



A JOINT ADVOCACY REPORT

# CLEARING AWAY THE RUBBLE

**Moving Beyond Blockages  
to Reconstruction Progress**

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NOVEMBER 2017





A photograph showing a person from the side, wearing a white t-shirt with dark text on it. They are working in a field where many tall, dry, yellowish-brown stalks stand upright. The background shows more of the same field under a clear sky.

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Team members from the Common Feedback Project conduct a focus group discussion with Dalit women in Darshantar, Nuwakot.

PHOTO: BRONWYN RUSSEL, CFP



The **HOUSING RECOVERY AND RECONSTRUCTION PLATFORM (HRRP)** was established to support the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA), other relevant government authorities, and Partner Organisations (POs) with coordination of the post-earthquake housing reconstruction.



The **INTER-AGENCY COMMON FEEDBACK PROJECT (CFP)**, under the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO), conducts a bi-monthly Community Perception Survey with 2,100 respondents randomly selected from across the 14 earthquake affected districts in order to collect communities' feedback and track trends in reconstruction perceptions and experiences.

# GLOSSARY



|        |   |
|--------|---|
| CFP    | Common Feedback Project                                   |
| CLPIU  | Central Level Programme Implementation Unit               |
| DCT    | District Coordination Team                                |
| DLPIU  | District Level Programme Implementation Unit              |
| DTM    | Displacement Tracking Matrix                              |
| DUDBC  | Department of Urban Development and Building Construction |
| GoN    | Government of Nepal                                       |
| HRRP   | Housing Recovery and Reconstruction Platform              |
| INGO   | International Non-Governmental Organisation               |
| MoFALD | Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development         |
| MoUD   | Ministry of Urban Development                             |
| NGO    | Non-Governmental Organisation                             |
| NPRs   | Nepali Rupees   |
| NRA    | National Reconstruction Authority                         |
| PO     | Partner Organisation                                      |
| VDC    | Village Development Committee                             |

# CONTENT



|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>Introduction</b>   | 8  |
| The Government of Nepal Housing Reconstruction Programme        | 10 |
| <br>  |    |
| <b>Blockages to Progress</b>                                    | 12 |
| 1. [Mis]Information – Rumours, Confusion, and Misunderstandings | 14 |
| 2. Inclusion in Reconstruction                                  | 20 |
| 3. Physical Inputs – Money, Materials, and Labour               | 29 |
| <br>  |    |
| <b>Recommendations</b>  | 33 |
| 1. [Mis]Information – Rumours, Confusion, and Misunderstandings | 34 |
| 2. Inclusion in Reconstruction                                  | 35 |
| 3. Physical Inputs – Money, Materials, and Labour               | 36 |



## INTRODUCTION

The Government of Nepal's (GoN) National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) has reported that as of October 2017 only 19.5% of households eligible for the GoN's reconstruction/repair grant have started construction. It has been widely discussed among reconstruction partners for a number of months that reconstruction is moving at a slower pace than was hoped. The Inter-Agency Common Feedback Project asks 2100 respondents from earthquake affected communities, every other month, if their main needs are being addressed. While initial progress in early 2017 was rapid, a clear plateau has been observed in recent months.

### ■ ARE YOUR MAIN RECONSTRUCTION ISSUES BEING ADDRESSED?





The following report aims to unpack some of the main issues that are contributing to this plateau in progress. It presents the collective analysis of the Housing Recovery and Reconstruction Platform (HRRP) and the Inter-Agency Common Feedback Project (CFP) of the key factors that are preventing progress in the reconstruction programme. Based on the analysis of a wide range of data sources, including community perception surveys of a total of 10,500 respondents, information and communications needs assessment of a total of 4000 respondents and Housing Recovery and Reconstruction Platform (HRRP) 4W, Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD) and Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD) data and NRA 5W data, this report presents evidence of issues, as well as recommendations, around three thematic areas:

■ **[MIS]INFORMATION:** access to correct, up to date, and timely information is an essential component of the owner driven housing programme to complement the GoN's financial assistance to households.

■ **INCLUSION:** meaningful engagement of vulnerable, women, marginalised and poor in the reconstruction process.

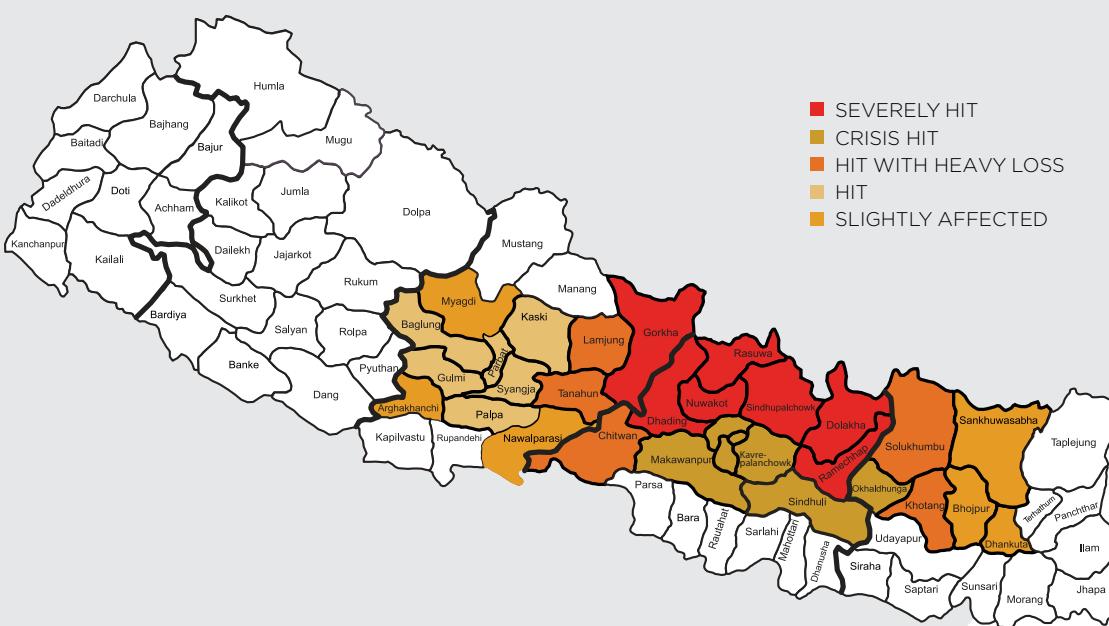
■ **PHYSICAL INPUTS:** including labour, materials and finance.

Based on experience from previous post-earthquake reconstruction efforts, it is expected that there will be a steep increase in the rate of construction during the building seasons in year 3 (September / October 2017 – April / May 2018) and year 4 (September / October 2018 – April / May 2019). Understanding what encourages / enables households to rebuild compliant homes, and conversely what the barriers are to compliant reconstruction, is critical to ensuring that reconstruction support is targeted towards overcoming the barriers and expanding the drivers. With so many households yet to start construction, and preparing to invest such large amounts of savings and loans in the construction, it is important to make every effort to support these households to build compliant houses.

**With this report, we hope to bring together a useful analysis of the varied data streams available, and build consensus around a set of actions to ultimately aid the reconstruction community in overcoming this plateau.**

# THE GOVERNMENT OF NEPAL HOUSING RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME

The M7.8 25 April 2015 Gorkha Earthquake, and the M7.3 earthquake that followed on 12 May, as well as the hundreds of aftershocks that followed both, caused loss of life and widespread damage to houses and infrastructure across 31 districts of Nepal. The housing sector was not only the largest, but also among the earliest to start recovery activities as people took initiative to salvage materials and start repairs and new construction as soon as they had the means to do so<sup>1</sup>.

