



RAPID ASSESSMENT

Community Engagement and Accountability

Lombok Earthquakes Operation

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 International Federation
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LOMBOK EARTHQUAKES

Magnitude 7.0

On 29 July 2018, a 6.4 magnitude earthquake struck off Lombok in the province of West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. A second, larger earthquake of 7.0 magnitude occurred on 5 August 2018, and was followed by thousands of aftershocks (data from Indonesia's Agency for Meteorology, Climatology, Geophysics – Badan Meteorologi, Klimatologi dan Geofisika). The earthquakes affected 509,600 people across five districts including North Lombok, East Lombok, West Lombok, Central Lombok and Mataram city, with 560 deaths and 7,757 injuries. At least 396,000 people have been displaced in the series of devastating earthquakes. Seventy-five per cent of buildings in North Lombok were damaged or demolished including 577 school buildings (data from National Disaster Management Agency – Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana).



Photo credit: **Husni/IFRC**

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Introduction

The Indonesian Red Cross Society (known as Palang Merah Indonesia – PMI) conducted a rapid assessment on information, communication and accountability in response to devastating earthquakes on Lombok island, Indonesia. Some 257 people from severely affected communities including North Lombok, East Lombok and West Lombok took part in this assessment, held through focus group discussions and interviews. Information from government institutions and aid agencies also contributed to this report. The key findings include **information needs of the affected people, their preferred communication channels, feedback mechanisms, and decision making process in the communities** to consider for integration in the programme designs for this response.

2

Methodology



Photo credit: **Husni/IFRC**

Fourteen focus group discussions and survey interviews with 257 respondents were conducted in North Lombok, East Lombok and West Lombok from 6 to 15 August 2018. Participants were men and women between 15 and 80 years old. Considering the amount of stress in the affected communities as people have endured thousands of aftershocks with multiple strong quakes, PMI selected the respondents randomly and conducted assessments informally through conversations with the respondents instead of using questionnaires, which can be overly formal. PMI also interviewed key government staff and humanitarian actors, and analysed information on official government websites and social media to complement the assessment findings.

