

# Annual Report 2008-09



**ALNAP**

Active Learning Network for  
Accountability and Performance  
in Humanitarian Action

08-09

## Message from Chair



As I write this third and final message for the Annual Report, I have looked back over my three years as Chair and it is clear just how far ALNAP has come in fulfilling its mission and expanding the understanding of learning and performance in humanitarian action. The

completion of the 2008–2013 strategy was a major step forward, as it clarified ALNAP’s vision, mission and objectives and how we as members can achieve them. It gave new impetus and direction to all the aspects of ALNAP’s work.

ALNAP does not exist without its members, and the last few years have seen a rapid increase in the number of agencies applying for full membership, as well much enhanced engagement with Southern networks, which has led to greater diversity, learning and a plethora of new ideas. We are grateful for the strong direction and priorities set by the members, but most of all for the very high level of engagement and work put into all the processes and products that have been developed. In addition, the secretariat has substantially strengthened over the past few years, which has allowed them to take on more work internally and be more responsive to the direction of the network. They are now producing world class research, as well as facilitating the development of globally important initiatives such as the humanitarian performance project, which will provide for the first time a regular appraisal of the state of the humanitarian system.

As well as the new areas of work, ALNAP remains committed to building on its original foundations by continuing to monitor and improve the quality of evaluations and support, and the dissemination and take up of recommendations. Here too, it has expanded its engagement to recognise that evaluations are only one way to bring about organisational learning and change, and therefore has complemented this work with research into innovations, understanding how organisational change occurs and supporting the development of guidelines on RTEs, to aid in turning learning into action. This work will also be supported by the much improved new look website.

## Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP)

ALNAP was established in 1997 following the multi-agency evaluation of the Rwanda genocide. It is a collective response by the humanitarian sector, dedicated to improving humanitarian performance through increased learning and accountability.

The Biannuals continue to grow in both size and subject matter and produce follow-up research and papers that are used far outside of ALNAP’s normal constituent groups, and have been shown to have direct positive impact on humanitarian action and the communities we serve. There is now a commitment to hold every third biannual in the regions, supported by a southern NGO or network, and this has resulted in a much better understanding of needs of Southern networks, a chance for two-way learning and exchange, as well as developing the ongoing network-to-network project where ALNAP is able to provide capacity building and support to Southern networks.

The membership guidelines have been rewritten and there is now a much clearer understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the members, steering committee, secretariat and ODI, and this along with the constituency lunches at the Biannuals has contributed to an improved understanding of who ALNAP is and how the members can engage.

The steering committee and secretariat are committed to finding practical ways to monitor progress towards our strategic objectives and this is explained more fully in the “Monitoring Progress” section of this report. We will use the annual report as a way of reporting back on progress to ensure we are held accountable to our members. We also continue to work with our members to monitor if learning is being turned into positive change and whether this in turn is improving the lives of the communities we serve.

As I hand over the role of the Chair, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all the members for their great support and commitment to making ALNAP a truly dynamic and value adding network. I would also like to express my thanks to the

Steering Committee who have provided excellent wisdom and guidance to myself and the secretariat, and have represented their constituent groups so professionally; to the ODI for the ongoing support and hosting; and finally to the secretariat, who under John's expert leadership have grown and matured into an exceptional team contributing so much both to ALNAP and the humanitarian industry as a whole. They have made my work as chair a really enjoyable and exciting experience and their commitment and humility never cease to inspire me. There is still much to do in ALNAP, from ensuring that there is a good balance in the discussions, having real global representation, completing and maintaining the state of the system work, and seeing this through to show real change. I am confident that ALNAP will continue to grow and make a meaningful contribution to improving the performance of humanitarian action and it has been my privilege to be part of the journey.

**Eleanor Monbiot**

### **ALNAP's Purpose**

ALNAP is dedicated to improving the accountability, quality and performance of humanitarian action by sharing lessons, identifying common problems and, where appropriate, building on consensus on common approaches and solutions.

### **Message from ALNAP Director**



In last year's Annual Report I noted that 2007–8 had been a turning point for ALNAP. This had come about due to a new five-year strategy, increasing applications for Full Membership and stronger capacity in the Secretariat. All of us recognised an opportunity to build on

existing achievements but more than this we also saw a reinvigorated ALNAP with a fresh potential to collectively forge ahead with new ideas and exciting new initiatives and outputs. There was a sense the time had come to boldly take the performance agenda forward and help the humanitarian system make genuine improvements.

This year I believe we have seen this begin to happen. In the context of the Humanitarian Performance Project (HPP) we have created several mutually reinforcing work streams around performance assessment, innovations, impact assessment, leadership, evaluation systems and capacities. Together these initiatives are creating a new and more holistic agenda where assessment and analysis are geared towards identifying what works well and how to make improvements. ALNAP has now moved beyond analysis and identifying problems and barriers to positive change (important as that is) and is now exploring new space for innovations and improvements.

I have been delighted this year to receive so much positive feedback about our products, especially our lessons papers. This is gratifying and I would like to thank our Chair and Steering Committee for their guidance and my team in the Secretariat who have worked so energetically and creatively together. It has been a pleasure to work in such a positive environment. Most importantly, I would like to acknowledge and thank all our members who have contributed precious time and given so many ideas and suggestions to virtually everything that comes out of ALNAP. This active involvement represents the unique added value that sets ALNAP apart from other networks, research institutes and think tanks, and provides us with a means for genuine collective endeavour.

**John Mitchell**

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### What we do and how

Our primary goal is to improve the performance of humanitarian action through a process of shared learning and collaborative research within the ALNAP Network. Our Full Members collectively make up the key actors involved in humanitarian funding, research, planning, operations and evaluations. This unique system-wide composition provides an inclusive platform for collective learning, innovations and positive change

ALNAP is a unique network that incorporates many of the key humanitarian organisations and experts from across the humanitarian sector, including members from donors, NGOs, the Red Cross/Crescent, the UN, independents and academics.

As such ALNAP is able to utilise the broad range of experience within its membership to produce tools and analyses relevant and accessible to the humanitarian sector as a whole.

ALNAP comprises Full Members and Observer Members. At the end of the financial year there were 62 Full Members and well over 1,000 Observer Members. The number of Full Members is currently limited to 75. The network is governed by a Steering Committee representing the membership, and serviced by a small Secretariat.

