

2015 Membership Survey

The ALNAP Urban Response Community of Practice was started in 2013 as part of ALNAP's ongoing efforts to provide a platform for the sharing of learning and ideas about urban humanitarian response. It now includes over 1500 members from around the world.

In March-May 2015, a survey was conducted of the urban response CoP. 408 responses were received, representing approximately a third of the CoP's membership at the time.

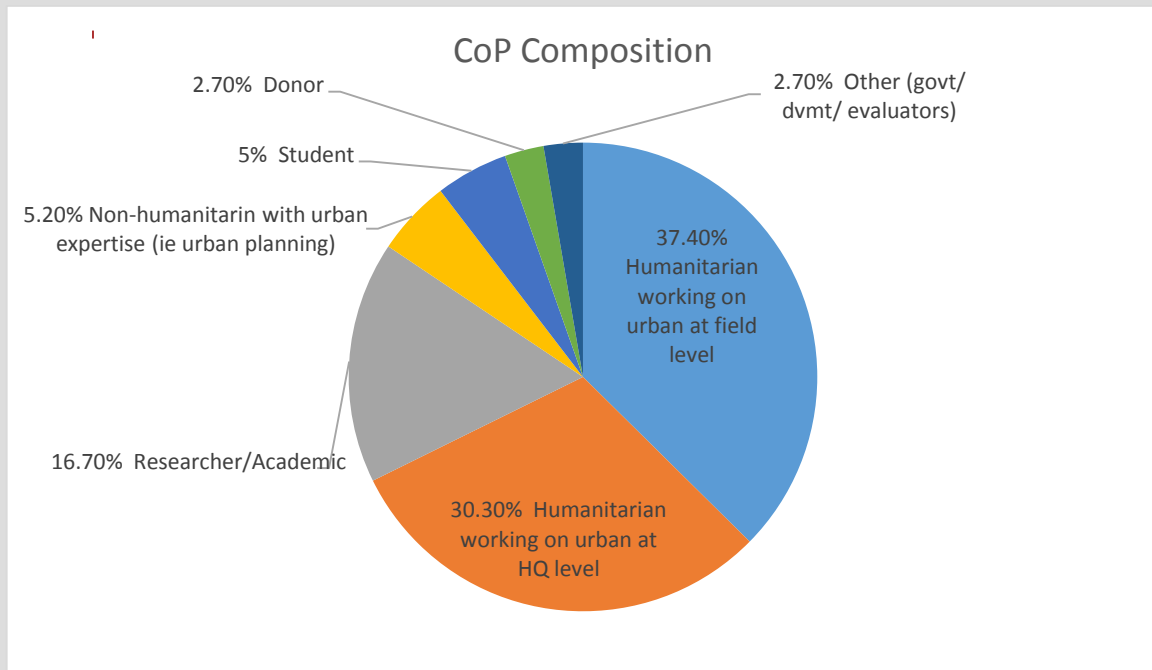
This summary shares the key findings from the survey. It answers:

- Who is in the Urban Response CoP?
- What do you use the Urban Response CoP for?
- What do you think of ALNAP's current urban activities?
- How do you want to engage with the Urban Response CoP?
- How should we shape the format/topics of future ALNAP urban work?
- What should ALNAP's future urban priorities be?
- Next steps for ALNAP

