

ALNAP Annual Report 2003–2004

Message from the Chair and the Coordinator



John Mitchell, Coordinator

Building a culture of accountability in the humanitarian sector requires concerted action, and the considerable work necessary in improving accountability in the field is a sufficiently weighty task that should not be borne on the shoulders of a single initiative. A true culture of accountability requires all of us to be involved, and complementary actions need to be taken on a number of fronts. ALNAP's role in this collective challenge is clear. Its chosen path is to improve performance and accountability through the creation of an environment that encourages and rewards critical inspection of performance and learning, both from within the Membership and throughout the sector.

It takes time to build the operational foundations required to underpin a culture of active learning and, over the last year, we have seen ALNAP steadily develop into a more mature network organisation. Recent discussions amongst the Membership at the May biannual meeting have laid out a clearer strategic direction and a *modus operandi* for achieving our Vision. A renewed focus on network activities has provided ALNAP with a strong, flexible backbone, and

modifications to programme activities and working group activities have provided greater opportunities for participation and innovation both throughout the network's membership and throughout the humanitarian community itself. The new communication strategy will provide more precise targeting and monitoring of ALNAP products and key messages. Finally, the broad funding base that ALNAP has built up and sustained over the years is now providing a secure basis for making our Vision a reality.

Indeed, there are now promising indications that ALNAP's activities are beginning to make a difference. Both the discussion with evaluation departments on the meta-evaluation, coupled with the high usage of training modules, are leading to positive changes in evaluation practice. The practitioners' handbook and country monographs produced by the *Global Study on Participation and Consultation of Affected Populations in Humanitarian Action* are now providing practical tools for practitioners in the field. Additionally, the interest surrounding the guidance booklet on protection indicates that it will help foster a better understanding of the concept, and will ultimately help mainstream protection elements in the design, monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian programmes.

We know that there are no quick fixes for improving practice; the ALNAP approach of monitoring operations, capturing learning, producing tools and products, testing them *in situ*, modifying them and using them again, is an ongoing process. The signs are there showing that changes in the sector are beginning to occur as a result of our approach, and there are good grounds for believing that ALNAP, as a mature active learning network, is now truly able to make a difference.

Anita Menghetti, Chair
John Mitchell, Co-ordinator

1. Network Activities

1.1 The Annual Review 2003²

The ALNAP Annual Review 2003 features a themed chapter on monitoring in addition to its usual evaluation synthesis and meta-evaluation sections.

The synthesis includes a set of completed reports made available to ALNAP in 2002, comprising 49 individual evaluation reports and six synthesis reports, commissioned by 18 organisations to evaluate humanitarian action in 21 countries. The evaluation synthesis has continued to provide a solid assessment of humanitarian operations based on these reports.

The main findings from the synthesis chapter are open to interpretation but they do reveal that many of the stated objectives of humanitarian intervention – saving lives and/or maintaining stable nutritional status – have been met. The ability of interventions to promote sustainability and connectedness was highlighted as particularly problematic; this is a consequence of several interlocking factors, including:

- jockeying for media profile which promotes short-term and rushed solutions;
- restrictive timeframes imposed by donors for expenditure of funds;
- poor understanding of local contexts and weak situation monitoring;
- limited attention to supporting and building the capacity of government and civil society;
- excessive focus on international as opposed to national procurement;
- reliance on expatriate staff on short-term contracts;
- inadequate guidance and training on how to link relief and rehabilitation.

The meta-evaluation for 2003 was based on 39 evaluative reports and rated against an improved ALNAP Quality Proforma which was refined to ensure increased consistency in interpretation and usage, and a continued reflection of current thinking on good evaluation practices. It also included a three-year comparison of report quality on 12 areas of the Proforma. The findings show that although there has been a strong focus on management issues in evaluation, which helps identify key constraints to better performance, a number of areas remain weak. These were identified as:

- failure to evaluate against agency policy;
- questionable credibility of many reports due to inadequate methodologies, or because it is unclear from where conclusions are drawn;
- lack of attention to rights-based approaches, including protection and gender equality;
- failure to consult with primary stakeholders, or adequately describe the nature of consultation;
- recommendations that are poorly formulated and therefore unlikely to be followed.

This year's themed chapter was on monitoring in humanitarian action and stemmed from the recognition that evaluation needs to be complemented by strengthened monitoring in order to improve both accountability and learning.

The renewed focus on monitoring is part of a trend in the evaluation of humanitarian action to look towards more innovative means of assessing results and lesson learning. The added value that monitoring can bring lies in its ability to assess and reassess the relevance and impact of interventions.

² Pursuant to a Steering Committee decision of 19th March 2004, as of next year, the *Annual Review* will be named *ALNAP Review of Humanitarian Action*.

