

Community Support during Disasters: A Review of Internally Displaced Population in Lakes State

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Abstract

Community is a social group of any size whose members reside in a specific locality, share government, and often have a common cultural and historical heritage. In the context of emergency management, before any government machinery and support reaches or outside help gets galvanized, it is the community which must respond almost immediately.

This article articulates the role of community support during critical times of emergencies; ascertain how humanitarian organizations can enhance community resilience; explain whether humanitarian interventions which transcend to targeting hosts communities are appropriate in the context of Lakes State's displacement; and explore the significance of community level preparedness and how community-based preparedness actions can be done in the context of Lakes State.

Three case studies of multi-hazard internal displacement of communities in Yirol East, Awerial and Rumbek North were reviewed. The triggers of displacement of communities were armed conflict, floods, and acute lack of food.

Findings depicted that community support was critical immediately during the onset of the emergencies, communities had no or were not involved in any preparedness processes, aid delivery was overly top down and carried out by humanitarian organizations, humanitarian interventions involving hosts communities were at least helpful in sustaining cohesion between IDPs and host communities. In the absence of community-based disaster management mechanism, the article recommends that humanitarian organizations focus on involvement and participation of community members in preparedness and enhancing capacities of the community to ensure resiliency.

Keywords: Preparedness, Resilience, Response, Recovery, Empowerment, Internally Displaced People, and mitigation

Introduction

Community is a social group of any size whose members reside in a specific locality, share government, and often have a common cultural and historical heritage. In the context of emergency management, before any government machinery and support reaches or outside help gets galvanized, it is the community which must respond almost immediately. Since the community plays the role of *First Responder*, it is critical that there is adequate awareness and preparedness at the Community level especially amongst the most vulnerable set of communities residing in the most vulnerable areas.

Internal displacement has been commonplace in South Sudan with about 1.5 million internally displaced people across the Country while Yirol East, Awerial, and Rumbek North of Lakes State has 115053 individuals of internally displaced people according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and IOM displacement tracking matrix (IOM, 2019). Inter and intra communal clashes led to increased arming and rearming of communities which exacerbated inter and intra-communal feuds. In July 2018, IDPs from the Pakam community fled Rumbek North County following attacks by armed elements from Rup section and planned disarmament exercise by the government of Greater Lakes State. The IDPs eventually settled predominantly in the areas of Pagarau, Nyang, Adior, and Billing, in a mix of cattle camps and host community villages. By August 2018, a number of IDPs estimated at approximately 28,000 individuals have been continuously arriving since April 2018 (Protection Cluster, 2018). Internally Displaced Persons settled in three camps of Nyang and Adior counties (Jier, Mamer, Machar-achiek) and 11 cattle camps while others integrated within the host community in Pagarau Payam.

Between May and July 2019, over 15,000 individuals moved to Dor Payam of Awerial County of Lakes State from Tindilo and Tali of Terkeka in Central Equatoria State. These areas have experienced insufficient rains for 7 years with the situation getting worst in May and July 2019 where most households were forced to either sell out their livestock to buy food or migrate to Dor in Awerial of Lakes state to access food. Sorghum and ground nuts are the main crops produced for household consumption in these locations. The IDPs settled in Dor and in dire need of basic humanitarian services especially food Aid, WASH, NFI and health services.

The IDPs informed partners and RRC in Awerial that they have not been able to plant and harvest sufficient food due to little and erratic rainfall in their places that has persisted for 7 years leading to acute shortage of food. They made the decision to relocate to Awerial where they heard food distribution was being carried out by WFP. Partners in Awerial recommended an assessment be carried out to ascertain the cause of this displacement and make the necessary recommendation and raise the matter with relevant stakeholders and players.

Meanwhile, in Northern Rumbek County, local authorities reported large scale torrential flooding which affected local infrastructure, destroyed huts and displacing over 3000 households. Many farms were submerged in water resulting in poor harvest and subsequently lack of food. Primary health care unit and centers were over-crowded with patients as malaria and acute diarrheal disease incidences unprecedentedly increased. Stock out of essential medicines was also reported in most facilities in the County.

