

COMMUNITY PERCEPTION REPORT FLOOD, LANDSLIDE AND HEAVY RAIN

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INTRODUCTION

In early 2021 Nepal was selected as a pilot country for OCHA's Central Emergency Response Fund's anticipatory action project. Anticipatory action is an attempt to design response intervention and act to execute them in advance of a predictable natural hazard, with an aim to mitigate the risk faced by exposed communities and prevent the loss of lives and livelihoods. By acting prior to an imminent disaster based on predictive models, humanitarian action becomes more effective, efficient and dignified. OCHA allocated \$6.7 million for the pilot in Nepal for a potential flood event in two major river basins.

In the months leading up to the onset of monsoon season, five partner agencies worked closely with OCHA and the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) to agree on a scientific trigger which would indicate a large-scale flood event was coming, a package of pre-defined interventions to be carried out upon the trigger being activated and pre-agreed financing to enable these activities. Given the COVID-19 context, and the short window of time between the anticipatory action framework design and the onset of monsoon, readiness and action activities of the anticipatory action pilot in 2021 were designed based on the experiences of participating agencies and did not involve an inter-agency community perception survey.

Although no major flood event happened during the monsoon season, Nepal witnessed unseasonal heavy rains shortly after monsoon season, resulting in a string of floods and landslides across the country. As it was the time of harvest, many crops had been cut and were washed away. It was estimated that up to 35% of crops were lost in some areas, representing a massive loss to food supplies in affected areas. Communities in Province One, Province Two, Lumbini and Sudhuraschim were affected particularly.

Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) is one of the guiding principles of humanitarian action, and has long been a focus in Nepal. The RCO can carry out community perception surveys in the event of a disaster, as an inter-agency common service, with funding provided by FCDO. Following the extreme weather event, the RCO can carry out a community perception survey, and integrated questions relevant to anticipatory action work, in order to feed into revisions of the project for 2022 and ensure the work is better aligned with the needs and priorities of the communities it aims to serve. In addition, the community perception survey will also contribute to preparedness activities for 2022.