It can also be used to examine social processes – the complex set of relations between agencies and primary stakeholders, and between primary stakeholders – on which intervention results are largely dependent. Because of this, good monitoring is crucial for organisational learning.

The chapter lays out some of the most common monitoring frameworks, an analysis of current performance and constraints in monitoring and some recommendations for strengthening monitoring. These include improving trust and feedback between field staff and colleagues in country, regional and head offices; simplifying reporting requirements; shifting the focus towards impact and expanding the current quantitative approach to monitoring with qualitative assessment³.

1.1.1 Key Message Sheets

ALNAP's Key Message Sheets are aimed at policy-makers, journalists, evaluators and evaluation offices and field staff. They summarise and aim to make easily accessible the central issues emerging from the *ALNAP Review of Humanitarian Action* series and other studies.

This year saw the publication of key message sheets on: *Humanitarian Action: Improving Monitoring to Enhance Accountability and Learning*, and *Humanitarian Action: A Comparative Study of After Action Reviews in the context of the Southern African Crisis*.

The first focuses on the current status of monitoring in the humanitarian sector, how monitoring can be strengthened to promote learning and on both the familiar Synthesis of Evaluations and the Meta-evaluation.

The second provides a useful summary of the findings of the After Action Review case study, including the strengths and weaknesses of the AAR approach which is detailed in 2.4 below.



1.2 Biannual Meetings

The 13th and 14th ALNAP Biannual meetings continued to provide ALNAP Full Member representatives with a standing forum where they can meet twice a year for reviewing ongoing activities, planning for new initiatives and debating issues of key importance to the sector. In addition, the decision to widen the agenda to include new issues, such as protection in humanitarian action, has attracted an even wider audience and has enriched the experience for many ALNAP Full Members.

The 13th meeting held in London focused on theme of Field Level Learning and the means by which the ALNAP Vision⁴ can be best taken forward and realised. Of particular importance here is the new concept of Working Groups⁵ and the development of a communication strategy – both of which are part of the process for operationalising the ALNAP vision.

The 14th Biannual Meeting was hosted by Tufts University and held in Boston in October 2003. The theme of the meeting was Protection in Humanitarian Action. Feedback forms showed that this meeting was particularly well received. A report since the Biannual noted that,

“On October 16–17, the Center hosted (ALNAP’s) biannual meeting (...). A group of about 80 members devoted its first day to discussing issues relating to protection (...) Successive meetings by ALNAP since its founding in 1997 have served as something of a barometer of the growth and maturity of the humanitarian sector.”⁶

³ See Key Message Sheet *ALNAP Annual Review 2003; Humanitarian Action: Improving Monitoring to Enhance Accountability and Learning*, available from www.alnap.org

⁴ The ALNAP Vision was formally adopted at the 14th Biannual meeting hosted by DFID in April 2002.

⁵ Working Groups aim to promote and facilitate experience from across the humanitarian sector by implementing various initiatives aimed at addressing common areas of concern for the membership.

1.3 Activities and Development of ALNAP Website

The ALNAP website is increasingly viewed as a comprehensive resource bank for issues relating to evaluation, protection and participation in the humanitarian sector. A recent participant in Aid Workers Network recently described the site as follows:

“The best general resource on M&E of emergency work that I know of is the ALNAP web site at www.alnap.org. The site includes evaluation reports, evaluation and lesson syntheses, information on improving monitoring and improving learning, training modules and links to related resources. I would be very surprised if you did not find what you needed here.”⁷

Indeed the ALNAP website has continued in its role as a dissemination portal for ALNAP’s key documents and publications. Over the course of 2003, 12 new ALNAP papers and publications were added to its already large list of documents (see graph 1). While all are available to download in pdf format, many are also available for purchase in hard copy through the internet. However, this is not to say that older documents on the ALNAP site have become redundant. Of the top 20 documents downloaded from the website in 2003–2004, 11 were research articles that were published prior to 2003, although this may be partly explained by the fact that these documents were available for the entire financial year, while new documents were uploaded during the course of the year.

