



ALNAP

Active Learning Network for
Accountability and Performance
in Humanitarian Action

26th ALNAP Meeting

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Hosted by the Red Cross/ Red Crescent Movement

and supported by Mercy Malaysia



**The role of national governments in international
humanitarian response to disasters**

Meeting Report

Day 1, Tuesday 16th November 2010

Chairs: Ivan Scott, Oxfam and Alk Cheng Heng, Mercy Malaysia

Session one: strategic perspectives on the role of national governments

Dato Misrain Karmain (ASEAN) opened ALNAP's 26th meeting in Kuala Lumpur by expressing ASEAN's commitment to strengthening the region's capacity to respond to humanitarian issues. Karmain identified that the key challenge for ALNAP is to develop collaborative strategies and foster a shared commitment to encourage a synergistic response to disaster management.

Disaster responses need to be aligned to both national and global mechanisms, ensuring accountability and monitoring of humanitarian efforts through a shared commitment. ASEAN has supported many governments in the region to coordinate responses with the UN and developed standard operating procedures for national governments. ASEAN has also developed various tools to assess needs, impact and to monitor efforts which were paramount in mobilising \$700 million for post-Nargis recovery efforts in Myanmar.

Recent disasters in the South-East Asia region have seen ASEAN emerge as a pivotal regional player and established the political will to build capacities of National Disaster Management Agencies (NDMA).

Read his presentation [here](#)

Keynote Addresses

Dr. Bhichit Rattakul (ADPC)

Dr. Rattakul stressed the changing nature of humanitarian assistance with greater reliance on regional cooperation and mechanisms in South-East Asia. ASEAN has strengthened regional cooperation by developing modules of cooperation between

countries. Formalised mechanisms and protocols have been developed to coordinate responses.

The international humanitarian community can engage with governments through such regional mechanisms, which avoids potentially sensitive issues. National governments have made progress in both disaster response preparedness and risk reduction. However, more information exchanges and joint planning strategies are required. Organisations such as ASEAN can help to construct the menu of choices for countries to enter into cooperation with international organisations. More can be done by the international humanitarian community and ASEAN to formalise entrance and exit points at regional and national levels as early as possible.

There are several critical considerations the International Humanitarian Community (IHC) must consider when responding to a humanitarian crisis:

- a) pre-assess local capacities and avoid undermining them
- b) clarify the role of different actors
- c) allocate funds over a longer-term
- d) determine shared responsibilities in response management.

Fernanda Teixeira (*former Mozambique Red Cross*)

Ms. Teixeira gave an account of the Mozambique response to the civil war. The government was keen to avoid creating parallel structures and the response was coordinated through the government, headed by a coordinating council (CCPCCN) which led associated clusters, together with a National Technical Emergency Committee (CTE). An International Disaster Management Institute (INGC) was established. This structure allowed for mutual understanding between national, local actors and the IHC early on. In the absence of an equipped and prepared civil response unit, regional actors delivered support to the response (South Africa).

Ms. Teixeira offered five lessons learned during the Mozambique civil war:

1. Governments need to take leadership with impartiality and transparency
2. Capacity-building efforts need to strengthen local and national actors while ensuring the IHC delivers qualified personnel
3. Affected communities need to be viewed as principal actors in humanitarian responses, not beneficiaries
4. An initial coordinated and multi-sector survey is critical
5. Actors involved in the response need to work towards continued dialogue, consensus and be flexible, open and honest about what can be achieved.

Plenary discussion

In response to Faizal Perdaus' (Mercy Malaysia's) question about efforts to empower civil society in disaster response, Misrain Karmain replied ASEAN has developed a people-centered response in the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) and encourages stakeholder participation. Ben Ramalingham added that local humanitarian groups are catalysts in humanitarian responses.



Randolph Kent, Humanitarian Futures Programme

Session two: presenting the evidence

Domestic humanitarian response: the scale of the government response.

Jane Keylock, Development Initiatives

Jane presented Bangladesh and Uganda as case studies to illustrate how domestic contributions to disaster response are often invisible and hard to track. Many national government budgets are not online and data is not adequately reported and thus not captured by the Aid Information Management Systems.

There is a shortage of adequate tools to measure government capacities and the national inputs to disaster response. For instance, although in Bangladesh there is no disaster budget there are networks of storage facilities and a cyclone-preparedness plan.

Local people value a national government response and local support structures over the IHC. Moreover, early warning messages are important to communities.

In Uganda, the government has ensured the encampment of the population, disarmament, peace dialogues, strengthening the security situation and supporting fast-growing crops in drought-affected areas. It has also created the Ministry for Disaster Management and Refugees, established a technical working group and platforms to bring together key actors and headed cluster systems.

However, there are reports that in spite of these efforts, the IHC often dominates and undermines government efforts. The IHC is seen to do little in early recovery or post-emergency periods and ignores remote areas and operates with pre-set responses. Despite this, the IHC is seen to be more effective, equitable and less prone to corruption.

In Uganda, disaster committees are not designated disaster staff and only function during disasters and in disaster-prone areas. This potentially restricts capacities to respond in future emergencies. Decentralising disaster efforts, building national capacities and proper documentation of responses

need to be addressed to ensure more streamlined responses.

A number of questions were raised including how to develop guidelines to foster more balanced ways of working between the IHC and governments. Jane stressed the need for appropriate pre-disaster planning and mapping of on-the-ground capacities.

Other issues raised included how to estimate community contributions in responses and planning and why we are still blaming weak government capacity when the IHC is mandated to build government capacity.

Read her presentation [here](#)



Paul Harvey, Humanitarian Outcomes

The Affected State: accepting responsibility

Paul Harvey

Paul Harvey expanded on the background paper to the 26th Meeting, which was based on an ODI/HPG report that found aid agencies have often neglected the central role of the state in responding to disasters, e.g. Haiti and the Tsunami.

India's response to the Tsunami and the role of the military in Pakistan's response to the earthquake are illustrations of a growing trend for national governments to assert responsibility in disaster response. However, Paul said "we need to guard against painting the growing assertiveness of states in a naively sunny perspective".

The IHC's focus should not be simply on capacity-building but "better principled engagement with states from a realistic perspective that sees them warts and all as sometimes corrupt, sometimes nasty but the rightful drivers of disaster response".

In recent years there have been shifts in how aid is disbursed from bilateral agreements between governments to disbursements from donor agencies to implementing partners, effectively by-passing governments altogether. The new cluster-based approach seems to be more about reforming the international system, with governments playing a marginal role.

In fact, in the 1970s and 1980s states played much more of a central role in disaster response. The way aid is disbursed has a huge impact on national capacities to respond: the European budget channelled through governments has fallen from 90% (1976) to 6% (1990s). With the proliferation of INGOs and their increased influence, "relief came to symbolise not simply the existence of massive humanitarian need, but an effective questioning of sovereignty".

Key issues are establishing guidelines for how humanitarian actors relate to national militaries. There is a need for more research into what state independence would look like in practice for aid actors, rather than focusing on the independence of NGOs from donors. NGO independence should not be equivalent to disengagement with government.

The Red Cross is in an awkward position as simultaneously fulfilling the roles of being bound by state laws and sovereign in its decisions. Another potential contradiction is how donors are simultaneously committed to the Paris declarations, humanitarian and fragile state principles and no one has questioned whether it's possible to adhere to all three at the same time.

