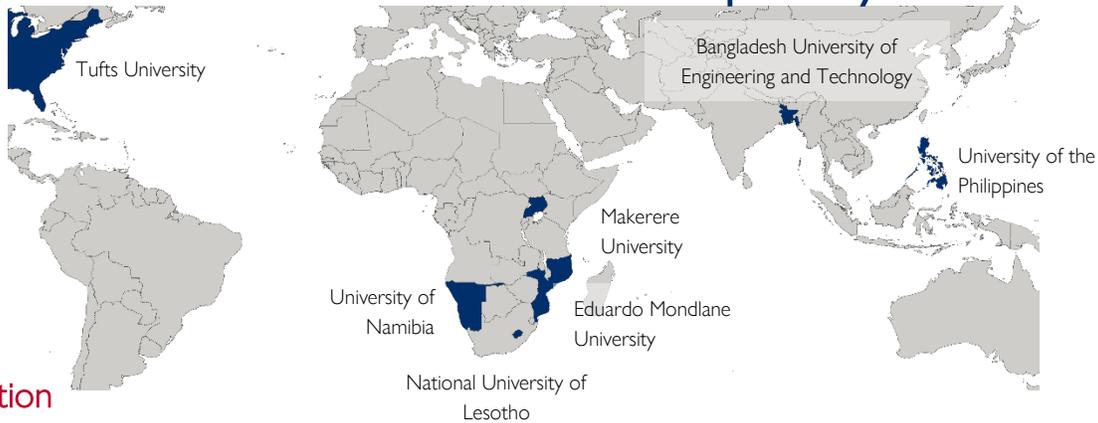




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# Academic Alliance on Anticipatory Action



## The Innovation

In May 2021, at the same time that they committed \$8.5 billion for countries at risk of famine, the G7 group of industrialized countries [announced](#) that they intend to scale up “Anticipatory Action” throughout the humanitarian system. From the United Nations to the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to local non-governmental organizations, humanitarians are working to anticipate crises before they happen, using weather forecasts to trigger early action and Forecast-based Financing (FbF) before disasters. This innovation is gaining momentum as a way of adapting to the increased frequency of extreme weather events due to climate change.

Anticipatory Action has the potential to dramatically increase the effectiveness of humanitarian work. Effective early action holds the promise to be cheaper, faster, and more dignified than disaster response. Hypothetical estimates include [\\$3 saved](#) in beneficiary losses for every \$1 invested in early action, to [€400 in benefit](#) for every €1 invested in flood early warnings in Europe.

## The Problem

If humanitarian actors are to increase the effectiveness of their support, they need to implement the most effective early action in the right place at the right time, which differs dramatically across contexts. Yet none of the hypothetical benefits can be generalized to “early action” as a concept and there is a [shocking lack of empirical evidence](#) on Anticipatory Action.

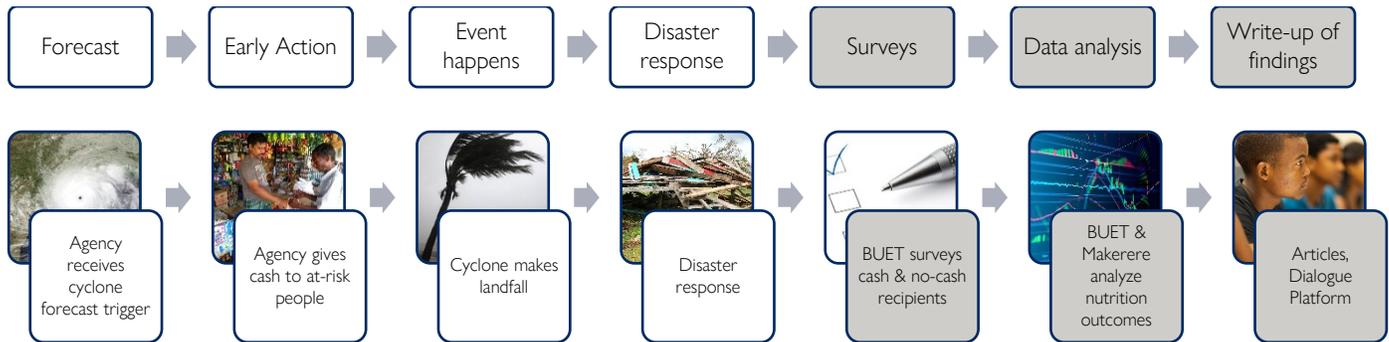
## Our Proposed Solution

The Academic Alliance on Anticipatory Action (4As, or “Straight As”) is working to build the evidence base on Anticipatory Action through a combination of impact evaluations of real-time anticipatory action and research to improve the development of anticipatory action programs and identify the most effective ways to help the most vulnerable people before a crisis pushes them further into life-threatening situations. 4As is a consortium of universities from around the world supported by the United States Agency for International Development’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) under cooperative agreement 720BHA21CA00044. This unique group of researchers relies on leadership from the country-level partners in designing and evaluating anticipatory action in collaboration with humanitarian agencies. The goal is to help communities in more than 60 countries over two years and undertake research to support and strengthen the design, data collection, analysis, and reporting of evaluation results of anticipatory action efforts.



## Work Package 1: What is the benefit of anticipatory action?

The Consortium is on “standby” to support evaluations whenever a humanitarian partner takes Anticipatory Action. When an event occurs, the regional lead university will collaborate with the humanitarian partner to design and implement an impact evaluation after the event. This can include surveys, interviews, and data analysis, followed by a “Learning and Utilization Clinic” with the local humanitarian partners and stakeholders.



**Figure 1.** Hypothetical timeline of events, from a hypothetical Anticipatory Action trigger (white) to the evaluation by 4As (grey). The universities involved in this hypothetical event are BUET: Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology and Makerere University, Uganda

## Work Package 2: How can anticipatory action be improved?

Each university partner will lead research on an aspect of Anticipatory Action, answering critical questions that enable humanitarians to scale up and improve effectiveness of their work. For example, AAAA researchers will investigate pathways into famine, the use of social protection systems for early action, and financial risk layering for cyclone preparedness. These questions have been developed based on existing collaborations with humanitarian partners and humanitarian [Research Roadmap](#). Results can be found on the [Anticipation Hub](#) and at global and regional Dialogue Platforms on Anticipatory Action.



We envision a humanitarian sector that jumps into action when there is a forecast of an extreme event, seeing Anticipatory Action as a key function of its work in a changing climate.

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