



**Generating evidence for
anticipatory action:
your questions answered!**



**24 June 2026
15:00-16:30 CEST
Online**

1. What's *different* about MEAL for anticipatory action?

Why focus on AA evidence?

Is MEAL for AA *different* from “normal” MEAL?

NO, but ... AA interventions are triggered and guided by a forecast. This implies **constraints and uncertainties** not faced by ‘conventional’ response programming, with implications for MEAL.



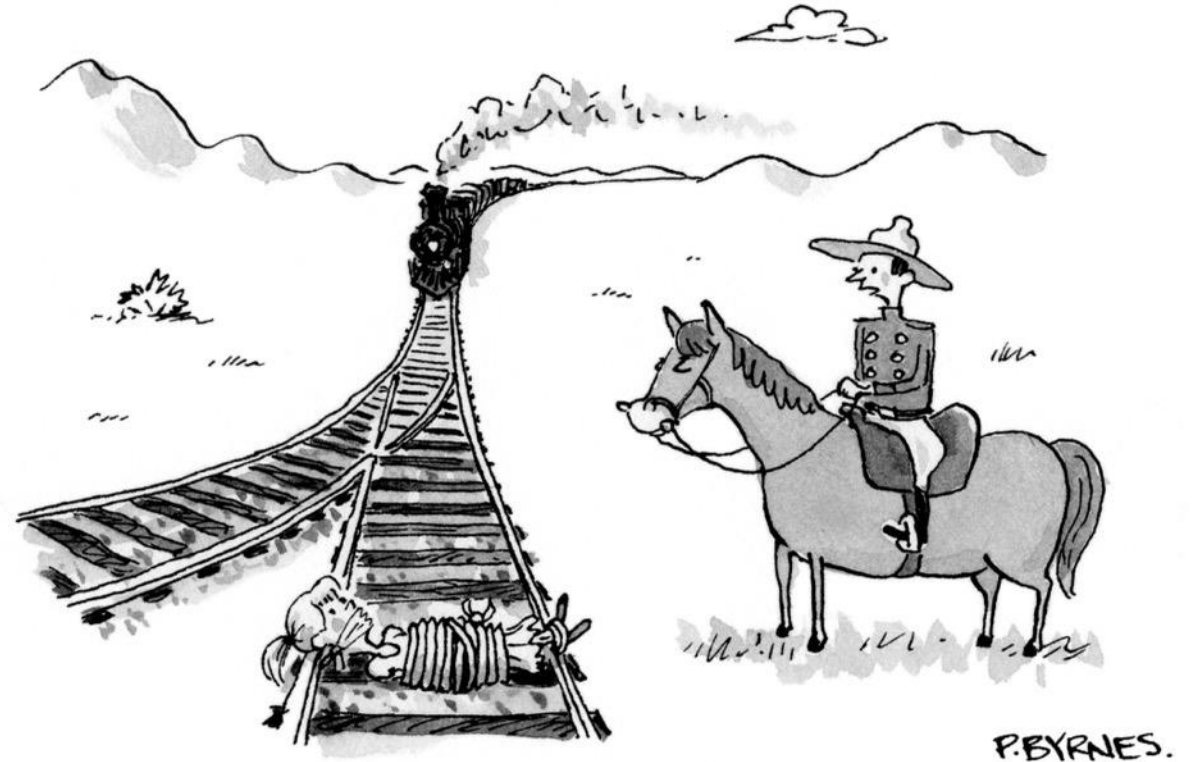
"I know the difference between right and wrong, Henderson - But I'm also aware of the similarities."



1. It is uncertain **whether**,
when and **where** a hazard
will occur.

Implications:

- **Baseline** data would need to be collected in *all* potential intervention areas
- The **severity** of the hazard impact might differ by location (→ non-comparable sample groups)



"But if it goes the other way, I'll have
gotten off my horse for nothing."

