



Displacement Data

Country: South Sudan

Cause of displacement:
Conflict and flooding

Conflict date: 13 December 2013

**Number of people affected/
displaced:** 1.6 million

People targeted by project:

50,000 in 2014 and 127,000 by November 2015

Project Location: Bentiu, Unity State

CCCM Cluster: Activated

Keywords

- Camp consolidation
- Coordination
- Data collection/analysis
- Disaster risk reduction
- Displacement tracking
- Local capacities
- National authorities
- Community participation
- Protection



Bentiu PoC flooded in 2014 © JC McIlwaine

SOUTH SUDAN

The CCCM Cluster expanded and improved the Bentiu Protection of Civilians (PoC) site to increase protection of the displaced population, accommodate growing numbers of IDPs and prevent flooding.

Context

The Republic of South Sudan became the world's newest nation on the 9th July 2011 following secession from Sudan through a referendum in January 2011, when the people of the South voted for independence from the north. Prior to independence, two civil wars spanning five decades led to the death and displacement of millions of people. Even though war was declared to be over by the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005, persistent insecurity continued to afflict various parts of the newly independent nation through minor rebellions, mutinies and skirmishes between armed groups, making the Government of the Republic of South Sudan appear incapable of providing security and achieving social, political and economic stability. As a consequence of government weakness, communities maintained local systems for protection, including arming rural youth, contributing to the militarization of South Sudanese society.

In early 2013, tensions within the

governing Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) started to emerge between the political and military leadership. Fighting subsequently erupted in the capital, Juba, on 16th-17th December and conflict escalated rapidly and spread to other parts of the city and country. The devastating violence, destruction of infrastructure (such as marketplaces and boreholes), decimation of basic services and increasing food insecurity across many states led to a large-scale displacement crisis.

People employed a range of strategies to cope, including settling with host communities, creating spontaneous settlements, and fleeing to PoC sites at the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) bases. By November 2015, there were more than 1.6 million IDPs with over 200,000 people living in PoC sites. The scale and duration of displacement at PoC sites was unprecedented. It was originally envisioned that PoC sites would provide refuge for civilians under threat of physical violence for up to 72 hours, rather than indefinitely house people forced from their



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homes. However, continued insecurity and the destruction of vital community infrastructure continue to prevent people from returning to their homes and have led to continuous waves of IDPs seeking protection and services within PoC sites. Renewed violence and increasing food insecurity across the region in early 2015 saw the population within the PoC sites more than double and the need for humanitarian services increase. Humanitarian actors rapidly shifted from small scale responses in 2013 to a country-wide needs based approach, a response that was challenged by the limited capacity of actors to swiftly scale up human resources and systems.

PoC (Protection of Civilians)

PoCs are areas within the bases of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), where the IDP population sought physical safety as a result of armed actions. The PoC sites were not intended for, nor equipped to accommodate large populations for a protracted period of time. However, because of the continuing insecurities, more IDPs sought protection inside PoCs leading to the expansion of PoC areas.

Unity State is situated along the North-South border and is strategically important to the warring factions because of its oil reserves and production facilities. It remains a key contested stronghold between the Sudan People's Liberation

Army (SPLA) and the SPLA-In Opposition (SPLA-IO) and has been marred by conflict since the crisis in December 2013, when people began fleeing to the PoC site in Bentiu. Following an attack on the capital, Bentiu town, in April 2014, the number of people at the PoC site increased from 8,000 to over 40,000 by May 2014. Conditions in Bentiu rapidly deteriorated due to overcrowding and flooding caused by the 2014 rainy season. The water inundated individual family shelters, common services and fragile camp infrastructure. It reduced the space between shelters where informal shops and markets existed, children played and families cooked and gathered together, and exacerbated the risk of water-borne diseases, such as cholera.

UNMISS, peacekeepers, humanitarians and the authorities had to co-ordinate closely to ensure the needs of people were met and standards attained. The support of the entire humanitarian and donor community, in a country with so many humanitarian priorities, was crucial to help implement the Bentiu site expansion project, and meet the needs of those in need of temporary assistance and protection.

CCCM Activities

This case study showcases the camp coordination and camp management work in re-designing the Bentiu camp to accommodate a substantially increased population and to prevent flooding, as well as to enhance humanitarian service provision.

After extensive assessments in late

2014, and negotiations between UNMISS and humanitarian agencies, CCCM and partners began a significant site construction project in February 2015 to extend the site and enhance it with flood control measures. The intention was to improve safety, security, health and living conditions for the IDPs living in the Bentiu PoC site. During initial site expansion development, the population of the PoC site rose dramatically again, from 52,908 in February 2015 to approximately 127,000 people by November 2015. This additional population necessitated revisions to site plans, and the need to negotiate with UNMISS regarding the use of additional land. The CCCM Cluster had to scale-up co-ordination efforts to ensure that humanitarian agencies and NGOs could best respond, within a very difficult and insecure working environment. The Shelter Cluster played an important role in assisting people with the construction of their shelters and providing materials.