### Identifying our priorities

ALNAP's annual workplan is developed as part of a collaborative process involving the Secretariat, the Steering Committee and the Full Members. The shape and content of the workplan is guided by the ALNAP Strategy 2008–13 and the final document is signed off by the Steering Committee on behalf of the wider membership.

It is recognised that improving the quality and utilisation of different types of evaluative processes is a key area for improving accountability, learning and performance. ALNAP has been at the forefront of much of the recent progress in analysing, promoting innovations (such as RTEs) and improving evaluations. At the same time, ALNAP's work has demonstrated that evaluations alone are not going to have a significant effect on improving overall performance. We recognise that evaluations are part of a broad range of organisational and institutional factors – including management systems, learning and knowledge management, HR practices, leadership and innovations – that collectively have the capacity to bring about positive change. This recognition has helped guide the development of the ALNAP research agenda.

### Three core areas

The workplan consists of three key areas of work: research and development; providing fora for shared learning and improvement; and providing a knowledge base for shared learning and improvement.

#### *a) Research and development*

The longer term studies that ALNAP undertakes are aimed at providing credible, state of the art research that will inform important areas of policy of

## Lessons Papers

2008–09 began with a ‘rapid response’ Lessons Paper in response to Cyclone Nargis, which hit Myanmar causing great humanitarian need in May 2008. The paper, which targeted aid agencies supporting the response, was published just three weeks after the cyclone hit and, partly for that reason, was extremely well received.

July saw the release of an ALNAP–ProVention Lessons Paper entitled *Responding to Earthquakes: Learning from earthquake relief and recovery operations*. This paper was more ‘proactive’ and provided a distillation of learning from thirty years of humanitarian response to earthquakes. In the wake of the Sichuan earthquake, the paper was translated into Chinese by DFID China and circulated to Chinese Ministries leading relief and recovery efforts.

In November, ALNAP published a ‘Lessons and Ideas’ paper on the Global Food Price Crisis. Again, this was well received around the world, featured by IRIN and cited in the Feeding Hunger and Insecurity Report 2009 by ACF. It also triggered an interesting debate among Full Members on the diversity of inputs into ALNAP products.

particular interest to the humanitarian community. For example, much of the material in the ALNAP Review of Humanitarian Action (RHA) series is aimed at enhancing the understanding of key trends and issues relating to humanitarian performance, as a means of developing policy and supporting improvements in system-wide performance. Chapters in the past have included previously unexplored areas, such as knowledge management, capacity building, evaluation utilisation, field level learning and organisational change, all of which are of interest and value to the ALNAP membership and the sector as a whole. ALNAP has also regularly provided an evaluation synthesis chapter which reviews recent humanitarian performance and lessons learned, through a review of evaluative material submitted by ALNAP members and other agencies.

Shorter research studies aim to promote real time learning. This is achieved in three main ways. The first way is by developing and circulating lessons papers in response to recent humanitarian crises.



Two more ‘rapid response’ Lessons Papers were published at the beginning of 2009, one on the Israeli military assault on Gaza that began in December 2008 and another on the agency expulsions from Sudan in March 2009.

ALNAP Lessons Papers continue to be useful tools for humanitarian actors, as well as for expanding ALNAP’s global reach. In 2009–10 the Secretariat will continue producing such papers in collaboration with other organisations. Some of these will be written in ‘rapid response’ to new emergencies, others will be more ‘proactive’, synthesising lessons from earlier responses in anticipation of future emergencies. An ALNAP–ProVention Lessons Paper on humanitarian response and recovery in urban disasters is expected to be published in early July 2009.

These draw on evaluations held in ALNAP’s evaluative reports data base, insights from field-based practitioners and policy makers, and additional research materials as appropriate. Recently ALNAP has provided lessons papers in response to agency expulsions in Sudan, the crisis in Gaza, the global food price crisis, the Pakistan earthquake in 2008 and cyclone Nargis in Myanmar.

Second, ALNAP works to strengthen the use and take up of real time evaluations and after action reviews across the sector. These innovative learning mechanisms focus on providing real time feedback to operational managers and staff as an emergency is happening. ALNAP has published guidance material on Real Time Evaluation (RTE) and After Action Reviews, and facilitates a cross-agency working group on RTEs.

And third, ALNAP undertakes research projects on particular topics in order to produce different kinds of guidance materials for operational staff. These can sometimes be on neglected topics, such as

participation and protection, or can take the form of trialling new approaches and tools such as the learning support office during the Southern Africa food crisis.

### ***b) Providing fora for shared learning and improvements***

As a system-wide network ALNAP has a unique convening power and has the ability to bring together representatives from across the humanitarian system and also from other sectors, such as the news media and the development community. This has a community building function for the humanitarian sector and promotes important linkages between sectors. This can have a beneficial effect on cross sector understanding and promotes more informed and more coherent policies.

ALNAP's Biannual Meetings have in the past provided a forum for face-to-face discussion which has helped renew relationships and partnerships, have provided a sense of shared ownership of key issues and agreement on priorities, and have established a stronger basis for successful collective action. For example, we have now seen the establishment of the Humanitarian Performance Project (HPP) which is a collective enterprise that aims to provide the first regular appraisal of system-wide humanitarian performance.

### ***c) Providing a knowledge base for learning and improvement***

The Evaluative Reports Database (ERD) is ALNAP's key tool to facilitate information sharing and lesson learning. It is a mainly a bibliographic collection of evaluative reports but also contains other evaluative reports, such as Lessons Studies, Reviews, Synthesis Reports and Good Practice Studies.

Any humanitarian agency may submit a report to the database, but all ALNAP Full Member organisations are expected to do so on a regular basis. The ERD makes available key sections and the full report when possible. Although the majority of reports in the database are available publicly, a minority are confidential: in accordance with the wishes of commissioning agencies, access to these reports is restricted to Full Members only.

We will be extending this facility and introducing a bigger and better data base with the planned launch of a new website.

### **High-profile and established global networks include:**

- the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC),
- the Global Humanitarian Platform (GHP),
- the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative (GHD),
- the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR),
- the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP),
- the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA),
- the Humanitarian Practice Network (HPN),
- the Sphere Project, and
- new practice-oriented networks within the UN-led cluster approach, linking different humanitarian actors working within particular sectors.

