LHAF

LOCAL HUMANITARIAN ACTORS FORUM

A collaborative platform for local NGOs in Zimbabwe

2nd ANTICIPATORY ACTION PLANNING TRAINING

MEETING REPORT

05 February 2026



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Meeting Details

- **Date:** 05 February 2026
- **Time:** 0830-1600
- **Location:** Cresta Oasis, Harare
- **Meeting Theme:** Localised Anticipatory Action: Strengthening Humanitarian Actor Readiness and Supporting District-Led AAP Processes
- **Facilitator:** Dr Pathias Bongo (Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Specialist)
- **Chairing:** Ngoni Muchenje (Methodist Development and Relief Agency-MeDRA)
- **Minuting and Workshop Report:** Privilege Murambadoro (MeDRA)
- **Opening Prayer:**
- **Closing Prayer:** Artwell Sipinyu (Anglican Relief and Development in Zimbabwe)

- **Facebook|LinkedIn|X|Youtube: Local Humanitarian Actors Forum**
- **Website (Hub): https://lhsizim.org**

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1 Introduction

1.1 Welcome Remarks

Presenter: Kudzaiishe (MeDRA)

The presenter officially welcomed all participants to the Anticipatory Action Planning Training. In her remarks, she acknowledged the presence of representatives from member organisations and commended their continued commitment to strengthening locally led humanitarian action in Zimbabwe. She emphasised that the increasing frequency and severity of climate-related shocks, including droughts and floods, require a deliberate shift from reactive emergency response to proactive and anticipatory approaches.

The presenter highlighted that the purpose of the meeting was not only to deepen understanding of anticipatory action concepts but also to strengthen institutional systems, coordination mechanisms, and internal readiness among local humanitarian actors.

She further underscored the strategic importance of the LHAF Knowledge Hub as a central platform for learning, collaboration, and institutional strengthening. Participants were strongly encouraged to:

- Register additional staff members on the Knowledge Hub;
- Enrol in and complete available LMS courses;
- Appoint or strengthen internal Knowledge Hub administrators to promote uptake.

She concluded by encouraging participants to actively engage in discussions, share practical experiences, and use the meeting as a platform for mutual learning and collaboration.

1.2 LHAF Knowledge Hub Analytics and Social Media Presence

Presenter: Privilege (MeDRA)

1.2.1 Knowledge Hub Analytics

The presenter delivered an overview of the current usage and performance of the LHAF Knowledge Hub, focusing on registration, learning participation, and knowledge-sharing activities.

Key statistics highlighted included:

- A total of **39 users registered** on the Knowledge Hub to date.
- Registration levels varied across member organisations, with:
    - MeDRA leading with 8 registered users, YMCA with 6 users, Christian Care with 5 users, and LDS with 4 users.
- It was noted that **13 organisations have only one registered member**, while **9 organisations currently have no registered users**, indicating uneven engagement across the network.

Regarding learning and capacity development:

- The Learning Management System (LMS) recorded: 24 enrolments, 9 course completions, and 5 certificates issued.
- These figures were presented as evidence of growing, but still limited, utilisation of training opportunities.

On knowledge-sharing:

- The Knowledge Base currently hosts **30 uploaded files**, contributed by member organisations.
- Participants were reminded that the Hub is intended to be a shared resource, with all members encouraged to contribute relevant tools, reports, best practices and learning materials.

Participants noted that:

The presenter strongly encouraged member organisations to:

- Register more staff members on the Knowledge Hub;
- Actively use the Knowledge Base for programme design, reporting, and learning;
- Enrol staff in available LMS courses and complete certifications;
- Upload organisational tools, case studies, and best practices;
- Appoint or strengthen the role of Knowledge Hub Admins to support internal uptake.

1.2.2 Social Media Platforms

The presenter provided an update on the LHAF Social Media Platforms and current levels of member engagement.

Participants were informed that LHAF is officially present on the following platforms:

- **Facebook:** Local Humanitarian Actors Forum
- **LinkedIn:** Local Humanitarian Actors Forum
- **X (formerly Twitter):** @LhsiZim
- **YouTube: Local Humanitarian Actors Forum**

The presenter encouraged all member organisations to actively **follow, like, repost, and share content** to increase the visibility and collective voice of local humanitarian actors in Zimbabwe.