Nevertheless, traditional criticisms of the IHC (poaching staff, higher salaries, undermining sovereignty, duplication of efforts and lack of coordination) must be balanced with recognition of real efforts to support government capacities. "Stereotyping international aid workers as a bunch of insensitive cowboys rushing in and trampling over national capacities just isn't particularly true or helpful".

"Whether governments would do more to help their own citizens in the absence of international aid, whether it undermines the political contract is one of those unknowable counterfactuals and not one that it would be ethical to try and discover. But the nastiness of some governments and weakness of others makes it seem unlikely that if all the aid agencies suddenly packed up and left that they'd step up to the mark".

Accountability must focus on state responsibilities to its citizens, rather than simply to beneficiaries (downward) or to donors (upward).

Greater attention to the successes and failures of international agencies to influence the behaviour of affected states is needed. Moreover, there needs to be clarification of the role humanitarian agencies in speaking out against government in a humanitarian context. Ways in which citizens can hold their governments to account, legitimate reporting lines of INGOs to government and advocacy all need to be carefully researched and put on the table for discussion.

Paul concluded with "a long overdue refocus on the roles and responsibilities of the state in relation to humanitarian action is finally taking place. This will continue to be driven by strong states with their own capacities to respond to disasters asserting greater control over the relief and recovery process".

Paul's presentation resulted in a number of questions and observations, including governments being more discerning when inviting aid, government actors making more effort in coordinating aid. Marriage brokering between the IHC and governments is happening but high turnover often compromises lasting relationships. The Paris declarations can be used for moving beyond 'if' to 'how' and consider channelling aid through local governments.

Read his presentation [here](#)

Table discussion: ideas emerging, issues arising

- Clusters could be a useful mechanism for governments to discuss humanitarian issues.
- Regional, multi-stakeholder approaches can support the system and individuals, with a particular focus on the private sector as a catalyst.

Session three: good practice from around the world

Five parallel workshops showcased examples of collaboration between national governments and the international system. These sessions provided participants opportunities to learn more about how collaboration can work in practice.

Bangladesh: emergency capacity building (ECB) and the government of Bangladesh

Kaiser Rejve, Humanitarian Programme Coordinator, Oxfam GB, Bangladesh

Mr. Mohammad Abdul Qayyum (National Project Director, Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme - CDMP) was due to present in this session. However, his input was shown by video.

Mr. Qayyam stressed the country's vulnerability to floods, cyclones and droughts – worsened through climate change. The Natural Disasters Risk Index (NDRI) ranked Bangladesh in the top three disaster-prone countries and 191, 637 people have died since 1970 from natural disasters.

In response to these challenges, the government has collaborated with NGOs since 1970 and the results can be seen in the response to cyclone SIDR in 2007. The government's goal is to mitigate vulnerability and the impacts of disaster through efficient emergency response management and RR mechanisms. This approach forms the institutional framework for disaster management in the country.

The CDMP enhances national disaster management capacity by coordinating different institutions with clear roles and responsibilities, i.e. the Union Disaster Management Committees at the lowest levels and the cyclone preparedness programme. NGOs are embedded into this system.

There are various statutes (passed and pending) that align actors to government priorities. These include the Disaster Management Act (DMA) which aligns the poverty reduction strategy to disaster risk reduction (pending), the National Plan for Disaster Management

2007-15 (passed) and standing orders on disaster (SOD) that can adapt to changing contexts. All humanitarian actors are stakeholders in the implementation of these mechanisms, allowing for a coordinated response to disasters.

The approach allows nation-wide disaster-proofing of development funding and allows communities to adapt to climate risk and provides NGOs a framework for their programmes.

Mr. Harun-or-Rashid, Manager - ECB project

Mr. Harun presented the ECB project, a collaboration between six INGOs which works with the CDMP on DRR, capacity-building of national actors and accountability to affected communities. The ECB project works in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Indonesia, Niger and a regional consortia in the Horn of Africa.

The ECB-CDMP engages in regular joint activities and planning meetings, with key focal points in formal collaboration. The collaborative project also sped up the enactment of the Disaster Management Act through engagement with media and policy dialogue. The ECB also commissioned a study of capacity-building of local disaster management committees which mapped out relief response in the country, developed key strategies to support the sector and created a database to illustrate existing disaster management efforts. The ECB translated the Good Enough Guide into Bengali.

The ECB Bangladesh advocacy strategy seeks to establish a central fund for humanitarian response, initiate a central coordinating body for disasters, clarify the roles of government relief bodies, establish guidelines, an accountability framework and a regulatory framework for the private sector, and create a national multi-sector platform for disaster response.

However, the context is not without limitations. The main limitations are: that the OCHA does not have a presence, bureaucracy, limited local-level government resources, turnover and its impact upon lasting relationships and that the DMA will take years to be fully implemented. There is no joint government-NGO readiness protocol to ensure swift entry of the IHC when disaster strikes and no harmonised tools or guidelines relating to humanitarian response.

Upon approval, the DMA needs to be disseminated at all levels and its implementation monitored. NGOs can also second their staff to government and develop common tools and guidelines to ensure quality humanitarian assistance.

The ECB-CDMP is an illustration of how government and the IHC can support each other to achieve each other's goals and avoid duplication of work. The project serves to support more effective and collaborative disaster management responses that infiltrate micro and macro levels.

Matt Bannerman (ECB Project Director) facilitated a Q&A. One participant asked how tensions between six NGOs are mitigated to which Mr. Bannerman said the project has learned to be strategic and has developed joint advocacy between the ECB and the government, for instance facilitating discussions with parliamentarians to pass the DMA.

When asked what the DMA will add to already promising relations, Mr. Bannerman said that once passed the DMA (drafted with the help of CARE Bangladesh) will impose a legal imperative where the government would have to respond to disasters effectively, rather than simply wanting to do it. Sarah Chynoweth (SPRINT Initiative) asked how the project deals with contradicting policies, to which Mr. Harun said the reason why the DMA was delayed is because the ECB was examining all possible contradictions within the draft.

Nepal: supporting national health systems

Dr. Mukeshkumar Prajapati, Country Health Director, Merlin, Nepal

Dr. Prajapati showcased Merlin's support in assisting the national health system in Nepal. This is done in various ways, including the provision of pharmaceuticals, providing health and medical services on behalf of the government; technical support to the health service, such as early warning systems, mortality and morbidity reports and post-mortem reviews. Merlin also supports capacity-building of staff, coordinating efforts through clusters, policy-making advisory services and planning across all levels.

Merlin's experience has taught that NGOs need to be engaged in policy-making at the operational level and know what their role is in each level. NGOs can initiate clear benchmarks on these roles.

In Q&A, Prof. Anthony Zwi stressed that it is important that NGOs have a presence prior to the onset of a disaster to ensure trust and existing relationships. Amy Watts (Sprint Initiative) said it is beneficial to be seen to not be working too closely with government when dealing with taboo issues in order to maintain neutrality. Prof. Zwi and Dr. George Nothelle both stressed the tension along the disaster-relief-development continuum as requiring attention. Dr. Nothelle noted that multi-stakeholder collaboration also adds to the reporting burden of different agencies in different funding cycles.

Other issues to emerge were the importance of determining length of stay, facilitating handovers and identifying key actors supportive/suspicious of humanitarian work. All actors should work together to manage community expectations and document best practice.



