



## Bulletin March 2009

Welcome to the ALNAP Bulletin, which provides regular updates to Full and Observer Members on ALNAP Secretariat activities.

ALNAP's research team has been focusing on writing the three chapters for the 8<sup>th</sup> Review of Humanitarian Action. The chapters will focus on impact assessment, system-wide performance, and innovations in the humanitarian sector.

ALNAP lessons papers continue to be useful tools for humanitarian actors; the recently published paper on the crisis in Gaza was followed by a joint ALNAP-HPG paper on Darfur. Forthcoming papers will look at response and recovery following urban disasters.

As part of its ongoing work on evaluation practices, ALNAP has continued to work on impact assessments. We also recently published a pilot guide on real-time evaluations of humanitarian action, which is aimed at evaluation managers and evaluation team leaders.

During the last months, members of the Secretariat have attended and contributed to a number of meetings, including the ICVA annual conference, the World Conference of Humanitarian Studies, a conference on stabilisation and civil-military relations in humanitarian response, and a meeting in the UK Parliament on climate change and the humanitarian sector.

We are delighted to welcome four new Full Members to the ALNAP network – Focus Humanitarian Assistance, which is the humanitarian arm of the Aga Khan Foundation, Global Hand, Mercy Malaysia and the Spanish Government Agency for International Development Cooperation. Turn to page 5 to find out more.

### Recent Events and Activities

#### December 2008

In December, ALNAP's Full and Observer Members came together at the 24<sup>th</sup> Biannual Meeting to discuss the **Impact of Humanitarian Aid**. Thanks are due to the staff of the German Foreign Ministry's Humanitarian Task Force for a successful meeting all-round. The background paper, written by Karen Proudlock and Ben Ramalingam, was very well received by the conference participants and provided a useful platform for discussions and debates. More on the meeting can be found [here](#).

Ben and Karen attended the **DfID public consultation** on its new evaluation policy on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2008 in London, and provided comments and feedback from both the Secretariat and from selected ALNAP member agencies.

Kim Scriven took part in a workshop hosted by Oxfam International and Oxford Brookes University on community-led disaster response and **Participatory Action Research (PAR)**. The event, which built on research findings from a large-scale PAR project carried out by Oxfam post-tsunami, looked at the scope for more participatory approaches to humanitarian assistance and how these could lead to better performance and enhanced accountability.

The first [Briefing Note](#) of the **Humanitarian Performance Project** was published, outlining work to date and next steps. This will be a biannual publication providing updates on this important ALNAP initiative.

## January 2009

John Mitchell participated in a conference on 'stabilisation and civil-military relations in humanitarian response', organised by the British Red Cross and the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office as part of the **NGO-Military** Contact Group. Some of the key issues to be raised included the subordination of humanitarian principles to political agendas; who is responsible for protecting civilians and the role of the military in providing assistance.

The Lessons Paper on the **Global Food Price Crisis** was featured by [IRIN](#) and was also cited in the [Feeding Hunger and Insecurity Report 2009](#) by ACF.

The ALNAP [Lessons Paper](#) on **Flood Disasters** was presented by the author, Kurshid Alam, at a [Wilton Park Conference](#).

Interaction's Monday Developments included an [article](#) by Ben and Paul Clarke on **Organisational Change**.

ALNAP's [Capacity Building study](#) was featured in an ECHO Roundtable on Capacity Building in Brussels.

## February 2009

At the beginning of February, members of the ALNAP secretariat attended the inaugural **World Conference of Humanitarian Studies** hosted by the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. John Mitchell, Karen Proudlock and Kim Scriven represented ALNAP across the four day event, which consisted of over 60 panels, with dozens of papers presented and around five hundred participants. Karen gave a presentation based on ALNAP's previous work around the 23<sup>rd</sup> ALNAP Biannual in Madrid looking at the role of the media in humanitarian emergencies. ALNAP Full Member Ian Christoplos will 'represent' ALNAP on the conference advisory committee as plans are made for the next conference, which will be held at Tufts University in Boston.

Ben took part in the **ICVA Conference**: his presentation on the topic of moral arguments for changing the humanitarian system can be seen [here](#) and his summing up of the proceedings of the day [here](#). The key points will be published as a briefing paper shortly.

February also saw the development and publication of a rapid response [lessons paper](#) on the **Gaza Crisis**.

An **ALNAP survey** on impact assessment was undertaken as part of the ongoing work on the Review of Humanitarian Action paper. Response rates were very good, and the findings will be incorporated in the study to be published as part of the 8<sup>th</sup> Review of Humanitarian Action.

Mihir Bhatt, ALNAP's Full Member Representative for AIDMI presented the ALNAP work on impact assessment at the **meeting of the TRIAMS initiative** in Bangkok.