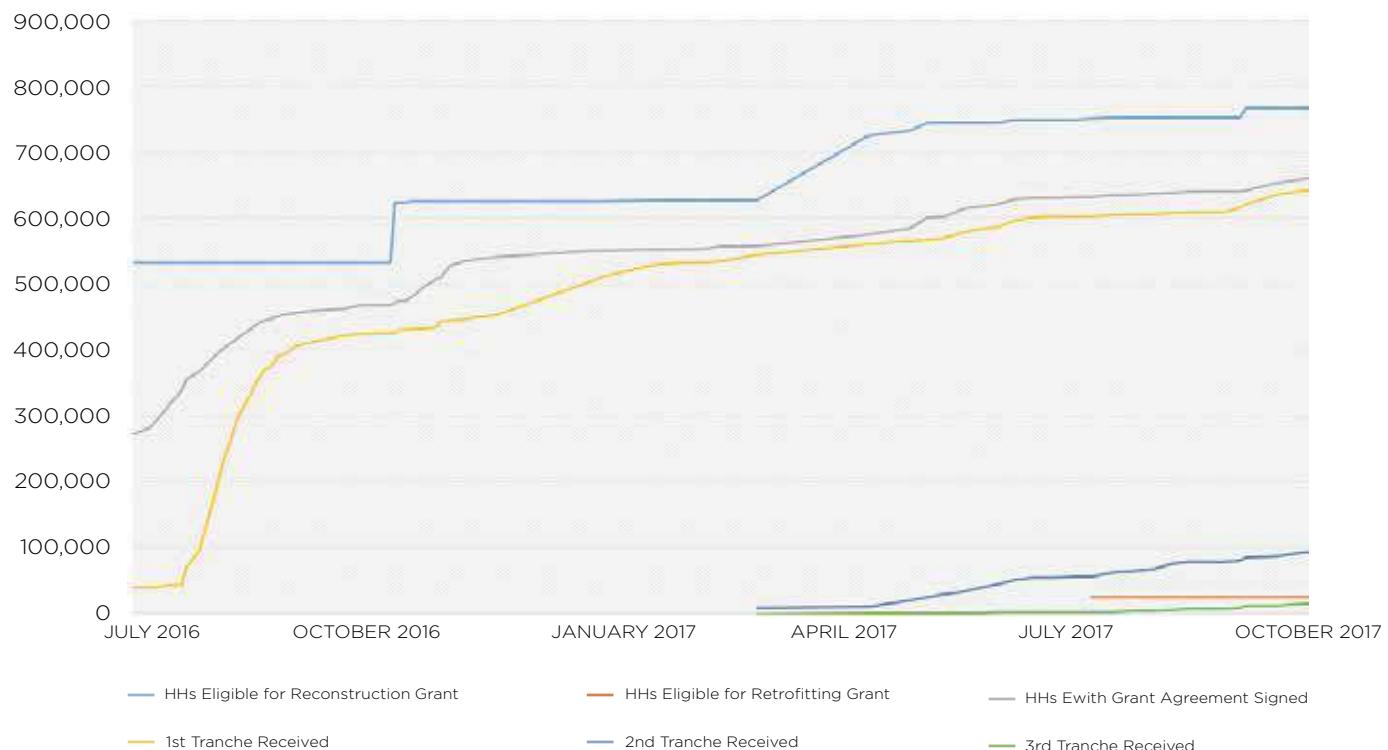


<sup>1</sup>Nepal Shelter Cluster Position Paper, June 2015

Initially emergency shelter assistance was provided to more than 1.2 million houses. The response then progressed to addressing temporary shelter needs with 699,157 households receiving a cash grant of 15,000 NPRs, or shelter materials. In parallel, the GoN, through the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA), began planning for the owner-driven housing reconstruction programme from June 2015. The programme includes a housing reconstruction grant of 300,000 NPRs grant, provided by the GoN in three tranches linked to compliant construction; 50,000 NPRs upon signing the programme partnership agreement with the GoN, 150,000 NPRs after construction to plinth level, and 100,000 NPRs after construction to ring beam level. A retrofitting grant of 100,000 NPRs is

also available to households whose homes have been partially damaged. The NRA and the HRRP have defined a core package of socio-technical assistance activities to complement the GoN financial assistance. As of October 2017, the NRA reports that 19.5% of households eligible for the GoN reconstruction / repair grant have started construction. The graph below presents the trend in the number of households eligible for the reconstruction / repair grant, as well as the number of these households that have signed the grant agreement with the GoN, received the 1st tranche, received the 2nd tranche, and received the 3rd tranche. The graph is based on HRRP, MoFALD Central Level Programme Implementation Unit (CLPIU), and MoUD CLPIU data from July 2016 to November 2017.<sup>2</sup>

## ■ HOUSING RECONSTRUCTION PROGRESS (31 DISTRICTS)



<sup>2</sup> Housing Recovery and Reconstruction Platform (HRRP), Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development Central Level Programme Implementation Unit (MoFALD CLPIU), Ministry of Urban Development Central Level Programme Implementation Unit (MoUD CLPIU).

# BLOCKAGES TO PROGRESS





PHOTO: MEDAIR/WENDY VAN AMERONGEN

## [MIS]INFORMATION- RUMOURS, CONFUSION, AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS

One of the most important factors in the reconstruction process is adequate, and accurate information. A lack of information, confusion, misunderstandings, and rumours all contribute to gaps in reconstruction programming and result in delays, waste of resources and worst: unsafe construction. Alternatively, standardised information disseminated through trusted sources has the ability to increase understanding and subsequently result in upwards progress of the reconstruction programme. This section of the report outlines these information gaps, with a focus on community feedback received through various surveys and two case studies.

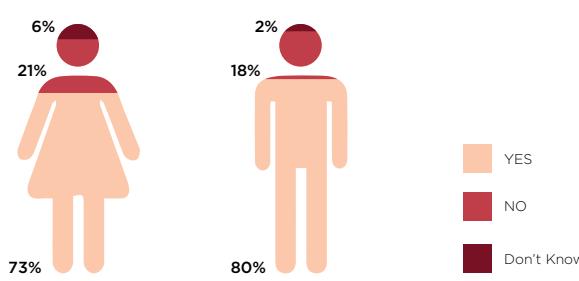
The October 2017 Common Feedback Project report indicates that 73% of female respondents and 80% of male respondents feel that they have the information needed to access reconstruction support. **Community / family members are the main source of information for 81% of respondents.** The challenge is that rumours, confusion, and misunderstandings are rife, and often the respondents'

feelings of having the information is **not reflective of their actual knowledge or understanding of critical components of the reconstruction process.**

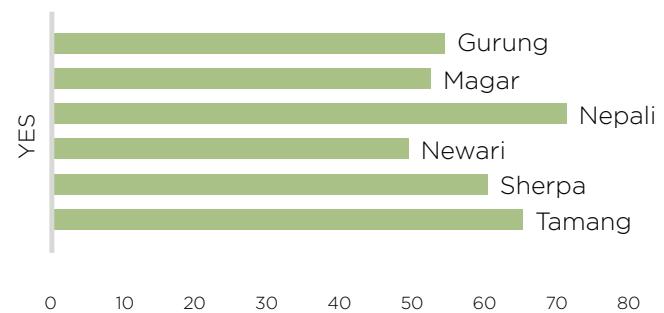
Additionally, it is important to recognize that language has, and continues to, play a significant role in a person's understanding of the reconstruction process. Nepal's rich cultural and linguistic landscape means that if all earthquake affected communities are to understand and properly adhere to the reconstruction process, a number of different languages must be employed. The Community Perception Survey of September 2017 found wide variation in respondents confidence that they fully understand the grant process by mother tongue, with 72% of Nepali speakers confident in their understanding, compared to only 50% of Newari speakers and 55% of Gurung speakers.

When asked what they understand about the grant process, 91% of people knew that the first tranche amount is 50,000 NPRs, but only 33% knew that the second tranche

### ■ AWARENESS OF SAFER BUILDING PRACTICES BY GENDER



### ■ CONFIDENCE IN UNDERSTANDING OF PROCESS BY LANGUAGE



## ■ WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE GRANT PROCESS?

**50,000**  
1<sup>ST</sup> TRANCHE

50,000 is first  
tranche (91%)



Government  
approves house  
design (33%)

**150,000**  
2<sup>ND</sup> TRANCHE

150,000 is second  
tranche (69%)



Second tranche  
after foundation  
(33%)

**100,000**  
3<sup>RD</sup> TRANCHE

100,000 is third  
tranche (51%)



Government  
approves house  
design (33%)

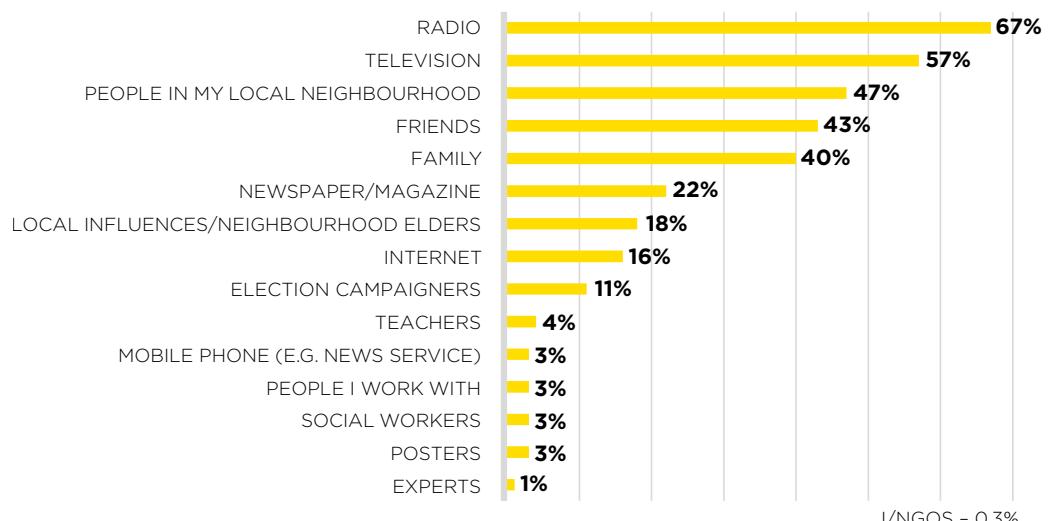


17 models  
(28%)

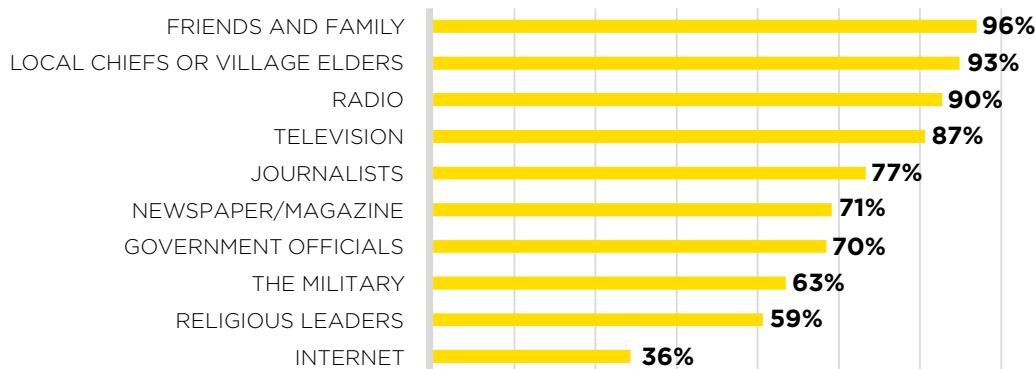
can only be applied for once the foundation has been completed. In addition, 28% still believe that they must construct using one of the 17 models from the DUDBC Design Catalogue Volume 1 (which is one of the most persistent pieces of misinformation), and **only 22% of people know that the MoUD DLPIU engineers must inspect and sign off on construction before the subsequent tranche can be released.**

In 2016, BBC Media Action conducted a nationally representative study in 25 districts, with a total of 4,000 respondents. Respondents were asked about their sources of information on current affairs and political issues, as well as about which of these sources they most trusted.