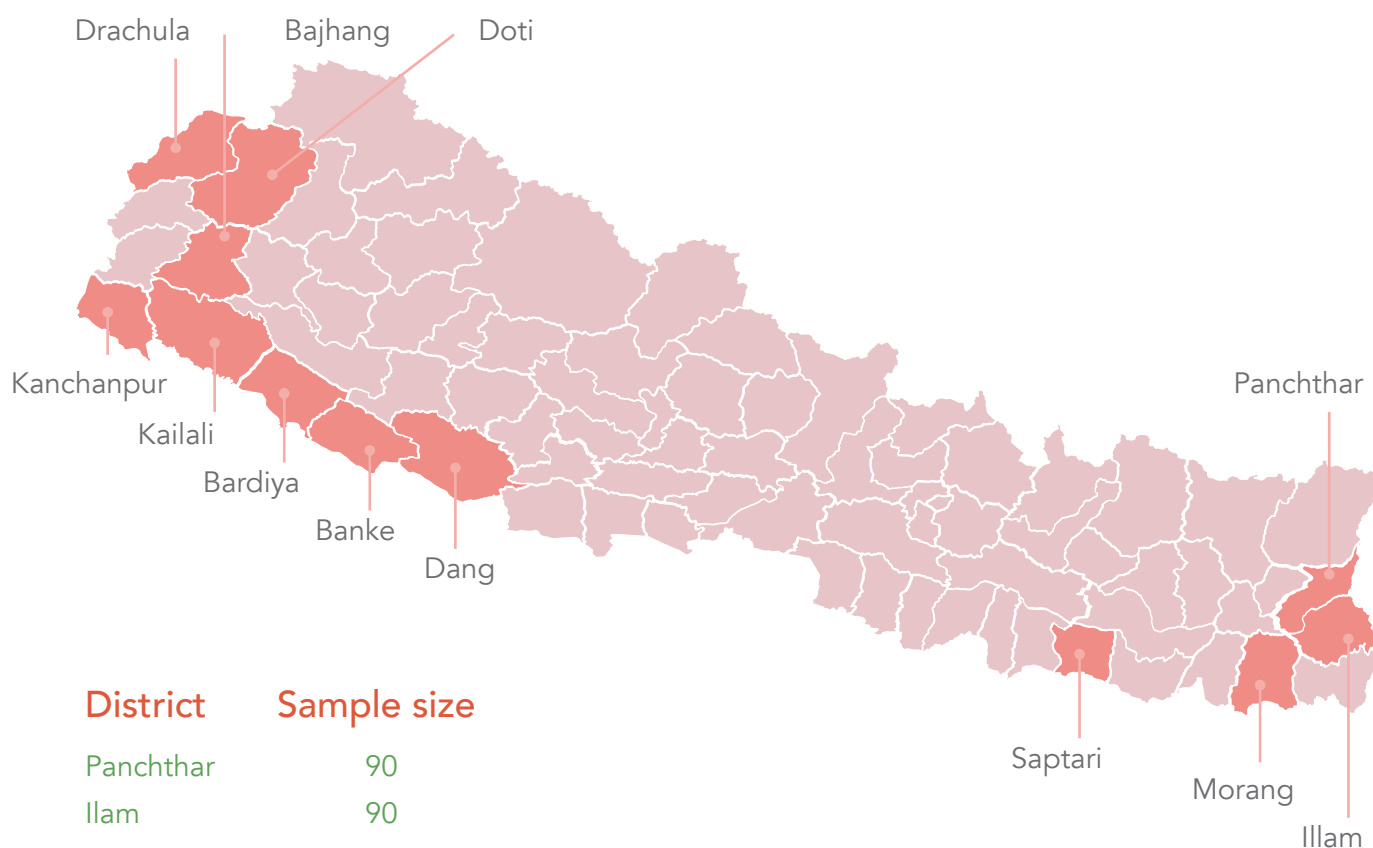


Methodology

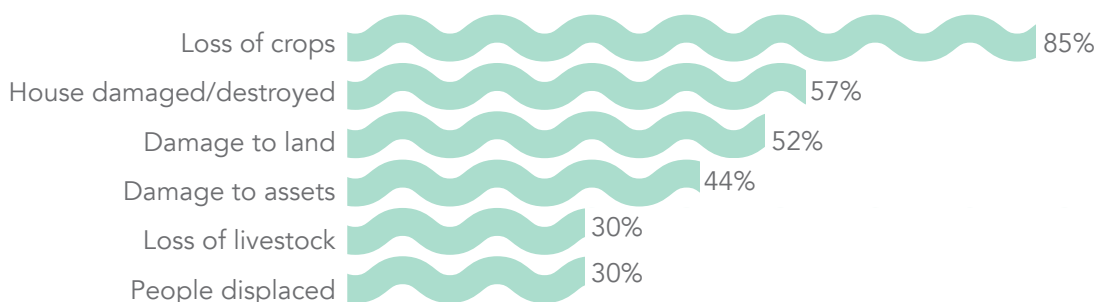
A quantitative survey was conducted in 12 districts of Nepal covering four provinces (Province One, Province Two, Lumbini and Sudharpaschim). The area for study was selected based on initial rapid analysis of impacts through ground level reporting and satellite imagery compiled by Nepal Red Cross Society, World Food Programme and the Resident Coordinator's Office.

Interviews were conducted with 1,100 households affected by flood, landslide and heavy rainfall. Household respondents were 52 percent of male and 48 percent of female.

A qualitative study was also conducted in four districts of Nepal, covering Province One, Province Two, Lumbini and Sudharpaschim. Altogether fifteen focus group discussions were carried out with male group, female group, female Dalit group, mixed of male and female group, male Dalit group, mixed caste group.



1. What has been the biggest impact of the recent heavy rains/flooding/landslides in your community?






Respondents were asked to reflect on the major impacts of the recent heavy rains in their community, they were not limited to a single response, and thus the total does not add up to 100 percent, but rather reflects how widespread the different types of impacts are in the affected areas.

Among 1,100 respondents across 12 affected districts, 85 percent stated that loss of crops has been the biggest impact of the recent rains, followed by homes damaged or destroyed (57 percent) and damage to land (52 percent).

Disaggregated by type of hazard

When impacts are disaggregated by hazard type, the findings shows that loss of crops is most significant in areas affected by flood and heavy rain (83-86 percent) and damage to land is most significant in area affected by landslide.

