



## NEW ALNAP COORDINATION WEBINAR

How can humanitarian better coordinate across a response?

Tues 23 Feb | 2 – 3:30pm (GMT)



**(84 minutes)**

**Leah Campbell:** Hello everyone, and welcome to this webinar. We are so glad to have all of you here with us, and so glad that there is so much interest in this issue. My name is Leah Campbell, I'm a Research Officer at ALNAP, and I'm going to start off by letting you know a bit about ALNAP's coordination work, and what led us to starting this webinar series. ALNAP's been doing work on leadership and coordination for the last few years. Last summer we published a paper about the humanitarian clusters, we followed that up with some round tables with the global clusters, as well as over the past year and a half, we've done a short webinar series which explores leadership and coordination concepts from outside of the humanitarian sector, and what use they might be for us as humanitarians. The next step in this work is a meeting that we're convening in June, looking at four different aspects of coordination. One of those aspects is coordinating across a response, and that's what we're going to talk about in today's webinar. As well as this webinar we'll be producing a briefing paper and a video on the topic, which will be shared closer to June. This week I've been working on the paper actually, so I'm very interested to hear about what the speakers have to say, as well as what you the audience has to say, and there will be some opportunity to ask questions, share your own thoughts, and contribute to some polls later on in the webinar.

To briefly introduce the topic, which is 'how can humanitarian better coordinate across a response', I guess the first question is, what do we mean by 'coordination across a response'? Well this is the best term we've come up with for describing connections between the different levels or sectors of a response. So in the humanitarian cluster system, this could be inter-cluster coordination, or inter-sectoral coordination. It also means connections between national and subnational levels of coordination, as well as the coordination of cross cutting issues, and while these are challenges for the humanitarian coordination system, similar challenges exist in other coordination mechanisms as well. So why is this issue important? Well, it consistently came up in our research, as well as in discussions and readings of other work that we've done. It's an aspect that we haven't yet been able to address in our research, and there's a lot of on going discussion in the humanitarian sector about how we can improve humanitarian coordination, and these aspects in particular, so we felt this was a great time to reflect on what the challenges really are, what we know does work, what learning we might bring in from other sectors, and what key questions remain.

So before I turn you over to our three speakers today, I just wanted to briefly introduce them to you. We have with us today Jessica Saulle, who is the head of Humanitarian Food Security & Livelihoods for Save the Children UK. She's been engaged in the humanitarian sector for over ten years, in operations and headquarters roles. Her background is in operation management, humanitarian coordination, social protection, economic programming, and preparedness. We also have with us today Alex Tyler, who has recently been the UNHCR Inter-Sector Coordination for the Jordan refugee response, which is the humanitarian operation supporting Syrian refugees in Jordan. Alex has worked in the humanitarian sector for the last 16 years, including in the Congo, Somalia, Eastern Europe, Thailand and Afghanistan, primarily in refugee, IDP, and emergency operations. He's held positions covering protection, programme and project design, livelihoods, as well as coordination. Our last speaker is Carlos Geha. Carlos is the Deputy Head of Office for OCHA Jordan. He's worked for 13 years within the humanitarian sector, mostly with the ICRC and the UN, and prior to that worked in the private sector. He has worked in several complex emergencies, including Chad, Yemen, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Jordan and the Ivory Coast, and he's been deployed on mission to Pakistan, and recently within Nepal, where he was based in the Gorkha sub office, leading the humanitarian hub in the western part of Nepal, and it's this experience that Carlos is going to draw on today.

So the final thing to do before I pass you over to our speakers is a bit of housekeeping, the first thing that I'll mention is we have a few polls. So the first poll should be up on your screen now, and we're really interested to hear from all of you at this time what your level of experience with coordination is. We have about 77% of you answering so far, so I'll read out the results. 27% of you have read or thought about coordination, but don't have any operational experience yet. 38%, the highest number, have been involved in a humanitarian coordination mechanism. 14% have been involved in many different coordination mechanisms. 10% of you have been a cluster or sector or working group coordination, and 11% have had coordination experience outside of the humanitarian sector. So that's quite a wide range of experience that we've got, and that's about 80% of you, of about 130 attendees, so thank you so much for sharing that with us. I'll close that poll now, and we'll come back to the polls a little later on, and get your thoughts on something else, some other part of the discussion. So I'm just about ready to turn over to our first speaker to address the first question as part of our Q&A, which is for our speakers to tell us a bit about their experience with coordination. So without further ado, here is Alex to let us know what his experience has been so far.

**Alex Tyler:** So hello, thank you very much. So again my name is Alex Tyler, I was recently the Inter-Sector Coordinator for the refugee response in Jordan. Now I'm going to talk very briefly about the Refugee Coordination Model, and then I will talk about how we applied that in the context of the Syrian refugee crisis in Jordan, and then lastly I'll talk about inter-sector linkages, and some of the challenges, some of the successes we've had in Jordan, in trying to encourage different sectors to talk to each other, and to coordinate, both as sectors and organisations within those sectors. So first of all, the Refugee Coordination Model. Now the Refugee Coordination Model is a framework for coordinating, as you can imagine, a

refugee response. It is a framework in the sense that it can be applied differently in different operations. It can be applied in emergency contexts, it can be applied in non-emergency contexts, and indeed it can be tailored as appropriate to that specific context. For instance you don't need to have a complex coordination structure with many sectors in a response which is involving only a few actors, but yet by comparison the responses in the Syrian refugee crisis have required very complex, multi-layered coordination structures, including national level sectors, local level coordination structures, and heads of agency bodies, as well as of course, interfaces with development, resilience actors and the government.

Now the Refugee Coordination Model is distinct from the cluster system, which many of you will be familiar with. The Refugee Coordination Model is overall led by UNHCR, it is the application of UNHCR's mandate through the General Assembly. UNHCR is delivering that mandate through partnership with different UN agencies, with different NGOs, with the government, and with the refugees themselves, to try and construct and to deliver the most effective operation in terms of providing protection and assistance to refugees. Again, I repeat the importance of ensuring that we keep that goal in mind, and that the model is there, and the coordination structure's there to protect and assist refugees, and that any structures which are developed around that should be tailored and tested to make sure that we are meeting that primary goal. Now, secondly onto the context in Jordan. The engine of the coordination structures in Jordan were the refugee sectors. There were seven sectors in total at the national level. They included the health, water and sanitation, education, food security, basic needs which included non-food items and cash, and that oversaw then, coordination structures at the local level. So there were two main camps which had their own inter-sector coordination group, and then may different sector groups, and then there were urban coordination meetings in three of the main towns, which were primarily just inter-sector groups.