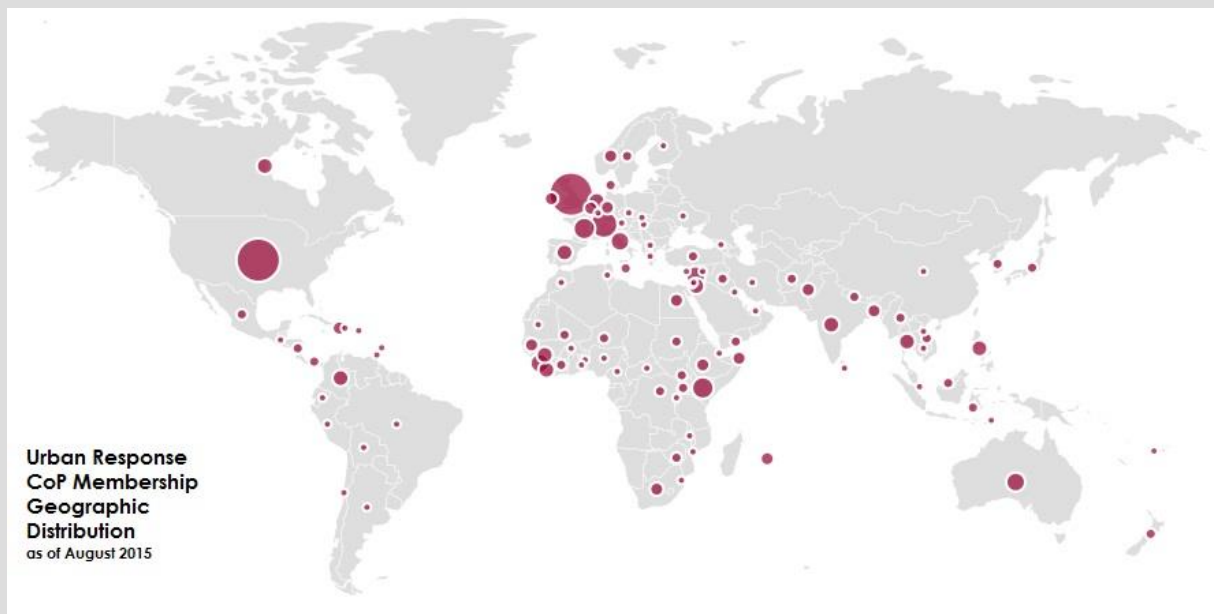
This survey was planned, executed and summarized by Leah Campbell and George Richards on behalf of the ALNAP Secretariat and the Urban Response Community of Practice. Thanks go to all those who participated in the survey and to the ALNAP Secretariat for support in designing/testing the survey.

1. Who is in the Urban Response CoP?

A range of different constituencies make up the Urban Response CoP – however the vast majority are humanitarians currently/formerly working in/on urban crises at field or HQ level.

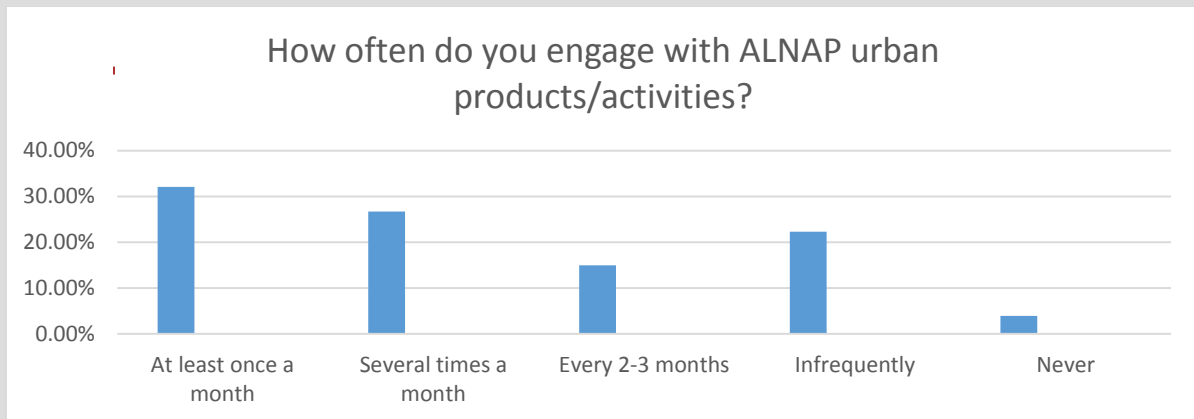


Members of the Urban Response CoP are based in 107 countries worldwide. The highest concentration are in the UK (14%), USA (14%), Switzerland (5%), France (3%) and Kenya (2.5%).



