



## 2021 MEETING

CONCEPT NOTE

# Learning from disruption: evolution, revolution or status quo?

19-21 OCTOBER | VIRTUAL MEETING

## WHY THIS TOPIC?

Humanitarians and observers of humanitarian action have often lamented the fact that the system is unable or unwilling to make the changes and improvements required to make humanitarian action more effective at meeting the challenges of an unpredictable world. Many stakeholders feel that changes are brought about less by the planned efforts of humanitarians themselves but more by external forces or shocks. Indeed, this has been born out during the last 17 months, where unplanned and unanticipated disruptions appear to have altered the structures and processes of humanitarian action, as well as how we think of and understand the purpose of the humanitarian endeavour itself.

COVID-19 has brought about disruptions to humanitarian financing and operational systems and processes. The reduction in numbers of international staff in crisis situations has created space for

increased recognition of the role of locally-led humanitarian action. Simultaneously, the proliferation of virtual meeting platforms has given new energy and exposure to a greater range of voices who are challenging traditional narratives about the purpose and principles of humanitarian action and how these relate to social justice.

Given the speed at which all of this is taking place, it is a very timely moment to take stock of the kinds of disruptions that are happening in order to learn from them. As a network that exists to support learning and improvements, ALNAP will address the following questions: **Where in the system are disruptions taking place? Are they adding up to create transformational effects? How can we understand their impact in order to enhance positive changes and improvements for crisis-affected people?**

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## WHAT IS THE AIM OF THIS MEETING?

The 2021 ALNAP Meeting will provide a unique space for the sector to come together to create a picture of the disruptions and experiences that have taken place and/or have accelerated over the last year and a half. The specific aims of the meeting are:

- to gain a shared understanding of how humanitarian operations are changing due to external disruptions; and
- to manage these changes in order to bring about effective responses for crisis-affected communities.



The meeting will cover 4 key areas in which changes and disruptions are taking place: **humanitarian ethics and principles; humanitarian financing; operations and programming; and evaluation, learning and policy.**

Examples of discussion topics for each area are listed below. You are welcome to suggest others.

### **Humanitarian ethics and principles:**

- changes and challenges to respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL)
- the effect of rising populist narratives on humanitarian values
- challenges to traditional concepts of humanitarianism from more diverse actors
- new challenges to collective understanding of humanitarian principles, ethics, values and bodies of law
- decolonisation of aid: implications for the humanitarian system
- balancing upward and downward accountability in humanitarian assistance

### Humanitarian financing:

- lessons learned from the use of new financing models
- learning from flexible funding and planning approaches
- the influence of philanthropic donors on humanitarian action
- innovative humanitarian financing
- synergies and trade-offs between humanitarian and traditional development financing

### Operations and programming:

- learning from local actors in responding to humanitarian crises since COVID-19 both *within* and *outside* the formal humanitarian system
- the effect of the pandemic on humanitarian supply chains and how to strengthen humanitarian logistics capacity
- developments in local leadership: examples of promising initiatives
- challenges and best practices in the remote management of humanitarian action

- the importance of mental health protection for humanitarian workers post COVID-19
- the role of emerging technologies like contact tracing in humanitarian programming

### Evaluation, learning and policy:

- the changing nature of humanitarian evaluations
- changes in humanitarian policy and moving forward on priority reform areas
- the role of organisational strategy in enabling donors and agencies to navigate a year of challenge and change
- innovations and experimentation in humanitarian learning and policy



## HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE?

### Applying for a session

We want to ensure that this meeting is co-created and we warmly invite you to help provide content and shape the agenda and discussion. Perhaps you have an idea for an engaging workshop, or an insightful angle for a discussion or a story?

Please let us know.

**Our call for sessions is now open. The deadline for submissions is 4 August 2021.** This year you can submit a session proposal that uses any one of the following four formats: broadcast sessions, workshops, breakout-based sessions and stories. To find out more and apply please visit: [alnap.org/2021-meeting](https://alnap.org/2021-meeting).

Proposals will be assessed by a panel of ALNAP members, secretariat staff and external reviewers. Those who submit successful session plans will receive support to optimise their session in the lead up to the virtual meeting. The platform hosting our meeting allows for a wide range of options for interaction, so do think big when pitching your sessions and stories.

### Attending the meeting

One of the benefits of holding this meeting virtually is that it enables a wider range of people to attend. All humanitarians interested in the meeting theme are welcome to register.

**The meeting will take place from 19 to 21 October 2021.** Sessions will be available in multiple languages and span different time zones, so that you can take part wherever you are.

### Registration

**Registration for the meeting will open in late July. Early-bird rates will be available for tickets purchased before 15 September 2021.**

Find out more and keep up to date at [alnap.org/2021-meeting](https://alnap.org/2021-meeting).

You can also sign up for our [email updates](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).



Strengthening humanitarian action  
through evaluation and learning

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