## **Report on activities**

### ***a) Research and development***

#### **Humanitarian Performance Project (HPP) and Review of Humanitarian Action (RHA)**

The exploratory phase of the HPP lasted from January to June 2008 and consisted of a consultative process canvassing the views of key stakeholders across the ALNAP network and the wider humanitarian system. The main output from this phase was an inventory of what kind of data are being collected in the system, by whom, and what implications this has for assessing system-wide performance. The inventory was presented to the membership at the 23rd Biannual Meeting in Madrid in June 2008 and the next phase of HPP was developed on the basis of feedback from the members.

The main recommendation from the meeting was to pilot a relatively simple mechanism for reviewing overall system-wide performance whilst simultaneously investigating a number of key areas

### **HPP Advisory Group Members**

- Jock Baker, CARE
- Mia Beers, USAID/OFDA
- Mihir Bhatt, AIDMI
- John Borton, Independent
- Peter Giesen, IFRC
- Scott Green, OCHA
- Mikael Lindvall, Swedish Foreign Ministry
- Margareta Wahlström, UN Assistant Secretary General, ISDR
- Peter Walker, Tufts University

that would be of value both in themselves, but also as part of the ongoing HPP process. These areas were:

- research into collective approaches and different models of performance assessment;
- understanding impact of humanitarian assistance;
- reviewing the scope for beneficiary surveys to play a greater role in understanding performance; and
- the development of 'key performance indicators' for the system.

As a result, the ALNAP Secretariat began a study which aims to present an analysis of the different kinds of data available in the humanitarian system, and how they can potentially map onto different kinds of performance models that have been used in a variety of sectors. This work was still in progress at the end of the financial year 2008–09, but it is due to be published in the opening chapter of ALNAP's *8th Review of Humanitarian Action*.

A research study on impact assessment was also started and an initial presentation made at the 24th Biannual Meeting in Berlin where the membership had the opportunity to make substantive inputs. The study, which is based on four in-depth case studies of humanitarian impact assessment, was almost complete at the end of the financial year and is due to be published in the *8th Review of Humanitarian Action*.

A key performance interest group will be set up in 2009–10 and is being led by John Borton, ALNAP Full Member. A note explaining the background and purpose can be downloaded [here](#).

A study on the use of beneficiary surveys has been written into the ALNAP workplan 2009–10.

Most importantly, the ALNAP Steering Committee gave the go-ahead to pilot a State of the System Report which is a systematic piece of research and analysis that will combine existing research, evaluations and studies with expert interviews and opinion polls. The aim is to provide a 'base line' to track future performance. 'Humanitarian Outcomes' were contracted to carry out the study which is being guided by an Advisory Group made up of key specialists and senior policy makers in the sector. They have already provided feedback on an inception report and will peer review the final work.

### **Innovations initiative**

Building on previous ALNAP work, and a call for more transformational learning in the sector, work began on the new ALNAP initiative on innovation. A substantial piece of research examining innovation in humanitarian response was undertaken for an ALNAP Study which will form a chapter in the forthcoming RHA. The Study, written by the ALNAP Secretariat with an outside consultant, represents the first comprehensive attempt to apply innovations theory to humanitarian action, and to appraise the extent of and scope for innovation in a humanitarian context. As well as drawing on an in-depth literature review and consultation with experts in innovation theory, the study also benefited from input from a wide breadth of the ALNAP Membership.

The study found that although there is a latent capacity for innovation in the sector, and in certain instances innovations have contributed to improved performance, agencies have made little systematic attempt to create organisational space for innovation. Conversely, the push towards standardisation and consolidation has created a risk-averse culture that threatens to stifle innovations when they do occur. The need to maintain an adaptive capacity was seen as key if the humanitarian sector is to cope with the increasing challenges it faces, and thus there is continued scope for ALNAP engagement with the innovations agenda.

Other work continuing as part of the Initiative included the initial production of ALNAP Innovation Case Studies, a new product designed to facilitate dissemination and learning around particular humanitarian innovations. Building on the case study research which contributed to the ALNAP Innovation Study, they will track the innovation process from inception to dissemination



and scale-up. In addition, scoping began for the development of a possible innovation mechanism to help facilitate innovation across the sector.

Anyone interested in this initiative or requiring further information should please contact: Kim Scriven, Research and Innovations Officer, [k.scriven@alnab.org](mailto:k.scriven@alnab.org).

## Evaluation Capacities and Context

Background research carried out by ALNAP at the beginning of 2008–09 highlighted a need for more analysis of the organisational and institutional contexts of evaluations of humanitarian action. To date, much of ALNAP’s work to improve the quality and use of evaluations of humanitarian action has focused on specific evaluation processes and their reports, without always taking full account of the wider contextual factors that may support or hinder evaluation processes and the use of their findings.

This new cross-network initiative aims to promote the quality and use of humanitarian evaluations by fostering sustainable organisational and institutional change, which promotes, rather than undermines, evaluation capacities. Specifically, it seeks a better understanding of evaluation capacities and their wider contexts and asks,

- why, how, and by whom, are evaluations of humanitarian action commissioned, carried out and used?
- what are the systems, structures and incentives within aid agencies (and across the sector as a whole) that shape, and are in turn shaped by, evaluations?

In the financial year 2008–09, the Secretariat completed the first phase of a desk review on organisational approaches to evaluation and



learning, which has laid a solid foundation for work planned in 2009–10.

Anyone interested in this initiative or requiring further information should please

contact: Karen Proudlock, Evaluation and Research Officer, [k.proudlock@alnap.org](mailto:k.proudlock@alnap.org).

## Humanitarian Networks Initiative

The past few decades have seen significant expansion in the number and scale of inter-organisational networks associated with humanitarian policy and programming. Such networks dominate governance within the system and are likely to continue to guide and coordinate humanitarian practice and policy.

ALNAP, in collaboration with ODI and ICVA, has developed and refined an approach to analysing and

strengthening humanitarian networks. Strengthening humanitarian networks: Applying the network functions approach by ALNAP, ODI and ICVA can be downloaded [here](#). This has already been utilised by a number of networks across the sector, including ALNAP and ICVA, INEE, Global Network on Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Shelter Centre. Most recently, the clusters have started to use it as a starting point for their work on accountability.

