



ALNAP

LEARNING • ACCOUNTABILITY • PERFORMANCE
IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Bulletin November 2008

Welcome to the ALNAP Bulletin,

It's been a little while since we were last in contact. Since April, the ALNAP network and the Secretariat have been buzzing with activity. This Bulletin provides highlights from the past few months as well as information about new ALNAP products and future events. We are especially pleased to be able to announce six new ALNAP Full Members, each of whom will be introduced at the end of this Bulletin.

Recent Events and Activities

In **May**, ALNAP launched the [7th Review of Humanitarian Action](#) at the Overseas Development Institute. Paul Clarke presented on Organisational Change in the Humanitarian Sector, Maurice Herson on the Pakistan Evaluation Synthesis and Margie Buchanan-Smith on the quality and future scope of joint evaluations. The event was well attended.

The chapter *Organisational Change in the Humanitarian Sector* has received a lot of positive feedback. In May 2009, Paul and Ben will be running a Masterclass at the Emergency Personnel Network (EPN) conference, which will explore the topic of *Facilitating Change: Tools and Strategies for Humanitarian Organisations*.

The event of Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar saw a flurry of activity in the Secretariat resulting in a Lessons Paper aimed at aid agencies supporting the response in Myanmar. [Cyclone Nargis: Lessons for operational agencies](#) was published three weeks after the cyclone hit and was extremely well received. As a result of this work, the ALNAP Secretariat contributed to media efforts for the BBC and Associated Press, and also advised the Speaker in the British House of Lords.

Ben facilitated a workshop on capacity building for Tearfund UK. Capacity building is central to Tearfund's disaster management work, and their new strategy aims to strengthen 50 partner organisations across 26 countries. They are also currently developing a monitoring and evaluation approach for their capacity efforts taking into account the principles of complexity science.

Ben was asked to attend two workshops on the topic of evaluation and complexity, one at Wageningen University in the Netherlands and one at NORAD in Oslo.

In **June**, the [23rd Biannual Meeting in Madrid](#), ALNAP's biggest event ever, addressed the relationship between News Media and Humanitarian Aid. Since publishing the Biannual [meeting report](#) in July, there has been a keen interest in the report's recommendations. Lisa Robinson and Imogen Wall from the BBC World Service Trust wrote a [policy briefing](#), in which they flagged the need to provide information to crisis-affected populations and urged to recognize this as an important form of aid. AlertNet is setting up an emergency news agency to provide information to affected populations, and the London School of Economics has been running a series of seminars on humanitarian communications/

During the 23rd Biannual, a side meeting of the ALNAP Network-to-Network Learning Initiative was held. This initiative seeks to broaden engagement and participation of southern participants in 'northern' initiatives and vice versa. The chairs of two regional networks, Jemilah Mahmood of Mercy Malaysia and Mamadou Ndiaye of OFADEC, were amongst the participants of this meeting.

July saw the release of the Lessons Paper [Responding to Earthquakes: Learning from earthquake relief and recovery operations](#). It is aimed to provide a distillation of the learning from thirty years of humanitarian response to earthquakes. In the wake of the Sichuan earthquake, this was translated into Chinese by DfID China and circulated around the Chinese Ministries involved in the response and recovery efforts. The ALNAP Secretariat assisted with a workshop in July 2008 bringing together international experts to contribute to the learning processes within the Chinese Government.

Karen and John presented the outcomes of the 23rd Biannual Meeting to the team of Dispatches from Disasters Zones at the British Red Cross.

Ben ran a workshop at the British Red Cross on their evaluation function, a pilot for the emerging work on evaluation capacities in ALNAP member organisation. He also attended a workshop organised by WFP on the relief implications of the high food prices.

In **August**, John and Karen took part in a workshop on [Monitoring and Evaluation of Disaster Risk Management](#), held at the Congress Center in Davos, Switzerland hosted by the ProVention Consortium, the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) and the Council of Europe Development Bank's Evaluation Department (CEB/DEP). The event aimed to assess developments in the field of Monitoring and Evaluation for disaster risk management since a conference on the same issue was held in 2006 in Paris. The Paris conference identified a strong convergence of lessons from across humanitarian and development agencies, and also determined that the same lessons were emerging time and again, indicating that they are not being learned. Both John and Karen formed part of a panel on "Applying Evaluation Learning", which explored progress made in this area and what more could be done. Karen presented on the topic of Evaluation Use - what it means and the factors that influence it (drawing on the [Evaluation Utilisation Study](#) in the 6th RHA) John chaired the session.

