



Anticipatory Humanitarian Action in Nigeria: The Strengthening Early Warning and Response Mechanism (SEWaRM) Project

Introduction:

Anticipatory Humanitarian Action (AHA) is a proactive approach designed to mitigate the impacts of potential disasters on lives and livelihoods by taking early action based on predictions, forecasts and early warning systems. In the Nigerian context, AHA is particularly vital due to the country's vulnerability to floods and droughts. In partnership with Welthungerhilfe (WHH) and the Christian Rural and Urban Development Association of Nigeria (CRUDAN), Oxfam in Nigeria is implementing the Strengthening Early Warning and Response Mechanism (SEWaRM), with funding from the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO). This project focuses on communities at risk of riverine floods in Adamawa State and drought in Katsina State.

Project Overview:

The Strengthening Early Warning and Response Mechanism (SEWaRM) project aims to develop and implement Early Action Protocols (EAPs) to empower vulnerable communities to prepare for potential hazards. By employing community-based participatory approaches and leveraging technical and scientific expertise. The project established mechanisms that can trigger anticipatory actions through pre-defined thresholds. This ensures that EAPs are ready to be implemented, enabling government agencies, NGOs, and communities to respond effectively to imminent disasters.

The project targets groups are most affected by food insecurity, especially due to drought. This includes women smallholder farmers, persons with disabilities (PWDs), internally displaced persons, pregnant and lactating women, children, minority groups, and widows. Community-based targeting leverages local knowledge and contextual understanding to identify and support these vulnerable groups.

Implementation Regions:

- **Numan LGA, Adamawa State:** In Northeast Nigeria, around 15,000 people are at risk of floods.
- **Baure LGA, Katsina State:** In Northwest Nigeria, around 82,136 people are at risk of food insecurity due to drought.

Development and Implementation of EAPs:

The development of EAPs under the project is an inclusive process that utilizes participatory facilitation methods to ensure the EAP is built on local knowledge and contextual understanding. This includes organizing dialogue sessions, workshops, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys to engage all stakeholders. Efforts are made to include semi-literate and illiterate individuals from various

livelihood groups, as well as vulnerable persons. To ensure accessibility, sessions are held in venues that are accessible to people with disabilities (PWDs), and translation into local languages is provided to enhance grassroots engagement.

To create constructive interaction between state and Local Government Area (LGA) efforts, the project collaborates with relevant state Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs). These include the Katsina and Adamawa State Ministries for Local Government Affairs, State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), Planning Commissions, Ministries of Environment and Agriculture, Rural Water Supply Agencies, and the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet).

Outputs and Milestones

1. **Mapping of hazards, risks, and impacts** specific to target areas alongside identification of existing forecasting systems:
 - Impact-based forecasting analysis, including a historic hazard analysis of impacts.
 - Impact assessment reports for target communities.
2. **Anticipatory actions** defined in collaboration with direct project participants and relevant stakeholders in planning and learning sessions.:
 - Development of an integrated work plan within the food security and WASH clusters, incorporating anticipatory mechanisms in collaboration with local and state authorities and partners.
 - Inclusive and participatory learning sessions with stakeholders in each state to share what worked well and what did not.
3. **Community-based EAPs** designed and validated in anticipation of response for target communities in Katsina and Adamawa states:
 - Multistakeholder governance structure has a framework to guide the efficiency of the trigger mechanisms and anticipatory actions.
 - A monitoring and evaluation plan specific for the flood and food insecurity has been developed to monitor the launch and implementation of the EAP as well as a calendar for monitoring the EAP development processes.

The Strengthening Early Warning Systems (SEWaRM) project has been launched in both Katsina and Adamawa States, marking significant steps toward proactive disaster management and community resilience.



Conclusion:

The Strengthening Early Warning Systems (SEWaRM) project is a lifeline for Nigerians facing the looming threats of floods in Adamawa and droughts in Katsina. By working together with communities most at risk, we are not only predicting disasters; we are working towards mitigating their impact.

Through strong early warning systems and practical plans to address imminent threats, Oxfam in Nigeria in partnership with the Christian Rural and Urban Development Association of Nigeria (CRUDAN) and Welt Hunger Hilfe (WHH), is empowering families and villages to protect what matters most: their homes, livelihoods, and loved ones. By combining local wisdom with climate science, the project is building a future where communities can thrive, even in the face of nature's challenges.