Community support has been critical for the displaced population during the first 48-72 hours of displacement. The host community in Yirol East, Rumbek North, and Awerial provided temporary shelter, shared their food with IDPs, and shared their cooking utensils with the IDPs. Notably also, facilities such as water points, toilets, health facilities, and schools were jointly shared with the displaced community. This research therefore seeks to analyze the significance of the hospitality offered by host communities during critical times of displacement and how the existing capacities can be strengthened by the humanitarian partners as a mechanism of preparedness and resilience.

Research objectives

The broadest objective of this study is to ascertain the significance of community support during critical times of internal displacement of communities. The research explores the following specific objectives.

Specific objectives

The research explores the following objectives

1. To explore the role of community support during critical times of emergencies
2. To ascertain how humanitarian organizations can enhance community resilience
3. To explain whether humanitarian interventions which transcend to targeting hosts communities are appropriate in the context of Lakes State displacement
4. To explore the significance of community level preparedness and how community-based preparedness actions can be done in the context of Lakes State.

Research problem

Internal displacement is a subject of varying proportions. In Lakes State, internal displacement has been triggered by a number of drivers ranging from inter and intra communal violence, floods in low lying areas, and acute lack of food in some communities. In most of the internal displacement, communities provide reactive measures and normally act as first responders before humanitarian organization could step in to provide support. Humanitarian actions in the context of Lakes State is overly driven by humanitarian organizations at the apex of which is the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and within the cluster approach. Partial coordination is provided by Relief and Rehabilitation Commission of the Government of South Sudan which has little capacity in policy and decision making as a result of which community involvement in all aspects of disaster management is absent.

Justification for the study

This article is important in ascertaining the roles of community support during critical times of emergencies especially in the first 48-72 hours of displacement, how humanitarian organizations can enhance community resilience, whether humanitarian interventions which transcend to targeting hosts communities are appropriate in the context of Lakes State's displacement, and the significance of community level preparedness and how community-based preparedness actions can be done in the context of Lakes State. This article identifies the gaps in *modus operandi* of humanitarian action in Lakes State and will be useful in uncovering how community involvement and participation can enhance their capacities to prepare and respond with their limited capacities to disasters.

Literature review

Communities contribute to disaster management in varying proportions ranging from participation in disaster preparedness, mitigation, response, recovery, and resiliency. In case of any disaster or emergency, before any government machinery and support reaches or outside help gets spurred, it is the community which respond immediately. As the community plays the role of First Responder, it is critical that there is adequate awareness and preparedness at the community level especially amongst the most vulnerable set of communities residing in the most vulnerable areas. It is pertinent to invest in efforts of strengthening community risk resilience at all levels to be able to adequately address disaster risk reduction (National Institute of Disaster Management). Patterson, Weil, and Patel (2010) notes that community responses to Hurricane Katrina demonstrate the importance of local knowledge, resources, and cooperative strategies in determining their survival and recovery, that is, their resilience. These responses can also greatly inform theories and practice of disaster preparedness and risk perception planning and help better understand how communities' strengths and capabilities can be integrated into these processes. In a number of disasters, community's role transcends from mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

The concept of community-driven development has widely been implemented by organizations. The role that community-based organizations (CBOs) play in decisions about the economic and social development processes that directly affect the livelihood of their members; and the development of a culture within public administration that views communities as subjects of change and development partners, rather than as mere receivers of the benefits of public expenditure (Manssour and Sparacino, 2009; Singh, 2013; Brookman, 2015). Community-driven development is a social and political transformation embed in the way local development is done across a country. Communities' involvement in development tend to increase communities' resiliency in terms of decision making, preparedness and resources ownership which is critical for them to cope during period of emergencies

Mitigation

Any sustained efforts undertaken to reduce the likelihood or consequence of the hazard's risk. FEMA (2005), asserts that mitigation is a 'cornerstone of disaster management'. Although this sounds rosy, mitigation measures are more challenging and costlier. Mitigation measures tend to be costly, disruptive, time consuming, and in some cases socially unpalatable. They almost always carry their own inherent risk and do not always work as intended. Political will for mitigation is hard to come by in many situations, and the public's attention span tends to be too short to accommodate the significant life changes that may be necessary for mitigation to work. Furthermore, mitigation traditionally has been a luxury of the rich nations, with many societies considering it to be something they cannot justify or afford in light of other, more immediate issues (Coppola, 2007).