In collaboration with Northern and Southern networks, ALNAP subsequently initiated a project to strengthen the capacities of regional networks of Southern actors. This has involved work with the Asian Disaster Reduction & Response Network (ADRRN) to help develop its new three-year strategy, and with ACHA to strengthen knowledge and learning capacities.

Work is now underway to undertake a research project, in collaboration with ODI-HPG, on humanitarian networks across the sector.



Anyone interested in this initiative or requiring further information should please contact: Ben Ramalingam, Head of Research and Development, [b.ramalingam@alnap.org](mailto:b.ramalingam@alnap.org).

## *b) Providing fora for shared learning and improvements*

ALNAP Biannual Meetings have continued to provide the humanitarian system with its only system-wide forum for the exchange of ideas and learning on issues related to accountability and performance. They also provide real face-to-face contact between ALNAP members and the opportunity to renew old relationships and establish new ones. Each ALNAP Meeting is hosted by one of its Full Members, which gives each meeting a distinct character and feel.

The **23rd ALNAP Biannual Meeting** was held in Madrid on 4th and 5th June 2008. Day one, chaired by Kate Adie, provided a platform for representatives from media and humanitarian agencies to discuss different dimensions of their relationship under the theme of **News Media and Humanitarian Aid**.

The meeting was opened by Her Royal Highness the Princess of Asturias. The welcome address was delivered by Leire Pajín, then Spanish Secretary of





L to r: John Mitchell, Leire Pajín, HRH the Princess of Asturias



A session during the 24th Biannual Meeting

State for International Cooperation, while José María Figueres, former president of Costa Rica, chaired the closing plenary session.

The large group of media personnel participating in the meeting included past and present international news correspondents such as Peter Arnett, Bill Dowell, Tim Singleton and David Pratt, as well as humanitarian media specialists including James Deane, Martyn Broughton and Ben Parker.

The **24th ALNAP Biannual Meeting** was held in December 2008 and hosted by the German Federal Foreign Ministry in Berlin. The theme of the meeting was **Re-thinking the Impact of Humanitarian Aid** and the welcome address was given by Ambassador Busso von Alvensleben, Commissioner for Global Issues: Civilian Crisis Prevention, Human Rights, Humanitarian Aid and International Terrorism (Watch the speech on [YouTube](#).)

Keynote presentations on the impact of humanitarian aid were given by John Mitchell, Director of ALNAP and Elliot Stern Professor of Evaluation Research, Lancaster University. Watch the presentations on YouTube: John Mitchell [part one](#), [part two](#); Elliot Stern [part one](#), [part two](#), [part three](#).

### *c) Providing a knowledge base for learning and improvement*

#### **Evaluative Reports Database (ERD)**

A total of 73 reports were added to the ERD in 2008–09 and this brings the total number of evaluative reports in the database to 976. Most of the reports added to the ERD this year were submitted

by donors.

ALNAP's new website will enable Full and Observer Members to submit evaluative reports online.

#### **Training in Evaluating Humanitarian Action**

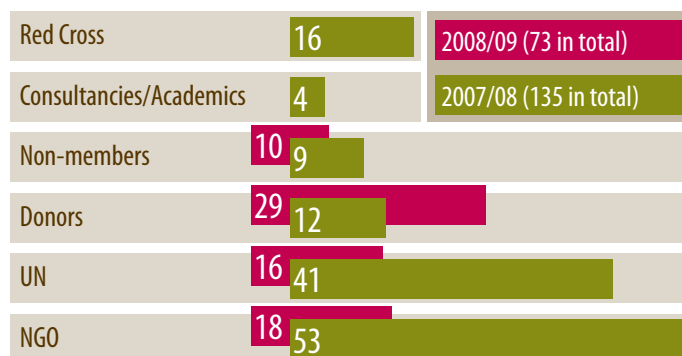
Channel Research continue to organise 3-day courses and a high degree of satisfaction was recorded through a participant feedback exercise. Participants unanimously agreed that they would recommend this course to others.

A survey was carried out by Channel Research to assess the training needs of evaluators. The survey identified the need for an advanced training course for experienced evaluators, and such a course is planned for November 2009.

### **Communications and information**

#### **Communications Plan**

As part of the new ALNAP communications plan the Secretariat undertook an audit of existing products in order to assess their relevance and relative



ERD reports sourced by type of agency, two-year comparison

### Hard copy publications in 2008–09

*ALNAP 7th Review of Humanitarian Action*

*Organisational change in the humanitarian sector* (individually published chapter of 7th Review of Humanitarian Action)



*Joint evaluations coming of age? The quality and future scope of joint evaluations* (individually published chapter of 7th Review of Humanitarian Action)

*Key messages from ALNAP's Seventh Review of Humanitarian Action*

*Mensajes claves del Séptimo Informe de la Acción Humanitaria de ALNAP*

*Messages clefs de la Septième Revue de l'Action Humanitaire d'ALNAP*

### Online publications

*Cyclone Nargis: Lessons for Operational Agencies.* [Download.](#)

*Responding to earthquakes: Learning from earthquake relief and recovery operations.* [Download.](#)

*The Global Food Price Crisis: Lessons and Ideas for Relief Planners and Managers.* [Download.](#)

*Deepening Crisis in Gaza: lessons for Operational Agencies.* [Download.](#)

*Where to Now? Agency Expulsions in Sudan: Consequences and Next Steps (Joint ALNAP/HPG paper).* [Download.](#)

*Real-time Evaluations of Humanitarian Action – An ALNAP Guide (Pilot version).* [Download.](#)

contribution to meeting new communications objectives. Each product was assessed against the criteria of targeting the right audiences, the methods and frequency of communication, and monitoring and learning tools. Each product was then modified according to the findings of the assessment.

Preliminary results were presented to the Steering Committee and a new Communications Plan will be completed in 2009–10. The communications plan will be finalised and implemented alongside a forthcoming monitoring plan.

### ALNAP Website

In September the Secretariat contracted a web developer to re-design ALNAP's website. The new website will offer better functionality but most importantly provide new ways for members to become more actively engaged in the network. We are confident that new features, such as an electronic discussion forum, a blogging facility and an interactive events calendar, will be welcomed by our membership. The launch of the new website is planned for 2009–10.

### ALNAP Bulletin

This year three editions of the Bulletin provided our members with ALNAP updates. The Bulletin continues to be a useful communications tool and has received positive feedback. There are plans to improve its layout and design in the coming year.

