



LEADERSHIP

Leadership and decision-making are regularly criticised in humanitarian evaluations – and yet attract surprisingly little academic attention. ALNAP has been addressing these gaps with two new projects: comprehensive research exploring the decisions and decision-making processes required in humanitarian contexts; and a set of practical training materials based on previous operational leadership work.

Central to the research this year is a major study on operational humanitarian decision-making that builds on ALNAP's track record in this area and draws on dedicated new data. Several outputs cascaded from the study – including webinars, presentations and 'bitesize' materials – some widely pitched, others more targeted. Event attendees praised the research findings for being 'thought-provoking', 'informative' and 'refreshing'.

[The webinar] made me reconsider my way of making decisions especially when having more information doesn't necessarily lead to better outcomes.

Caritas staff at launch event

Key achievements

Humanitarian evaluations routinely criticise decision-making for being too slow, disconnected and unaccountable. However, the ability to make good decisions – particularly in difficult circumstances – is fundamental to effective humanitarian responses.



4

PUBLICATIONS



1,715

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ALNAP's study '[Beyond Assumptions](#)' set out to understand how decisions are made in-country during a crisis and how different decision-making approaches perform. It drew on more than two

KEY PUBLICATION PERFORMANCE



1,013

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163

WEBINAR
PARTICIPANTS

years' research into operational decision-making and analysed 55 decision-makers' diary entries to scrutinise how they made a total of 1,035 decisions. Nearly all operational ALNAP Member organisations engaged in the research.

Findings from the study fed into ALNAP's other prominent output this year – the '[Introduction to Effective Humanitarian Leadership](#)' training materials. This output builds on ALNAP's earlier work on humanitarian leadership and offers a method of applying shared leadership that departs from highly individualised, traditional models.

The materials underwent extensive, invaluable piloting by Member organisations earlier in the year and include 'train the trainer' videos and facilitation kits for capacity-building within Member organisations.

Much of the year's outputs stemmed from the Beyond Assumptions study, which produced stimulating (and surprising) findings. Some 160 participants joined the webinar launch, while in-

country presentations to humanitarian leaders in Abuja, Dhaka, Cox's Bazar, Jakarta and Suva were all well-attended. Feedback from events was resoundingly positive.

Complementary materials included a '101' bitesize publication, '3 steps to improve your decision-making', with a flowchart for humanitarian leaders to identify the most suitable decision-making approach for different situations.

A highly popular interactive quiz, policy brief and method note drew out key messages from the study for different audiences. Both the quiz and the 101 bitesize were translated into six languages reflecting the Beyond Assumptions participants, with high download figures particularly for Bangla versions.

[A blog exploring the findings on evidence](#) and [a webinar on the diary method](#) rounded off the year.



Hamsatu James (EYN Projects), Leah Campbell (ALNAP Senior Research Officer and co-author of Beyond Assumptions Study), Saliu Gorko (Al-Muhibbah Foundation) and Grace Mbaiora (Africa Youth Advisory Board on Disaster Risk Reduction) at launch event in Abuja, Nigeria.