The refugee sectors, the chairs of those sectors together with representatives from the INGO forum, and the senior gender advisor met together in the inter-sector coordination group at the national level. This is the group I was chairing for the last few years. Now that group, its function is to try and work on processes, on common processes which can have an added value on the individual work of different sectors to try and develop linkages between those sectors, to try and develop, and overall improve the response, than it would otherwise have been if we had been working in silos. Now examples were, for instance, of inter-sector coordination were the development of the refugee response plans. Those were the main planning strategies and funding mechanisms for the last few years, across the region affected by the Syrian refugee crisis, and that included basically the setting of objectives, the setting of outputs and indicators, agreement on budgets and overall strategic direction. It also covered monitoring and reporting on those goals, on those objectives. Other common projects included contingency planning, and advocacy messages, both for a specific sector advocacy concerns, but also advocacy vis-à-vis different stakeholders, which were relevant to the overall response.

A last key process we developed was trying to agree on a common framework for defining vulnerability of refugees. We developed what was called the Vulnerability Assessment Framework, or VAF, which leveraged refugee data from registration, applied through models, there was econometric model, and then sector specific models, which then provided a scoring of each refugee family in terms of their relative vulnerability. Now this was a very important process, because it allowed us to collectively come together and agree on both a common definition of vulnerability, have a common understanding of who required assistance, and what type of assistance, and with which priority, and it meant that we could actually therefore then target assistance, as our resources became more and more limited, and indeed pre-empting that stage. Another process which I'll talk specifically about was how we tried to then develop inter-sector linkages between the sectors, and I'll talk about again, some of the challenges and some of the successes we had. Over the last year we've held every single month a presentation by one sector, almost like a peer review, where the sector chairs would present to the other sectors their main objectives, their challenges, their goals, and then there would be working group discussions on how other sectors could support them in achieving those goals, or rather how those sectors could work together.

This led to a long list of potential activities, many of which were actually on going, which we then reviewed later on in the year to ensure that there was progress towards achieving some of these activities. There were some very good examples of inter-sector coordination, and very simple ones. First of all, just ensuring that each sector has a very clear work plan, and in developing that work plan, other sectors had an opportunity to contribute to that work plan. Secondly, that each sector had very clear objectives and time frame, the work plan for their activities, which meant that there was an obvious interface where other sectors could understand what the other sectors were doing, and then see how they could link up with those sectors. There were also very specific examples where two sectors came together, for instance in WASH and education, UNICEF's work where they linked WASH in schools, or there was NRC's work where they linked protection activities with their shelter interventions, through housing, land and property interventions. There were actual very specific examples where one organisation, or two organisations together managed to develop through a simple agreement, a way to ensure that they each brought their comparative advantage to the table, and worked together to assist refugees in a more holistic way.

So I would say as a last point, that was an interesting observation at the end, that it was clear that it was easier for organisations to develop inter-sector linkages within their own organisation. That may sound like a very obvious thing to say, but it was easier for, for instance UNHCR's health team, to work closely with UNHCR's shelter team, and UNHCR's non-food item team for instance. Similarly within UNICEF there was very established collaboration between health, child protection, education and WASH. I've already provided the example of NRC. The challenge though was how to make organisations work together more closely, and there are barriers and obstacles to doing so, which we could perhaps discuss more in this webinar. They included for instance, perhaps a lack of trust between organisations. In some cases organisations were concerned, or there was competition, whether they felt that by opening up their project area to another organisation,

that eventually they would lose their space to deliver that project for instance. Also there were just different ways of working, different types of language, different terminology. One of the challenges is how to come together with a common understanding of the situation, a common way of delivering assistance, to make sure that you can actually interface together as two organisations. Again, there were some very good examples of that happening, I can go into more detail on that.

Lastly I would just point to, I've described the Refugee Coordination Model in Jordan, things have evolved since the Refugee Model was rolled out there. Now the process in Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq and Jordan is overseen by the 3RP, or the Refugee & Resilience Response Plan. This is led jointly by UNCHR and UNDP and represents how the situation has evolved, whereby refugee programming and coordination structures are trying to link up with resilience and development actors, both in terms of leveraging additional funds, bringing additional skills to the table, and ensuring that there is a more holistic response. In many ways this is inter-sector coordination at a much bigger level, between the two pillars of humanitarian and development responses. Now that in turn is also building up on national leadership in each country, where the different governments have now developed their own response plans, which humanitarian and development actors are feeding into. So it shows you how it's important, even though we have this established Refugee Coordination Model, to allow it to adapt to be responsive to the changing needs, and also to ensure that we have the long-term goals in mind, and recognising that we do need to work more closely with development actors who can bring in additional funds, additional skills to the table.

**Leah Campbell:** Great, thanks so much Alex. We're going to turn now to Carlos to hear some more about his experiences as well.

**Carlos Geha:** Okay, thank you, good afternoon everyone. My name is Carlos Geha, I'm currently working in Jordan. As Leah mentioned, I was deployed last year for the earthquake in Nepal, and as you can remember we had two earthquakes in Nepal, one in the east, one in the west, and we had basically two emergencies within one country. For the first time, I have always been working at capital level, leading the OCHA office for either the country itself, or being inter-sector coordinator, more or less the same as what Alex described earlier on. This time I was deployed in the field in the west, and my experience in Nepal was enlightening in the sense of, from the beginning, from the onset of the crisis, and it was an IDP crisis, not a refugee crisis, and therefore the humanitarian reform applies and activation of clusters are also activated, but all of them depending on the crisis. In Nepal the humanitarian coordinator has appointed two deputies, one for the east and one for the west, therefore decentralising the response in two halves. This is the first time I worked in an environment where we have two deputy humanitarian coordinators, decentralised, and both reporting to the humanitarian coordinator. The experience was pretty good.

