

Collective action and performance: a personal view
John Mitchell

Organisational change in the humanitarian sector
Paul Clarke and Ben Ramalingam

Joint evaluations coming of age?
The quality and future scope of joint evaluations
Tony Beck and Margie Buchanan-Smith

**Perceptions of crisis and response: A synthesis of evaluations
of the response to the 2005 Pakistan earthquake**
John Cosgrave and Maurice Herson

ALNAP SEVENTH REVIEW OF HUMANITARIAN ACTION

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

AJK (Pakistan-administered) Jammu and Kashmir	IHE inter-agency health evaluation
ALNAP Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in humanitarian action	INGO international non-government organisation
CAFOD Catholic Agency for Overseas Development	JE Joint Evaluation
CAP Consolidated Appeals Process (UN)	JEEAR Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda
CfR Cash for Relief	JPO Joint Policy of Operations
CHAP Consolidated Humanitarian Appeals Process (UN)	M&E monitoring and evaluation
DEC Disasters Emergency Committee	MSF(H) Medecins sans Frontieres – Holland
DFID Department for International Development (UK)	NGO non-governmental organisation
DRC Democratic Republic of the Congo	NWFP North West Frontier Province (Pakistan)
ECB Emergency Capacity Building	OCHA Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (UN)
ECHO European Community Humanitarian Office	ODA overseas development assistance
EHA evaluation of humanitarian action	OFDA Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID)
ERC/USG Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA)	RBA rights-based approach
FAO Food and Agriculture Organisation	RBM results-based management
GHD Good Humanitarian Donorship (initiative)	RTE real-time evaluation
HAP Humanitarian Accountability Partnership	SMART Standardised Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transition
HIC Humanitarian Information Centre (UN)	TEC Tsunami Evaluation Coalition
HNTS Humanitarian health and Nutrition Tracking Services	ToR terms of reference
IASC Interagency Standing Committee	UNEG United Nations Evaluation Group
ICVA International Council of Voluntary Agencies	UNHCR United Nations High Commission for Refugees
IDP internally displaced person	UNICEF United Nations Children’s Fund
IFRC International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent	USAID US Agency for International Development
	WFP World Food Programme (UN)
	WHO World Health Organisation (UN)

Foreword

Each ALNAP *Review of Humanitarian Action (RHA)* has attempted to improve our understanding of humanitarian performance, provide a platform for new strategies and challenge us to investigate new areas of our work. The first ALNAP *RHA* focused on the 1999 Kosovo crisis and articulated a number of interconnected areas and issues that lay at the heart of the performance debate. This provided an enduring framework for discussion, and subsequent syntheses have added more clarity and depth to each of these areas.

In recent years, many people have asked why improvements in the system seem to take so long in coming. The 6th *RHA* looked at realistic expectations of the global humanitarian system and at the utilisation of evaluations, and went some way to answering these questions. In this 7th edition we have explicitly looked at the experiences of organisations that have embarked upon processes of change and improvement. We have asked the basic questions – has change happened? if so, how? and if not, why? This work, led by Paul Clarke and Ben Ramalingam, goes into uncharted territory in its aims to understand the institutional, political and behavioural realities inside humanitarian organisations and how they can impede and prevent positive changes.

The chapter on organisational change also challenges us to think about what a humanitarian organisation actually is. How do we understand the occasional irrationality and lack of internal cohesion that many of us experience when working in our respective organisations? The authors invite us to examine our preconceptions and suggest a number of different metaphors for explaining how to think and understand how organisations function – and sometimes don't function. They identify and present the main drivers of successful change and present a grounded and practical analysis of how successful change happens

This edition also contains the most comprehensive analysis to date of joint evaluations in the humanitarian sector. Tony Beck and Margie Buchanan-Smith describe how joint evaluations have evolved, their relative strengths and weaknesses. They use the results of a rigorous meta-evaluation process which assesses the quality of reports using the ALNAP quality pro-forma, combined with a

strong qualitative analysis based on key informant interviews. The authors point the way towards a future agenda for joint evaluations by recommending a third system-wide humanitarian evaluation. This should be considered in the next 18 months and should focus on a significant but relatively forgotten humanitarian crisis, for example in eastern DRC. This may provide one concrete way of taking forward the call for collective action as articulated by John Mitchell in the Introduction to this edition.

This year's evaluation synthesis by John Cosgrave and Maurice Herson is on the lessons learned from the international response to the Pakistan earthquake in 2005. Some important issues are brought to light concerning the system's current surge capacity, funding patterns, and very practical challenges around needs assessment and beneficiary consultation. It also alludes to how national militaries can play a pivotal role in humanitarian response but warns against the high costs associated with foreign military intervention. Of current interest to many will be the experiences from the cluster approach which was applied in Pakistan and represents an important part of the humanitarian reform process.

As always, I would like to thank all the ALNAP members who contributed evaluations for this edition and gave so many valuable comments to all the authors. These insights continue to root the RHA in current realities and ensure its relevance, and I have no hesitation in recommending this edition most highly.

Eleanor Monbiot

Chair, ALNAP