Delegates at the 26th ALNAP meeting

South-East Asia: ASEAN partnership groups

Lilian Mercado (Oxfam, ASEAN Partnership Group, APG) & Jean-Michel Piedagnel (Consultant)

Ms. Mercado described the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER, since 2004) as a legally-binding framework

that strengthens regional collaboration among the ten ASEAN member states. The AADMER mandates multi-stakeholder platforms and is not just about joint collaboration but ensuring each member state has the capacity to fulfil its responsibility to protect its own citizens and neighbouring countries facing crises.

The ASEAN Partnership Group (APG) was initiated in 2009 and formally launched in May 2010. It is open to all South-East Asian civil society organisations and has adopted the AADMER workplan to enhance regional collaboration. The APG provides planning, policy and monitoring support in the priority areas of reducing infant mortality and building resilient communities through community participation.

The APG is the civil society advisory body in ASEAN and aims to be a bridge between government mechanisms, institutions and civil society. There are a number of mechanisms civil society can engage with, helping to raise awareness of AADMER and build trust in its implementation. A draft framework for CSO participation in emergencies is being developed.

The APG helps strengthen ASEAN's institutional capacity through resource management and knowledge-management.

Phase one of the APG reviewed four disaster-prone countries in the region: Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam. Phase two will map actors and stakeholders in humanitarian response, analyse policies for alignment/inconsistencies with the legally-binding AADMER and document multi-stakeholder approaches. This work will put in place contingency measures and foster regional preparedness. A network of NGOs will be established to strengthen coordination of INGOs before and during disaster response.

However, due to funding constraints and reliance from grants (in particular, Oxfam), the APG can only operate in four ASEAN countries and offer advisory support to the other six.

Various lessons have emerged from ASEAN's experience in the APG. These include being aware of politically sensitive issues, working in constructive and engaging ways and formalising working relationships through MoUs. In order to add value you need to be able to offer solutions.

In Q&A Kevin Savage (World Vision) asked how the APG works in countries where civil society is not welcome or legal and how international groups can be represented without being at the expense of local groups. Ms. Mercado called for more case studies and for governments to allow the participation of non-state actors.

Randolph Kent asked who is driving the process of APG? Mr. Piedahel said there is political will to strengthen regional capacity within ASEAN. However, this still needs to be translated into political will among ASEAN member states. Ms. Mercado explained how ASEAN is establishing the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management, signalling ownership of the project.

Brazil: The Brazilian National School Feeding Programme and cooperation with WFP & FAO

Ms. Christiani Buani (Ministry of Education, Brazil)

The national school feeding programme has benefited from recent legislation that makes adequate food a human right in Brazil. It also offers a framework for who is responsible for school feeding. This gives the programme an effective legal framework to ensure school children have adequate food.

The Brazilian National School Feeding Programme – FNDE - is an assignment of the National Fund for Educational Development. The School Feeding Council – in which civil society members are included - is responsible for supervising and following the execution. The programme is entirely financed by the Brazilian federal government and the financial resources are distributed to the States according to their number of enrolled students.

Since states are decentralized, they can ensure the supply chain boosts the local economy and that regional habits are catered for. Legislation stipulates that 30% of the funds for the school feeding programme must be spent on purchasing local production from small-holder farmers. The programme also encourages the implementation of school vegetable gardens as a way to improve food and nutritional security.

The FNDE works internationally with technical cooperation in school feeding and in some countries, within this framework, in conjunction with FAO and WFP. Therefore, the school feeding programme has been implemented in Portuguese-speaking countries, Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin American countries.

Bakheit Yagoub (Sudan) commented how food insecurity at home and at schools forces school leavers to join gangs or the army.

Meanwhile Caroline Heider (WFP) expressed concern over the proportion of funding allocated to school feeding at the expense of other educational needs. She also questioned how the programme is evaluating this. Christiani responded that around 4% of educational funds are allocated to the programme. She expressed that Brazil is already scaling up efforts for M&E of the programme.

Amadou Diop (Government Senegal) congratulated the Brazilian initiative of including the right to adequate food in its Constitution and believes that states should have the right to adequate food in their constitutions. The onus on local economies is positive since in some African countries, international food aid is killing local agriculture. Focusing on the growth of the local economy will lead to improved livelihoods and incomes to support children's education. Christiani said that Brazil's experiences are now being used by the government of Mozambique in order to define their own school feeding programme, which may count on local producers to improve the quality of purchased food for the programme.

Caroline Heider expressed concern over the efficiency of multi-donor programmes and their appropriateness for replication. Christiani has also agreed with these concerns and highlighted that Brazil transfers its experience so that countries take ownership of the knowledge to create and manage their own models.

IFRC: the IFRC's International Disaster Response Law (IDRL)

Olav Ofstad, Coordinator, Asia Pacific IFRC, International Disaster Response Laws

Disasters bring with them 'massive chaos'. In Sri Lanka and Indonesia after the Tsunami "all sorts of organisations started to run all over the place finding things to do".

A type of disorganised, competitive response brings inappropriate aid. For instance, outdated or unmarked medicines or consignments too large for local authorities to manage (Haiti). A lack of a proper registration system means people come to affected countries and work illegally or legitimate aid workers cannot get visas. A lack of leadership within governments can hamper planned coordination.

International instruments only respond to these challenges in a haphazard way. The IFRC engaged in a profound analysis of these challenges in 2001. In 2007 the IFRC developed some IDRL guidelines, outlining how governments can address these issues through domestic legislation.

The IFRC is working with a number of countries in the Asia Pacific region to strengthen their legal system. In Cambodia, the IFRC is advising the government on developing a complete disaster management law.

In Indonesia, a disaster management board was established as the lead agency for disaster response and developed regulations in disaster response management in the local community. The national Red Cross contacted the IFRC when the government started to develop regulations on how to relate to the international community. It is standard practice that the national Red Cross will contact the IFRC rather than the government.

Various organisations were involved in developing regulations for government-IHC engagement. These included OCHA, IFRC, Oxfam, Plan International, CRS and the Indonesian Red Cross Society. This dialogue led to regulation no. 23: of the Participation of International and Foreign NGOs on Disaster Management. However, since these were deemed to be insufficient, the IHC coalition requested the government to clarify these relationships further.

In August 2009, a comprehensive workshop was held for stakeholders to develop further guidelines, facilitated by Indonesian Red Cross, IFRC and Oxfam. This workshop led to draft guidelines “Guidelines on the Role of International Organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations During Emergency Response”, presented in December 2009.

The government wanted to pilot the guidelines during the ASEAN annual Yearly Disaster Response Exercise but this was postponed. The government has become very open to interacting with the IHC. In the recent Tsunami, the government requested the IFRC to help coordinate the government’s response. This represents a shift in how government relates to the IHC – with a willingness to cooperate.

A video ‘Disaster in Asia, the Case for Legal Preparedness’ was shown, portraying case studies from Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the Philippines about how each country has adapted to the IDRL and different partnerships that were fostered.

Ricardo Polastro (DARA) commented that the role of the state varies between and within states. The Indonesian government was particularly pro-active, but the drivers and disablers in other countries will differ. Mr. Ofstad replied that the IDRL programme takes a flexible attitude towards each government. The IFRC can support governments and other actors to hold workshops to discuss disaster risks and a comprehensive study to map gaps and offer concrete recommendations. In Pakistan, the IDRL is helping to supplement existing legislation with the development of guidelines.

