

District profile: DOLAKHA

19 August 2015



Nepal Earthquake
Assessment Unit

This district profile, which is based on a review of secondary data, outlines the current humanitarian needs in Dolakha districts and existing information gaps. The profile is based on a desk review of secondary data, including recent assessments and baseline data.

KEY FIGURES

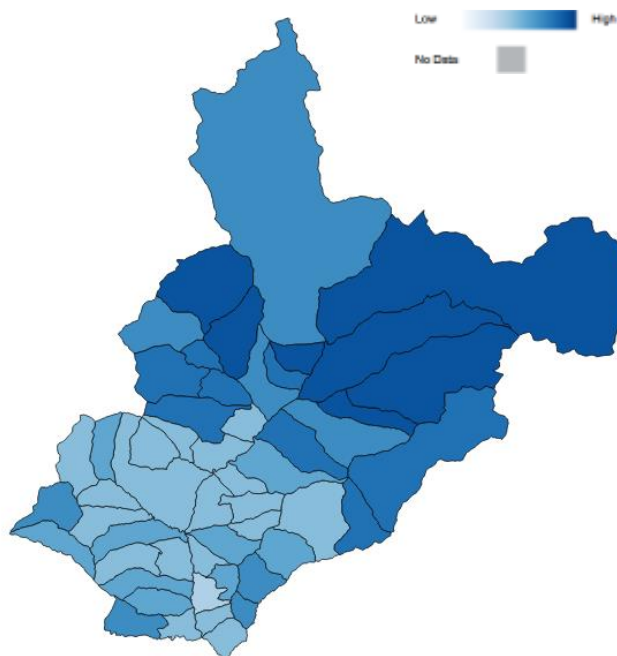
- 280,874** total population¹
- 87%** houses fully or partially damaged²
- 50,284** houses fully damaged²
- 305** houses partially damaged²
- 2,037** people in nine sites hosting >20 HH³

(¹Tamakoshi Hydropower 2014, ² District Development Committee 03/07/2015, ³IOM/CCCM 20/07/2015)

KEY ISSUES

- Dolakha was the epicentre of the 12 May earthquake. While the 25 April earthquake caused widespread damage to the area, the second earthquake led to more severe damages and casualties in Dolakha and other eastern districts.
- Access has been the primary constraint to the delivery of and access to assistance in hard-to-reach northern VDCs. This has affected nearly all sectoral response, particularly since the onset of monsoon season which has led to an increase in impassible roads and a backlog in air transport.
- The number of households (HHs) qualifying for aid distributions increased as affected HHs (traditionally made up of extended families) separated into nuclear families in order to maximise the amount of aid received. This has led to a shortage of assistance. VDC authorities and communities have called for blanket aid coverage, however this has left some VDCs with no assistance, as additional resources were not available to cover the gap.
- Humanitarian actors have prioritised emergency assistance in light of the onset of monsoon season; now planning for recovery and winterisation is required as the vast majority of Dolakha's population reside in areas with mean January temperatures below 5 degrees Celsius. Authorities have requested that humanitarian partners support with permanent, rather than temporary or semi-permanent, structures – for housing, temporary learning centres (TLCs), as well as health facilities.
- While Dolakha's public and private schools experienced the third highest levels of damage among the 14 priority district, humanitarian agencies had nearly met targets to establish TLCs across the district by the end of July. The main gap is in the provision of TLCs in hard-to-reach areas due to access challenges.
- Pre-earthquake data indicates that specific sectors with a lack of assessment data should be prioritised. An understanding of access to emergency cards and assistance, particularly for Dolakha's marginalised groups which are concentrated in hard-to-reach areas, is required. Humanitarian actors should strengthen information collection and sharing on protection issues. High pre-earthquake rates of child labour in Dolakha make children and women particularly vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation.

