

# **INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT**



**INTER-AGENCY COMMON FEEDBACK PROJECT  
MARCH 2016  
NEPAL**

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# **BACKGROUND**

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## COMMUNICATION IS AID

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On 25 April 2015 Nepal was struck by a 7.8 magnitude earthquake, causing severe loss of life, injuries and damages. Immediately following the earthquake, the Government of Nepal launched search and rescue as well as response efforts. Under the leadership of the Government, humanitarian agencies scaled efforts to reach affected communities to address immediate needs. In order to ensure communities can help themselves and access the available support, it is critical that they have clear information and are able to communicate with government and aid providers. The Communicating with Communities (CwC) Working Group was established days after the earthquake to coordinate community outreach efforts. Chaired by UNICEF and supported by OCHA and the UN Resident Coordinator's Office, the CwC coordinated with clusters to gather key messages that could be shared with communities. Partnerships with media personnel, particularly radio, which were established in preparedness efforts, strengthened coordination of community outreach initiatives. The CwC also worked to advocate for and coordinate efforts in repairing radio stations, providing temporary spaces for radio operations, and building capacity of community radio to provide key life-saving and life-enhancing messages to communities.

In order to better understand immediate information needs of affected communities, the CwC coordinated a key informant assessment.

Working with implementing partners<sup>1</sup>, the CwC conducted informant surveys (222 respondents) across 10 earthquake affected districts. This assessment provided important information on vital information needs for different community segments. While the assessment is not representative, it did provide indicative insight that was useful for implementing agencies.

### **Inter-Agency Common Feedback Project**

Communicating with communities is critical, but not enough. Government and agencies must also be able to gather feedback and listen to the concerns and opinions of communities. In support of this, the Inter-Agency Common Feedback (CFP) project was established in June 2015 with financial support from DFID. The Common Feedback Project (CFP) is structured as an inter-agency common service that builds on existing structures and partnerships. Working with partners, the CFP synthesizes and elevates community feedback received from multiple platforms. This feedback is shared with the government, humanitarian community, as well as civil society and other actors. The CFP incorporates community feedback received from:

1. Household level perception surveys
2. Rumor tracking via OpenMic
3. Community feedback via partner feedback mechanisms
4. Communicating back to Communities

<sup>1</sup> The Key Informant Assessment (available here:

[http://cfp.org.np/uploads/documents/Information%20and%20communication%20Need%20Assessment\(september\).pdf](http://cfp.org.np/uploads/documents/Information%20and%20communication%20Need%20Assessment(september).pdf) was completed with Acaps, Internews, Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs, Plan International, Save the Children, Suaahara, UNICEF, and World Vision

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### *Household level perception surveys*

Working with Accountability Lab and Local Interventions Group, community perception surveys are carried out across 14 earthquake affected districts.

### *Rumor Tracking*

Led by Internews, Accountability Lab and Local Interventions Group, the Open Mic Nepal project captures rumors and perceptions on the ground to eliminate information gaps between media, humanitarian agencies and communities.

### *Community feedback via partner feedback mechanisms*

Listening to communities occurs across organizations and platforms. The Inter Agency Common Feedback Project works with partners to collect, synthesize, and analyze feedback received across different organizations, channels and districts from communities. Bringing together feedback can elevate community feedback to help identify key issues being raised that require attention and action.

### *Communicating back to Communities*

The Common Feedback Project, with Accountability Lab and Local Interventions Group, began organizing community meetings. These meetings bring communities, government, and humanitarian partners together to discuss feedback collected from communities and address any concerns related to the earthquake response.

# METHODOLOGY

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## INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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A key component for the CFP was to conduct an Information and Communication Needs Assessment that builds on the insights gained from the inter-agency CWC key informant assessment completed in July 2015. The aim of this assessment was to gain insight on information and communication needs from earthquake affected communities almost 7 months after the earthquake. The Information and Communication Needs Assessment was conducted with support from Equal Access in December 2015.

In conducting this assessment, the CFP aimed to:

1. Gather insight that would allow CwC and the broader humanitarian community to reflect on community engagement efforts taken immediately following the earthquake;
2. Strengthen collective understanding of current information needs and media consumption patterns that could inform community engagement and outreach in the reconstruction period.

To achieve the above aims, the Information and Communication Needs Assessment was designed with two major components. The first component was to collect information on current information needs, access to different communication modalities and trusted sources of information. The second component focused on the types of information remembered and modalities people used immediately after the earthquake. In addition, the assessment asked respondents to reflect on whether any actions were taken as a result of the information provided immediately after the earthquake.

### Methodology

The study was a quantitative survey based on robust samples which used a piloted, structured questionnaire. A total sample size of 2100 respondents, 150 respondents from each of the 14 priority affected districts were surveyed. Prior to the field work, a three day training was provided to the enumerators covering various aspects of the study. Altogether 14 teams, each team comprised of three members, were mobilized to collect the data from 17 to 24 December 2015.

### Sampling

In line with the census breakdown of rural versus urban, 80 percent sample was allocated to rural population and 20 percent to urban population. Three village development committees (rural sample) and one municipality (urban sample) were randomly selected in each district. District headquarters were selected as a peri-urban sample area in any district that had no municipality (such as Rasuwa). However, some VDCs had to be re-selected given the time frame of the study, due to heavy snow fall as the data collection was during the peak winter season, the fuel crisis and some VDCs being deserted by villagers for seasonal migration to the lower warmer areas during winter. As a result of these barriers and limitations, the VDCs surveyed should be considered more accessible, thus having implications on the results and conclusions of this assessment.

Within each VDC and municipality/district headquarters, two wards were randomly selected. In each ward of the VDCs 20 respondents were surveyed, while 15 respondents were surveyed in each ward of the municipalities/district headquarters. The study aimed to achieve equal representation between male and female.

### Selection of households and respondents

In the given specified ward of the VDC/municipality/district headquarters, the survey team identified an entry point targeting a landmark such as school, a temple or a chautara to initiate the individual interview process. At that point, a spin the bottle approach was used to form a basis to initiate the selection to interview respondents. A skipping pattern of one house in rural areas and three houses in urban areas was followed, where possible. Temporary shelters and make-shift houses were also considered part of the regular household sample. Survey teams had the leverage to move to the next adjoining ward to complete the interview process if the sample household numbers were not met in the original ward. Once in the household, a lottery method was used to select the respondent from the eligible family members of 15 years and above for the interview.



## Survey Area (East)



### Legend

- Other Area
- Dolakha Survey Area
- Kavrepalanchok Survey Area
- Bhaktapur Survey Area
- Sindhupalchowk Survey Area
- Ramechhap Survey Area
- Sindhuli Survey Area
- Okhaldhunga Survey Area



## Survey Area (West)



## Legend

- Other Area
- Gorkha Survey Area
- Makwanpur Survey Area
- Rasuwa Survey Area
- Nuwakot Survey Area
- Lalitpur Survey Area
- Kathmandu Survey Area
- Dhading Survey Area



# **KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

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## KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

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### Information Sources and Access Now and after the Earthquake

In ‘normal’ times, radio and television remain the top sources of information respondents identified. A total of 73 percent of respondents identified radio as their top source of information, with 63 percent stating radio is also a trusted source of information. Television as a main source of information is lower, with 59 percent of respondents citing it as a main source and 46 percent ranking television as a trusted source. Other key sources of information listed by respondents include mobile phone (24 percent), print media (26 percent), friends and family (29 percent), and community meetings/events (14 percent). A total of 22 percent of respondents access information through a variety of online sources, such as email, Twitter and Facebook.

While radio and television are currently main sources of information, access to these forms immediately after the earthquake was less prevalent. A total of 55 percent and 31 percent used radio and television, respectively, immediately following the earthquake. Print media was used even less, with only 12 percent of respondents recalling information through this channel. This contrasts with 70 percent of respondents who used mobile phones immediately after the earthquake.