Before I elaborate further, it's important to consider that coordination and response varies very from the country we are in. Even sometimes within the same country, we have two national sub offices, and the two of them are working differently. It's important that we have

strong leadership at the central level, at the national level in this case, and guidance and strategies, methodology, approach identified. Those are translated into a response plan by each sector, and those response plans, or strategies by sector, are basically taken at the sub national level. However the sub national level has also to operate in the environment we are sitting in. In the west, where we were based in Nepal, in Gorkha, we had a government which was pretty strong. OCHA and the international community, INGOs and local NGOs, the Red Cross, etc., we had to obviously support the government in responding to the crisis, and that is a very important fact that we tend to forget. You do not try to come and substitute the government effort. We provided a capacity, our techniques, our tools, and our goods, and tried to work with the government on how you can use them to best deliver to these people.

The needs within one area, in one country, also varies from one location to another location. In this context of the earthquake, obviously everyone was in need of shelter, but in some areas, and in the west, health facilities were still working and standing. In the east it was completely the opposite, so obviously health had a priority. The geography and landscape of the environment also sometimes guides our actions. In Nepal, if you have been in Nepal you know how different it is from one location to another location. Logistics were a massive constraint to humanitarian actors, and we had to rely a lot on the logistics cluster led by WFP, in order to move our goods from one location to another location. So I will say based on my experience in working in different countries, and recently in Nepal, I think this is a good way forward, in the sense of having strong leadership in one national office, and having a good team with partners who are ready to work together, to coordinate together, not to be coordinated, but to coordinate themselves with their partners, this is a key to success.

In Nepal when I was in Gorkha, I basically took the tools provided by the national level, the methodology for example in how we do rapid assessment. We took the methodology on how we're going to do cash distribution, cash assistance, and basically we adapted that tool to the context in which we were living. Often again, depending on the country itself, sometimes the distance between a sub national office and the capital is so far, that basically the two have to be operating differently. There are good practices in how we can link more the sub national to national, some of them are straightforward, for example, inviting the sub cluster at a sub national office to go to meet with the cluster leader at the national, capital level, or vice versa. Often a good practice was also to invite the senior management and the coordination team also to come to the field to see the situation on the ground, and some of the actions that have been taken. That is my experience in Nepal, it's something that we have discussed internally at OCHA, and it's not that we're trying to replicate it, because every country is different from another country, and every scenario is different from another. However, it is important that the sub national do keep, and do have independence to be able to deploy and assist the people we are supposed to assist at the onset of a crisis.

**Leah Campbell:** Thanks very much Carlos. We're going to turn now to Jessica to hear her thoughts about her experiences with coordinating across a response.

**Jessica Saulle:** Hello everyone. As Leah was saying, I'm heading the Humanitarian Food Security & Livelihoods team in Save the Children UK. This is a team which was traditionally doing food security and cash for food security objectives, and that has now evolved to be more of a supportive team to other sectors, as well as doing the food security sector cash. My coordination experience was both as an OCHA employee and in cash coordination, but for this talk I'm going to focus on the latter, as I have supported different experiences as an NGO employee, first with Oxfam and then Save the Children and have done so since 2010. So 2010 is also the moment when there was a growing trend towards the use of cash transfer programming as a response modality in emergencies across the humanitarian sector. The most emphasis is actually on food security, but other sectors were also involved, and are interested in being involved with that. Cash in the bucket of beneficiary is a multi-commodity (inaudible 25.39). This is really important for this discussion, because when we provide cash to our households without restrictions, it allows the household to meet most sector needs according to their own priorities. We can picture that cash, doing so is a little bit of a challenge for the current sector-based system, the cluster systems that we have, and our mandates.

Also there are some functions that require specific harmonisation that is not tackled by the current system, because it also requires harmonisation with everybody involved, all the clusters involved. So these are around targeting the transfer size, delivery mechanism, monitoring and evaluation, accountability, information management, and also as Alex was specifying before, an understanding of the situation and common objectives. So Save the Children, Oxfam, CaLP and other NGOs have engaged in doing an in-country cash working group for quite a while now. Until 2014 the cash coordination experiences that Save the Children especially has led, were a cash working group, there were also ad hoc, unpredictable funding dependant, but also personality dependant coordination groups, and they were dealing only with the technical aspects of the cash coordination. So they were not formally linked to the humanitarian architecture, or having the authority to properly relate to the government. This is actually most of them that are still in that shape now. Also there are a few coordination set ups that attempted to overcome some of these features, and some of the lessons learned I'm going to let you know about now.

Basically Lebanon is one of them, so in the third quarter of 2014, 32 agencies reported over 170 cash transfer projects. Most of them were restricted with a single sector objective, but there has been a trial during the winter of 2013 on 86,000 households that were receiving multipurpose grants. So one grant to cover different needs in different sectors. It actually, this exercise was assigned a cash working group that was created to normalise the approaches and the work and the aspects I just mentioned before, so targeting, the transfer value, delivery mechanisms, the monitoring and evaluation system, the market assessment and analysis, which is very important when we speak about cash, because we need to understand whether the market has the possibility to provide the items, but also we need to understand how the population is linked to the market, and various different considerations. It also worked on accountability and (? 29.03). So it was well attended, including (ph 29.05) the cluster representation, this cash working group was not involved in the restricted sector CTP

debates, so it could not actually look at all the restricted sectoral cash transfer programming that was still in the different sectors. Also this can not be looked at as a comprehensive model for cash coordination, because it just looks at one fragment of the cash programming that was going on. Also later, this cash working group was involved in a basic needs, basic assistance sector working group, and included the NFI assistance.

Another coordination system that we have experienced as a stakeholder, not as a lead or a co-lead, is the cash coordination Haiyan response in the Philippines. So in this response a cash coordinator was deployed by OCHA to oversee the seven hubs where cash was occurring. So the person could concentrate on two of the hubs which were the hubs with the most cash, and managed to bring some successes, both in the strategic and technical levels, such as bringing the government, which is very critical, and also looking at some targeting issues that were going on. So there was a recommendation that this role is too broad for one person, it's really a good start to have one person overseeing the full spectrum in a sense, and ensuring that all the information gets across one group.