## ■ SOURCE OF INFORMATION



### ■ MOST TRUSTED INFORMATION SOURCE



Results demonstrate that radio, television, and family / friends / neighbours are not only major sources of information, but are also considered trusted sources. **Social workers, posters, and NGOs / INGOs make up a small portion of people's sources of information, and do not even feature in the trusted sources category.** Radio and television jingles, PSAs as well as print materials have been heavily used in communications efforts surrounding the reconstruction process. However, it is clear from the findings of the CFP survey that even somewhat complex information, such as the process for engineer sign off at different stages of construction, is not reaching the majority of earthquake affected people. Furthermore, the findings of both CFP and BBC Media Action's research points towards the answer: communities are most likely to get, and trust information from interpersonal communications.

The information shared by, and between, community and family members is not necessarily within the control of reconstruction actors, but the information shared by GoN and partner organization field staff is. However, with **limited investment to date in developing the communication skills of field staff and harmonised content** such as providing regular updates on new / updated policies, guidelines, etc. these field staff have, in many cases, been a source of confusion or misinformation. This was highlighted by a recent information needs assessment conducted by BBC Media Action in collaboration with community radio stations in 11 of the districts most affected by the earthquake (the three districts of Kathmandu Valley were not included). **The issue of confusing or differing information received from government / Partner Organization field staff came up as a challenge in every district.**

► CASE STUDY | RADIO EMPOWERING COMMUNITY MEMBERS



**My name is Parbati Tamang and I live in Satyadevi VDC in Dhading. I work as a teacher in the local primary school. Since the earthquake I have been living in a temporary shelter. I am waiting to get advice from an engineer before I start rebuilding my home. I want to construct it in a way that is earthquake resilient.**

**I have been listening to Milijuli Nepali for quite a while now and I find it very inspiring to hear stories from other people who are**

**also rebuilding. The information shared about rebuilding techniques is also very useful.**

**I have been inspired to become more active in my own village after hearing stories of women who have been involved in building earthquake resilient houses. Because of the information that is shared through the programme I am able to offer help and suggestions to other people in my community who are rebuilding their homes.**



## CASE STUDY HOUSEHOLD CHALLENGES WITH THE INSPECTION PROCESS

**My name is Yadav Prasad Parajuli and I live in Dhulikhel-2 in Kavre District. I received the first and second tranche of the government grant, but my house has not been approved for the third tranche.**

**Initially the government engineers were very helpful and they supported me to select a design from the catalogue and informed me of the importance of using banding and other earthquake resistant techniques.**

**But now the biggest reconstruction challenge we face is the contradictory information shared by the engineers. Some adobe houses have received the grant, but we were told that our houses would not be approved if we built in this way. We were also told that we had to restrict the length and width of our homes but now others who did not keep to the restrictions are being approved for the grant.**

**I enrolled in the programme in March 2016 and received the first tranche in August 2016. Three months after this I started the construction of my home. I used the first tranche for the demolition of my damaged home and then used my own resources to construct the new building. During the construction, I requested the government engineers to come for supervision visits and to carry out an inspection for the second tranche, but over the phone they assured me that the construction was compliant and suggested that I continue with the work. I received the second tranche in June 2017, three months after the forms had been filled in. I then completed the construction of my house.**

**Just before Dashain festival, the engineers visited to conduct the final inspection. During this inspection, they marked the house as non-compliant as I have used stone for the gable wall. I am annoyed as if they had told me not to use stone for the gables, or had conducted supervision visits when I requested them, then my house would be compliant. It is challenging for me to pay the 20,000 NPRs required to fix the gable walls, and finding labour is very difficult. Until I make these corrections, I will not receive the third tranche. I asked the engineers if I could apply for the NRA's loan schemes so that I could make the corrections, but they told me that people that have already completed their construction cannot apply.**

**Despite the challenges I have faced, I am pleased with the house I have constructed and hope that I will be able to make the corrections required to get the third tranche. People often say that the reconstruction process is complicated and 300,000 NPRs is not sufficient for reconstruction but I tell them that if you add a little of your own money to the grant you can build an earthquake resistant house.**



Across the 14 districts most affected by the earthquake, there are just over 2,500 MoUD District Level Programme Implementation Unit (DLPIU) engineers, sub-engineers, and assistant sub-engineers. These are the GoN representatives at the forefront of the reconstruction, dealing with households on a daily basis and responsible for the inspection process tied to the disbursement of the housing reconstruction grant. These staff are often young, recently graduated engineers charged with a very difficult task, and often working without a high level of logistical or operational support.

**Standardising the information shared by field staff, and supporting them to have the correct, regularly updated information to share has become an urgent task.** Equally, community leaders need to be effectively engaged as agents of the reconstruction to utilise their position as highly trusted sources of information. The recently elected local officials also have a role to play and need support to be able to share accurate and up to date information with their constituents.

► CASE STUDY CHALLENGES FACED BY INSPECTION ENGINEERS



**My name is Sunil Thapa and I am from Tikapur, Kailali. I have been working as an MoUD DLPIU engineer in Bijulikot VDC, Ramechhap for 1.5 years as part of a team of 2 engineers, 1 sub-engineer, and 1 assistant sub-engineer. Our work is challenging, but I am trying my best to share my knowledge on safe reconstruction. The VDC is very large, there are 1,263 households reconstructing, and due to the difficult terrain and the distance between the houses I have to walk 5-6 hours every day to inspect and monitor houses.**

**Despite this, I am determined to do the best I can. It gives me immense pleasure when I see the happy faces of people who have finished**

**their homes. It feels really good when our work is a success and I want to stay here until all the houses are earthquake resistant. Water scarcity is an issue here that is making it difficult for households to rebuild. There is also no electricity here which makes it very difficult for us to submit our weekly progress reports to the main office. We also cannot charge our phones when we need to.**

**When the government decided to give the 300,000 NPRs grant to affected households, local people were very happy. We hope that the government will now address our issues as well and facilitate a good working environment for all the MoUD DLPIU engineers.**

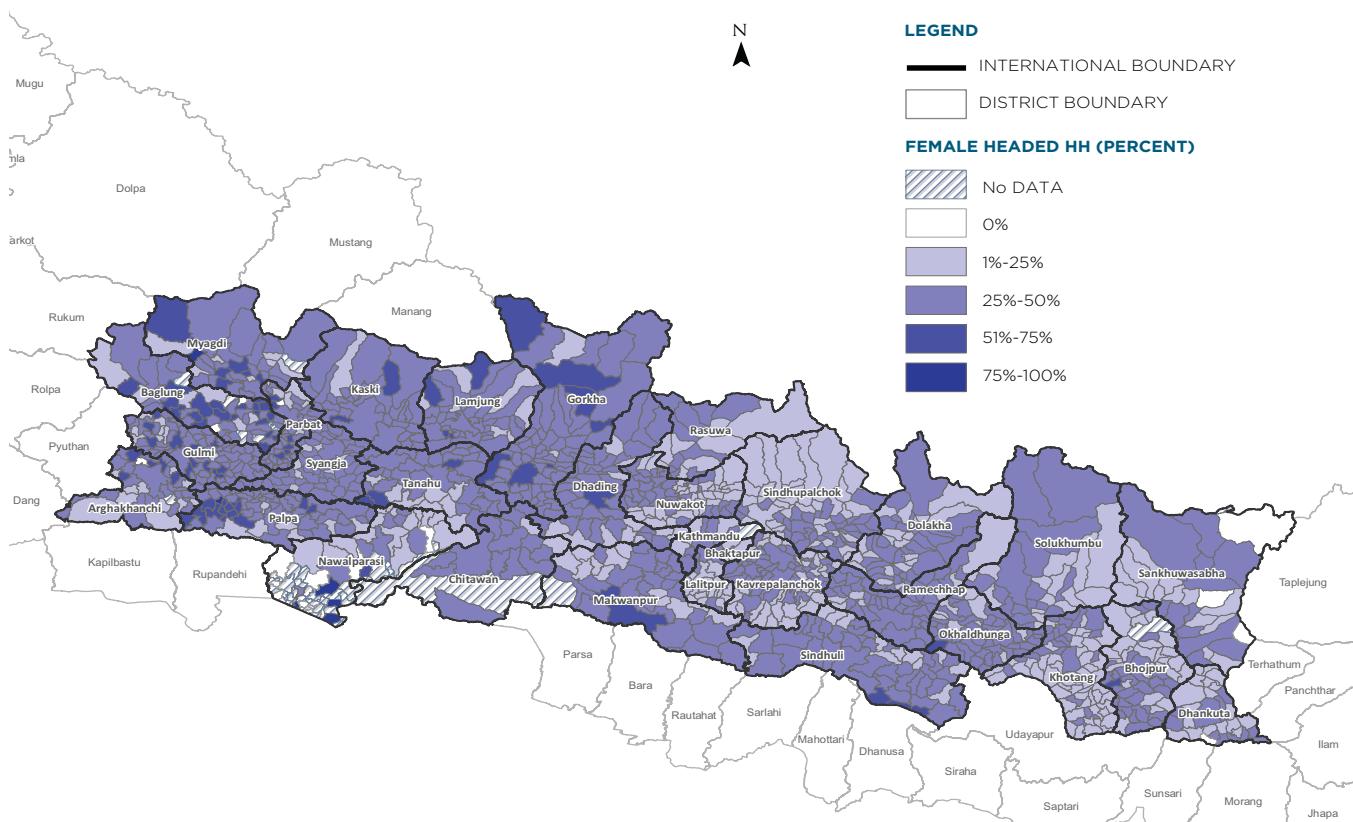
## INCLUSION IN RECONSTRUCTION

Before the earthquake, development actors regularly raised concerns around the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups in their own and government programmes. The earthquake is estimated to have pushed an additional 750,000-900,000 Nepalese living close to the poverty line into poverty<sup>3</sup>. Despite this, inclusion continues to be an issue which is not sufficiently addressed in the post-earthquake reconstruction process.