#### ***Recommendation:***

Immediately following an earthquake, access to regular forms of communication are limited. As such, the government and humanitarian community need to explore non-traditional methods in reaching communities with information. The use of volunteers and social mobilizers, which was prevalent in Nepal following

the earthquake, offer an opportunity for information sharing and dissemination of key messages. Tapping into this potential was not fully recognized immediately after the earthquake. It should be recognized for future CwC initiatives. If mobile networks remain intact, communication through this medium should be considered.

### Information recalled immediately after the earthquake

Straight after the earthquake, there were several efforts to disseminate life-saving or life-enhancing messages to affected communities. The Communicating with Communities Working Group was established in the first days following the earthquake to coordinate these efforts. Given the scale of the disaster and the logistical barriers that existed (limited radio coverage, communication networks damaged, etc.), getting information to communities was challenging. When asked, respondents were able to recall a wide range of information and messages immediately after the earthquake. This includes information on first aid, WASH, shelter, staying safe from aftershocks, financial support, and government decisions. It should be noted that agreed messages from the CwC shortly after the earthquake also focused on these issues, specifically WASH, shelter and staying safe from aftershocks<sup>2</sup>.

Across mass media platforms, a majority of respondents who recall receiving information immediately after the earthquake also took action as a result of that information. The most common actions taken included staying in a safe place for aftershocks and maintaining good WASH practice. The majority of respondents cited not enough resources as the main reason for not taking an

<sup>2</sup> Review of CwC agreed messages document 3rd May 2015 highlighted key messages across cluster. In the early stages of agreed messages, there was more focus on WASH, health, shelter, and protection issues.

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## KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

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action based on the information received. This would include financial means but also access to the necessary materials or capacity to carry out an action. Other reasons for not taking action included not enough information or confusing information. For example, first aid was listed by respondents as information they recall but not something they cited as taking action on. Not taking action on this could be a combination of not having the necessary materials, enough information, or a need to do first aid.

***Recommendation:***

It is important for the government and humanitarian community to have clear, concise and agreed messages in place before a disaster strikes along with strategies and partnerships established to support immediate dissemination of information through available channels. While the NRRC Communications Group made strides in this, more is required for response preparedness messages in coordination with government, clusters, media partners, private sector, and civil society. Common messages and corresponding materials should be developed in consultation with communities to ensure clarity and desired impact of communications. In addition, consideration should be given to classifying the CwC as a cluster rather than a working group to better integrate efforts with other clusters.

***Recommendation:***

Information and relief distribution are not separate entities. Information is only actionable if communities have the resources and capacity to take action. Similarly, effectiveness of relief distribution is maximized if adequate information is provided on how to use items, where to access support, etc. It is critical for the government, humanitarian agencies and CwC partners to

strengthen integration and collaboration of these efforts.

**Rumors**

Another piece of information that respondents recalled immediately after the earthquake were rumors or predictions of another earthquake. This has been a well-known issue raised in the CwC and wider humanitarian community but this assessment highlights the lasting potency that rumors can have.

***Recommendation:***

There is a need to have necessary messages and strategies in place immediately, through response preparedness, to anticipate the risk of rumors.

***Recommendation:***

Initiatives such as the Open Mic Project offer important services in tracking and dispelling rumors that arise in post-disaster contexts and providing information to communicators. In Nepal, the Open Mic initiative began reporting in June, nearly three months after the earthquake. It is critical that such initiatives are able to begin as quickly as possible following a major disaster in order to track and provide support in dispelling misinformation that is frequent during the immediate response phase.

**Mobile Phones**

Respondents identified mobile phones as an important medium to access information through phone calls, SMS, alerts, listening to radio, accessing social media and internet, etc. Immediately after the earthquake, a majority of respondents (70 percent) used their mobile phone. While a large number of respondents used mobile phones, over 80 percent categorize the coverage during that time as bad or very bad. Access to electricity to charge mobile phones was a challenge for many respondents with over 30 percent charging their phones in public

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## KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

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areas such as community centers, camps or with support from Government and NGOs.

**Recommendation:**

The importance of mobile phones for individuals to contact family and friends and access information is significant. It is important for CwC to work with relevant partners, particularly the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC), to support in providing adequate services that allow individuals to use their mobile phones. Specifically, the establishment of charging stations, which occurred at a smaller scale in Nepal, should be utilized and scaled accordingly.

**Recommendation:**

Establishing mechanisms of two-way communication should focus, as much as possible, on face-to-face engagement. Multiple channels that allow communities to engage with aid providers is ideal and should be explored according to local context and preferences.

### Communicating with Aid Providers

Communication is not a one way process. It is critical that affected communities are able to share their concerns, questions, and suggestions with government and aid providers. A total of 44 percent of respondents stated that they were able to communicate and share information with aid providers. For those respondents who are able to communicate with aid providers, face-to-face conversations, phone calls, and community meetings are the main methods of doing so. It should be noted that 90 percent of respondents identified face-to-face conversation as their primary way of communicating with aid providers. Other methods, such as suggestion boxes or information desks were not cited as much by respondents. However, it should be noted that this survey was conducted at household level, whereas the popularity and use of suggestion boxes and information desks are primarily at distribution points.



# **ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

# Information & Communications Needs Assessment

## Demographics

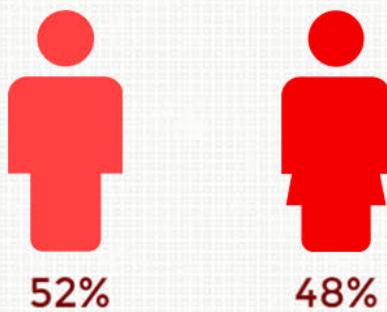
### Sample

2100 respondents across 14 earthquake affected districts

Bhaktapur  
Dhading  
Dolakha  
Gorkha  
Kathmandu  
Kavrepalanchowk  
Lalitpur

Makwanpur  
Nuwakot  
Okhaldhunga  
Ramechhap  
Rasuwa  
Sindhuli  
Sindhupalchowk