Robert McCouch (UNICEF) said that as well as legislation and guidelines there is also a need for enforcement, which requires significant investment. Mr. Ofstad replied the guidelines do not go into depth on pre-conditions needed to operationalise the guidelines. These aspects need further attention.

Mihir Bhatt (AIDMI) asked if anyone can be sued under the IDRL. Mr. Ofstad replied that it is non-binding and only a suggestion as to how governments could develop their disaster legislation. There is no overarching law but the individual governments are held accountable as to whether or not they implement the guidelines.

Rosalinda Crescini-Tablang (CPDC, Philippines) shared her experiences from the Philippines. It is important to identify champions within the government and to have a determined civil society on key issues. Moreover, exposure to natural disasters can often awaken people to the need for laws such as the disaster risk reduction and management law. Mr. Ofstad highlighted again the importance of a flexible approach and that existing capacities will determine the degree to which you go beyond legislation to capacity-building.

Krishna Vatsa (Regional Disaster Reduction Advisor, UNDP) said that while India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka Bhutan and Nepal have either passed or drafted legislation in disaster management, there are a number of constraints. Firstly, law-making is seen as a sovereign function and they are reluctant to involve other stakeholders. Secondly, the legislation does not automatically confer rights to people and governments cannot necessarily be held accountable. Thirdly, these types of law work against decentralisation and are central government-focused. The onus has become on a central institution and the law is still vague.

Ross Sovann (Cambodia) shared the country’s experience in responding to the IDRL guidelines. The guidelines provide a checklist as to what the government should consider. It is up to governments to produce legally binding legislation to ensure that people are held accountable and sanctions imposed if necessary. However, the government is more than just the Agency for Disaster Management, so all actors, civil, private and NGOs need to be held accountable for failures in humanitarian response.

In Cambodia, the law is drafted and put through a consultation process at all levels of government. The draft received comments from local, provincial and national government, as well as NGOs and grass-roots organisations. The challenge now is to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined in legal terms. Legislation is essential to facilitate adequate resource allocation and enforcement and encourages private sector involvement with disaster management and the risk reduction process. It is the government’s responsibility to coordinate this.

Session four:

Multi-Stakeholder Discussions: setting a shared agenda

Feedback was given from the five different break-out groups.

At their tables delegates discussed the following:

- What is the current state of working together – what is the ideal state?
- How can we move from the current state to the ideal state?
- Developing a future agenda for collaboration between national government and international actors

Representatives from the different tables offered their perspectives.

An increase in sovereignty in the Asia-region was noted which will give impetus for states in regions to increase their sovereignty in response to humanitarian crises. How the military can play a greater role in DRM was highlighted.

Robert McCouch (UNICEF) said the current state is still based on negative preconceptions of the IHC and that government is monolithic entity. Moreover, relief efforts are largely fragmented and poorly coordinated. There are also power struggles within humanitarian agencies and UN agencies. Bakheit Yahoub (Sudan Govt) said there is a need for continuous assessment of the situation.

When asked what the relationship would look like in 2015, Antonio Fernandez (Church World Service) said there would be more institutional mechanisms and formalisation of roles. He cited how agencies in Burma/Myanmar signed MoUs with the government; while in Sri Lanka the government introduced a registration system for NGOs before they can bring relief, helping improve coordination, accountability and transparency. Malaysia has many policies in place while Cambodia is improving their internal mechanisms.

Amy Watts (Sprint Initiative) and Robert McCouch (UNICEF) called for more case studies to show the positive and negative initiatives to facilitate improved relations between the IHC and governments to strengthen government capacities.

Other points raised included, the process should be government-led, the relationship should be institutionalised and based on trust and mutual cooperation, greater alignment of funding to DRM and better trained staff. This would allow INGOs to play more of a facilitator-role and allow government to fulfil its sovereign role to respond to disasters. However, governments must also recognise that NGOs are here to stay and find ways to foster positive relations with them.

Day 2, Wednesday 17th November 2010

Session one: panel session – views from the frontline

Five representatives from participating government disaster management authorities gave their perspectives on the role of their governments in response to humanitarian disasters. The value of ALNAP's 26th meeting was noted by those who presented their experiences.



Bakheit Yagoub, Ministry Humanitarian Affairs, Sudan

Cambodia: Ross Sovann – Deputy General for the Committee of Disaster Management

Not all governments are able to fulfil their duties to protect their citizens on their own and working with partners in the humanitarian sector is often critical. Harmonising efforts while retaining government's sovereignty are critical for the effective delivery of essential services. Yet even within government, there is not one entity but a collective agency with a shared mandate.

Mr. Sovann explained how partnerships allow the government to set a long-term agenda with a common understanding. Partnership identifies roles and responsibilities, recognises limitations, facilitates joint planning and responses and mutual respect. It also allows entities to come together to learn from one another to formulate synergistic development goals. He also noted that the success of humanitarian endeavours will benefit the image of the host government.

Mr. Sovann was confident that in the future the relationship between the IHC and governments will be more harmonious. Development agencies have a longstanding relationship with governments, while emergency organisations only appear during a crisis.

He also expressed concern at how climate change will materialise in national disasters yet there hasn't been a global goal to marry disaster risk reduction with climate change.

Sudan: Bakheit Yagoub, Deputy Commissioner, Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs

Sudan is a varied country and Africa's largest. It is exposed to natural and man-made catastrophes, notably drought and the protracted civil war. In 1985, various aid agencies supported relief for affected persons during drought. In more recent times, only the UN have been able to deliver aid to people in the South as per an agreement with the government.

This was unique for the government, who were effectively allowing aid to be distributed to the very people who were fighting against it. This indicated the trust the government had in the UN. It served as a precedent for other conflict-affected states, including Mozambique, Angola and Palestine, where people – irrespective of their political affiliations – are provided for in times of need. This led to improved relations between the government and the IHC.

Mr. Yagoub raised the following as key lessons learned: decision-makers need to be informed of what humanitarian agencies are doing, end the dependency cycle of relief handouts and the need for greater information sharing between governments.

Ethiopia: Rahel Belachew, Senior Resource Mobilisation Expert, Disaster Risk Management, Ministry of Agriculture

Ethiopia has had recurrent drought for three decades. In this time the government has developed good relations with the IHC. There are a number of task forces including food management and a disaster risk reduction technical group. The UN and other agencies

work with the government to determine key issues, hotspots and provide a platform to share information.

The government conducts assessments twice a year to determine the extent of how the country's 85% rural farmers are affected by the erratic rainfall. Without the help of the UN and INGOs Ethiopia could not have worked through these issues.

The IHC can do more to help government in strengthening grassroots capacity to develop early warning systems and networking. Donors also need to be more flexible in the way they fund projects.