2. How do you use the Urban Response CoP and ALNAP's other urban activities?

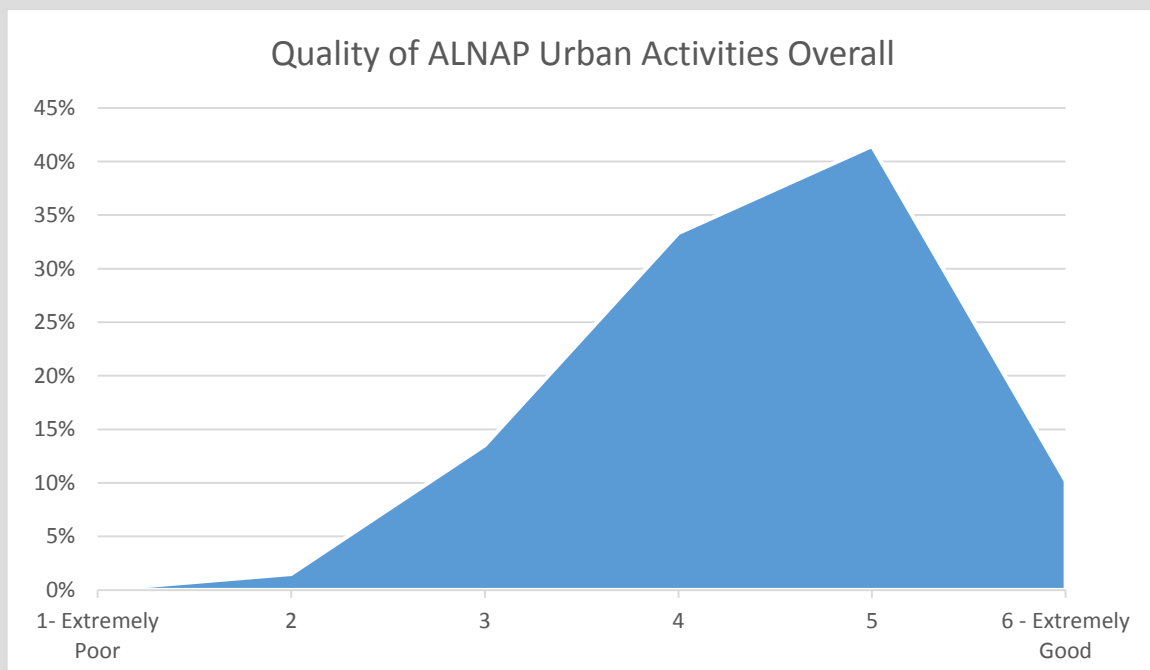
Almost 60% of respondents engaged in ALNAP urban activities at least once a month, or more frequently, which is a high level of engagement.



Lessons papers, webinars, the resource roundup and resource portal have the greatest level of utilization/participation (38-51%); CoP discussions and blogs are less so (21-28%). This suggests a higher instance of passive engagement (accessing and reading content) compared to active engagement (discussions, sharing own resources).

3. What do you think of ALNAP's current urban activities?

Overall, ALNAP urban activities were rated quite highly with a median answer of 5 (out of a possible 6). Only 1.5% giving a 2/6 rating and no 1/6 (extremely poor) ratings were received).



Use and feedback on various ALNAP urban activities varied:

Urban Humanitarian Response Portal

- 46.5% of respondents report using the Portal, no specific questions were asked/no unsolicited feedback given

Blogs

- 21.5% of respondents report using the Portal, no specific questions were asked/no unsolicited feedback given
- Blogs scored quite low on the priorities ranking question

Research/Lessons Papers

- ALNAP has 2 lessons papers and a meeting paper. 46.5% of respondents report using these, however no specific questions were asked/no unsolicited feedback given
- Additional research as well as the publication of short fact sheets/summaries were rated highly in both the list of new activities and the priorities ranking question.

Resource Roundup

- 46.5% of people report using the resource roundup, and it scored well in the priorities ranking question. No specific feedback was given on this activity.
- The majority of CoP members (61%) would prefer that the resource roundup stays as it is, sharing a range of documents on different topics each month. Only 39% prefer that each month's issue focuses on a particular topic/context.

Webinars

- Webinars is the activity which most respondents have participated in (52%).
- Of those who have attended webinars, 65% have attended 1-2, 30% have attended 3-5 webinars and only 5% have attended 6 or more webinars, suggesting more effort is needed to retain webinar audiences, in addition to attracting new participants.