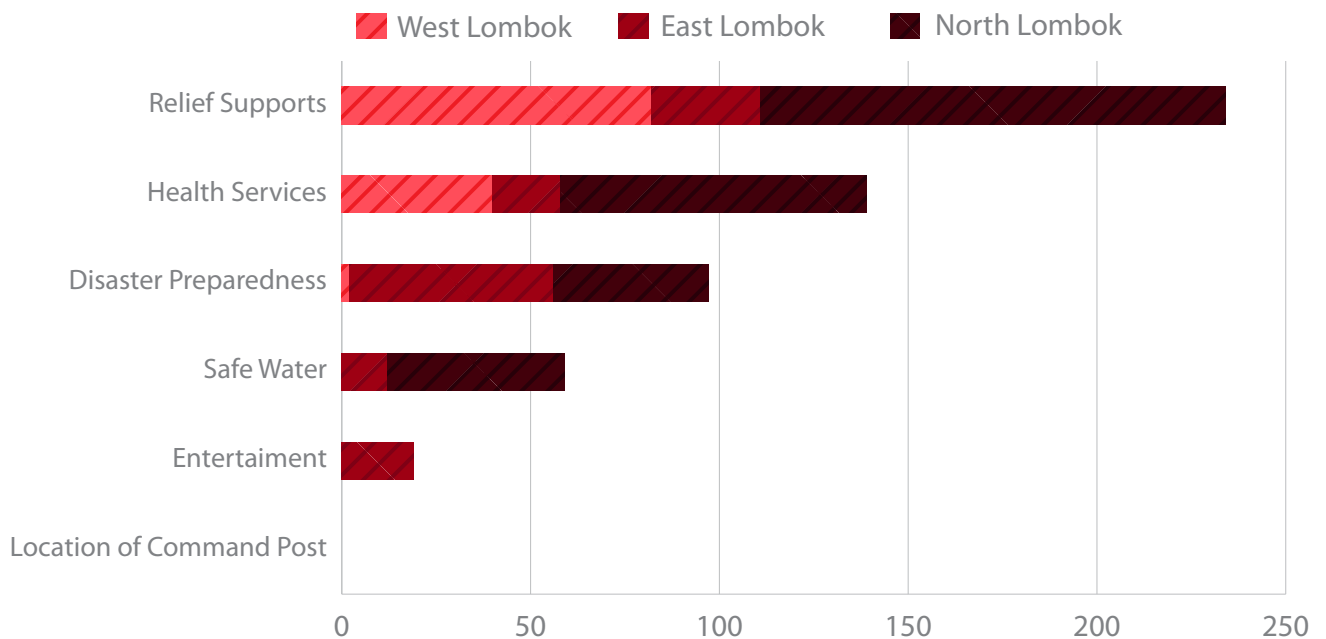


3. Findings

3 Findings

Photo credit : Husni/IFRC

Information needs



While the top information priority among the affected population is relief distribution from the government and aid agencies, they also require information of health services due to the community evacuation settings that expose them to various health risks. Most communities set up small, open-air camps using plastic sheets and tarpaulins next to their damaged houses and gardens; meanwhile some chose to stay in the communal evacuation camps, many of which have hygiene problems. In two of the hardest-hit districts, North Lombok and East Lombok, people need information on how to stay safe from aftershocks. They have endured thousands of aftershocks since the first earthquake and they have constant fears of future quakes and potential tsunamis.

”

We need more information on how to be safe from the aftershocks as we keep facing the tremors in our villages. Some simple tips and information on facing the aftershocks would help us to be more prepared for the quakes.

- a group of men and women in East Lombok. -

“



Language

Most people participating in this assessment speak Bahasa Indonesia. However, in some rural areas, elders speak their native language, Sasak. It was observed that the literacy rate is high across all villages assessed.

Access to information

In remote areas of North Lombok, people face challenges to access information on relief supports. This is hampered by road access to villages as the earthquakes and aftershocks have fractured some roads, brought down tones of soil, and damaged bridges and communication lines in villages. Heads of families strive to travel significant distances to look for information on relief distribution. People also build signboards across the main roads to attract attention from aid providers to bring help to hidden villages.



Rumours



People face various rumours in the earthquake response. The most common rumour is another strong earthquake (double the magnitude) would strike soon, followed by a giant tsunami. People have also heard a rumour that strong earthquakes would always strike on Sundays as the ones they experienced from the first and second quakes occurred on Sundays. This causes tremendous panic and stress across communities. Some robbers have taken advantage of this event by stealing community possessions through creating rumours in the villages.

”

After the quake, I was able to save some of my stock and the store front. There was a rumour a big tsunami would happen and I escaped to higher ground with all people in this village. When we returned home, my stock was stolen.

- a woman in North Lombok -

“

”

It is so hard to believe which news is true and false. On one hand, we want to evacuate ourselves for our safety if we hear the news of a tsunami. On another hand, we lose our belongings when we have to suddenly escape the village for evacuation.

