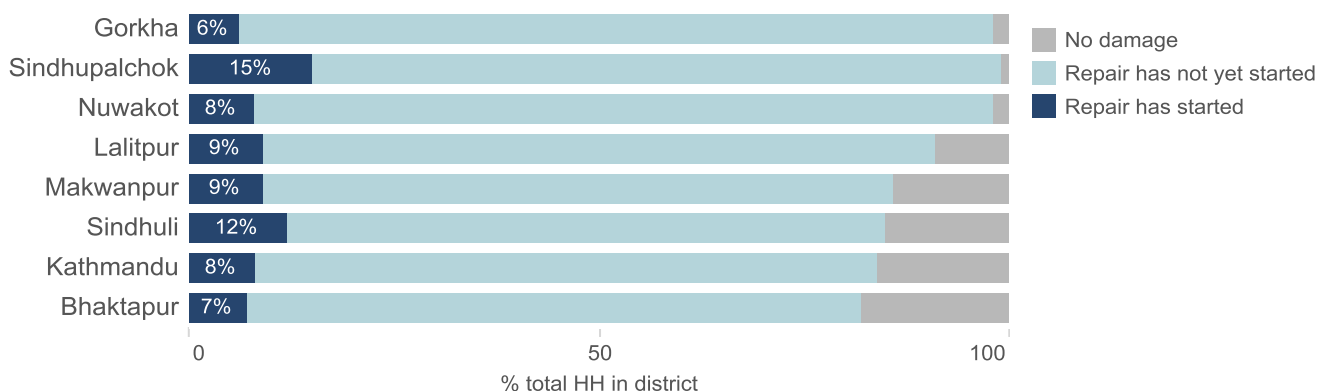
	Gorkha	National
Main source of energy for cooking	Wood: 84.7% Liquid, petrol, gas:10.9%	Urban: Liquid, petrol, gas: 68.2%; wood: 25.9% Rural: Wood: 73.1%; cow dung: 12.5%
Main source of energy for lighting	Electricity: 76.7% Kerosene: 16.8%	Electricity: 67.7% Kerosene:18.4%
Type of housing foundation		
Mud-bonded bricks/stone	88%	44%
Cement-bonded bricks/stone	3%	18%
RCC with pillar	5%	10%
Wooden pillar	3%	25%
% of households who own their housing unit	91%	85%

Source: [Census 2011](#)

Damage and repair

98% of households in Gorkha reported some sort of housing damage as a result of the earthquakes during a Shelter Cluster assessment. 55% of houses were partially or completely destroyed. The most commonly used housing foundation in the district – mud-bonded bricks or stone – is also the most susceptible to earthquake damage. Over 60% of these structures have been heavily damaged or destroyed. Only 6% of households whose house had been damaged have started repair. This is the lowest proportion among the districts assessed. It could be the result of lack of inputs: according to the households assessed, the main needs to support repair are durable construction materials followed by labour. 44% of households were reported to be without electricity. ([Shelter Cluster Assessment 29/06/2015](#)).

Status of household buildings



Source: [Shelter Cluster Assessment 29/06/2015](#)

Hard-to-reach areas: The northern VDCs recorded similarly high levels of damage to infrastructure. Most damage was sustained during the 25 April earthquake; findings indicate that only 5–10% of damage was caused by the 12 May earthquake. Reports suggests that the majority of the damage was due to the collapse of stone walls and the cracking of roofs. Respondents felt that cracked or separated roofing structures were the priority for repair, as they do not offer protection against monsoon rains. Key informants estimated that around 70% of the population felt unsafe living in houses with building damage. Fear of aftershocks was reported as the primary reason. 56% of the population stated they did not feel their shelter would offer adequate protection against harsh weather conditions. Government officials conducted structural assessments of at least 75% of the houses in 12 of the 13 communities (all except Phillim).

FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS

Pre-crisis facts and figures: Gorkha

Main sources of income Seasonal migration, wage labour, income from livestock production and agriculture product, remittances, and pensions

Food Stock before lean season Around 50% of HHs have food stocks for more than four months

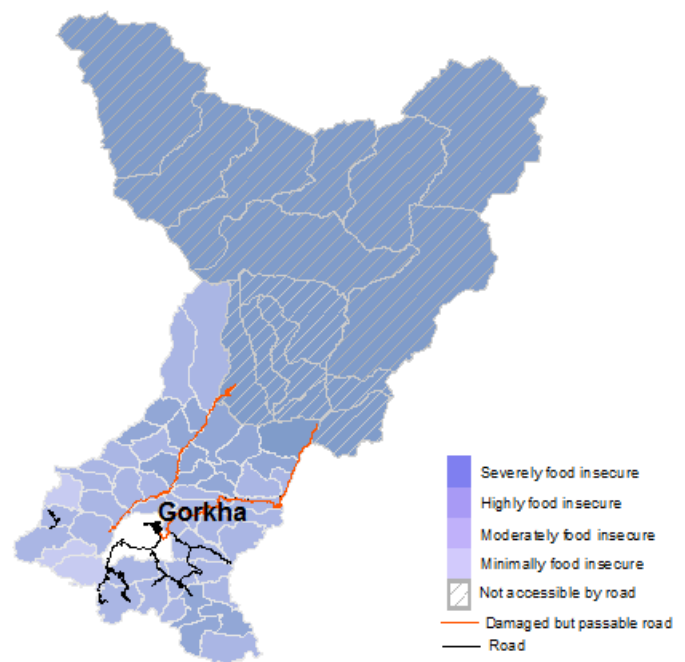
Sources: [Food Security Network Bulletin 15/03/2014](#), [Food Security Network Bulletin 15/11/2013](#)

Sources of income and food security

According to the 2011 agriculture census, around 80% of households in Gorkha rely on agriculture as their main source of income. Before the earthquakes there was a cereal surplus, meaning that the district produced more than the population consumes ([NCBS 12/2013](#)).

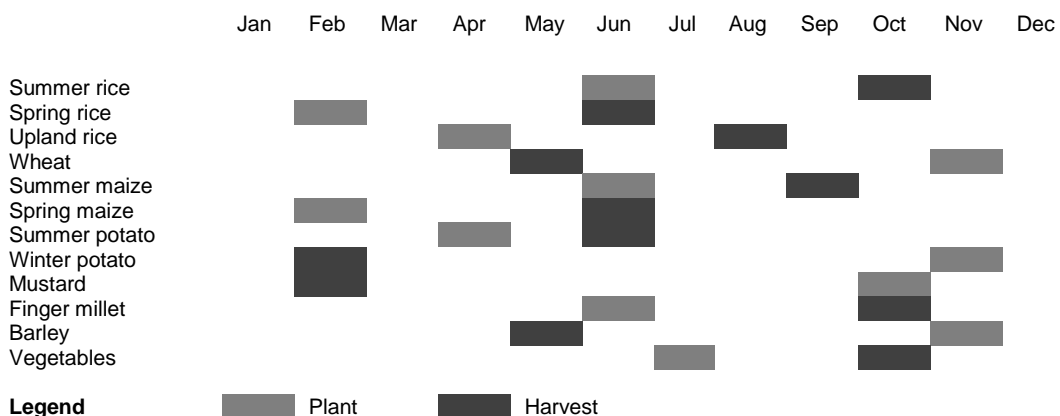
During May, of the 67 VDCs, 31 were highly or severely food insecure, according to a food security cluster assessment ([Food Security Cluster 05/2015](#)). Food security is directly related to the accessibility of areas, with the hard to reach area in the north recording higher levels of food insecurity than those connected by main roads. With the harvest of several crops in June, the situation is expected to improve in the four months until September. June is the busiest month in terms of agricultural activity, particularly for rice, maize, potato, and millet crops. As a result of the earthquakes and the need to rebuild infrastructure, a shortage of labour can be expected, which will impact agricultural yields. The shortage of labour was also noted during the Shelter Cluster assessment ([Shelter Cluster Assessment 29/06/2015](#)). According to the PDNA, households are incurring above average debt as current income generation does not meet the needs ([PDNA 20/06/2015](#)).

