SOUTH SUDAN
RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

KEYWORDS:

RETURN AND INTEGRATION, CAPACITY BUILDING, SERVICE MAPPING, INFORMATION MANAGEMENT, LOCALISATION

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CAUSE OF DISPLACEMENT	Conflict
DATE OF EVENT CAUSING DISPLACEMENT	December 2013 – ongoing
PEOPLE DISPLACED	Over 150,000 outside of camps
PROJECT LOCATION	Unity State, Kothieny, Bentiu Town
PROJECT DURATION	May 2016 - March 2017 (10 months)
NUMBER OF PEOPLE TARGETED BY THE PROJECT	492 Households (2,460 individuals)
CCCMCOORDINATION MECHANISM	Cluster Activated

SUMMARY:

The project took services closer to IDPs, host community members and returnees affected by the on- going conflict in Unity State through mobile outreach teams and static presence in line with the Beyond Bentiu Response Strategy[1]. This facilitated restoring dignity among the affected population, provided opportunities for IDP returns and provided information to increase understanding in humanitarian operations.
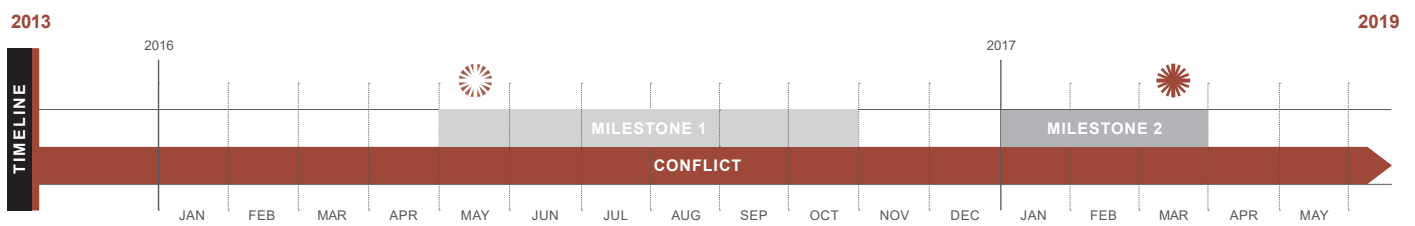
✷	May 2016	Project start
1	May - October 2016	Secured land from the government through the protection cluster. Managed the reintegration of 300 IDPs and returnees among the host community population.
2	January - March 2017	A 2nd group was successfully settled comprising of 192 households.
�	March 2017	Project Completion.
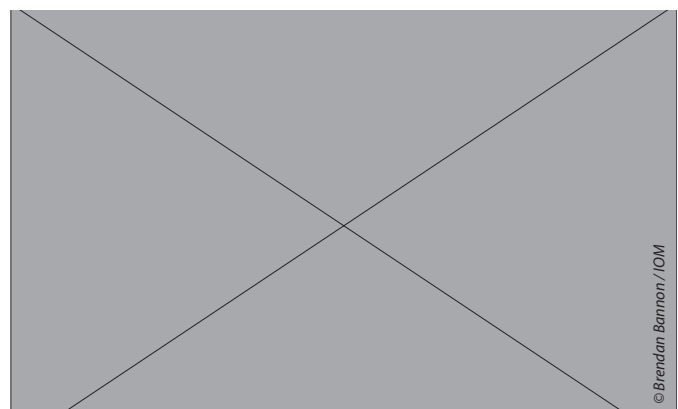
People walking through Bentiu. September 2015.