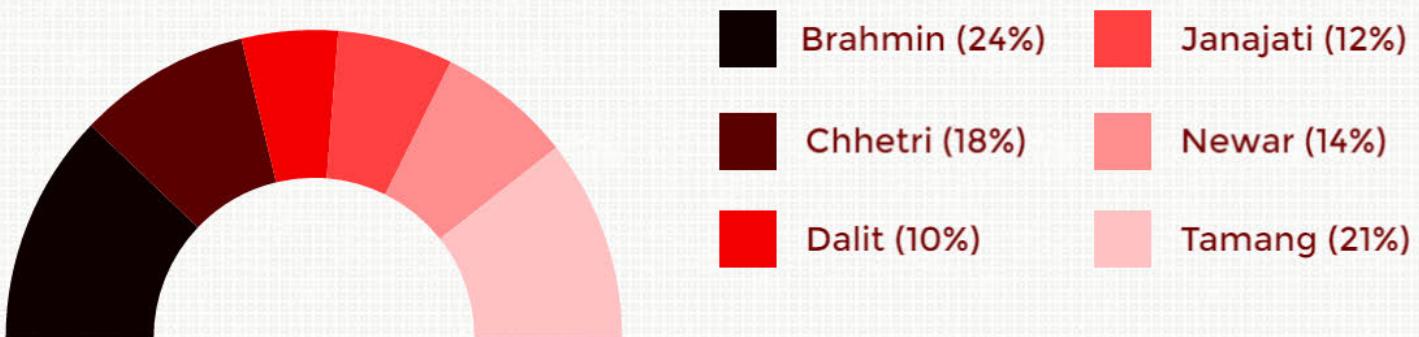
### Gender



### Age

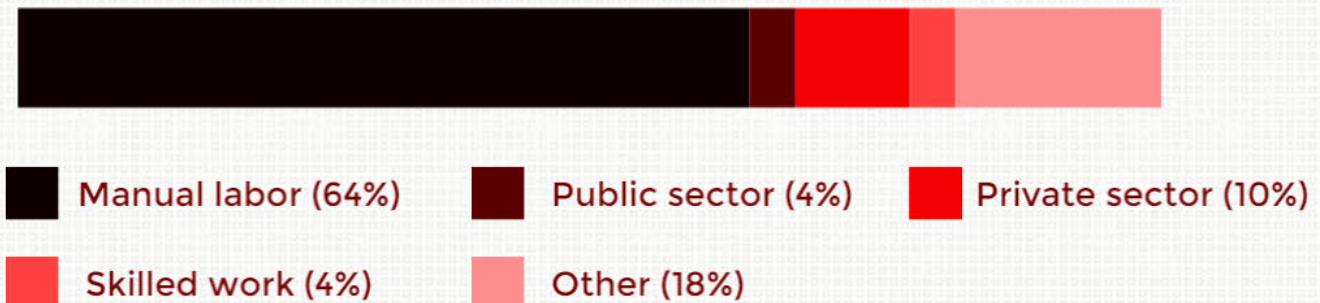


### Caste / Ethnicity



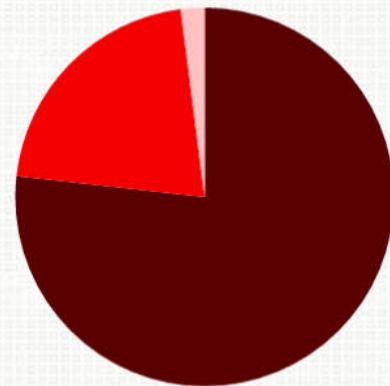
## Demographics

### Occupation



### Health Problems

- No difficulty (76%)
- Some difficulty (21%)
- A lot of difficulty (1%)



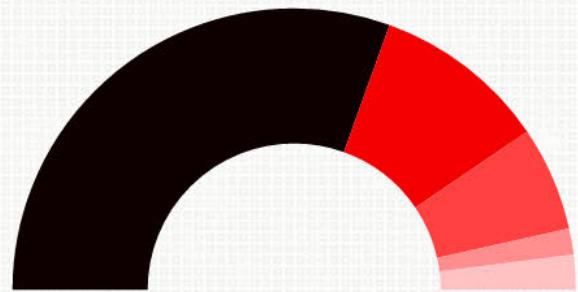
### Current Living Arrangements



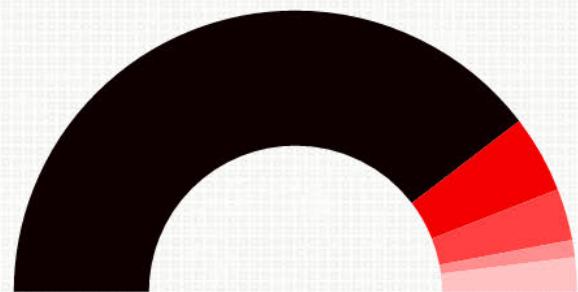
# Information & Communications Needs Assessment