Many people reported **concerns about the recently announced deadlines for tranche**

**disbursement**, as they feel they are unable to overcome structural and financial barriers necessary to meet the deadlines. The Common Feedback Project has found that this is having a bigger impact on marginalised groups, particularly people from Dalit communities, who are the most likely to have not yet started reconstruction<sup>4</sup>. The HRRP has found a small correlation between income and rate of construction: poorer people are building faster than richer people. However, it remains the case that putting a cut-off deadline on access to the housing grant is likely to have a negative effect on the 80.5%

### A MAP OF THE % OF FEMALE HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN THE 31 EARTHQUAKE AFFECTED DISTRICTS, AS PER THE CBS DAMAGE ASSESSMENT DATA



<sup>3</sup>UNESCAP Asia-Pacific Disaster Report, 2017

<sup>4</sup>CFP Report August 2017

of households yet to start construction, and will only push vulnerable and marginalised groups further behind.

**Women consistently report not having been meaningfully engaged in the reconstruction process,** or treated as agents of the recovery. This has played out in various ways at all stages of the recovery and reconstruction. From the beginning of the enrolment process when women's names were not listed for bank accounts making them unable to access the reconstruction grant, to a persistent gap in targeting them with reconstruction information in a way that meets their communication needs. When asked if they felt men and women

were equally engaged in the reconstruction process 60% of men felt they were, compared to only 49% of women. When asked why women were not equally engaged 57% believe it is because men are given preference in beneficiary lists, 36% feel it's due to low participation of women in training, and 32% say it's because women are not as strong as men.

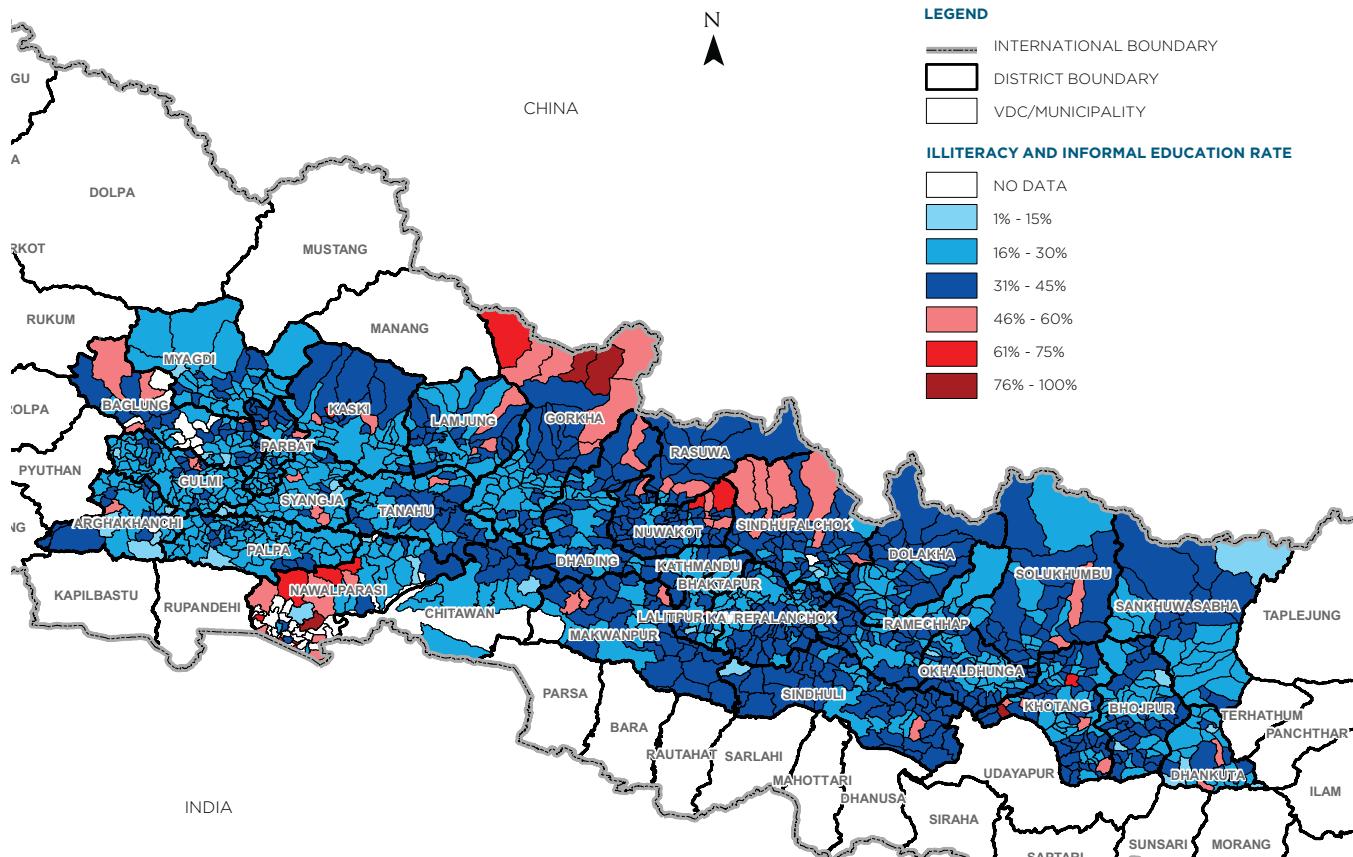
All stakeholders involved in the reconstruction must give this serious strategic consideration. If more than 50% of the population are not encouraged and supported to take part in the reconstruction it is unlikely that the expected results can be achieved.



The **literacy rate nationally is just 48%; for Dalits it is only 18%**. Participation in the reconstruction programme requires a certain level of literacy to be able to fill in the required forms, especially for the grievance process. Considering the low rates of literacy, especially amongst the most marginalised

households, additional social mobilisation support is required to address this. This is also a protection issue; it is important to ensure that vulnerable households are provided with support to access the services they are entitled to, and to raise grievances if required.

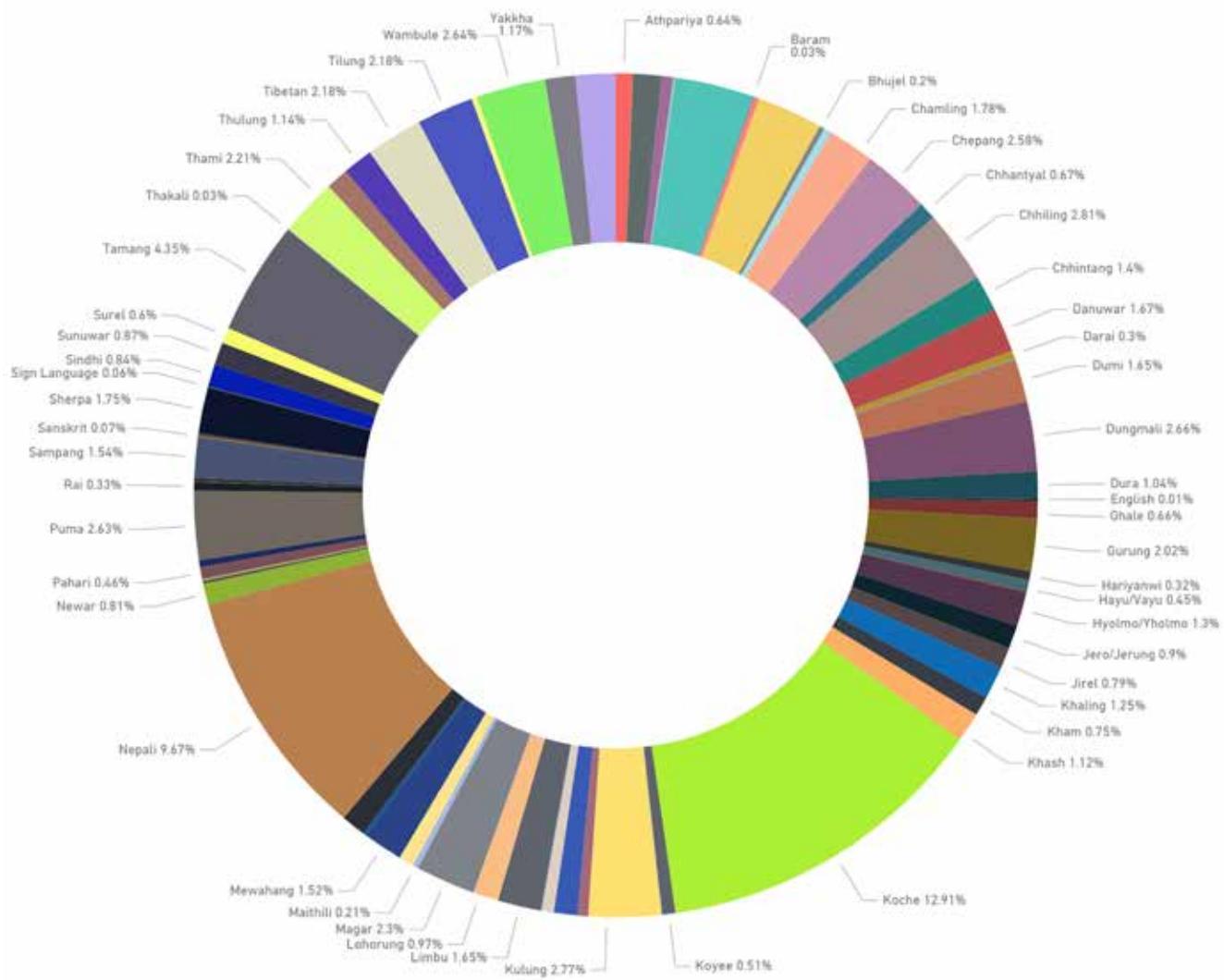
## LITERACY AND INFORMAL EDUCATION RATE ACROSS THE 31 EARTHQUAKE AFFECTED DISTRICTS, AS PER THE CBS DAMAGE ASSESSMENT DATA