Mitigation efforts have five prime goals to achieve viz; risk likelihood reduction which seeks to reduce the likelihood of a hazard occurring. Application of this measure is much easier for technological and intentional hazards which emanate from human actions. For some hazards like hurricanes and cyclones, it has not been established technically how to apply risk likelihood reduction (Coppola, 2007). The second goal of mitigation is risk consequences reduction; this seeks to reduce the impacts of disaster to humans, structures and environment. It is assumed that disasters will occur and create enormous consequences and therefore the need to reduce these negative consequences. Typical examples of impacts reduction can be seen in construction of hurricane and cyclone shelters where communities can

be evacuated during onset. The third goal of mitigation is risk avoidance; it should be noted that some risks are unacceptable even after reduction of their likelihood consequences. The viable option for such risks is to completely avoid them. Risk avoidance actions include removal of people from certain hazard prone areas. The fourth goal is risk acceptance which entails that communities may have some risks they contend to live with. This is common with some religious beliefs as well. Also, governments may be unable to afford the cost of certain risk mitigation and so decides to accept some level of risks. The final goal of mitigation is risk transfer, sharing and spreading which is commonly applied by insurance companies. Companies collect premiums from all population both at risk and those not at risk for them to be able to compensate the highly affected people once the hazard occurs. This is the most common mitigation measure in the context of Lakes State where communities communally share resources like food, water, schools, and health facilities during emergencies.

Coppola (2007) suggests a number of things which he classified into structural and nonstructural mitigation measures. Under structural measures, actions include; building wind resistant community shelters, building code and regulatory framework, treatment systems, construction of barriers, deflectors, and retention systems, and relocation. Whereas under nonstructural measures are regulatory measures, community awareness and education programs, environmental controls, and behavioral modifications. To achieve some degree of mitigation nonstructural and structural actions must be pursued in tandem.

Disaster preparedness

In the 16th century, Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, author of *Don Quixote*, wrote, “forewarned; forearmed (cited in Coppola, 2007). This echoes the prime role that preparedness plays in responding to emergencies. Being prepared is almost half of the victory towards effective response. According to UNICEF operational manual for responding to emergencies, it is emphasized that preparedness reduces the overall cost of emergency response by half. Preparedness entails a number of actions, in UNICEF operations, preparedness is a four-step annual process which includes joint risk analysis, scenario definition, key elements of response, and preparedness actions which take stock of available minimum measures of preparedness. To ensure coordinated emergency management authorities at the national level (Country or area) should take lead in developing emergency operations plan which should bring on board all relevant stakeholders (Coppola, 2007). Preparedness has proven significant in a number of emergency response globally; the Jewish communities of Southern Louisiana adopted contingency planning methods developed by Jewish Family Service agencies in Southern Florida, which has also experienced many hurricanes. Florida’s JFS compiled an Emergency Care Contact List, for which senior citizens could voluntarily pre-enroll. Then, in the event of a hurricane, JFS can deliver services and assistance to seniors who are known to be potentially vulnerable (Patterson, Weil, and Patel, 2010)

Raju (2013), in a study of community-based disaster management asserted that community-based disaster management provide opportunities for the local community to evaluate their own situation based on their experiences. Under this approach, the local community not only becomes part of creating plans and decisions, but also becomes a major player in its implementation. Although the community is given greater roles in the decision-making and implementation processes, community-based disaster management does not ignore the importance of scientific and objective risk Assessment and planning. The CBDM approach acknowledges that many stakeholders as needed should be involved in the process, with the end goal of achieving capacities and transfer of resources to the community.

