

ALNAP National NGOs research

Infosheet

July 2015

National NGOs in disaster and emergency response

Introduction

This research into National NGOs in disaster and emergency response is planned in two parts. The first phase will address research at a country level, taking each country as a standalone exploration informed by Grounded Theory. The second phase takes the individual country theories and explores the scope of an overall analysis.

Objective and Background

Aims

The National NGO research aims to better understand the work of National Non-Governmental Organisations (NNGOs) involved in disaster and emergency response through exploring their perceptions, their conceptual frameworks, and what priorities and commitments motivate and guide their decisions and activities. In short, this research aims to understand what humanitarian action looks like from an NNGO perspective. It aims to contribute to a deficit of description, analysis and interpretation of the role of NNGOs in emergency and disaster response *in their own terms*.

Objective

To establish a theoretical understanding, grounded in the realities of NNGOs in emergency response and disaster relief.

- Identify how NNGOs in the country of focus understand their identity and role in humanitarian, emergency response and disaster relief activities
- Assess the feasibility of a coherent 'National NGO' category, identifying its emerging trends, commonalities or potential patterns of action (practices) and self-perception

Rationale and justification for the approach

Several research and reports have addressed the importance and perspectives of the need for an increased role for NNGO in humanitarian and emergency response. However, most of the research, advocacy and evaluative pieces addressing the topic of NNGOs and their role in emergency and humanitarian response are commissioned and elaborated on from the perspective of international actors, primarily INGOs. Often, reports have formulated their key questions around a hypothesis to demonstrate effectiveness, comparative advantages and the potential benefits of national and local actors' humanitarian response in a comparative fashion.

While much of this work advocates for greater inclusion and equal treatment of NNGOs in the international humanitarian system, it offers this through an international actor's understanding of humanitarian action, as opposed to how NNGOs conceptualise and act in the humanitarian field. In the scoping phases for this research, humanitarian workers and researchers from countries affected by humanitarian crises noted the current lack of visibility in this work from the perspectives of the "global South", particularly in their own terms.

This research is encompassed in the [ALNAP work stream around National Actors](#).

Research Questions

Research question for the individual country research

What are the experiences of National NGOs in emergency response and disaster relief?

The research question is around identity, self-perception, self-motivation and what derives from these. What are National NGOs? How do they perceive and understand their role in emergencies? How do they act and relate in emergency settings?

Research question for the overall analysis of country studies

Does 'National NGO' exist as a coherent category or group?

The research question is around: what are, if any, the parameters or variables that define NNGOs from the country research as a specific group? What are, if any, the commonalities, trends and patterns of NNGO involvement in emergency response and disaster relief? Are there any specificities?

Methodological approach for stand-alone country research studies

A mixed methods approach

- A selection of countries has been established on a purposive sampling based on the established criteria (see next section)
- A selection of organisations and individuals have been chosen for initial interviews using purposive sampling based on:
 - a. Country profiling (including legal and institutional framework in-country)
 - b. ALNAP member's contributions
 - c. Interviews with key informants
- Using Grounded Theory approach will guide the data collection (interviews) and analysis (coding phases), including using theoretical sampling for interviews beyond the initial phase