Across the earthquake affected districts there are many languages spoken. Language is generally very closely linked with ethnicity

and caste, making it **impossible to achieve inclusion if languages other than Nepali are not catered to.**

#### ■ LANGUAGES SPOKEN IN THE 31 EARTHQUAKE AFFECTED DISTRICTS, AS PER CBS CENSUS 2011.



**The NRA estimates that approximately 10,000 'landless' households are eligible for a grant of up to 200,000 NPRs to purchase land<sup>5</sup>.** Whilst this is very positive, and during October it was reported that 729 Guthi<sup>6</sup> settlers from Rasuwa and Sindhupalchok signed a grant agreement for the reconstruction of their homes<sup>7</sup>, it is not yet clear how the practical implementation of the policy will play out for households in this area. It is a concern that landless households not identified as eligible for the grant may be vulnerable or marginalised people who would struggle to manage the grievance process. There are also anecdotal reports of households moving from displacement sites and securing land to set up temporary shelters by agreeing that the landlord will receive 50% of their crops annually.

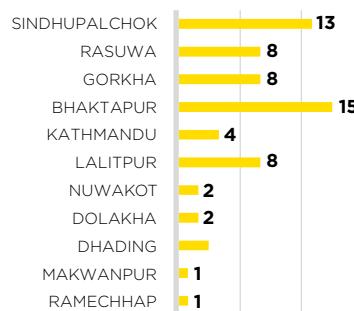
The December 2016 Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), Round 9<sup>8</sup> reported that there were 65 active displacement sites hosting 20 or more households, with a total of 3,753 households living across these sites. It was also reported that 49% of displacement sites are within 30 minutes of the displaced

families place of origin, 26% are between 30 minutes and 3 hours from the place of origin, and 25% are more than 3 hours from the place of origin. **Understanding the complex reasons for displacement, and how to support households in this situation through the reconstruction is challenging.**

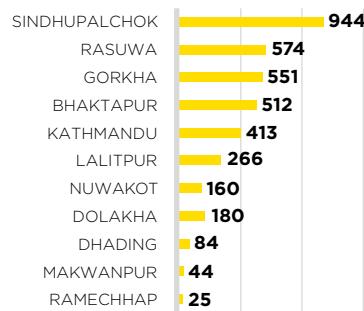
Some are living in displacement sites for socio-economic reasons (closer to urban centres and work opportunities), while others have been displaced by geo-hazards, etc. Eviction also remains a threat for some displacement sites.

The NRA has published a policy for the provision of a grant of up to 200,000 NPRs to support households whose settlement has been identified as unsafe to purchase land. In October, it was reported that 17 landless families from Ramche, Barabise, Tauthali, and Melamchi in Sindhupalchok have filed their applications with the district NRA for the 200,000 NPRs grant to buy land<sup>9</sup>. This is a positive step forward but **this group will require specific, targeted support for many years as they move through their reconstruction and recovery.**

#### ■ NO. OF TEMPORARY SETTLEMENTS



#### ■ NO. OF HOUSEHOLDS



<sup>5</sup>As of November 2017, NRA District Coordination Offices are going through a process of identifying and verifying 'landless' households eligible for the 200,000 NPRs grant to purchase land.

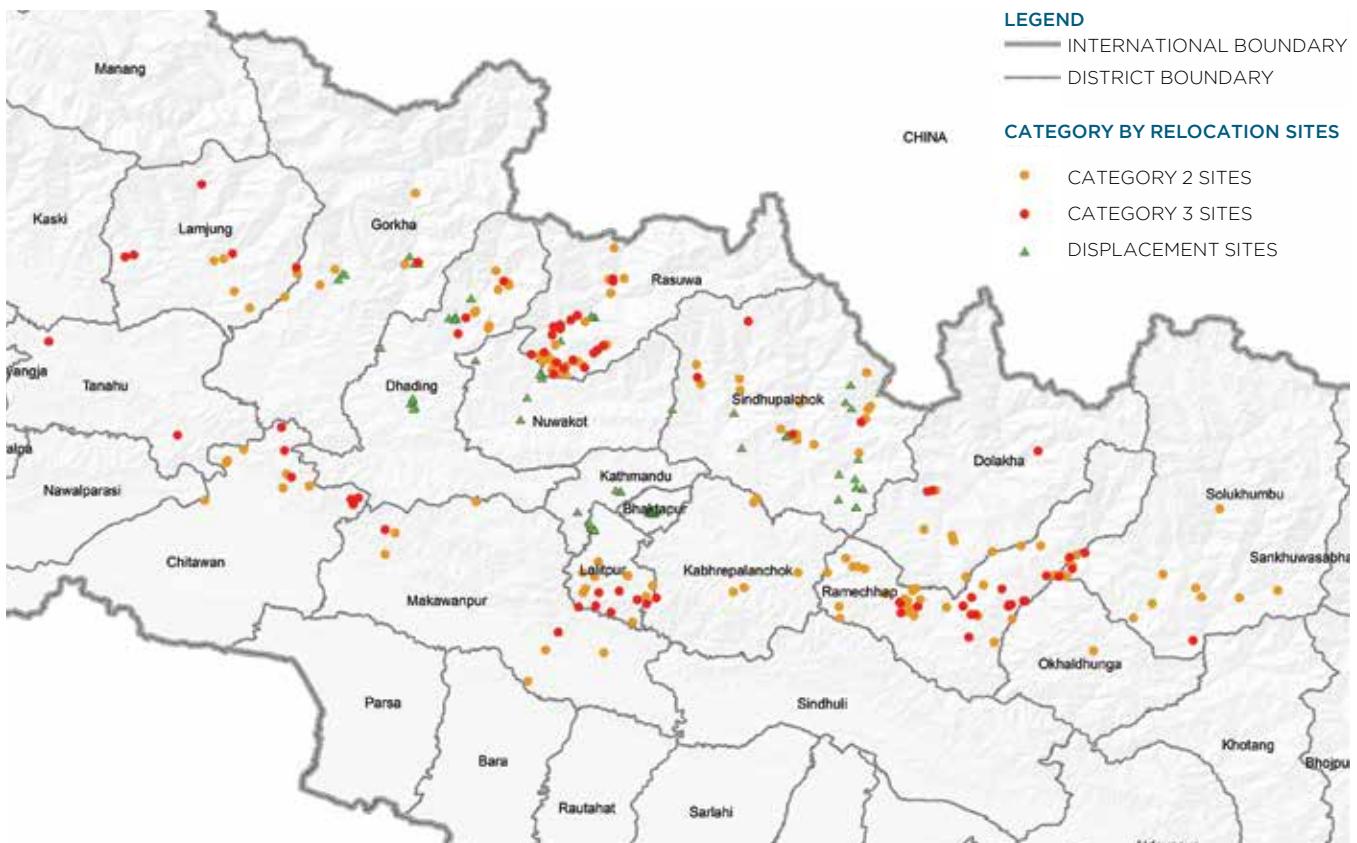
<sup>6</sup>The Guthi Corporation Act, 2033 (1976)

<sup>7</sup>Supporting Durable Solutions Update, 16 October 2017

<sup>8</sup>Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), Round 9, December 2016

<sup>9</sup>Supporting Durable Solutions Update, 16 October 2017

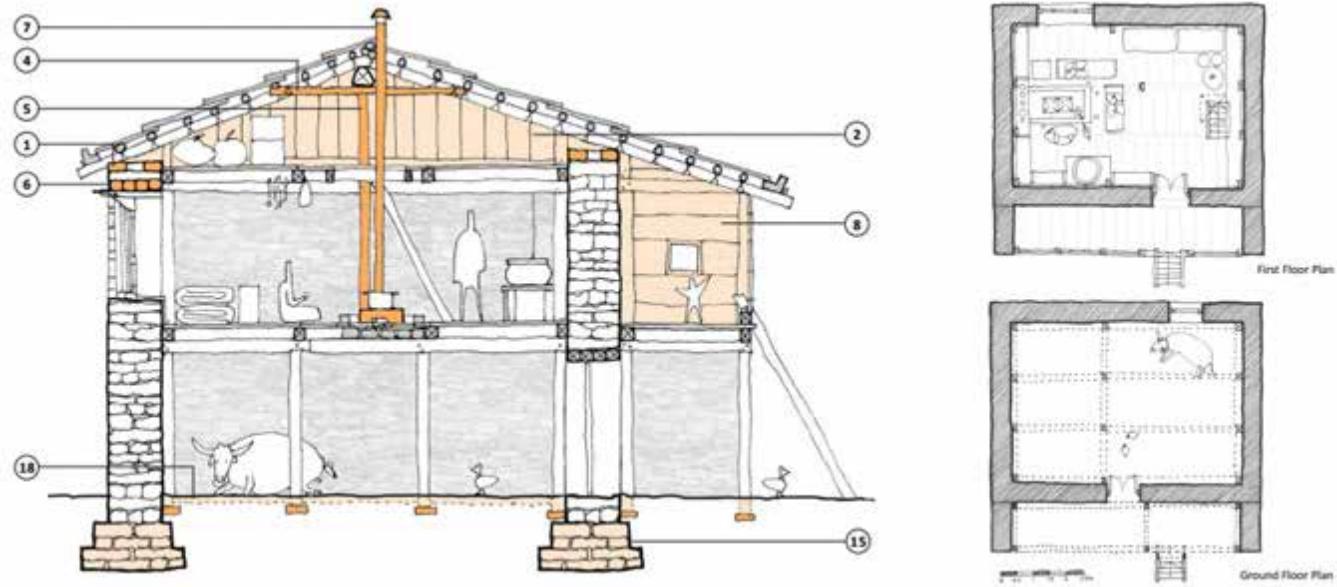
■ LOCATION OF SETTLEMENTS IDENTIFIED AS CATEGORY 2 (MITIGATION WORKS REQUIRED) AND CATEGORY 3 (UNSAFE) BY THE NRA GEO-HAZARD ASSESSMENT, AND DISPLACEMENT SITES.