Severity index¹ - Dolakha



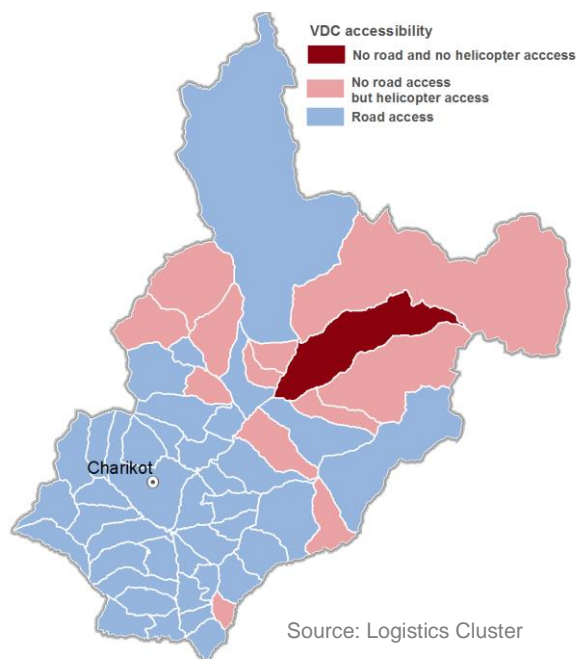
¹ The severity index is a composite measure of severity, reflecting three categories: baseline information of socio-economical, physical vulnerability, and earthquake impact based on assessment data. This is an update with improved granularity of the severity index used in the revised Flash Appeal and represents the shift in priorities as the humanitarian response has evolved. Thus a greater focus has been placed on physical vulnerability due to the monsoon.

OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS

Twelve of the 52 VDCs in Dolakha are categorised as hard-to-reach due to a lack of road access (see map), with Khare considered particularly challenging due to its high elevation which prevents air transport. Fifteen VDCs, with an estimated population of 76,385, were considered hard-to-reach due to lack of road access, according to the 2012 District Preparedness Response Plan (DPRP) (DPRP 2012).

In June and July, 122 landslides were identified by satellite imagery, although about 40% of the district could not be assessed due to cloud cover (BGS/Durham University 08/2015). Among the areas which could be assessed with satellite imager, Khare, in particular, experienced the most landslides with 48 of the 122 occurring in the district, and is only accessible by porters. The DPRP also reported that 18,500 HHs in 20 VDCs and Bimeshwor Municipality are at high risk of landslides and floods, while an additional 17,645 HHs are at medium risk. Eight of the hard-to-reach districts are also considered at high or medium risk of landslides (DPRP 2012).

VDC accessibility



DISPLACEMENT PATTERNS

By the end of May, 95% of households were not living in the same shelter as before the earthquake. Based on the 2011 census data, this amounts to almost 43,500 households. Most households reside in close proximity of their original residence on the land of the damaged house. Among those residing in spontaneous settlements, 99% reside less than 30 minutes away from their original houses (CCCM 20/07/2015). While there have been anecdotal reports of external migration being higher than national averages, according to the 2011 census and data from the Department of Foreign Employment (DoFE), Dolakha district is not a major contributor to external migration. However, Dolakha is the tenth top contributor by district in terms of the number of women accessing foreign work permits over the past five years (DoFE 2014).

Only a small percentage of the population resides in spontaneous settlement sites in Dolakha. There are nine displacement sites hosting over 20 HH in Dolakha with 447 households, or 2,037 individuals residing in these sites, according to the IOM/CCCM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM). Damage to housing is the main factor preventing return (CCCM 20/07/2015). Since the previous assessment, three of the sites, namely Bulung, Orang, and Kalinchok Higher Secondary School hosting 234 HHs, have been closed and it is unclear where the population moved. (CCCM 14/06/2015). Despite the closures of several sites, information has become available for six additional sites hosting more than 20 HH between June and July.

Following a Government directive to evacuate settlements at high risk of landslides, district authorities have temporarily relocated 146 HHs in eight VDCs in July. As of early August, additional evacuations had not been planned, but may take place at the request of affected communities.