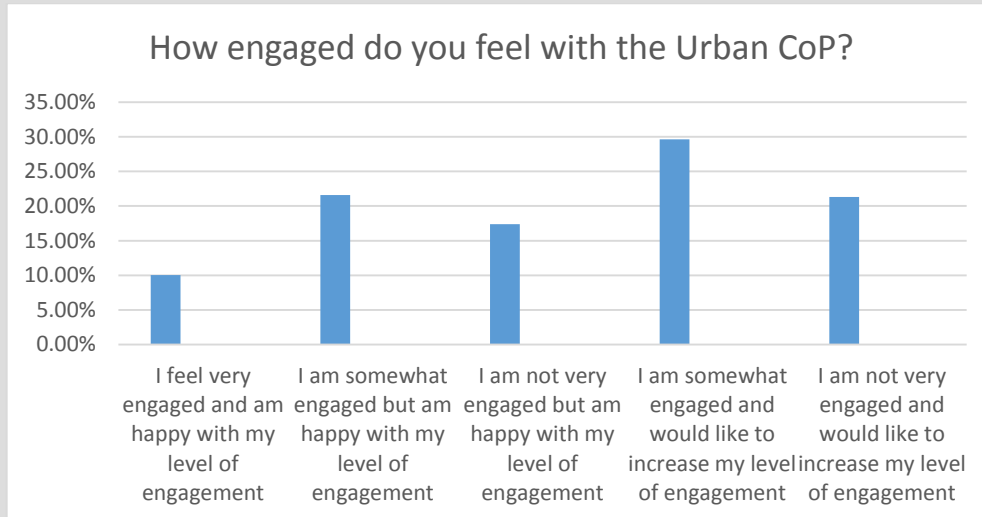
Respondents gave a number of suggestions to improve future webinars, including:

- Improving sound quality
- Providing a transcription/summary of the webinar, translated into other languages
- Including graphics/illustrations in presentations and pre-webinar messaging
- Hold webinars at a range of times to be accessible around the globe
- Better presentation materials (not just PowerPoint)
- Encourage live Tweeting
- Include more local actors and those from non-humanitarian disciplines as presenters
- Ensure sufficient time for Q&A
- Try a debate format
- Double the frequency of webinars!
- Encourage more interaction, not just holding the webinar
- Topic idea – focus on a particular city
- Clearly articulate what attendees will get out of participating/more detailed abstract

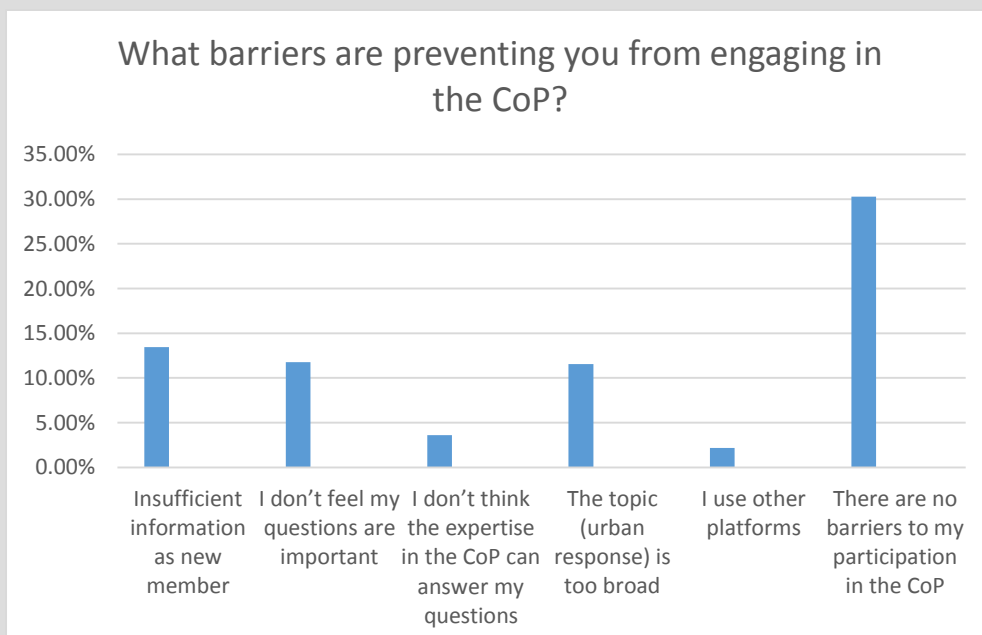
4. How do you want to engage with the Urban Response Community of Practice?

Currently, participation in CoP discussions is low – with only 28% identifying themselves as using this ALNAP urban feature, and a low number of posts coming through the discussion listserv.