It was highlighted that:

- Out of 30 member organisations, **only 5 organisations have followed LHAF on Facebook**, indicating very low engagement from the network.

This was presented as a concern, given that social media is a key platform for amplifying local leadership, showcasing member achievements, and influencing broader humanitarian discourse.

The presenter outlined the type of content currently being posted across platforms, including:

- **LHAF Updates** – Forum announcements, meetings, and coordination updates.
- **LMS Courses Series** – Promotion of available Knowledge Hub courses and learning opportunities.
- **LHAF Members Spotlight Series** – Featuring and celebrating member organisations and their work.
- Additional relevant humanitarian sector updates and engagement opportunities.

Participants were reminded that these platforms are not only communication tools but also strategic visibility platforms for localisation and advocacy.

The meeting recognised that low engagement weakens collective visibility and limits opportunities for broader sector influence. The presenter strongly encouraged all member organisations to immediately follow LHAF on Facebook, LinkedIn, and X.

2 AAP Introductory Concepts and Refresher

Facilitator: Dr P Bongo

2.1 Key Concepts Discussion Highlights

- **Anticipatory Action as a Proactive Shift:** Unlike traditional reactive disaster response, anticipatory action represents a paradigm shift to proactive risk management. By acting before disasters impact, it reduces human suffering and economic loss, making humanitarian aid more efficient and dignified. This approach requires a fundamental change in mindset from reacting to crises to anticipating and mitigating them.
- **The Critical Importance of Timing and Triggers:** The success of anticipatory action depends heavily on acting within a specific window of opportunity between the issuance of early warnings and the hazard's peak impact. Predetermined triggers, based on a combination of indicators such as rainfall, soil moisture, river discharge, and indigenous knowledge, signal when to initiate interventions. Triggers are emphasised as context-specific, requiring triangulation of multiple indicators to provide reliable signals for action. The timing dimension introduces the concept of a "window of opportunity," a critical period to implement measures that can avert or mitigate disaster impacts. This precision timing ensures resources are used effectively and communities are better prepared.
- **Data Downscaling and Integration:** Regional climate outlooks provide broad forecasts that must be downscaled to national, provincial, and district levels for localised accuracy. From the regional Southern Africa Climate Outlook Forum (SACOF) to the National Climate Outlook Forum (NACOF) led by the Meteorological Services Department (MSD) and extending down to specific districts. Investing in automated weather stations and river gauges improves the granularity of data, enabling tailored anticipatory actions. Moreover, integrating indigenous early warning systems with scientific models enhances the reliability and community acceptance of forecasts.
- **Need for Flexible and Predictable Financing:** Anticipatory action requires pre-arranged funding mechanisms that can be rapidly deployed once triggers are met. Traditional procurement and funding systems are often too rigid, causing delays that undermine the effectiveness of early interventions. Reforming these systems to prioritise flexibility and speed is critical to operationalising anticipatory action.
- **Collaborative Frameworks and Partnerships:** The Anticipatory Action Task Force exemplifies how multi-agency collaboration can pool expertise, resources, and influence to advance anticipatory action globally. Partnerships between governments, humanitarian organisations, and local communities are essential to embed anticipatory action into national disaster management frameworks, ensuring sustainability and wider reach.
- **Expanding Scope to Multiple Hazards:** As climate change increases the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, anticipatory action must adapt to a broader range of hazards, including droughts, floods, heatwaves, and disease outbreaks. Each hazard type

requires customised early warning indicators and response protocols, underscoring the need for continuous innovation and contextual understanding.

- **Challenges in Institutional Readiness and Systems:** The example of delayed inputs during the 2023-24 El Niño drought activation illustrates the operational challenges faced by organisations. Existing policies and legal frameworks, designed for traditional emergency responses, often lack the agility to accommodate anticipatory approaches. Institutional readiness, both in capacity and policy adaptation, is a prerequisite for successful anticipatory action.