Pat Byrnes / CartoonStock.com



2. There is a specific – often short – **window of opportunity** to act.

Implications:

- Assistance might arrive **late**.
- **Baseline** data difficult or impossible to collect.
- Different actions aim at different results, measurable at different points in time.
- **Timing** of data collection is crucial (event timeline; indicator recall period; recall bias).



“I’m from the late-warning system.”



3. Action before **extreme** event; severity unknown in advance.

Implications:

- ‘**No change**’ can be a desirable result.
- ‘Traditional’ before-after comparison of only AA participants may not yield useful information about effectiveness of AA.



2. **Results:** what should be monitored and evaluated?

Domains of change

Common types of results:

Individual / household level

- Protected lives
- Physical & psychological well-being
- Nutrition & food security
- Livelihood impacts
- Assets damaged / lost
- Enable faster recovery
- Strengthen resilience

Humanitarian systems / institutional

- Operational capacity to act on forecasts or early warnings
- Shift in humanitarian & disaster management culture and policy towards anticipation
- Reduce later response needs
- Reduce response time and cost
- Availability & agility of financial resources

Forecasting

- Capacity
- Model skill / accuracy
- Communication
- Usability by humanitarian & disaster management actors

Guidance on Planning and
Measuring Country Capacity
Strengthening for AA

Trigger Review Template

3. **Methods: current and emerging practice in MEAL for anticipatory action**

1. Outcomes & impact

- What **difference** did anticipatory action make for participants compared to traditional humanitarian-response activities?
- How and why did anticipatory action achieve (or fail to achieve) its **intended impacts**?
- **For whom** did anticipatory action work best or least?
- Did anticipatory action adequately **reach** and benefit marginalized or at-risk groups?
- How were beneficiaries' **experiences and perspectives** shaped by the implementation of anticipatory actions?
- Was the anticipatory intervention **cost-effective or cost-efficient** compared to traditional humanitarian response activities, or compared to other anticipatory action interventions?

2. Process

- What **worked well** and what should be **improved** in future interventions
- How could **triggers and actions** be adjusted to better serve different population groups or contexts?
- How **accountable** were the interventions to affected people (i.e., did humanitarian actors fulfil their responsibilities to communities)?

Quantitative

- Randomized controlled trials
- Quasi-experimental design
- Pre-post programme participants
- Economic evaluation methods (e.g. return on investment, cost efficiency, cost effectiveness, cost benefit, value for money)

Qualitative

- Theory-based impact assessment
- User experience methodology
- Missing voices
- Outcome harvesting

Mixed methods

- Success case method
- Q methodology

Accountability in DRF

<https://www.disasterprotection.org/publications-centre/accountability-in-disaster-risk-financing>

