

2 December 2019, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

Dissemination workshop of **ANLAP Study on operational decision making in humanitarian context**

COAST Trust hosted an operational decision making workshop of an international research and networking organization, ALNAP (www.alnap.org) on 2nd December in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. The backdrop of the workshop was the ability to make good decisions, particularly under difficult circumstances, was fundamental to effective humanitarian response. Md. Iqbal Uddin, Assistant Director of COAST Trust welcomed the guests and described the objectives of the dissemination of the study on operational decision making in humanitarian context. Leah Campbell, the study's lead author presented the research findings. Ms Moonmoon Gulshan, The National Coordinator of Bangladesh Rohingya Response NGO Platform and Mr. Bimal Chandra Dey Sarker, The Chief Executive of Mukti Cox's Bazar were present at the workshop as panel discussant while Mr. Abu Murshed Chowdhury, The Chief Executive of PHALS and Co-Chair of CCNF (www.cxb-cso-ngo.org) chaired the session.



Leah Campbell, the lead researcher of the study presents the findings at a hotel in Cox's Bazar. Photo Credit: Junaidul Islam Jowel, COAST.

Despite receiving frequent critique in humanitarian evaluations, there has been relatively little academic study on decision-making in humanitarian response. A new study from the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action ([ALNAP](http://www.alnap.org)), explores the nature of humanitarian contexts, the different types of decisions that they require, and the most suitable approaches to making these decisions at the country or field level. It seeks to identify concrete recommendations for humanitarian organisations and individual decision-makers. The presentation is now online here: <https://www.alnap.org/help-library/alnap-study-beyond-assumptions-how-humanitarians-make-operational-decisions>.

Methodology:

The workshop started with the key presentation of the lead author of the study Leah Campbell and then she engaged the guests and participants from the humanitarian community in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh with reflective discussions. The audience took part in making comments, questions and received answers from the researchers.

Key of the research/ presentation were:

Analytical

Analytical decision methods aim to identify the best possible course of action—that is, the course of action that will create the most value according to the defined criteria (such as financial return on investment, or measurable health or education outcomes)

In order to do this, the decision-maker:

1. Identifies a range of options for action,
2. Develops a number of criteria against which they can assess the options,
3. Analyses information to assess the potential performance of each option under future conditions.

Analytical approaches follow a structured process and rely on—largely quantitative—information. This approach is designed to eliminate individual subjectivity and bias.



Photo Credit: Junaidul Islam Jowel, COAST.

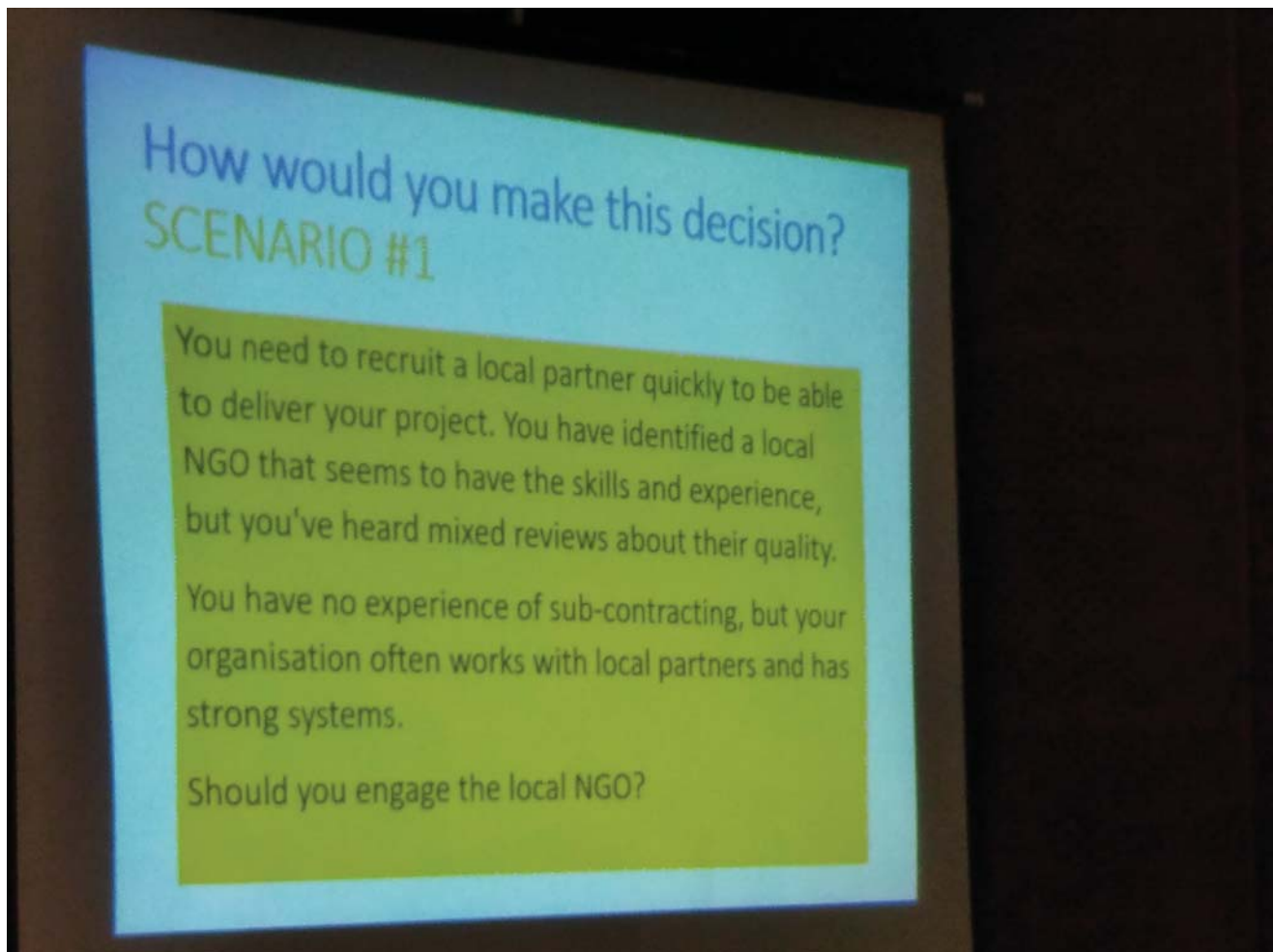
Experience—based (Naturalistic)