3 Development Process of District AAPs (Group Work)

Group Presenters: Francis (YMCA), Jihad (Nyahunure), Julius (Aquaculture Zimbabwe)

Participants were put into three groups to discuss the development process for district-level AAPs aimed at managing natural hazards. All groups selected drought as the target hazard in their chosen districts. The presentations highlighted the importance of multi-stakeholder engagement, community participation, integration of technical input, and iterative validation to ensure ownership, relevance, and sustainability. Here are the highlights of the presentations and discussion considerations regarding AAP developments:

3.1 Key Considerations in District AAP Development

- **Stakeholder Coordination Is Crucial for Protocol Success:** The process begins with engaging the district Civil Protection Unit and other stakeholders. This coordination ensures that existing frameworks and resources are leveraged rather than duplicated, enabling a coherent and unified approach to disaster risk management. The involvement of multiple sectors, including government, private, and civil society, broadens the resource base and expertise available for anticipatory action.

- **Community Engagement Ensures Ownership and Contextual Accuracy:** Direct community consultations enable the identification of locally relevant hazards and the prioritisation of response actions. This participatory approach not only reflects ground realities but also builds community trust and willingness to support and implement the protocol. Ranking hazards and responses helps prioritise limited resources effectively.

- **Vulnerability and Risk Analysis Tailors Responses:** Detailed assessments of vulnerabilities, including food, water, and livestock insecurities, allow for targeted interventions. Recognising the most affected demographics (women, children, elderly) and geographical hotspots enhances the effectiveness of anticipatory actions and resource allocation.

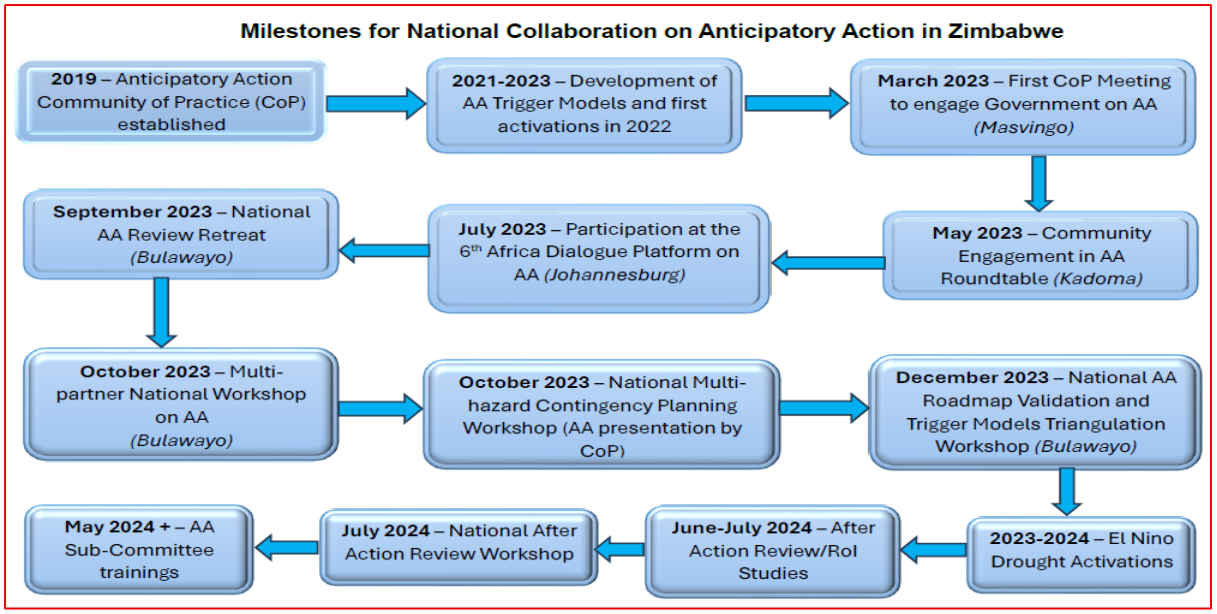
- **Early Warning Systems Integrate Scientific and Indigenous Knowledge:** Combining meteorological forecasts with indigenous knowledge systems enriches early warning capabilities. This dual approach increases the accuracy and acceptance of warnings within communities, improving preparedness and timely action.