### Members' Information Exchange

As in previous years many Full Members participated in the process of sharing information about their organisations' activities with other Full Members. The Secretariat received information from 32 Full Members for the 23rd Biannual Meeting; 27 Full Members provided us with their updates for the 24th Biannual Meeting.

With the new website in place in 2009–10 the process of submitting information about Full and Observer Members' activities will be simplified. It is anticipated that members will be able to submit information, such as upcoming events, latest publications, completed evaluation reports and announcements of vacant consultancies, directly to the website throughout the year.

According to the website statistics, ALNAP's existing website has maintained a steady number of downloads. Page views also increased by about 8%

Fig. 1. Page views: 3-year comparison, 2006–07, 2007–08, 2008–09

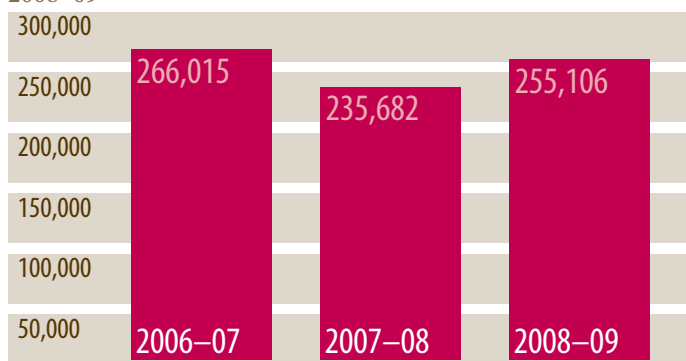


Fig. 2. Ten most popular documents, 2008–09



compared to the previous year but decreased by 4% when compared to 2006–07 (Figure 1).

Figure 2 illustrates ALNAP's 10 most popular documents visited during 2008–09. As shown in the bar chart, the Lessons Paper on Cyclone Nargis in May 2008 was especially popular.

### Measuring progress

ALNAP's **five year strategy** was unveiled and approved by members at the 23rd Biannual Meeting in Saly, Senegal in December 2007. The strategy focuses on five strategic objectives, and highlights what will be done to achieve each of them, and what will be seen in terms of outcomes. The strategy was produced by a process led by the Secretariat and the Steering Committee and which saw substantial engagement from the Membership, thereby reflecting a broad consensus on vision, priorities and approach.

As a learning network focused on the improvement of performance, ALNAP is committed to practising what it preaches and will work towards a systematic

way to learn from its progress against objectives. However, in order to achieve this it is necessary to design a clear way of monitoring how our activities are each contributing to our objectives. As a first step in addressing this question, the Secretariat and the Steering Committee have formulated a plan to develop three specific tools which will together provide a means of tracking an 'auditable trail of intentions'.

The first tool is a social framework which is an adapted version of a traditional Logical Framework. This will provide a visual description of how the actions of each level of the ALNAP Network (Secretariat, Steering Committee, Members) relate to each other and the people it wants to influence (other organisations and intended recipients of humanitarian assistance).

The second tool is a planning matrix which will provide an overview of how activities are expected to contribute to each of the strategic objectives. And the third tool is an evaluation matrix which will use the information from the planning matrix for assessing achievements.

All three tools will be developed in the next financial year and provisional plans for an evaluation of the strategy will also be made. The data and a first analysis of the results of the monitoring plan will be published in next year's Annual Report.

### Progress in 2008–09

Measuring progress in a complex network like ALNAP is inevitably an inexact science and even more so before the monitoring system is set up. Quantitative measures with respect to hits on the website, number of citations in reports and books, etc. can help provide some sense of the level of activity that the network has generated but they clearly do have limitations. Qualitative data, often in the form of feedback forms or unsolicited e-mails, are necessarily subjective and, at the moment, it is only partially possible to establish a close causal relationship between any given ALNAP output and positive changes in humanitarian policy and practice. Nevertheless, judgements do have to be made and there are a few key areas where there is a good basis to suggest that positive progress is being made.

Both strategic objectives 1 and 4 focus on improving the use of evaluations to make improvements in

both policy and in field practice. It is clear from the overwhelmingly positive response from field practitioners that the timely production of lessons papers (using lessons from evaluations and other sources) in response to new emergencies has provided much useful guidance for field staff working in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar in May 2008, the Israeli/Palestinian conflict in Gaza and the agency expulsions in Sudan. We also saw our paper on responding to earthquakes picked up by the Chinese government and used by Chinese Ministries dealing with the Sichuan earthquake.

We have also seen that lessons papers have a direct influence on policy, most notably the paper on the global food price crisis which was featured by IRIN and cited in the Feeding Hunger and Insecurity Report 2009 by ACF.

The link between our biannual meeting reports and policy has also been strengthened due to stronger Secretariat capacity to produce quality reports for the meetings. The report following the 24th Biannual Meeting on Re-thinking the Impact of Humanitarian Aid was very well received and has provided the basis for developing a framework for understanding and implementing impact assessment which has generated provisional interest amongst several agencies interested in undertaking their own assessments.

Strategic objective 3 aims to improve system-wide fora for active learning and the exchange of experience and ideas and, on the basis of our biannual feedback forms, we are seeing a very positive response and recognition of improved substantive quality of the meetings. ALNAP Biannual

#### **Examples of feedback given in response to ALNAP's Lessons Paper on Cyclone Nargis**

*"This is exactly what we need from ALNAP. Well done on turning this round so quickly..."*

*Ivan Scott, Oxfam GB*

*"... your Nargis paper was really excellent – covering just the right topics, and in a very practical way. Great job."*

*Simon Maxwell, Director of ODI*

*"What timely and thoughtful recommendations!"*

*Roslyn G. Hees, Global Programmes, Transparency International*

### **ALNAP's five Strategic Objectives**

- 1** ALNAP will establish stronger links between learning processes and improvements in humanitarian policy and field practice
- 2** ALNAP will advocate for and actively promote improvements in performance in the humanitarian sector.
- 3** ALNAP will improve system-wide fora for active learning and the exchange of experiences and ideas.
- 4** ALNAP will work to improve the quality and utilisation of evaluations within the Network and throughout the humanitarian system.
- 5** ALNAP will expand its global reach and engagement in order to better promote humanitarian learning.