Experience—based methods aim to identify a course of action that will produce positive results. In contrast to analytical approaches—which aim to decrease individual subjectivity—the decision-maker identifies this course of action from the previous experience.

The decision-maker:

1. Matches the situation in which the decision is to be made with previous, similar situation.
2. Identifies a course of action that has been successful in the past.
3. May test the course of action by forecasting—considering how it is likely to work out in the current situation—and test again during implementation to see if it is working as expected.

It is important to emphasise that 4xperience-based decision-making is not the same as a whim or gut reaction. This approach makes use of intuition, shaped by previ9ous relevant experience and informed judgement.



Procedural:

The focus of this approach is on the organization, as much as the individual or group making the decision.

In this approach, the organization:

1. Defines a series of steps to be taken to conduct a specific task (such as an assessment, or a procurement)

The decision-maker:

2. Follows the procedure.
3. Is guided by the procedure as to the course of action they should take.

While the procedure will generally not make the final decision, —of how much food is required for whom, or of where to produce it—it reduces the decision-making load by the removing the need to make decisions about how to conduct an activity, when and what order.

Questions, comments and answers:

After her presentation, there was a session for making comments, questions and answers about the research findings in decision making. Major questions or comments were:

- Does age contribute in taking decision?
- How does 'majority' works in making quality decisions?
- It is important to look into the failure of a decision, if any. Why is it missing? Is there no evidence?



Questions and comments from participants.

- Resource both financial and human resource are a challenge for organizations in taking suitable and time being decisions. Without resource, the decisions may not be executed.
- Structure, priority and procedure—are they important for decision-making? If yes, then the researcher needs to share us their impacts in decision making approach.
- How can we be thinking in future for taking decisions? As we see local knowledge, capacity, culture, values, norms, approach, etc. are missing in the research which should be considered for taking any decision, we think.
- What is the evidence of a good decision? Who certify this? Is it the implementer, community or people affected by crisis? How can we assess the success?
- The decision-making procedure mostly depend on the structure or nature of the organization. E.g. if it is a local organization then it is the executive body or the management team, but if it is an UN organization then the it depends mostly on their structures.

After some exercise of making decisions, in the conclusion, the chair said there were something to be picking up for us form the study, especially the approaches in decision making for individuals or organizations. It would reduce our mistakes in decision making and also would be pragmatic more if we consider the leadership and organizational capacity, geographic location, trust, policy and procedure, etc. of the organization. Having no other issues to describe the workshop was ended up with the vote of thanks of the chair.

Report prepared by:

Md. Iqbal Uddin
Assistant Director, COAST.
08 December, 2019.

Annex- 1: Some photos of the workshop











7 November 2019

**Dear Hon'ble CCNF and NGO Platform Members
Cox's Bazar,**

The ability to make good decisions, particularly under difficult circumstances, is fundamental to effective humanitarian response. Despite receiving frequent critique in humanitarian evaluations, there has been relatively little academic study on decision-making in humanitarian response. A new study from the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action ([ALNAP](#)), due to be launched mid-November, explores the nature of humanitarian contexts, the different types of decisions that they require, and the most suitable approaches to making these decisions at the country or field level. It seeks to identify concrete recommendations for humanitarian organisations and individual decision-makers.