Top 20 pdf Downloads from ALNAP website in 2003–2004

- New** 1 Annual Review Key Messages 2003
- New** 2 After Action Review Key Messages
- New** 3 Liberia Evaluation Synthesis
- New** 4 After Action Review Case Study
- New** 5 Iraq Evaluation Synthesis (DAC)
- 6 Afghanistan Evaluation Synthesis (DAC)
- 7 Towards Social Learning for Humanitarian Programmes
- 8 Annual Review Key Messages 2002
- 9 Organisational and Institutional Learning in the Humanitarian Sector – Opening the dialogue
- 10 Further Development of the Learning Office Concept With Reference to Sierra Leone and East Timor and a Developed Proposal to Run a Test Office during 2004
- 11 Mapping Accountability in Humanitarian Assistance
- 12 A Synthesis of Evaluations of Peacebuilding Activities Undertaken by Humanitarian Agencies and Conflict Resolution Organisations
- 13 Participation by the affected population in relief operations: a review of the experience of DEC agencies during the response to the 1998 famine in South Sudan
- 14 Annual Report 2002–2003
- 15 Contents Page of Evaluating International Humanitarian Action
- 16 Follow-up to Evaluations of Humanitarian Programmes
- 17 Learning in the Food and Nutrition Sector: A Preliminary Mapping of Learning Processes
- 18 Kosovo Humanitarian Evaluations: Towards synthesis, meta-analysis and sixteen propositions for discussion
- New** 19 JEFAP Manual
- 20 Biannual Meeting Record 2001

⁶ “The Humanitarian and War Project”, Status Report #43, November 2003, p.4.

⁷ Rick Davies, M and E News, posted on Aid Workers Network in 2003.

1.3.1 New Additions

Since FY 2003–04 has coincided with the end of Phase I of the ALNAP Working Group study on ‘Participation by Affected Populations in Humanitarian Action’, six of the added documents are Global Study publications and include:

- Global Study *Country Case Study Monographs on Angola, Afghanistan, DRC, Sri Lanka, and Colombia*,
- and the draft version of the Global Study *Practitioners’ Handbook*

Total downloads for these publications over the course of the year are presented in Graph 2.

Note that these figures do not include downloads from the Global Study website and Reliefweb. The *Practitioners’ Handbook* has been the most downloaded document, despite being available for a much shorter period of time. Downloads for the *Practitioners’ Handbook* are now available from the ALNAP site in smaller sections.

Other key documents and publications added to the site include the *JEFAP Manual*, produced by the LSO in collaboration with JEFAP during the Southern Africa crisis, *Key Message Sheets* for the *Annual Review 2003* and *After Action Review* case study, a *Synthesis* of evaluation findings on Liberia, and most recently the pilot version of *The Protection Booklet*. Finally, ALNAP’s training modules on *Evaluation in Humanitarian Action* were revised in 2003 and updated accordingly on the website.

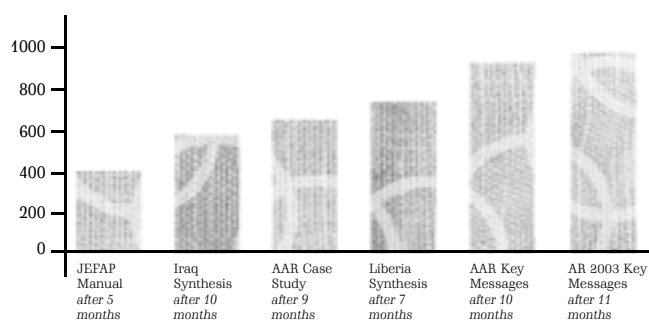
Of particular note, is the performance of the *Liberia Synthesis* and the *Protection Booklet*:

- The *Liberia Synthesis* has been available from the website for seven months. Exactly 50% of its total downloads occurred within the first two months

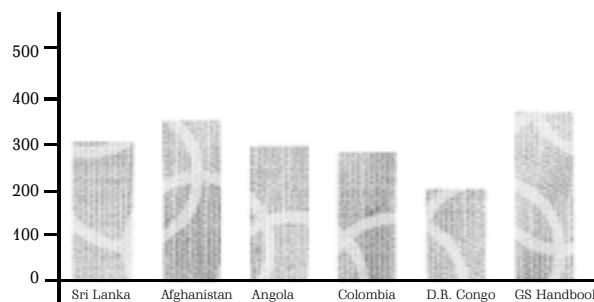
This can be seen as evidence for two things:

- that there is a clear demand for lessons learned documents targeted at specific situations and produced in a timely fashion
 - that electronic dissemination of ALNAP publications is particularly successful when combined with direct emailing. The synthesis was disseminated in collaboration with Aid Workers Network on location in Liberia
- The *Protection Booklet*, evidently popular in its hard copy format – now on its second print run, has swiftly become the most popular addition to the website, despite being uploaded in the final month of the financial year: in March alone, the *Protection Booklet* received 149 download sessions.

Graph 1 – Downloads of Key Documents added in 2003



Graph 2 – Downloads of Global Study Publications



Figures for Jun 03 – Mar 04, except DRC and GS Handbook Oct 03 – Mar 04

1.3.2 Website Performance

Although the ALNAP website performance is comparable with other organisations' websites of similar size and audience, the website attracts a steadily increasing number of visitors. On average, there have been 45% more visits to the site than during the same period in FY2002–2003 (see graph 3), and (while usage appears to originate predominantly from Western European and North American countries) there is new evidence that traffic also comes from visitors representing a wider range of countries.