- **Pre-arranged Funding and Clear Disbursement Processes Facilitate Rapid Response:** Identifying funding sources and establishing disbursement mechanisms before triggers occur is vital for timely early action. Including provisions for vouchers and procurement ensures that resources reach beneficiaries efficiently once a warning threshold is met.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation to Strengthen Protocols Over Time:** Continuous monitoring and evaluation allow stakeholders to assess the effectiveness of actions, learn from implementation experiences, and adapt protocols accordingly. This iterative process is key to improving resilience and ensuring that anticipatory actions remain relevant and impactful.
- **Clear Roles and Responsibilities Facilitate Coordination and Accountability:** Defining who does what and when among stakeholders reduces overlaps and gaps in response. This clarity enhances efficiency and fosters accountability within the district's disaster management framework.
- **Iterative Validation and Feedback Ensure Protocol Quality**: Draft protocols are shared with both district stakeholders and communities for input, ensuring the final document is well-informed, accepted, and practical for implementation. This step is fundamental in bridging technical knowledge and local realities.
- **Use of Historical Data Enhances Scenario Planning:** Reviewing past drought and hazard data supports the development of realistic scenarios that inform timely and appropriate early action. This data-driven approach increases the predictability and effectiveness of interventions.
- **Inclusion of Diverse Community Representatives Promotes Inclusivity**: Engaging women, youth, the elderly, people with disabilities, and traditional leaders ensures that diverse perspectives shape the protocol, enhancing equity and social cohesion in disaster preparedness and response.
- **Private Sector and Civil Society Provide Additional Resources and Innovation:** Beyond government structures, involving private companies and NGOs can bring in extra funding, expertise, and innovative approaches to hazard management, increasing the protocol's resource base and potential impact.
- **Timing of Actions Is Critical to Effectiveness:** Prioritising not only which actions to take but also when to execute them ensures that interventions are timely and have maximum impact, preventing or reducing hazard impacts before they escalate.

4 AAP Roadmap in Zimbabwe

Presenter: Dr P Bongo



The presenter provided a comprehensive overview of the evolution, institutionalisation, and practical implementation of anticipatory action (AA) and contingency planning within Zimbabwe from 2019. It highlights the collaborative efforts of multiple stakeholders, including government agencies, organisations like the WFP, FAO, and Red Cross, in developing and formalising anticipatory action frameworks to better prepare for and mitigate disasters, particularly droughts. Initial challenges included a lack of clarity about anticipatory action concepts, government structure ambiguities, and coordination difficulties. However, through continuous government engagements, scientific modelling, workshops, and pilot activations, the approach gradually gained formal recognition and integration into national, provincial, and district civil protection frameworks.

The development of key documents such as the compendium on community engagement and national roadmaps for anticipatory action solidified the foundation for these efforts, while after-action reviews of 2023-2024 drought responses provided valuable insights on effectiveness and areas for improvement. Institutionalisation also involved establishing subcommittees dedicated to anticipatory action within the National Civil Protection Committee and down to local levels, with training provided by organisations like WFP. The presenter also discussed the importance of multi-model forecasting approaches since no single predictive model covers all necessary indicators, emphasising collaboration and data sharing among stakeholders.

5 Organisations' Readiness to AAP

5.1 Internal Readiness to AAP (Groupwork)

The group discussions centred on enhancing emergency preparedness and response within the local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), focusing on key operational challenges and strategic improvements. The following key insights from the discussions:

5.1.1 Key Readiness Group Discussion Highlights

- **Procurement and Logistics Bottlenecks:** The discussion reveals that procurement processes are often slow due to bureaucratic procedures and donor requirements. This delay significantly impacts the timely delivery of humanitarian essentials like non-food items (NFIs) and other critical supplies during emergencies. Furthermore, logistical

challenges such as limited vehicle availability, especially for local NGOs that rely on project vehicles, compound response difficulties. Emergency procurement policies and framework agreements with suppliers are needed to expedite these processes, highlighting the importance of pre-positioning resources before disasters strike.