	House damaged/destroyed	Damage to land	Damage to assets	Loss of crops	Loss of livestock	People displaced
 Flood	57%	42%	44%	86%	30%	26%
 Landslide	72%	84%	54%	75%	32%	44%
 Heavy rains	53%	56%	33%	83%	21%	25%

"All our fields are destroyed from landslide and heavy rain, I have no source of income now." – Male, FGD participant, Panchthar district

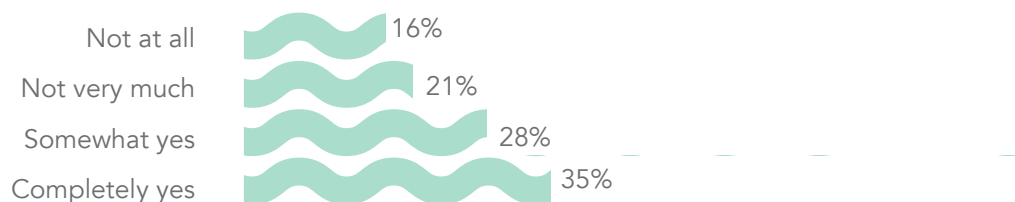


2. Is anything in the current situation, or the situation during the disaster, creating particular difficulties for women in your community?

The majority of respondents felt that the disaster they experience, whether heavy rains, flooding or landslide, created particular difficulties for women in their community. 63 percent of respondent stated that women had faced some challenges.

Disrupted access to food aid was cited as a major difficulty for women (43 percent), followed by the unavailability of mobile health care services in their area (37 percent) and lack of toilets or sanitation facilities in evacuation locations (32 percent).

During the focus group discussion conducted in landslide affected districts, it was expressed that women had to struggle more while evacuating to the safe area particularly women with elderly members and small children in the house.



Major difficulties faced



43
PERCENT

Food aid



37
PERCENT

Healthcare



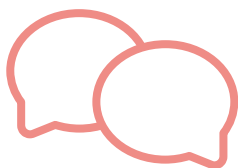
32
PERCENT

Toilets/
sanitation



28
PERCENT

Access to
clean water

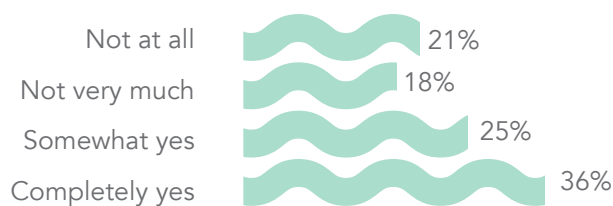


"It was more difficult for me because I was having my period during that time and I had no clothes to change." – Female FGD participant, Doti district.



3. Is anything in the current situation, or the situation during the disaster, creating particular difficulties for children in your community?

Among 1,100 respondents, 61 percent stated that the heavy rainfall, flooding or landslide created difficulties for children in their community. More than half of the respondents stated that their children were not able to go to school. Based on analysis of FGDs, it was found that nearby schools in the community were mostly used as evacuation center during and after the floods or landslides. Respondents also cited a lack of health care services in their community for children (42 percent), lack of food (34 percent) and access to clean water (32 percent) as difficulties faced by children during the disaster period.