The last coordination experience that I would like to speak to you about is the Nepal one, so in Nepal Save the Children seconded a technical coordinator to OCHA during the earthquake response with DFID funding. This is because we recognise that if OCHA were to lead, one person in OCHA was not enough to do that work, so there was a need to have one person ensuring that all the clusters were linked, the government was linked, and looking at strategic issues, and then also a person looking at more technical issues. This has been actually a good experience and has overcome a few challenges, but it's still showed that resources were not sufficient, and that the information inside is something that needs to have particular insight on. So we need to really fix the information system in those responses, alongside all different aspects. It has been a really good experience already to continue the (inaudible 32.28).

**Leah Campbell:** Thank you so much to all three of you for starting off the webinar by giving us a taste of your different experiences. There's quite a few questions that are coming in, I'm going to start off the discussion with one that was submitted in advance of the webinar, and we're going to start by going to Alex first, and the next question is, what possibilities are there for a more decentralised and localised approach to coordination that is adaptive and changing to complex contexts? We're going to turn to Alex to start this one off, and hear what he has to say.

**Alex Tyler:** Well the short answer is, there are many opportunities or possibilities for more centralised and localised approaches. I mean, I think it depends on what level we're talking about. If we're talking about the difference between the global coordination policy and approaches versus country level, or decentralised within countries and having different approaches in different parts of the country. I would say that on one level it's important to have some consistency between the approaches which are applied. I mean, not least in terms of accountability for the response, and knowing who should be doing what, so that if there is an urgent response required and lives need to be saved, that the agencies are there, and the



organisations are there who can deliver, and know that they should be delivering based on global responsibilities. There's also a value in having some predictability in the way coordination is done between different contexts. It makes it easier for partners to talk to each other if they talk the same language basically, in terms of coordination.

Now that being said, I would actually say that coordination is at its most vibrant when it is decentralised, and when there are new ideas coming up, which are then taken on by the central, global level. I've noticed when I was working on the coordination in Jordan, that there were some very good practices developed in Lebanon for instance, in Turkey, in other parts of the world which we were aware of through these sorts of webinars, and online tools or exchanges, and we were then able to adapt this approach to our context, or take the bits which were appropriate to the changing context in Jordan. Vice versa, I think we've learnt a lot from the cluster system and the Transformative Agenda from UNHCR's perspective, and I think now the Syria crisis, the Refugee Coordination Model has set a certain tone and standard. It'll be interesting to see how this is then taken on and developed in other contexts. But again, I mean, I come back to my original point, the key issue is making sure we're adaptive to changing contexts, in order to deliver what? In order to make sure assistance and protection is going to the people who need it, and that the coordination structure should be tailored to the specific needs of that context, recognising as I said at the beginning, the need for some consistency to ensure predictability of the response.

**Leah Campbell:** Great, thanks Alex. I'm going to turn as well to Carlos for some thoughts on this one.

**Carlos Geha:** I'm just mainly talking about coordination at a national level, not going to the global level. Indeed one country should speak with one voice. We can't have sub offices taking different methodologies, different leads, because when it comes to comparing like with like, we need to be talking with the same indicators. These usually are set up at the national level, in collaboration, in coordination with all humanitarian actors across the board in the whole country. Just to capitalise on what Alex said, yes there has been a lot of good practices used, and it's an evolving market in which we always have to adapt ourselves basically to the demand. These days we have technology which we did not have ten years ago, and with the technology and capability of it, we are able to do more things, assessing the needs and the gaps, and identifying where we have to tailor our approach. In the context, just to focus on the context of Nepal, at some point, the first four weeks, the government of Nepal at the central level was saying that food is a priority, therefore the protection cluster was only using their trucks, and especially the helicopters, because we had a big deficiency on helicopters to transport goods, we were only using the helicopters mainly to transport food. In the west where I was, the local government priority was basically to give the tools to people to rebuild their shelter, because all those people had their own means, coping mechanisms into finding food in one way or another.

Then we had to intervene through the deputy humanitarian coordinator, or the western humanitarian coordinator to discuss directly with the humanitarian coordinator at the

capital level, into basically changing that, in the sense of the inter-cluster coordination body in the capital cannot dictate what has to be shipped across the country. It took us a bit of a while to changing that, convincing the cluster that the needs in the west and the needs in the east are different, and it's not what the central government is asking for, which could be for any political motivation or reason, that may be, that we have to do the same across the board. Yes, I will go for a decentralised approach as much as possible, again it varies on context. If the capital is only a half an hour drive from the sub national office, that's different, sorry, but when we have a distance of concern I will decentralise, but ensuring that the sub national offices are using the tools as much as possible that have been set up at the capital level.

Jessica mentioned earlier on that she worked on the cash in Nepal, which I was very much involved in Gorkha, in the western part of Nepal. Here in this example, obviously we had a team working and doing different studies, and analysing and finding best practices, looking at the equity basket, how much we should be giving to people. We came up with a \$75 amount, and that was good enough, but then identifying the vulnerability of the people in the west, and using what was said at the capital was not necessarily adaptable to our context. For different reasons, I mean, one of them was purely political, and where we had to change our target groups in the west to adapt to what the government wishes to have, and what the partners on the ground said, "Okay, maybe that is the best approach." At the end of the day we managed to take the best practices or indicators given at the capital level, and adapted it to our level. That did not create so many issues with our senior manager at the capital level because the idea was to roll out the cash working group and to roll out its activity, and in order to reduce a little bit on expensive transport systems where we had to provide food, provide shelter, provide NFIs, etc.

**Leah Campbell:** Thanks Carlos. Great, we're going to move to the next question that's come in now. This has to do with the role of competition and what role or what effect that might have in coordination across a response, and potentially how we might minimise competition for funding in order to improve humanitarian coordination for efficiency. So I'm going to turn first to Jessica to hear some thoughts on this one.

**Jessica Saulle:** So competition for funding has challenges and also obvious opportunities. Basically in terms of challenges, and because of my role here, especially about the cash coordination, I would like to come back to something that I mentioned before, the information management, which is a difficult task in cash coordination, as the information doesn't necessarily flow well to a national cash coordination, but from the regional or sub national entities. In two cash coordination experiences, NGO led cash working groups, we noticed that it was pretty difficult to get information at all from organisations that were actually bidding for the same funds. So the information sharing issue got resolved in some of the contexts by the organisation moving together in a consortium, and the consortium approach has been systematically looked at, and adapted in different contexts such as in Somalia, in Mozambique, and is an no brainer for NGOs in this context, they just join some consortium and continue the work, especially in a protracted crisis.