Asian Disaster Preparedness Center works to build the resilience of people and institutions to disasters and climate change impacts in Asia and the Pacific. Some of their achievements include building capacities of the governments of 21 member Countries to embrace resilient programming as well as working with the national disasters’ organizations to enhance the capacities of the communities on disaster risk reduction. After the collapse of a dam in Lao PDR in 2018, for example, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center provided the government with satellite maps to estimate the extent of the inundation and identify the most affected areas. The information could be useful for the Government of Lao PDR and emergency response practitioners in providing flood response to the affected people. Similarly, in Cambodia, a decision-support service for supporting flood forecasting was developed in collaboration with the government. The tool goes by the name of Virtual Rain and Stream Gauge

Information System, which contains high resolution satellite rain and stream gauge data that will enhance the flood early warning system of Cambodia. (Rana ed., 2019). In addition to this technical and policy level support, the focus is much on a “communities first” and therefore, a total of 1534 people learned about the status of sector specific disaster preparedness and worked towards finding the way forward through 48 events held across six countries. This technical support becomes of the basis for effective preparedness where communities could be warned of the threat which is capable of reducing the amount of damage and loss of lives during emergencies.

In Latin America, the top-down approach to disaster management was discovered to have many flaws as communities were never involved. Communities participation was limited to provision of labor in development projects. However, case studies on community-based disaster mitigation approaches shifted principal responsibility and authority for the development of the program to community-based organization (CBO); problems were correctly defined; responsive mitigation measures and strategies for recovery were worked out following disaster since people could express their real needs and priorities to the CBOs; existence of CBOs allowed rapid and effective response to emergencies; the principal resource is people themselves and their local knowledge and expertise to programs had small financial inputs but produced large results; and programs were multi-sectoral, combining different activities (Victoria, 2002).

Disaster response

At the onset of emergencies, communities expect their government and anyone to help them out. Governments and authorities in given Countries or areas have the responsibility to help their people. Even though that seems to be the promise of authorities, when it comes to times of response, it becomes an enormous hurdle to bear. Lessons from major response operations showed that a carefully planned and prepared communities and actors leads to less human and economic losses once disaster strikes. Response is by far the most complex of the four functions of emergency management, since it is conducted during periods of very high stress, in a highly time-constrained environment, and with limited information. During response, wavering confidence and unnecessary delay directly translate to tragedy and destruction. Response includes not only those activities that directly address these immediate needs—such as first aid, search and rescue, and shelter—but also includes systems developed to coordinate and support such efforts. Response involves the rapid resumption of critical infrastructure (such as opening transportation routes, restoring communications and electricity, and ensuring food and clean water distribution) to allow recovery to take place, reduce further injury and loss of life, and speed the return to a normally functioning society (ibid).

Disaster recovery

Disasters wreak havoc on the living, on built structures, and on the environment, but preparedness and mitigation reduce vulnerability to disasters, and response minimizes the loss of life and property. However, even with the best mitigation, preparedness, and response, there will almost always be some level of environmental damage, destruction of property and infrastructure, disruptions of social and economic systems, and other physical and psychological health consequences. The process by which all of these are rebuilt, reconstructed, repaired, and returned to a functional condition is called recovery. In a comprehensive way, recovery actions are supposed to begin at the pre-disaster planning stage and continue long after the disaster has occurred. Because of the spectacular nature of disaster events and because disaster consequences affect so many peoples’ lives, recovery generates the greatest amount of interest and attention from the world community as a whole. In relation to the other disaster management functions, it is by far the costliest. Disaster recovery is also the least studied and least organized of all of the disaster management functions, and therefore the most haphazardly performed (ibid). commonly performed activities during recovery period include; ongoing communication with the public, provision of temporary or long-term housing, assessment of damages and needs, demolition of damaged structures, clearance, removal, and disposal of debris, rehabilitation of infrastructure, inspection of damaged structures, repair of damaged structures, new construction, social rehabilitation programs, creation of employment opportunities, reimbursement for property losses, rehabilitation of the injured, and reassessment of hazard risk.