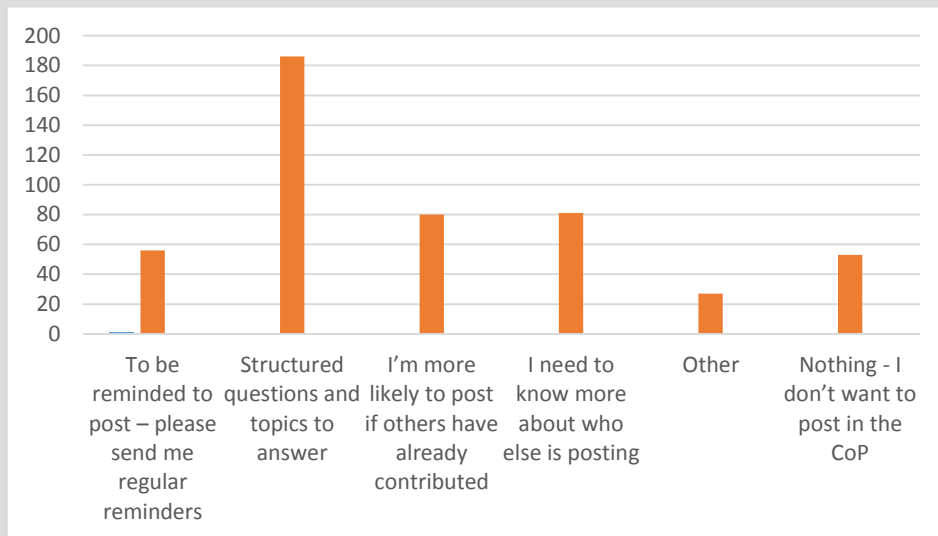
The survey showed that 61.28% of people have some level of engagement, and 50.98% would like to increase their level of engagement. There are no significant patterns when comparing each membership constituency group to their level of engagement.



While there are some barriers to participation in the CoP which ALNAP can improve upon (providing more information to new members), a significant amount of people do not feel there are barriers to their participation, or cite barriers external to the CoP (most predominantly lack of time to engage). Respondents also noted that the CoP is only in English, which limits participation for non-English speakers, and others were concerned that their narrow focus (for example, food security) would only interest a small portion of the group, and therefore are hesitant to post.



When asked ‘what would make you more likely to post in the CoP?’ a large number of respondents identified having structured questions and topics as a potential solution, with some offering their own suggestions.



‘Other’ responses included:

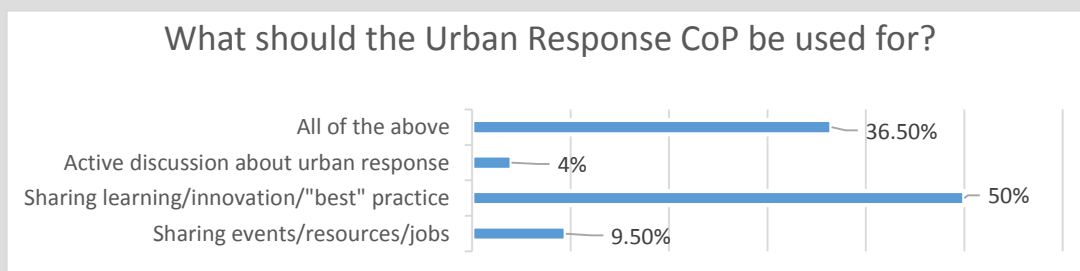
“It’s like writing into an abyss and perhaps because I don’t know who else is on the group, it makes me nervous. I feel like everything has to be thought about and well-structured but perhaps it doesn’t. It can be a space for informal thought processes also.”

“I would participate more if the experiences and perceptions of local "non-traditional" humanitarian actors outside the sector were actively sought out –i.e. government officials, particularly municipal. How are humanitarian agencies supposed to learn about how to work in a support role if local actors are not engaged? It would also be interesting to provide a platform where local actors could consider and challenge the findings of external researchers (myself included)”

“Having more time would help. There are just so many things to attend to, this is one more. However much one wants to engage more, there is no time!”

“I am very interested in the subject do urban response, but I don’t really know about it. That is why I joined. I think I would need to know more to post about it.”