The consortium approach does not actually fix the system, it doesn't allow, in terms of cash coordination, it doesn't allow the strategy and coordination to happen very clearly. It doesn't allow, for instance, the coordination between the government, the United Nations, INGO, NGOs that may actually all do cash programming. It doesn't also enter the complementarity between the cash and other modalities and services that the clusters are providing, or in general coordinating the aid response. It's not necessarily a solution. In the Haiyan response the OCHA led cash coordination was seen as a good example in terms of competition for funding, and reducing it, because OCHA who led that, was a non-implementing agency, and managed to have partners more willing to share information, so partners like the government, ICRC, or other national actors.

**Leah Campbell:** Great, thanks Jessica, and I think we're also going to turn to Alex to get some thoughts on this one as well.

**Alex Tyler:** I think if you look at the last part of this question, 'how can we minimise competition for funding to improve humanitarian coordination for efficiency', I would put it the other way round. I think that competition does have a role in improving efficiency, and I think that can be self evident, where it's a health competition. I think we should all be trying to become more efficient, to reduce overheads, to reduce and be very self aware when submitting project proposals that our budgets are appropriate to the response. Where one organisation manages to save on some overheads, and therefore get the project funds, that can actually be overall a better use of resources for the response. More people can be assisted with the same amount of money. I would say that there are of course lots of caveats to that, and of course it shouldn't be affecting the overall quality of the response. The other part is that competition can actually breed a very positive exchange of ideas. Whether you call it competition or just taking very good examples another organisation has done, for instance WFP really have blazed a trail by shifting from in kind assistance to e-cards and e-voucher systems, which really have empowered refugees in the Jordan and Lebanon contexts, to really allow them to make choices of how they then spend funds.

Then UNHCR has also in parallel developed its own iris based banking ATM system, where basically people can get a virtual bank account, which is created through the private sector banking system, and they can extract funds, money from their bank account, using iris biometrics on a monthly basis. Again, I watched how these two different approaches actually learned from each other, and there was a point where I think one model was perhaps more efficient than the other, and the other organisation then adapted their approach, and took on a different use of technology. So in the end, and I would say there's also lots of complementarities between WFP's food vouchers and UNHCR's cash programming in that context. I think it can actual encourage partners to do a better job. We can become complacent if we sit back and using the same methodologies and same approaches, and in that context competition can be a good thing.

I would say it can be negative when competition prevents cooperation, where you have partners who don't want to share data for instance, when by sharing data they would actually be helping refugees in this context, but they don't share data because it will affect their organisational position. That's of course very questionable. Or not sharing information on what their activities are and what they're doing. I think there are ways to get around that by trying to build trust between these organisations, as I mentioned before, by developing consortium approaches, I point to the ECHO consortium where ECHO creates a project system which requires partners to come together to appeal for funds jointly. In that case those partners, actually by working together for the same project proposal, they actually both have a value from it. A similar approach could be taken with some joint projects or joint programmes in the UN system where that's the most appropriate model.

**Leah Campbell:** Great, thanks Alex, I think that's a great, well rounded answer there on both sides, thanks very much. We've had a question come in that I'm going to turn to next, but before we turn to our speakers I've turned, at least in part, this question into a poll to hear from you the audience. So the question is about whose responsibility it is to ensure effective coordination across a response. We obviously can only put so many options up on the screen, so I've focussed the poll on one aspect of coordination across a response, just for the purposes of the poll. So I'll put this up on the screen just as a provocative question, to see what people think. Whose responsibility is it for inter-cluster or inter-sectoral coordination? Is it the cluster coordinators, or sector coordinators? Is it members of those clusters or sectors? Is it the HCT? Is it OCHA or UNHCR, whoever is providing the coordination mechanism support, or is it donors, or is it a mixture? I think you can check as many as you think it is. As people do that I'll turn to our first speaker on this question. Again, we're not just talking about inter-cluster, inter-sectoral coordination, although that is the poll, so for the speakers, feel free to draw on any aspect of coordination across a response that you've been involved in, to think about this. I'll turn to Carlos first and see if he has any thoughts about whose responsibility is it, which actors are responsible for ensuring that coordination across a response is effective?

**Carlos Geha:** Thank you Leah. Being an inter-sector coordinator, and currently working in Jordan at the moment, and focussing on the Syria crisis, on the southern Syria part, coordination is the responsibility of all. The sector coordinators have a strong role to play, they're all professionals with plenty of experience deployed into any emergency context. Members and partners, donors have always requested to have the leadership for the sector, for a strong person coming to it. As an inter-sector coordinator, or inter-cluster coordinator in my case, obviously we have to provide the basic guidance on how we want to respond, but the output and the inputs coming on a good response has to come from the cluster coordinator or sector coordinator himself. I will say it's a dual effort, OCHA, or when it's the cluster system, or UNHCR when it's a refugee crisis situation, play a strong role as well as equally as much as the cluster coordinator. It is not possible for OCHA to coordinate the whole response, and the whole needs and gaps, and identifying tools and etc., on their own. That's the humanitarian reform, it's a shared responsibility, shared accountability, and all agencies who are lead in one sector or another are also accountable to what they say they will

be doing. All those coordination tools obviously report to the humanitarian coordinator, to whom he is also accountable to the emergency relief coordinator.

To answer this quick poll for me, it would go to cluster coordinators, OCHA mainly, or I will say eight out of ten, but also sector members and donors have a strong role to play. Alex mentioned several times, if members are not really sharing information on what they're doing and how they want to do things, it is not up to the cluster coordinator or to OCHA to guess what the other is doing, and in a good coordination system information is key. The more information that is being shared across partners, among partners, and in a timely manner, the better we're able to respond, and the better the coordination is.

**Leah Campbell:** Thanks Carlos. Before I turn to Alex and Jessica on this one, I just want to feed in the results of the poll. So with just over half of you voting so far, some people are reserving their opinion I guess. 72% think that the cluster/sector coordinator have a role to play. 55% think that cluster or sector members have a responsibility. 37% say the HCT have a responsibility. 64% say OCHA or UNHCR have a responsibility, and 28% donors. So thanks very much for voting in the second pole, and we'll go now to Alex to hear what he thinks of this question.