Meetings have now become an important and well recognised feature of the humanitarian calendar.

Strategic objective 2 calls for ALNAP to promote improvements in performance of the sector and we have now taken the all-important first step of piloting the State of the System Report that will be able to track and regularly report on humanitarian performance. If successful, it will provide the humanitarian system with a means of knowing how well or how badly it is doing, and will in itself act to promote improved performance.

#### **Plans for 2009–10**

We have developed a workplan for next year which focuses on strengthening the humanitarian system's ability to understand and assess both individual agency and system-wide performance, whilst promoting best practices, methods and innovations for improvements.

The next steps for the Humanitarian Performance Project (HPP) will be to pilot and publish the State of the System Report and begin a process of reflection on the findings and on the methodology for the next edition in 2011. The latter will be informed by the two chapters of the 8th Review of Humanitarian Action – Counting what counts: performance and effectiveness in the humanitarian sector and Improving humanitarian impact assessment: bridging theory and practice.

The Secretariat will also begin a study to review how beneficiary surveys are used to inform different sorts of evaluative exercises and this will also contribute to

the state of the system methodology.

The ALNAP initiative on 'evaluation systems' will be taken forward by identifying the range of organisational systems for EHA and how some of these systems have worked in specific agencies. The aim is to demonstrate the value of locating evaluations within wider organisational processes at work in aid agencies, so as to identify key gaps in understanding and move the debate and discussions forward. A study will be published, as well as a series of cross-network and organisation-specific workshops to assist in strengthening evaluation capacities.

The stream of work on humanitarian innovations will progress with the publication of the study *Innovations in international humanitarian action* in the 8th Review of Humanitarian Action. This will be presented at the 25th ALNAP Meeting, co-hosted in London with the Humanitarian Futures

#### **Examples of responses given by participants of ALNAP's 23rd Biannual Meeting in Madrid when asked how the meeting met its aims**

##### **Positive comments:**

"The subject was really of interest, very well prepared and documented."

"[The meeting] successfully highlighted the areas where collaboration is working and where the major tensions exist."

"The day held great discussions and raised important issues to consider in our work."

"you are to be congratulated for trying to make progress, and for those willing to engage and break away from convention, [...] there is a real prospect of a more meaningful partnership [between humanitarians and the media]."

##### **... and some criticisms to take into account:**

"...it would have been of benefit if there were more representatives from the independent media – journalists and broadcasters, who could have challenged the debate a little further."

"I would have appreciated more press officers, or people from communication departments who have daily contact with media and media strategy."

"[ALNAP needs] to balance the UK-centric dialogue."

"The workshop gave rise to some interesting debate, although a little away from the set topic I feel! This was due to the large-size group [...]."

#### **Examples of responses given by participants of ALNAP's 24th Biannual Meeting in Berlin when asked whether their understanding of Impact Assessment changed as a result of the day's discussions**

"I see now that a long-term comprehensive look at the interventions by the humanitarian community would make more sense."

"Greater appreciation of the complexity of the issue, particularly in relation to the identification of indicators."

"Not changed but consolidated. A very useful survey of the extent of knowledge and practice in this area. Great questions were proposed to the group from the Secretariat. Challenging however to facilitate input into so many questions by so many people. I thought you did admirably. A great step that should be repeated."

Programme. The meeting will focus on innovations and will include an 'innovations fair' which will allow agencies to present innovations that have had a positive effect on practice.

A study into establishing an 'innovations fund' will be undertaken. The fund would aim to provide small financial incentives to field practitioners and consultants who are the source of many field-based innovations, to write them up and submit them for consideration to a panel. The innovations fund would also promote wider learning processes through meetings to share ideas and learning, and monitoring how new innovations and ideas positively influence change in the humanitarian sector.

ALNAP will also begin a new study on humanitarian leadership which will review different kinds and levels of leadership in humanitarian contexts and suggests ways for leadership to be understood and improved in the sector. This will be carried out in collaboration with Tulane University, the Humanitarian Futures Programme and People In Aid.

ALNAP will continue its usual job of producing lessons papers in response to new emergency situations, helping to build and strengthen regional networks of agencies through the on-going Humanitarian Networks Initiative, and convening meetings to promote learning and discussion on various key issues.

## End of year financial report 2008–09

### 1. Budget/Expenditure

| AREA OF ACTIVITY   | Consultancy fees  |                   | Salary costs       |                    | Other costs        |                    | BUDGET             | EXPENDITURE        | TOTALS            |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
|  | Budget            | Expenditure       | Budget             | Expenditure        | Budget             | Expenditure        |                    |                    |                   |
|  | £                 | £                 | £                  | £                  | £                  | £                  | £                  | £                  | £                 |
| A0002 Communications; promotion of ALNAP activities & products | 7,142.86          | 0.00              | 59,197.14          | 46,985.35          | 17,700.00          | 15,694.13          | 84,040.00          | 62,679.48          | 21,360.52         |
| A0003 Evaluative Reports Database and Website                  | 4,761.90          | 0.00              | 10,526.88          | 10,091.30          | 0.00               | 0.00               | 15,288.78          | 10,091.30          | 5,197.48          |
| A0004 Biannual Meetings  | 7,164.87          | 1,700.00          | 42,871.79          | 39,020.52          | 15,300.00          | 35,653.88          | 65,336.66          | 76,374.40          | -11,037.73        |
| A0005 Steering Committee                                       | 0.00              | 0.00              | 12,655.53          | 11,780.57          | 2,580.00           | 1,077.64           | 15,235.53          | 12,858.21          | 2,377.32          |
| A0007 ALNAP Secretariat Administration                         | 0.00              | 0.00              | 23,092.57          | 21,381.79          | 7,012.50           | 10,754.09          | 30,105.07          | 32,135.88          | -2,030.81         |
| A0008 Training Modules   | 9,142.86          | 0.00              | 4,950.05           | 3,583.61           | 0.00               | 0.00               | 14,092.91          | 3,583.61           | 10,509.30         |
| A0011 RHA  | 25,700.00         | 36,437.50         | 49,041.51          | 54,067.04          | 3,450.00           | 20,402.08          | 78,191.51          | 110,906.62         | -32,715.11        |
| A0017 Complementary studies                                    | 36,115.00         | 32,277.50         | 58,634.75          | 57,058.03          | 19,881.60          | 5,915.11           | 114,631.35         | 95,250.64          | 19,380.71         |
| A0018 Facilitating future evaluation coalitions                | 0.00              | 0.00              | 0.00               | 0.00               | 5,000.00           | 0.00               | 5,000.00           | 0.00               | 5,000.00          |
| A0020 Follow up to Tsunami Evaluation Coalition                | 0.00              | 0.00              | 0.00               | 0.00               | 2,291.25           | 1,698.13           | 2,291.25           | 1,698.13           | 593.12            |
| A0021 Meta-evaluation of humanitarian evaluations              | 0.00              | 0.00              | 0.00               | 0.00               | 0.00               | 2,687.33           | 0.00               | 2,687.33           | -2,687.33         |
| ODI overhead on Secretariat salaries                           |                   |                   |                    |                    | 118,081.82         | 116,033.28         | 118,081.82         | 116,033.28         | 2,048.55          |
| ODI service charge on consultant fees                          | 4,501.37          | 3,520.75          |                    |                    |                    |                    | 4,501.37           | 3,520.75           | 980.62            |
| <b>Totals</b>  | <b>£94,528.87</b> | <b>£73,935.75</b> | <b>£260,970.22</b> | <b>£243,968.20</b> | <b>£191,297.17</b> | <b>£209,915.66</b> | <b>£546,796.26</b> | <b>£527,819.61</b> | <b>£18,976.64</b> |

