



Anticipatory Flood Response in Eastern Nepal

Timeframe: October 2024 – April 2025

Budget: Approximately US\$ 997,134

UN Implementing Entities: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Implementing partners: Relevant Government Ministries; National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority; Nepal Red Cross Society; Women's Rehabilitation Center

Background information

Eastern Nepal, particularly the Koshi River Basin, experiences recurrent and severe flooding driven by climate variability, high exposure, and underlying structural inequalities. These floods pose significant threats to lives, agricultural livelihoods, food security, and access to essential health and protection services, disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups, such as smallholder farmers, landless households, women-headed families, pregnant and lactating women, adolescent girls, persons with disabilities, and marginalized caste and ethnic communities. Flood-related shocks trigger cascading risks, including the loss of crops and productive assets, disruption of health services, heightened exposure to gender-based violence, and reliance on negative coping strategies such as distress migration and early marriage. These interconnected vulnerabilities underscore the need for anticipatory, integrated, and people-centered approaches that address multiple dimensions of human security in a timely manner.

Goals and objectives

The programme aimed to reduce flood-related risks and vulnerabilities in eastern Nepal through a coordinated, prevention-oriented anticipatory action framework. Specifically, it sought to:

- 01.** protect agricultural livelihoods and food security through early action and asset protection;
- 02.** ensure continuity of essential sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services and protection for women and girls;
- 03.** strengthen early warning systems and risk-informed decision-making; and
- 04.** enhance community resilience and institutional capacity through integrated, multi-sectoral action.

Beneficiaries

The programme directly supported vulnerable farming households and at-risk populations in flood-prone municipalities of eastern Nepal. It placed particular emphasis on women and girls, marginalized communities, and those with limited adaptive capacity. Through a whole-of-society approach, it engaged local governments, community-based organizations, farmer groups, Female Community Health Volunteers, and psychosocial workers to ensure inclusive, context-specific delivery and strong community ownership.

Applying the Human Security Approach

The programme applied a human security approach by prioritizing prevention, inclusivity, and a deep understanding of local risk patterns. It placed people at the center of decision-making, using risk-informed analysis and community engagement to identify who was most at risk, why they were vulnerable, and when support would be most effective. This approach ensured that actions addressed underlying drivers of vulnerability and strengthened preparedness before flood impacts intensified.

In practice, the programme translated this approach into coordinated delivery of targeted support that addressed different but interconnected needs at the same time. It combined early warning dissemination with measures to protect agricultural assets and food supplies, alongside the provision of essential health and protection services, including support for women and girls at heightened risk. By aligning support to reach the same households during critical periods, the programme improved efficiency, reduced gaps, and achieved results that would not have been possible through standalone interventions.

At the same time, the programme reinforced both institutional systems and community capacities. It strengthened coordination, service readiness, and response mechanisms within government structures, while also enabling communities to make informed decisions, act on early warnings, and safely access available services. This dual emphasis helped shift beneficiaries from passive recipients of aid to active agents in managing risk, contributing to more sustainable resilience and longer-term recovery.

Achievements



More than 5,900 households were supported to protect seeds, grains, fertilizers, and livestock feed from flood damage, safeguarding critical livelihood assets ahead of the floods. Following the shock, over 5,200 households received vegetable seed packages, enabling rapid restoration of food production and reducing reliance on external assistance.



Early warning messages on agriculture, livestock, fisheries, and disaster preparedness reached more than 50,000 people, strengthening preparedness and enabling timely, informed decisions to reduce losses and protect assets.



More than 35,000 women and adolescent girls accessed essential sexual and reproductive health services, information, and protection mechanisms during high-risk periods. This was supported by prepositioned reproductive health kits for an estimated 150,000 women, alongside the distribution of over 7,500 dignity kits, helping maintain health, safety, and dignity.



By combining early action, livelihood protection, and access to critical services, the programme reduced reliance on harmful coping strategies, such as distress migration and early marriage, and strengthened communities' resilience and recovery in flood-prone areas.