



# GBV AoR HELPDESK

Gender Based Violence in Emergencies



## Research Query: GBV and Anticipatory Action Approaches

Hannah Jay | June 2021



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## Introduction

This report is a primer for GBV actors on anticipatory action. It aims to provide a brief overview of what an anticipatory action approach is, including how this approach differs from disaster risk reduction and preparedness work. The report describes the systems, processes and timelines that align with the approach, including the different lead times for undertaking anticipatory actions depending on the specific type of emergency event, or hazard, and how these link to operational planning processes, including the design of GBV activities to be implemented as part of the anticipatory actions.

Anticipatory action is itself a new approach, and GBV integration into anticipatory action is newer still (with one notable pilot of GBV-specific anticipatory actions in response to a 2020 monsoon in Bangladesh, described further below). Nevertheless, this is a promising area for humanitarian intervention generally, and for GBV specifically. In order to support evidence-based learning for GBV actors, the report provides a summary of research-to-date on the effectiveness of the anticipatory action approach, particularly in relation to return on investment and effects at the household level, as these have particular relevance to GBV work. The report then offers some specific guidance on addressing GBV in anticipatory action, first looking at some overarching considerations linked to the emerging evidence, and then providing specific recommendation for GBV coordinators, GBV specialists, and those supporting risk mitigation interventions. The guidance highlights that the actions to be taken are not unique, but rather can be drawn from the existing knowledge base and adapted to this new approach—as another tool to use to enhance efforts to prevent, mitigate and respond to GBV in humanitarian emergencies.<sup>1</sup>

## Distinguishing Anticipatory Action, Disaster Risk Reduction and Preparedness

Anticipatory action as an approach has largely been applied to contexts of natural disasters—particularly climate related hazards. However, anticipatory action is distinct from other models commonly used in natural disasters—disaster risk reduction and preparedness—in that it responds to an imminent and specific crisis that has been forecasted. Anticipatory action refers to a set of planned and pre-financed measures taken when a disaster is imminent, prior to a shock or before acute impacts are felt.<sup>2</sup> Aimed at “reducing or mitigating the impact of disasters and enhancing post-disaster response, using forecasts or early warnings of imminent shock of stress,” antici-

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1 This piece draws from and is linked to the [GBV AoR Help-desk Learning Brief on GBV and Climate Change](#), which provides more in-depth information on the links between climate change and GBV risks for women and girls. In addition, the [GBVAoR Helpdesk Guidance Note on Prevention of, and Response to Gender-Based Violence in Settings Affected by Natural Disasters](#) provides guidance on GBV prevention and response programming in settings affected by disasters.

2 Wilkinson, Emily, Pforr, Tobias, & Weingartner, Lena. (2020) ‘Integrating ‘Anticipatory Action’ in Disaster Risk Management.’ ODI

patory action is driven by early warning systems.<sup>3</sup> As will be discussed later in the report, this focus on *acting before a hazard occurs* is particularly conducive to supporting GBV prevention and risk mitigation (i.e., anticipating and reducing the cascade of GBV risk factors that accompany a disaster through, for example, pre-emergency distribution of cash vouchers).

Like anticipatory actions, disaster risk reduction activities also occur prior to a crisis, but do not rely on forecasts of a specific hazard and are likely to be longer term in nature. (See Figure 1.) Disaster risk reduction is typically an ongoing process of identifying, assessing and reducing the risks of disaster. Preparedness refers to specific actions to ensure readiness to respond to disasters and may or may not be linked to a forecast. Even recognizing these distinctions, there is commonality and overlap between these approaches and anticipatory action should build upon good disaster risk reduction and preparedness work.

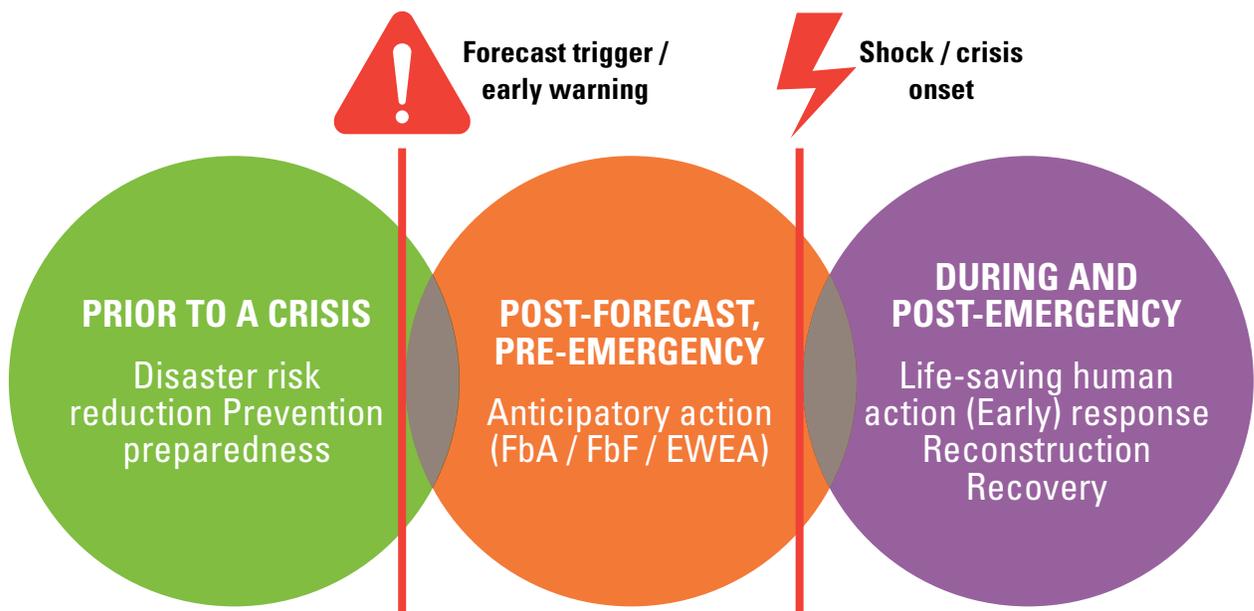


Figure 1: Timelines of Action<sup>4</sup>

It is important to remember that the anticipatory action model is distinguished by a particular process and timing for action but does not describe a pre-determined or fixed set of activities. Rather the *actions* within anticipatory action will vary according to setting, type of emergency, response sector and many other factors. As well, none of these actions will be completely novel or unique; they will draw from strategies used during other phases of humanitarian action. From a GBV programming perspective, an anticipatory action approach may combine some activities that would typically be viewed as GBV preparedness activities, alongside other activities more commonly seen in humanitarian response. This will be discussed in greater detail below.