**Alex Tyler:** I would very much agree with Carlos, and I think the short answer is 'all'. I make a distinction between accountability and responsibility. I would say it's different under the cluster system, but under the Refugee Coordination Model, UNHCR is accountable for ensuring and facilitating that there is an effective response overall, but it is done through partnership. It's done through an inclusive process of consultation, and making sure that the models and how they're applied are appropriate to the context. I mean, it really comes down also to cluster members. Cluster members in a cluster context, or sector members as well. It's a very frustrating thing to be chairing a meeting, and you realise that the staff who are attending the meeting are changing frequently, or aren't informed of previous discussions, and that means that the managers of the different organisations who are participating in the sector meetings really do need to take responsibility for ensuring that the right person comes at the right time, with the right information, to really make a genuine contribution to the discussion. At the same time I would say that, sort of, minimal participation sometimes is a result of there being too many meetings, and some organisations are bigger and can cope with sending people to every single sector meeting. Others can't, so are more sporadic.

I think in that sense it comes back to making sure that the meetings are the minimum necessary to have an added value to the overall response, so they're not... that was our catch phrase in Jordan at least, a phrase which we never quite met in terms of a standard, but trying to do the minimum necessary structures. I think it's a shared responsibility, was my short end to a long answer.

**Leah Campbell:** Great, thanks Alex. I'm going to turn to Jessica to see if she has any thoughts about this in terms of responsibility for bringing into the coordination mechanism, issues that might not have any one natural home. At the same time, I'm wondering Jessica if

you could also elaborate a bit. Somebody has asked for a bit more follow up on what you were talking about when you first spoke, about the difficulties in placing cash in the existing coordination structure, and why this is difficult, and what the implications of this for coordination are. So I'm wondering if Jessica, you can address this question about who's responsibility it is, and also just elaborate a bit more about what the difficulties are in working cash into the existing coordination structure in the humanitarian sector, and why these difficulties exist.

**Jessica Saulle:** Okay, so I also agree with my two colleagues, and this needs to operate as a well-oiled machine, but in order to achieve that, there is a need for a focus on different aspects, and with cash, cash is not new, but it is still seen as a new topic, especially when we speak about cash coordination, and when we speak about unrestricted cash, so cash that is not necessarily meant to focus on one sector. In that actually, mandated agencies, like HCR and OCHA will need to ensure that they have the correct capacity at all levels, and also internal ownership in order to ensure that the cash is well coordinated. The HCT also does need to take on a more strategic role. They need to coordinate with the government, they need to ensure that the strategic aspects are done, bringing together the cluster is very important. Also basically capacity building needs to happen at a larger scale within the different structures.

To address the next question about why is cash not coordinated and difficult to place in the current system, is that it means that basically cash is what I was saying before, a multi-commodity and service bucket of beneficiaries. So beneficiaries choose how they want to spend it, if they want to spend it on shelter, or food, or medicines, transport to hospital, that's up to them. We can't actually define that they are going to spend X amount on this sector, X amount on that sector. The only way to define it is to assess needs very well, and we know that needs are fluctuating throughout the response. So cash cannot actually be put in one cluster or one sector, because it's not a sector, it's an approach to deliver outcomes. So it's actually a catalyser for all the discussion around who needs to step up and coordinate it. It's also big for the World Humanitarian Summit. The implication of not coordinating cash, because we can have every agency going to the same beneficiaries, and having response fatigue. We can have also cost inefficiencies on assessment being duplicated, but also aid being duplicated, and an obvious gap in other places. We can also have quite a bit of confusion on different grant values, and also the different labour rate, when we speak about cash for work. This has been seen in various responses. Also government can also be quite confused in targeting (inaudible 59.26) as well as beneficiaries, and as a result governments would tend to say stop, and block the different programmes going on, because they cannot actually justify that to their own population, for instance.

**Leah Campbell:** Great, thanks very much Jessica. We're going to turn now to the next question, and this is a question that both was submitted in advance, but we've also had quite a few questions come in that are related to this, and the question deals with where new humanitarian stakeholders, or stakeholders that haven't traditionally been included in coordination mechanisms perhaps fit in the coordination structure. So we're thinking about

things like private sector, smaller NGOs, journalists, and then also some of the people who've been writing in during the webinar have mentioned things like coordination in urban areas in sub national levels, perhaps local municipalities and service providers. Also people have mentioned, given for example, the grass roots movements that have come up around the refugee migration challenges that are happening around the world really, the huge influx of grass roots organisations and volunteers, and how those can be coordinated with. So it's a big broader than the original question, but basically the topic is, how do we fit these emerging actors into coordination structures that we do have, and ensure that they're effectively coordinated with? So I'll turn first to Carlos to see his thoughts on this topic.

**Carlos Geha:** Thank you Leah, for this difficult question, I must say. Obviously things are evolving, and we should also differentiate between a crisis at the onset of the crisis, and for chronic crises that have been going on for years and years. Obviously at the onset of a crisis, humanitarian actors meet together and there's a lot of turnover of new partners, etc., putting a coordination system in place, so obviously we tend to talk to those directly involved with humanitarian response, and humanitarian aid workers. That doesn't mean that we don't talk to journalists and we don't talk to the private sector either. I don't personally see at the moment, in the near future, immediate near future, to be that way where we will have journalists sitting around our coordination table, whether at the HCT, whether at the inter-sector coordination working group, or inter-cluster coordination working group, I don't see journalists sitting there. However that doesn't mean that we neglect or we ignore completely the journalists. We work a lot with journalists by organising some press conferences, or by using journalists to advocate key messages, or advocate on human rights issues. Sometimes also we invite journalist to come along to see some of the activities that have been taken by the humanitarian workers in the field. That's vis-à-vis the journalists.

Vis-à-vis the private sector, it is again a new niche which we've been discussing as the UN and also with OCHA for a few years right now, on how we can develop a better partnership with the private sector. Alex will talk later on, there has been a lot of good examples on partnership with the private sector in Jordan. Doing cash through ATMs, obviously we have to work with the private sector on that issue. Now again, having the private sector directly being involved into our coordination discussion, which is very much central to humanitarian assistance, I don't think it is probably a good time for them to invest during or through our coordination mechanism. I would see them both as being a partner, but a different type of partner then when we talk from one UN agency or from one INGO, and etc. Both of them have a value added, one the journalist, we've been working with journalists and the media for years now, this is not new to us, it's embedded into our approach, and that's why we do sit reps, or humanitarian bulletin, etc., you can name it, and that all goes to the media where we advocate our message.