There also appears to be increasing awareness of ALNAP by the general public: over 50% of visitors reached the site directly rather than indirectly from another website. This is an indication that an increasing number of visitors are aware of ALNAP and are looking for further information on its activities. Furthermore, although a proportion of visitors are referred to the website by search engines, with the consequence that a large number may visit the website accidentally, over 60% of visitors arriving at the website in this manner, appear to have been searching specifically for ALNAP or an ALNAP product.

1.3.3 Evaluative Reports Database

Seventy-six new records were added to ALNAP's Evaluative Reports Database (ERD) in FY2003/2004. As in previous years, the ERD was utilised to source

documents for the *Liberia Synthesis* and to source reports for *ALNAP's Review of Humanitarian Action in 2003*.

For the first time statistical information on the use of the ERD for the period 2003–2004 has been made available. Although this does not allow for detailed analysis of usage, it is possible to draw some very general conclusions. The database receives on average 100 users per month, and of these, approximately 30% appear to originate from ALNAP Full Member organisations, which indicates a usage much wider than ALNAP's membership.

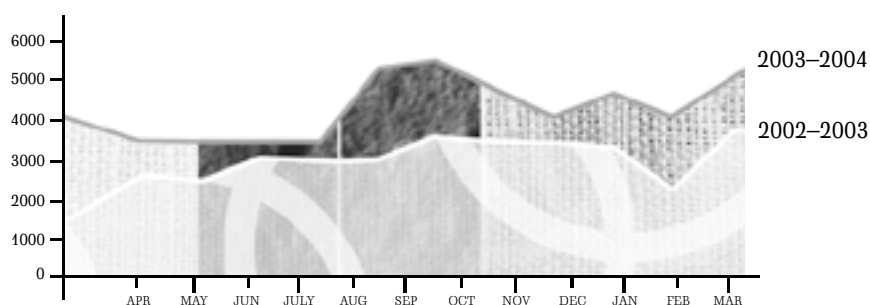
1.4 Membership and Governance

1.4.1 Membership

A review of the Full Membership was carried out in 2003–04 and, as a result, ALNAP is delighted to welcome three new Full Members – the Danish Refugee Council, the International Rescue Committee, and RedR. The combined operational experience of these agencies will be of great benefit to ALNAP, and their participation in the future will be of great value.

As part of the review process, the ALNAP Guide is being updated in order to add optimum clarity to the roles, responsibilities, benefits and obligations of ALNAP Members.

**Graph 3 – Visitor Sessions to ALNAP website.
FY2002–03 and FY 2003–04 compared**



1.4.2 The Steering Committee

The Steering Committee met on 30th April and 5th July 2003 in London, on 15th October 2003 in Boston, and on 19th March 2004 in Oxford. The Secretariat is grateful to CAFOD, RedR, Tufts University and Oxfam respectively for hosting these meetings.

The Steering Committee members were consulted and gave advice on matters of ALNAP direction which arose between meetings.

The terms on the Steering Committee of Matthew Carter (Caritas Internationalis/CAFOD, representing NGOs) and Andre Griekspoor (WHO, representing UN agencies) expired in April 2003, and both were re-elected for a further two-year term. The term of Ted Kliest (MFA Netherlands, representing donors) expired in October. He was replaced by Marco Ferrari (SDC). Jeff Crisp (UNHCR, representing UN agencies) resigned from the Steering Committee in January 2004 and was replaced by Susanne Frueh (OCHA).

At the end of the financial year the Steering Committee consists of:	
Representing donors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marco Ferrari, SDC • Anita Menghetti, USAID/OFDA (Chair)
Representing UN agencies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Susanne Frueh, OCHA • Andre Griekspoor, WHO
Representing NGOs etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andy Bonwick, Oxfam • Matthew Carter, Caritas Internationalis/CAFOD
Representing the Red Cross	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathew Varghese, IFRC
Representing consultants/ academics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ian Christoplos

1.4.3 ALNAP Secretariat

John Mitchell (Coordinator), John Lakeman (Database and Website Manager) and Colin Hadkiss (Administrative Support Officer) remained in post throughout the year. Following the departure of Sera Orzel (Network Officer) in January 2004, Gabriele Russo has been employed on a consultancy basis pending further decisions about staffing needs and recruitment. Agency temporary staff have also been used for a number of weeks to assist with the transition from Interest Groups to Working Groups (autumn 2003), and with web site related tasks (spring 2004).

The Secretariat continues to be hosted by the Overseas Development Institute in its Waterloo office in London. The ODI is due to take over additional office space in 2004, which is expected to give the Secretariat additional space and an improved working environment.