In **September**, work was started on the 8th ALNAP Review of Humanitarian Action, which will explore three key areas: humanitarian 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 24th 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. The 8th RHA is due to be published in April 2009.

On 18 September, the ALNAP Steering Committee met in Brussels, hosted by ECHO.

Ben presented on organisational learning at the DEC meeting. 'Organisational Learning' is one of the five priority areas in the new DEC Accountability Framework. Ben also attended a meeting on 'Open Innovations in the Aid Sector' at IDS in Sussex. The meeting showcased some great examples of how the market for innovations has been strengthened in a variety of industries and sectors.

The *RTE Guide*, revised subsequent to feedback and comments, was circulated to peer reviewers, and was subsequently field-tested in Myanmar by the Inter-Agency RTE team.

The [ALNAP Annual Report](#) for 2007/08 was published.

In **October**, ALNAP warmly welcomed six new Full Member organisations: Action Against Hunger International Network, OFADEC, the DEC, CENDEP, the Humanitarian Futures Programme and IECAH. This brings the total number of members up to 60. Short profiles of these new members can be found at the end of this bulletin.

People in Aid, ALNAP, ICVA, the Asian Disasters Reduction and Response Network (ADRRN) and the West African Humanitarian Network (WAHN) agreed a final concept note for the first phase of the Network-to-Network Learning Initiative. Possible donors are now being approached. For more on this initiative, please get in touch with Jonathan Potter (People in Aid) or Ed Schenkenberg (ICVA).

ALNAP's Evaluation [training modules](#) were used in a training course organized by Channel Research near Brussels. There were 16 participants from UN organisations and NGOs who gave an overall positive feedback. The Secretariat will announce details of future training courses once they become available.

Ben took on a role on an informal advisory group for a WFP process to strengthen the utilisation of evaluations.

On 6 October, Philip Tamminga, project manager of HRI, and Gilles Gasser (both DARA) met with John to get a briefing on DARA's latest Humanitarian Response Index.

Veronique de Geoffroy (Groupe URD) presented on key messages of the RHA chapter on organisational change at a meeting in Cordoba.

The ALNAP Secretariat started work with web developers to give the ALNAP website a new structure and layout, to improve existing facilities and to introduce new features. Fruity Solutions, a small company with lots of experience in working with humanitarian quality and accountability initiatives, have started designing a new website that will provide members and general users with a virtual platform for more active engagement. It will also offer improved access to ALNAP's wide range of resources. The launch of the new website is scheduled for March 2009. The Secretariat also launched a process to improve its communications efforts and processes. This involves using a tool by which current communication practices of ALNAP products are being reviewed against strategic objectives established in the new five year strategy. This process is being led and coordinated by Franziska.

In **November**, the Secretariat welcomed Kim Scriven as ALNAP's first Research and Innovations Officer. His main tasks will be to gather evidence of field-based humanitarian learning and innovations and develop these into guides, lessons papers and case studies that make a solid contribution to improved humanitarian practices. You can contact Kim on k.scriven@alnap.org.

On 6 November, Muslim Aid organized the event 'Giving a Voice to the Silent Tsunami', which focused on the global food crisis, and in particular asked what responsibility NGOs and the Media have in addressing this crisis (see [press release](#)). John joined this event as a panellist presenting the five key recommendations derived from ALNAP's 23rd Biannual Meeting on News Media and Humanitarian Aid.

ALNAP's latest Lessons Paper [The Global Food Price Crisis: Lessons and Ideas for Relief Planners and Managers](#) was published in November 2008. Well received around the world, it triggered an interesting debate on the diversity of inputs into ALNAP products, which will be explored in more depth during the Full Members Day at the upcoming Biannual.

As part of the Network-to-Network Learning Initiative, Ben was invited to contribute to and help facilitate the annual ADRRN meeting. He presented on learning styles, organisational learning and network functions, and also co-facilitated a strategic planning session using the world café methodology.

Ben presented on networks in a complex world at the Humanitarian Futures Programme's Stakeholders meeting, on the topic of collaboration and innovation. He also presented on global networks at Henley Business School.