## March 2009

Work on ALNAP's new **State of the System Study** has started. Using a combination of research reviews, evaluation syntheses, key informant interviews, data and analysis from the Humanitarian Performance Project and a sector-wide poll, this study will appraise key system wide-performance elements and provide a report on the state of the global humanitarian system. The study will provide a special focus on trends and developments since the publication of the TEC Synthesis and thematic reports. The [ToR](#) and the [successful proposal](#) are published on the ALNAP website.

In early March, the pilot version of **Real-time Evaluations of Humanitarian Action - An ALNAP Guide** was published. This [guide](#) is intended to help those involved in initiating, commissioning,

overseeing and conducting real-time evaluations of humanitarian operational responses. The guide will be piloted in different crises settings over the next year.

A **Quality and Accountability Initiatives** teleconference was held on 10<sup>th</sup> March, to discuss among other things, a cross Q&A electronic community of practice. This initiative was broadly approved and a working group is being set up which will take the work forward.

John and Ben met with **DfID's Humanitarian Institutions and Policy Team** to discuss key issues of relevance to both ALNAP and DfID.

In response to the recent **expulsion of NGOs from Sudan**, HPG and ALNAP produced a paper entitled ['Where to Now? Agency Expulsions in Sudan: Consequences and Next Steps'](#). It discusses the immediate implications and suggests ways forward for international NGOs, the UN system, and donors.

John and Ben participated in a meeting in the UK Parliament on **climate change and the humanitarian sector**. Speakers were Sir John Holmes, the Emergency Relief Coordinator, and Bekele Geleta, Secretary General of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. John and Ben also participated in a cross-agency roundtable that followed the meeting.

Since publishing the last Bulletin, the ALNAP Steering Committee has met twice. During the last meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> March in London the **2009/10 workplan** and two new membership applications were approved. The meeting participants also discussed the ALNAP Strategy and a proposed monitoring and evaluation framework for the ALNAP network.

The new **communications** plan has been presented to the Steering Committee and is currently being finalized. The Secretariat will be working with a consultant specializing in monitoring, which will help informing ALNAP's monitoring plan introducing network-specific methods of monitoring.

Ben has been asked to present at the Save the Children **Leadership Conference** at the end of March, on external orientation and networks.

A meeting will be taking place in New York on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2009, chaired by Sir John Holmes, which focuses on the role of **media and disaster affected populations**. This work builds on discussions and findings of the 23<sup>rd</sup> ALNAP Biannual in Madrid.

## Planned Future Events and Activities

### April 2009

There will be a meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> April on **evaluation and complexity** in London, with ALNAP involvement.

Scheduled for 28<sup>th</sup> April is a meeting of a cross-agency initiative on **leadership**, developed by a collaboration including BOND, People in Aid, Skill Share, ALNAP, Oxfam and RedR. This first meeting will take place at the Save the Children offices in London and will focus on leadership in international NGOs.

### May 2009

Ben will be running an event at the [Emergency Personnel Network \(EPN\)](#) Conference on **Organisational Change**, along with Paul Clarke. The [RHA chapter](#) on the topic is an important background paper for the conference.

The **new ALNAP website** will be ready in May. Thanks to all those who have taken part in our homepage design survey back in December. We have taken your suggestions and useful comments into account. Work is continuing, although the schedule has been revised owing to a

number of technical issues. Once the new website is live all members will receive a notification along with instructions about their user accounts and how to use the site and its interactive parts.

Please note that from 1<sup>st</sup> May the website of the [Tsunami Evaluation Coalition](#) will be discontinued and its contents incorporated into the ALNAP website.

## **June 2009**

The **8<sup>th</sup> ALNAP Review of Humanitarian Action** will be published in June 2009, and will explore three key areas: system-wide performance, impact assessment and innovations in the humanitarian sector.

The first study will bring together research on performance issues with the findings of the **Humanitarian Performance Project**. A study on **impact assessment** will combine literature reviews, organisational reviews, interviews and discussion summaries from the 24<sup>th</sup> Biannual. It will also review existing practices in impact assessment in the aid sector, and make recommendations for how impact assessment needs to be repositioned as a strategic tool for change in practices and improving performance. Finally, a study on **innovations in the humanitarian sector** will examine the nature and role that innovations play in improving field-based humanitarian practices, and will also launch a new series of **Innovations Case Studies**, as well as a new mechanism for supporting the capture and exchange of innovations.

A new ALNAP Lessons Paper entitled **Humanitarian Response and Recovery in Urban Disasters** will be published by June.

From June to September, Ben will be on sabbatical.