1.5 Dissemination, Promotion & Representation

One of ALNAP's main achievements thus far has been that of developing a portfolio of products that has been widely approved and appreciated by the humanitarian sector⁸. However, it was recognised that:

'(...) although there were notable exceptions the network was failing to connect with its key target groups, and that considerable steps still need to be made in the area of communicating the network's message. A large number of respondents associated ALNAP with evaluation, but were unsure of its other activities. There was also repeated reference to a lack of knowledge regarding ALNAP's activities beyond participating departments at HQ level(...)'⁹

⁸ As indicated in the findings from Howard Standen's study 'Operationalising the ALNAP Vision: Issues, Challenges, Options and Directions', available from www.alnap.org

⁹ Standen, *supra*.

Hence, a need emerged for a new strategy designed for 'communicating the network's message'. In 2004, this strategy was brought to the forefront of ALNAP thinking, and the coming year will see its implementation, which will focus on improving the quality and presentation of products, tailoring products to the specific requirements of particular segments of the market, targeting these products with more precision, developing systematic follow-up processes and exploring methods for monitoring impact and improvement in performance.

Meanwhile, the publication of the *Guidance Booklet on Humanitarian Protection* has been a true leap forward in the quality and presentation of ALNAP products. Thus far, some 4,000 copies of the guidebook have been disseminated to over sixty agencies and interested individuals for piloting and reviewing purposes. A systematic follow-up process, which will allow ALNAP to map dissemination, track recipients, enhance and monitor the feedback process is in place, thus leading to a more refined final product.

Additionally, in 2003 and early 2004, new initiatives were undertaken to promote findings from the Annual Review's Meta-evaluation, and to facilitate greater participation by the ALNAP membership.

In Spring 2003, following the completion of the Review, Tony Beck, author of the Meta-evaluation chapter, undertook a series of visits to ten agencies, who had submitted reports to the Review for several years. The purpose of the meetings was to discuss general trends in the quality of evaluation reports, as revealed by rating the reports against ALNAP's Quality Proforma as a set of standards for quality in humanitarian evaluation. The meetings also enabled the gathering of feedback from agencies on the Annual Review in general and the development of the Quality Proforma.

Building on the visits to agencies in spring 2003, Tony Beck and Peter Wiles (the two consultants involved in producing the Meta-evaluation) participated in further meetings in early 2004 with eleven ALNAP Full Member agencies.

In addition to discussing report ratings against the Quality Proforma, the meetings focussed primarily on issues relating to evaluation process, such as developing the terms of reference, hiring consultants and following up report recommendations. These visits were aimed at making the Meta-evaluation more participatory, and ensuring that factors relating to the evaluation process be incorporated into the analysis.

Despite constraints of time and resources, which restricted the scope of the visits to ALNAP Full Members, the agencies' response was extremely encouraging. Feedback to date indicates that the meetings were seen as a positive development by the participating agencies.

ALNAP's Quality Proforma is growing in acceptance by the humanitarian and evaluation communities. In 2003, it was submitted to the renowned Evaluation Center at Michigan University as an evaluation checklist. In 2004 it featured in the DEC Southern Africa Evaluation, having been used as a tool to assess DEC agency evaluation reports. It has also been used by Groupe URD to assist with evaluation planning, and by ECHO as a basis for strengthening its standardised evaluation terms of reference.

Finally, in order to promote increasing understanding of accountability in the humanitarian sector, John Mitchell wrote a paper for HPN entitled 'Accountability: the three-lane Highway' published in *Humanitarian Exchange No 24, 2003*.

2. Programme Activities

2.1 Training Modules

ALNAP's training modules on Evaluation in Humanitarian Action were updated in 2003 to include more detailed materials on evaluation criteria, key messages relating to evaluating protection and new activities that apply training to real situations. Module 3 also features a new session on strengthening organisational learning, while Module 2 builds links between evaluation and monitoring.

The updated modules reflect feedback from participants from over fifty organisations who have attended the courses on Evaluating Humanitarian Action (EHA), and the results from the latest research and publications sponsored by ALNAP. Many organisations have since incorporated handouts and training sessions into their own training programmes.

All training modules are available for free on the website and continue to be very popular. In fact, the training homepage has been on average the third most popular page on the site since being added in May 2002. From overall feedback, 88% of users rate the service as very good or excellent, and the remaining 12% as good: 88% of users would recommend the EHA to others.

2.2 Improving Protection in Humanitarian Action

Some time ago ALNAP's membership identified a gap between providing humanitarian assistance (of which a great deal is known), and implementing humanitarian protection at field level, which has often been distinguished by a lack of confidence and a lack of understanding among humanitarian agencies and practitioners. In order to bridge this gap, during the

course of 2003, ALNAP has instigated a process that has led to the development of a *Guidance Booklet on Humanitarian Protection*. This is a tool aimed at promoting understanding of the concepts that underpin protection and how key elements can be used to engender a protection focused approach in programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Most importantly, the guidebook has been designed with a view to helping practitioners make extremely difficult judgements in situations that are always complex and sometimes dangerous.