4. What can go *wrong* in MEAL for anticipatory action – and what to do about it

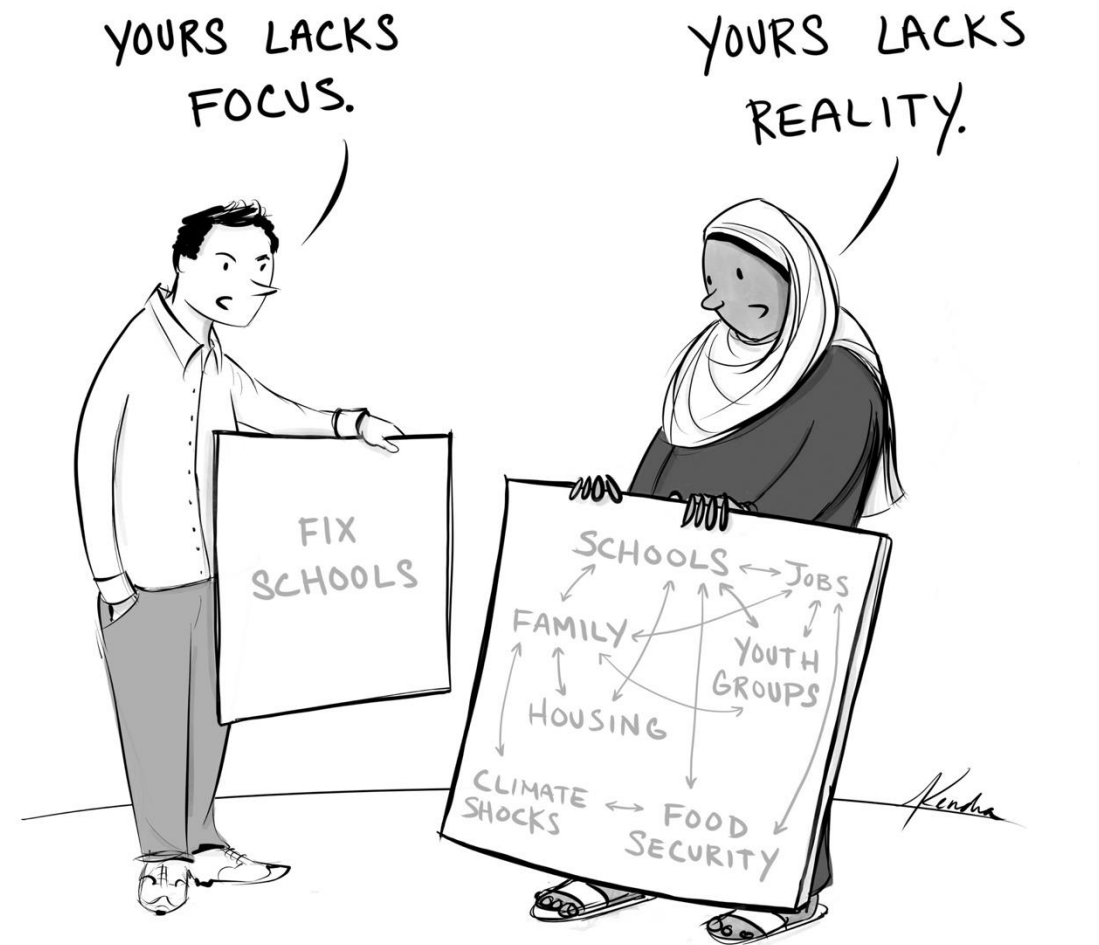
1.



Theory of Change unclear, or not applicable anymore



- Always outline *how* actions are expected to translate into measurable results (and *which* results).
- Let's be transparent about *changes* (context, assumptions, ...) or *limitations* of the ToC.