Food security classification May 2015



Source: [Food Security Cluster 05/2015](#)

Crop calendar Gorkha



Source: [Nepal Alia 06/2015](#)

Hard-to-reach areas: Damage to agricultural land and crops in the seven northern VDCs assessed was minimal. Ten out of 13 communities reported no damage; Chumling, Sipchet, and Shyla indicated less than 25% damage to agricultural land and crops. However, only two communities (both in Chhekampar VDC) reported sufficient seeds for the next crop cycle; Sipchet and Sama communities indicated no availability of seeds, while the rest had insufficient quantities for the entire community. This could be a result of the earthquake's impact on seed supply routes, or structural shortages. All communities owned yaks and cattle, which they used primarily for agriculture, transport and milk. Approximately 20% of yaks and cattle were killed in the earthquakes. There was minimal impact on other livestock and livestock pastures.

The primary concern reported by all communities was the lack of storage for food stocks and grains, and respondents were worried about their ability to protect food from harsh weather conditions. Overall, communities in all assessed VDCs were concerned about food security and had adopted negative coping strategies, including eating less and skipping meals, to extend their food supplies.

Markets

Markets in the south of the district are mostly functional ([Food Security Cluster 05/2015](#)). A rapid assessment of seven markets in Baguwa and Gorkha VDCs at the start of June found that all shops were open. Slight price increases before and after the earthquakes were recorded for rice and lentils in four of the seven markets, while the prices for soap and oil have remained stable. Shopkeepers indicated a need for access to credit. Note that this assessment only covered a part of the markets in Baguwa and Gorkha VDCs: although these results could be indicative of other markets in the south and centre of the district, the results cannot be extrapolated to all the 67 VDCs in the district.

Hard-to-reach areas: Market functionality in the seven northern VDCs differs significantly from central and southern VDCs. Market access in these areas was already limited before the earthquakes and remains severely constrained. Communities were travelling 2.5 hours on average to reach the closest market at the time of the Food Security Cluster assessment ([Food Security Cluster 05/2015](#)). During the district government-led multi-sectoral assessment, enumerators indicated that not all shops were open, and there was insufficient stock in those shops that were. Key informants indicated that on average only 40% of the needs of the population could be covered. The main sources of cash have not changed: the primary source remains borrowing, followed by trade and informal systems. These areas have historically had limited access to formal financial systems.

HEALTH

Pre-crisis facts and figures

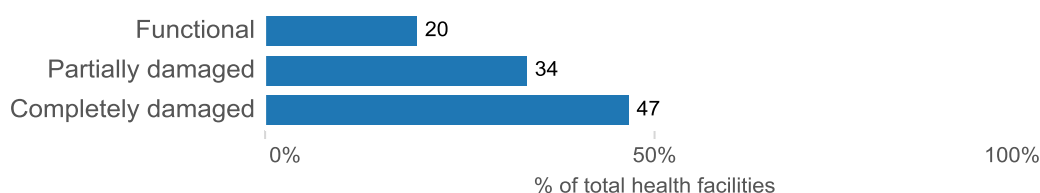
	Gorkha	National
Life expectancy at birth (years)	72	69
Measles vaccination coverage for infants	67%	88%
Severe wasting	3.8%	3.2%

Source: MICS 2014, Census 2011

Impact on health infrastructure

According to the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA), Gorkha has one of the highest proportion of health facilities completely damaged. Only 19 of the 92 facilities identified are functional (20%). Traditionally, every VDC has a health post. However, the PDNA results indicate that in all but 11 of the 67 VDC-level health posts damage was reported. As a result, communities spend more time and resources accessing basic healthcare. Both of the two hospitals in the district have both partially damaged. The District Public Health office has been partly damaged as well, which will make reconstruction and coordination more difficult.