I/we are writing to invite you to a launch presentation of this new research, which will take place on Monday **2nd December at Sabrang Hall, Best Western Heritage Hotel, Bypass Road, Kolatoli, Cox's Bazar from approximately 8:30-10:30am** followed by refreshments. The study's lead author, Leah Campbell, will be travelling to Bangladesh to present the research findings and engage in reflective discussion with the humanitarian community in Bangladesh. COAST Trust, a long-standing ALNAP member, is co-hosting this event.

On the 2nd, following a presentation of key findings, Leah will be joined by two decisionmakers who took part in the study, submitting their decisions through an app-based diary. They will share their reflections, and then the floor will open for Q&A. The presentation event is open to anyone working on or interested in humanitarian response, and will be of particular interest for those in decision-making and leadership roles.

If you would like to attend, please let us know by completing the short registration form here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/operational-decisionmaking-launch-presentation-in-coxs-bazar-registration-78688717071>

****Please note a similar event has been organised in Dhaka, co-hosted by Concern, on 2nd December. Registration is also open for this event, here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/operational-decisionmaking-launch-presentation-in-dhaka-tickets-78660398369> ****

Please share information about both events with colleagues who may be interested, in Dhaka or Cox's Bazaar. When completing the registration form, you will notice there is also the opportunity to apply to take part in a longer two-hour interactive training module facilitated by Leah directly following the session. This session is designed specifically for those currently in operational decision-making roles within a humanitarian response (country directors, heads of unit, etc) so if you fit this profile and you are interested in attending, please do indicate this. Finally, if you are from an ALNAP member organisation, Leah will also be organising an informal 'ALNAP in Bangladesh' session – Leah will be in touch separately about this.

We hope you and your colleagues will join us on 2nd December to discuss operational decision-making in humanitarian response in Bangladesh and worldwide. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leah", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Executive Director
COAST Trust (www.coastbd.net)

For more information, please contact Mr. Shahinur Islam, Head-Humanitarian Response in Cox's Bazar at: 01713367434, Mr. Iqbal Uddin, Asst. Director in Dhaka at: 01713338841, COAST Trust.

Annex-3: Outline – ALNAP workshop in Cox’s Bazar

Monday 2nd December 2019

Venue: Best Western Heritage		
8:30-9am	Coffee/tea arrival for attendees	
9am-10:30am	Presentation of the decision-making study	25 minutes - Presentation of Decision-making findings 25 minutes - Reflection from Panel 40 minutes - Q&A
10:30-11	Refreshment break for attendees	
11:00-1:00	Training module on decision-making	For approximately 20 participants who have applied to join this extended session, Leah will facilitate a two-hour long training session going deeper into some of the specific findings
1:00-2:00	Lunch for 20 training participants	
1:45	Leah will need to leave for the airport to catch the 3:50pm flight back to Dhaka, unfortunately	

Annex-4: Registered participants list

Session	First Name	Surname	Position	Organisation
AM Only	Washim	Kabir	Admin Associate	UNHCR
AM Only	Abik	Roy	Field Registration Assistant	UNHCR TAI
AM Only	Md. Asaduzzaman	Asad	PC-EiE	VSO Bangladesh
AM Only	Md.Jashim Uddin	Siddiquee	Chief Executive	WAIT N. 'C'
AM Only	Jakaria	Tuhin	Assistant Business Development Officer	Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor
AM Only	Henk	Schipper	Head of Project	Welthungerhilfe
AM Only	Marie	Enlund	VAM Officer	WFP
AM + Training	FarheenMasfiqua	Malek	Coordinator- Overall Community Based Protection	ActionAid Bangladesh
AM + Training	Karl Johan	Andersson	Coordinator I	AMURT
AM + Training	Poushali	Barua	Senior HR Officer	Caritas Bangladesh
AM + Training	Rizwana	Akhter	Program Manager-Rohingya Response	Center for Disability inDevelopment (CDD)
AM + Training	Zahangir	Alam	Regional Team Leader	COAST Trust
AM + Training	Iqbal	Uddin	Assistant Director	COAST Trust
AM + Training	Iqbal	Chowdhury	Project Manager	Educo International
AM + Training	Kamlesh	Vyas	Humanitarian Coordinator	HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation
AM + Training	ASM	CHOUDHURY	Medical Director	HumaniTerra International
AM + Training	Sabrina	Denuncq	Head of Office	ICRC
AM + Training	Jack	Frith-Powell	Programme Manager	IFRC / Swedish RC
AM + Training	S M Nazer	Hossain	Executive Director	ISDE Bangladesh
AM + Training	Sheuly Sharma	Sheuly	Executive Director	JagoNariUnnayanSangstha(JNUS)
AM + Training	Rajan	Ghimire	Country Coordinator Bangladesh	Malteser International
AM + Training	Javier	Tena Rubio	General Coordinator	MdM-CH