- **Human Resource Constraints During Emergencies:** Recruitment delays and inadequate staff capacity during emergencies impede swift response. Organisations often face challenges in quickly mobilising trained personnel, which stresses the need for having emergency-ready teams with clear roles and continuous staff capacitation. Safeguarding staff from harm during crises is also critical, as the psychological and physical well-being of responders directly influences operational effectiveness.
- **Necessity of Internal Emergency Funds for Pre-Financing:** Reliance on donor funds with complicated approval and disbursement processes causes delays in emergency response. Having dedicated internal funds for emergencies enables organisations to pre-finance activities, ensuring resources are available immediately when needed. This financial agility is vital for the rapid deployment and scale-up of response operations, especially in fast-evolving disaster scenarios.
- **Complex Coordination Among Donors, Headquarters, and Local Offices:** The hierarchical structure involving donors, international headquarters, local offices, and partners introduces multiple layers of approval and communication, which can slow down decision-making. Streamlining these coordination mechanisms and clarifying reporting lines within emergency response teams are essential to improve responsiveness and reduce bureaucratic lag.
- **Anticipatory Action Frameworks and SOPs Enhance Preparedness:** Establishing clear anticipatory action plans, standard operating procedures (SOPs), and emergency response plans ensures that all stakeholders understand their responsibilities ahead of disasters. This preparedness framework facilitates faster mobilisation, better interdepartmental coordination, and smoother implementation of emergency interventions, reducing confusion and inefficiencies during crises.
- **Collaboration and Resource Sharing Among Organisations:** Multiple organisations operating independently in the same geographic area often lead to duplicated efforts and inefficient resource use. Improved collaboration, information sharing, and coordinated planning can optimise the deployment of personnel and materials, enhancing the overall impact of disaster response efforts. Creating common platforms for communication and joint resource mobilisation is critical for maximising outcomes.
- **Strengthening Internal Systems: Data, Budgeting, and Policies:** Effective disaster preparedness requires robust data collection and knowledge management systems to inform decision-making. Financial and procurement policies must be adapted to emergency contexts to allow flexibility and speed. Including contingency budgets that account for facilitation and stakeholder engagement ensures all relevant parties are supported without compromising transparency or integrity. Building these internal capacities fosters organisational sustainability and resilience to recurrent emergencies.

5.2 AAP Micro-Planning Toolkit for Internal Readiness

Presenter: Dr P. Bongo

The presenter discussed the development and operationalisation of a model micro-planning toolkit designed to enhance emergency preparedness and response within organisations. The toolkit presented integrated multiple critical functions, including finance, logistics, safeguarding, risk management, and programmatic planning, to ensure a cohesive and effective emergency response strategy. Central to its design is the establishment of clear roles, particularly a senior management focal point responsible for trigger validation and risk oversight, supported by a multi-disciplinary team representing various organisational units.

The toolkit emphasised the need for structured but adaptable processes, including trigger mechanisms (manual or digital), contingency funds, supplier frameworks, and logistics pre-positioning matrices. It also highlights the importance of regular monitoring, after-action reviews, and simulations to validate systems and improve readiness. Safeguarding principles such as political neutrality, gender sensitivity, and disability considerations are embedded in risk management protocols. The toolkit aims to streamline approval processes, improve beneficiary verification, and ensure programmatic accountability while fostering organisational learning through feedback loops and scoring mechanisms.

5.2.1 AAP Toolkit Discussion Highlights

- Development of a comprehensive micro-planning toolkit for emergency preparedness and response.
- Establishment of a senior focal point and multi-unit teams to oversee triggers and risk management.
- Clear financial structures including simplified approval thresholds and contingency funds.
- Pre-positioning and logistics readiness matrices to ensure swift resource deployment.
- Emphasis on monitoring, after-action reviews, and simulation exercises to enhance system effectiveness.
- Integration of safeguarding principles focusing on political neutrality, gender sensitivity, and disability.
- Continuous improvement through beneficiary feedback, internal audits, and risk scoring.