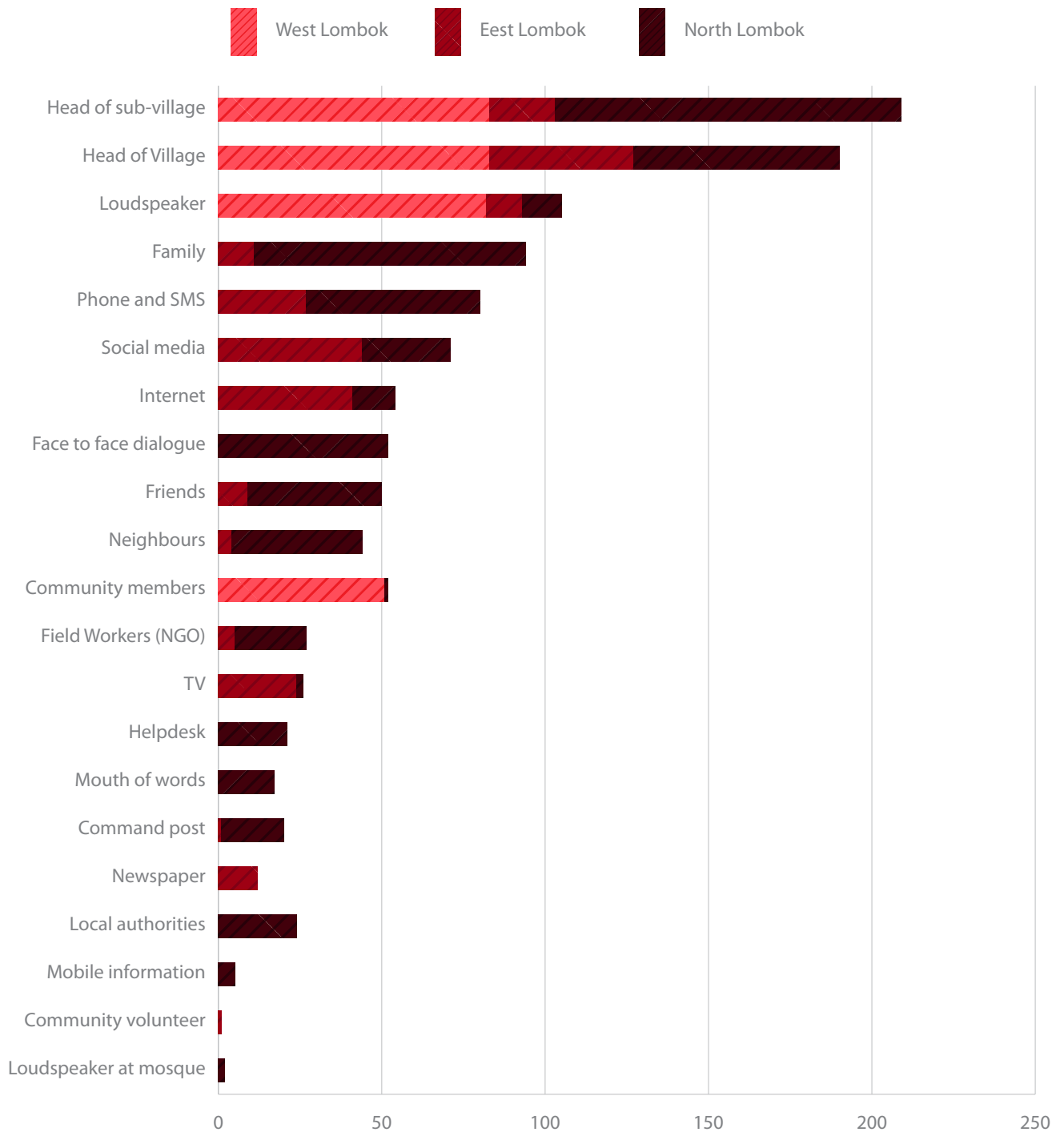
- a group of men and women in East Lombok -

“



Another rumour is that Mount Rinjani, a popular tourist and trekking destination located in East Lombok, would create a huge explosion due to continued earthquakes across the island. This adds to greater anxiety among the communities, particularly those living in East Lombok.

PREFERRED COMMUNICATION CHANNELS



Graph: communication channels preferred and trusted by the affected people



Community leaders

Heads of sub-villages and villages are the most preferred and trusted communication sources by the affected people. People reported that they have a great level of trust in their community leaders, which applies across all three districts assessed.



I take care of my own community and provide them regular information and updates about the earthquakes for their safety. We don't have any casualties from the earthquakes despite all the buildings in this area were flattened.

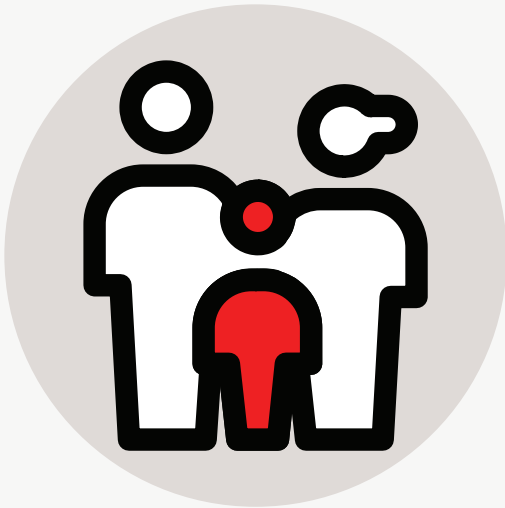
- Head of sub-village in North Lombok -



Loudspeaker

Loudspeakers play important roles to convey messages. Community leaders usually broadcast announcements via loudspeakers to allow larger communities to receive information.