Peru: Percy Vadillo, Director of International Cooperation, Civil National Defence Institute

Peru is exposed to many natural disasters, including tsunamis, earthquakes and major volcanic activity. After the 2007 Pisco earthquake the government learned four major lessons:

1. There must be frameworks to facilitate adequate IHC-government coordination in ways that encourage constructive criticism and self-analysis
2. Have a concrete plan that aids communication within the humanitarian network
3. Interventions can be optimised in a timely and efficient manner with clearly defined lines roles and responsibilities, i.e. clusters
4. It is the government's role to facilitate and guide humanitarian assistance

Costa Rica: Marco Vinicio Saborio Mesen (Director of International Relations and Cooperation)

Mr. Mesen said ALNAP's meeting will help to overcome past mistakes and forge a new international humanitarian cooperative vision. "Where governments will join in the search for standardised emergency protocols and promote laws at different levels of government so that even if the government changes, the system will prevail. It should be a state policy and not a governmental decision".

In Costa Rica, a manual has been created with protocols for cooperation and humanitarian assistance management.

All Latin American countries have approved the CEPREDENAC (natural disasters prevention and coordination in Central America). Each member seeks donor support in the preparation and prevention of emergencies that can meet the needs of the region and individual countries.

Regional bodies have a role to play in humanitarian assistance. National legislation should be adapted to meet the requirements for the prevention and preparation of humanitarian assistance.

Scott Chaplowe commented there is a failure of international organisations to speak the language of the countries they work in. He asked how the sector can increase government capacities to respond to disaster (as in the case of Ethiopia). There is inadequate monitoring and evaluation of government responses. Greater funding should go hand in hand with greater accountability.

Percy Vadillo responded that in Peru his department liaises with the treasury to determine funding for disaster response. A law was passed that prevents political influence on reserved money and record their spending. While the government works closely with the UN there are still flaws in lower levels of government.

Mr. Mesen responded that the manual for technical disaster assistance has protocols for international assistance. A further law mandates an analysis of assistance provided by the IHC.

Mrs. Rahel Belachew said that Ethiopia's response has been from crisis management to a multi-hazard response in the areas of DRM and food security. The government has allocated funds to a disaster risk management budget but this was insufficient for the scale needed. There is a greater need to share and transfer knowledge from other countries and for the IHC to increase capacities. There is a humanitarian response fund managed by OCHA, however, there needs to be greater flexibility to use development funds when crisis hits.

Mr. Bakheit Yahoub said that Sudan is running one of the largest operations in the world, with \$800 million spent on food alone. Camps are creating dependency. There is a need for preventative methods to make countries more resilient. DRM needs to be

mainstreamed into the development plan of the whole country to ensure sustainable development.

Ross Sovann said governments and the IHC need to shift from thinking of humanitarian disasters as something unpredictable. With a focus on long-term institutional capacity a better response can be designed. The statistics which point to decreased funding to governments for humanitarian responses mask the fact that governments already have many resources to respond (staff, equipment). An evaluation tool to track funding would be helpful.

Mihir Bhatt asked who should respond to disasters. Mr. Mesen said legislation needs to be for the state, not passing governments, based on needs of different regions. This can be done by governments working in conjunction with international actors and creating regional bodies based on regional needs.

Mr. Vadilo said every actor has different roles in a response. Local communities are often the first to act. The IHC should complement what governments are doing and providing. Some governments might try and avoid this responsibility and give it to the IHC. "It's time to invest in development to reduce the number of disasters and improve capacities for response".

Mrs. Belachew said that response is a government priority but due to lack of funds, the government has to approach the IHC. The government's plan is to strengthen internal capacity to respond.

Mr. Bakheit Yagoub said there needs to be more transparency and accountability of aid agencies, who are often reluctant to give governments information on their expenditure.

Ross Sovann mentioned the private sector as a means of mobilising more resources.

Session two: Learning Across Boundaries - challenges and ideas from the wider world

Dato Johan Raslan, *Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PWC), Malaysia*

Thoughts on the corporate sector

Mr. Raslan shared PWC's experience of working with Mercy Malaysia to offer insights into effective private sector-NGO partnerships.

The relationship between the private and the humanitarian sectors is a blend of altruism and trust.

Mr. Raslan presented key lessons learned:

- Show an understanding of each other's culture
- Understand the strengths of each party and the roles each can play
- Build a lasting and sustainable partnership
- Learn from one another and help each other transform

PWC's partnership started during Mercy Malaysia's response to the Tsunami in North Sumatra, Indonesia. At this point PWC donated money. During Mercy's response to floods in Jahor, Malaysia, Mercy's director suggested that instead of funds PWC could support Mercy as consultants to advise on strategic planning and help Mercy attain HAP accreditation. PWC has since supported Mercy with subsequent accreditation and audits. This has allowed PWC to participate more actively and play to their organisational strengths.

Mr. Raslan showed the changing trends of private sector engagement in the non-profit sector.

Before 1970 – **philanthropy**: doing good fast

1970 – 1990 – **PR whitewash**: doing good to look good

1990 – 2001 – **CSR**: focus on social initiatives

2001 – present – **sustainability**: balancing the triple bottom line (people, planet, profit)

As companies move through these stages they become more discerning in which partners they choose to collaborate with.

However, there are challenges to cooperation, including:

Collaborations that need to be established quickly – insufficiently trained staff to drive initiatives; inadequate project management skills to facilitate complex initiatives; inadequate infrastructure to deliver with speed and scale.

Collaborations between large numbers of companies with respective capacities and interests – diverse agendas that do not complement each other; inadequate planning and clarity in roles and responsibilities; not fully leveraging on respective in-built strength (i.e. doing something outside area of expertise).

Collaborations between companies that usually compete with each other – protectionism of IP and solutions; finding balance between responsible business and profitable business; belief in the myth that to be the best you have to be the only one or the first and unsupportive of others.

Collaborations across cultural and political boundaries – lack of appreciation of diverse cultures and political landscape; difficult to gain trust of local recipients/governments.

PWC has collaborated with other organisations including UNHCR and WWF, where the latter saw PWC use its contacts to turn off the lights of the Putra Towers and other large commercial buildings for Earth Hour. PWC has also advised other companies how they can win the Khazanhah and StarBiz award and move from philanthropy to sustainability. Previous Petronas staff were trained to be Mercy on-location volunteers, playing to Petronas' strengths.

To grow responsible leaders for the future, Mr. Raslan offered the following insights:

- **Challenge and stretch staff:** make responsible business part of their work and inject humanity and emotion into what corporations care about. This helps to improve the values of people within a company and increases success and sustainability of corporations.

- **Give people the opportunity to do good:** the younger generation need guidance and the opportunity to give back to society. This generation is different as they feel their work must be in line with their values.
- **Dispel the myths of competitive disadvantage:** encourage collaborations and ensure there are enough opportunities.
- **Recognise and reward responsible practices:** i.e. in Malaysia the Prime Minister's award and ICRM-StarBiz Corporate Responsibility Award.
- **Tailor leadership programmes that develop responsible practices:** PWC endeavours to stand for more than making partners rich and makes its employees feel proud.

Read his presentation [here](#)



Johan Raslan, PwC Malaysia

Aik Cheng Heng, *Mercy Malaysia*

Mercy saw the value of the role of the military in disaster management and emergency response following the 2004 tsunami. Mercy found that 40% of the medical staff in Aceh had died, making it hard to form a response. The military from various countries supported the response, including the Australian army who opened the Aceh airport within 24 hours of the time of the disaster.

In 2005 a conference was held in India on military assistance in natural disasters. 2006 saw the start of the Asian Pacific Conference on Military Assistance to Disaster Relief Operations (APC – MADRO) with representation from OCHA, IFRC and other regional bodies. APC-MADRO works to provide a framework for the future development of regional civil-military and military-military coordination and cooperation to support wider collaboration.

