

**Global welfare: A realistic expectation for the international humanitarian system?**

Hugo Slim

**Proportion and distortion in humanitarian assistance**

Tony Vaux

**The utilisation of evaluations**

Peta Sandison

# **ALNAP REVIEW OF HUMANITARIAN ACTION**

## **Evaluation utilisation**

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## List of acronyms and abbreviations

<b>ALNAP</b>	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in humanitarian action	<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organisation
<b>CAFOD</b>	Catholic Agency for Overseas Development	<b>OCHA</b>	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (UN)
<b>CAP</b>	Consolidated Appeals Process (UN)	<b>OFDA</b>	Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID)
<b>CfR</b>	Cash for Relief	<b>RBA</b>	rights-based approach
<b>CHAP</b>	Consolidated Humanitarian Appeals Process (UN)	<b>RTE</b>	real-time evaluation
<b>DEC</b>	Disasters Emergency Committee	<b>TEC</b>	Tsunami Evaluation Coalition
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development (UK)	<b>ToR</b>	terms of reference
<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of the Congo	<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
<b>ECHO</b>	European Community Humanitarian Office	<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>ERC/USG</b>	Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA)	<b>USAID</b>	US Agency for International Development
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organisation	<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme (UN)
<b>GHD</b>	Good Humanitarian Donorship (initiative)	<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organisation (UN)
<b>HAP</b>	Humanitarian Accountability Partnership		
<b>HIC</b>	Humanitarian Information Centre (UN)		
<b>IASC</b>	Interagency Standing Committee		
<b>ICVA</b>	International Council of Voluntary Agencies		
<b>IDP</b>	internally displaced person		
<b>IFRC</b>	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent		
<b>INGO</b>	international non-government organisation		
<b>JEEAR</b>	Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda		
<b>M&amp;E</b>	monitoring and evaluation		
<b>MSF(H)</b>	Medecins sans Frontieres – Holland		

## Preface

Last year's *Review of Humanitarian Action* (RHA) alluded to some positive developments with regard to evaluations of humanitarian assistance. We now know that evaluations are more engrained in the system than before; there are more innovative evaluative approaches including Real Time Evaluations (RTEs); the system has demonstrated its ability to conduct system-wide Joint Evaluations such as the TEC; and there has been a small improvement in evaluation quality. All of this is laudable but there is still a big question mark over whether these improvements have been translated into improved performance. Indeed, the findings from the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition clearly indicate that there is still a long way to go.

I think it is therefore very appropriate that this sixth edition of the RHA directly addresses why the lessons from humanitarian experience have not been learned and therefore have not acted as catalysts for improving humanitarian action. Chapter 3 gives a well-argued explanation of the myriad of reasons why clear and common sense recommendations from evaluations are not acted upon. While it makes for sober reading, I believe it is crucially important to understand the kind of barriers that exist, so that we can develop approaches and strategies that take account of these problems. Indeed, the chapter outlines a number of practical steps that are relevant for evaluators and evaluation managers alike. This kind of practical advice has the potential to make a real difference in take up and utilisation of recommendations.

Chapter 2's evaluation synthesis provides an insightful account of the distortions that occur in the field as the result of a humanitarian system that still does not function fully in accordance with humanitarian principles. The evaluations support the proposition that the global allocation of aid is not based on a common understanding of 'need' and provide clear evidence that the humanitarian system is therefore not properly directed. Again, the chapter provides some very clear examples of what actually happens and presents some clear messages which will help guide both practitioners and policy-makers in their work.

I am sure that many of us are so close to the issues and challenges presented in the above 2 chapters that we sometimes find it hard to see the wood for the trees. That is

why this year we have asked Hugo Slim to stand back on our behalf and present us with a bigger view in Chapter 4. What can humanitarians realistically hope to achieve in a global humanitarian system that is so inextricably tied up with international politics? Is a global welfare system a realistic aim and what should our attitude and relationship be to other powerful informal humanitarian systems that exist in the world today? This chapter provides us with an illuminating and unusual analysis that I am sure you will find exciting and challenging.

I would also like to thank all those ALNAP Members who provided such valuable advice and comments to the authors of this edition; to those agencies who made case study material available; and to those who provided evaluative reports for this edition. As usual, the willingness of ALNAP Members to give their time and share their experiences demonstrates the vitality and the goodwill in the network and ensures that the RHA is well grounded and relevant.

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Chair of ALNAP