Family linkage

People reported that family is an important source of information, especially in North Lombok considering the level of destruction in this district. Many individuals reported that they discussed issues at the family level to make informed decisions.

Phone call and text-messaging

The use of mobile phone is high across the two hardest-hit districts, North Lombok and East Lombok. Despite communication disruptions and electricity issues caused by the earthquakes, people reported that they used mobile phones to contact people from outside the villages to find out information they needed. They charged phones using motorbike batteries to enable them to stay connected with the outside world.



I would travel five to six kilometers away to a higher ground to get a good phone reception to make contacts with relatives and friends.”

- a man in East Lombok -





Social media and internet

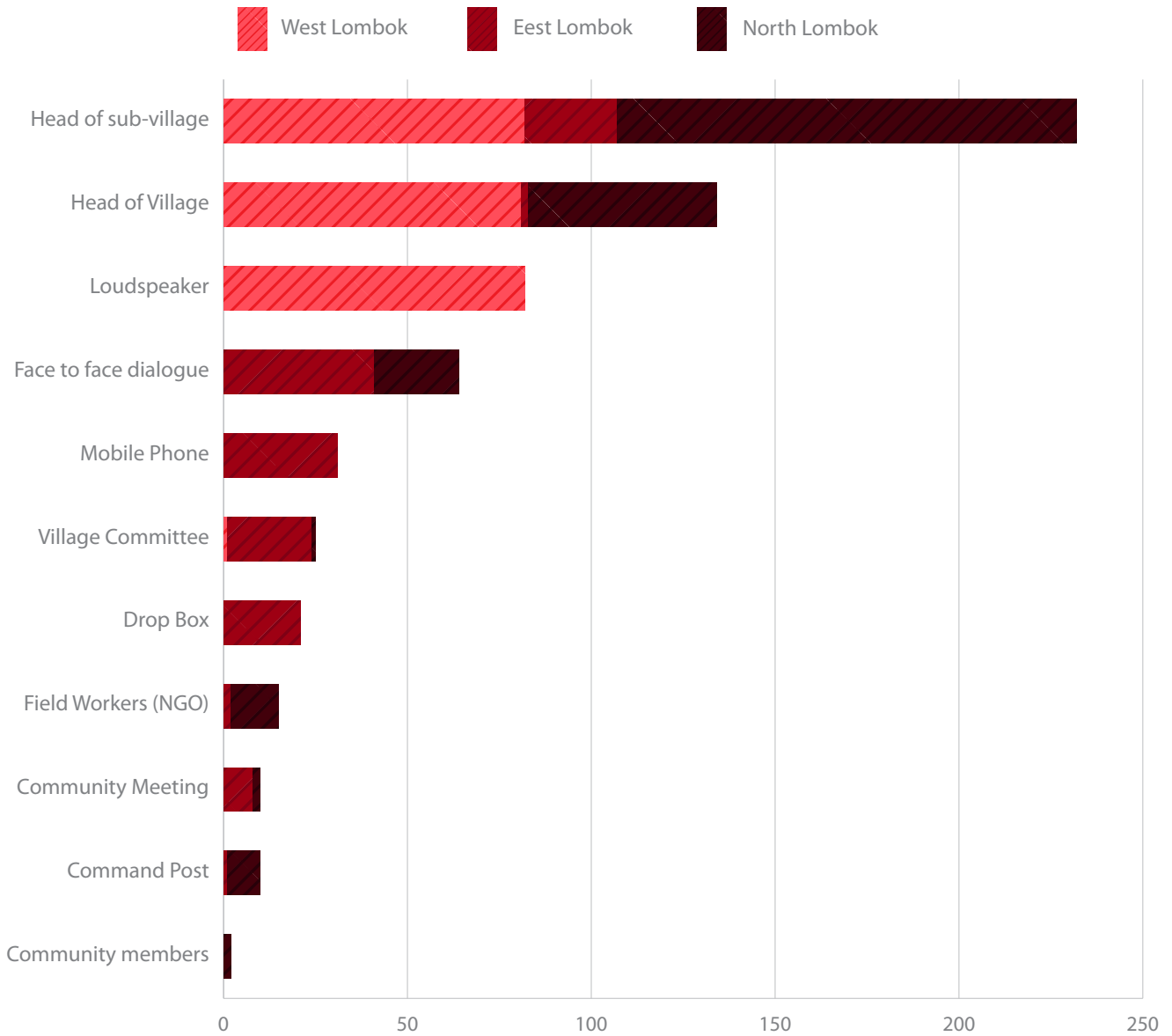
Social media and internet are popular among young people in North Lombok and East Lombok. They access information on social media (especially Facebook) and disseminate information to families and friends. However, people reported that they had trust issues with some social media posts as they found there were many hoaxes and fake news related to the Lombok earthquakes circulated online.

