

ANTICIPATORY ACTION BULLETIN

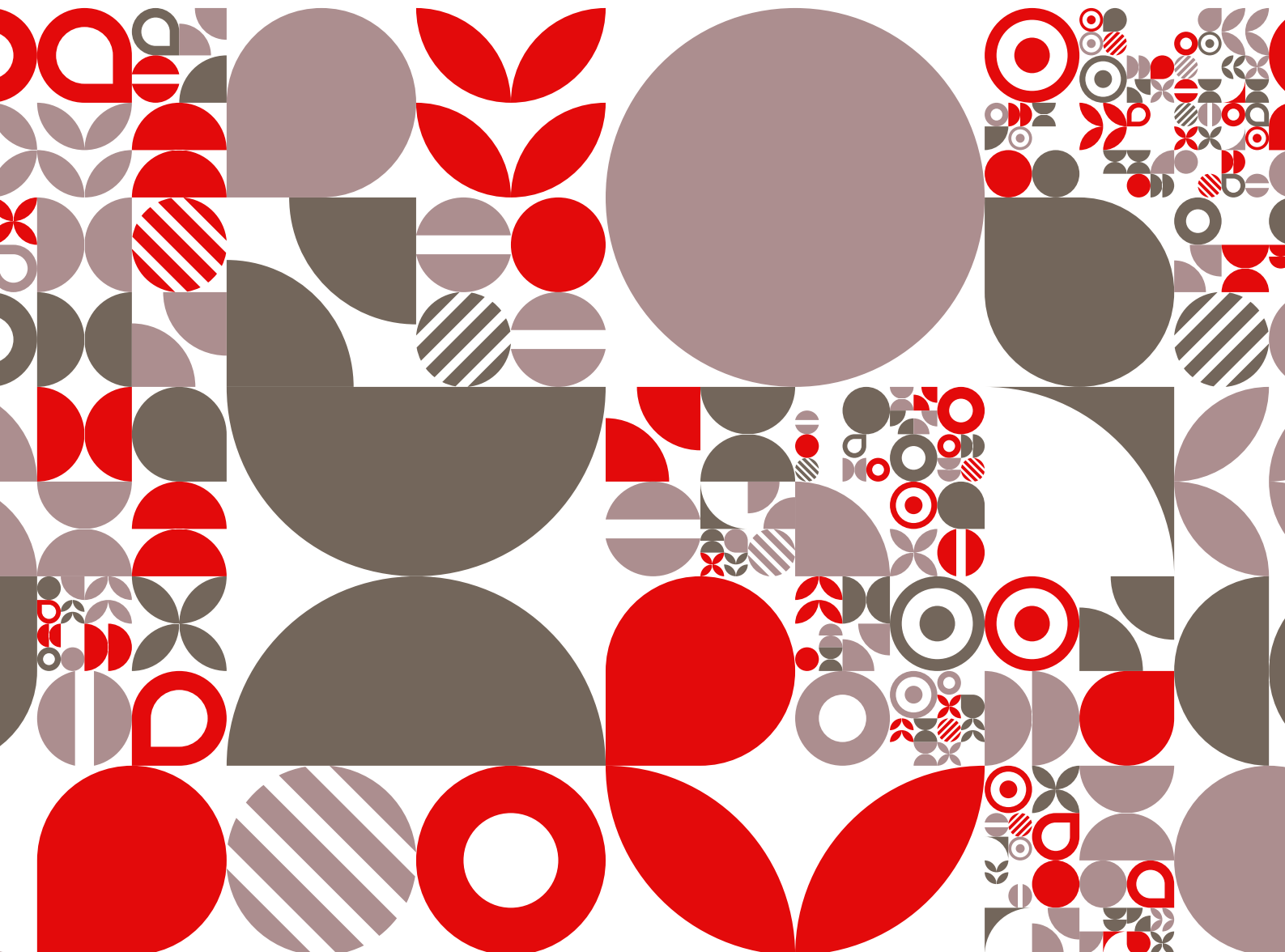


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Local leadership on early warning shines at National Platform

Early Warnings for All (EW4All) is a global initiative to ensure that everyone is protected by early warnings by 2027. The Government of Nepal (GoN) has spearheaded this initiative and is finalizing the Multi-Hazard Early Warning System led by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA).