## Demographics

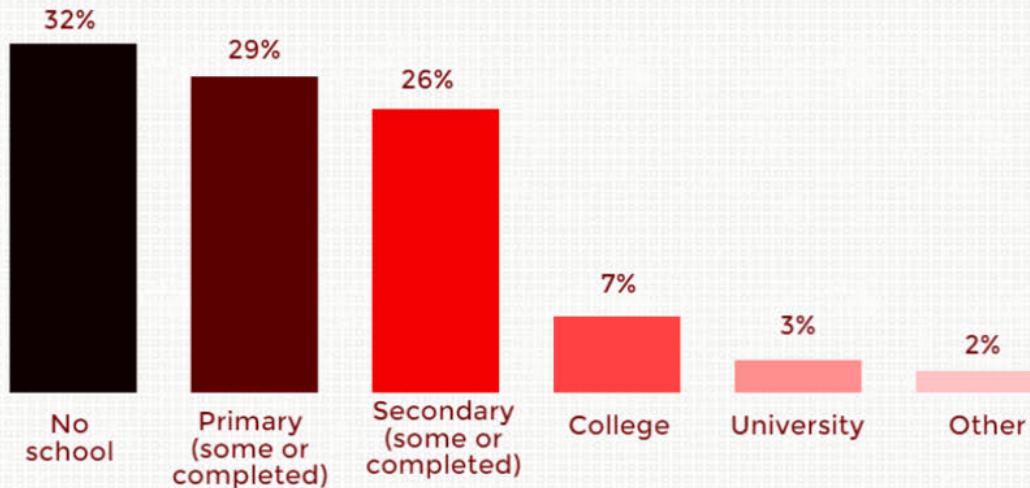
### Primary Language



### Second Language

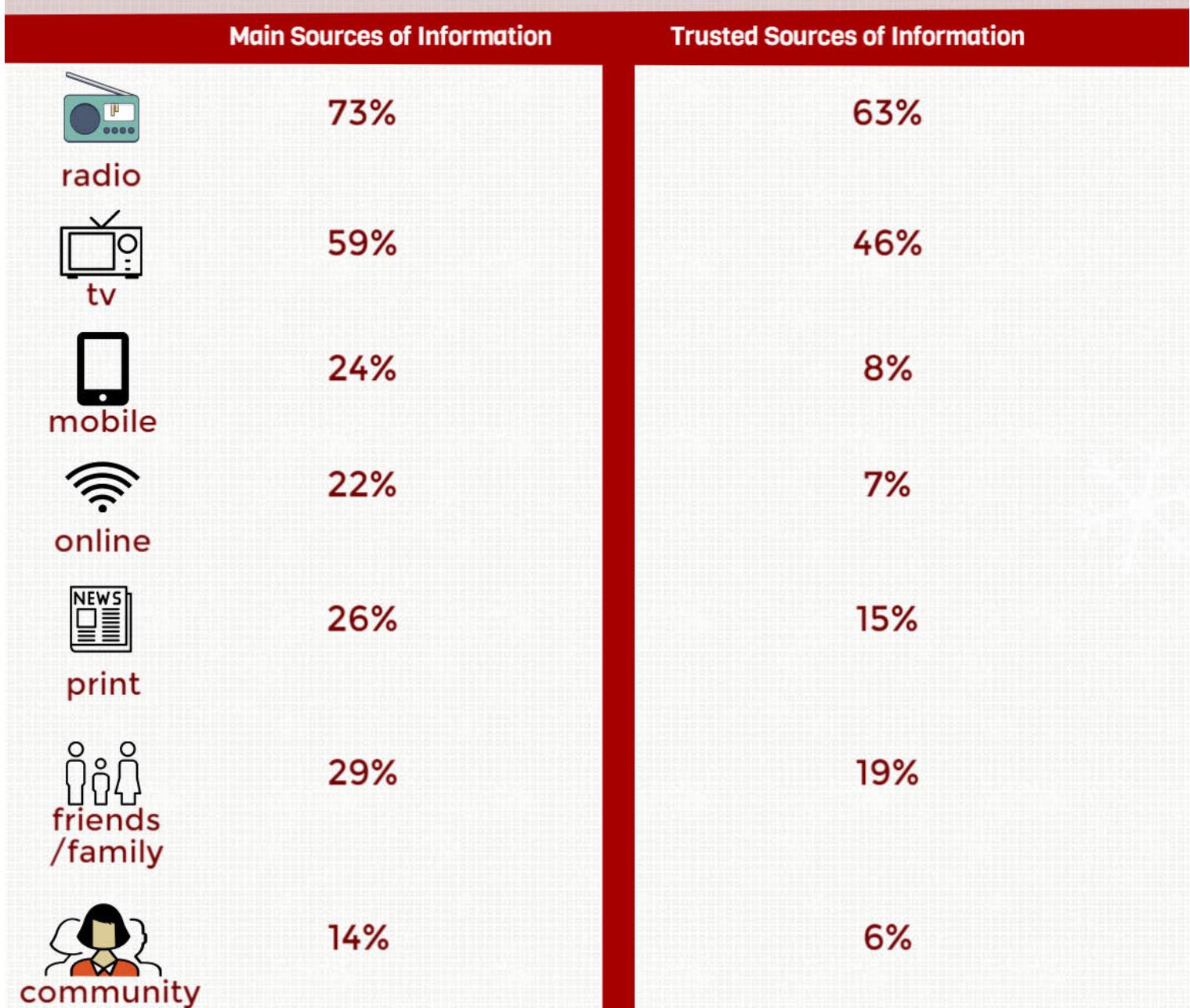


### Education

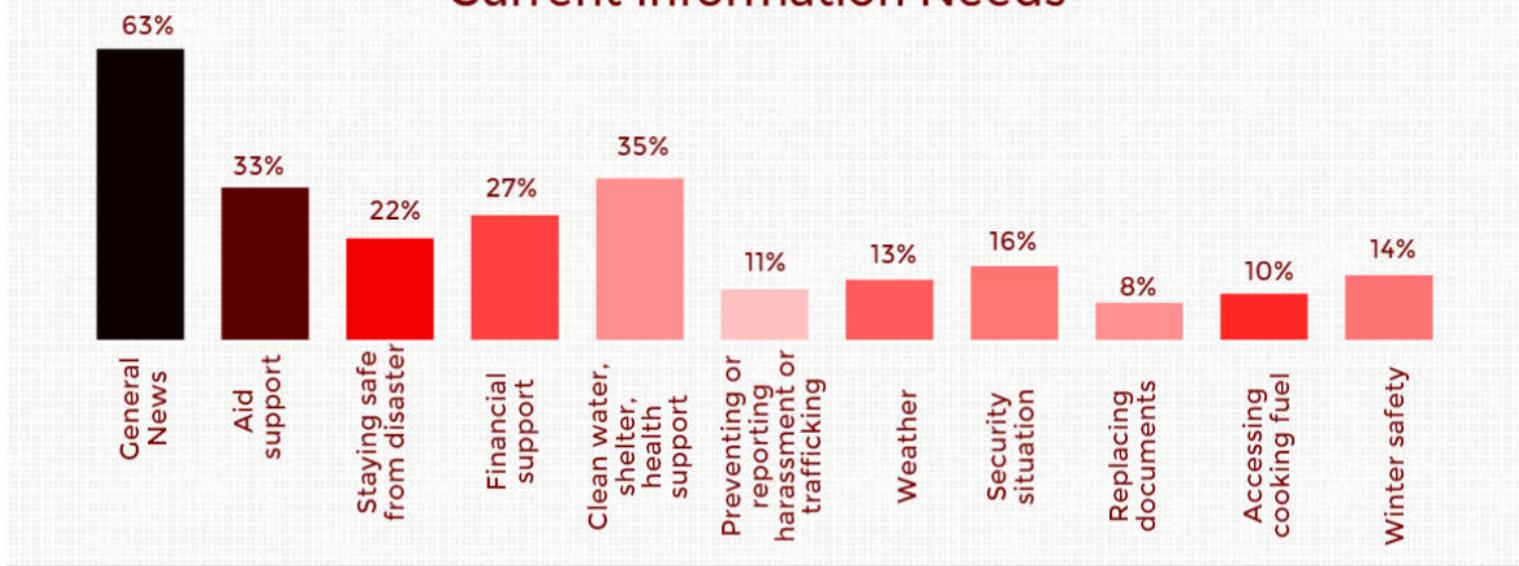


# Information & Communications Needs Assessment

## Current Information Sources and Needs



### Current Information Needs



## Barriers to Getting Information

- █ Don't know who to ask (41%)
- █ No information available (35%)
- █ No access to sources (TV, radio, print, internet) (53%)
- █ No electricity (17%)
- █ Nothing (11%)



## Radio Access & Consumption

### Current Access



### Reasons for not listening to radio



No access (50%)

No electricity (8%)

Do not like (24%)

Radio damaged (10%)

Don't have time to listen (15%)

## Radio Access & Consumption After the Earthquake

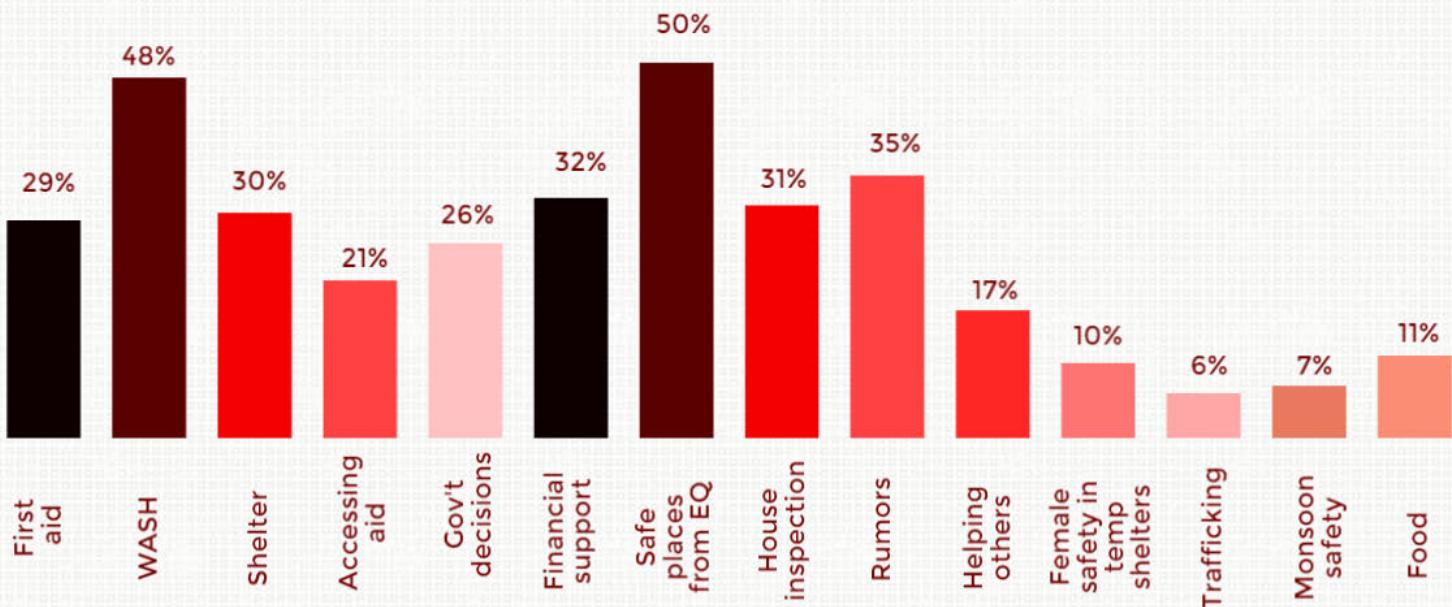
### Listening to radio days after earthquake