APC-MADRO has met in Singapore, Malaysia, and Australia and 20 member countries agreed to a draft cooperation agreement.

Guidelines include:

- strategic guidance to military commanders and a frame of reference for the IHC
- military should provide first response
- ‘do no harm’
- deployment should only be at the request of affected states
- the military should be transparent and ready to share information
- key actors should be identified, an exit strategy should start as soon as possible
- the guidelines should be a living document

The APC-MADRO agreements, drafted by OCHA, are being considered by ASEAN, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, Pacific Islands forum, Australia and New Zealand and AMPAC and the Latin American conference on MADRO.

The guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Oslo Guidelines. They do not, however, apply to complex emergencies, do not address reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts and do not affect existing international agreements.

The document outlines that foreign military assets remain under the control of their own national command and operate with the support of the affected state. Humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality and do no harm apply and the sovereignty of the state must be respected.

The scope of the document is:

- disaster management cycle
- responding to needs assessment
- open information-sharing between civilian and military actors
- use of military assets
- pre-disaster preparedness
- post-disaster actions
- lessons learned and best practice

The affected state has the responsibility to protect its own citizens and can request assistance if the scale of the disaster exceeds national capacities. The state should have a national or local disaster management office to facilitate the entry, stay and exit.

The assisting state can only enter with consent of the affected state, must respect sovereignty and follow humanitarian principles and abide by domestic laws. Assisting states should not gain financially, further political or religious viewpoints, intervene in internal affairs or gather any sensitive information. They should share information with the affected state. Assisting states should be environmentally and culturally conscious and support immediate needs.

Read his presentation [here](#)

Session three:

Stakeholder - specific discussions and recommendations

Delegates split into stakeholder specific working groups to discuss whether their constituency was doing enough to collaborate with other national and international humanitarian actors. The workshops then moved on to formulate tangible recommendations for what that group could do differently.

National Government constituency workshop:

Speakers in this workshop suggested that ‘most governments never think they are doing enough’. Recognising that every country has its strengths and weaknesses, a suggestion was made that greater regional cooperation would help all countries to improve their humanitarian responses. It also makes it easier for international humanitarian organisations to know where their expertise is needed and who to engage.

Insufficient human resources was identified as a challenge in several National Disaster Management departments. Also the lack of formal legal structures to define the terms of relationship between governments and humanitarian agencies was raised.

They were also keen to emphasise that “humanitarian aid is the principal responsibility of the government and we shouldn’t have anybody try to break this down.”

Recommendations

- Create guiding principles for government-humanitarian collaboration
- Build strategies to connect risk management, emergency actions, post disaster phase & sustainable development
- Establish national institutions/ funds in each government to spend on humanitarian issues

United Nations Constituency workshop:

This group quickly agreed that the short answer to the question – “Are we doing enough?” is ‘no’ but some are practicing good practices and some are not. Therefore they moved on to look at what lessons could be learned and what specifically could be done better?

There was recognition that context was also important, as ideally national governments do respond adequately and understand the responsibility, but in many cases governments depend on international relief agencies and others want to respond more but are sidelined by the international agencies.

Recommendations

- More co-ordinated, comprehensive and cohesive identification of capacity – strengths and gaps including those of government and other actors e.g. corporate & military
- Better and more collective advocacy aligned around IDRL
- Greater involvement of governments in the cluster system
- Capitalise on UN’s convening role to create fora for national governments to talk to each other
- Explore potential role of national governments in evaluations to ensure greater accountability of IH actors [without compromising objectivity/independence] & how the UN can help them to do that

Red Cross/ Crescent Constituency workshop:

This workshop group agreed that the Red Cross movement has a vital role to play in facilitating the practical elements and logistics of disaster management, such as training, planning and M&E. The structure and reputation of the movement makes them uniquely well placed to advocate to governments for improvements in disaster management structures and regulations. This is particularly true in conflict situations.

Recommendations

- Support government capacity for disaster management (response and preparedness)
- Advocate/ promote IDRL- potentially package with OCHA/ Mercy Malaysia the military framework
- Develop and promote donor-government guidelines for humanitarian response - how to best co-ordinate and complement resources and funds provided to affected communities

Researchers/ Academics Constituency workshop:

Recommendations

- Need a demand-driven research evaluation agenda, responsive to needs and involving stakeholders
- Need ongoing dialogue that listens to government and continues the discussions started in this meeting to facilitate learning between different actors
- Focusing on how policy makers and practitioners utilise research and developing a communications strategy with a focus on mainstreaming good practice

Donor Constituency workshop:

This workshop group discussed how donors often fail to interact with national government, particularly during the acute emergency phase of responding to disasters. They can also present an obstacle to cooperation, as funding of certain types of organisation or international NGO can create tensions. They are often better at working with local structures during planning, disaster preparedness and recovery phases.

The group discussed the decline in humanitarian aid given to affected states from around 90% in 1970 going to government to 6% now. There was discussion of the challenges of working with governments where transparency, fiscal accountability and trust is not

present. Donor country accountability to their own constituents was also discussed in this context.

Several delegates raised the importance of UN structures, OCHA and the Cluster system, in facilitating the flow of donor money to co-ordination activities.

Recommendations

- Improving preparedness – donors' field presence can help capacity of national governments, build relationships and build capacity in disaster risk reduction, disaster management and coordination
- Improving donor coordination - between donors within country and cooperation strategies within the organisation to manage the development-humanitarian tensions
- Improve systems of evaluation – develop capacity of governments to evaluate themselves and to do more evaluations

NGO Constituency workshop:

The NGO workshop group began by discussing the unique identity and role they have in the humanitarian system, and warned against getting their role mixed up with UN or Government functions.

Key factors in successfully working with national governments were identified, including honesty and transparency from the NGOs, establishing long term relationships and engaging at every level of government decision making.

There was a suggestion that international NGOs should focus efforts on building the capacity of government staff and local NGOs, with the goal of making their role in the country obsolete.

Speakers raised the issue of tensions between governments and NGOs, particularly where NGOs have a rights based approach or undertake advocacy, alongside their emergency relief programmes.

Recommendations

- Build local and national networks in order to better engage with the government – starting with CSOs and reach out to others, be mindful of beneficiary and community participation; networks should exist outside of disaster response
- Engage with governments on a common system for response management - include role-setting for military and private sector; be willing to support the development and enacting of the system, commit to share learning and experience, support simulations and exercises
- Play our part in smoothing resource flows for example, to look at our own internal structures, how we share information and evidence to justify more investment in DRR and preparedness

Session four: final discussion panel, moving forward, next steps

Chair, Dr. Faizal Perdaus, Mercy Malaysia

Dr. Faizal shared an ideal vision where governments act responsibly, are representative are well informed and have a good governance structure. Moreover, where NGOs have high degrees of competency, are culturally sensitive and accountable and both government and NGOs are distinct entities.