Anticipatory action is not a substitute for disaster risk reduction and is complimentary to longer-term work to reduce vulnerability and strengthen people's capacity to manage risks and adapt to a changing climate. Nor is anticipatory action likely to eliminate the need for post-disaster

<sup>3</sup> Weingartner, Lena and Wilkinson, Emily (2019). Anticipatory Crisis Financing and Action: Concepts, Initiatives and Evidence. Pg. 6

<sup>4</sup> Pichon (2019) Anticipatory humanitarian action: what role for the CERF? Moving from rapid response to early action as cited in Weingartner, Lena & Wilkinson, Emily. (2019) Anticipatory Crisis Financing and Action: Concepts, Initiatives and Evidence.

response, but it should reduce it, in some cases significantly. An appropriate and timely response will need to deal with the residual risks to ensure that further suffering is avoided (see Figure 2).<sup>5</sup>

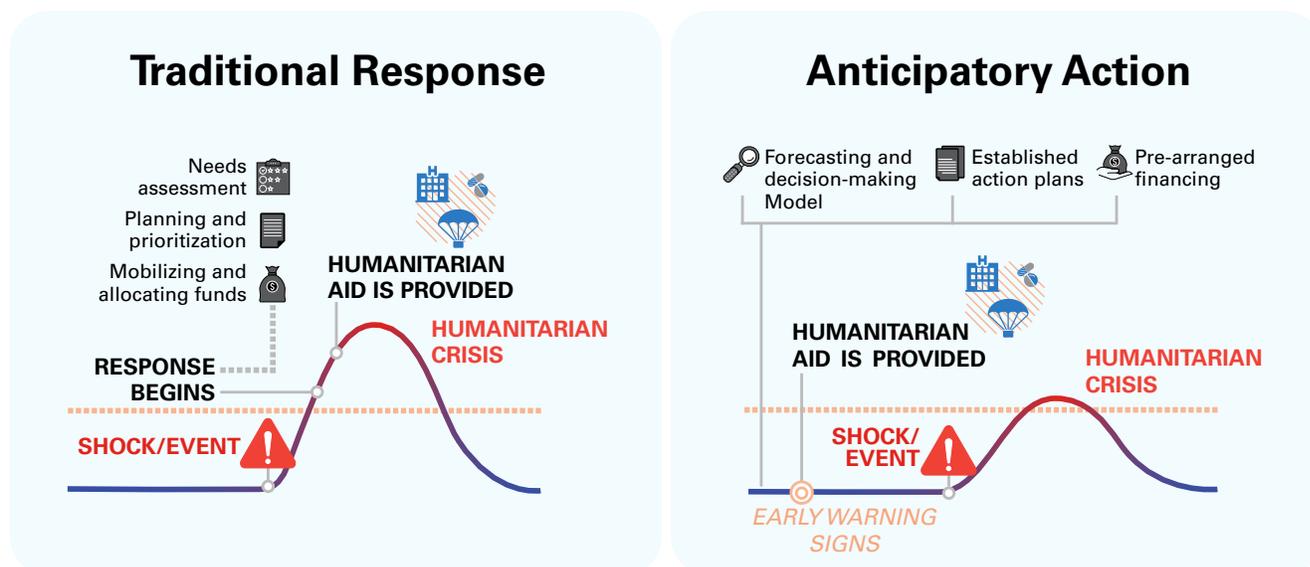


Figure 2: Traditional Humanitarian Response versus Anticipatory Action<sup>6</sup>

## An Introduction to Core Elements of Anticipatory Action

### Basic Steps of Anticipatory Action

Anticipatory actions may be delivered by a single agency, or by multiple agencies; as a result, the decision on when to initiate an anticipatory action approach in relation to an impending humanitarian emergency will vary. For natural disasters, decisions on applying an anticipatory action approach will typically be done in conjunction with the National Disaster Management Office, or an equivalent. Although there are differences in the approaches of the various anticipatory action models that have been applied globally (depending on lead agency, donor and context), there are some shared elements among all models. The following provides a broad overview of commonly applied steps for establishing an anticipatory action approach that sets the stage for implementing the anticipatory actions themselves. What is important to recognize about this model is that much of the work is preparatory to actually undertaking the anticipatory actions—it is about being able to understand risk, create early warning systems, identify forecast triggers, and have a plan in place to act quickly when a trigger occurs. Key steps to introducing anticipatory actions include:

- **Assess risks and impacts** in order to better understand the potential impact of extreme weather events on communities and to inform the design and targeting of anticipatory mitigation actions.
- **Assess the capacity of existing early warning systems** to produce and transmit reliable and timely information and forecasts for the implementation of anticipatory actions ahead of an extreme weather event.

<sup>5</sup> Costello, Cecilia, Et al. (2017) Scalable and sustainable: How to build Anticipatory Capacity into Social Protection

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office Bangladesh (2020) Handbook: Humanitarian Coordination and Collaboration in Bangladesh. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.

- **Decide when to act by setting forecast triggers.** Establish triggers for action when certain risk thresholds are reached based on multiple factors, including forecasting capacity, hazard type, and the time and cost necessary to complete sector-specific anticipatory actions.
- **Develop anticipatory action plan that outlines agreed actions,** along with the actors, costs, thresholds, triggers, and predetermined funds to be mobilized in anticipation of an extreme weather event. The action plan should be aligned with national disaster risk management plans and validated together with key actors through simulations.
- **Monitor forecasts and act** in response to a trigger, and following a fast disbursement of financing, coordinate with key stakeholders to implement anticipatory actions as per the action plan.<sup>7</sup>

### Box 1: Useful-to-Know Definitions and Concepts Linked to Anticipatory Action

Advances in early warning and forecasting allow us to predict specific, imminent disasters like climatic shocks and communicable disease outbreaks with growing accuracy. Data can facilitate the decision to trigger the release of pre-arranged finance for pre-agreed interventions that mitigate the impact of such shocks before they happen. Initiatives that come under the banner of anticipatory action include early warning early action and forecast-based action.<sup>8</sup> Forecast-based financing is also important for GBV actors to understand, as this can be an important way to access resources for GBV interventions linked to anticipatory action.

**Early warning-early action:** The general concept of taking early action based on a warning. Early warning- early action builds on the ‘early warning systems’ concept, emphasizing the need to reinforce actions as key outputs of the warning system.

**Forecast-based action:** The term forecast-based action (FbA) is similar to anticipatory action and in some instances, it is used interchangeably. The general distinction between anticipatory action and forecast-based action is that FbA is a narrower term used to describe actions based only on scientific forecasts. Whereas anticipatory action also includes broader analyses such as consensus decision making and qualitative expert assessments.<sup>9</sup>

**Forecast-based financing:** Based on forecast information and risk analysis, forecast-based financing is a release of humanitarian funding for pre-agreed activities. It facilitates early actions to be performed quickly and efficiently before disaster strikes, allocating and disbursing the funds automatically when a specific threshold is reached.<sup>10</sup> Forecast-based financing is a mechanism that bridges the development and disaster response agendas.<sup>11</sup> (See **Annex 1** for examples of forecast-based financing sources.)

