

Transition towards Recovery and Development, its Implication on the Cluster System in Kitgum

Background / Rationale

As the peace situation in Northern Uganda started to stabilize, people have left the IDP camps and went back to their areas of origin. Unofficial reports coming from UNHCR and other partners pegged the rate of return to around 60-80% with some former IDPs staying in transit camps while others have completely returned to their areas of origin. This development underscores the end of the humanitarian phase in northern Uganda and ushers the transition towards recovery and development.

This reality is further evidenced by the shrinking and scaling down of operations of the humanitarian agencies and partners that once had full scale interventions in the district and in the sub-region as a whole. At the national level, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) has recommended for the cluster system to be reviewed and look at possibilities to merge, modify or close the different clusters which operates in the country.

Recovery and Development Challenges

The imminent end of the humanitarian phase in the district however does not take away the challenges that the district and its people are being confronted with. The food scarcity both in camps and in the areas of return brought about by the delay in the coming of the rains in April, the lack of basic social facilities and services in the areas of return and the low capacity of the returning population to start up with agricultural and livelihood activities are just some of the concerns that need to be addressed by the different stakeholders in the district. There is also a challenge with regard to the capacity of the local structures to be able to tackle much of the issues and challenges which straddles both humanitarian and recovery needs of the population.

District Government to take the Lead

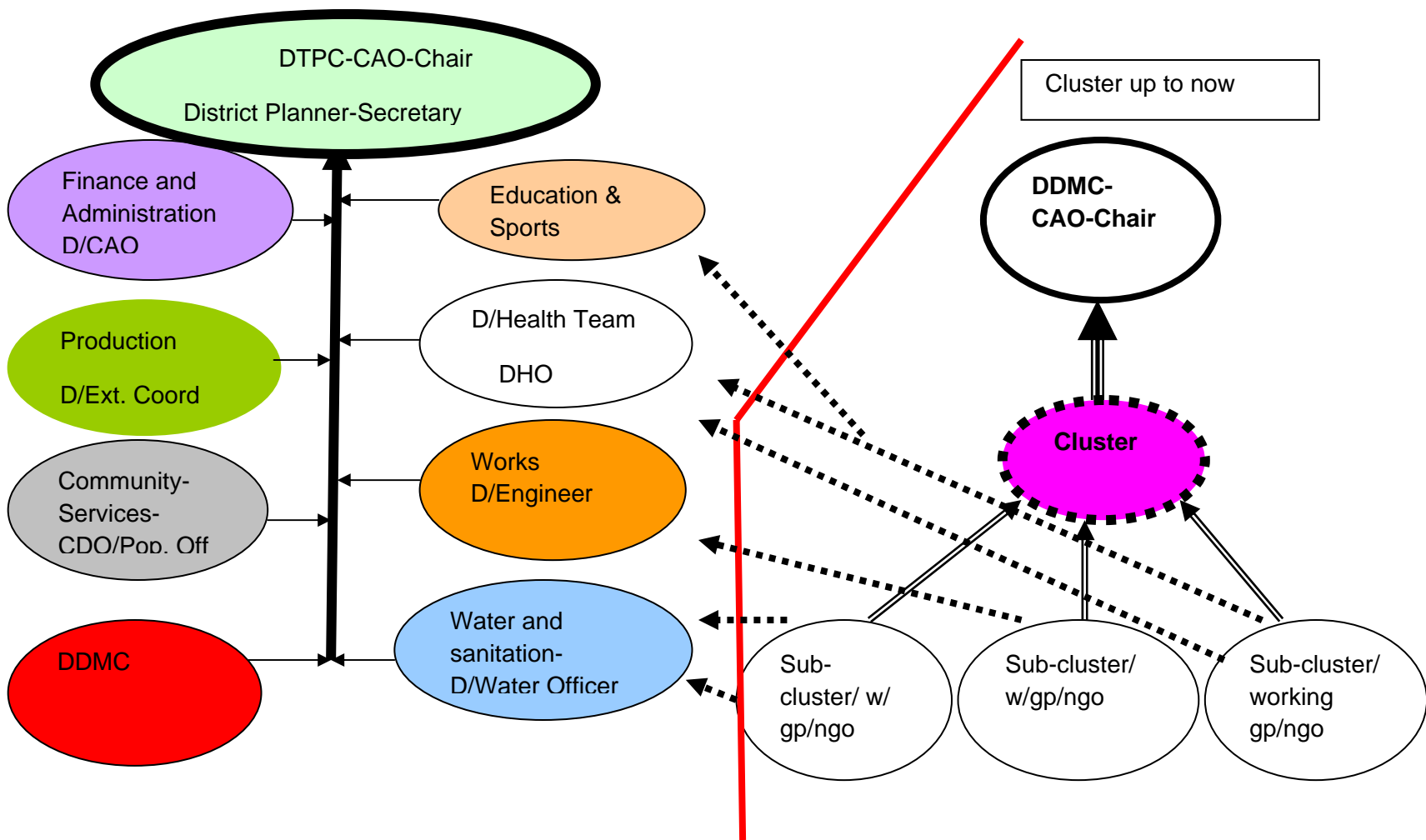
In this transition time from humanitarian phase to recovery and development, a credible stakeholder should take the lead not just in coordinating the efforts and interventions of partners but moreso in providing guidance and direction on how the district can best respond to the different challenges that it is confronted with. This early in the transition process it is important for the district government to take the lead. It has the inherent mandate to do so. It also has the necessary structures and the human and technical capacities to be able to deliver.