Other communication channel: Radio

People were asked if they had access to radio and all mentioned that they had problems with electricity in their villages after the earthquakes and were unable to access media such as TV and radio. In some areas like Mataram city, radio stations function well and they run news broadcasts in addition to entertainment. A humanitarian actor on the ground reported that there is Indonesian Community Radio Network (Jaringan Radio Komunitas Indonesia) operating in the main Command Post of National Disaster Management Agency. He also explained that some radio stations like Primadona FM used their social media page (Facebook) to extend information to their audience.



FEEDBACK MECHANISMS



People indicated that community leaders were their most trusted channel to provide feedback and complaints about the issues they were facing and about emergency operations. This is followed by face to face dialogue with aid workers to channel inquiries on relief supports. In East Lombok, people explained that they liked to engage more on mobile phones.

COMMUNITY STRUCTURES

Decision Making Process

People in the three districts assessed indicated that the process of decision making was made through the village authorities. See table below:

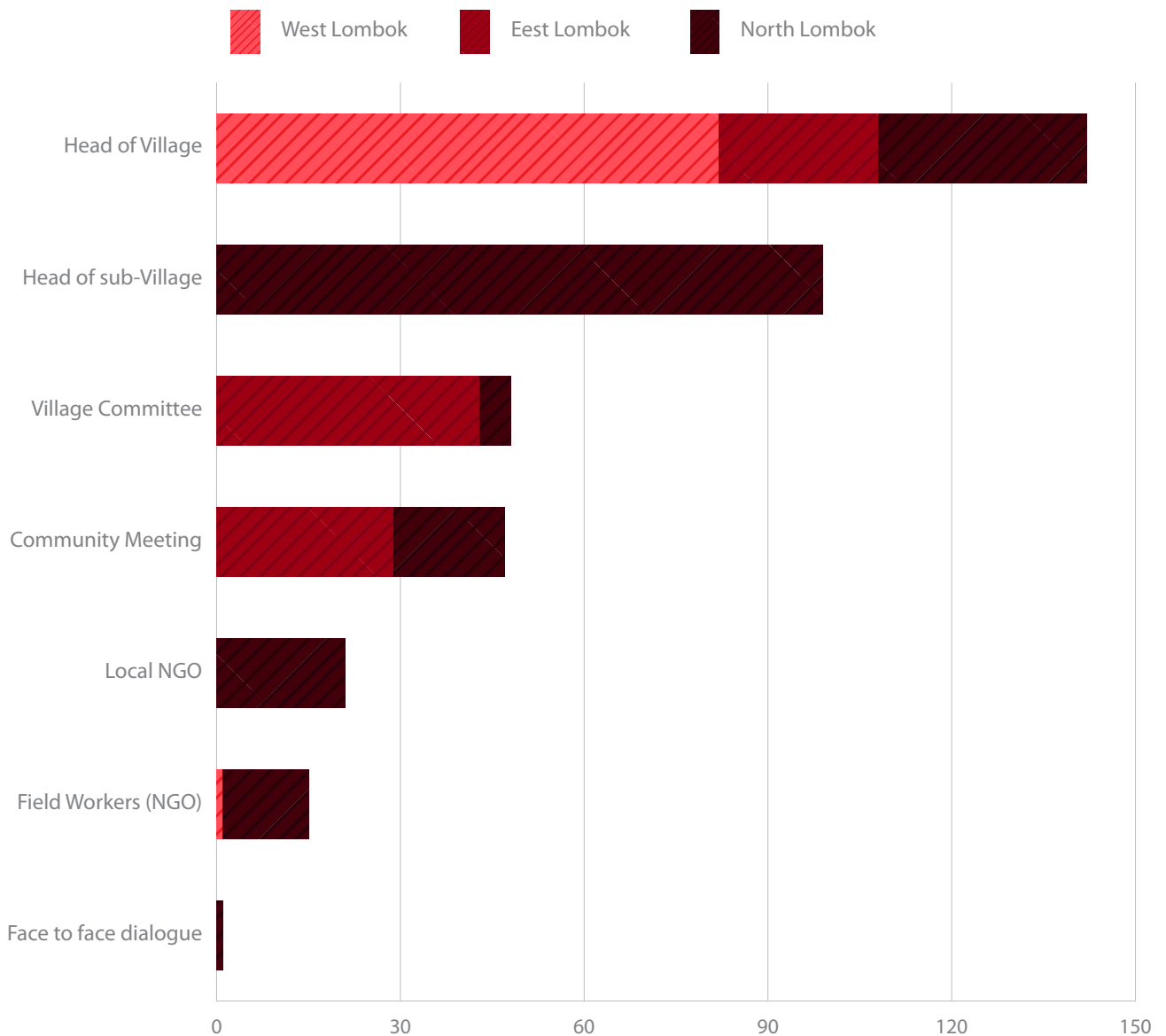




Photo credit: **Husni/IFRC**

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Key recommendations



Life-saving information such as relief distribution, disaster alerts/ information, health and hygiene topics are critical in the affected areas. It is recommended that information be produced in two languages, Bahasa Indonesia and Sasak, to improve understanding in remote areas, particularly among elder communities. At the time of assessment, PMI was disseminating information in both languages via printed materials and communities showed preference for their local language.



Use multi-media approach to communicate and engage with the affected population. Communicating through their community leaders is the most effective means as suggested by the communities. Additionally, the use of mobile phone and social media can help improve information sharing and community participation respectively. PMI has established a dedicated