**It should be noted that work on anticipatory action is evolving. There are no universally agreed definitions—they can vary from organisation to organisation.**

7 IFRC (2019) Forecast-based Financing: A new era for the humanitarian system

8 De Wit, Sara. (2019). Getting Ahead of a Crisis: A Thesaurus for Anticipatory Humanitarian Action.

9 Wagner, Marie & Catalina, Jaime. (2020) An Agenda for Expanding Forecast based Action to Situations of Conflict. Working Paper, September 2020. Global Public Policy Institute.

10 IFRC (2019) Forecast-based Financing: A new era for the humanitarian system

11 German Red Cross (2017) Forecast-Based Financing: A Policy Overview

## Anticipatory Action Timeframes Linked to Hazard Type and Forecasting

The timeframes and approaches for implementing anticipatory actions differ depending on the hazard. It is useful to understand various early warning and forecast lead times (see Box 2), as well as types of information used to forecast different hazards, as these will inform how triggers are set as well as the operational planning processes that underly anticipatory action. For GBV actors, understanding forecast lead times means understanding how much time there is to develop a plan for anticipatory actions that can address specific GBV risks.

As the examples below illustrate, there are different tools used for predicting different types of hazards, with some systems using forecasting information, others using real-time monitoring information and some combining both. Systems using forecasts can generally provide longer lead times than those based on monitoring information, although real-time monitoring can provide long lead times in more slowly evolving systems such as droughts. Some systems operate over a range of forecast lead times, drawing on forecast information from seasons through to days. This can allow for the progressive staging of actions. A notable example is the Red Cross extreme rain/flood hazard system in Peru, which involves preparedness actions triggered automatically by forecasts at various lead times (days/months/seasons).<sup>12</sup>

### Box 2: Lead Time From Forecasting to the Onset of the Climate Disaster

- **Short lead times (typically days):**  
\*pluvial flooding, heat/cold waves, cyclones/typhoons/ hurricanes
- **Intermediate lead time (typically days to weeks):**  
fluvial flooding (depending on river basin size)
- **Longer lead times (months; up to 12 months):**  
drought and food security hazards.

\*A pluvial flood occurs when an extreme rainfall event creates a flood independent of an overflowing water body, Fluvial flooding occurs when the water level in a river, lake or stream rises and overflows onto the surrounding banks, shores and neighbouring land. Source: Wilkinson, E. Et Al. (2018)

Whilst meteorological forecast information is important, different kinds of analysis and disciplines need to be brought together to turn a meteorological forecast or monitoring information into a crisis prediction to justify anticipatory action. This information might include community based early warning information, information on historical impacts of hazards, risk analysis and socio-economic information.

- **Slow Onset.** Depending on the reliability of forecasts and the level of preparation conducted, anticipatory actions in slow-onset crises, such as drought, may be implemented six months before the forecasted peak of humanitarian need. Analysis of slow onset crises usually include information from various sources such as meteorological, agricultural, hydrological, community based early warning information and socio-economic information.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Wilkinson, E. Et Al. (2018) Forecasting Hazards, Averting Disasters; Implementing Fore-cast Based Early Action at Scale. ODI. March 2018.

<sup>13</sup> Donald A. Wilhite, Mannava V.K. Sivakumar, Roger Pulwarty (2014) Managing drought risk in a changing climate: The role of national drought policy, Weather and Climate Extremes, Volume 3, 2014.

- **Sudden Onset.** Anticipatory action models for sudden onset crises such as flooding or cyclones/typhoons/ hurricanes will likely include greater use of seasonal forecasts; however, the timeframes for the anticipatory actions themselves—the actual activities that are implemented in anticipation of sudden onset crisis—are usually much shorter. Thus, while the planning stage may be longer, particularly for cyclical disasters where it is possible to predict an event recurring over time, the period for anticipatory action may be weeks to only days.
- **Disease Outbreak.** The use of an anticipatory action approach in the outbreak of diseases is an emerging area. UN OCHA is validating a Global Cholera Risk Model developed by the Universities of Maryland and Florida. The model predicts the onset of cholera one month in advance by combining environmental conditions, infrastructure and human behaviour, which gives health and other humanitarian actors a brief window for anticipatory actions to mitigate the outbreak and its impact. This model of disease outbreak may be of interest to GBV actors given the links between disease, burden of care, and GBV that women and girls experience, as has been illustrated globally in the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **El Niño, La Niña.** The El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is generally separated into three states – El Niño, La Niña and Neutral- although there is no formal international agreement on the classification or thresholds related to ENSO states. ENSO events are natural phenomena that occur on average every two to seven years affecting seasonal climate and associated weather patterns around the world in different ways and can be reliably predicted at approximately 8 months in advance. Although the impacts on rainfall and temperature patterns throughout the world vary somewhat from one event to the next, the strongest shifts remain reasonably consistent. As a result, a lot can be done well in advance of an episode being confirmed based on information of average impacts and predictions. The IASC *Standard Operating Procedures for Early Action to El Niño-La Niña Episodes* are a useful tool for GBV actors to familiarize themselves with, particularly as climate-related humanitarian emergencies accelerate across the world.<sup>14</sup> They provide a structured framework for the initiation of early actions to mitigate the impacts of extreme weather caused by ENSO episodes.
- **Armed Conflict.**<sup>15</sup> Anticipatory action has been used almost exclusively in the context of hydro-meteorological hazards, such as floods or droughts.<sup>16</sup> Although some of these have occurred in conflict situations, applying anticipatory action to conflict-induced emergencies is still in nascent stages. Challenges for this work include establishing reliable forecasting systems and setting ‘triggers’ for action. Nevertheless, as climate change continues to create more disasters globally, resource scarcity and other climate concerns are likely to intensify the links between climate-induced and conflict-related emergencies.

## Examples of GBV-Targeted Anticipatory Action Activities<sup>17</sup>

As highlighted above, anticipatory action is a way of working, rather than a set of deliverables. Taking an anticipatory action approach does not necessarily dictate the type of GBV activities to implement. The selection of activities will vary depending on context, including the type of hazard

<sup>14</sup> IASC Reference Group on Risk, Early Warning and Preparedness (2018) *Standard Operating Procedures for Early Action To El Niño/La Niña Episodes*.

<sup>15</sup> UNFPA (Forthcoming) Guide to Engaging in CERF Anticipatory Action

<sup>16</sup> Wagner, Marie & Catalina, Jaime. (2020) An Agenda for Expanding Forecast based Action to Situations of Conflict. Working Paper, September 2020. Global Public Policy Institute.