The humanitarian / emergency phase had challenges which were beyond the capacities of the districts and national government to respond to and therefore, different agencies and partners played key roles in providing necessary resources and guidance. The transition towards recovery and development would also have a corresponding transition in the roles of the stakeholders. Agencies and partners should start to settle toward a supporting role to the local

government structures which should start to take the rein and lead the recovery and development processes.

Transition

While it is true that the district local government unit has the necessary structure and resources to effectively take the lead in the recovery and development processes, a proper transition time should be allowed for the district to fully take on the lead role. Cluster lead agencies and other partners should provide a period of 'hand-holding' for their district counterparts for the later to fully absorb their roles and finally take off. The remaining semester (July – December) of the year is an ideal period for such transition. The cluster system will end in September but most of the agencies and partners would still be in the district until December. This will give them the needed time to provide the necessary technical support to the corresponding district departments.



Education Sector:

This is chaired by District Education Officer (DEO) to include sector heads of inspectorate, administration, personnel, sports, guides and scouts, and include vocational training programmes, as well as any education-related workplan activities. NGOs and agencies currently having such education-related activities will attend this sector, present their workplans for technical verification, and harmonization with District Development Plan (DDP). The DEO will report to the District Technical Committee on all matters discussed at the technical sector meeting. The sector may meet once every two months, but key challenge is maintaining the tempo and gust set up by education cluster in order to enhance participation of partners. UNICEF will play a big role in mentoring this committee.

District Health Team:

This will be chaired by District Health Officer (DHO), and will be comprised by the key health Officers-Health education, Inspectorate, heads of hospitals and major health centres, entomologists and vector controllers, Health Visitors and Senior Nursing Officers as well as MIS officers. All NGOs and agencies with health –related programmes and projects will attend this meeting and present their workplans and progress reports in this committee for technical verification and harmonization with District and national Health plans and standards. Any emerging issues will be technically discussed and appropriate recommendations made to District Administration and/or Council Committee responsible for health. Committee can co-opt any officer deemed necessary on any given matter. Committee may meet monthly or even more frequent, given the dynamics of health scenario. WHO and UNFPA will surely have big roles to play here, with WFP nearby.

Works and Engineering

Chaired by the District Engineer, committee will comprise all sector heads dealing with roads, housing, energy, transport, mechanical matters, including geography and land surveys and physical planning of the district. All NGOs and partners with programmes and projects/activities that fall under the work and engineering realm will present them to this committee for technical verification, harmonization with District plans, advice on national and local standards and costing, as well as relevant procurement processes. At the implementation stage, such activities/projects will be technically supervised and monitored under the auspices of this committee. The Committee/its relevant officers will give implementation guidelines, and issue inspection reports on quality of work done/not done and recommend appropriate courses of action. Committee may meet once in two months, or as the situation may demand, especially in emergencies. UNDP will be close to this Committee.

Water and Sanitation Technical Committee:

Chaired by the District Water officer, the committee will comprise all sector heads within water department such as i/c boreholes, shallow wells, springs and open waters and rivers, as well as piped water providers. It will also include environment officers as water and environment are very close components. Any NGOs and partners with projects/programme activities related to provision of water will present such workplans and progress reports to this committee for technical guidance and harmonization with District and national plans. In initiating any such programmes, the technical Committee through relevant sector officials will supervise and monitor the progress and report to appropriate organs of District administration. Again UNICEF and related partners will be deeply involved here.

Production sector Technical Committee:

This committee will be chaired by the District production Coordinator, this committee comprises of Officers in charge of agriculture, veterinary, entomology, fisheries, trade development, bee-keeping, forestry, natural resources, cooperative societies, poultry, mushroom growing and beverages etc. It also includes artisanship and micro-finance. Any NGOs/CBOs or partners with programmes and projects related to production will present them to this committee for technical verification and harmonization with district plans and production practices, as well as monitor compliance with national policies and programmes. In the recovery phase, this should be one of the most robust Committees handling livelihoods- both agricultural and non-agricultural. UNDP, FAO and WFP and related partners will be heavily involved here.

Community Services Sector:

Chaired by Community Services Manager, this committee will be comprised of probation and welfare Officer, labour officer, child protection officer, human rights advocates, community legal aides, traditional authorities, religious (faith-based) groups and CBOs with community out-reaches. This also goes for programmes concerning OVCs, EVIs, the generally vulnerable such as aged, disabled, minorities. This also taps in groups and institutions that handle cases of abuse of human rights such as courts, community policing, population issues and community violence. Committee can meet every month as human rights issues are diverse and erupt any time. UNOHCHR and UNFPA will be the lead mentor here,

Governance/Leadership/Management Committee:

Chaired by the Deputy CAO, this committee will embrace programmes and projects that deal with leadership, elections to offices, general capacity building, compliance, community civic education, good governance principles and accountability, public policy. It will comprise of planners, election officers, trainers, information officer, and NGOs and partners with relevant programmes. It is envisaged this will be a back-stopping committee to the others. OCHA and UNDP will be involved with this Committee

District Disaster management Committee:

DDMCs are provided for under the Government Disaster policy, and are answerable to OPM vertically, but laterally to the District. As disaster becomes less pronounced, the committee also finds itself faced with some redundancy. It is thus suggested either it becomes one of the technical committees, retaining its' functions and keeping to monitor for signs of fresh disasters and setting up early warning systems, in addition to capacity-building for disaster, or alternatively, it could be merged with the Governance and Management committee above, still within the CAO's Office. Of course OCHA and UNDP will be closely involved in this transition process with DDMC.