

# ANTICIPATORY ACTION BULLETIN





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# FbA-SRSP project final review and STRONG in DRM project's kick off

Nepal Red Cross Society is advancing its disaster risk management efforts through Strengthening Ownership and Governance in Disaster Risk Management (STRONG in DRM) project, which builds upon activities of Forecast-Based Action & Shock-Responsive Social Protection (FbA SRSP).

The Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) Disaster Management Department organized a three-day workshop in Thakurbaba, Bardiya district from 28th to 30th November 2022. The workshop aimed to conclude the FBA-SRSP project and conduct its final review, as well as introduce STRONG in DRM project which is funded by EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. Participants included the director of the Disaster Management Department, Bipul Neupane from NRCS headquarters, representatives from the Danish Red Cross (David Fogden) and Finnish Red Cross (Sushma Shrestha), Mercy Corps and leadership from NRCS district chapters, project staff, local government authorities, Red Cross volunteers, and staff.

The workshop focused on discussing and reflecting on the progress, best practices, learnings, gaps, and implementation challenges of the FbA-SRSP program. It also aimed to introduce the attendees to STRONG in DRM project. The importance of anticipatory actions in enhancing the capacity of individuals, households, communities, and institutions for better preparedness and timely response to anticipated disasters was emphasized.

The workshop concluded that the activities of STRONG project should also focus on the local rivers and inundation as the community were not only affected by Babai and Karnali but they mostly affected by inundation and local rivers. Additionally, it was agreed upon in the meeting to increase the involvement of community participants to ensure the effective implementation of Early Actions at the local level. Furthermore, the workshop finalized the two-year implementation plan and budgets for the STRONG project.

# FbA-SRSP Community of Practice (CoP) meeting



In 2022, FbA SRSP community of practice (CoP) for group was established to facilitate knowledge sharing among its members. This group allowed members to exchange their learnings, best practices, implementation challenges, and upcoming priorities based on their experiences in program implementation. To continue this collaborative effort, the Quarterly CoP meeting took place on 28th February 2023 in Kathmandu. Representatives from over 20 agencies working in Anticipatory Action (AA), including NDRRMA, DHM, and MOFAGA, attended the meeting. The NRCS co-led the meeting, which focused on five thematic agendas with presentations from the respective agencies.

During the meeting, Danish Red Cross (DRC) presented the preliminary findings of an early action and early response assessment conducted in Kailali district. Additionally,

Dan Church Aid (DCA) and the Institute of Himalayan Risk Reduction shared information about B-READY, a scalable model of locally led anticipatory humanitarian action in the Mahakali River Basin, Western Nepal. The meeting also included a demonstration of the localization of the Bipad portal by the Youth Innovation Lab, while Save the Children provided insights into their tasks related to cold wave anticipatory action. Lastly, Practical Actions presented information on the Global Flood Resilience Program and Index-based Flood Insurance.

Following the presentations, a fruitful open floor discussion addressed various questions raised by different agencies. The meeting concluded with an agreement to hold the next meeting on April 28, 2023, to continue the exchange of knowledge and collaboration within the CoP group.

# Municipal leader and DRR officials' exposure visit

In March 2023, the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and officials from Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) departments of Barhabise, Bhotekoshi palikas in Sindhupalchowk, and Naukunda and Uttargaya palikas in Rasuwa, visited the STRONG project implementing palikas (Tikapur and Janaki) in Kailali district. This visit was facilitated as part of the PRATIBANDHA II project supported by the European Union.

During their exposure visits to Tikapur Municipality and Janaki Rural Municipality in Kailali district, the local government

representatives and DRR officials had the opportunity to observe and learn about successful practices in flood early action and Disaster Risk Reduction governance. They engaged with the communities, gaining valuable insights into the strategies, policies, and programs implemented in those areas. This visit aimed to equip the visiting representatives and officials with knowledge and ideas that they could potentially apply in their own area, thereby enhancing their disaster preparedness and response, especially in the context of landslides.

# Scaling up anticipatory action in Dang district

The NRCS's Enhanced Community Resilience (ENCORE) project organized a one-day Anticipatory Action Orientation for members of the District Disaster Management Committees (DDMC) and other key stakeholders at the district level, as well as municipal officials at the municipal level. The primary objective of this orientation was to enhance the participants' understanding of Anticipatory Action and enable them to formulate and implement Early Action plans at the district and municipal levels. A total of 102 participants (84 male, 18 female, 4 Dalits, and 1 person with disabilities) attended the training.

During the orientation session, participants engaged in discussions and reached a consensus on the essential components of Anticipatory Action to be integrated into the Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and monsoon preparedness and response plans. They also explored their commitment to developing or revising these plans to incorporate Anticipatory Action. Following the workshop, the DDMC in Dang and Rajpur, as well as Gadhawa and Babai Rural Municipalities developed their DRM plan, Monsoon preparedness and response plan, and flood contingency, embedding AA in their routine responsibility.