hotline for the Lombok operation and promoted PMI's hashtag #TanyaPMI (#AskPMI) on social media and both mediums have proved to be effective means of communication and engagement with affected people.



Establish rumour-tracking strategies within the operation. In addressing rumours, the official Twitter account of National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) can be used to dispel rumours. Additionally, the Twitter account of BNPB's spokesman, Mr. Sutopo Purwo Nugroho (@Sutopo_PN), can be a reference to clarify rumours as he regularly addresses the fake news circulating on online forums. PMI has promoted these links and engaged with communities through volunteers to alleviate concerns about rumours of other larger earthquakes and potential tsunamis.



Use local radio to disseminate life-saving messages and build engagement with the affected people. It is recommended that aid providers include the distribution of radio sets to affected communities at the household level to allow access to information and better participation in the response.



Work with local radio operating across Lombok to improve their coverage and establish programmes that are useful and relevant to the affected people. The radio programmes can be extended to support the efforts of social and behaviour change communications in recovery programmes.



For further information please contact:

Arifin Muhammad Hadi

Head of Disaster Management Division

Indonesian Red Cross Society – **PMI**

Email: arifin_mhadi@pmi.or.id

Aulia Arriani

Head of Public Relation Bureau and Community
Engagement Focal Person

Indonesian Red Cross Society – **PMI**

Email: aulia_arriani@pmi.or.id

Deasy Sujatiningrani

Acting Head of Planning Bureau and Community
Engagement Focal Person

Indonesian Red Cross Society – **PMI**

Email: deasy_sujatiningrani@pmi.or.id

Husni

Community Engagement and Accountability Coordinator
Supporting Indonesia, Timor-Leste and Philippines

International Federation Of Red Cross And Red Crescent
Societies – **IFRC**

Email: husni.husni@ifrc.org

Written by

Husni (IFRC)

Aulia Arriani (PMI)

Photo credit:

Husni (IFRC)

Indonesian Red Cross

Jl. Gatot Subroto Kav. 96 Jakarta 12790

Phone. +62 21-799 2325, Ext. 300

Fax. +62 21- 799 5188

Website. www.pmi.or.id



@Palangmerah



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