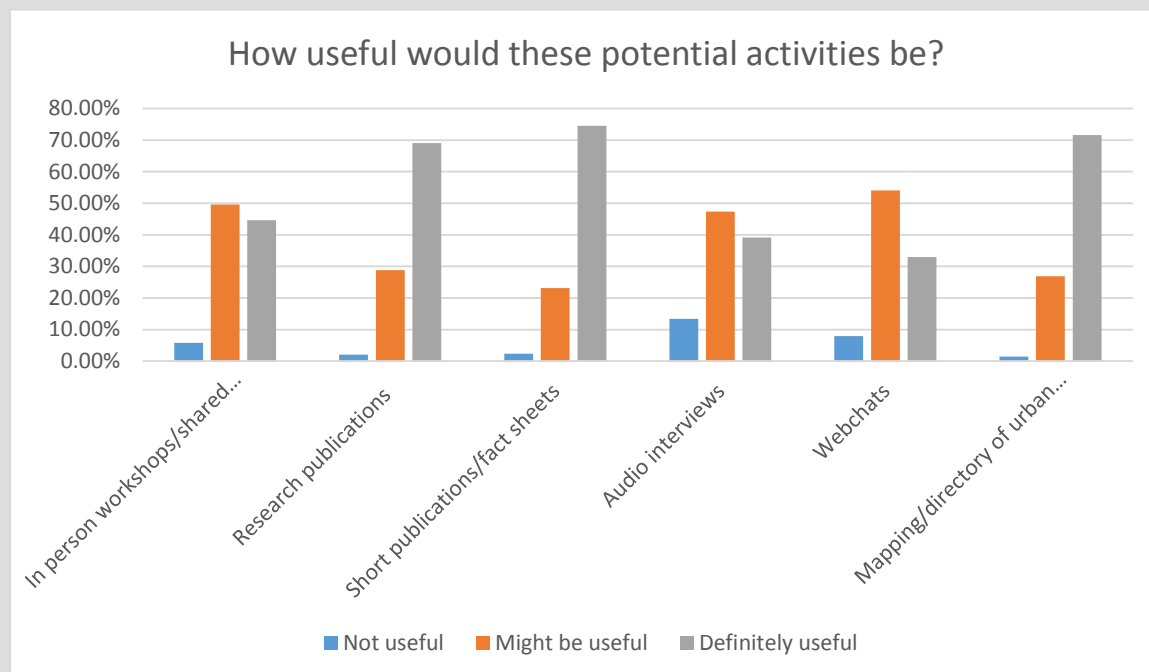
We also asked what the Urban Response CoP’s purpose should be. The results suggest that, first and foremost, the CoP should focus on the sharing of high quality learning (including but not limited to innovation and “best practice”) which can be used to improve practice and policy. The functions of discussion and sharing events/resources/jobs should be secondary aims.



5. How should we shape the format/topics of future ALNAP urban work?

Format of activities

The membership survey suggested a number of potential new activities within ALNAP's urban workstream. The results show quite clearly that there is a high interest in a mapping or directory of humanitarian urban initiatives, as well as more publications from ALNAP, both longer research papers as well as key messages/fact sheets. In-person events might be useful.



Comments following this question included:

"It would be great to have space to showcase research"

"Online trainings would be very helpful"

"I like the ISDR / PreventionWeb initiative "Ask the expert" where for a week they choose an expert in DRR and have people post questions for them to answer in an open forum ... maybe something similar for urban response?"

"Involve actors outside of the humanitarian field"

"There are many initiatives on urban and it's difficult to connect all of them"

"I think ALNAPS strength is in the coordination of information relating to initiatives, research and pilots. This could be followed up by workshops / shared events on specific issues"

"Opportunities for networking"

"Summary or recap of all urban work worldwide"

"Annual conference for networking and presenting research, projects etc."

"I hope the in person workshops will be taking place!"