### Recall receiving earthquake related messages via radio

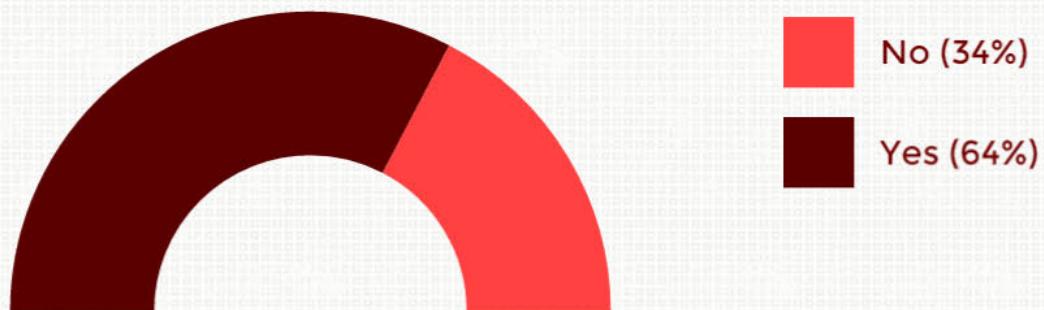


### If recalled, Information received immediately after earthquake via radio



## Radio Access & Consumption After the Earthquake

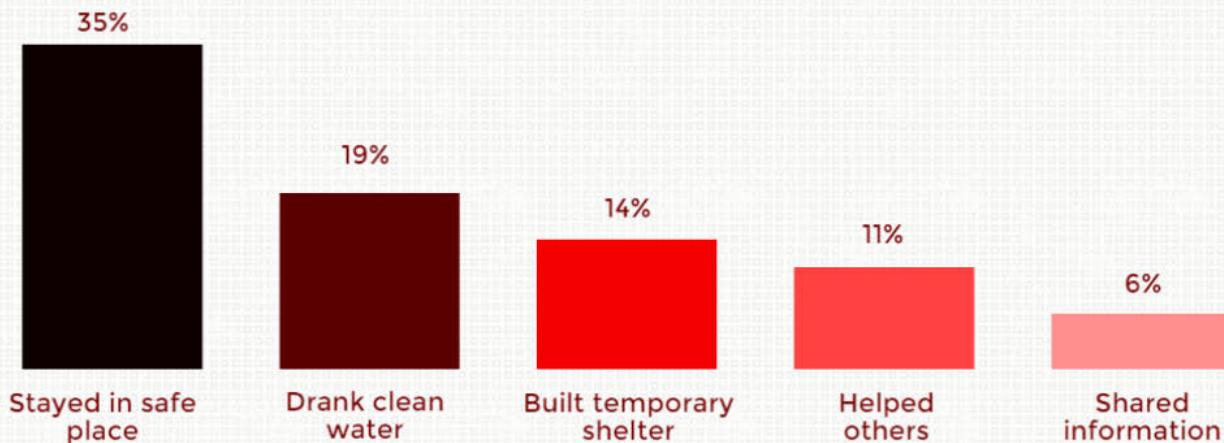
### Action taken based on information via radio



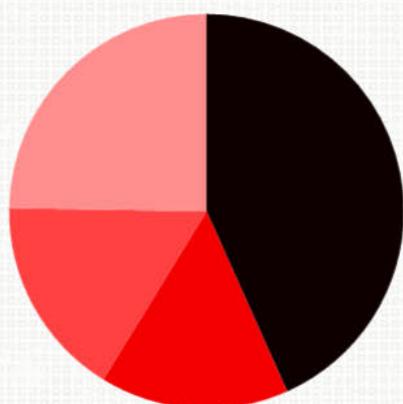
No (34%)

Yes (64%)

### If action taken, type of action based on information received via radio



### If no action taken, barriers to taking action on information received



Not enough resources (42%)

Information confusing (15%)

Not enough information (16%)

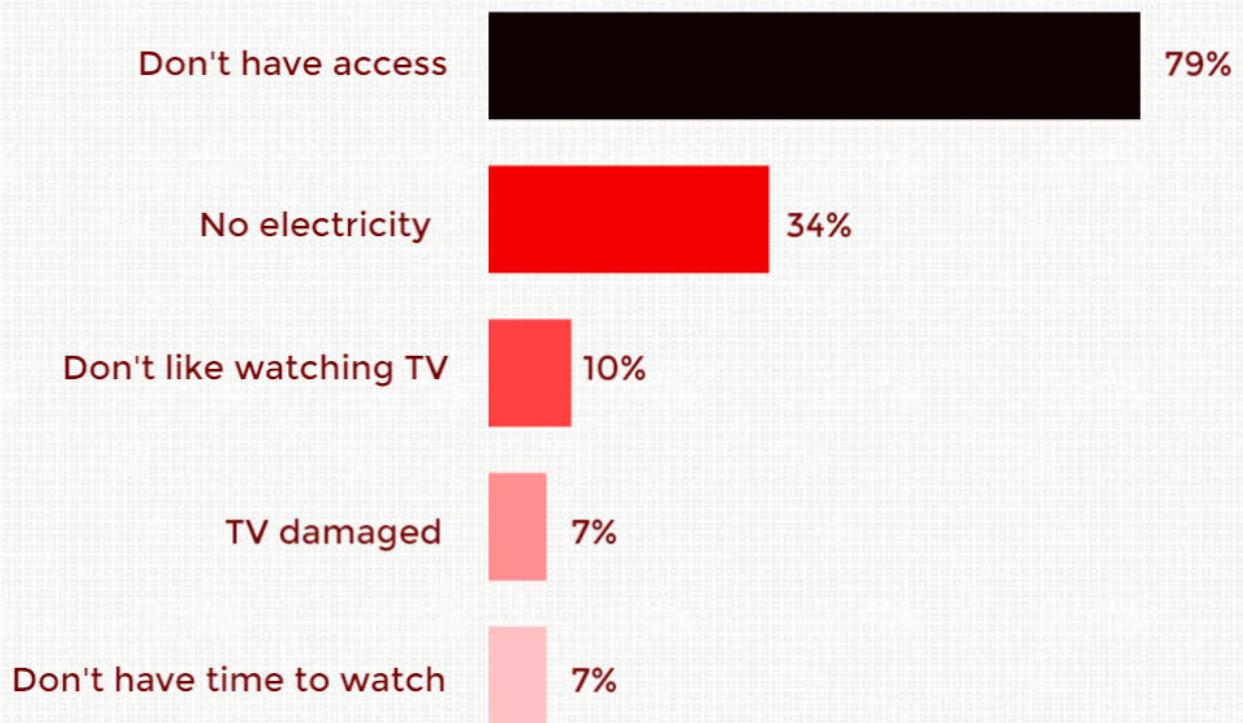
Other (24%)