SHELTER AND NFI

Pre-crisis facts and figures

	Dolakha	National
Type of housing foundation		
Mud-bonded bricks/stone	92%	44%
Cement-bonded bricks/stone	5%	18%
Other	7%	35%
% of households who own their housing unit	94%	85%

Source: Census 2011

According to a Shelter Cluster assessment, in May, 92% of 52,000 households in the district reported some sort of housing damage as a result of the earthquakes ([Shelter Cluster 29/06/2015](#)), while NEOC classified 95% of houses as completely damaged ([NEOC/MoHA 03/07/2015](#)). The District Development Committee, meanwhile, classified 87% of houses as fully or partially damaged ([DDC 03/07/2015](#)). The most commonly used housing foundation in the district – mud-bonded bricks or stone with CGI – is also the most susceptible to earthquake damage. Over 76% of these structures have been heavily damaged or destroyed ([Shelter Cluster 29/06/2015](#)).

As of 30 July, the Dolakha Shelter Cluster had planned to distribute CGI or cash for shelter to about 39,700 HHs or 62% of the estimated HHs in need. Inaccessibility in hard to reach areas coupled with CGI sheets delayed by customs procedures for some aid agencies has resulted in delays in the response, and about 40% of the planned distributions were completed by the end of July.

The shelter response thus far has been focused on the provision of CGI sheets to protect people against monsoon rains, however, aid agencies in Dolakha expressed concern with the forecasted need for winterised shelters as most populated areas of Dolakha have a mean January temperature of 5 degrees Celsius or below.

FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS

In May, 12 VDCs out of 52 with a population of 25,817 were found severely food insecure, according to a Food Security Cluster assessment. ([Food Security Cluster 05/2015](#)).

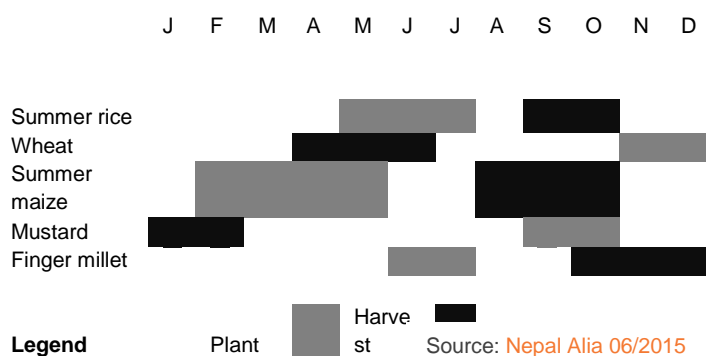
A food security and livelihoods assessment of three wards in Chhetrapa and Namdu VDCs found that income has decreased, while both debt and shelter expenses have increased. According to focus group discussions, many HHs prioritised temporary shelter construction and repair, foregoing wage labour, which in turn led to a decrease in income. Markets have made a fragile recovery but will require sustained purchasing power among communities to ensure sustainability ([Save the Children 07/2015](#)). The assessment found that the food security situation was largely stable due to ongoing food distributions.

According to the 2011 Agricultural Census, agriculture is the main source of income for 75% of households Dolakha. Although a significant proportion of the population relies on agriculture, Dolakha has one of the largest deficits in cereal production meaning that the population consumes more than is produced and is therefore dependent on transport of food from other districts; however, the per capita production of potatoes, milk, and meat is above national averages. ([Food Security Cluster 06/06/2015](#)). According to the Local Development Officer (LDO), the earthquakes have reduced the summer planting of rice by 5-10%.

According to the District Livestock Services Office, the percentage of livestock loss was lowest among the six earthquake-affected districts (Dhading, Dolakha, Gorkha, Nuwakot, Rasuwa, and Sindhupalchok) assessed. Only 0.1% of large livestock, 0.3% of medium-sized animals, and 2.1% of poultry were lost as a result of the earthquakes ([Food Security Cluster 06/06/2015](#)).

The Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) reports that 38 of the 44 small and medium irrigations schemes have been affected ([PDNA 06/2015](#)).

Crop calendar



HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Health: A health infrastructure damage assessment showed that 51 public health facilities out of 53 were completely or partially damaged ([PDNA 06/2015](#)). District health authorities have requested support for demolition, debris clearance, and reconstruction of health facilities across the district.

There have been no reported disease outbreaks since 25 April in Dolakha. The most reported syndromes between 14 June and 1 August were severe acute respiratory infections, followed by measles-like symptoms (fever with rash or jaundice), and acute watery diarrhea, according to the Ministry of Health and Population's Early Warning and Response System. Acute watery diarrhea was the most commonly reported type of diarrhea during the

reporting period at the three surveillance sites in Dolakha. The data shows that cases increased and appeared to peak at the end of June and slowly decreased throughout July (DHO 03/08/2015).

Nutrition: Post-earthquake nutrition data specific to Dolakha district is not available, however, the Central Mountain Region (in which Dolakha is situated) experiences slightly higher baseline global acute malnutrition (GAM) rates at 15% compared to the national average of 13.5%. In addition, children living in mountainous and rural areas are significantly more likely to be malnourished than those in urban areas (UNDP 2013). According to the agriculture and livelihoods assessment, key informants in all VDCs assessed in Dolakha reported that the majority of the population was eating much less animal protein (Food Security Cluster 06/06/2015).

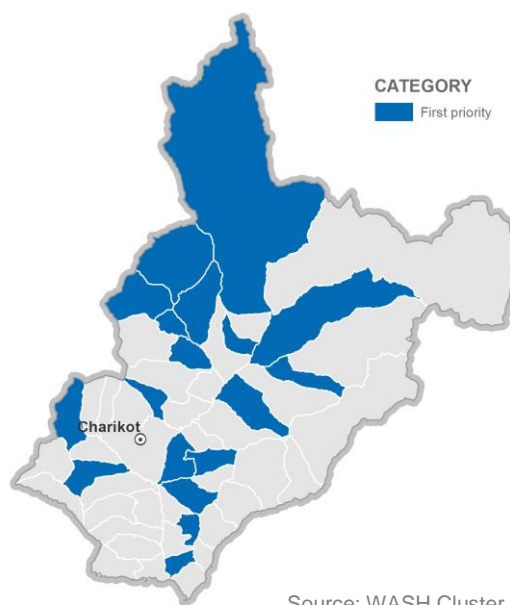
WASH

Pre-crisis	C. Mt. Region (Dolakha)	National
Access to improved drinking water source	93.8%	93.3% ¹¹¹
% of households with improved sanitation facilities	86.1%	71.6% Urban: 93.7% Rural: 67%
Number of VDCs declared Open Defecation Free	33 VDCs out of 52, 63%	1,042 VDCs out of 3,625, 29%

Sources: DWSS 20/01/2014, DWSS 21/10/2013, MICS 2014, WASH Cluster 07/2015

According to WASH actors, issues with contaminated water were not as severe as in other districts because many of the affected areas have low population density and water sources were available. Other districts, such as Sindhupalchok have reported that springs and wells have dried up following the earthquakes. Pre-earthquake information also indicates that the population in Dolakha had better access to sanitation facilities compared to the national average. Prior to the earthquake, the district was close to being declared open defecation free (ODF). In 41 districts assessed, damage to sanitation systems was widespread, with 38% of toilets destroyed and 51% partially damaged (SEBAC 12/07/2015). A separate Red Cross assessment of 10 districts found that 5% of HHs were resorting to open defecation as a result of damage to latrines. As of 5 August, 18 VDCs have been categorised as high priority by WASH actors, including district authorities (WASH Cluster 05/08/2015).