To reach this vision it is important:

- Not to stereotype and focus on parties' strengths, not weaknesses
- Dispel myths about NGOs being too autonomous or governments being slow
- Enhance the role of national government without diminishing the contributions of the IHC and NGOs.
- Build relationships between government and the IHC *before* an emergency to build on personalities

- Realise the differences in capacities and build partnerships that can strengthen the different parties involved at local and national levels.
- Governments need to improve excessive bureaucracy
- Create more channels to improve coordination practices in both disaster and non-disaster situations, i.e. information-sharing and resource dissemination
- Regional and local capacities can be used as brokers and facilitators
- Increased intra- and inter-NGO collaboration at country and regional levels will improve the effectiveness of responses
- Community capacity and resilience can be built through civil society and targeted support
- NGOs need to engage governments at all times, particularly in the design of NGO policies and planning

Christiani Buani commented how the Brazilian government is working closely with the WFP and FAO, formalised through MoUs. There is a system of shared learning built on trust within a legal and accountable framework. This has led to local capacity-building, promotion of knowledge transfer, increased openness of government and the raising of the profile of the school feeding programme on the national agenda.

She went on to say that the ALNAP meeting has been an important way to share experiences and see each other's ability to cope with situations.

Mia Beers (USAID), summarised the issues raised as 'partnership, trust, commitment, authenticity, accountability, lessons learned, transparency'. Frameworks are in place for rapid responses but we need to encourage greater transparent and frank dialogue. Leveraging constituency networks can ensure this dialogue is system-wide.

Moving forward the following steps were outlined:

1. Commitment to disaster risk reduction and management
2. Donors need to make long-term commitments to international and national capacity
3. Greater engagement between national and international capacities

The humanitarian landscape is changing and we should expect to see an increased role for the private sector, the national military and increased government assertiveness. The IHC and government partnership is not a marriage of convenience. Rather, it is a long-term commitment and the IHC has a critical role to play in making sure this marriage works.

John Mitchell (ALNAP) said there are five steps that can be taken immediately:

1. How to get DRM on the high-level policy/political agenda – the Swiss government is chairing the General Assembly. In 2011 there is a meeting on DRR and preparedness. It is an opportunity to introduce the issue of the relationship between the international response community and national governments.
2. How to include this issue in ALNAP's regular performance review, the State of the Humanitarian System report– an analysis of government capacity will be included in the next report
3. The inclusion of governments in the meeting has been invaluable – more government members will be invited to ALNAP meetings. ALNAP could play the 'marriage guidance' role. ALNAP can establish a database that could be used to connect governments and NGOs.
4. Improve evaluative capacity, especially government capacities in evaluations – ALNAP will budget for a training course for government officials around the world to support their evaluative skills

5. ALNAP will follow up with delegates from the meeting with a view to discuss how they can engage with ALNAP and play a greater role within the ALNAP membership.

Day 3, Thursday 18th November

Session one: Reflections and follow up to days 1 & 2

Ivan Scott, ALNAP Chair, invited the ALNAP members to give feedback of their experiences of this year's meeting. Key contributions included:

Continuing the conversation with national governments after the meeting:

Ian Christoplos- How can we network more with national governments on a regional level? Could engagement be based on mobilisation of southern regional partnerships with ALNAP?

Mamadou Ndiaye, *OFADEC* – The interaction with government on a regional platform is a good idea. A regional platform is where we can have most influence in humanitarian action

Create more fora for discussion after the meeting perhaps online webinars, more sharing on the ALNAP website

Salim Sumar, Focus Humanitarian Assistance – Hopefully an outcome will be an effective development network, including a database which the group can share, ALNAP perhaps playing a 'marriage councillor' to connect the respective NGO with the needy government

Mona Girgis, *CARE Laos* – There is a lot of good partnership work with governments already happening. We perhaps know how to pull out failures, but the background paper did not show the best practices being carried out in the field.

Mike Tozer, *Global Hand* – We have partnership guidelines for the NGO business we do - partnership guidelines for before, during and after collaboration. I can offer that as a tool to perhaps be adapted.

Develop mentorship programmes and opportunities.

Misikir Tilahun, *Africa Humanitarian Action* – Is there some kind of mentorship programme between NGOs and humanitarian agencies that can take government representatives to disaster areas during emergencies, have them work with them and experience it?

Ian Christoplos – endorsed the suggestion around mentoring. Start with a system around evaluations.

Ricardo Polastro, *DARA* – Building the national evaluation capacity seems to be a main point. There are a number of full ALNAP members who are already working in this issue. How can we draw from this resource? Webinars?

Session two: Launch of the Humanitarian Innovations Fund (HIF)

Jess Camburn, *Director, ELRHA* and Kim Scriven, *Research and Innovations Officer, ALNAP* presented the Humanitarian Innovations Fund (HIF), recently established through a partnership between ELRHA and ALNAP and funded by DFID.

Humanitarian Innovation and history of the HIF

Kim introduced ALNAP's work on innovation, which started in 2008 with an in depth study. One of the key findings was, 'There is a focus on incremental improvement but not enough on basic deconstruction of how we work. There is a tendency in all sectors to stick with what is comfortable rather than strive for innovation.

Further key findings included:

All innovations pass through 5 broad stages- recognition of problem, invention of new/significant idea, development of practical modalities for implementation, and diffusion.

Context also matters. We need to look at the wider context i.e. social, political, economic and political factors. Also important are capabilities of those involved in the innovation process.

Research and evaluation plays an important role in identifying the space for innovation, assessing appropriate innovations, evaluating pilots, and disseminating positive results.

Many that we spoke to argued that the sector has failed to invest properly in R&D.

The key recommendation of the ALNAP Study:

The humanitarian sector should establish a cross-sector mechanism to facilitate innovations... providing support to innovation processes and raising pooled R&D resources for the sector.



Presentation of the Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF)

Management of the HIF and next steps

Jess explained the details of the partnership between ALNAP & ELRHA, the £900,000 grant from DFID as the first donor and the management structure of the Fund, which will include a HIF staff team, a Strategy Group and an independent Grant Panel. She also outlined how the Fund will operate, with small grants up to £20,000 made on a rolling basis, plus larger grants of £75,000-£250,000 made through fixed calls.

Expectations for successful proposals include:

- Projects that clearly understand and articulate the stage and type of innovation they are proposing.
- Projects that address a key area for improving humanitarian efficiency and effectiveness.
- Projects that illustrate how the benefits of the innovation can be demonstrated in a systematic fashion.

- Projects that aim to be as collaborative as possible.

- Application of high-quality relevant research and knowledge.

- Access to and participation in academic and private-sector knowledge networks.

- Communication of the evidence of innovation success in an effective and credible manner.

Staff recruitment, formation of the HIF Strategy Group & Grants Panel and efforts to engage more donors would begin immediately after the meeting. The first call for proposals would come in early 2011.

Questions and concerns raised from the floor:

How can you encourage proposals from the South?

We will encourage and make sure the fund is accessible to southern partners. Ideas as to how to do this are very welcome

What is the risk tolerance and what do we do in a case of failure? Where does the buck stop?

The process allows us to engage with risk, which is a reality. This is research funding and requires systematically gathering evidence to quantify and take on risk. It's all part of the process.

Are private companies keen to do research in natural disaster and can they apply?

If there are going to be successful private sector applications they need to be very strong and demonstrate meaningful partnerships with humanitarian organisations.

To what extent is 'cost effectiveness' a factor in the selection process?

Cost effectiveness is not a deciding factor but it is an important impact of innovation.

Innovation is an iterative process. We don't simply fail, there are always results. We should not conflate success in one situation with success in all.