## **ALNAP Meetings**

As outlined in an email from John Mitchell in February, following discussion with the Steering Committee, **ALNAP meeting arrangements** have been adapted in the face of the financial crisis and resulting tightening of many Full Member organisations' travel budgets. There will be only one meeting per year in 2009 and 2010. There is scope to return to two meetings per year in 2011, after a review of the situation.

The **25<sup>th</sup> ALNAP Meeting** is planned to take place in November this year. We are working in close partnership with the Humanitarian Futures Programme based at King's College London to organise this meeting. Its theme will be **Innovations in the Humanitarian Sector**. A concept note and further logistical details will be made available on our website shortly.

## New Members

Since December 2008, **four new Full Member organisations** have joined the ALNAP Network. We welcome the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), Global Hand, MERCY Malaysia and Focus Humanitarian Assistance. Please find short overviews of our new members below. Save the Children US now represents the Save the Children Alliance in ALNAP, so Save the Children UK is no longer a separate member. This brings the total number of members up to 62. You can find all current Full Members [here](#).

### Focus Humanitarian Assistance (FOCUS)

**Constituency:** NGO

**Representative:** Salim Sumar ([salim.sumar@focushumanitarian-europe.org](mailto:salim.sumar@focushumanitarian-europe.org))

**Profile:** FOCUS is a group of international crisis response and disaster risk reduction agencies, which provide humanitarian relief and support to those most vulnerable and in need following a disaster. FOCUS is the humanitarian arm and affiliate of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), a group of institutions working to improve opportunities and living conditions for people of all faiths and origins in specific regions of the developing world. Together, FOCUS and the AKDN work in approximately 30 different countries and 7 regions.

Adhering closely to SPHERE Standards and having applied to be HAP certified, FOCUS concentrated much of its efforts on learning from its beneficiaries. One of the underlying themes behind the practice of the organization is to promote participation from within the local community. While strengthening community ownership of the projects, it also enhances the organization's knowledge and understanding of the operational mechanisms from within the communities. This results in increased support of the local economy with regards to aid and the implementation of projects which will ultimately be sustained by the community.

**Website:** <http://www.akdn.org/focus.asp>

### Global Hand

**Constituency:** NGO

**Representative:** Mike Tozer ([enquiries@globalhand.org](mailto:enquiries@globalhand.org))

**Profile:** Global Hand is a matching service helping corporate and community groups partner with NGOs: a non-profit brokerage facilitating public and private partnership. Their matching services cover the areas of human resources, freight and goods.

Global Hand is acutely aware of the dangers one can face in material aid when an inappropriate product is placed. As a result, Global Hand is developing international standards of best practice with interaction from colleagues in major NGOs worldwide.

Global Hand maintains a library set up to connect all parties in this sector with carefully chosen information searchable by location, need type and services, at both national and international levels. Users of their online forum are able to interact on issues of mutual relevance and set up special interest groups.

**Website:** <http://www.globalhand.org/home>

### MERCY Malaysia

**Constituency:** NGO

**Representative:** Jemilah Mahmood ([president@mercy.org.my](mailto:president@mercy.org.my))

**Profile:** MERCY Malaysia focuses on providing medical relief and sustainable health-related development for vulnerable communities. It is active in the Asian region but also has programs in Sudan.

MERCY Malaysia is recognised as an organisation which is able to provide rapid response in crises meeting SPHERE standards in its programs and projects and has a wide range of partnership. It is active in the clusters it works in and is able to develop partnership with other NGOs, both local, national and international, UN agencies as well as governments.

Almost all MERCY Malaysia staff are trained in SPHERE and some have been trained in "building safer organisations", disaster reduction and response, safety and security etc. MERCY Malaysia also provides training in disaster response, humanitarian law and SPHERE for other NGOs and government agencies. It was HAP certified in 2007.

Their values lay in providing rapid medical response for the assistance of communities affected by disasters, working with partners and volunteers, providing an opportunity for individuals to serve with professionalism, upholding the International Code of Conduct for Humanitarian Workers, and holding themselves accountable to donors and beneficiaries.

**Website:** <http://www.mercy.org.my/main/index.php>

### **Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID)**

**Constituency:** Donor

**Representative:** Gonzalo Vega Molina ([gonzalo.vega@aecid.es](mailto:gonzalo.vega@aecid.es))

**Profile:** AECID is the official Spanish Agency for international development cooperation and for humanitarian assistance, responsible for the coordination of the whole Spanish humanitarian aid. In the last few years, Spain has increased its humanitarian aid and has reinforced its relation and commitment with the international principles and organisations. In 2008, a new Office for Humanitarian Action has been created within AECID and a new Strategy for Humanitarian Action has been published. Within the Office for Humanitarian Action, a new unit for prevention and evaluation has been created.

**Website:** <http://www.aecid.es/>