The guidebook was published in March 2004 and immediately disseminated to a number of agencies for testing. Piloting will take place in a variety of emergency contexts to assess whether the content is comprehensible, relevant and useful to those for whom it is intended. A final version will be produced in the forthcoming year on the basis of these findings. Agencies involved in this exercise include the DRC, the IRC, and Save the Children UK. Other agencies are already using the guide for training purposes and 1,000 copies have been disseminated amongst ALNAP members and affiliated organisations. The high level of interest shown by ALNAP member organisations as well as other protection agencies clearly reflects the importance of this subject to the humanitarian community.

2.3 Evaluating Humanitarian Action: an ALNAP Guidance Booklet

The guidance booklet has been revised this year by Tony Beck on the basis of initial stakeholder feedback. A pilot draft has been produced aimed at helping evaluators improve the quality of evaluations by assisting them in applying DAC criteria in their evaluation work.

Three ALNAP member agencies (ECHO, The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Groupe URD) have volunteered to pilot the booklet in order to test the content, focus and usability of the guide with actual users, while Tony Beck has begun to provide briefings and debriefings to agencies involved in the testing, either in person or remotely. It is anticipated that the final version of the Guidance Booklet will be published in 2005.

2.4 A Comparative study of After Action Reviews⁴⁰ in the context of the Southern Africa crisis

In 2002 ALNAP commissioned a study based on a mapping exercise of its members working in Southern Africa, a review of the literature on AAR, and case study investigation of the experiences of World Vision International (WV), the British Red Cross Society (BRCS) and the Joint Emergency Food Aid Programme (JEFAP) Consortium. The study's objective was to increase understanding of current AAR practice and identify, wherever possible, what constitutes good practice. The study revealed that, as a complement to conventional monitoring and evaluation type approaches, AAR creates space for a deeper level review, involving a broader selection of participants and is likely to result in a greater commitment to change.

2.5 Managing Learning at the Field Level in the Humanitarian Sector

In keeping with ALNAP's theme of learning in humanitarian action, a study was commissioned to increase understanding of the ways in which humanitarian field workers make sense of the world around them, and to use that as a point of departure for consideration of incentives and disincentives on learning in their work. The study also explores ways to improve the capacity of agencies to encourage learning in the field through simple workable changes in procedures and incentive structures that can be easily integrated into normal agency field practices.

This is part of a continuing series of studies on learning for performance undertaken by ALNAP, and an additional effort towards the development of a common framework for learning in the humanitarian sector. The operational framework presented in this study is derived from ALNAP's before, during and after learning model, linked to the knowledge management concepts of tacit and explicit knowledge and knowledge assets.

Fernande Faulkner and Brian Foster were commissioned to carry out the research work and were guided by an advisory group of 8 specialists. The study includes over 30 in-depth interviews with field workers and an exploration of the conditions and variables that influence the ability of humanitarian personnel to optimise their learning during assignments.

The study concludes that field level learning is "on the job learning" and that the focus in this area should be on humanitarian operations as the place where most of the learning takes place. The role of the field manager is seen as pivotal in supporting this learning process. Guidelines are offered about the learning needs, and optimal conditions for learning with incentives and disincentives for before, during and after a field assignment.

The findings from this report will inform much of the material for chapter 2 of the *ALNAP Annual Review of Humanitarian Action in 2003*. A full report will be available on the ALNAP website.

⁴⁰ After Action Review (AAR) originated with the US Army and it is increasingly used by groups, teams, and organisations to enable them to improve their performance by reflecting back on their activities and actions.

3. Working Group Activities

The term “Working Group” has a formal definition within ALNAP. It denotes a substantive element of the ALNAP network, which conducts planned activities, producing outputs of tangible use to practitioners and policy makers. Working Group activities are carried out by a consortium of individuals and agencies who join together to work in partnership with ALNAP. The management and implementation of the work is done by the Working Group and is facilitated and promoted through the ongoing activities of ALNAP.

3.1 ALNAP Global Study on the Consultation and Participation of Affected Populations in Humanitarian Action

The Global Study on Participation and Consultation of Affected Populations in Humanitarian Action is a research project facilitated and promoted by ALNAP, hosted and managed by Oxfam, and implemented by Groupe URD. The aim of the project is to help fill gaps in the understanding and use of consultation and participatory mechanisms in humanitarian aid.

Following the completion of Phase I in 2002–2003, which provided the field data for three country Monographs, Phase II saw the publishing of the draft version of the *Practitioners’ Handbook* (the central output of the Global Study) in the autumn of 2003. The *Handbook* is intended to be used by international humanitarian personnel as well as staff working for national and local organisations.