6 Final Recommendations and Guidelines

Presentation: Dr P Bongo

The following recommendations and guidelines were discussed on the implementation of AA within Zimbabwe's disaster risk management (DRM) framework:

6.1 Recommendations Highlights

- **Integration with Civil Protection and DRM Systems:** The necessity to anchor anticipatory action within existing national and district civil protection systems is paramount. This avoids duplication of efforts and ensures that anticipatory action complements broader DRM plans, thereby fostering coordination and operational coherence. The policy implication includes requiring formal justification before activating anticipatory action to promote transparency and coordination.

- **Context-Specific Risk Design:** Utilizing district-specific hazard profiles tailors anticipatory action to localized risk realities, such as flood or drought vulnerabilities. This specificity informs timelines aligned with seasonal calendars and risk windows, enabling more accurate early warnings and targeted interventions. Such an approach acknowledges that a one-size-fits-all model is ineffective given the heterogeneous climatic and socio-economic landscapes across districts.
- **Triggering Mechanisms and Decision Timelines:** The discussion highlights the importance of developing clear activation triggers based on multi-category indicators, including long-range forecasts, seasonal observations, and short-term alerts. A recommended 48-hour decision window is critical for timely response, especially for fast-onset disasters like floods, where lead times can be as short as hours. Drought anticipatory actions, conversely, allow for longer lead times, ranging from weeks to months.
- **Funding Flexibility and Pre-financing:** Effective anticipatory action hinges on the availability of flexible funding streams that can be rapidly deployed when triggers are met. This calls for institutionalising pre-financing and rapid release protocols within funding agencies and government frameworks.
- **Localisation, Community Ownership, and Protection:** The localisation agenda is emphasised as a fundamental principle to ensure interventions are community-driven, accountable, and transparent. It insists on integrating gender, age, disability, and protection considerations into planning and implementation to avoid exclusion errors and safeguard vulnerable groups. Evacuation and beneficiary selection processes must be sensitive to these dimensions to uphold ethical standards.
- **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL):** The discussion stresses the importance of building strong MEL frameworks that document outcomes, avoid harm, and demonstrate the value of anticipatory action. Conducting after-action reviews with civil protection committees and updating trigger thresholds based on lessons learned enhances the system's responsiveness and effectiveness. Ethical considerations, including "do no harm" principles and respect for existing coping strategies, must guide all MEL activities.
- **Coordination and Complementarity:** Strong coordination mechanisms between agencies and partners are vital for complementarity, reducing duplication, and maximising the reach and effectiveness of anticipatory action. This calls for clear roles, shared information, and collective planning integrated into the broader DRM architecture.
- **Readiness and Capacity Building:** The final part of the discussion calls for identifying pain points in readiness among agencies implementing anticipatory action and encourages sharing best practices to enhance preparedness. Critical readiness components include maintaining updated beneficiary lists, pre-negotiated supplier agreements, trained rapid response teams, and conducting readiness simulations or drills where possible.

7 Action Points

Point	Responsibility	Timeline
Register in the Knowledge Hub and complete all the courses	All participants and member organisations	13/3/2026

Completing the needs assessment feedback form for the next steps after training	All participants	17/2/2026

8 Closing Remarks

Presenter: Funuel (Shamwari Yemwanasikana)

The presenter delivered the closing remarks, expressing appreciation to all participants for their active engagement and meaningful contributions throughout the training.

He reflected on the key discussions of the day, including anticipatory action concepts, trigger mechanisms, district AAP development processes, internal organisational readiness, financing challenges, and coordination mechanisms. He noted that the deliberations highlighted both the progress made in advancing anticipatory action in Zimbabwe and the practical challenges that still require collective effort.

The presenter emphasised that anticipatory action is not merely a technical framework but a mindset that requires institutional preparedness, flexible systems, and strong collaboration among stakeholders. He encouraged organisations to translate the learning from the training into concrete internal reforms, including improving coordination with district Civil Protection structures.

He reiterated the importance of sustained utilisation of the LHAF Knowledge Hub as a mechanism for continued learning, documentation, and knowledge exchange.

In conclusion, he thanked the facilitators, organisers, and participants for their dedication and collaboration. He encouraged continued partnership, shared accountability, and commitment to strengthening anticipatory action and localisation efforts across Zimbabwe.

The meeting was officially closed with appreciation, and safe travel wishes were extended to all participants.

Workshop Gallery