Priority VDCs for WASH interventions, 5 August



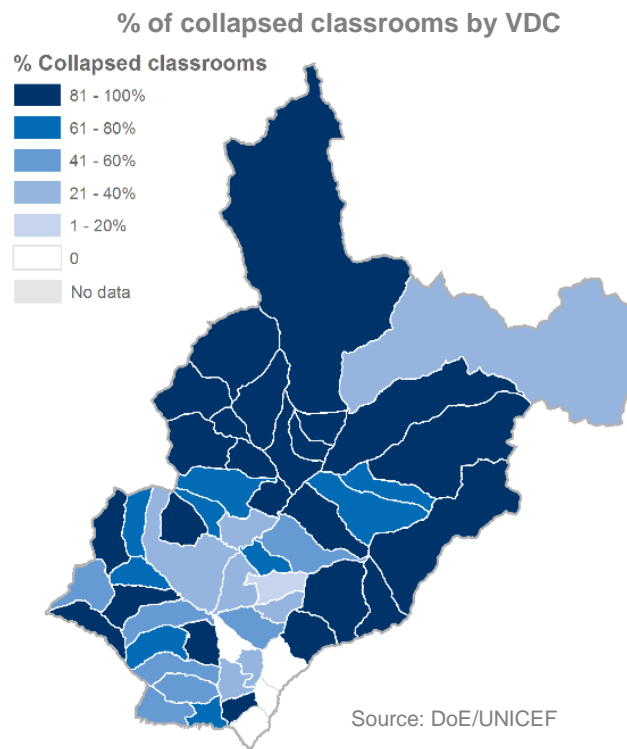
Source: WASH Cluster

Priority WASH VDCs
Alampu
Babare
Bigu
Bulung
Chankhu
Chilankha
Gairimudi
Jhule
Jhyaku
Kabhre
Katakuti
Khare
Khopachagu
LakuriDada
Lamabagar
Malu
Namdu
Sundrawati

EDUCATION

A school structural assessment found that 83% of the 3,858 classrooms assessed in Dolakha are in blocks classified as unsafe. The proportion of classrooms in unsafe buildings is the third highest across 11 earthquake-affected districts (the 14 priority districts, excluding the three districts in the Kathmandu Valley). Blocks in almost all schools assessed, (or 430), require some sort of repair. According to the Dolakha Education Cluster, all planned TLCs are expected to be completed by mid-August; 284 TLCs have been established or are in the process of construction ([Education Cluster 29/07/2015](#)). Gaps in the provision of TLCs are reported in the hard-to-reach VDCs in northern Dolakha due to their inaccessibility ([WFP RAO 05/08/2015](#)). District authorities have requested for TLCs to be replaced with permanent structures due to the heavy damage to schools.

The assessment highlights the limited availability of WASH infrastructure in the assessed schools. In at least 148 schools, or 34% of the schools assessed, there are no permanent toilets currently useable. In almost 51% of the assessed schools, no drinking water is available on-site.