<sup>17</sup> UNFPA (Forthcoming) Guide to Engaging in CERF Anticipatory Action

and lead time available for planning, as well as the drivers of violence, GBV risks and capacity for implementation. The following are only a few examples of GBV response activities that may be selected for an anticipatory action approach.

- Distribution of dignity kits;
- Deployment of roving GBV counselling teams;
- Establishment or expansion of GBV hotlines/ helplines or available telephone counselling services;
- Distribution of information and communication materials on how to access GBV services;
- Analysis of gender-sensitive livelihoods needs assessments and market analyses in partnership with food security actors and marginalized women to identify profitable, accessible and desirable livelihoods activities that are not susceptible to economic shock.

As noted above, when GBV actors have a sense of forecast lead times, they can determine how much time there is to develop a plan for anticipatory actions that can address specific GBV risks. When lead times are short, interventions may focus on getting out essential resources and messages to affected communities. When lead times are longer, this may allow for anticipatory action interventions that take more time, such as building social protection programmes for women and girls that they can utilize in the wake of an emergency or focusing on other types of resilience programming as a form of anticipatory action. (Also see Annex 3 as an illustration of specific anticipatory actions that may be undertaken collectively by a GBV coordination mechanism in response to a flood.)

### GBV-Targeted Anticipatory Actions: The Case of Bangladesh<sup>18</sup>

As noted previously, integrating attention to GBV into anticipatory action approaches is a new area. To date, there have been few instances where anticipatory actions have been specifically undertaken to prevent and respond to GBV. One instance where this has occurred is in Bangladesh as part of a global pilot to test the anticipatory action approach. Bangladesh is a country dealing with increased seasonal flooding linked to climate change. Global and national flood forecasts enable humanitarian actors to predict when flooding will surpass the capacity of communities to cope, and which areas will be most affected. In 2020, the UN launched an Anticipatory Action Pilot in Bangladesh, funded by the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) in response to these predictions. It provided humanitarian relief in anticipation of flooding disasters, in order to minimize the impact on those affected. The Anticipatory Action Pilot consisted of three components:

- **Predetermined triggers:** The pilot agreed on pre-determined triggers to prompt anticipatory action.
- **Pre-determined anticipatory actions:** The pilot established which actions would be taken to reduce the impact of flooding on vulnerable communities prior to the flooding taking place.
- **Pre-determined finance distribution:** The pilot established how much funding would go to each agency to fund the pre-determined anticipatory actions.

<sup>18</sup> This case study is adapted from the *GBV AoR Help-desk Learning Brief on GBV and Climate Change*. Learning from Bangladesh will also be captured in UNFPA (Forthcoming) Guide to Engaging in CERF Anticipatory Action.

This pilot established that anticipatory action would be triggered when 40% of the population were forecasted to be affected or 20% of household assets were predicted to be damaged. In order to increase the time to prepare for activation, the pilot utilized a two-step trigger system:

**Stage 1:** The *Pre-Activation (Readiness) Trigger* was reached when the water flow at the Bahadurabad gauging station was forecasted to be more than 50% likely to cross the “severe shock” threshold of 100 000 m<sup>3</sup>/s with a lead time 10 days.

**Stage 2:** The *Activation Trigger* was reached when the water level at Bahadurabad gauging station was forecasted to cross the government-defined “Danger Level” of +0.85 meters with a lead time of 5 days.

As part of anticipatory action, the UNFPA received \$589,084 from the CERF to distribute Dignity Kits, Menstrual Hygiene Management Kits, and Reproductive Kits to 15,000 women and girls in two stages, according to the two-stage trigger system. During Stage 1 (between the Pre-Activation Trigger and the Activation Trigger) UNFPA prepared the Dignity Kits. Each kit included key “flashcards” with GBV-related referral and service information, including shelter contact details as well as the phone number of a psycho-social support hotline. During this stage, UNFPA also transported Dignity Kits to partner distribution locations in the vulnerable districts and identified convenient distribution points and times. These decisions were made in line with GBV guiding principles and with reference to the safety and security of beneficiaries in the COVID-19 context. During Stage 2 (after the Activation Trigger) the UNFPA notified beneficiaries of the distribution point, date and time, provided all eligible beneficiaries with an authorised chit card for collection and distributed Dignity Kits to women and girls.

This case study example represents a first step in understanding how to introduce activities to address GBV into anticipatory action. However, there are many other important activities that GBV actors will want to consider, depending on the types of emergency, lead time from the forecasting of the event to the emergency, the trigger system, etc.

## The Emerging Evidence Base on Anticipatory Action Approaches

The hope for anticipatory action is that it will result in improved outcomes not only at the broad level of the humanitarian system, but also at the individual and household levels. Ambitions are significant in terms of the ability of anticipatory action to decrease the costs of humanitarian aid, reduce response times, protect lives and promote resilience, among other anticipated outcomes (see Figure 3).

However, the work of establishing an evidence base on the ability of anticipatory action to achieve these outcomes is still in early stages. Methodologies for assessing impact are themselves being developed and tested alongside the piloting of anticipatory action approaches.<sup>19</sup> On the positive end, this research is wide ranging—it reflects the diversity of programmes and interventions that

<sup>19</sup> Measuring anticipatory action outcomes faces many challenges, including how ‘early’ is defined, especially in the case of drought and pandemics. The windows for action to reduce impacts from floods, cyclones or other rapid-onset events based on forecasts and early warnings are relatively clear but defining the start of slower-onset events is more difficult. Also, there is substantial variability in record keeping from context to context and often even within countries, on the impacts of historical natural disasters and crises. There are moves to develop manuals and guidelines on best practice in monitoring and evaluation, and a new monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) group on Anticipatory Action has been set up and is exploring the idea of creating a common analytical framework to assess Anticipatory action. For more information, see Weingärtner, L. T. Pforr, & Wilkinson, (2020) *The Evidence Base on Anticipatory Action*.

fall under the umbrella of anticipatory action approaches. However, the data from this research are not always comparable, as there are diverging beliefs about the best way to assess and evaluate anticipatory action approaches.

HUMANITARIAN SYSTEMS / INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL	INDIVIDUAL AND HOUSEHOLD LEVEL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased operational capacity to act on forecasts or early warnings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protected lives</li> <li>Protected livelihoods</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced response costs and time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoided losses</li> <li>Faster recovery</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced or transformed the scale of later humanitarian needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoided or mitigated physical and psychological suffering</li> <li>Protected food security and nutrition</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shift in humanitarian / disaster management / development culture and policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthened resilience</li> </ul>

Figure 3: Expected Outcomes of Anticipatory Action<sup>20</sup>

To date, this research has largely focused on sector interventions linked livelihoods, food security and nutrition and education. There is limited evidence thus far on the impact of anticipatory actions on GBV prevention or response. Nevertheless, it is useful for GBV actors to have a basic grounding in some of the learning related to anticipatory action models, as some of it may be useful in when considering how to scale up attention to GBV in anticipatory action.