Status of health facilities in Gorkha



Source: PDNA 20/06/2015

Hard-to-reach areas: While the PDNA indicates that health posts in Samagaun, Lho, Chumchet, Bihi and Sirdibas are completely damaged, key informants during the multi-sectoral assessment indicate that although buildings have sustained some damage, all had partially restored health services and were operating from existing buildings. All health posts were staffed, and key informants indicated that facilities in 3 VDCs had adequate medical supplies (although they were not fully stocked); the remainder not able to answer the question. Damage to health workers' residence was reported in seven communities, however this had not led to the displacement of health workers.

Health status

There is limited information available on the current health status of the population. At 2 June, over 1,100 people were identified as injured. However, it can be assumed that serious injuries have been treated. Within the four spontaneous displacement sites assessed by IOM, diarrhoea was mentioned as prevalent. One spontaneous displacement site, Chomdor in Barpak, reported measles cases. Measles vaccination coverage in Gorkha has historically been below the national average. In addition, there is a risk that the increase in open defecation will result in a higher prevalence of communicable diseases.

Hard-to-reach areas: Key informants identified diarrhoea and fever as the most commonly reported health conditions for both children and adults during the multi-sectoral assessment. Acute respiratory infections were highlighted in Sirdibas. Informants noted that all serious injuries had been attended to and that minor injuries were healing. Enumerators clarified that diarrhoea and fever was prevalent prior to the earthquake, although incidence had increased since, with some cases of bloody diarrhoea. However, communities indicated that existing health facilities were adequate and had the capacity and resources to address these complaints.

EDUCATION

Pre-crisis facts and figures

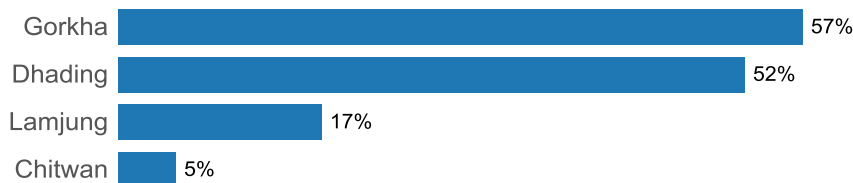
	Gorkha	National
Literacy rate of population 6 years and above (Male/Female)	76% / 60%	76% / 59%
Net attendance rates pre-crisis (Grade 1-5)	97%	86%

Source: Nepal Nutrition and Food Security Portal 2015, UNFPA 2014-2, MICS 2014

Impact on education infrastructure

57% of the over 5,000 classrooms in Gorkha are damaged or destroyed according to preliminary damage assessment data from the Department of Education (DoE 17 May 2015), At least 27 teachers have been killed. Despite the widespread damage to education infrastructure, the DoE reports that 60–65% of students attended school the day after the 1 June re-opening of functional schools (DoE 01/06/2015).

Percentage of classrooms destroyed or with major damage (Gorkha and neighbouring districts)



Source: DoE 17/05/2015

Hard-to-reach areas: The attendance rates reported by the multi-sectoral assessment in the northern VDCs are below the Department of Education statistics for the district. Fear since aftershocks and hazardous transport due to landslides have resulted in very poor primary-school attendance rates. Only students in the communities of Sama and Shyla had returned to school (with approximately 90% attendance rates), and children in the remaining communities were currently not attending primary education. The availability of teachers was cited as a cause of the existing lack of access. It is common practice for teachers to reside outside of the district during school holidays. Teachers could not return to education facilities because trails were blocked, particularly in the four northeastern VDCs.

WASH

Pre-crisis facts and figures

	Gorkha	National
Access to improved drinking water source	65.4%	85.9%
% of households with toilets	73%	Urban: 90.1% Rural: 54.3%
Number of VDCs declared Open Defecation Free	60 out of 67 VDCs, 89%	1042 VDCs out of 3,625, 29%