PROTECTION

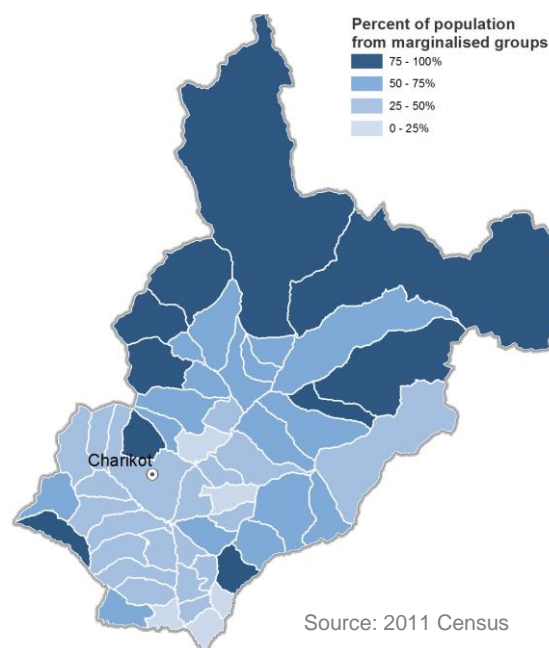
Marginalised groups: Little assessment data on the post-earthquake protection situation is available nationally, as well as in Dolakha specifically. Despite the Caste-based Discrimination and Untouchability Act of 2011, which makes discrimination of this kind a criminal offense, it is still common, although records of this are poor due to a lack of official reporting ([UNRCO 2013](#)). In Dolakha, marginalised ethnic and caste groups include Kami, Thami, Badi, Damai/Dholi, Majhi, and Sarki ([2011 Census](#)). The census data does not report Dalit populations, however, Dalit communities do exist in Dolakha and may be reported instead under ethnic-based affiliations rather than caste-based. Dalits are not members of the DDRRC, and there is no information available on the representation of other marginalised groups in decision-making bodies ([ADRF 2015](#)). A rapid assessment in three VDCs in Dolakha found that that intra-community solidarity was strong after the earthquake, including in places with Dalits, and at least temporarily overrode otherwise prevalent forms of discrimination ([DRCN-TAF 03/07/2015](#)). As seen in the map, hard-to-reach areas in northern Dolakha have a high proportion of marginalised groups.

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV): SGBV is an ongoing concern in the aftermath of the earthquakes, particularly in spontaneous settlements. According to the GBV sub-cluster, there are reports of SGBV cases of children in spontaneous camps in Dolakha. A 2011 survey in rural areas of four districts, including Dolakha, found that approximately half of Brahmin or Chhetri married women aged 15–24 had experienced some form of violence from their husbands. Nearly half (46%) reported sexual violence, while a 25% reported physical violence ([Lamichhane et al., 2011](#)). Dowry is a major driver of violence against girls and women ([CARE 05/05/2015](#)). Five female friendly spaces have been established in the district in the aftermath of the earthquakes.

Child protection: Child labour is one of the highest in the Region in which Dolakha is located at 57% compared to the national average of 38%, according to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) from 2014 ([MICS 2014](#)).

Civil documentation: Citizenship certificates are required to receive an “Earthquake Victim Identity Card” and access assistance. According to one study, as of 2011, 24% of Nepal’s population

Marginalised groups



aged 16 and above did not have citizenship certificates (FWLD 2014). In the 12 districts surveyed, possession of a citizenship certificate was significantly associated with gender and caste, with 87% of eligible men holding citizenship, compared to only 74% of eligible women (FWLD 2014). Given that civil documentation, particularly the citizenship certificate, is required to obtain the “Earthquake Victim Identity Card”, internal migrants who already lacked identification documents, or who have lost some or all of these documents in the earthquake, are facing problems accessing government relief due to not being registered in the districts affected, even if they have lived there a long time (Amnesty International 2015). In the absence of identification documents, local officials or community members can informally identify people, which can ensure access to relief for people. However, previous experience suggests that the lack of transparency and complex social and political circumstances in some communities could potentially exacerbate social exclusion (IFRC 2014).

INFORMATION GAPS

There have been few detailed and comprehensive assessments of Dolakha district. Most assessments conducted by humanitarian agencies have been project-focused and have not been translated into a published report. Two high priority VDCs, Khare and Orang, have not been assessed by humanitarian agencies, according to the information available to the Assessment Unit.

Sectorally, there are major gaps in understanding the impacts of the earthquakes on protection and nutrition, as there are at the national level. Little information is available on access to civil documentation and emergency cards at the district level, and its impact on access to aid. While disease surveillance data is available, there is a lack of information on access to health services post-earthquake. In the WASH sector, there is a lack of updated data the affected population’s access to improved water and sanitation facilities.

Assessments planned

- ACTED is finalising a multi-sectoral assessment in seven VDCs.
- Plan is expecting to conduct a multi-sectoral assessment to determine medium-term recovery needs in the coming months.

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

