

# *Joint evaluations coming of age?*

*The findings from ALNAP's most recent meta-evaluation*

*Margie Buchanan-Smith*

*Launch Meeting for 7<sup>th</sup> ALNAP RHA*

*8<sup>th</sup> May 2008*





# Introduction

- ALNAP's sixth meta-evaluation, for the first time focused on joint evaluations
- Joint evaluations – carried out by 2 or more agencies, evaluating the work of 2 or more agencies
- Objectives of this meta-evaluation:
  - To review the quality of joint evaluation exercises, compared with quality of single-agency evaluations
  - To document learning from the growing experience of JEs, to feed into future joint endeavours
  - To make a significant contribution to the nascent body of knowledge about JEs



# Approach

- Reviewed 18 joint evaluations (2005-07) against Quality Proforma, including TEC, NGO and UN experiments with JEs
  - NB 80% of sample are JEs of natural disasters, many tsunami-related
- Interviewed those who commissioned JEs and evaluators who did them
- Developed 10 hypotheses to be tested


# Typology for JEs

	Program focus	Institutional	Sectoral/ thematic	Multi- sectoral	Global
Partner- ship			X		
Like- minded agencies			X	XXX	
Hybrid multi- partner			X		
System- wide				X	



# Hypothesis 1: JEs help to build trust & social capital

- Yes, especially when ‘institutionalised’ eg ECB and IHE initiatives
- The process may be as important as the product
- ‘Decision-making (about JEs) is as much a political process as it is a technical one’ (IHE)



Hypotheses 2 & 3: JEs tend to be driven from the centre rather than the field; involvement of government weak

- Yes - JEs were all northern and HQ-driven
- But key learning – the value of building in-country buy-in eg IASC in Pakistan.
- Negotiation and ownership of TOR essential
  
- National government involvement weak, even in countries with strong government capacity and in JEs of natural disasters

# Hypothesis 4: greater opportunity for beneficiaries to be consulted in JEs

- JEs have better record than single agency evaluations (47% rated as 'good' or 'satisfactory' compared with 27% respectively)
- NGOs have the best record, but scope of consultation often unclear in reports
- Other stakeholders such as agency and government staff usually consulted much more widely


Hypotheses 5, 6 & 7: JEs have more rigorous methodologies, pay more attention to international standards, & stronger on cross-cutting issues

- Yes, more rigorous methodologies:
  - examples of good practice but little methodological innovation
  - challenge of data analysis
- Striking difference re attention to international standards (73% cf 20%)
- Generally poor re cross-cutting issues: protection, advocacy *and* gender analysis

# Hypothesis 8: overall quality of JEs higher than single agency evaluations

## ■ Yes, eg:

- clearer and more thorough TOR
- higher quality methodology fed into higher quality report
- stronger use of international standards
- good use of DAC evaluation criteria, especially connectedness and impact



Hypotheses 9 & 10: JEs more likely to address policy issues & situate findings in wider debates in the sector

■ Mixed record:

- positive examples related to UN humanitarian reform
- missed opportunities eg some TEC reports
- needs to be clearer in TOR

# Follow-up & utilisation

- Higher quality and more accessible reports
  - Possibly because of higher skill set of evaluation team leaders
  - Also use of professional report editors
- Conclusions slightly stronger, but little difference in the quality of recommendations
- Utilisation-focus more challenging for JEs because of the range of stakeholders involved with different needs
  - examples of good practice in terms of how the process is designed at the outset and how the evaluation team engages with stakeholders, especially in-country.
- Follow-up more likely when JEs are part of a wider institutional framework/ relationship



# Learning points from this meta-evaluation

- Don't underestimate the time needed for a JE – beware of false pressures! Take time to negotiate TOR
- In-country buy-in essential to a utilisation focus
- Small pool of sufficiently skilled evaluators (if policy focused, then include policy analysts)
- JEs that are part of wider institutional frameworks likely to result in better take-up of findings



# A future agenda?

- Expect more JEs. How to support this trend – ALNAP well-placed
- Time to review different management structures for JEs
- Consider a third system-wide JE in next 18 months:
  - of under-evaluated crisis eg eastern DRC
  - opportunity to apply learning from TEC
  - encourages system-wide evaluations becoming a more regular feature – let's not wait another 10 years!