In Nepal, a two-day National workshop was organized by the government together with UNDRR and the IFRC as global Pillar leads of the EW4All initiative. Sunteli Chaudhary, a community member shared how her community organized themselves and mobilized their networks to ensure that early warning messages were received and understood by everyone in her community. Key actors were also accountable for ensuring that the messages were especially received by those who had unique and special needs such as persons with disabilities, pregnant women, lactating mothers etc. Nirmala Chaudhary, the DRR focal person, Tikapur, Kailali also shared the progress made by the local government in proactively monitoring the weather forecasts and ensuring the information is communicated to communities in an understandable and accessible manner. This community and local-led approach to early warning communication and its resulting early actions was highly appreciated at this national platform. It further consolidated the progress made at the ground level through the work of Nepal Red Cross Society and Danish Red Cross amongst the government, wider humanitarian agencies, and donor communities.

A multi-year, multi-stakeholder EW4All National Roadmap (2023-2027) will be developed as an outcome of this national consultation. The government with its partners aims to ensure that every family in Nepal will be covered by the early warning system within 2027.

Janaki Rural Municipality: a model on institutionalising AA at the 11th Global Dialogue Platform



The Global Dialogue Platform took place in Berlin between the 10th to 12th of October. The conference focused on the theme ‘people at the center’, with several sessions focusing on locally led AA and how to strengthen local systems to scale up AA. A joint session was organised on “A roadmap to institutionalizing AA” together with Nepal, Bangladesh and Philippines. Government representatives from all three countries highlighted their work on integrating AA in their disaster management systems and plans, to expand this approach from the policy level to operationalization in the field. From Nepal, Ganesh Chaudhary, the Janaki rural municipality mayor panelled the session where he spoke on how the

municipality has mainstreamed AA into its Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan, as well as its Flood Standard Operating Procedure and Contingency Plan, which enables improved planning and coordination among all stakeholders. The exemplary work done in Janaki on strengthening early warning systems and institutionalising AA despite technology and resource constraints was well appreciated by the participants. He shared, “The local level government has overall DRM responsibility which is a lot considering that we have so many hazards to deal with and with limited resources. We must make disaster-related plans, policies and also separate disaster funds. We need to invest in trained human resources.”

Collaborative workshop in Lumbini Province enhances disaster Preparedness and Anticipatory Action Initiatives

Nepal Red Cross Society organized a one-day workshop in Lumbini Province, bringing together a wide range of stakeholders from various humanitarian organizations in Lumbini Province. The main focus of the meeting was to exchange information about their implementing projects: "Strengthening Ownership and Governance in Disaster Risk Management" (STRONG in DRM) and "Strengthening Urban Preparedness and Earthquake Response in the Western Region of Nepal (SUPER) project's achievements and future plans, along with the advocacy for improved disaster risk management and anticipatory action strategies in the province. Attendees at the workshop included representatives from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication, Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS), Danish Red Cross, UNICEF Nepal, Save the Children, as well as other relevant stakeholders. The primary aim of this gathering was to promote collaboration and ensure better coordination of their activities.

During the meeting, Mr. Rudra Narayan Adhikari, the Deputy Director of NRCS headquarter, presented an in-depth overview of the ongoing projects and their associated goals. This presentation provided a comprehensive understanding of the missions and activities inherent in these projects. Furthermore, the meeting highlighted the potential establishment of a Community of Practice (CoP) platform, dedicated to Anticipatory Action and Disaster Risk Management at the provincial level. This platform is envisioned as a central hub for continuous learning and collaboration among the various stakeholders.

A key achievement of the workshop was the agreement on coordination mechanisms among the humanitarian agencies working in disaster preparedness, enabling them to identify areas of collaboration and partnership with the province government. By strengthening anticipatory actions, disaster risk reduction, and preparedness at multiple administrative levels, this unified approach marks a significant step toward enhancing disaster resilience and response capabilities in the region. This includes financial, technical, and human resource aspects.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication in Lumbini Province expressed its dedication to work closely with the agencies operating in the province to enhance anticipatory action and disaster preparedness. The ministry is determined to provide unwavering support to all organizations, ensuring they achieve success in their disaster preparedness and anticipatory action efforts.

Empowering communities through Anticipatory Actions training and SIMEX



The Nepal Red Cross Society with support from the Danish Red Cross, has been implementing the Enhanced Community Resilience (ENCORE 22-23) program in Dang. The primary aim of this project is to empower vulnerable rural communities in Dang district by improving their ability to predict and respond to local disasters and health risks. From October 3rd to 5th, 2023, Anticipatory Action training

and Simulation Exercise (SIMEX) were conducted in Tulsipur, Dang, and the Matheura Community, Babai Rural Municipality. The training's objectives included enhancing participants' understanding of anticipatory action, sharing insights from the STRONG in DRM program and stressing the importance of Anticipatory Action. Along with orientation the three-day training also included a simulation. The training covered topics like Forecast based Actions, early warning systems, and the national forecast mechanism. Participants were engaged in hands-on exercises to deepen their understanding of anticipatory action and its implementation. SIMEX preparation was a crucial part of the training, ensuring participants were well-prepared to simulate early actions in response to disaster scenarios. The training received positive feedback from participants, emphasizing the importance of timely, accurate, and accessible communication channels for disaster risk reduction. The SIMEX exercise reinforced the significance of early messaging, shelter management, drainage maintenance, early evacuation, Non-Food Relief Items distribution, domestic animal evacuation, water and sanitation, cash distribution, and safety and security in disaster response.