Difficulties children faced



52
PERCENT

Children going back to school



42
PERCENT

Healthcare



34
PERCENT

Food aid



32
PERCENT

Access to clean water



27
PERCENT

Child protection



21
PERCENT

Lack of child friendly spaces

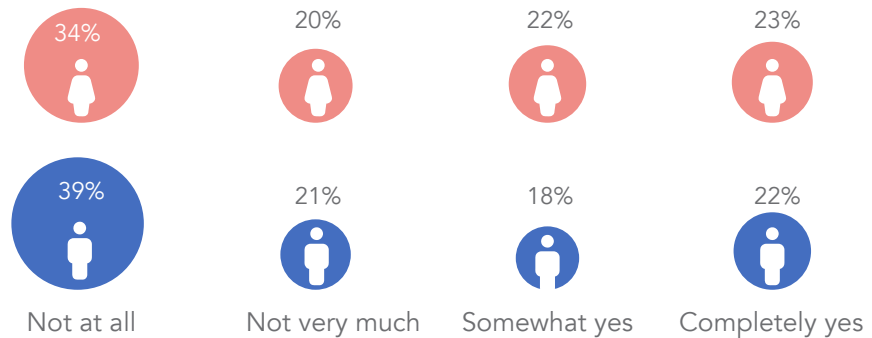
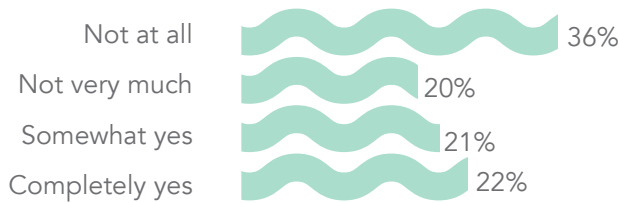
	Bajhang	Banke	Bardiya	Dang	Darchula	Doti	Ilam	Kailali	Kanchanpur	Morang	Panchtar	Saptari
Access to clean water	37%	31%	32%	0%	31%	24%	15%	45%	52%	20%	39%	21%
Health care service	23%	22%	55%	17%	13%	56%	19%	44%	26%	73%	30%	63%
Food aid	35%	33%	17%	0%	31%	60%	2%	51%	56%	13%	4%	47%
Child protection	37%	14%	14%	67%	19%	42%	15%	37%	26%	53%	4%	29%
Lack of child friendly spaces	44%	14%	27%	0%	19%	11%	25%	27%	0%	23%	26%	20%
School	81%	36%	39%	100%	71%	6%	100%	21%	63%	80%	100%	63%



4. Do you think anyone is listening to the needs of your community?

The community perception study shows that more than half (56 percent) of affected people do not feel that anyone is listening to the needs of their community. However, it is encouraging that 43 percent of affected people feel that their needs are either completely or somewhat being heard. When disaggregating by gender, it is clear that more female respondents (59 percent) feel that their needs are not heard than male respondents.

Among those respondents who feel that their needs are being heard, the ward officer is identified most often as the one who is listening to the needs of the community (74 percent). In addition, I/NGOs (50 percent) as well as local government and municipality offices (46 percent) are felt to be listening to the needs of the community.



Who do you think are listening to the need of your community?



74
PERCENT
Ward office



50
PERCENT
I/NGO



46
PERCENT
Local government/
palika



13
PERCENT
Community groups



5. What are your top priority need arising from the disaster?

Community perception survey respondents were asked to identify two top priority needs arising from the recent disaster, and then asked to identify a modality preference for each specific need. Results below are aggregated from the top two needs identified and their associated modality preferences. Sixty-eight percent of respondent stated food was an immediate top priority need, followed by livelihood support (58 percent), long-term shelter (22 percent) and access to clean water (20 percent).

Beyond immediate needs, affected people are also looking for long-term solutions to their exposure to natural hazards. Based on analysis of focus group discussions, construction of embankments and relocation of communities to safer areas are frequently identified as long-term needs to prevent recurrent disaster related losses which often reinforces a poverty trap.

Top priority needs



68
PERCENT

Food



58
PERCENT

Livelihood support



22
PERCENT




Long term shelter



20
PERCENT

Access to clean water

Preferred modality by need

	Cash assistance	In-kind assistance
 Food	51	47
 Livelihood support	87	13
 Long term shelter	77	13



“With cash, I can buy what I need the most.” – Female FGD participant, Bardiya district

Would you prefer cash or in-kind support?

Overall, cash is preferred as a modality for receiving assistance by almost 60 percent of respondents, with a slightly higher percentage of women expressing a preferences for cash than men (62 vs. 57 percent respectively). For each of the top priority needs identified by respondents, cash is preferred as a modality to meet that need for everything except clean water.

Cash is also a strong, overall preference in ten of the 12 districts surveyed. However, people from Bajhang and Kailai districts of Sudharpashim Province prefer to receive in-kind assistance. Although food assistance is preferred in cash modality in 11 district survey but in Panchthar district food is preferred in in-kind modality. Likewise in Darchula and Doti cash modality is preferred for WASH related assistance.