### 2. Income

| INCOME SOURCE                             | Income            |
|---|-------------------|
| Full Member 2008-9 Contributions received | 409,946.29        |
| 2007-8 contributions received in 2008-9   | 101,915.00        |
| Book sales                                | 45.00             |
| Other income                              | 745.56            |
| <b>Totals</b>                             | <b>512,651.85</b> |

### 3. Income/Expenditure

|  | Income            | Expenditure       | Balance           |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Income and expenditure in 2008-9       | 512,651.85        | 527,819.61        |                   |
| Carry over from 2007-8                 | -8,324.21         |                   |                   |
| <b>Totals</b>                          | <b>504,327.64</b> | <b>527,819.61</b> | <b>-23,491.97</b> |
| Income pledged but not received        | 103,652.23        |                   |                   |
| <b>Totals when all income received</b> | <b>607,979.87</b> | <b>527,819.61</b> | <b>80,160.25</b>  |

## ALNAP Funding Summary 2008–09

| Member                          | Pledged for     | 2008–09 contributions | 2007–08 contributions |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
|                                 | 2008–09         | received by 31/3/09   | received in 2008-09   |
|                                 | £               | £                     | £                     |
| AusAid                          | £25,764         | £25,764               |                       |
| BRCS                            | £5,120          | £5,120                |                       |
| CAFOD/CARITAS                   | £8,775          | £8,775                |                       |
| CARE International.             | £3,050          | £3,050                |                       |
| Christian Aid                   | £4,875          | £4,875                |                       |
| CIDA                            | £24,354         | £24,354               |                       |
| CRS                             | £2,957          | £2,957                |                       |
| Danida                          | £18,557         | £18,557               |                       |
| DFID                            | £45,000         | £45,000               |                       |
| DRC                             | £2,993          | £2,993                |                       |
| FAO                             | £2,300          | £2,300                |                       |
| GICHD                           | £4,875          | £4,875                |                       |
| ICRC                            | £3,480          | £3,480                |                       |
| IFRC                            | £3,650          | £3,650                |                       |
| IRC                             | £5,120          | £5,120                |                       |
| Irish Aid                       | £69,116         | £69,116               |                       |
| MFA Germany (for 24th Biannual) | £38,842         | £38,842               |                       |
| MSF-H                           | £3,840          | £3,840                |                       |
| NORAD                           | £16,406         | £16,406               |                       |
| NRC                             | £5,112          | £5,112                |                       |
| OCHA                            | £5,246          | £5,246                |                       |
| OXFAM GB                        | £6,825          | £6,825                |                       |
| ProVention                      | £2,925          | £2,925                |                       |
| RedR                            | £5,120          | £5,120                |                       |
| SC US                           | £4,875          | £4,875                |                       |
| SDC                             | £30,000         | £30,000               | £5,000                |
| Sida                            | £17,215         | £17,215               |                       |
| Tearfund                        | £5,000          | £5,000                |                       |
| UNHCR                           | £9,750          | £9,750                |                       |
| UNICEF                          | £5,008          | £5,008                |                       |
| UNICEF (for RTE)                | £5,105          | £5,105                |                       |
| USAID/OFDA (for RHA)            | £103,653        |                       | £92,040               |
| WFP                             | £8,540          | £8,540                |                       |
| WHO                             | £4,875          | £4,875                | £4,875                |
| World Vision                    | £5,275          | £5,275                |                       |
| <b>TOTALS</b>                   | <b>£513,599</b> | <b>£409,946</b>       | <b>£101,915</b>       |

## Governance and New Members

### *Steering Committee members as of 31st March 2009*

**Eleanor Monbiot**, Senior Director, Global Knowledge Management, World Vision, Chair  
**Jeff Crisp**, Head, Policy Development & Evaluation Service, UNHCR  
**Stefan Dahlgren**, Senior Evaluation Officer, Sida  
**Scott Green**, Chief of Evaluation & Studies Section, OCHA  
**Anette Haug**, Senior Advisor, Norad  
**Charles-Antoine Hofmann**, Humanitarian Policy Adviser, BRCS  
**Randolph Kent**, Director, HFP  
**Eva von Oelreich**, Executive Secretary, SCHR

### *The following also served on the Steering Committee during the year*

**Nicoletta Pergolizzi**, Head of the Evaluation Sector, ECHO  
**Mathew Varghese**, UNICEF  
**Claude Hilfiker**, Senior Evaluation Officer, OCHA  
**Peter Walker**, Director, Feinstein International Famine Center, Tufts University

### *New Governance Document*

The Secretariat and Steering Committee have taken the former ALNAP members guide and updated it to produce a new document which provides a detailed explanation of the roles and responsibilities of all the key ALNAP stakeholders. This will help provide a clearer understanding of the way the network operates, both for existing members and for new members. The document can be viewed [here](#).