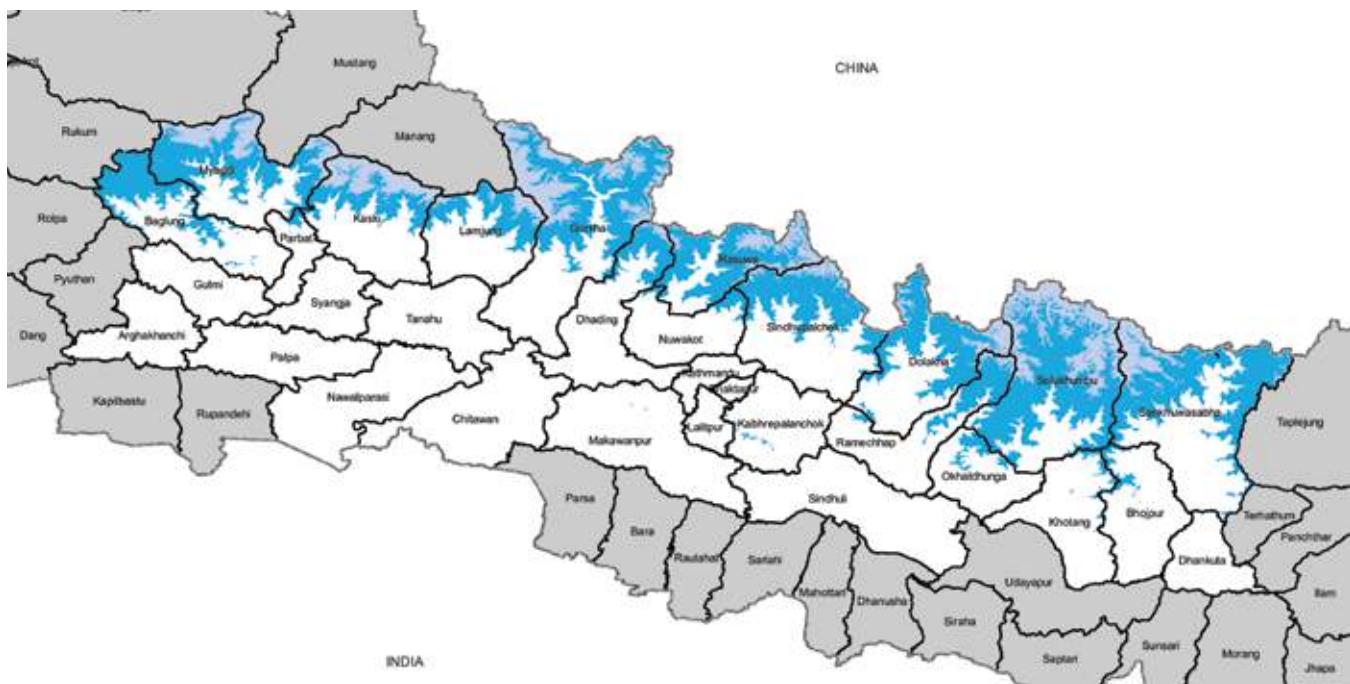
When asked about their reconstruction needs, remote communities have reportedly prioritised improved road infrastructure (to improve access to markets, schools, health centres, etc.) over housing reconstruction. However, these communities also have concerns around what impact improved transport links could have on communities as many jobs are tied to portering, mules, trekking, etc. Remote and inaccessible areas also pay more for materials due to the high cost of transportation. Expanding the compliance menu to include local building techniques will help to address this. As the majority of households in these areas have already rebuilt but are likely non-compliant, the expansion of the compliance menu will need to translate into expansion

of the corrections and exceptions manual to address common non-compliances in these areas. Labour supply can also be an issue; people migrating from their home in search of work can create labour shortages. Alternatively, people migrating to affected areas to provide labour may not possess the right skills or be familiar with traditional local building practices. In areas where there are many trekking routes, mainly in the north, there is great potential for tourism to have a big impact on reconstruction. Linking reconstruction and recovery to tourism is also a priority of the Post Disaster Recovery Framework (PDRF). Healthcare, education, and income generation are often challenging in remote areas, which together combine to impact heavily on people's overall recovery.

### TYPICAL KHIM (HOUSE) IN NORTHERN GORKHA<sup>10</sup>



■ AREAS HIGHLIGHTED IN BLUE ARE 'NORTHERN AREAS',  
I.E. AREAS WHICH ARE AT AN ALTITUDE OF 2,500M OR MORE.



<sup>10</sup>Gorkha North Field Report, CRS Shelter and Settlements Team

In urban areas, renters whose rental accommodation was damaged or destroyed by the earthquake, are a potentially very vulnerable group that there is little information on, especially as they are outside of the reconstruction grant programme.

The demolition of the Chuchepati camp in Kathmandu by Nepal Police on 14th March 2017 did somewhat highlight this issue as many of the residents of the camp had been renters prior to the earthquake.

► CASE STUDY URBAN RENTER



PHOTO: SAJANA SHRESHTA, PEOPLE IN NEED

**My name is Gita Maya Raut and I am originally from Okhaldhunga but I have been living in a rented room in Kathmandu since before the earthquake. I moved to the Chuchepati camp with my family of six after the earthquake. We have a tiny rented room where we are storing our belongings but it is not big enough for us**

**to stay in so that is why we came to the camp. Only my eldest son has work but he does not earn enough to support us all. When the camp was demolished we had no other option but to move into our small rented room where we were storing our belongings.**

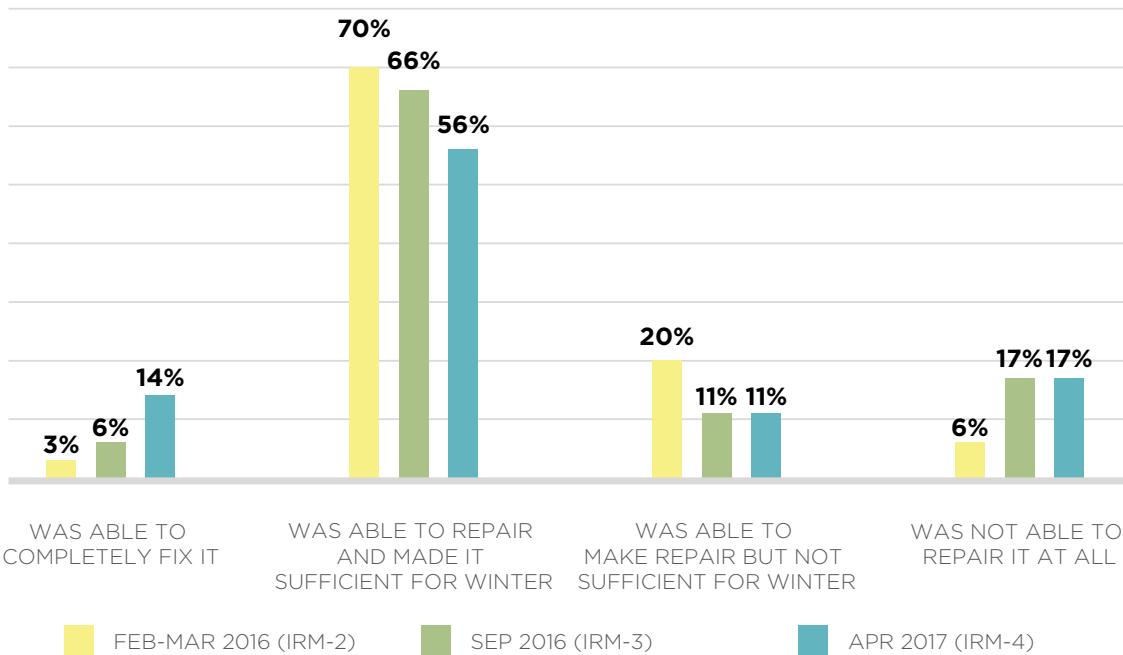
Round four of The Asia Foundation 'Independent Impacts and Recovery Monitoring' Project, conducted in April 2017, found that 70% of respondents felt they had been able to prepare their shelters for winter weather, however, 17% failed to repair their shelters completely and 11% failed to repair them sufficiently for winter<sup>11</sup>. Those who were unable to prepare their shelter for winter were more likely to be from low caste groups. The report also indicates that those with lower income were less likely to be able to prepare their shelter for winter. People with disabilities also faced greater difficulty repairing their shelters, with only 46% of people with disabilities able to carry out repairs.

The NRA NGO Mobilisation Guidelines include provision for Partner Organisations to distribute a top-up grant of up to 50,000 NPRs to support:

- Resettlement and settlement relocation,
- Vulnerable households (" very disadvantaged family, family of widow and single woman with only underage offspring, family with only members of senior citizens above 75 years, personal housing for single person with disabilities"), and
- Transportation management necessary for private housing reconstruction in remote areas.

To date, this top-up grant is being, or is planned, to be distributed to 563 households (as per the HRRP 4W data as of 25 October<sup>12</sup>). Scaling up coverage of the top-up grant is important but must include a comprehensive package of support to vulnerable and marginalised households, most importantly including social mobilisation support. This support needs to be provided for a sufficient duration to see households through the full process.