Future interventions, whether anticipatory or traditional response, should consider a mix of cash and in-kind modalities, taking into account both the location and type of assistance in planning. For instance, a mixed package that included some cash as well as hygiene kits could be appropriate given the slight preference for in-kind support when it comes to WASH supplies.

Analysis of focus group discussions indicates a strong preference for receipt of assistance in advance of a disaster, with a heavy focus on loss prevention being more important than short-term post-disaster assistance. Items such as waterproof containers, cash, tarpaulin, ropes and assistance from volunteers to relocate vulnerable community members and livestock to safe places were identified as assistance that could help to save their lives, livelihoods, assets and other essential items.

These findings align with current anticipatory action pilot design in which more than half of the budget is allocated for cash transfers aimed at being provided in advance of an imminent, large-scale disaster. However, more should be done in the future to incorporate the other elements identified by affected communities, including some in-kind distribution, such as waterproof containers, as being important to prevent devastating losses like this year's massive crop loss.



Preferred mode of humanitarian assistance



60
PERCENT

Cash



33
PERCENT

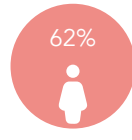
in-kind support



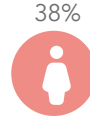
7
PERCENT

Don't know

Preferred mode of humanitarian assistance by gender

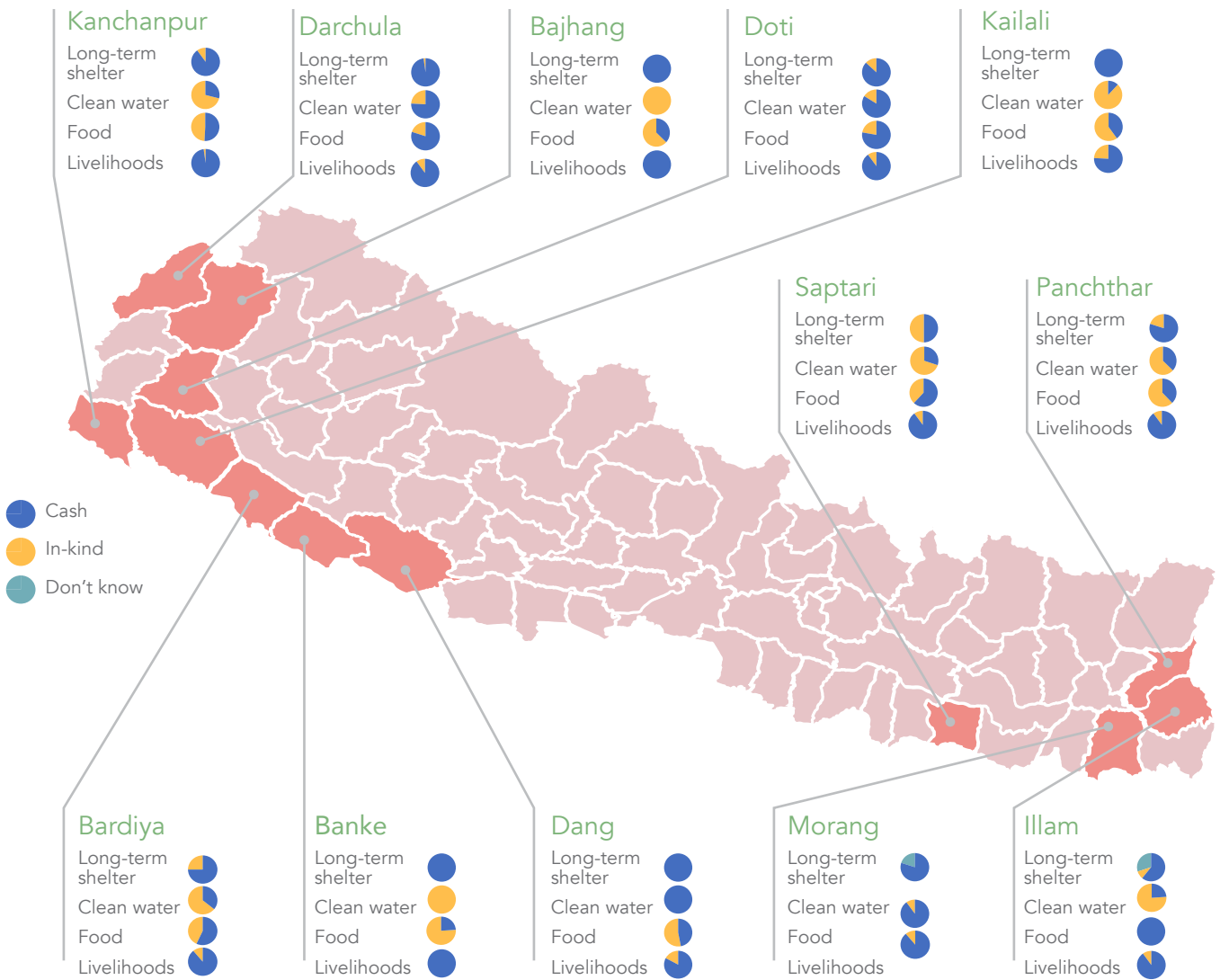


Cash



In-Kind

Preferred mode by district



6. What is your biggest concern over how the disaster will impact your household in the coming months?

More than 70 percent of survey respondents are concerned about their household's food insecurity in the coming months, followed by concern over financial crisis (62 percent) brought on by the loss and damage of their assets. A large number of affected people are also concerned about the safety of their families (43 percent).



70
PERCENT

Food
insecurity



62
PERCENT

Financial
crisis



43
PERCENT

Safety of
family



21
PERCENT

Shelter

How will your household cope with this extra stress?

The majority of affected people surveyed (68 percent) plan to look for casual labour work to recuperate their losses. More than half (52 percent) also plan to take a loan, either from a financial institution or from relatives or friends, to make it through the coming months. Almost half of the affected people (47 percent) will look for foreign employment. Nearly 20 percent of respondents have no plan for how to manage in the coming months.