Sources: DWSS 20/01/2014, DWSS 21/10/2013, Census 2011

Impact on water and sanitation infrastructure

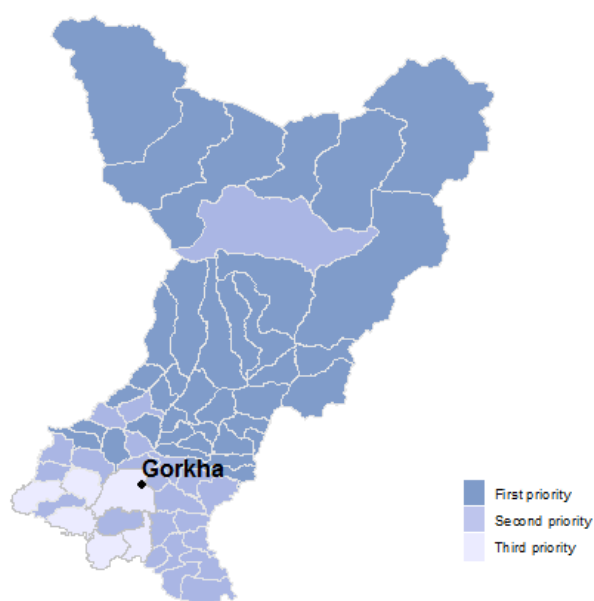
The WASH cluster has categorised VDCs across the country according to priority. This prioritisation is based on assessments and discussions with the Government and other stakeholders. More than half of the VDCs in Gorkha (38 of 67 VDCs) were identified as a first priority for intervention. Additional data collection on water and sanitation is ongoing.

Hard-to-reach areas: In the northern VDCs that were assessed, on average, more than half of the population were reported to be practicing open defecation. The communities of Samdo, Bihi, Namrung and Sipchet reported the 100% of the population resorted to open defecation, primarily due to damage to sanitation facilities, with a lack of awareness cited as a secondary cause for the continued practice. The most commonly used defecation practices before the earthquakes were household toilets, either pit toilets or flush toilets. Widespread damage to sanitation facilities was reported throughout: 10 out of 13 communities reported damage to all existing toilet structures. However, on average key informants indicated that 60% of facilities within their community had only sustained damaged to the superstructure.

Existing inadequate hygiene practices have been exacerbated, with only 9% of the population practising hand-washing and almost no instances of use of menstrual hygiene products reported. The use of menstrual hygiene products is not a traditional practice among the assessed communities.

According to key informants, water sources had not changed following the earthquakes, with the exception of Sipchet, which reported a 100% shift from piped water supply to the use of wells. Enumerators indicated that a river in Lho VDC that had previously been used for drinking water was now blocked and dry, and inhabitants had to travel over two hours to reach alternative water sources. Water treatment was almost non-existent prior to the earthquakes and this has not changed since.

Priority VDCs – WASH cluster assessment



INFORMATION GAPS

Although all areas of the district have been covered by at least one assessment, several information gaps remain:

- Most assessments are one-off and there is limited insight on the evolution of needs over time. A system to monitor the needs will be particularly important during the monsoon season, when a part of the population will be able to continue to recover, while others will face a continuation of or increase in needs as a result of access barriers and landslides.
- There is a need for more information on the levels of access different population groups have to the support provided, taking into account possible ethnic and caste-based discrimination.
- According to the Government, remittances accounted for nearly 28% of household income in Gorkha before the earthquakes ([International Media 2015/05/20](#)). It is unclear to what extent the earthquakes have impacted remittance flows and financial infrastructure.
- There is no information on the impact of the earthquakes on nutrition and feeding practices.
- There is insufficient market price monitoring and market surveillance to track if and how markets are recovering.
- Detailed information on the impact of the earthquakes on levels and conditions of debt is required to support early recovery interventions.
- There is no information available on the impact of the earthquakes on existing protection concerns.
- Additional data on communities' information needs is required.

ASSESSMENTS PLANNED

Some of these information gaps will be addressed by current and planned additional information collection activities, including:

- School Structural Assessment by Health Research and Social Development Forum (HERD) and UNICEF, 11 districts, started 20 May, ongoing.
- Health Infrastructure Damage Assessment led by Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP), ongoing.
- Child Protection Assessment led by Central Child Welfare Board (CCWB), ongoing.
- Protection Assessment by the Protection Cluster, ongoing.
- Information and Communication Assessment, Common Feedback Project, ongoing.

The Assessment Unit welcomes all information that could complement this report. For more information, comments or questions please email nepalassessments@humanitarianresponse.info



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