#### ■ SHARE OF PEOPLE PREPARING THEIR SHELTERS FOR WINTER / MONSOON



<sup>11</sup>Aid and Recovery in Post-Earthquake Nepal, Synthesis Report, Phase 4, The Asia Foundation  
<sup>12</sup>HRRP 4W R42 25 October 2017

## PHYSICAL INPUTS – MONEY, MATERIALS, AND LABOUR

It is impossible to reconstruct without physical inputs. Earthquake affected communities have consistently reported to CFP that issues of insufficient building materials, water, skilled labour, and funds are major factors preventing them from being able to reconstruct their homes. In May 2017, CFP found that the top reconstruction needs for respondents were skilled labour (21%), building materials (55%), and financial resources (93%). By October 2017, CFP data seems to indicate that there has been some progress with respondents reporting that their top reconstruction needs are financial resources (74%) and building materials (7%).

In October 2017, the HRRP District Coordination Teams spoke with over 550 households, across the 14 districts most affected by the earthquake, regarding the actual, or estimated, costs of reconstructing their home<sup>13</sup>. The District Coordination Teams also collected information regarding loans and sale of assets to generate resources for reconstruction.

The Common Feedback Project, in their October 2017 report, highlighted that of the 25% of respondents that had completed construction of their home, 75% had taken loans to do so. As the data collected by the HRRP District Country Team indicates, the average rate of interest on loans is 23% (annual), with many households paying 43% annual interest, meaning the cost implications for households are enormous. It is also concerning that many people are taking informal loans, where the consequences of missed, or non-payment of the loan may include loss of assets, including the family home. In the long term, increasing levels of debt are likely to impede the overall recovery of households, and their communities, and may have implications for resilience in the face of future disasters.

Interestingly, some initial analysis by the HRRP of the rate of construction (as MoUD CLPIU data) versus the income of households (as per the CBS damage assessment survey) shows that in most districts there appears to be an increased construction rate amongst

### MEDIAN COST OF RECONSTRUCTION, AS PER DATA COLLECTED BY HRRP DCTS IN OCTOBER 2017<sup>14</sup>.

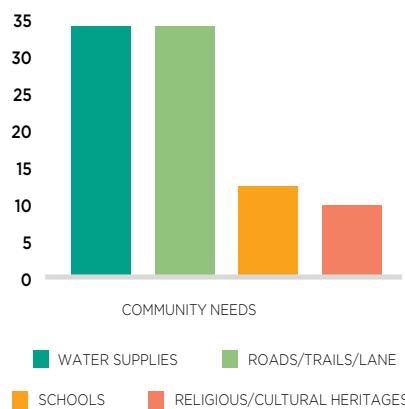
| DISTRICT              | MEDIAN (NPR\$) | LOWEST (NPR\$) | HIGHEST (NPR\$)  |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Bhaktapur             | 2,500,000      | 700,000        | 4,200,000        |
| Dhading               | 800,000        | 200,000        | 2,500,000        |
| Dolakha               | 550,000        | 300,000        | 2,600,000        |
| Gorkha                | 700,000        | 150,000        | 3,500,000        |
| Kathmandu             | 2,250,000      | 200,000        | 6,500,000        |
| Kavre                 | 600,000        | 300,000        | 3,000,000        |
| Lalitpur              | 1,200,000      | 75,000         | 6,000,000        |
| Makwanpur             | 575,000        | 50,000         | 3,200,000        |
| Nuwakot               | 650,000        | 200,000        | 6,500,000        |
| Okhaldhunga           | 500,000        | 250,000        | 1,400,000        |
| Ramechap              | 600,000        | 300,000        | 3,500,000        |
| Rasuwa                | 700,000        | 300,000        | 1,700,000        |
| Sindhuli              | 1,000,000      | 700,000        | 1,600,000        |
| Sindhupalchowk        | 600,000        | 280,000        | 4,000,000        |
| <b>OVERALL MEDIAN</b> | <b>675,000</b> | <b>265,000</b> | <b>3,350,000</b> |

<sup>12</sup>Cost of Construction Report, HRRP, October 2017

<sup>14</sup>Cost of Construction Report, HRRP, October 2017

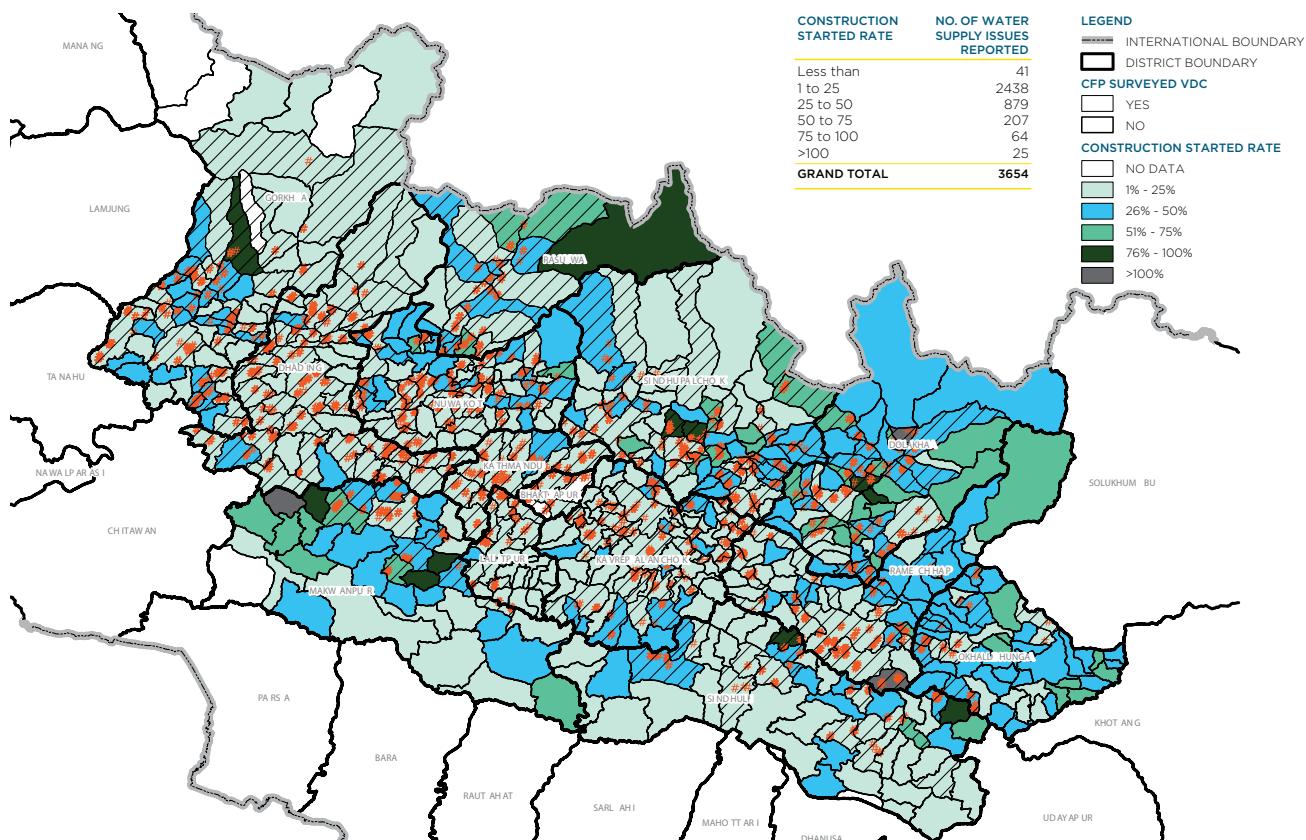
households with lower income. Perhaps, this is because households with lower incomes have fewer alternatives and therefore there is increased pressure to complete their construction.

### ■ NON-HOUSING COMMUNITY RECONSTRUCTION NEEDS



Water scarcity is an issue that has been affecting communities' reconstruction in many areas. The latest CFP report (October 2017) found that 34% of respondents prioritise water supply as their second biggest reconstruction need, after the reconstruction of their homes. This is the first time that the percentage of respondents prioritising water supply has dropped in 2017 and it is likely due to the timing of the data collection; the data was collected in September just at the end of the monsoon. A survey conducted by BBC Media Action in August 2017, also found that people listed water as their top most requirement for construction. When the CFP data on water scarcity was laid over the construction rate data from MoUD CLPIU there was no indication of any correlation between the two<sup>15</sup>. However, this remains an issue that communities raise on a regular basis, and there are numerous reports from the field that water scarcity is impacting the construction rate.

### ■ LOCATION OF WATER SUPPLY ISSUES REPORTED TO CFP (ACROSS FOUR ROUNDS OF DATA COLLECTION IN 2017) VS. CONSTRUCTION RATE.



<sup>15</sup>Map of CFP reported water scarcity issues vs. construction rate as per MoUD CLPIU data

There have been huge investments in the development of skilled labour to support the housing reconstruction, particularly short training (normally 7 days) on earthquake resistant construction techniques for existing masons, and longer 'On the Job' training (normally 50 days) to train new masons. The daily wage rate for trained masons has gone up by at least 200 NPRs in earthquake affected districts, but in Dolakha it has increased by up to 700 NPRs<sup>16</sup>. Households often struggle to manage the increased labour cost, especially as they are often

expected to provide food for the masons on top of wages. This tends to impact female headed households most heavily, as there may not be others in the house that can provide labour for construction work. Labour migration, in and out of earthquake districts, is also an issue. There are reports of trained masons moving to urban areas in Nepal, or travelling to Gulf States to find work, as well as reports of masons untrained in earthquake resistant construction moving from the Tarai into the earthquake affected districts to work on the reconstruction.