## TV Access & Consumption

### Access



### Reasons for not watching TV



# TV Access & Consumption After the Earthquake

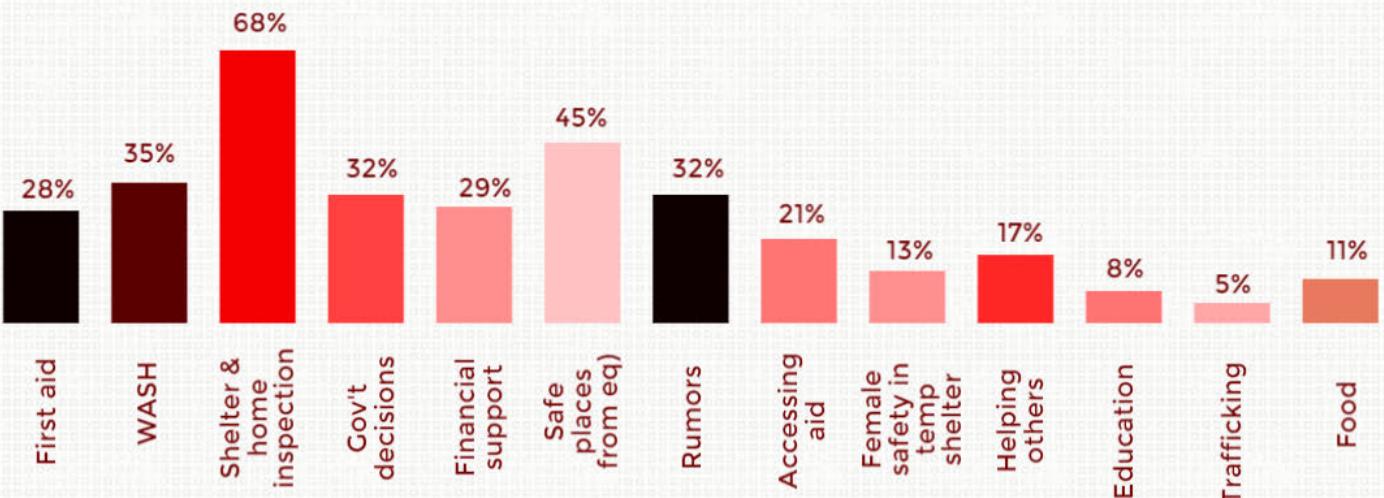
## Watching TV days after earthquake



## Recall receiving earthquake related messages via TV

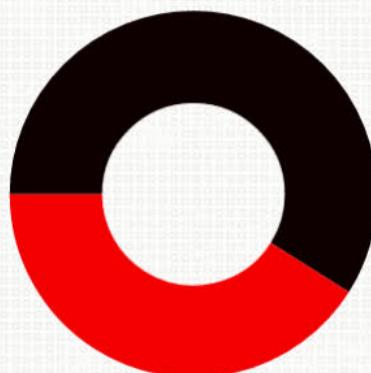


## If recalled, information received immediately after earthquake via TV



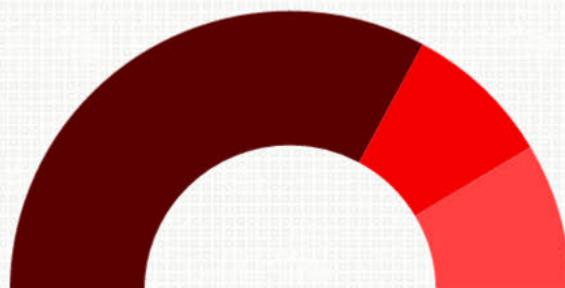
## TV Access & Consumption After the Earthquake

### Action taken based on information via TV



■ Yes (56%)  
■ No (39%)

### If taken, type of action based on information received via TV



■ Stayed alert and outside (46%)  
■ Maintained good WASH practice (12%)  
■ Helped in finding missing people and building temporary shelter (12%)

### If action not taken, barriers to taking action on information received



Not enough resources (85%)



Information confusing (15%)

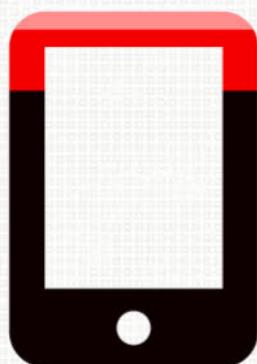


Not enough information (12%)

# Information & Communications Needs Assessment

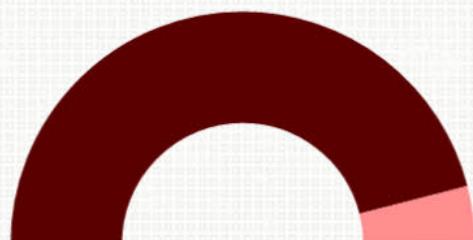
## Mobile Phone Access & Consumption

### Use a mobile



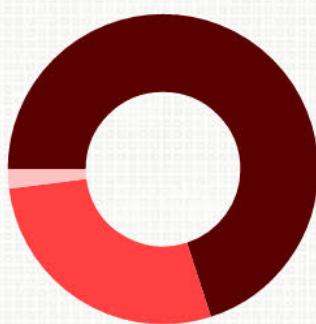
■ Yes (78%) ■ No (17%) ■ Don't know (5%)

### If use a mobile phone, whose?



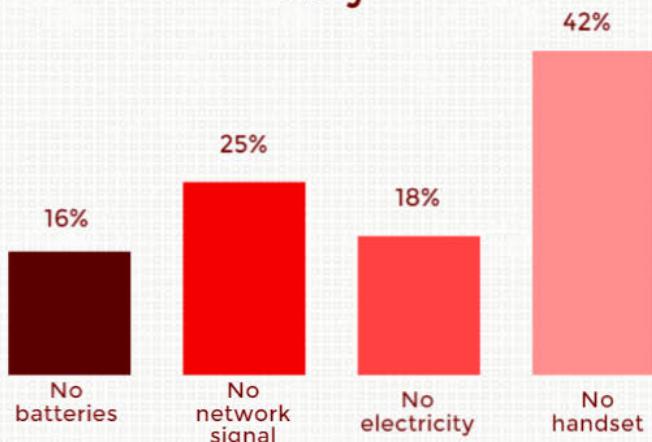
■ Use own mobile (92%) ■ Use mobile of family or friend (8%)

### Used mobile immediately after earthquake

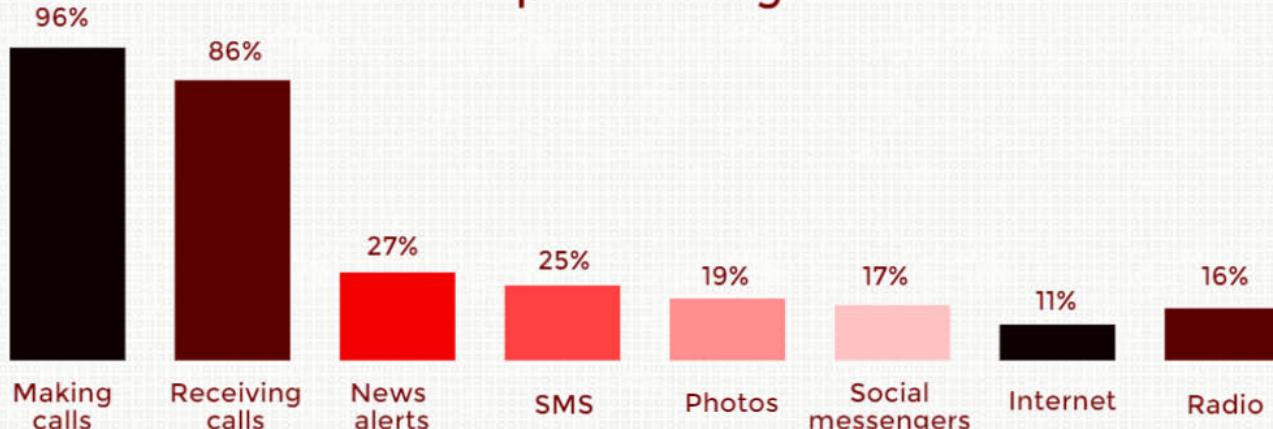


■ Yes (70%) ■ No (28%) ■ Don't know (2%)

### If no access to mobile phone, why?



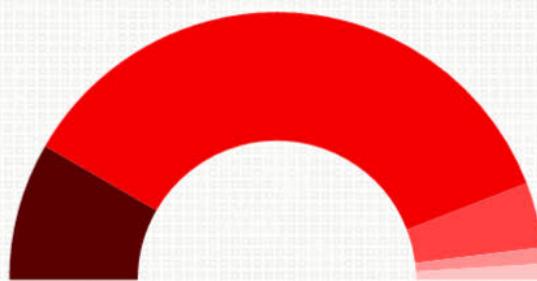
### Mobile phone usage



# Information & Communications Needs Assessment

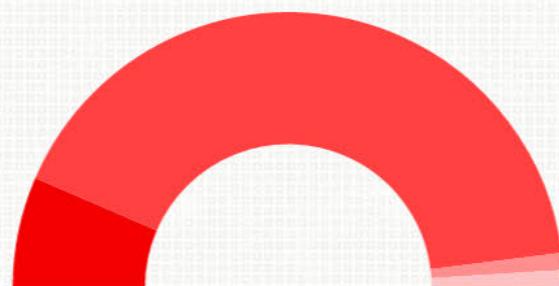
## Mobile Phone Access & Consumption

### Network coverage after earthquake



■ Very bad coverage (17%) ■ Bad coverage (72%) ■ Good coverage (8%) ■ Very good coverage (2%) ■ Don't know (2%)