# MDRG-SA training in Bardiya and Kanchanpur

Under the STRONG project, the NRCS conducted Municipal Disaster Risk Governance and Self-Assessment (MDRG-SA) training on 12th and 13th March 2023 in Bardiya and 15th and 16th March in Kanchanpur. The training aimed to enhance the knowledge of municipal DRR/IT focal persons and NRCS Municipal Assistants from 12 project implementing municipalities. The objective was to build their understanding of municipal disaster risk governance and improve their facilitation skills, preparing them for future trainings and orientations. The training was jointly facilitated by the MOFAGA, NRCS, and Mercy Corps. A total of 64 participants (54 males and 10 females) successfully completed the training.

During the training, participants had the opportunity to enhance their knowledge on various topics including DRR governance assessment tools, the disaster governance and DRR policy of the Nepalese Government, mainstreaming DRR in the planning process, municipal-level DRR governance assessment, relevant constitutional and legal aspects of DRR, institutional and organizational structures, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, coordination, collaboration, partnership, available resources, capacities, and other interrelated aspects. The Municipal Disaster Risk Governance Assessment Tool is valuable in understanding the current resources, resource needs, gaps, and challenges in disaster risk reduction and management at the municipal level. The indicators within the tool will be considered during the planning, budgeting, and policymaking processes. The training was closely monitored by the NRCS headquarters, district chapters, and DRC, with the participation of MOFAGA representatives providing their valuable observations.

## DRR orientation to Ward Disaster Management Committee (WDMC)

In March 2023, Janaki Rural Municipality, in coordination with the NRCS's Kailali district chapter, organized a one-day orientation for the members of the WDMC in wards no. 2 and 4. The orientation focused on various aspects of disaster management, including weather forecasting, early action, early warning systems, and shock-responsive social protection.

The session was facilitated by Netra Prasad Jaishi, the head of the disaster management section, and Prakash Dangi, a Municipal Assistant of the STRONG project. During the orientation, participants recognized the importance of disaster management and agreed that the WDMC should prioritize this issue. They also acknowledged the need to implement different activities aimed at reducing losses during disasters. With the improvement in weather forecasting in Nepal, participants emphasized the significance of paying special attention to weather forecast information and taking preventive measures to minimize losses caused by rainfall and floods. Furthermore, the participants reached a consensus on the effective implementation of the already established communication channels. They also agreed to initiate anticipatory actions by mobilizing local communities to prevent or mitigate upcoming flood disaster risks.

# Red Cross support on community level planning process

The Bardiya district chapter of the NRCS actively engaged with various communities in different wards of Thakurbaba municipality to promote measures for reducing disaster risks during the local planning process. They conducted awareness-raising activities among community members, emphasizing the importance of forecast-based actions. Red Cross staff, alongside field champions, actively participated in the community-level planning process and encouraged them to incorporate disaster management plans in the upcoming fiscal year 2080/81. Through these efforts, community members recognized the significance of disaster risk reduction and forecast-based actions. Unlike previous years, where their focus was primarily on issues such as roads, electricity, and irrigation, they now prioritized disaster management plans during the planning process. The STRONG in DRM program played a crucial role in increasing their understanding of the importance of integrating disaster management activities into their annual plans. As a result, community members prioritized key initiatives, such as the installation of hand pumps and the construction of drainage systems for water outlets, in order to address flood-related concerns. Additionally, they ensured the inclusion of disaster-related training programs in their plans.

## Establishment of LEOC in Punarbas Municipality

To mitigate the risk of disasters and ensure preparedness within Punarbas Municipality in Kanchanpur, the Local Emergency Operation Center (LEOC) has been established. This demonstrates the municipality's commitment to effectively prepare for and manage potential disasters in the area. The NRCS has played a crucial role in advocating for the establishment of the LEOC, and the Punarbas Municipality is dedicated to implementing all necessary plans to minimize disaster risks and address challenges, thereby promoting safe and sustainable development.

The Punarbas LEOC is committed to maintaining a dedicated staff presence within the center, ensuring their availability 24/7. The LEOC has also implemented a system to display all early warning messages related to disasters on an installed display within the municipality. Furthermore, the municipality is actively seeking support from the NDRRMA to install gauges at two locations along the Dhodha River. This will enable the collection of water level data every 15 minutes, enhancing their monitoring and response capabilities.

The leaders of Punarbas Municipality, along with the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) focal person, are dedicated to maintaining regular coordination with the District Emergency Operations Center (DEOC), Provincial Emergency Operations Center (PEOC), and National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC). Their aim is to effectively manage current risks, disseminate early warnings, provide support to the community for proactive measures, and respond to disasters promptly.