► CASE STUDY FEMALE MASON



PHOTO: OCHA/ROAP

**My name is Gyaneshwari Kapali, and I am from Chautara-5, Sindhupalchowk. I am currently living in a temporary shelter with my husband and our three children. We have been living in the shelter since our home was destroyed in the April 2015 earthquake.**

**The organisation SAATHI provided me with the opportunity to take part in a 45-day mason training. I enjoyed the training and have no problem doing masonry work. I am very happy to be earning good wages by working on the reconstruction of people's houses. I feel independent and strong now that I am earning my own money for the first time. I am very pleased that there is no discrimination between male and female masons and we all receive the same pay. I am keen to continue to develop as a mason and want this to be my career. I want to take part in more advanced training courses and maybe eventually go and work in other districts as well.**

**I have received the first tranche of the government grant but have not started reconstructing my home yet. I am still saving money for the construction but I hope to be able to start in December 2017.**

<sup>16</sup>Masons Training Experience Sharing Session, HRRP Presentation, December 2016

Material quality is also an issue that households face. If they have not received, or do not have access to information on what quality of material they should use, and how to test this, it is very difficult for them to make sure that they are purchasing the best possible products. Vendors and producers represent fixed points of reference for households and communities, where they can access information and guidance regarding materials and their use for construction. Local technical support should include the mobilisation of vendors and fabricators as partners in the promotion of awareness of the importance of quality assurance in safer construction.

The cost of reconstruction in urban areas is much higher than in other areas. When the median cost of construction in the 11 districts outside of the Kathmandu Valley is compared to the median cost of construction in the three districts in the Kathmandu Valley, this can be seen very clearly:

The technical challenges in urban areas are also very complex. For example, due to the practice of vertical sub-division many plots are now too small to meet the building code requirements and therefore cannot be approved for a building permit. There are also questions around how heritage aspects of urban areas can, or should be, preserved. The interaction between existing municipal by-laws and the reconstruction specific standards has also proved challenging in some areas.

#### **■ COMPARISON OF MEDIAN COST OF CONSTRUCTION IN KATHMANDU VALLEY AND IN THE 11 DISTRICTS OUTSIDE THE VALLEY**

| DISTRICT  | MEDIAN COST OF CONSTRUCTION (NPRS) | MEDIAN COST OF CONSTRUCTION IN 11 DISTRICTS (NPRS) | DIFFERENCE (NPRS) |
|-----------|------------------------------------|--|-------------------|
| BHAKTAPUR | 2,500,000                          | 600,000  | 1,900,000         |
| KATHMANDU | 2,250,000                          | 600,000  | 1,650,000         |
| LALITPUR  | 1,200,000                          | 600,000  | 600,000           |

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Common Feedback Project and HRRP have developed the following set of recommendations to address the challenges identified in this report. We strongly advocate for all reconstruction actors to come together to implement these recommendations.

Reconstruction actors must be realistic about the time required to complete the reconstruction, and plan and budget accordingly. Five years after the 2011 Christchurch Earthquake, thousands of households were still waiting to start repairs to their homes<sup>17</sup>. Five years after the 2011 earthquake in Japan 58,948 people were still living in temporary homes and weren't expected to move to permanent housing for at least another two years<sup>18</sup>. Six and a half years after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, it was estimated that 55,000 families remained in displacement camps and hundreds of thousands of families were still living in temporary shelters<sup>19</sup>.

Households will take time to plan and save for their reconstruction; different families will move at different paces and will face different challenges. Reconstruction actors need to work to "understand the process from affected people's point of view, understand how they are planning their own recovery, and then determine how to support"<sup>20</sup>. Assistance provided should be done so in "contribution or partnership, as an open-ended process, with timing and other factors determined by people themselves"<sup>21</sup>. This is an owner driven reconstruction; we need to trust households and communities to manage the process, providing support as and when required.

<sup>17</sup>'Christchurch earthquake: The battle to rebuild, five years on', BBC

<sup>18</sup>'5 years later, Japan still struggles to recover from tsunami disaster', USA Today

<sup>19</sup>'Seven Years after the Earthquake: Haiti in an unprecedented humanitarian, food, and climate crisis', Relief Web

<sup>20</sup>Kashmir Earthquake 2005, Learning from the Shelter Response and Rural Housing Recovery

<sup>21</sup>Kashmir Earthquake 2005, Learning from the Shelter Response and Rural Housing Recovery

## [MIS]INFORMATION- RUMOURS, CONFUSION, AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS

### **Invest in face-to-face communication**

methods to better communicate complex concepts, such as the grant process and the associated technical requirements, and support vulnerable and marginalised families. This will involve scaling up the presence of field staff, particularly social mobilisers.

### **Establish a support framework for field staff to ensure they have sufficient training and ongoing support**

to be able to share correct and up to date information, as well as to document and share successes and challenges.

Engage and develop community leaders, elected officials, and construction material vendors and producers as **effective agents of the recovery**. In particular, women need to be supported to take on this role so that they can bring other women into the process.

Avoid large investments in training if the other components of the core socio-technical assistance package are not also going to be provided. Training has limited impact if, for example, there is no follow up by door-to-door technical assistance teams, or if households cannot access information through orientations or from a technical resource centre. **Scaling up the coverage and quality of the core socio-technical assistance package is an urgent and critical task, particularly for vulnerable and marginalised households.**

**Clarity is required around the recently announced tranche deadlines:** what are the implications if these are not met? Is there additional support available to households to help them to meet the deadlines? Clear information needs to be communicated on this topic to avoid the potential for rumours and misinformation to confuse and concern households.



## INCLUSION IN RECONSTRUCTION

**Bring women into the reconstruction process in a meaningful way.** This means treating them as full agents of the recovery, targeting them with information, engaging them in training and enabling them to take reconstruction into their own hands. With more women than men in rural areas, properly engaging women is the only way to improve the pace and the quality of the reconstruction process.

Where masons trainings are provided, **equal opportunity needs to be given to female participants through single gender trainings.** There are multiple reports from districts of female participants in mixed gender training being allocated only menial tasks. Every effort needs to be made to avoid this, particularly as the number of female headed households is so high.

**Consider language and literacy skills.** The reconstruction process requires the understanding of many complex processes and concepts, as well as filling-in multiple forms at different points throughout the process. The mother tongue of many households across affected areas is not Nepali; speakers of other languages such as Tamang, Gurung, Sherpa, and Chepang need to be catered to. Information needs to be available in these languages, particularly through trained local social mobilisers and community leaders. The presence of social mobilisers needs to be scaled up to offer

additional support for households struggling with language or literacy constraints.

### **Scale up coverage of the vulnerable and remote top-up grant of 50,000**

**NPRs.** Transportation support for remote households is particularly important, considering the high costs of transportation in these areas.

**Displaced and landless households require specific, long term support throughout their reconstruction process.** The number of households in this situation is relatively small in relation to the total number of households involved in reconstruction. However, their needs are great, and the possibilities for households to become further marginalised and/or vulnerable through this process is high. Protection and social mobilisation activities need to be scaled up, with properly trained and well supported field staff deployed to work on this complex topic.

The Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) identified a total of 31 districts as earthquake affected. To date, most support provided has been focused on the 14 'most affected' districts. Despite this, large gaps (and some duplication) remain in these areas. **Support now needs to be expanded so that coverage of reconstruction support is improved in the 14 districts, as well as being expanded into the 17 'moderately affected' districts.**

## PHYSICAL INPUTS – MONEY, MATERIALS, AND LABOUR

Further **research and documentation of the cost of reconstruction** is needed. E.g. what impact does the distance of the house from the road have? How are material and labour costs increasing or decreasing over time? What impact is inflation having?

Advocate for, and support the introduction of **high level policy changes around construction materials** as a method of reducing costs for households. E.g. cut tax on cement and steel for one year.

**Facilitate access to financial resources with reasonable interest rates.** Support households to understand lending and financial processes, e.g. what is a reasonable interest rate? What are the risks involved? Advocate with government and financial institutions for the provision of more reasonable loan rates.

**Reconstruction in urban areas needs renewed focus and support.** There are urban areas across all the earthquake affected

districts; this is not only related to the Kathmandu Valley. As urbanisation continues to increase in Nepal, it is important that urban reconstruction has adequate support and direction to support the longer term urban development planning and Disaster Risk Resilience efforts.

**Households that are still living in temporary shelter may require additional winterisation support,** particularly if they live in higher altitude areas. Given probable funding restrictions for this, vulnerable and marginalised households, especially those who have been unable to carry out maintenance and/or improvement work on their shelters, should be targeted for this support.

Develop compliance requirements and inspection formats for additional building materials and typologies, e.g. **hollow concrete blocks, timber frame with infill, and traditional architecture.**

■ **FROM L-R: TRADITIONAL HOUSE IN ARGHAKHACHI DISTRICT. TWO STOREY TIMBER FRAMED STRUCTURE WITH STONE AND CEMENT MORTAR MASONRY INFILL UP TO SILL LEVEL, HOLLOW CONCRETE BLOCK INFILL FROM SILL LEVEL TO CEILING IN GROUND FLOOR, AND TIMBER PLANKS FOR THE FIRST FLOOR IN KAMALAMIA MUNICIPALITY, VIMAN, SINDHULI. HYBRID STRUCTURE IN DOLAKHA WITH HOLLOW CONCRETE BLOCK GROUP FLOOR AND TIMBER AND CGI FIRST FLOOR.**





**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, AND TO  
ACCESS REFERENCE DOCUMENTS AND  
DATA SETS, PLEASE VISIT:**

**Housing Recovery and Reconstruction  
Platform, Nepal**

🌐 [www.hrrpnepal.org](http://www.hrrpnepal.org)

ƒ [@HRRPNepal](#)

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Reconstruction Platform, Nepal](#)

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**Inter-Agency  
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