Kendra Allenby / CartoonStock.com

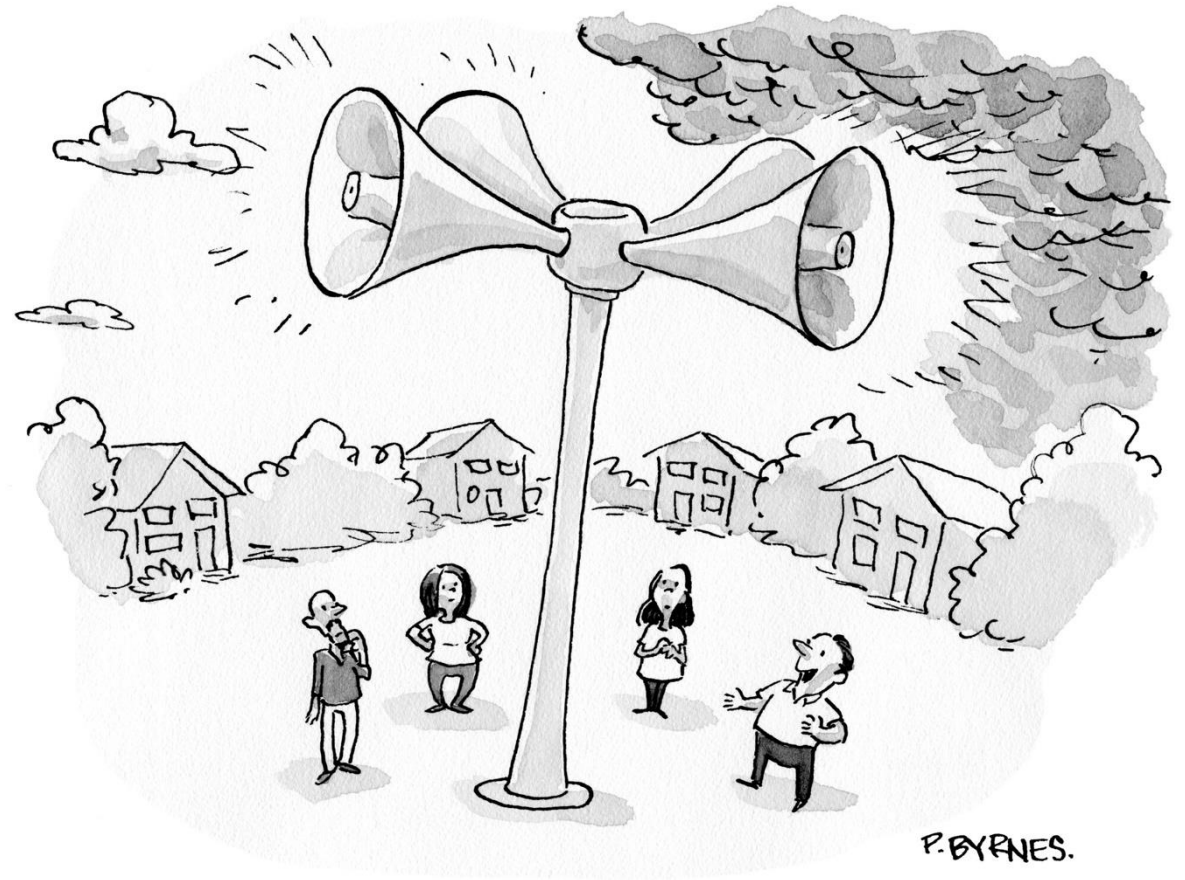
2.



Missing information about timeline & basic facts of AA & research



- Include a timeline of events: **What happened, when?**
- Include essential facts about the **hazard** conditions, the **AA** intervention, and the main **research activities** (including timing of data collection).



“It works! The early warning system works. Now if only we knew what to do when the siren goes off.”

3.



Transparency about study design and methodology



- Describe the study design and methodology, including limitations, whether quantitative or qualitative.
- Let's be clear about sample size & composition.



“Oh, is that so, smart guy? Remind me where you took *your* degree in African Studies.”

Liam Francis Walsh / CartoonCollections.com

4.



Baseline data is incomplete or missing



- Include information about people's **demographics & socio-economic background** in **later rounds** of data collection to reconstruct the 'starting conditions'.
- See if there is **secondary data** from other sources about the population of interest that can serve as a proxy.



P. BYRNES.

“The spirits say you have all the data.
Just do something.”

Pat Byrnes / CartoonStock.com

5.



Result indicators aren't clearly defined, and/or not standardised



- Define all result metrics.
- Use **standardized indicators** whenever possible, making it easier to compare outcomes across contexts.
- **Look around** for what others are doing. **Consult** widely.



