

The Evidence Base on Anticipatory Action



REPORT SUMMARY

In this report, WFP and ODI review the current evidence base on Anticipatory Action (A-A).

Anticipatory Action initiatives, often referred to as forecast-based early action (FbA), Forecast-based Financing (FbF) and Early Warning Early Action (EWEA), can be distinguished from other humanitarian, disaster risk reduction and preparedness practices, as they rely on weather and other forecasts to trigger funding for predetermined actions ahead of a shock before it turns into a disaster. A-A initiatives are relatively new in the humanitarian sector, yet they are quickly scaling up across the globe.

MAIN FINDINGS

There is a growing body of evidence pointing towards the positive impact of Anticipatory Action, yet it is often fragmented, incomplete in scope, and in need of methodological improvements.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

Robust empirical data and a strong MEL agenda are necessary in order to effectively scale up Anticipatory Action, improve response systems and enhance people's resilience to climate change.

KEY MESSAGES

Greater investment in MEL systems:

As A-A projects multiply and scale up around the globe, sufficient resources should be dedicated to capturing and applying the knowledge gained from prior experiences, so that learning drives program design and results are clearly communicated to donors and partners. There is a lack of primary data collected on the ground due to the small scale of A-A initiatives so far, thus now is a great opportunity to put in place robust Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) systems and fill those data gaps during the upcoming expansion of the anticipatory approach.

Common analytical frameworks:

A common analytical framework would allow for cross-country, cross-hazard and cross-project comparisons, currently not feasible due to methodological differences. It would also allow practitioners and policy makers to make more strategic conclusions on the value and future direction of A-A.

Maintaining flexibility for differences in the context and objectives of each A-A project and implementing agency is important. However, agreement on common principles will also ensure coherence and methodological rigor as the body of evidence on the approach expands.

A focus on improving the models:

Anticipatory actions require that assistance reaches the right people at the right time. Ensuring maximum impact for A-A requires tailored MEL models that can be updated and reconfigured based on the activation of carefully designed triggers, while also ensuring transparent and effective communication of results.

A-A partners are already making significant progress on this front, investing in the development of guidance and best practice material, yet there is significant scope for improvement in the methodologies employed so far.