ALNAP Secretariat

There have been some staff changes at the Secretariat: Saku Mapa has left ALNAP in September and Franziska Orphal has become Communications Officer. Kim Scriven, the new Research and Innovations Officer, started in November.

Future Events and Activities

On 2 and 3 December, ALNAP's Full and Observer Members will be meeting to discuss the **Impact of Humanitarian Aid**. This 24th Biannual Meeting will be hosted by the German Foreign Ministry.

State of the System Review: 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 Evaluation reports. Humanitarian Outcomes will be contracted to undertake this work, which will begin in March 2009.

A follow-up study of the LRRD evaluation is currently lead by Sida. The study will involve partners in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the Maldives. The final report is expected in late February 2009. For more information about the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition, please visit <http://www.tsunami-evaluation.org>.

Kristin Smart has started working on a new lessons paper about Urban Crises, which will be produced in conjunction with ProVention. Another forthcoming paper, written by Vivian Lee, will generate lessons on displaced people in complex emergencies. This will be of particular importance in the light of the current Goma crisis.

Oxfam International is organising a workshop hosted by the Centre for Development and Emergency Practice (CENDEP) at Oxford Brookes University to discuss with leading humanitarian practitioners and academics how we can better use real-time analysis and community participation to achieve better aid effectiveness.

DfID is launching a public consultation on its new evaluation policy on 9 December 2008 in London.

The World Conference of Humanitarian Studies will take place on 4 – 8 February 2009 in Groningen, the Netherlands.

New Members

Action Against Hunger International Network (ACFIN)

Constituency: International NGO

Representative: Jean Michel Grand

Profile: Action Against Hunger is an international, non-governmental, non-religious, non-profit making organisation with programmes in 43 countries worldwide. Its vocation is to save lives, especially those of malnourished children, and to work with vulnerable populations to preserve and restore their livelihoods with dignity. Action Against Hunger Programs cover nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, food security, health and advocacy.

Office Africain pour le Développement et la Coopération (OFADEC)

Constituency: International NGO

Representative: Mamadou Ndiaye

Profile: OFADEC is concerned with refugees, IDPs and asylum seekers in West Africa, in particular with advocacy on behalf of these groups. Within the last 18 years, OFADEC has been working closely with UNHCR. It is the first HAP-certified NGO and has had this status for the last three years.

Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC)

Constituency: Network/Umbrella Organisation

Representative: Annie Devonport

Profile: The Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) was formed in 1963 with an initial membership of five aid agencies. The DEC are an umbrella organisation with a current membership of 13 humanitarian aid agencies comprising ActionAid, BRCS, CARE International UK, CAFOD, Christian Aid, Concern UK, Help the Aged, Islamic Relief, Merlin, Oxfam, SCUK, Tearfund and World Vision. At times of

overseas emergency, the DEC brings together this unique alliance of the UK's aid, corporate, public and broadcasting sectors to rally the nation's compassion and ensure that funds raised go to DEC agencies best placed to deliver effective and timely relief to people most in need.

Centre for Development and Emergency Practice (CENDEP)

Constituency: Research Institution

Representative: David Sanderson

Profile: The Centre for Development and Emergency Practice (CENDEP) at Oxford Brookes University provides a unique academic setting for the study of international development, conflict, disaster management, urbanisation, humanitarianism and human rights. With its core emphasis on practice, CENDEP offers students the opportunity to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes in the rapidly changing field of development and emergency practice.

Humanitarian Futures Programme (HFP)

Constituency: Research Institution

Representative: Randolph Kent

Profile: The HFP advises organizations with humanitarian roles and responsibilities to be better able to anticipate, adapt and respond to future humanitarian threats than they do today. To achieve this, HFP is developing a series of tools, methods and approaches to assess humanitarian organisations' future capacities and the potential ways to strengthen them.

Instituto de Estudios sobre Conflictos y Acción Humanitaria (IECAH)

Constituency: Research Institution

Representative: Francisco Rey Marcos

Profile: IECAH was founded in 2000 and regards itself as a pioneering private entity in Spain in all the matters related with the quality improvement of humanitarian aid. IECAH's activities include research, training courses, evaluation and professional advice to private and public institutions.