In conclusion, the Anticipatory Action training and SIMEX program are pivotal in increasing participants' capacity to implement early actions and enhance community resilience. Effective communication channels are vital for the success of these initiatives, even in the face of limited infrastructure and resource constraints. The SIMEX exercise provides a hands-on opportunity to test early response procedures and better prepare communities for potential disasters.

Strengthening disaster preparedness in Punarbas Municipality through tabletop simulation exercise

Punarbas Municipality, situated in Nepal's Terai region, faces constant threats from disasters, with recurring floods being a prominent hazard. This vulnerability is exacerbated by heavy monsoon rains and the presence of significant rivers like Dodha and Mohana. To address this ongoing risk, the Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) has been implementing the STRONG project in collaboration with local government to enhance community capacity and disaster preparedness. To test the effectiveness of disaster preparedness, a tabletop simulation exercise was conducted with the support of STRONG in DRM project in June 2023, focusing on evaluating the functionality of the Disaster Preparedness Response Plan (DPRP), testing early warning communication channels, and enhancing information sharing and coordination among key stakeholders. The exercise, which brought together municipal and district-level authorities and key government agencies at the provincial level, aimed to improve preparedness and coordination for monsoon-related disasters. The exercise was based on hypothetical disaster scenarios, simulating potential floods along the Dodha River. It involved various injects and sub-injects, each prompting participants to take specific actions related to disaster response and preparedness. Debriefing sessions were held after the exercise, with facilitators and observers providing feedback. Key outcomes included the realization of gaps and strengths in the DPRP and early warning communication channels. The simulation exercise served as a validation process for the DPRP and LEOC procedures and contributed to improved collaboration among different response agencies, promoting a more seamless and effective disaster response. The tabletop simulation exercise was a vital step in building resilience and preparedness in a flood-prone municipality like Punarbas. It highlighted the importance of



effective disaster response plans, early warning systems, and coordination among stakeholders to safeguard lives and minimize impacts of disasters. By actively engaging stakeholders Punarbas Municipality and similar communities are better prepared to face the ever-present threat of flood, ultimately ensuring the safety and well-being the last mile communities.

Strengthening disaster resilience in Sudurpaschim Province: formation of anticipatory action and disaster risk reduction CoP

With the initiative of the Nepal Red Cross Society, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Law for the Sudurpaschim province has assumed responsibility for the Community of Practice, a shared platform designed to bring together organizations operating in the Sudurpaschim province in the field of Anticipatory Action and Disaster Risk Reduction. On the 28th of July 2022, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Law (MoIAL) convened a meeting that brought together over 20 agencies in Sudurpaschim province, with the aim of establishing a shared platform. This platform is intended to facilitate the exchange of crucial updates, lessons learned, and information among agencies operating in the province, thereby reducing the potential for duplication of efforts. The extension of Sudurpaschim province CoP is also focused as the extension and continuation of the National Level CoP on anticipatory Action. The Sudurpaschim province's MoIAL-led platform made the decision to appoint WFP

and Mercy Corps as co-leaders of the CoP. Additionally, the meeting agreed to divide the platform into two distinct sectors: Anticipatory Actions, and Disaster Preparedness and Response where Nepal Red Cross Society will lead on Anticipatory actions and IOM jointly with UNDP designated as co-leads.

Since the CoP meeting has been held in Sudurpaschim province for the first time, Niru Pradhan, a Program Coordinator representing the Danish Red Cross, shared information about the CoP's inception and its objectives concerning Anticipatory Actions. Subsequently, representatives from all participating agencies discussed their respective endeavors and actions pertaining to Anticipatory Actions and Disaster Risk Reduction. The interim secretary of MOIAL concluded the meeting with closing remarks, emphasizing the need for the group to finalize the Terms of Reference (TOR) for Sudurpaschim province by the next meeting.