There is budget in the fund to develop tools for M&E, ways to gather evidence etc. Context is very important and innovation does not happen in a vacuum. Failure is a valid result.

Session three: Lessons from recent inter-agency real time evaluations (IA-RTEs)



Scott Green, UN-OCHA; Riccardo Polastro, DARA; Francois Grünewald, Groupe URD

Joint Humanitarian Evaluations: update on current status and emerging challenges

- Scott Green, UN-OCHA

Consultations were held in 2010 with a representative cross section of humanitarian actors, including affected populations on how to mainstream joint impact evaluations (JIE).

Scott explored the findings of these consultations and went on to share the resulting recommendations which included to undertake two pilot JIEs, one on a natural disaster and one on a complex emergency

setting in 2011/12. One pilot JIE will focus on lesson learning, and the other on accountability, to test and provide guidance on these different approaches.

Scott outlined the care that has gone into developing the JIE methodology to ensure it is participatory and includes mechanisms to ensure sustained involvement of the affected population in evaluation design and implementation.

Further key progress made in 2010 with respect to IA RTEs are the approval of an IASC Working Group, the creation of new standardised operating procedures and an automatic trigger mechanism, the use of flash appeals, and improved evaluation coverage.

Read the presentation [here](#)

Lessons from recent IA-RTE's

- Riccardo Polastro, DARA

Riccardo introduced his understanding of IA- RTE's, as an evaluation that provides immediate feedback in participatory manner to those executing and managing the response. It is a supportive measure to adjust planning and performance. They require agility and a light footprint among the evaluating team, and they also require the involvement of all stakeholders.

He provided a short history of IA-RTE's and summarised the key added value of these as well as the key challenges they pose.

Riccardo concluded that the future of RTEs will take one of two paths. It will be either a dynamic tool feeding into decision making or a momentary trend. Which path it takes depends on the drivers involved.

If it is to become a dynamic tool, the drivers needed are:

- (i) participation and ownership by the field with support from HQ,
- (ii) a core purpose of learning and guidance,
- (iii) RTE rolled out systematically and triggers respected (including secure funding),
- (iv) timely deployment,
- (v) based on strong evidence chain, and
- (vi) with findings and recommendations applied.

Read the presentation [here](#)

Lessons from the Haiti IA-RTE

- Francois Grünewald, Groupe URD

Francois led the IA-RTE team into Haiti within 3 weeks of the earthquake in Jan 2010. He observed three key factors in conducting an RTE, to come at the right time, to return repeatedly, and to get feedback, quickly and from different stakeholders.

Other observations included:

Users must accept the lack of scientifically rigorous evidence; it is part of the nature of RTE.

RTEs must happen from the bottom-up. Normally, we would have seminars first and find little or no time for field work. So, a decision was made to reverse that order

A critical element in RTE is feedback. We need to ensure feedback is structured and goes straight back to the field.

In terms of the uses of feedback, we should distinguish between messages meant for the system as a whole and those for specific actors engaged in particular topics.

Discussion:

Mihir Bhatt, AIDMI- Regarding the follow up of JIE, so much time and money goes into these evaluations; they need to be put to better use. One suggestion for ALNAP is to develop the utilisation framework of evaluation a bit more

Rob McCouch, UNICEF - About evidentiary standards, there's a false trade-off between methodological rigour and speed/practical work. We need to rethink how we do things rather than say that we need to be quick and so we will stick to assumptions.

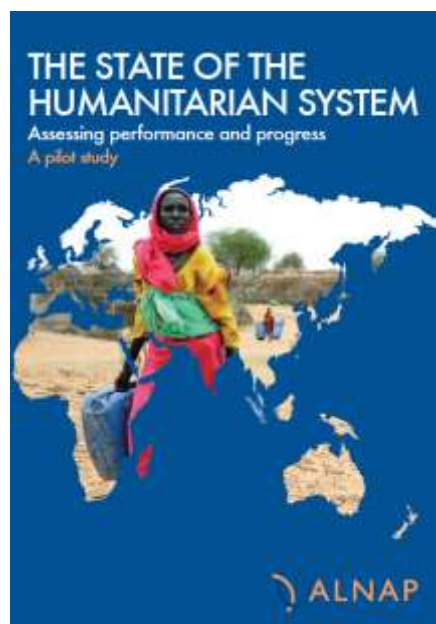
Scott Chapelowe, IFRC - We need to be careful using the word participatory. There is a continuum, and RTEs tend to be on the lower end, since we often treat locals simply as sources of data. We might want to consider renaming RTE because people often take exception to the idea of conducting evaluations while the response is ongoing. Perhaps we can call it "participatory learning exercise."

Is RTE going to end up a ritual? What's the added value? We need to get more utility from prior RTEs.

Session four: State of the Humanitarian System Learning Review

Yuka Hasegawa, *Research Officer, Evaluation & Accountability, ALNAP* and **Kim Scriven**, *Research and Innovations Officer, ALNAP* presented the findings from their learning review on ALNAP's pilot State of the Humanitarian System (SOHS) report, launched in January 2010.

Kim provided some history on the SOHS project along with details of the report and its dissemination, including over 5,000 downloads from the ALNAP website and formal launches in London, Geneva and New York.



Yuka presented the feedback that has been gathered about the report since its launch, which included:

The report could be written in less academic language.

The report should better complement other publications such as the WDR and HRI.

Ownership by ALNAP membership needs to be increased and disseminated through member agencies more strategically.

In terms of frequency, the consensus is that a report every two years is fine, with a full report every 3-5 years, and annual updates. The next version should set the baseline.

In conclusion, there is overwhelming support for the project. It captures both major crises and policy concerns of the system as a whole (e.g. security, value for money), and also monitors for significant changes and trends. A more strategic dissemination strategy is needed.

In terms of next steps, a ToR will be formulated by the end of 2010, and the intended project publication date is spring 2012.

Discussion:

Wendy Fenton, ODI: To what extent can the report look at donors who are not part of the formal system?

Francois Grünewald, Groupe URD: Some stakeholders don't see themselves in the system but they are. It is an open and dynamic system and we need to reflect this openness, rather than perpetuate a pyramidal structure.

Jess Camburn, ELRHA: Can the report potentially look at people affected by disasters compared to those who trigger a response?

Scott Chaplowe, IFRC: You should start off with a write-up on the purpose of the report. And address these questions that keep cropping up, e.g., "what do we mean by system"? In the pilot there was a similar discussion on these questions, so they should be tackled up front.

SOHS as an advocacy tool:

Ivan Scott: I am intrigued about the idea of using the report as an advocacy tool.

Ben Ramalingam, ALNAP: I do not see how the report can be an advocacy tool without recommendations to advocate for.

Nigel Timmins, Christian Aid: The report should not be an advocacy tool, or else ALNAP will get bogged down in editorial policy. People reading the report will start to wonder about hidden agendas and the whole thing inevitably gets politicised. It is best to stay focused on evaluation and seem more objective.

Final Session: Open Space Learning

The final session of Day 3 was an informal open space learning event. Speakers from the floor proposed topics of discussion and groups of delegates gathered to address each of these topics in a less structured format.

Topics addressed included follow up on IA-RTE's; follow up on the Humanitarian Innovation Fund and 'how ALNAP can better reach out to Southern based organisations and stakeholders.'