Theoretical framework

Social network theory

This article is guided by the social network theory which views social relationships in terms of nodes and ties. Nodes are the individual actors within the networks, and ties are the relationships between the actors. There can be many kinds of ties between the nodes. In its most simple form, a social network is a map of all of the relevant ties between the nodes being studied. The network can also be used to determine the social capital of individual actors. These concepts are often displayed in a social network diagram, where nodes are the points and ties are the lines. In traditional Lakes State, individuals have linkages in the form of intermarriages and extended family relationships and friendships akin to the social network theory conception. It is these traditional connections which become significant in communities' supporting each other during disruptions by disasters.

Disaster risk governance

The article within the disaster risk governance and resilience framework adopt the below model. The model posits community resilience at the center of all efforts. Chief amongst all actions are: learning that encompasses community's perception of risks, critical reflections from the history of disasters, dissemination of disaster related information and plans, monitoring, and innovation. Equally important are the actions like the level of preparedness, response, recovery and vulnerability reduction. Critical is also taking stock of the resources at the disposal of the community in terms of human, financial and socio-political. Proper interface of these three elements would lead to enhancement of community resilience.

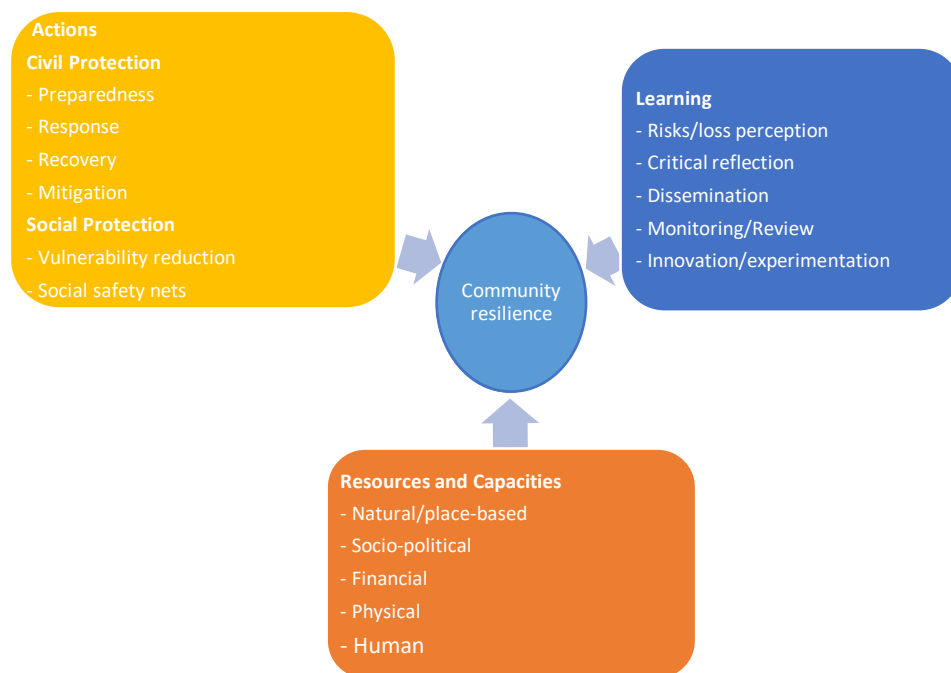


Figure 1. Conceptual model

Methodology

Analysis of inter-agency rapid needs assessments for multi-hazard causes of internal displacement was conducted looking at reports of internally displaced population in Yirol East of Lakes State, report of internal displacement in Rumbek North due to floods, and also the report of internal displacement of people into Awerial County of Lakes State as a result of acute lack of food in Tindilo and Tali of Central Equatoria State. In each of these scenarios, I participated as a lead assessor and used a myriad of interviews and focus group discussions both with the IDPs and host communities.