Session	First Name	Surname	Position	Organisation
Chair	Abu Murshed	Chowdhury	Executive Director	PHALS
Panellist	Bimal Chandra	Dey Sarker	Executive Director	Mukti
AM Only	Shreya	Bose	Project Lead South Asia	A4ID
AM Only	Tanbir	Arman	CwC& Accountability Specialist	ActionAid Bangladesh
AM Only	Saima	Sharmin	Community groups coordinator (protection unit)	ActionAid Bangladesh
AM Only	Nayan	Dey	Protection Monitoring Officer	BRAC
AM Only	Khaled	Morshed	Head of Operations	BRAC
AM Only	Lobke	de Pooter	WASH delegate	British Red Cross
AM Only	Md.Ilias	Miah	Chief Executive	CEHRDF Bangladesh
AM Only	Hasnain	Mahmood	Lawyer	Chittagong Taxes Bar Association
AM Only	Marta	Glaczynska	Consultant	Consultant
AM Only	Golam Mehedi	Hasan	Programme Officer	Danish Red Cross under IFRC
AM Only	Md. Khirul	Alam	Field Manager	Dhaka Community Hospital Trust
AM Only	Shafiul Azam	Chowdhury	Leadership	EdotcoBangladesh company ltd
AM Only	Abul Basher	Basher	Technical Coordinator	ICCO Cooperation
AM Only	Nina	Yang	Research Manager	IMPACT / REACH Initiatives
AM Only	Mohammed Abul	Kalam	Former Head, Department of Medical Sociology	Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control & Research (IEDCR)
AM Only	Ali	Moalinibrahim	Officer in Early Warning System	Ministry of Humanitarian and Disaster Management
AM Only	Ahamedul	Arefin	Project Coordinator Support	MSF

Session	First Name	Surname	Position	Organisation
AM Only	Md. Mizanur Rahman Akhand	Akhand	Project Coordinator	Mukti Cox Bazar
AM Only	Sarwar Uddin Md.	Jonied Chowdhury	Program Coordinator	Mukti Cox's Bazar
AM Only	Filip	Lozinski	CD	NRC
AM Only	Md Nurul	Azim	Chief Executive	ORNB COXSBAZAR
AM Only	Afrin	Mortaza	Technical Coordinator-ASRH	Partners in Health and Development
AM Only	Sabikunnaheer	Mitu	Management Information System Officer	Partners in Health and Development
AM Only	Sanjida	Rahman	MEAL Coordinator	Partners in Health and Development
AM Only	Alam Khan	Faroque	Programme Manager CPIE	Plan International
AM Only	AFM Rezaul	Karim	Executive Director	PranticUnnayan Society (PRANTIC), Bangladesh.
AM Only	Deboralupita	Debora	Manager Marketing	PT.ASTRA MOBIL
AM Only	Syed	Yeasin	Liaison Coordinator	RPN
AM Only	Binu	Philip	Coordinator (Humanitarian Response)	SHEBA MANAB KALLYAN KENDRA (SMKK)
AM Only	Riccardo	Mioli	Deputy Country Director	Solidarites International
AM Only	Mike	Pearson	Programme Manager	Street Child
AM Only	Riazul Islam	Riaz	Procurement and Logistics Officer	Swedish Red Cross under IFRC of Population Movement Operation, Cox'sBazar
AM Only	Mohammad	Taher	Child Protection Activity Coordinator	Terre des hommes Foundation (Tdh)
AM Only	Mahmudul	Hasan	UNV Reporting and Communications Officer	UNDP

Session	First Name	Surname	Position	Organisation
AM + Training	Carl	Adams	Country Director	Medair
AM + Training	Ashok	Sarkar	Coordinator-Program	Mukti Cox's Bazar
AM + Training	Dayna	Santana	Consultant	OBAT Helpers USA
AM + Training	Monzur	Siddique	Senior MEAL Officer	Oxfam
AM + Training	Charles	Okumu	Humanitarian Programme Coordinator	Oxfam International
AM + Training	Kamal	Kamal	Coordinator-EIE	Plan International
AM + Training	Md. Atiqul Islam Chowdhury	Atique	Director - Program	PULSE Bangladesh
AM + Training	Tanvir	Elahi	Relief Coordinator	Qatar Charity
AM + Training	Muhammad	Max	District Manager	SBSKS
AM + Training	Laxmi	Bhattarai	Freelancer	Seasoned humanitarian aid and development activist
AM + Training	Md. Shamsuzzaman	Zaman	Project Manager	United Purpose
AM + Training	Tapon Philip	Rodrigues	Manager-Child Protection & Education	World Vision International

Sarifur Rahman
RESHMATUR

RASHID

APC
Medical
Ambulance

Muslim Aid Relief
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Relief International
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