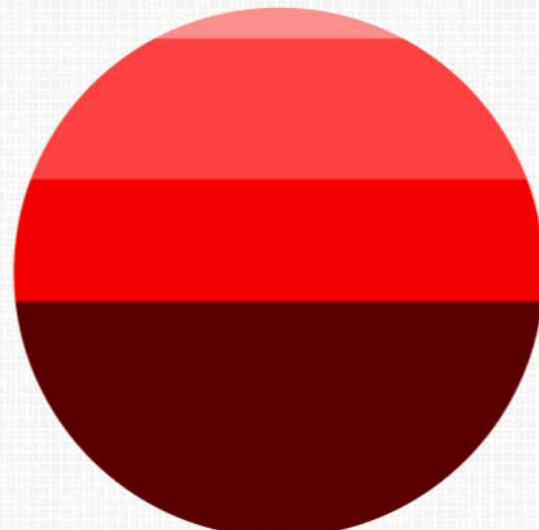
### Network coverage now



■ Very bad coverage (0%) ■ Bad coverage (13%) ■ Good coverage (83%) ■ Very good coverage (2%) ■ Don't know (2%)

### Where was phone charged immediately after the earthquake

- Did not use mobile (6%)
- Public area (28%)
- Home of friend/family (24%)
- Home (47%)



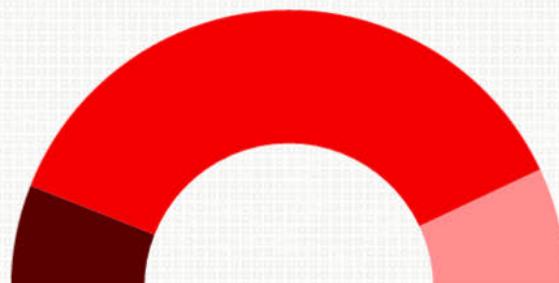
## Print Media Access & Consumption

Recently seen print media providing information on earthquake response



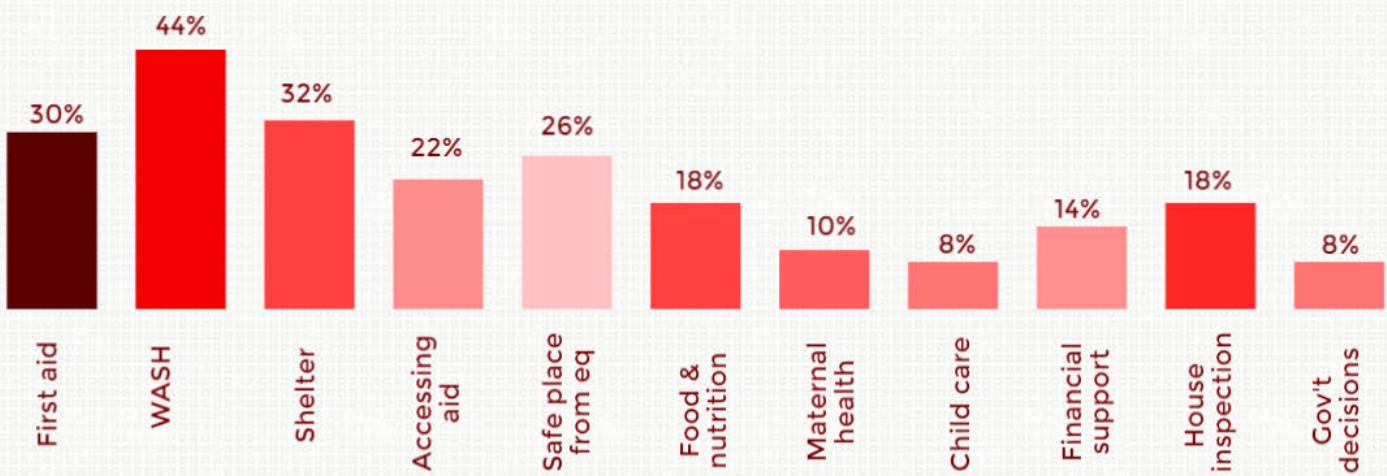
■ Yes (14%) ■ No (75%) ■ Don't know (11%)

Recall receiving print materials immediately after earthquake



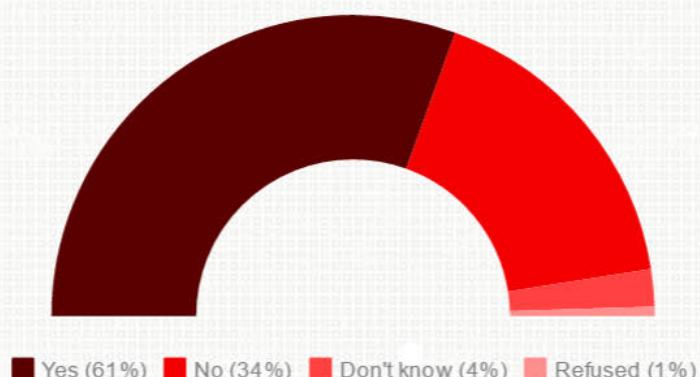
■ Yes (12%) ■ No (74%) ■ Don't know (14%)