### Snapshot of Evidence on Return on Investment for Anticipatory Action

A large proportion of studies on the effectiveness of anticipatory action have focused on return on investment, the results of which help make the case for funding anticipatory action, in particular to donors and national governments. A World Food Program meta-analysis of studies on anticipatory action found that overall, the evidence suggests that anticipatory action is better – for households and from a donor, humanitarian or development agency perspective – than no intervention. However, the reviewers concluded that further testing is needed to order to understand whether it is also better than doing other things or taking action at a different point in time (i.e., before or after a shock).<sup>21</sup>

Country-level studies on return on investment tend to also show positive outcomes. Findings on cost-implications from anticipatory action interventions to mitigate the effects of drought and migration on food security in La Guajira, Colombia found that for every USD \$1 that was spent on anticipatory actions, beneficiary households had a return of USD \$2.6 crop production and

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<sup>21</sup> Weingärtner, L. T. Pforr, & Wilkinson. (2020) The evidence base on Anticipatory Action.

livelihoods.<sup>22</sup> A study from Save the Children Ethiopia that used modelling to assess return on investment found that every £1 GBP invested in the early action fund resulted in an average of £2.58 GBP in value for targeted households linked not only to income, but also to nutrition, education, access to drinking water and other measures of well-being.<sup>23</sup> Although the cost-benefit from the Colombia research is about the same as that from Ethiopia, the measures of well-being are much broader in the Ethiopia study, giving a more complete sense of the benefits generated by the anticipatory actions.

The type of broad analysis used in Ethiopia to understand return on investment (looking beyond economic measures), may be particularly important in terms of understanding cost benefits related to anticipatory actions to address GBV. Results from the 2020 anticipatory action pilot in Bangladesh (which included GBV-related anticipatory actions, noted above) showed a relatively modest return on investment of .80 US cents in direct benefits for every \$1 USD invested. However, the GBV component was not specifically evaluated, nor were any benefits linked to well-being included in the methodology used to calculate return on investment. The analysis was instead on whether durable assets were preserved in the immediate wake of the floods. Researchers acknowledged that this type of analysis did not allow for a full understanding of benefits likely to accrue to affected populations over a longer time-frame post-flood as a result of anticipatory actions, and that measuring impact in acute emergencies was more challenging than in slower-onset emergencies.<sup>24</sup> Integrating GBV measures into return on investment analysis may be an important area in which to build research capacity, as this can assist GBV actors to advocate to donors and governments to fund attention to GBV within anticipatory action frameworks and interventions.

## Snapshot of Evidence of Benefits of Anticipatory Action at the Household Level

Analysis of effectiveness of the anticipatory action approach has not only looked at return on investment—it has also looked at benefits to the affected population, commonly measured at the household level. Again, none of this has specifically focused on GBV interventions, but what the early data show is that it is possible through anticipatory action to target some of the known drivers of GBV at the household level. For example, global evidence indicates that financial and other forms of stress at the household level can trigger intimate partner violence. Global evidence also indicates girls who are out of school are at higher risk of a range of GBV issues, i.e., early marriage, sexual exploitation, etc., than girls who remain in school. Anticipatory actions may reduce these risk factors.

In Bangladesh, households that received an early cash transfer (as opposed to those who did not), accumulated less debt during and straight after the flood, and also experienced less psychosocial stress.<sup>25</sup> In a study in the Philippines on the impact of early warning/early action of families affected by drought, those who received support were more likely to report they were able to maintain some income and were therefore able to afford to keep their children in school.<sup>26</sup> Researchers conducting a study for Save the Children in Ethiopia concluded similarly positive outcomes on education (as well as other indicators) linked to anticipatory action for drought.<sup>27</sup>

22 FAO (2020) Anticipatory Action Interventions To Mitigate The Effects Of Drought And Migration On Food Security In Colombia.

23 Weingärtner, L. T. Pforr, & Wilkinson. (2020) The evidence base on Anticipatory Action.

24 FAO. (2021) Bangladesh Impact of Anticipatory Action Striking before the floods to protect agricultural livelihoods

25 Gros et al. (2019) Household Household-level effects of providing forecast-based cash in anticipation of extreme weather events: Quasi-experimental evidence from humanitarian interventions in the 2017 floods in Bangladesh

26 FAO (2020) The Philippines- The impact of Early Warning Early Action. Rome.

27 Atkinson, E. (2018) Social Cost Benefit Analysis of the Early Action Fund. Save the Children. Cited in L. Weingärtner, T. Pforr, & Wilkinson. (2020) The evidence base on Anticipatory Action.

What is important to bear in mind with these analyses is that none of them illustrate any reduction in GBV incidents, or even in GBV risk. They only show promise in reducing risk factors known to contribute to GBV. As such, they suggest that anticipatory action is likely a very useful entry point for GBV risk reduction activities. However, efforts must be much more explicit in targeting these risk factors in order to prevent and mitigate GBV.

## Good Practices for Integrating GBV in Anticipatory Action Approaches

### GBV Prevention and Response Programming

There is some emerging evidence on general good practice within anticipatory action approaches that has been collected through assessments and evaluations that are relevant to GBV prevention and response programmes. These are summarized below. They are not exhaustive, but rather highlight some key issues for GBV actors to consider when undertaking anticipatory action work.<sup>28</sup> In addition to these points on general good practices, it is important to acknowledge the important role that GBV coordination partners and GBV coordinators play in ensuring GBV issues are integrated into anticipatory action. Box 3, below, describes some of the responsibilities of the GBV coordinator. (Also see Annex 3 as an illustration of anticipatory actions that may be undertaken collectively by a GBV coordination mechanism in response to a flood.)

- **Preparation:**
  - Anticipatory action should build on good existing preparedness and contingency planning efforts.<sup>29</sup> This might include mapping GBV response services; pre-positioning commodities; pre-positioning IEC materials; providing trainings and other capacity building activities.
  - Arrange sub-grantee agreements in advance where possible.<sup>30</sup> For slow-onset disasters and cyclical emergencies, longer planning timeframes provide the opportunity for more partners to be involved in anticipatory action, particularly in the case of CERF anticipatory action funding (which can only be accessed by UN agencies). Having pre-prepared sub-grantee agreements is particularly important for supporting a partnership approach with local women-led organisations and other local GBV actors.
- **Identification of triggers:**
  - In partnership with women-led organisations and women and girls in the community, GBV coordination mechanisms should (where possible) integrate their own early warning indicators into anticipatory action operational planning processes. This can be especially important for slow-onset disasters such as drought, where early warning indicators linked to women and girls (e.g., decreasing school attendance rates for girls) are not typically included in early warning systems.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Pichon, Florence (2019) Anticipatory humanitarian action: what role for the CERF? Moving from rapid response to early action. Working Paper 551, ODI.

