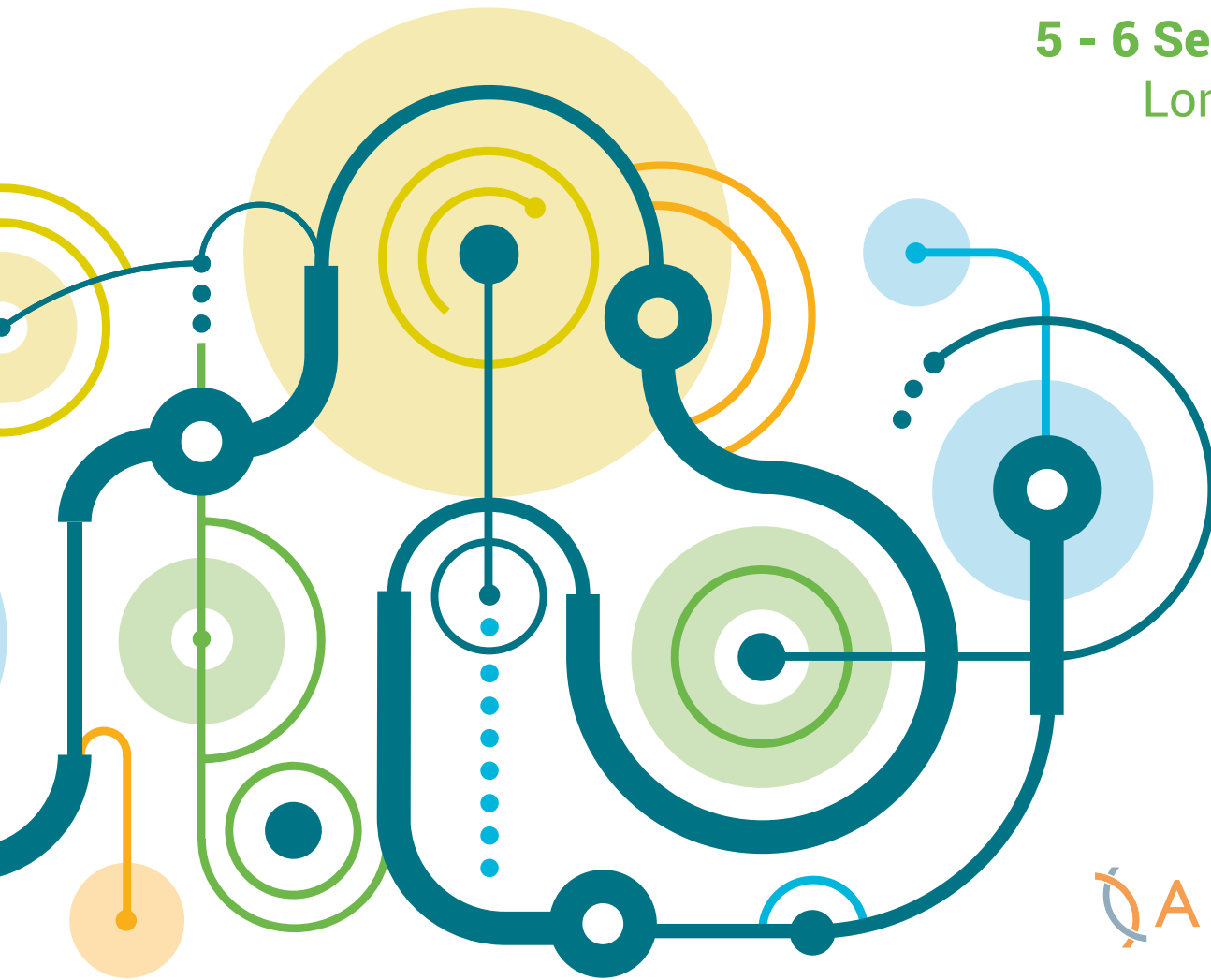


# Making humanitarian response more flexible:

Exploring new models and approaches

**5 - 6 September**

London, UK



## Background

Humanitarian crises are dynamic: they change frequently and rapidly. In some countries, they ebb and flow over long periods of time, against a backdrop of chronic vulnerability and conflict. Humanitarian organisations need to be capable of seeing the dynamic nature of crises and responding to these changes appropriately.

Flexibility and adaptiveness are seen as helping humanitarian organisations perform effectively in dynamic, uncertain environments. Flexibility is the ability to redirect resources quickly in response to changes in an external environment. Recent studies and evaluations have found a correlation between general organisational flexibility and improved humanitarian effectiveness (Shuria et al 2016). Greater flexibility also enables humanitarians to find different ways of working with development and peacekeeping actors and to shift their programming when acute needs rise or fall over time.

Adaptive management and programming are structured approaches to flexibility that enable agencies to design programmes to fit particular contexts and make improvements based on learning. There is evidence that agencies using adaptive management contribute to more appropriate and relevant assistance (ACF 2017).

### The need for new models

Why isn't this happening more frequently? Despite the growing recognition that flexibility and greater understanding of context is needed in humanitarian action, many organisations struggle to achieve this in practice. Inflexible, short-term funding mechanisms receive much of the blame for this rigidity. Yet, even where more flexible funding is available, it can be difficult for humanitarian agencies to change internal systems that were developed to meet expectations for speed.

**Alternative models need to be explored to show how the different functions within humanitarian organisations can work better together to deliver aid that is timely, and also adaptable to changing needs and situations.**

The ALNAP Secretariat has spent a year exploring the barriers to flexible context-sensitive humanitarian action. This work also seeks to identify practices and frameworks that can help address these barriers. There are several examples where adaptive management and programming have been used in humanitarian settings but no wider learning on how these can be applied more consistently. Also, there has been little exploration of the changes needed to organisational functions such as logistics and human resources management to support greater flexibility and adaptiveness.



## Aims and objectives



Drawing on original research and recent work by ALNAP Members and colleagues in the development sector, ALNAP is running a workshop to explore what flexible humanitarian action looks like and how to support it. The aims of this event are:

- To share learning on what has enabled flexible and adaptive humanitarian action across different contexts.
- To understand what is needed to support flexible, and adaptive humanitarian action in three distinct scenarios: as a crisis arises, during crisis response and as a crisis declines.
- To discuss new models for humanitarian action that enable greater flexibility and how these can be taken forward, encompassing four key organisational functions: programming (including monitoring), logistics, human resources management and funding/fundraising.

This workshop will bring together a diverse set of participants, drawn from across the humanitarian system, as well as experts on adaptive management from the development and business sectors. It will provide a unique opportunity for participants to:

- Discuss the core concepts of flexibility and adaptive management, and how these can apply to humanitarian operations.
- Learn from concrete examples and consider how these can be applied to the participant's own organisation.
- Have a holistic conversation that encompasses the programming, financial and logistical approaches required to support adaptation and flexibility.



**Register to attend**



You can find out more and register your interest to attend here: [www.alnap.org/ALNAPadapt](http://www.alnap.org/ALNAPadapt)

Places at the workshop are limited and will be confirmed on a first come, first served basis. We would advise that you register as soon as possible.

Further information on the workshop, including a discussion paper, draft agenda and information on break-out sessions, will be sent to you by mid-July.

**For any questions on the content of the workshop, or ALNAP's other work on this topic, please contact:**

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