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CCCM CLUSTER
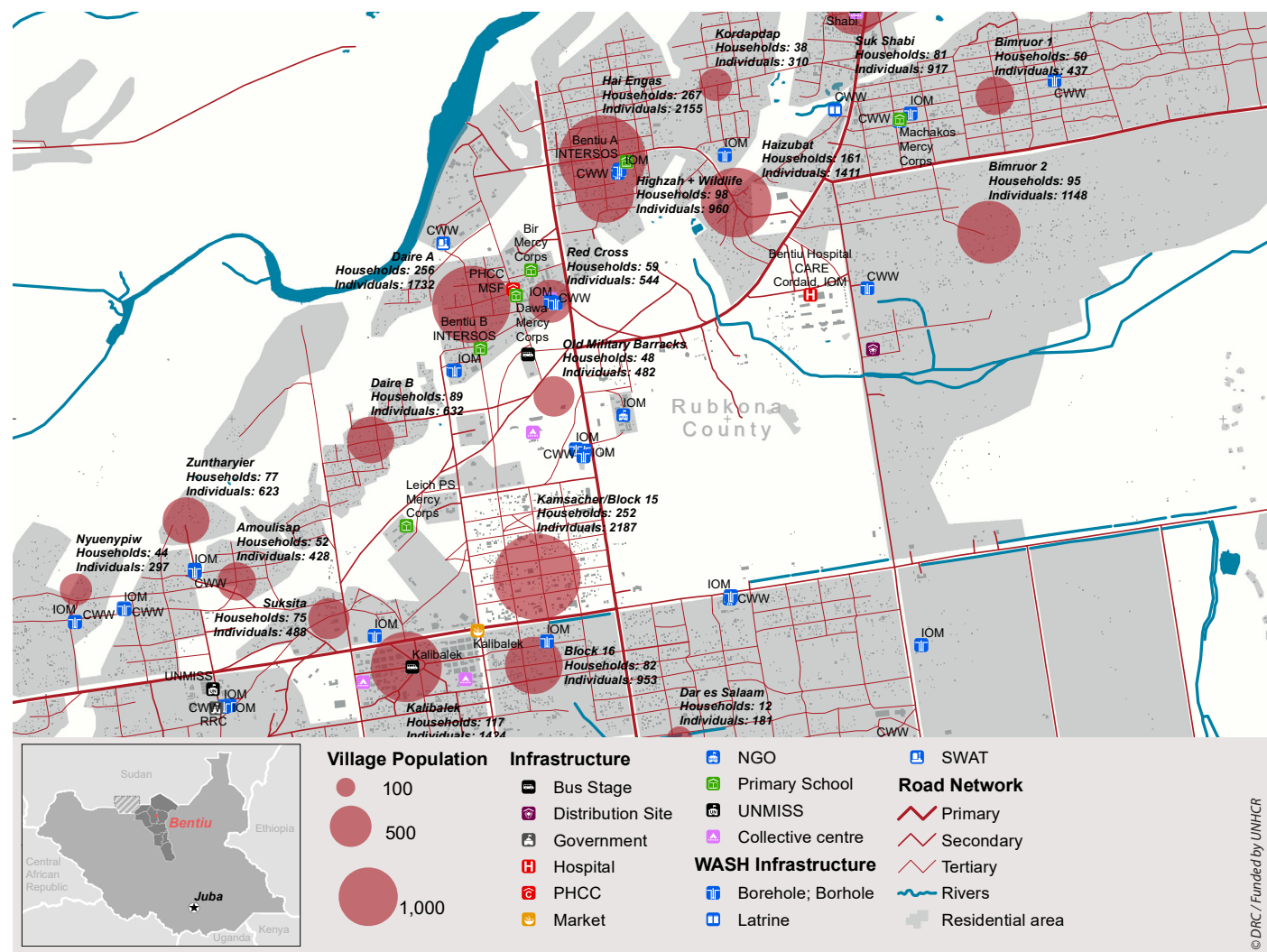
Bentiu Town Population and Infrastructure. Rubkona County, June 2017

CONTEXT

The December 2013 conflict in South Sudan that began in the capital city, Juba, spread across the country. The conflict caught humanitarian actors unaware as it was not expected that a young nation, after 1.5 years of independence, could plunge into crisis. Hence the level of preparedness for conflict-related displacement was non-existent in South Sudan. The humanitarian response was focused on food insecurity and flood response.

The conflict took a new dimension with the introduction of a third armed element – SPLA iO2[2] protracting the conflict further. This created additional challenges in terms of humanitarian access by increasing the number of frontlines, worsened the situation by July 2016.

Properties were burnt down and looted, women and girls suffered the wrath of the government forces, with some running to hide into the swampy areas while others trekked to the Bentiu Protection of Civilians (PoC) site, which was already hosting a population of 120,000 in March 2017. Men were killed, joined their allied forces or crossed the border to Sudan.

The humanitarian agencies working in South Sudan confirmed that over 90% of IDPs in the country were living outside of the formal camp, such as collective sites and informal settlements. Due to the scattered displacement settings, it was decided that there was a urgent need to take services closer to where people were living. As a result, the CCCM Cluster with support of OCHA and other clusters, developed specific intervention in camp-like settings outside of the UNMISS Bentiu PoC in line with the Beyond Bentiu Strategy[3].

The CCCM Cluster strategy aimed to continue to improve the living standards in displacement sites including PoC sites, collective centres and other spontaneous settlements. The CCCM Cluster continued to coordinate lifesaving service delivery in camp and camp-like settings and managed displacement sites to provide activities such as communicating with communities (CwC), information management and ensuring accountability to the affected population (AAP) to ensure a healthy, safe and dignified living environment in displacement sites across the country. In the event of the possibility of the continuation of protracted conflicts, early warning systems were put into place by the CCCM Cluster in coordination with the Protection Cluster. This was done through restoring community-based protection structures that were previously fragmented due to displacement.

PROJECT

DISPLACEMENT TRACKING

The cluster utilized the common service of the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), assessment reports from REACH, head counts conducted by the humanitarian partners and the local authorities and the WFP food distribution population. In outside of formal camp settings, the Cluster tracked displacement through implementing partners, who used the Population Movement Tracking (PMT) due to the high rate of population movements across areas of the country where the presence of humanitarian partners was limited.