<sup>29</sup> The *Handbook for Coordinating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Emergencies* sets out clear guidance on GBV preparedness and contingency planning. In addition, the Inter-Agency Minimum Standards for Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies Programming provides key actions on preparedness throughout each standard. These should both serve as useful tools for designing anticipatory actions.

<sup>30</sup> UNOCHA 2020. Process Learning from UN-OCHA 2020 Monsoon Anticipatory Action Pilot in Bangladesh

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

- The identification of unambiguous, agreed-upon triggers that are able to be monitored in real time are central to an effective anticipatory action approach. Ideally, triggers are pre-agreed by government to circumvent the need for official emergency declarations (which may delay response operations), and to ensure government and non-government anticipatory action is triggered simultaneously to maximize synergy and minimize gaps.<sup>32</sup> GBV actors should be aware of these triggers and understand the lead times associated with them to inform the design of any GBV actions in anticipatory action approaches.
- In some contexts, the use of subnational triggers will be implemented. Subnational-level triggers have several benefits, including allowing identification of pockets of extreme need within a country and allowing for more precise triggering of anticipatory actions.<sup>33</sup> Resourcing and strengthening GBV sub-national coordination is critical to ensuring GBV anticipatory action at the sub-national level.
- **Partnerships with government and community organisations:**
  - Committing to technical strengthening and engagement with government agencies is important in order to implement the legal and regulatory frameworks needed to scale up anticipatory action, and integration in existing systems will require sustained effort. For GBV actors, this means supporting relevant line ministries and ensuring these efforts are linked to existing DRR and preparedness capacity building and technical strengthening work.<sup>34</sup>
  - As has been noted above, engagement with communities and local organisations is critical in all phases of anticipatory action, but particularly in terms of validating forecast and risk analysis. GBV actors must make a concerted effort to take an intersectional approach to understanding the needs, strengths, and vulnerabilities of different groups of women and girls, whose risks may not only be defined by issues of gender discrimination, but also by discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, race, age, class and other factors. It is important to ensure anticipatory action does not increase or create protection risks and that risk analyses includes diverse information from across the community.<sup>35</sup>
- **The use of social protection mechanisms in anticipatory action:**
  - Shock-responsive social protection programmes can provide strategic entry points for the integration and sustainability of anticipatory action. In response to a trigger, social protection systems can use their registry and distribution channels to scale up timely assistance for both current beneficiaries as well as new ones.<sup>36</sup> An expansion of social protection programmes provides an opportunity to extend support to individuals and groups not sufficiently covered by social safety nets, although it's also important to consider any risk mitigation measures required to minimise GBV risks.

32 UNDRR: Scaling up disaster risk reduction in Humanitarian action

33 United Nations CERF (2020) Anticipatory Action Update. CERF Advisory Group Meeting, 1st June, 2020.

34 UNOCHA 2020. Process Learning from UN-OCHA 2020 Monsoon Anticipatory Action Pilot in Bangladesh

35 Jones, C. Et Al. Applying an inclusive and equitable approach to anticipatory action. Rome, FAO

### Box 3: The Important Role of GBV Coordinators in Facilitating Anticipatory Action

In the case of multi-agency anticipatory action approaches, GBV coordinators will play an integral role in facilitating planning and leading on the integration of GBV actions into anticipatory action operational plans. The following provides some ideas on actions for GBV coordinators in this work.

#### Assess coordination and service delivery capacity

- Assess existing staff capacity and availability of staff in the geographic area identified within forecasts; identify surge capacity needs and establish procedures for deployment to areas of anticipated emergency, including staffing for coordination of GBV response.
- Conduct service mapping, monitor continuity of GBV services and update referral pathways.
- If relevant, establish or strengthen sub-national GBV coordination mechanisms.
- Establish “preliminary” SOPs or guidance for referral pathways for multi-sectoral response by engaging (at minimum) health, MHPSS, security and protection actors. Ensure that SOPs and referral pathways guidance remain relevant to the crisis context and that the systems linking survivors to services remain functional. Integrate economic empowerment and livelihood programmes into GBV SOPs, and referral systems.
- Monitor continuity of women and girl-specific services.

#### Engage in risk analysis and planning processes

- Engage with risk analysis processes and crisis timeline development to ensure GBV risks and historical impacts (e.g., learning from prior emergencies about GBV) are captured.<sup>37</sup>
- Ensure national women’s machineries and women-led organisations are involved in risk analysis processes that formulate both the trigger and set the SoPs for anticipatory action.
- Engage with disaster risk prioritisation processes to ensure that survivors and those at risk of GBV are included in processes that map vulnerabilities and prioritise support.<sup>38</sup>

#### Advocate for Inclusion of women and girls in anticipatory action, including in social protection programs and other cash and voucher assistance programs

- Engage ministries of social welfare or those involved in social protection programming to advocate for women and girls currently not or insufficiently covered by social safety nets. Specifically advocate for targeting those at risk of GBV and GBV survivors through social protection programs, in line with the core guidance set out in *Cash & Voucher Assistance and Gender-Based Violence Compendium: Practical Guidance for Humanitarian Practitioner*.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Costella, C, et al. (2017) Scalable and Sustainable: How to Build Anticipatory Capacity into Social Protection Systems

<sup>37</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

**Box 3 Continued**

- Existing national social protection programs may require beneficiaries to meet conditions in order to continue to receive payments (for example, attendance at health clinics or school). Where possible remove or relax conditionalities from social protection payments linked to anticipatory action to alleviate time pressures on women and reduce demands on staff to monitor compliance.

**Promote and facilitate the participation of women and girls in the development of early warning systems and advocate for gender-responsive early warning systems and triggers**

- Work with partners to ensure the language of anticipatory action- forecasts and triggers- is communicated in a way that is accessible for community based organisations, including women-led organisations.
- Support women and girls to engage with early warning systems, to input their knowledge and information on past hazards and early warning signs.
- Assess and advocate for the Integration of specific information needs of women and girls, including GBV survivors and those at risk in the design of early warning systems. This could be the information source, communication channels and technologies used.

**GBV Risk Mitigation in Anticipatory Action Approaches**

Established knowledge and practice on how to effectively mitigate GBV risks in humanitarian action are applicable to anticipatory action approaches. The recommendations provided in the *IASC Guidelines on Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action* are the central guidance for all clusters on mitigating GBV risks in their activities implemented as part of anticipatory action. That said, anticipatory action as an approach, also brings with it its own distinct systems, processes and timelines related to GBV risk mitigation.