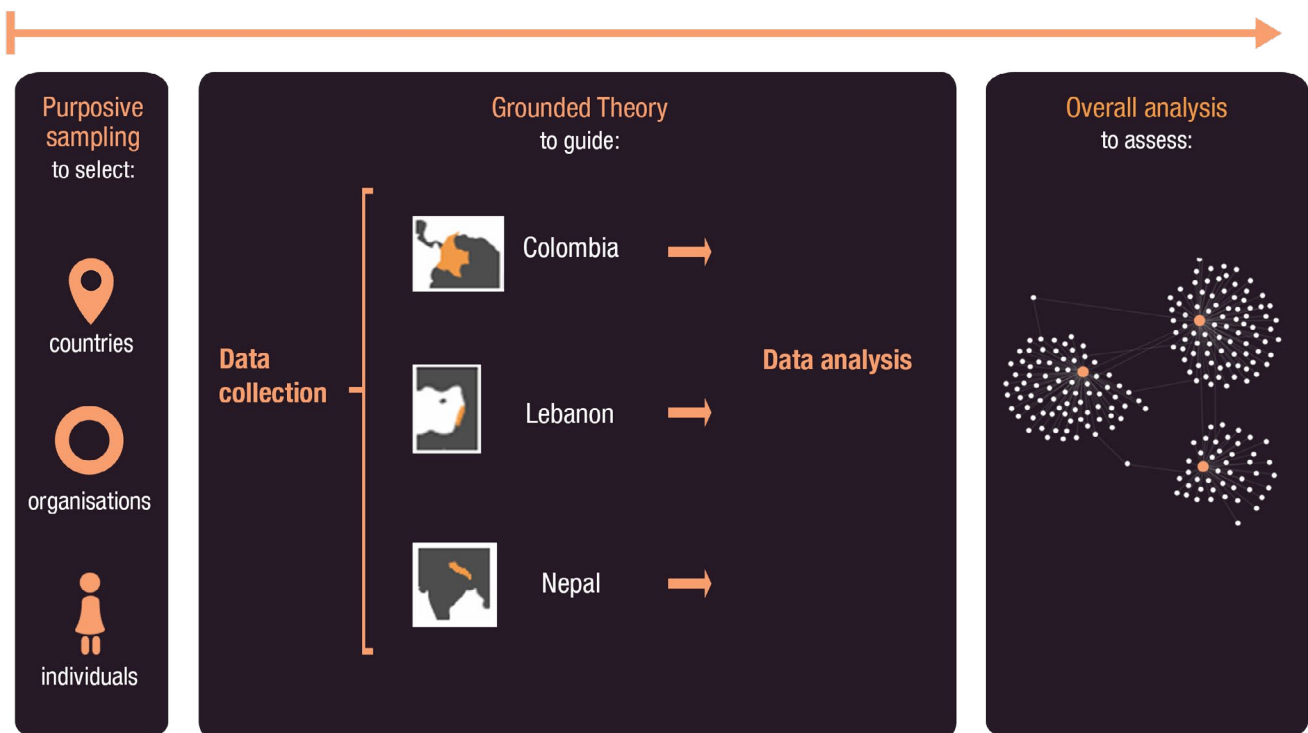


FIGURE 1: PHASES IN THE RESEARCH USING A MIXED METHODOLOGY

Grounded Theory methods provide the researcher with a theoretical base that avoids importing and imposing packaged images and automatic answers from existing theories. It is particularly useful for studying social and political topics for which there is little understanding and a need for identifying core issues. The open-ended and qualitative nature of the research satisfies the need to question/critically analyse externally imposed qualities and characteristics to the involvement of NNGOs in emergency and disaster relief. Qualitative research methods, and Grounded Theory in particular, allows for a more exploratory research and hypothesis-generating approach rather than an approach that tests, validates or refutes pre-established assumptions or hypotheses.

The method will start broad and general and would address issues around how NNGOs and the individuals who work for them perceive themselves. What are the actions and processes that add up to how NNGOs approach emergency response and preparedness? Who is involved, where and when?

ALNAP will be pioneering the use of the Grounded Theory approach in the humanitarian field. Additional details on the choice of this methodology can be found in the ALNAP NNGO Research Method Note.

Data collection and analysis will be processed using MAXQDA, a software for qualitative data analysis.

Sampling of focus countries (Scoping criteria)

What we are going to observe and analyse (the unit of analysis) are the responses to emergencies and disasters that NNGOs have partially or completely implemented in the selected country of research. Challenges associated to the definition of key terms have been addressed in the methodological design of the research.

Selection of countries

The sample of countries have been selected on a purposive basis. The criteria to select the countries for each individual research study has been:

- A certain degree of geographical representation in the capturing of diverse experiences at national and local level from a qualitative perspective
- Countries which have an active mixed humanitarian profile with multi-risks/hazards, including natural and man-made disasters (often including armed confrontation), and displacement
- Countries with evidence of existing and active national organisations and platforms
- Countries that for different reasons – including language – barriers to some degree have not received as much attention in research.



FIGURE 2: COUNTRIES SELECTED FOR FIELD VISITS

Estimated timeline including field visits

Selected countries for field work are:

- Colombia and Lebanon: Phase I between August and November 2015
- Nepal: Phase II, between end of 2015 and first trimester 2016.

Once the individual country studies are completed, an assessment for the parameters and feasibility of an overall analysis will be undertaken during the first trimester of 2016.

All dates are subject to change.

Final research output

This research has two components:

- Individual country research studies from the selected countries: Colombia, Lebanon, Nepal
- Overall analysis, assessing the feasibility of categorising NNGOs as a specific group/ stakeholder in disaster and emergency humanitarian response

The research will be undertaken between 2015-2016.

How can ALNAP members participate?

Opportunities for ALNAP members to support with this research are:

1. ALNAP members can facilitate the production of country individual research by facilitating and providing contacts of national/local organisations for participation in the research, and/or by agreeing to host the fully funded researcher field visits through:
 - a. The facilitation of contacts with national/local organisations in country, including help scheduling meetings
 - b. Aiding the arrangement of interviews by providing umbrella security and logistical arrangements, including transport, accommodation and translation where required (please note that all expenses associated to these activities are fully covered by ALNAP budget)
2. Once the country studies have been carried out, contribute to the overall analysis by participation in an Advisory Group that will provide feedback to question the findings over potential trends, patterns, commonalities and gaps in the research. At this stage of the research, it is not feasible to determine the Terms of Reference for an overall analysis. Terms of Reference for the Advisory Group will be produced once the country individual researches are more advanced and provide the parameters for its inception.

Contact

ALNAP Research Fellow, Luz Saavedra [l.saavedra@alnap.org]