The last six months saw the piloting and refinement of the *Handbook* in different field contexts with the help of Groupe URD and DMI. This exercise was aimed at producing a final comprehensive document. Efforts have also been made to canvass the views and experiences of national staff as well as affected populations to ensure that their views are fully reflected in the next version.

Further, in the past year, two more country monographs have been published on Afghanistan and Eastern DRC in addition to those previously released on Sri Lanka, Angola and Colombia. The final case study on Guinea has been prepared and will be published in June 2004. It is worth noting that – thanks to the international nature of the research teams – several of the monographs are available in other languages.

There remain also proposals for an *Overview Book* – that will incorporate the additional material emerged during Phase II – and for a conference to take place during Phase III, whose funding is already underway.

3.2 Trialling the Learning Support Office in Malawi

The concept of the Learning Support Office is of an independently-located initiative designed to have a positive effect on the quality of the ongoing relief operations through its support to learning amongst the national and international agencies involved in the response. The concept was developed by ALNAP and field tested for the first time in Malawi from October 2002 to March 2003.¹⁴ This year, the concept was evaluated to verify the ability of the LSO to benefit the quality of the operation. The evaluation concluded that the LSO Test had provided a rich source of lessons for the LSO concept and had delivered some concrete and measurable impacts on the humanitarian response.

In order to define a feasible strategy for a next phase in field-level learning activities, the Working Group held a workshop in London in November 2003. Participants included donors, agency representatives, independent consultants and working group members.

The workshop agreed that a fully-fledged ALNAP Working Group be established under the name of *Field Learning Support Initiatives (FLSI)* to pursue the learning support activities as a valid, relevant, and needed concept. The working group was tasked to draw up a viable proposal covering a menu of feasible activities that could attract donors' interest. Four agencies are interested in taking this forward. These are Groupe URD, RedR, Disaster Mitigation Institute and Aid workers Network.

3.3 Evaluating the Use of Research Methods in Humanitarian Contexts

In 2004, UNHCR Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit proposed and organised an ALNAP-sponsored meeting to evaluate lessons learnt and develop guidelines for humanitarian organisations engaged in gathering qualitative data among populations of concern. This initiative will result in the creation of the ALNAP Working Group on *Evaluating the Use of Research Methods in Humanitarian Contexts* on the basis of a proposal submitted to the ALNAP secretariat, which was approved by the ALNAP membership at the annual meeting in October 2003.

This Working Group (whose prospective members include OXFAM, IRC, ICRC, HAP International, UNHCR, academics and independent consultants) aims to build on previous work examining why the humanitarian sector is sometimes poorly informed about refugees and other forced migrants.¹² The final output will be a guidebook aimed at maximising the likelihood that information gathered by field practitioners in various humanitarian contexts answers in a valid way the lacunae of information.

The objectives of the proposed field guide are to describe the research tools that are available and guide readers in choosing the most appropriate methods available to them. The Working Group aims to produce a handbook that will guide users in choosing the most appropriate research methods available to them. It will also provide advice for what constitutes sound research in the humanitarian sector.

¹⁴ The objective of the LSO is to make a positive impact on the quality of emergency response in the field, through the promotion and facilitation of three-way learning activities: learning in, lateral learning, and learning out. To this end,

the objective of the Test LSO in Malawi was to verify the applicability of the LSO concept within the context of the food emergency crisis in Malawi and to obtain the empirical evidence required to refine and/or adapt the concept to other disaster contexts.

¹² See FMR 18, p.55. 'Why do we know so little about refugees? How can we learn more?' by Jeff Crisp: www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/FMR18/fmr18unhcr.pdf

4. Financial Report

ALNAP Member agencies continue to provide a secure and broad funding base to finance the annual workplan. Given the maturity of the ALNAP network and expectations that ALNAP will continue to provide services and products for the Membership, it is hoped

that donors will consider making multi-annual pledges as this would greatly assist future planning processes.

The approved budget for 2003-04 contained salary costs for a full-time 'Interest Groups Manager' This was subsequently not taken up due to a decision made at