CCCM ACTIVITIES

The project supports populations either living within the host community in collective sites and/or informally settled within the host community. The project aims to:
- Support persons with specific needs,
- Develop and implement IDP solution strategies,
- Provide voluntary return assistance.

This project ensured that protection was mainstreamed into the interventions through establishing systems for referral of protection cases living in hard to reach areas. Furthermore, the support to the existing leadership structures paved the way for the formation of the *community-based protection networks* which were effective in identifying persons with specific needs. The project targeted all affected population either through cluster assessment or through multi-sectoral assessment that informed the nature of response.

IMPLEMENTATION

The project was initiated by the implementing agency as the CCCM and the protection lead agency in the state. They advocated for IDPs living in deplorable situations at the collective sites, secured land from the government and thereafter brought on board the WASH and Shelter Non-Food Item (NFI) clusters to provide both shelter materials (poles, nails & ropes) as well as water and household latrines. Additionally, the implementing agency provided the plastic sheets and solar lanterns.

In early 2017 it became possible to relocate IDP households to the newly secured 4,000 acres of governmental land This significantly contributed to the restoration of dignity of the affected population, who were now able to freely carry on with their daily lives. In addition, the project also identified potential areas of return and displacement catchment areas, a key mechanism for informing the overall humanitarian response in Unity State.

Through Communications with Communities (CwC), persons of concern were informed about the project, allowing them to make informed decisions before choosing to voluntarily move to safe havens amidst the continued conflicts. The already existing leadership structures within the communities were supported resulting in better feedback on services provided by humanitarian partners and enhanced the self-protection capacities of these communities.

With support from the Protection, WASH, and Shelter-NFI Clusters and the local authorities, the project managed the relocation and reintegration of 492 households - including households from the collective sites, returnees and those who opted to leave the UNMISS Bentiu PoC - to integrate into the host community in Bentiu Town. Continuous coordination efforts immensely contributed to achieve the project's objectives including the different clusters coming on board and providing their expertise.

After the successful integration of the IDPs, the Food Security and Livelihood (FSL) partners, began to provide seeds and tools whereby the beneficiaries managed to grow vegetables. IDP households were able to grow enough vegetables to sell at the markets contributing to their livelihood.

IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

The project aimed to provide a coordinated and timely cross-cutting response to the immediate humanitarian needs in camps and camp-like settings and contributed to save lives and alleviate suffering. The project eased the integration of the relocated households into the host community as the result of training being conducted jointly establishing common understanding and join benefits of the learning gained. The project also eased the integration of the relocated households into the host community by selling their farm produce to the market and/or bringing the host community to their farms to buy vegetables.

The UNHCR High commissioner's visit to Bentiu in June 2017 engaging UNHCR staff and the local authorities near a shelter under construction.

Relocation activities underway at the bentiu PoC through the allocation of newly constructed shelters to IDPs.

ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNT

ACHIEVEMENTS

- This project has led the state government to promise to provide more land for IDPs willing to move out of the collective sites, informal settlements and those returning from other areas within the country.

- The project contributed to better information sharing on strategies and matters affecting the community.

- Service mapping factsheets to inform other clusters of existing humanitarian gaps allowed the clusters to reach out to displaced populations. Reports on achievements, challenges and gaps also led to some gaps being addressed by other clusters/partners.

- The project enabled the children of relocated IDPs to better integrate into the host community by attending the same school and other social amenities, which wasn't possible while living at the collective sites.

CHALLENGES

- There was a lack of permanent partners in the informal settlements and collective sites as humanitarian assistance was mostly provided through mobile outreach teams.

- There was no dedicated funding available for the project to cover camp-like settings in hard to reach areas, as it was not included into the financial planning from the onset.

- Several IDP households that had voluntarily returned to their home villages sold their houses to other IDP households upon their return. The humanitarian agencies were not in position to completely prevent this trend through community sensitization.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Meaningful engagement with the communities and their existing leadership contributed to strengthen trust relationships between displaced persons.

- Establishing cordial relationships with the state actors on behalf of the affected population aids to provide improved options for IDPs living in displaced sites.

- Collective approaches in decision-making by the different agencies always yields a better result and a positive impact to the affected population.

- Identifying the resilience of the community and incorporating their strengths into the project is a key pillar to address displaced community challenges effectively.

- Humanitarian intervention should focus on collective, multi- sectorial objectives that are centred on affected population needs rather than organizationally-driven.

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[1] Beyond Bentiu Strategy (BBR)
[2] Sudan's People Liberation Army In-Opposition
[3] UNDP Beyond Bentiu Protection of Civilian Site Youth Reintegration Strategy

An aerial view of Kothieny in Bentiu Town where IDPs and Returnees have integrated with the Host Community through the support of UNHCR .