The private sector is likely newer, and there is more work to be done on that, on how we can basically best capitalise it. We should not forget that the private sector also do speak a completely different language as us, as humanitarian workers. What maybe makes sense to them doesn't necessarily make sense to us. We have some basic humanitarian principles that

we respect and we work around the humanitarian principles. Sometimes the private sector don't know the humanitarian principles, and the way they view things is different. It's kind of a difficult one, in the sense of where we have to balance between what is appropriate and what we can do, what we cannot do, and where we put the line.

**Leah Campbell:** Thanks Carlos. We're going to turn to Jessica as well for some thoughts on this one.

**Jessica Saulle:** It's quite important to include the diversity of actors, but it can only be done in the right structure, if we don't want to waste everybody's time. The working groups that I've personally attended, but also colleagues, are often attended by a large number of participants, and become more of a one way update exercise for the lead agency, versus a sharing exercise. The more participants you have, the less committee discussion you get. When the option was in the past, in different working groups including the cash working group at global level, to set up a core group and thematic sub groups, core group is executive functions, such as producing guidance and information, or reviewing guidance or standards. Thematic sub groups, and also advisory board and groups, so we could look at this group as an entry point to capture the wealth of diversity that we can see. I haven't actually thought about all of the first responders and the groups that you have named, so this is going to be food of thought for me, but one thing that comes to my mind is that working in preparedness might actually be a chance to link up all these actors, or actually part of these actors, and build awareness of what cash is, in terms of cash transfer, and in terms of also modalities. We can also speak about what our response can be in the future, and trying to engage those actors prior to the crisis.

**Leah Campbell:** Great, thanks Jessica. We don't have much time so I'm going to move right to our next question. This question has to do, I guess, with what we know works. The question is, is there a standard set of practices, procedures, a minimum set of actions or a checklist, or what you need to do in order to effectively link national and sub national coordination, or to coordinate between sectors or clusters. So this really is focussing on, do we have a list of things that make it work, and what are those things? We'll turn first to Alex on this one.

**Alex Tyler:** There are a number of different tools available, both generic tools which provide advice and guidance on how to coordinate, how to manage meetings, how to co-chair terms of reference, sector coordinated terms of reference, cluster coordinated terms of reference, that sort of thing, and many of these are available from the inter-agency standing committee, but there was also a tool which was developed for the Syria refugee response which is available at [www.coordinationtoolkit.org](http://www.coordinationtoolkit.org). It is actually a compilation of actual examples from different contexts, specifically Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, etc., and it's an example of, for instance, how different coordination structures work in practice, which I've found more useful when trying to develop these in Jordan, because then I could take practical examples. I could see how they worked, I could see the challenges and why they were developed in a certain way, and then apply them. So within Jordan we had, specifically on this question, we



had terms of reference and guidance on linking urban and national coordination structures, which I'll have to check if they're in that toolkit or not, and if they're not I'll try and make sure they are.

I would say that there is a simple list in terms of linking central and urban coordination. The first thing is to make sure that the roles are clear between the two, and those roles may vary from country to country. In Jordan for instance, the central sectors had significantly a lot more authority and control, partly because the country was relatively small compared to the urban coordination structures. But again, ensuring that the roles and how the two, what areas each are supposed to focus on, and how you're supposed to link the two up. There are very simple tips on everything from scheduling, and ensuring that the urban coordination or the sub national meeting happens a few days before the national level meeting, with enough time for minutes to be developed. Second thing is ensuring action points are developed from each meeting, and so action points on the sub national can be referred up to the national level, and be discussed there, not to repeat the same discussion, but to make sure that the concerns of the sub national level are being addressed at the higher policy level. Thirdly of course, ensuring that there is a feedback loop from the national level to the sub national level in terms of responding to queries to question. It requires discipline at the end of the day, discipline and structuring of the schedule and the action points.

**Leah Campbell:** Thanks Alex, that's really useful, and we will definitely send the link round to everyone when we send out the recording of the webinar. I'm going to turn to the next question to keep it moving, as we only have ten more minutes, and this question has to do with how important and feasible it might be to begin coordination before the disaster hits, and whether doing so would improve coordination across a response. And if it's possible, what the potential steps might be to ensure that it's planned and funded properly. So to start off, we're going to turn to Carlos on this one.

**Carlos Geha:** The international community and we all have a responsibility to do emergency preparedness. So we have two levels here, whether there's already a crisis in a country, and humanitarian actors are already working in the country. If that is the case, emergency preparedness is one of the key activities that we are always doing, analysing the situation, looking at the risks, and basically developing a contingency plan, etc. That is very, very important, it has been proved in the past that yes, there is a massive value added into doing preparedness in a country, and how we can prepare ourselves for the worst if something has to happen in this country. That is usually done in a very easy manner, because the coordination structure, whether it's a refugee coordination system, whether it's an IDP coordination system where OCHA take the lead, etc., the people are there, the partners are there, the coordination mechanism is there, and it's easy to develop that. Where it's become slightly more difficult is in countries where we do not have a crisis, and where those countries are what we classify as early warning countries, where they've been on the watch list and we observe them. Obviously OCHA plays a strong role into developing the national capacity.

My experience has been into going to countries, because I've done that in the western part of Africa in several countries. We go there and we develop contingency plans, what we call inter-agency contingency plan where all the UN, INGOs and the NGOs are all partners, and we develop a contingency plan in which to respond to the crisis. We do that document, and often it remains on the shelf. When the crisis hit this country, basically no one remembers, "Oh, we did a contingency plan recently." Where it has been more successful is when we work closer with the government, and assisting the government itself, into having a national contingency plan in which the government basically sets up, or defines a mechanism into okay, coordination of this crisis will be led by either the prime minister, or the president himself, and underneath we have the different ministries. That often, we forget to do it, and there is effort into developing that, but often this effort is led by one donor, or by one INGO, and it becomes an exercise in which all the community is involved.