Results

On 30th January 2019, fighting broke out between youths from Pakam and youth of Pagarau who were displaced from their homes in Rumbek North to Yirol East. Because of the armed conflict, women and children fled the internally displaced camps of Mamer, Jier, and Machar-achiek to Yirol town where they were initially accommodated at an open ground in the middle of Yirol town with protection provided by the local police. Humanitarian partners in Yirol quickly assessed the needs of the IDPs which included safe shelter since they were sleeping in an open place, medications, food, and transportation as families expressed the need to return to Rumbek North. Eventually 28,000 internally displaced persons were transported by the local authorities to Maper in Rumbek North where they were resettled. From August 2019, torrential floods strike Rumbek North destroying several huts, farms, health facilities, schools and limiting access to villages around Maper town. Cases of diarrhea and malaria surged and drug stockout eminent as there is no road access from Rumbek to Maper. Vulnerability was extremely high among the IDPs who were settled in low lying areas and have not been able to recover sufficiently from previous shocks of multiple displacements.

For the displacement from Tindilo and Tali to Dor of Awerial County, some of the findings for the assessment commissioned by partners are as hereunder

1. An estimated 8,438 households in Tali and 3132 households in Tindilo were found to be in need of various basic services – shelter, food, non-food items among others.
2. The already limited access to basic services such as food, WASH, health, nutrition, protection, NFI and education are likely to be worsened by drought/approaching dry season and displacements as cattle raiding conflicts continue in both Tali and Tindilo.
3. It is estimated that over 15,000 people have been displaced to Awerial County of Lakes state and Mundri County in Western Equatoria state mainly due to lack of food. However, retaliatory attacks by the Mundari over cattle raids in September is forcing some of these IDPs to forcefully return.
4. The global acute malnutrition (GAM) rate in Tali was found to be 17.3% of the children aged 6-59 months screened by Nutrition team. This rate is above WHO emergency threshold of 15%. Immediate response on nutrition service is recommended.
5. Vast distances between police establishments may be encouraging cattle raids. Establishing police posts at strategic places along the cattle raiding routes will reduce incidences of cattle raiding and crimes.

Community support

Support was unconditionally provided by the hosting communities in a number of ways such as; sharing of Food, provision of Temporal Shelter, medical treatment from Host Primary Health Care Center and Primary Health Care Units, provision of land for the IDPs, enrollment of displaced children in host's schools, and protection services. These levels of support initially made the IDPs confident to continue to stay in the areas of displacement like in Dor, Jier, Mamer, Machar-achiek, and Maper. For the IDPs whose trigger of displacement is inter and intra communal conflict, hosting communities have taken the mediation roles which generally lead to a peace process and eventual reconciliation leading to peaceful return of the displaced population.

Humanitarian's beneficiaries targeting

In the three case studies of humanitarian response in Lakes State, targeting of beneficiaries have been determined by humanitarian actors on the basis of needs of the affected populations. However, as communities supported the affected population, the resources of the host communities were depleted because of the increasing strain of additional population. Humanitarian aid was therefore given to a percentage of host population to enhance their coping strategies. Failure to provide similar assistance is likely to engineer conflict between the host population and the IDPs and to adhere the humanitarian principle of 'do no harm' it was prudent to equally help the hosting communities. Another reason as to why hosting population should be supported during humanitarian assistance is to preserve the harmonious practice of support that the communities themselves have started. Here I quote a statement from key informant

We were happy to help our brothers from Pakam who came to our place, it is our responsibility to provide food, water, shelter and many more to our guests. During the food distribution, we are also supported, this food will compensate for our food which we have shared with our guests (One of the Key Informants in Yirol).

This echoes the concept of social network theory. Communities in Lakes State have long history of co-existence as well as other social ties and great sense of hospitality whereby people would generously welcome each other and provide whatever support they can afford during critical times of needs. It is therefore of immense significance that humanitarian intervention should aid this great imperative in the community.