GIS training for municipal assistant and DRR focal person

Under the 'STRONG in DRM' project, the Nepal Red Cross Society organized a 3-day training session on GIS/OSM for Municipal DRR focal person of all 12 project implemented local level and Municipal Assistants of STRONG in DRM project. The primary objectives of this training were to provide participants with fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for proficient use of GIS software and OSM for purposes such as mapping, analysis, and decision-making. Additionally, the training aimed to equip local government personnel and Municipal Assistants with the expertise to map affected areas and strategize responses during disasters, enhance the local government's capability to independently utilize GIS and OSM for their benefit, and boost the NRCS staff's capacity in data management, analysis, visualization, and mapping using GIS.

The training took place in Nepalgunj from September 13 to 15 and in Kanchanpur from September 25 to 27, accommodating a limited number of participants. This method was chosen to offer participants an ideal setting for practical exercises, practice, and skill improvement. A total of 42 individuals benefited from the training, consisting of 4 females and 38 males.

During this training, participants had the opportunity to improve their competencies and understanding of topics such as the fundamentals of Remote Sensing & GIS, its components, and its applications in disaster preparedness and response. They also gained skills in visualizing, manipulating, creating, and analyzing both Vector and Raster data, including working with map properties in QGIS software. Additionally, participants learned how to download, visualize, and utilize Satellite and OSM datasets in QGIS, as well as how to upload data to the OSM web portal. The training covered aspects like vulnerability mapping, field data capture visualization, coordinate reference systems, and the creation of map layouts.

National CoP on AA

The community of practice on Anticipatory Action group was established in 2021 which facilitates its members in sharing their knowledge, best practices, implementation challenges, and forthcoming priorities based on their program implementation experiences in the meeting of this group conducted every quarter. In a recent meeting of the National CoP on Anticipatory Actions, there was a change in its leadership. This common platform is being led by NDRRMA (National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority). Initially jointly Co- led by the Nepal Red Cross Society and UNICEF, the co-led of this collective platform has been handed over, in line with the Terms of Reference (TOR) for National CoPs on Anticipatory Actions. The leadership responsibility has designated to Mercy Corps and DCA, following consensus among all participating agencies in the CoPs. This transition took place during the meeting held on September 29, 2023, at Dhokaima Café in Lalitpur. Furthermore, during the same meeting, Alina Karki of the Danish Red Cross presented insights on the preparedness for Cash Assistance (CASH) in the context of Anticipatory Actions during the monsoon season of 2023. Saroj Thakur, from the Finish Red Cross, provided an overview of their recent assessment report conducted in various rural municipalities in Eastern Nepal. Additionally, Sabin Adhikari, representing People in Need, shared their experiences and lessons learned in the domain of Early Warning for Landslides.

Functional simulation exercise on anticipatory action in Karnali river basin

In a groundbreaking initiative aimed at fortifying disaster preparedness, a Functional Simulation Exercise on Anticipatory Action unfolded in municipalities adjacent to the Karnali River Basin. Tikapur Municipality and Janaki Rural Municipality in Kailali, alongside Geruwa Rural Municipality and Rajapur Municipality in Bardiya, took center stage in this comprehensive exercise.

Kicking off with a joint meeting on November 26, 2023, in Geruwa Rural Municipality, the simulation progressed through subsequent days, concluding with a comprehensive review on December 1, 2023. The core objectives were to identify vulnerabilities, streamline communication channels, and test the efficiency of resource deployment in the face of potential hazards like floods, diarrhoea, and dengue. The specific emphasis of the simulation was on:

- Examining the capacity of the municipal government to operationalize their anticipatory action framework and their inter-municipal coordination mechanisms between the municipalities along the Karnali river basin for effective disaster management.
- For cash in anticipation, different modalities of cash transfer such as the use of the Rahat app (blockchain technology), social protection program's registries and bank accounts were also tested. The use of Interactive Voice Response technology (pre-recorded and automated message) was also tested to inform communities about the inclusive early warning message, selection criteria for cash, grievance, and feedback handling mechanism etc along with leveraging flood exposure data and early warning communication channels.

Community response to early warnings and evacuation procedures was thoroughly tested, with a keen eye on the timeliness and appropriateness of decisions made during the simulation. A multitude of stakeholders played a pivotal role, ranging from local disaster management committees, emergency operation centres, and sectorial committees to security forces, private sectors, and humanitarian agencies such as the Nepal Red Cross Society, UNDP, WFP, and Practical Action. By replicating real-world scenarios, the goal was to fortify the capabilities of local governments and communities, ensuring a resilient and coordinated response to hazards like floods.

International organizations like the Danish Red Cross, Finnish Red Cross, and the American Red Cross monitored the exercise alongside government authorities such as the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority, Provincial Disaster Management Committee and the District Disaster Management Committee.

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