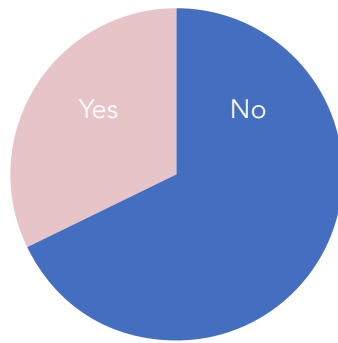


Here, livelihood support interventions are vital to help affected people recover from their losses and to reduce the long-term economic impact created by the extremely high interest loans which are nearly impossible for poor families to get out from underneath. The highest interest rates are consistently born by the most marginalized families, as their lack of alternate options and limited coping capacity to absorb shocks is exploited.



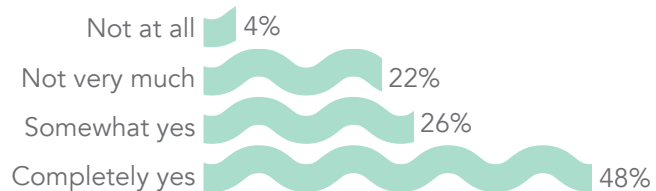
7. Did you receive any early warning?

Sixty-eight percent of respondent stated that they did not receive any early warning messages before the disaster. Among the 32 percent of respondents who did receive an early warning message, 62 percent received in less than 24-hours in advance of the disaster. The affected people were not able to evacuate on time or protect their assets.



Was the message clear?

Among 1,100 respondents, 32 percent received an early warning message. Among them, 74 percent stated that the message they received was clear and easy to understand.



While exploring local techniques adopted to determine appropriate evaluation times and indigenous knowledge on early warning, it is found that there is no common understanding of the right time to evacuate. Findings shows that the majority of affected people remain in their area until they see water entering their village or until they see their neighbours or neighbouring community evacuating.



This is an essential preparedness action which needs immediate attention. The awareness on the right time to evacuate can prevent loss of life and assets. It is important for partner organizations working together to focus on early warning communication, building trust and developing practices of early evacuation, when required.

Mobilization of local volunteer groups to help provide early warning messages and provide assistance in relocating vulnerable people and livestock at the readiness trigger phase should be explored.

“If I see flood entering our village, I think it is time to leave the house.” –Male FGD participant, Kailali district.

“When the water level rises and flood starts to enter village, we leave the house.” – Female FGD participant, Saptari district.





Flood affected people securing their belongings, Bardiya district



Focus Group Discussion with Women from Bardiya district.





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