### *New Full Members in 2008–09*

The following organisations were admitted as Full Members in 2008-9:

- Humanitarian Futures Programme (HFP)
- Action Against Hunger
- Centre for Development and Emergency Practice (CENDEP)
- Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC)
- Instituto de Estudios sobre Conflictos y Acción Humanitaria (IECAH)
- L'Office Africain pour le développement et la coopération (OFADEC)
- Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (AECID)
- Global Hand
- Mercy Malaysia
- FOCUS Humanitarian Assistance

## Appendix

### *Full Members as of 31st March 2009*

**Michael Ahrens**, Humanitarian Aid Task Force, MFA Germany  
**Connie Alozie**, Policy & Advocacy Adviser (Humanitarian Support Personnel), DFID  
**Jock Baker**, Program Quality & Accountability Coordinator, CARE International  
**Rachel Bedouin**, Senior Evaluation Officer, FAO  
**Mia Beers**, Humanitarian Coordination Specialist, USAID/OFDA  
**Niels Bentzen**, Head of Programme Support Unit, Danish Refugee Council  
**Mihir Bhatt**, Honorary Director, AIDMI  
**Nelly Blokker**, MFA Netherlands  
**John Borton**, Consultant, John Borton Consulting  
**Eva Broegaard**, Technical Advisor, Danida  
**Ian Christoplos**, Consultant, Independent  
**Jeff Crisp**, Head, Policy Development and Evaluation Service, UNHCR  
**John Damerell**, Project Manager, SPHERE  
**James Darcy**, Director of Programmes, Humanitarian Policy Group, ODI  
**Annie Devonport**, Humanitarian Programme Advisor, DEC  
**Sue Dwyer**, Vice-President, Programmes, IRC  
**Mitsuaki Furukawa**, Resident Representative in UK, JICA  
**Josse Gillijns**, Head of Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting, IFRC  
**Claire Goudsmit**, Humanitarian Officer, Caritas Internationalis/CAFOD  
**Jean-Michel Grand**, Executive Director, Action Against Hunger  
**Scott Green**, Chief, Evaluation & Studies Section, OCHA  
**François Grünewald**, Président, Groupe URD  
**Oddhild Günther**, Senior Advisor, Strategic Management Support, Norwegian Refugee Council  
**Hana Haller Crowe**, Senior Specialist, Accountability, Save the Children US  
**Anette Haug**, Senior Advisor, NORAD  
**Caroline Heider**, Director of the Office of Evaluation, WFP  
**Silvia Hidalgo**, Director, DARA  
**Charles-Antoine Hofmann**, Humanitarian Policy Adviser, British Red Cross  
**Pat Johns**, Director, Emergency Response Team, CRS  
**Donal Kenneally**, Irish Aid  
**Randolph Kent**, Director, Humanitarian Futures Programme  
**Gunilla Kuperus**, Evaluation Adviser, MSF-Holland



**Janey Lawry-White**, M & E Specialist, Bureau for Crisis Prevention & Recovery, UNDP  
**Jemilah Mahmood**, President, Mercy Malaysia  
**Anar Mamdani**, Manager, Strategic planning and policy, CIDA  
**Yves Mauron**, Programme Officer, Quality Assurance, SDC  
**Eleanor Monbiot**, Senior Director, Global Knowledge Management, World Vision International  
**Mamadou Ndiaye**, Directeur Général, OFADEC  
**Ian O'Donnell**, ProVention Consortium  
**Phil O'Keefe**, Managing Director, ETCUK Ltd  
**Juliet Parker**, Emergency Officer – Accountability, Christian Aid  
**Nicoletta Pergolizzi**, Head of Evaluation Sector, ECHO  
**Jonathan Potter**, Executive Director, People In Aid  
**Francisco Rey Marcos**, Codirector, IECAH  
**Catherine Russ**, Learning and Development Programmes Director, RedR  
**David Sanderson**, Director, CENDEP  
**Kathrin Schick**, Director, VOICE  
**Ivan Scott**, Programme Learning Support Team Leader, OXFAM  
**Nick Stockton**, Executive Director, HAP International  
**Michelle Sullivan**, Humanitarian Policy Manager, AusAID  
**Salim Sumar**, Director, Focus Humanitarian Assistance  
**Manisha Thomas**, Policy Officer, ICVA  
**Maria Thorin**, Programme Officer, Sida  
**Nigel Timmins**, Head of Disaster Management Unit, Tearfund  
**Mike Tozer**, Global Hand  
**Antje Van Roeden**, ICRC  
**Mathew Varghese**, Senior Evaluation Officer, UNICEF  
**Gonzalo Vega Molina**, Consejero Técnico de Ayudas, AECID  
**Eva von Oelreich**, Executive Secretary, SCHR  
**Peter Walker**, Director, Feinstein International Center, Tufts University  
**Nevio Zagaria**, Coordinator, Communicable Disease, Eradication and Elimination, WHO  
**Dawit Zawde**, President, AHA

#### *List of consultants used*

**InterWorks Europe Limited (John Cosgrave)**: Real Time Evaluation guide.  
**Sara Pavanello**: lessons paper, Cyclone Nargis.  
**John Borton**: Humanitarian Performance Project.

**Kristin Smart**: lessons paper, urban disasters; literature review, humanitarian performance project.  
**Conor Foley**: RHA (innovations).  
**Margie Buchanan-Smith**: facilitation at 24th Biannual Meeting.  
**Vivian Lee**: lessons paper, conflicts.  
**Peta Sandison**: RHA (impact assessment).  
**Humanitarian Outcomes**: State of the System report.  
**Humanitarian Policy Group**: lessons paper, Gaza; Agency Expulsions paper.

#### *ALNAP Secretariat staff in 2008–09*

**John Mitchell**, Director  
**Colin Hadkiss**, Administrator  
**Franziska Orphal**, Communications Officer (Communications & Information Assistant to 30/9/08)  
**Karen Proudlock**, Evaluation and Research Officer  
**Ben Ramalingam**, Head of Research and Development  
**Kim Scriven**, Research and Innovations Officer (joined 17/11/08)  
**Sakunthala Mapa**, Communications Officer (left 7/9/08)

#### *Interns who assisted during the year*

**Chamutal Eitam**: preparatory work for the “evaluation systems” paper  
**Catherine Fentress**: assisting with researching and writing of background paper for the 23rd Biannual Meeting  
**Krishma Nayee**: preparatory research for humanitarian leadership study