Site Selection is an integral part of the camp set-up phase, and normally such a site would not have been chosen due to the location on a floodplain. However, because of the ongoing conflict in the region, security was an overriding concern, and there were no other choices of locations.

Challenges and Achievements

There were several challenges involved in completing this project. The 2014 planned extension of the camp was designed for approximately 50,000 people. However, by November 2015, around 127,000 people had arrived and the planned extensions were insufficient to provide appropriate shelter and services to so many people. Core CCCM activities had to be increased to support the greater population, and the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Team provided essential support, conducting registrations from January 2014 and commencing biometric registration of IDPs in June 2014.

Additionally, there were logistical difficulties inherent in the large scale work that needed to be done and in the context of South Sudan. There were de-

lays in the delivery of materials, difficult working conditions, and complexities involved with coordinating and negotiating with technicians and engineers. Heavy duty equipment including diggers, bulldozers and excavators, as well as construction materials, had to be transported to the construction site in UN Humanitarian Air Service flights. The CCCM Cluster also had to undertake considerable negotiations with the relevant local authorities to transport large quantities of soil into the camp used to raise the roads and make them flood resistant. Moreover, the existing site for expansion was occupied, so the work plan needed to accommodate the resident population of IDPs.

Challenges also stemmed from the conflict in Unity State, which caused significant protection concerns for IDPs, CCCM staff and peacekeepers all sharing the same PoC. The PoC perimeter barriers were not sufficiently secure, there was a lack of lighting around the perimeter and the peacekeepers from UNMISS providing protection were understaffed.

The CCCM Cluster is used to coordinating with a wide variety of actors to achieve its goals. However the expansion and enhancement of the Bentiu PoC site required extraordinary coordination efforts that involved many different actors. One of the main consultations regarding the site expansion was with the camp population themselves, and included forums between camp managers and the IDP community lead-

ers. Sharing information and regularly discussing the progress of the project was an essential part of coordination. These meetings provided a place to raise challenges and constraints on the logistics, and issues affecting both the IDPs and humanitarian workers. A two-way feedback system helped to manage expectations regarding the expansion, and the communication system also enabled the CCCM Cluster and partners to disseminate messages about the project – one of the most important related to the safety of children in the PoC around heavy machinery and the internal drainage system.

The CCCM Cluster was able to use its information management tool, DTM, to gather baseline information on the displaced population and their living conditions to inform the project. Beneficiaries within the site were consulted regarding what they felt were key services, and many IDPs were employed in a variety of daily labor jobs.

The project was achieved its aims through strong partnerships. The CCCM Cluster engaged with a network of partners to complete the work, particularly sub-contractor Ammars, who performed the heavy earthwork and machinery work. UNICEF provided a topographical survey in November 2014 and in December the Government of the Netherlands contributed flood risk assessments and provided technical recommendations about site layout, storm runoff, a hydraulic model and a master drainage plan. On the

basis of these recommendations, a one million square meter extension to the PoC site was proposed, which UNMISS negotiated with the South Sudanese government to acquire in January 2015. In February 2015 further construction began for an extension to the PoC and rehabilitation of other parts.

Given the presence of local armed forces, relocation of IDPs to new sections of the site could only occur once all areas were secure. This required available security forces, the finished construction of a four meter high wall and military observation posts, as well as external fencing. As the expansion progressed, ready blocks were progressively handed over to key service providers for provision of infrastructure and services such as shelters and WASH facilities. Partners aimed to assist IDPs to relocate to the newly developed areas in June 2015. As of mid-August 2015, the expansion of the PoC site was completed and approximately 55,165 individuals were relocated to the new or rehabilitated areas of the PoC and provided with complete shelter units.

An important achievement was the ability to adapt the project to meet the needs of people who experienced further conflict in Unity State, along with the support from UNMISS and the humanitarian and donor communities. UNMISS agreed to allocate 180,000 square meters of space to construct contingency areas for the new IDPs arriving in July 2015.

Lessons learnt

- Innovative and flexible responses are needed to manage unprecedented displacement situations for CCCM practitioners in site planning and responding to sudden influxes, when sites cannot be chosen because of the context.
- Cluster coordinators can benefit from strong, forward planning with regard to logistics and suppliers in contexts where extreme weather variability and poor infrastructure determines transportation possibilities and access to the affected population is intermittent due to conflict.
- More realistic context and conflict analysis should be considered in the planning phase to incorporate worst case scenarios, particularly in places with known volatility.
- Camp managers' focus on accountability and the involvement of the camp population included incorporating the displaced population in the planning of the expansion, and ensuring clear communication regarding the site expansion. Two way communication allowed essential messages about safety to be passed to the population in a timely way, one example being to avoid children getting hurt by playing with construction machinery.