It is useful for GBV actors to be aware of some of the core actions that non-GBV specialists should take in anticipatory action related to GBV risk mitigation. In this way, GBV specialists can be better positioned to offer support and technical assistance as requested. The following is a general list of risk mitigation measures that may be applied by different sectors in their anticipatory action approaches. This is not exhaustive, but rather meant to assist GBV actors to understand some overarching risk mitigation responsibilities.

- Collect information on gender dynamics, coping strategies of women, girls, men and boys and other aspects contributing to GBV risks in multi-sectoral risk assessments conducted as part of an anticipatory action approach.
- Conduct gender analyses, social norms mapping and needs assessment across response sectors. Ensure data is disaggregated by sex, age and disability.
- Identify GBV risks in anticipatory action plans and articulate risk mitigation measures.
- Ensure front-line staff involved in anticipatory action with communities receive up-to-date information about GBV services and are trained on making safe and effective referrals.
- Train partners/members on the IASC GBV Guidelines.

- Investigate and understand barriers to accessing key services. Utilise tools such as the Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability and Quality Framework both to understand barriers to access to existing services and also to inform the design and ensure access to any measures implemented under an anticipatory action approach.<sup>40</sup>
- Utilise existing resources such as the *Tip sheet For Consulting With Women And Girls* to guide your consultations with women and girls and ensure that this information informs the design of appropriate anticipatory actions.<sup>41</sup>
- Conduct safety audits in targeted areas that include built-in protective mechanisms to monitor and address potential risk factors.<sup>42</sup>
- Assess the feasibility and protection aspects of cash transfers through direct distribution or electronic transfer so that families (specifically female-headed households) and single women and girls can meet food and other basic needs, in order to reduce their protection risks.<sup>43</sup>

## Key Considerations Moving Forward

Anticipatory action is complimentary to but does not replace either disaster risk reduction work or traditional humanitarian response. As the evidence builds on the effectiveness of this approach to minimise impacts of crises it is crucial for GBV actors working in humanitarian response to be equipped to engage with anticipatory action in order to ensure attention to GBV is prioritised. However, if the GBV community is to be involved in anticipatory action, it is important that investments are scaled up in core areas of work. Several of these are identified below, as food for thought for GBV actors and donors alike who are interested in improving capacity to address GBV in anticipatory action.

### 1. Support GBV coordination.

Strong GBV Coordination is critical for ensuring actions to address GBV are integrated into anticipatory action approaches. Effective coordination will enable anticipatory action by allowing key actions to be identified and agreed upon in advance of a trigger being met and for these actions to be integrated in to action plans.

### 2. Build the evidence.

There is a dearth of information on gendered impacts of anticipatory action approaches. There is limited information even to the extent to which anticipatory action approaches have included gender analyses or action on mitigating GBV risks. Many of the documented findings that relate to gender and GBV are anecdotal or include only a small sample size of women with limited analysis of any change to gender power relations and GBV risks. Advocating for greater investment in understanding both the gendered impacts of anticipatory action, as well as documenting the effectiveness of gender equality and actions to address GBV within anticipatory action is critical to ensuring that gender and GBV are appropriately included in anticipatory action from this early stage.

### 3. Increase the focus on prevention.

GBV prevention work is too often de-prioritised in the face of substantial humanitarian need. Anticipatory action, with a focus on acting prior to the impacts of a hazard lends

39 CARE (2019) Cash & Voucher Assistance and GBV Compendium: Practical Guidance for Humanitarian Practitioners

40 UNICEF (2019) Availability, Accessibility, acceptability and Quality Framework: A tool to identify potential barriers to accessing services in humanitarian settings

41 UNICEF (2019) Annex 3. Tip Sheet: Consulting with Women and Girls

42 A list of resources to conduct safety mapping have been collated in the following [GBV AoR Helpdesk \(2019\) Research Query; Mapping of Safety Audit Tools and Reports](#).

itself to an increased focus on actions that seek to prevent GBV from occurring. There is an opportunity to increase investment in GBV prevention activities, alongside work on establishing safe, accessible and appropriate GBV services and mitigating GBV risks in anticipatory action approaches.

**4. Build knowledge and expertise.**

For GBV specialists, there is an imperative to build knowledge and expertise on anticipatory action approaches, and on the related systems, processes and financing mechanisms. Understanding forecast types and lead times for natural hazards will enable effective engagement in anticipatory action from the early stages. Understanding the operational planning processes will facilitate advocacy for critical lifesaving GBV actions to be included in anticipatory action plans.

**5. Promote the leadership and participation of women and girls.**

Anticipatory action approaches rely heavily on understanding risks and forecasting impacts of an impending crisis. The voice and representation of women and girls in identifying risks and understanding both historical and potential impacts of hazards is crucial to informing effective anticipatory action. Supporting women and girls to engage with these systems; to have their knowledge on early warning signs, risks, historical impacts and capacity and coping strategies included as well as to ensure their needs are effectively reflected in any actions will vastly improve anticipatory action.

## ANNEX 1: Knowledge Exchange Platforms on Anticipatory Action

Anticipatory action is an evolving field, with different models and approaches regularly being piloted and evaluated. The evidence base on addressing GBV in anticipatory action is emerging, and the sharing of learnings across contexts is an important aspect of building knowledge on what works in integrating GBV actions into anticipatory action effectively. Some key platforms for information and peer-to-peer exchange on anticipatory action approaches include:

- The Anticipation Hub website coordinates and facilitates peer-to-peer exchange on anticipatory action: <https://www.anticipation-hub.org/>
- The Anticipation Hub runs an annual global dialogue platform on anticipatory humanitarian action: <https://live.anticipation-hub.org/global-dialogue-platform>
- Regional dialogue platforms on anticipatory humanitarian action are also held annually for Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America: <https://www.forecast-based-financing.org/dialogue/>
- The Risk Informed Early Action Partnership seeks to bring together climate, humanitarian and development actors in a global network to foster collaboration and partnerships. Membership is open to all interested countries, initiatives and organisations: <https://www.early-action-reap.org/>
- The Anticipatory Action Global Task Force is a group of five organisations who work in anticipatory action around the world. The group focuses on the common challenges in mainstreaming and scale up of anticipatory action and produced a number of resources. <https://www.anticipation-hub.org/exchange/networks-and-forums/anticipatory-action-task-force-aatf/>
- There are also regional working groups on Anticipatory Action in some regions, the groups aim to promote a regional approach to knowledge sharing and cooperation and are currently active in Southern Africa region and the Asia and Pacific region.