## Multi hazards siren installed in flood prone area

In close collaboration with the NRCS, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA) has successfully implemented the Audio Emergency Warning and Notification System, also known as the Siren System, across nine municipalities in Bardiya, Kailali, and Kanchanpur districts. This system has been strategically installed in locations identified by the local Palikas as being at higher risk of flood exposure from the Babai, Karnali, and Dodha rivers, aiming to address multiple hazards and ensure the timely dissemination of emergency alerts and notifications. This system aims to inform the general public about potential disasters. By utilizing SIM cards and internet connectivity, information can be transmitted from various levels of governance, including local municipalities, districts, provinces, or central authorities. In addition to generating sound alerts, this system is capable of delivering information and updates in the local language. The siren device has an audible range of about 2 kilometres from where it is installed.

The installation of sirens in these Palikas is particularly significant due to the recurring occurrence of various disasters, such as floods, fires, and animal attacks, resulting in significant losses each year. Coastal areas along the Karnali, Babai, and Dodha rivers, in particular, face challenges related to inundation and flooding caused by rising water levels. The installation of automatic sirens has substantially enhanced the municipalities' capacity for early warnings, helping to mitigate the impact of such disasters.

Prior to the installation of the sirens, the NDRRMA and the NRCS conducted joint assessments of the locations chosen by the municipalities. The STRONG project team from the NRCS provided support and assistance to NDRRMA during the installation process of the sirens in the project areas. These sirens were successfully installed in various locations, including Barbardiya, Thakur Baba, and Gulariya in Bardiya district; Janaki, Bhajani, and Tikapur in Kailali district; and Punarbas, Laljhadi, and Shuklaphanta in Kanchanpur district.

# Utilizing existing social protection systems for rapid delivery of disaster relief

*The exposure data that has been collected in FbA SRSP and STRONG in DRM will facilitate the timely dissemination of information and distribution of relief to the most vulnerable people in the community affected by disasters.*

*- Mukesh Gautam, Program Officer, NRCS,*

The Tikapur municipality in Kailali district has taken a proactive step in disaster management efforts. Recognizing that vulnerable groups, such as senior citizens, persons with disabilities, single women, children, and pregnant women, have additional and special needs during disasters, the municipality has leveraged the social security allowance to its disaster relief initiatives.

According to statistics, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, single women, and children are among the most affected during disasters, and the Tikapur municipality experiences recurrent flood disasters on an annual basis. In the past, challenges arose due to the lack of community names and contact numbers for social security beneficiaries, making it difficult to identify recipients and effectively communicate early warning messages and distribute relief in a timely manner. To address this issue, the social security registration sections of the municipality updated the missing information during the renewal process of social security allowances for beneficiaries.



**Risk and vulnerability household data in addition to the SSA registry was used for targeting of the families who were at most risk of the floods. This showed the feasibility of temporary horizontal expansion of the SSA and its features to deliver cash assistance to disaster-affected households.**

This year, the municipality is relaying forecast-based messages to the community members using the contact numbers provided by the beneficiaries of the social security allowances. Nirmala Choudhary, DRR focal person, mentioned that the contact information for the social security allowances has been updated.

# Second National Dialogue on Anticipatory Action in Nepal



The second National Dialogue on Anticipatory Action 2023 in Nepal was a critical milestone following the success of the First National Dialogue in 2022. Themed "Connecting Science and Policy with Actions for Communities," the event showcased solidarity and collaboration, with over 50 organizations participating. Hosted by the NDRRMA and co-hosted by the NRCS and DRC, the dialogue brought together stakeholders from diverse sectors to discuss and advance proactive measures in disaster management.

The dialogue covered a diverse range of topics, addressing key aspects of anticipatory action. These included the active involvement of local municipalities and communities in implementing anticipatory measures, the development of community-centric early warning systems,

and the vital role of anticipatory action in addressing health-related hazards, especially in light of the global COVID pandemic. Discussions also revolved around effective risk communication, national information systems, shock-responsive social protection programs, and disaster risk financing.

By emphasizing collaboration and coordination among government agencies, NGOs, academia, and local communities, the event aimed to effectively address the challenges posed by climate change and its impact on disaster risks. Through the identification of good practices, addressing gaps, overcoming obstacles, and setting milestones, a joint path forward for all stakeholders involved in disaster risk reduction and management was developed.

# Community practice on flood early action and early messaging



Hiralal Tharu, a resident of Bhadapur, Ward No. 11 in Barbardiya, shares his experience with the effectiveness of receiving early warning messages and the importance of preparedness. Hiralal's family consists of nine members, including his senior parents who receive social security allowances.

During the flood of 2074 B.S., Hiralal's community received early warning messages through SMS on mobile phones. However, not everyone could read and understand the messages, only those who were literate could comprehend and share the information. As soon as the information about the upcoming flood was received, the community immediately stored some of their belongings on the top floor of their homes.