Why I focus more on building the capacity of the government, or doing national contingency plans instead of inter-agency contingency plans in countries where there is no conflict, is because when the UN or INGOs or the Red Cross Movement comes to a country, our main priority is to assist the population, and we can only do it by using the local infrastructure that is available, but if the local infrastructure, if the government does not have a mechanism set up in place, so we can help them to respond to the needs of the population, after all, they are the main responsible of responding to the needs of their own people, it is difficult for us. It becomes basically the international actors come in and creating a system that substitutes the effort or substitutes an existing government. So for me I would say yes, it is very important to invest on preparedness, even more important to invest on preparedness at a national level for the country itself, then after that, basically work with humanitarian actors to work together and to respond to the crisis. Doing preparedness in a country where there's an existing crisis, I think this is now, we are doing it all the time, whether it's UNHCR, whether it's OCHA, it's being done at nearly all levels, and every country where there's a strong coordination mechanism in place.

**Leah Campbell:** Thanks Carlos, and I'll just quickly turn to Jessica to give some quick thoughts on this one as well.

**Jessica Saulle:** Thanks. I can speak in length about this topic, so I'll try to save a little bit for the time. Basically it's quite important to do it, and it is feasible. The minimum steps should be done in order to do that, especially when you speak about cash coordination. As I mentioned before, building the staff capacity, especially at national level as Carlos mentioned, is very important. When we speak about cash programming, there are some necessary analysis that needs to be done pre crisis, so in peace time, that will really enable and speed up the cash response we need during a crisis, and also allow us to understand when the cash response can be operated. The first is a market analysis, as we need to understand what the overall strengths of the markets are, its vulnerability and how it adapts to different shocks, but also how the potentially affected population is linked to it, as the market is also a source of employment. The second analysis is the baseline analysis of how people live and prepare for disaster, and the third analysis is cash feasibility assessment, looking at the private

sector, especially understanding how to link the national, local financial services in peace time or pre crisis time is important.

Another factor is the aspect of linking with the government, as Carlos mentioned again. Basically we need to ensure that, maybe UNDP signed an MOU with the government pre crisis, but we also need to ensure that all the ministries that will have a stake in the crisis are linked up, and also to define how possible and appropriate it would be to make emergency cash transfers through the national social protection programme, if there is one in place. Then also going back to national capacity, the (? 01.17.50) experience shows that coordination works better when there is already a (? 01.17.55) in place, either because there has been an active group in place before the crisis struck, or because there was already a crisis before, and a bigger crisis came. Basically we need a pre arranged national cash working group for the cash transfer coordination, with potential stakeholders from long lasting agencies and ideally key national staff representing them. With the Haiyan response there has been a cash working group set up, and still active now. So for me, that would be my answer.

**Leah Campbell:** Great, thanks Jessica. So as we only have a couple of minutes left, what we're going to do is do our final poll, which is also our final question for our speakers, and this has to do with whether the existing humanitarian coordination architecture is fit for purpose in terms of achieving coordination across a response, so things like connection national and sub national levels, things like coordination across the different sectors of a response, and also finding a home for cross cutting issues. So I'm going to turn first, while the poll is open to Alex to have his last word on this webinar, on this topic, and any final closing thoughts. Alex?

**Alex Tyler:** That's a very big question for a last minute word. I would say in short, yes, that the humanitarian coordination structures are sufficient to be delivering on humanitarian responses. The challenge is when we're trying to link up with other... or where the response in general requires political solutions, or where we need to link up with development actors, the challenge is how to interface with those to ensure that there is a partnership between the two, especially between humanitarian and development, and I've already mentioned some good examples of how this has been tried and tested in the Syrian crisis through the 3RP. That's where we need to, I think... some people were saying that the humanitarian system is broken for instance, and I don't think that is accurate. I think that we should actually be recognising what the humanitarian systems have achieved, but also what their limits should be, and rather working more on those interfaces with other types of response.

**Leah Campbell:** So I'll turn to Carlos for his final thoughts now.

**Carlos Geha:** Thank you. Yes, my answer is yes. I think that we have improved a lot since the humanitarian reform has been put in place in 2006. We certainly, the international community has certainly saved thousands of lives, if not more with a better coordination framework. The Syria crisis also has put a level of coordination to one step higher. Obviously there's a lot to learn on the best practices that have been developed in the Syria crisis, in

which UNHCR led the coordination effort, and the way it's been done. Initially as Alex mentioned early on, a lot has been learned from the humanitarian reform, and has been taken over through the Syria crisis to a different, higher level, more I would say, genuine levels. Then I think we can deliver, and the permission, because it's put in place, and the way it's been fine tuned over the years with best practices, better experience, more knowledgeable. The cluster coordinator and more knowledgeable leadership, and stronger leadership at the country level, definitely it has improved and it is working.

**Leah Campbell:** Great, thanks Carlos. And for our final work on the webinar, I turn to Jessica.

**Jessica Saulle:** Indeed it's a broad question, but I would like to look at a few things that would need to happen for more correct cash coordination, there would be a need for more ownership at all coordination levels, and more resources, especially to allow the work in preparedness in an inclusive way. So not only to a few agencies, but really ensuring that the breadth of actors are included. While we don't really know what the outcomes of the World Humanitarian Summit will be, we hope that cash will feature more at cluster level, and inter-cluster level, and that the HCT will take a more strategic role.

**Leah Campbell:** Thanks Jessica, and thank you again to all of our speakers, and to everyone listening. I'll quickly tell you the results of the poll, a strong 58% of those who voted have opted for 'some elements can work, but we need to change others', and again it would be really interesting to hear what you think those are. 22% think 'yes, but with quite a bit of improvement'. 12% say 'yes, but with only minimal improvements'. 7% are unclear what is possible, what degree of changes might be needed, and just 1% think 'no, not with the current coordination structure'. So quite a range of opinions, and thank you again so much for those of you who've voiced your thoughts today in that poll. Just to close, I want to reiterate that we really are interested in hearing your thoughts about this. This is the start of this chapter of ALANP's coordination work, and as I mentioned, we'll be doing three more webinars, we'll be producing four videos, four papers, doing a meeting in June and then making a final meeting paper and video afterwards. So we're really interested in continuing the discussion with everyone around these issues, and as I've already mentioned the next webinar in this series will focus on the role of national actors in humanitarian coordination, both national governments and national NGOs, and that webinar is on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, and you should have already received an email with a link to that. So thank you again to everyone, and I hope you have a great rest of your day. Bye.