1. BUDGET/INCOME

Budget	£402,358
Income	£401,718
Variation	-£640

2. BUDGET/EXPENDITURE (including allowances)

AREA OF ACTIVITY	Salaries (£)		Consultancy (£)		Other costs (£)		Totals (£)			
	Budget	Expenditure	Budget	Expenditure	Budget	Expenditure	Budget	Expenditure	Variation	
Network Activities										
A0001	Membership Maintenance & Development	14,925.00	10,806.50	0.00	0.00	2,000.00	126.63	16,925.00	10,933.13	5,991.87
A0002	Communications, promotion, development	59,701.00	43,226.01	8,750.00	5,605.00	8,292.00	6,056.36	76,743.00	54,887.37	21,855.63
A0003	Evaluative Reports Database and Website	26,992.00	19,543.68	0.00	857.04	3,500.00	1,645.00	30,492.00	22,045.72	8,446.28
A0004	Biannual Meetings	25,405.00	18,394.05	6,300.00	6,834.31	17,500.00	22,788.81	49,205.00	48,017.17	1,187.83
A0005	Steering Committee Servicing	20,641.00	14,945.16	0.00	0.00	2,000.00	663.07	22,641.00	15,608.23	7,032.77
A0006	Useful Resources Membership and Journals	5,081.00	3,678.81	0.00	0.00	2,550.00	126.93	7,631.00	3,805.74	3,825.26
A0007	ALNAP Secretariat Administration	16,513.00	11,956.13	0.00	6,939.29	0.00	2,803.31	16,513.00	21,698.73	-5,185.73
A0008	Training/modules	11,750.00	8,507.25	3,850.00	2,327.07	3,000.00	1,224.00	18,600.00	12,058.32	6,541.68
A0014	ALNAP Review of Humanitarian Action in 2003 (includes late payments for AR 2003)	38,107.00	27,591.07	34,750.00	51,834.57	14,500.00	13,060.85	87,357.00	92,486.49	-5,129.49
Programme Activities										
A0009	Protection	30,485.00	11,496.28	18,800.00	3,900.00	4,000.00	10,188.03	53,285.00	25,584.31	27,700.69
A0013	Evaluating Humanitarian Action	0.00	10,576.58	0.00	3,021.20	0.00	1,329.21	0.00	14,926.99	-14,926.99
Working Groups Activities										
A0010	Working Groups Facilitation & Development	17,466.00	12,645.91	3,500.00	0.00	2,000.00	891.85	22,966.00	13,537.76	9,428.24
Totals		267,066.00	193,367.42	75,950.00	81,318.48	59,342.00	60,904.05	402,358.00	335,589.95	66,768.05

the 13th Biannual Meeting in May 2003. Here the Membership decided to introduce the concept of ALNAP Working Groups rather than continue with Interest Groups managed centrally at the ALNAP secretariat by a new member of staff. This resulted in unspent funds for salaries amounting to approximately £70,000 at the end

of this financial year. This figure includes employment costs and an overhead levied by the ODI. The salary costs saved from this year will be carried over and used to recruit appropriate staff and resources to ensure the implementation of the communication strategy in FY2004–05.

3. INCOME/EXPENDITURE			(£)
INCOME SOURCE	Income	Expenditure	Variation
Full Member Contributions received	400,359.20		
Income from other sources*	5,171.37		
Pledged but not received	0.00		
Carry over 2002–03	9,250.00		
Extra donations towards 2002–03 overspend	5,437.64		
Totals	£401,718	£335,589.95	66,128.26

4. END OF FY 2003–04 ALLOWANCES

expenses not invoiced at 31.3.04 but included in above expenditure figures

AREA OF ACTIVITY			(£)
Network Activities			
A0001	Membership Maintenance & Development		0.00
A0002	Communications, promotion, development		0.00
A0003	Evaluative Reports Database and Website		0.00
A0004	Biannual Meetings		0.00
A0005	Steering Committee Servicing		0.00
A0006	Useful Resources Membership and Journals		0.00
A0007	ALNAP Secretariat Administration		0.00
A0008	Training/modules		0.00
A0011	ALNAP Review of Humanitarian Action in 2003 (includes late payments for AR 2003)		27,599.00
Programme Activities			
A0009	Protection		0.00
A0013	Evaluating Humanitarian Action		930.00
Working Groups Activities – Secretariat Support			
A0010	Working Groups Facilitation & Development		0.00
Totals			28,529.00

*(book sales, LSO balance, training)

			Australian Government AusAID	BADC	John Borton	
		British Red Cross <i>Caring for people in crisis</i>			Canadian International Development Agency Agence canadienne de développement international	Ian Christopolos
DANIDA		Dansk Flygtningehjælp		Development Cooperation Ireland	DfID	
						
				HAP INTERNATIONAL <i>Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International</i>		ICVA
						
	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies		MFA France	MFA Germany		
	MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES ARTSEN ZONDER GRENZEN					Red 
	Save the Children	SCHR			Ian Shaw	
	The Sphere Project	John Telford			UNHCHR	UNHCR
UNICEF					World Vision	

For further information please contact the ALNAP Secretariat

ALNAP at ODI,
144 Westminster Bridge Road
London SE4 7JD, UK
Tel: +44 (0)20 7922 0300
Fax: +44 (0)20 7922 0399
alnap@odi.org.uk

www.alnap.org