## ANNEX 2: EXAMPLES OF FORECAST BASED FINANCING MECHANISMS

There are a number of different forecast based financing mechanisms which support anticipatory action, each financing mechanism has different mechanisms for funds to be mobilised and disbursed. Understanding the landscape of forecast based financing is useful for GBV actors to understand opportunities to engage in anticipatory action. Below are some examples of forecast based financing mechanisms, this list is not exhaustive.

### United Nations Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF) Anticipatory action funding - (Housed under CERF rapid response funding window)<sup>44</sup>

For rapid-onset events, CERF funds may be best used to mobilise a rapid response – one that can start before large-scale emergency aid arrives. For slow-onset events, CERF funds can be triggered earlier. The type of early actions supported would be similar to the kinds of response actions the CERF already supports- with the funding released prior to the impact of the crisis.

### Start Network Forecast Based Financing<sup>45</sup>

Anticipatory funding is disbursed through the Start Fund for small to medium crises, based on dynamic decision-making, meaning that NGOs can act early when they see crises coming. The network utilises financial tools such as insurance to leverage funding for NGOs, allowing them to protect against the risk of large-scale drought. This involves quantifying risks, planning humanitarian operations, and disbursing funding according to pre-agreed triggers, in a timely and predictable manner. This funding has been accessed in Malawi, Madagascar and Pakistan

### IFRC: Forecast-based Action (FbA) by The Disaster Relief Emergency Fund<sup>46</sup>

The Forecast based Action by the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) was launched in 2018 and it's managed by the IFRC Secretariat as a central fund. The Forecast-based Action (FbA) by the DREF is a funding mechanism specifically designed to fund Forecast-based Early Action Protocols (EAP) developed by Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

### World Food Programme Forecast-Based Financing<sup>47</sup>

The World Food Programme is implementing a forecast based financing mechanisms in several contexts, in particular those prone to recurrent climate related shocks including The Philippines, Haiti and Bangladesh.

43 UNFPA (Forthcoming) Guide to Engaging in CERF Anticipatory Action

44 United Nations CERF (2018) CERF For the Future: Anticipatory Humanitarian Action. Update For the CERF Advisory Group, 2018.

45 Start Network (2021) Anticipation and Risk Financing. June 2021.

46 IFRC (2021) Practical Information on Forecast Based Action by the DREF.

47 World Food Programme (2018) Forecast-Based Financing: Moving from Crisis Response to Risk Management.

## ANNEX 3: EXAMPLE OF EARLY ACTIONS FOR GBV COORDINATION MECHANISMS FOR SEVERE FLOODS

The following table has been adapted from the *ODI Recommended Timing of Early Actions for Severe Floods*, showing lead times for monsoon related floods, to illustrate specific examples of early actions that may be undertaken or led by GBV coordination mechanisms in each phase.<sup>48</sup> As noted previously, anticipatory actions are typically phased according to the severity of the impending crisis. Actions in the early phases of anticipating a crisis may lean towards the type of actions typically implemented in preparedness and contingency planning, whilst those conducted in the later stages resemble more closely post-crisis humanitarian work.

Timing	Early Actions for GBV Coordination Mechanisms
<p>Risk-informed development</p> <p><b>Lead time: 2–4 months, using seasonal monsoon forecasts</b></p>	<p>Analyse capacity in cluster coordination, including at sub-national level.</p> <p>Conduct community outreach on early warning systems; undertake simulations of events.</p> <p>Preposition post-rape kits, dignity kits and other relevant resources.</p> <p>Update SOPs, contingency plans, and preparedness plans.</p> <p>Prepare checklist of preparedness activities and agree on assistance package.</p> <p>Identify potential partners/ subgrantees for GBV anticipatory action.</p> <p>Ensure information about safe referrals are available, and advocate for sectors to train their partners/members on the IASC GBV Guidelines.</p>
<p>Early Action Phase 1</p> <p><b>Lead time: 15 days, using national meteorological forecasts</b></p>	<p>Engage with sectors who determining evacuation routes and planning evacuation procedures to ensure effective GBV risk mitigation.</p> <p>Conduct or support safety audits at key locations on evacuation routes.</p> <p>Map GBV services around evacuation centres/ evacuation routes and update referral pathways.</p> <p>Determine GBV surge capacity (national and international) including for coordination positions.</p> <p>Work with partners and sectors on GBV risks and measures to be taken collectively in line with IASC GBV Guidelines and Inter-agency GBV Minimum Standards, including planning risk mitigation measures for activities upcoming in Phase 2.<sup>49</sup></p>

48 ODI. (2019). *Anticipatory Humanitarian Action: What Role for the CERF? Moving from Rapid Response to Early Action*.

49 GBV AoR (2019) *The Inter-Agency Minimum Standards for Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies Programming*

<p>Early Action Phase 1</p> <p><b>Lead time: 7–10 days, using national meteorological forecasts</b></p>	<p>Alert GBV service providers, including women-led organisations.</p> <p>Distribute dignity kits.</p> <p>Distribute information on GBV services and referral options.</p> <p>Coordinate the establishment of temporary women and girl’s safe spaces in evacuation centres or temporary camps.</p> <p>Advocate for the effective targeting and integration of gender and social inclusion analysis in the design of any payments and support made through social protection mechanisms.</p>
<p>Early Action Phase 2</p> <p><b>Lead time: 3 days, using rainfall watch, river watch</b></p>	<p>Work with partners and sectors on GBV actions to be taken collectively in line with Inter-agency GBV Minimum Standards.</p> <p>Utilise key resources to ensure GBV mitigation is integrated into the design of cash and voucher initiatives.<sup>50</sup></p> <p>Ensure capacity of GBV hotline to receive calls and make safe and effective referrals (staffing levels, phone line capacity etc.).</p>
<p>Early Action Phase 2</p> <p><b>Lead time: 1 day</b></p>	<p>Monitor information about safety on evacuation route.</p> <p>Continue to distribute Information on available GBV services.</p> <p>Continue to plan for post disaster response actions</p>

50 CARE. (2019). Cash & Voucher Assistance and GBV Compendium: Practical Guidance for Humanitarian Practitioners

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## The GBV AoR Help Desk

The GBV AoR Helpdesk is a unique research and technical advice service which aims to inspire and support humanitarian actors to help prevent, mitigate and respond to violence against women and girls in emergencies. Managed by Social Development Direct, the GBV AoR Helpdesk is staffed by a global roster of senior Gender and GBV Experts who are on standby to help guide frontline humanitarian actors on GBV prevention, risk mitigation and response measures in line with international standards, guidelines and best practice. Views or opinions expressed in GBV AoR Helpdesk Products do not necessarily reflect those of all members of the GBV AoR, nor of all the experts of SDDirect's Helpdesk roster.



### The GBV AoR Helpdesk

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*The Helpdesk is available 09.00 to 17.30 GMT Monday to Friday.*

*Our services are free and confidential.*