Enhancing community resilience

Long history of conflicts and hardship in South Sudan and Lakes State in particular has hardened the level of resiliency of the communities. Traditional coping strategies include selling of livestock to buy food for families, leaning on relatives who are employed with NGOs for assistance, surviving on wild leaves and fruits, hunting amongst others. For humanitarian actors to promote resilience in Lakes State some of the following suggestions are very critical

1. Strengthen social and cultural networks pre-disaster and establish pre-disaster relationships with nontraditional partners in disaster preparedness and response activities, to promote social re-engagement activities post-disaster. Such groups include faith-based organizations, non-governmental social support organizations, family and child advocacy organizations, youths' groups, and Gelweng/Titweng groups.
2. Integrate key capabilities into disaster planning, such as economic development, social capital, community competence, and information and communications and enlist community members in planning at all levels.
3. Develop a range of communications tools appropriate for the community's emergency specific literacy and cultural diversity.
4. Leverage the diverse resources of communities through public-private sector collaborations and partnerships.
5. Address the psychological health of a community, specifically by fostering adaptive coping responses to adversity.
6. Develop and implement community-level public education plans detailing how individuals, families, and households prepare for incidents, highlighting information for and about at-risk individuals.

Communities' participation in planning processes is critical. Communities must not be treated as mere beneficiaries of humanitarian aid but should be treated as equal stakeholders who have knowledge about their specific localities. This will lead to proper identification of issues which in turn can lead to adequate response. Additionally, recovery activities of the organizations must include basics elements of resilience like arming communities with the requisite knowledge in the form of reflective learning and dissemination of pertinent information amongst the communities. More so, recovery activities should continue long enough until communities are on their feet.

Community preparedness and early warning mechanism

Emergency management activities in Maper, Yirol East, and Awerial or in the Greater Lakes region of South Sudan have been handled by international organizations with Relief and Rehabilitation Commission coordinating the overall efforts from the side of the government. The nature of preparedness has been loosely top-down, with NGOs making their own preparedness action. Subsequently, events like flood in Rumbek North have been occurring every year which questions the level of how actors are prepared to provide concrete lasting solutions to the disaster. A shift in the modus operandi of humanitarian actors is needed to bring onboard communities in preparing for this natural hazard. Even though Rumbek North has some high ground where communities could be resettled, communities for some cultural reason are unable to leave their traditional home areas. Authorities in Lakes State should take up steps to persuade communities to avoid the inherent risks of flooding every year to resettle communities in areas with lesser risks of flooding. Early warning early

action should be stepped up as a way to mitigate conflict. Community leaders and Gelweng youths should be part of this mechanism. Adequate training is needed for the communities to better monitor the security situation and develop measures to avoid conflict.

Discussion

In the three case studies, community's involvement in all functions of emergency management viz, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery were found to be very limited. Communities were treated as mere beneficiaries – recipients of humanitarian assistance. This obviously comes with a number of shortcomings; for instance, communities become more dependents on aid, communities neglected their coping strategies and always focus on external help. Involvement of communities is therefore a significant step towards building a resilient society.

Effective recovery as a cornerstone to communities' resilience

Analysis from the three cases of internal displacements of communities in Lakes State show that response by humanitarian organizations are reactive though properly coordinated through the existing international framework of cluster approach. There is contingency planning at the level of organizations in which communities and local authorities at the grassroots are never involved. Mitigation measures or early warning systems have never been established, making activities just reactive to the plight of the people affected. Beyond the humanitarian handouts, recovery activities are non-existent or poorly coordinated. This paper therefore proposes that recovery intervention must be properly planned and inculcated into the disaster preparedness plan and should be kicked-off almost immediately with the response and should continue long after the response has ended as asserted by Coppola (2007).