Currently, the community is receiving continuous updates about the flood through radio broadcasts. Hiralal said, "Even the Ward Chairman is directly sharing information to us which he got from the early warning bulletin he received on his mobile phone from the Emergency Operation Center. He informed me that when the water level reaches the danger mark of 6.1 meters in the Chepang Geridaram, it takes about 4 to 5 hours for the flood to reach the community."

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*During the year 2014, the flood ruined my 24 quintals of rice, and I couldn't even save the clothes and other materials from my home. After the flood, it was very difficult for my family to survive. Other households in the community also faced similar problems. We were not aware about the early warning and messaging before the flood, so that we could save our belongings and foods before the flood hits. As a result, our days were very difficult.*

*- Hiralal Tharu, Bardiya*

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Hiralal plays an active role in disseminating the messages to the community, ensuring that everyone stays informed. Hiralal emphasizes the importance of taking necessary precautions based on the received messages. He keeps his important documents and household items in a safe place before the flood and checks the weather forecast before engaging in agricultural work. He acknowledges that in the past, weather forecasts were not reliable, leading to a loss of trust. However, with the current system of receiving weather messages, the community now trusts the information and takes the necessary steps to ensure safety.

Hiralal said, "Since my parents are elderly, it would be difficult to evacuate them to a safe place in the event of a flood. So, I have already made arrangements to move them to my sister's house along with my important documents and food supplies. Similarly, Other members of the community have also made preparations for potential floods."

Hiralal emphasizes effectiveness of receiving early messages, as it enables the community to prepare in advance and minimize financial losses. He expresses the need for the continuation of such information, as it keeps the community alert and well-prepared.

## FbA trigger mechanism



### River Flooding and Flash Flooding



**Forecast Source: Both hydrological and meteorological forecasts (Global, Regional and Local)**



**Readiness Lead Time: 3-7 days**



**Activation Lead time: 24h-48h**

# Heat Wave initiatives

NRCS, along with Red Cross movement partners (Finnish Red Cross, German Red Cross, and Norwegian Red Cross), developed the Nepalgunj Heat Action Plan 2023.

## Identification of Heat Threshold and Hotspots Study in Nepalgunj

In Nepalgunj, heat thresholds and hotspots were determined, with a maximum daily temperature of 38°C and an impact threshold of 47 based on the heat index. Wards 13, 16, 19, 20, 21, and 22 were identified as heat hotspots. Heatwaves have a significant impact on vulnerable groups like rickshaw pullers and auto drivers, who experience substantial income loss during extreme heat events.

## Policy Brief: Reducing Heat Impacts in Nepalgunj City, Nepal

A policy brief was produced to share insights on how the Nepalgunj City in Nepal could improve its preparedness for extreme heat through revision and additions to existing policies and plans. The strategies for mitigating heat impacts in Nepalgunj City consider different timescales of heat action, and are more specifically detailed in the Heat Action Plan.

## City Stakeholders Dialogue Workshop

The event was conducted in presence of the Mayor of Nepalgunj Sub-metropolitan city (SMC), and other key stakeholders to foster consensus on heat risks and impacts. During the workshop, participants exchanged ideas on short and long-term measures to address heat risks. Additionally, an initial roadmap for heat action in the city was outlined as an outcome of the workshop.

## Heat Awareness Campaign

NRCS championed a campaign to raise awareness among stakeholders and city residents about heat-related risks. The campaign involved distributing pamphlets, placing posters and banners at critical locations throughout the city, and broadcasting heat awareness messages on radio, news channels, and social media platforms.

## Knowledge Sharing in Nepalgunj

A workshop leveraged local knowledge and aspirations for effective heat action, emphasizing a systematic and collaborative approach. It identified short-term and long-term measures to address heat-related challenges, integrating the workshop outputs into the comprehensive Heat Action Plan, incorporating valuable insights from participants.

## Heat Action Plan (HAP) for Nepalgunj

The Heat Action Plan (HAP) for Nepalgunj is based on scientific heat research conducted by RCCC, followed by community engagement and stakeholders' consultation. It provides a framework for implementing, coordinating, and evaluating extreme heat action across timescales to minimise negative impacts of extreme heat on the health and livelihood of the city's residents.

NRCS, along with American Red Cross, Finnish Red Cross, and Red Cross Climate Center (RCCC), organized two workshops in Dhangadhi and Bhairahawa. The workshops aimed to share lessons from the Nepalgunj Heat Action Plan and explore their applicability in other areas. Furthermore, NRCS has been designing Anticipatory Actions to effectively respond to extreme heat situations based on the feedbacks received during the workshops.



# ANTICIPATORY ACTION BULLETIN

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