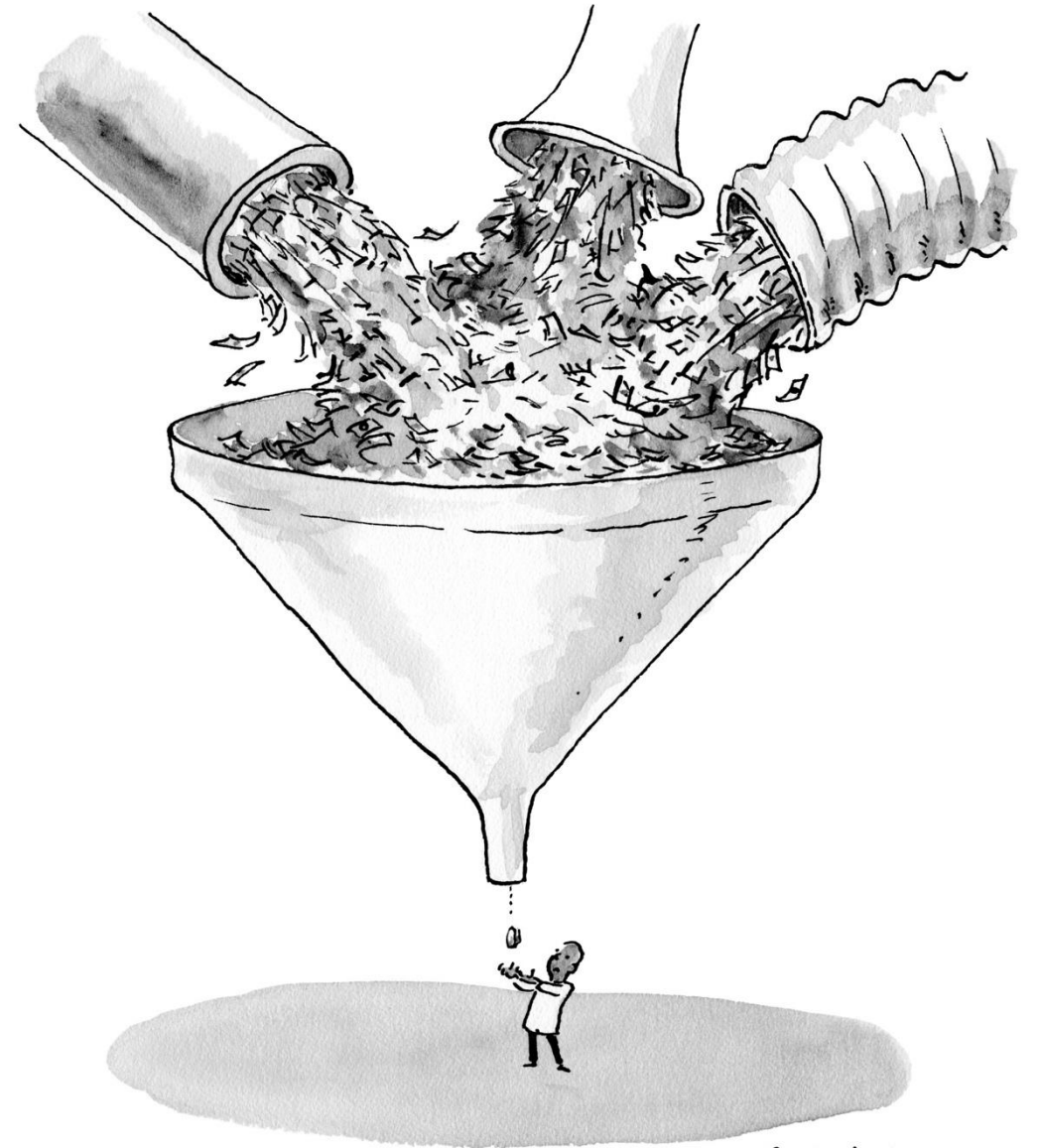
6.



ROI & CBA analyses with unclear or overly optimistic assumptions



- Be **transparent** about all 'ingredients' to your return-on-investment or cost-benefit analysis. Describe all parameters.
- Share your **analysis plan**, share your **code**.



P. BYRNES.

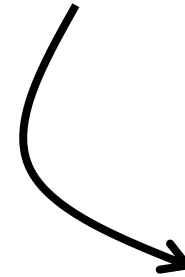
<https://www.anticipation-hub.org/download/file-5911>



**Read the
briefing paper**



**Learn more about
the AA MEAL
Practitioners Group**



<https://www.anticipation-hub.org/get-involved/working-groups/meal-practitioners-group>