Disaster management functions

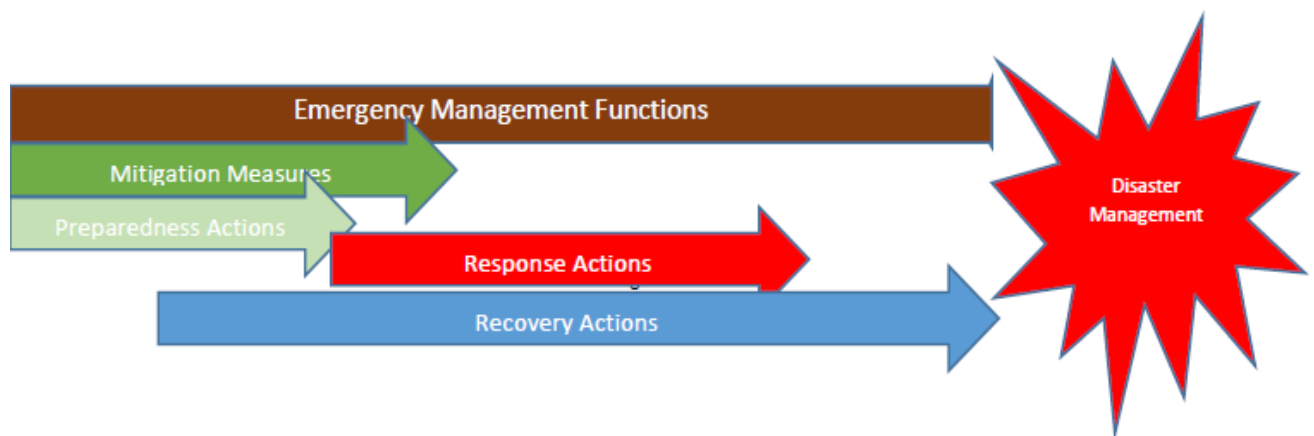


Figure 2. Disaster management functions

Government's Relief and Rehabilitation Commission at all levels – National, State, and County levels must step up their functions to include adequate planning, mobilizing all actors to regularly identify priority risks and work out a unified emergency operation plan in which communities are part and parcel of the planning process. Structural actions are needed at the community level through creation of community disaster management committees who will help communities, local authorities, and the population at large to ease actions towards community perception of disasters. NGOs have to develop the capacities of the community disaster management committees, community-based organizations and other groups on disaster management. Even though communities in Lakes State are more resilient to shocks of varied disasters – both manmade and natural, it is worth noting that there are times when their coping strategies could not bear, a situation of '*shocks aftershocks and shocks upon shocks*'. These situations were seen in the case of IDPs who were multiply displaced and affected by multiple catastrophes, completely distracting their capabilities and even those of the host communities.

To restore the coping strategies and resiliency of these communities, carefully planned recovery activities are required and chief in those recovery actions is community participation.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, communities' support to each other during period of shocks was found critical in the three cases of emergencies where support was provided in the form of sharing food, sharing of health facilities, sharing of water points, sharing of schools, provision of temporal shelter for displaced people. This conforms with the social network theory which the in traditional Lakes State, communities have long history of ties and a communal tradition of sharing. Besides, the beneficiaries targeting by aid workers which transcend to include hosting communities was cornerstone in helping hosting communities to cope even after their limited resources have been exhausted by the people they have accommodated. It also helps in maintaining peaceful co-existence among the IDPs and the hosts. Chief in the efforts to managing disasters is also formation of community disaster management committees and developing their capacities to identify and mitigate inherent risks of hazards in their communities.

Community's involvement in emergency management function is non-existent as the function is overly top-down. This paper recommends participation of communities in all the functions of emergency management to inculcate some level of ownership in managing their affairs. To enhance community resilience, actors should ensure: strengthening of social and cultural networks pre-disaster and establish pre-disaster relationships with nontraditional partners in disaster preparedness and response activities, to promote social re-engagement activities post-disaster. Such groups include faith-based organizations, non-governmental social support organizations, family and child advocacy organizations, youths' groups, and Gelweng/Titweng groups, integrate key capabilities into disaster planning, such as economic development, social capital, community competence, and information and communications and enlist community members in planning at all levels, developing a range of communications tools appropriate for the community's emergency specific literacy and cultural diversity, leveraging of diverse resources of communities through public-private sector collaborations and partnerships, address the psychological health of a community, specifically by fostering adaptive coping responses to adversity, develop and implement community-level public education plans detailing how individuals, families, and households prepare for incidents, highlighting information for and about at-risk individuals.

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