If recalled, what information was received after the earthquake via print media

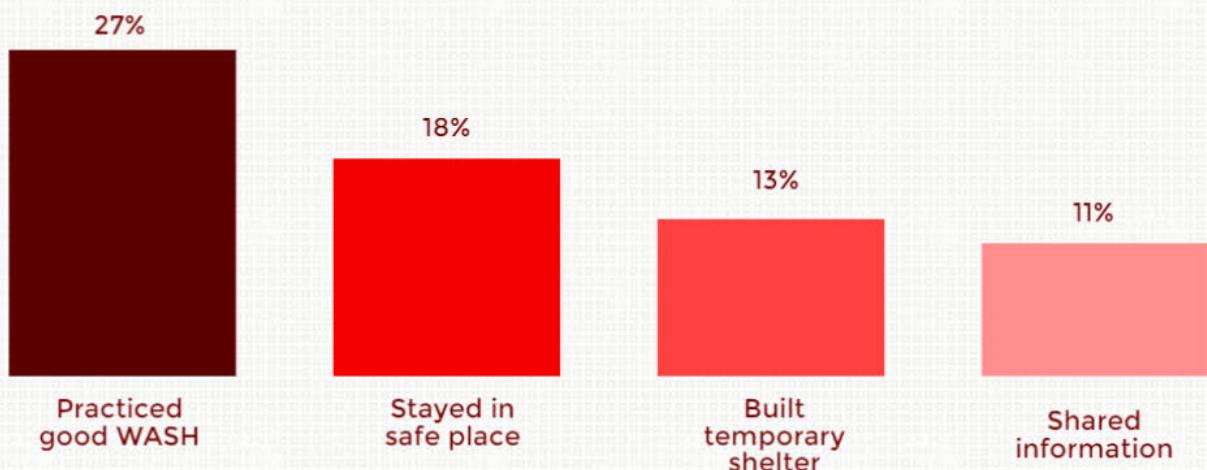


## Print Media Access & Consumption

Were actions taken based on information received via print media



If action taken, type of action based on information received via print media



If action not taken, barriers to taking action on information received



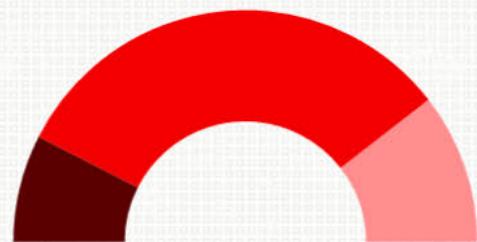
## Internet Access and Consumption

### Use the internet



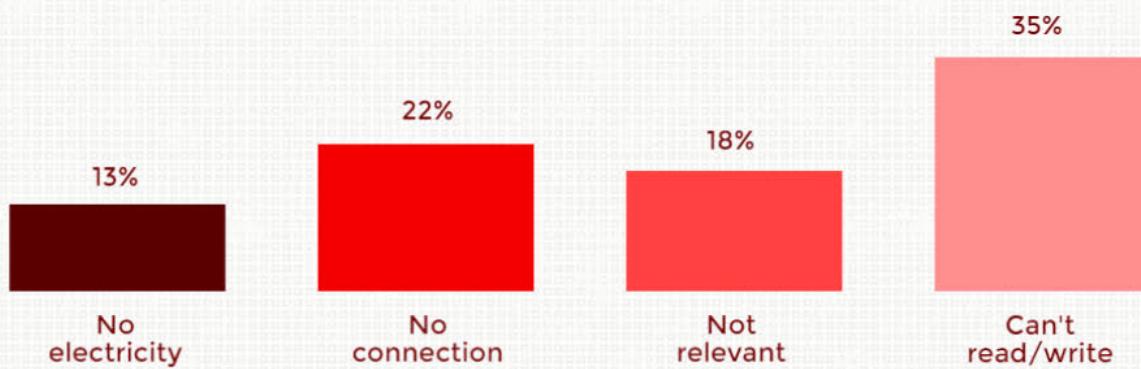
■ Yes (24%) ■ No (61%) ■ Don't know (15%)

### Use the internet immediate after the earthquake



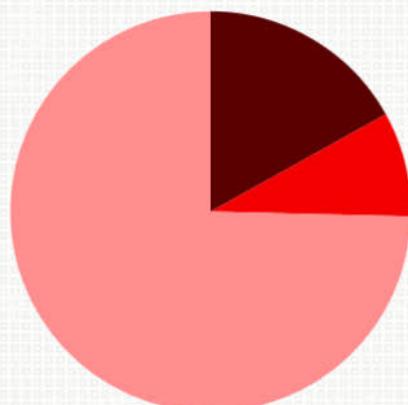
■ Yes (15%) ■ No (64%) ■ Don't know (21%)

### Reasons for not using internet



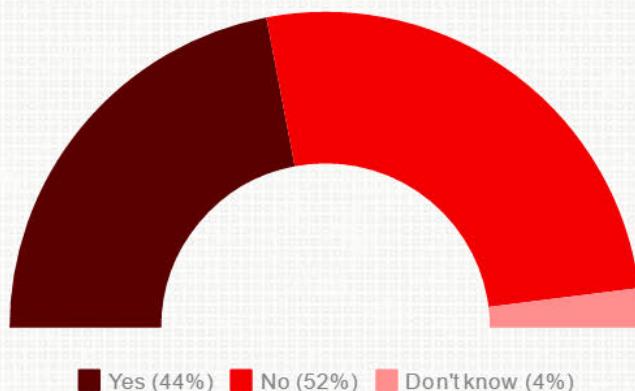
### If using, main ways of accessing internet

- Mobile phone (97%)
- Home computer (11%)
- Laptop (22%)



## Communication with Aid Providers

Able to communicate with aid providers



If able to communicate with aid provider,  
main method of communicating



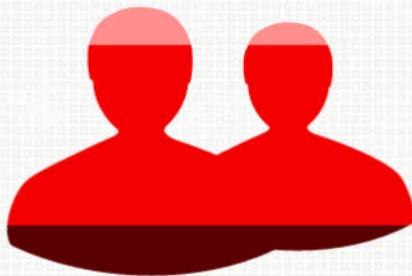
Community meeting  
(14%)

Face-to-face (90%)

Telephone (24%)

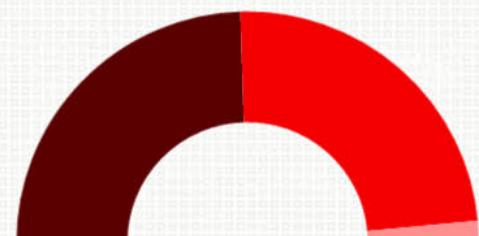
## Communication with Aid Providers

Has an aid worker visited the community/shelter to provide information on earthquake response

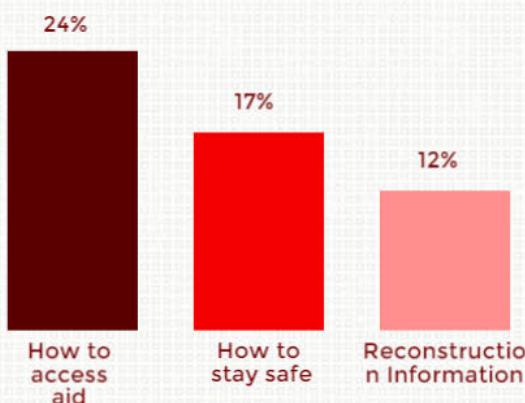


■ Yes (19%) ■ No (67%) ■ Don't know (14%)

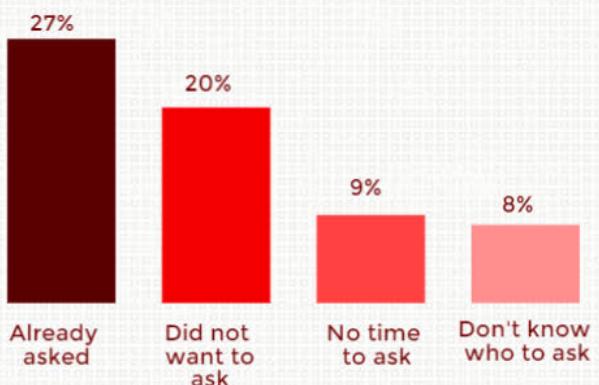
If aid worker did visit, did you engage and ask questions?



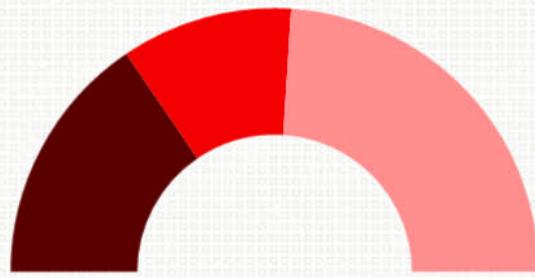
If asked a question to aid worker, what information was sought



If no question asked, why not

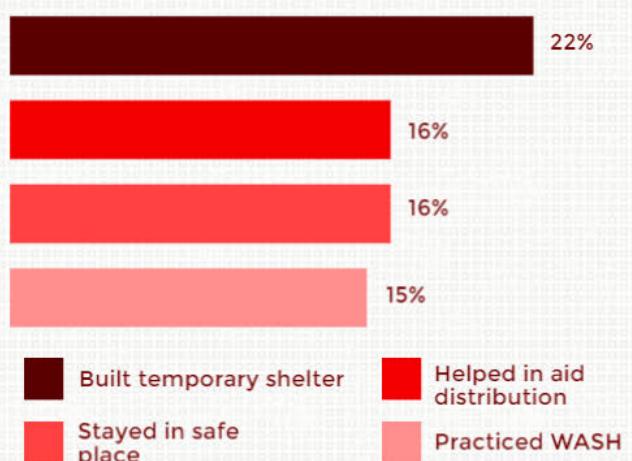


Based on information received, were any actions taken



■ Yes (31%) ■ No (21%) ■ Don't know/blank (48%)

If action taken, type of action





**CFP.ORG.NP**