Topics

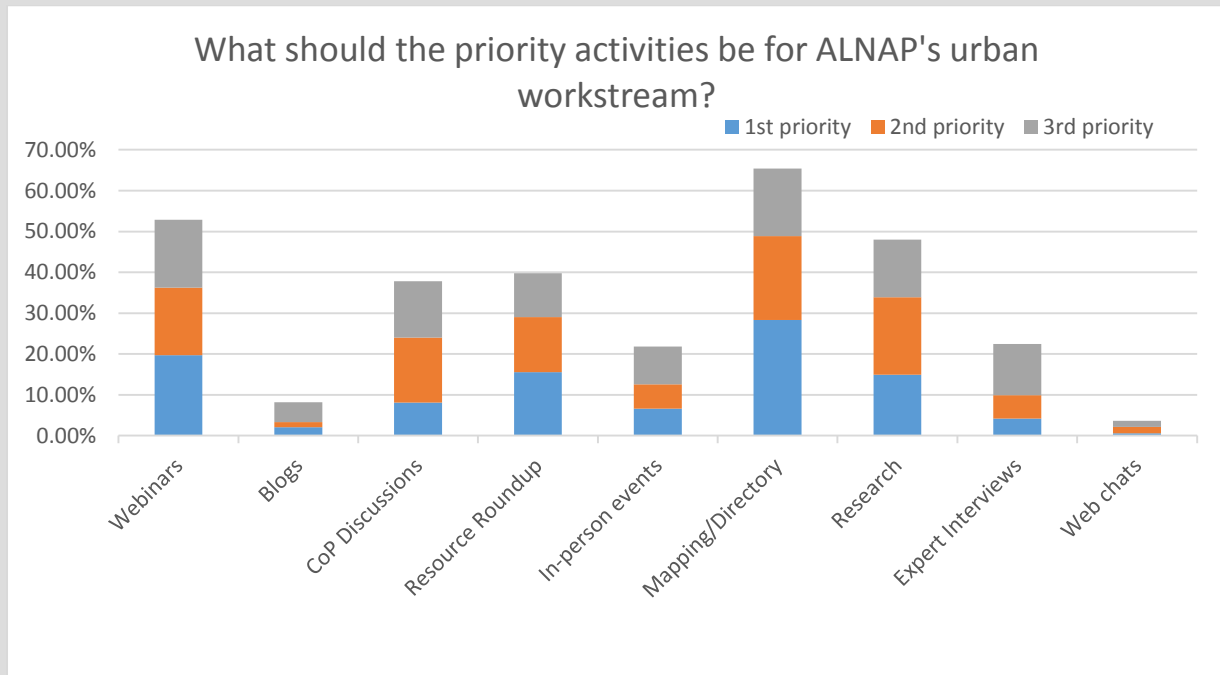
58% of survey respondents indicated they would prefer ALNAP urban activities to be more connected by topic. For example, a series of webinars exploring one topic, or a webinar and short paper on the same topic; rather than one-off activities where topics differ.

One question provided a long list of topics which may interest participants, and the results were fairly even, with no strong clear universal topics of interest. These results suggest ALNAP urban activities should continue to cover a broad range of issues.

6. What should ALNAP's future urban priorities be?

ALNAP is a small network, and the urban activities a fairly small component of our workstream. Therefore, resources are limited. We asked survey respondents to help us determine which activities, current and new, should be priority going forward.

The results show that there is widespread agreement that webinars, a mapping/directory of urban initiatives, and research publications are priority. Secondly, CoP discussions and resource roundup, followed by in-person events and expert interviews. Little support was given to web chats and blogs.



7. Next steps for ALNAP's urban workstream

Based on feedback from this survey, as well as resources available, ALNAP will:

1. Launch a new 'directory' of urban humanitarian research/pilots/initiatives which will be hosted on the Urban Humanitarian Response Portal. Further details about the directory and how you work can be highlighted will be sent later this summer.
2. Continue the webinar series, holding approximately 4 webinars per year. Where possible, the suggestions provided in the survey in terms of content, advertising and technology will be implemented. A greater attempt to link the webinars with other ALNAP urban activities will be made.
3. Redesign the roundup to be more eye-catching (already implemented) and continue to provide a monthly roundup which highlights a handful of resources as well as upcoming events. The roundup will also feature an urban initiative from the directory each month, as well as a 'CoP member of the month' so members can get to know one another better.
4. Close the urban blog series and focus attention elsewhere. However, the ALNAP blog will continue and urban topics can continue to be submitted and featured there.
5. Consider possibilities for the CoP discussions, including how they might be better integrated with webinars, and potentially short fact sheet/summaries.
6. Explore opportunities for ALNAP research on urban topics in the 2016-2017 workplan year.
7. Look to conduct another survey of the urban response CoP membership in 2017.