South Sudan Emergency Response in Maban County, Upper Nile State: Mid-Term Review Summary

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Mid-Term Review Summary, January–August 2012

Refugees in Jamam camp queue up to receive buckets and soap as part of Oxfam's public health campaign to reduce the spread of diseases such as cholera, diarrhoea and Hepatitis E in the camp. Photo: Alun McDonald/Oxfam GB

Since becoming independent on 9 July 2011, South Sudan has faced many challenges. Poor harvests have led to severe food shortages, and there have been continuous conflicts across the border with Sudan. In September 2011, intense fighting broke out in the Blue Nile State of Sudan between the Sudan Armed Forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (North). Thousands of people fled the fighting, and over 30,000 refugees arrived in the camps in Jamam, a village in the remote Upper Nile State of South Sudan. Since November 2011, Oxfam and other humanitarian agencies have been responding to emergency needs of refugees displaced from Blue Nile.

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Introduction

The main focus of Oxfam's work was on delivering WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene) in the refugee camps of Jamam. By mid-July this included work in the new camp of Gendrassa, to which some of the population of Jamam were moved. Work with the host community in the area is ongoing.

Some emergency preparedness measures were in place in January 2012, but although Oxfam was able to respond well initially, work stalled after the first couple of months. On 24 February, Oxfam declared that the situation in Maban county was a category 2 humanitarian crisis[1] and that the programme should be 'scaled up' accordingly. By the time this review was carried out in early August, Oxfam was delivering a good quality programme that effectively met the needs of refugees and host communities. However, it took six months to reach this point, and there was a disparity between Oxfam's pace of change over this period and the increase from approximately 4,000 refugees in Jamam camp in the first week of January to over 30,000 by the end of the month.

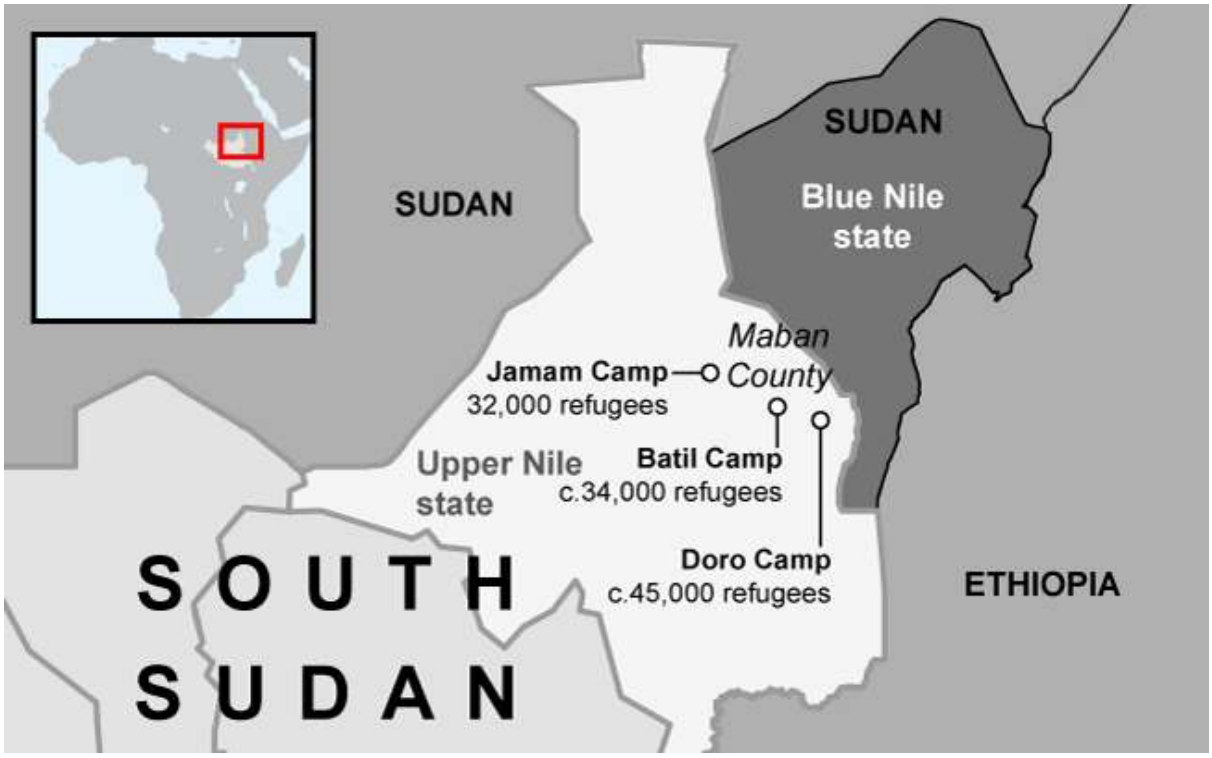

Fig 1: The location of refugee camps and numbers of refugees in Maban County, South Sudan., June/July 2012

Drawing on the 'Mid-Term Review – South Sudan Emergency Response in Maban County, Upper Nile state' by Richard Luff,[2] this summary report reviews the speed and quality of Oxfam's intervention in the first seven and a half months of 2012, and responds to questions raised by other humanitarian actors including UNHCR and MSF about its performance. The aim of this summary is to contribute to organisational learning on the implementation of humanitarian interventions. It acknowledges Oxfam's achievements, but also addresses challenges about the nature of its response. The summary draws together key points to aid understanding of the context of this programme, and critically examines what Oxfam and others could do differently to deliver rapid, good-quality emergency WASH programmes in

the future. It summarises findings from the independent review conducted by Richard Luff and makes recommendations for policy and practice that could have enhanced the Maban response, and will help to improve the quality of further programmes by Oxfam and other agencies working in complex, fragile environments.

Programme overview

All agencies in Maban were working in a challenging environment. The location is geographically remote, and infrastructure is almost non-existent. Programming is expensive, as some roads are not usable during rains, necessitating the use of air transport. At the beginning of January 2012, there were two self-settled sites, Jamam and Doro, with just under 33,000 refugees, 4,000 of whom were in Jamam. By the first week in February, the number of refugees in Jamam camp had risen to over 30,000. Oxfam was working in the area on long-term development issues prior to the response, and there were high expectations for its performance due to this existing presence.

Oxfam played a leading role in supplying water to Jamam camp, constructing latrines, and in hygiene promotion work. However, when the caseload began to expand rapidly it initially overwhelmed Oxfam's resources, while other agencies appeared able to scale up more quickly and effectively, leading to questions about Oxfam's technical expertise. The pace of Oxfam's scale-up was affected by several external factors beyond its control, including uncertainty over the location of refugee camps. There is not much groundwater in the area, and the water situation in Jamam is chronically fragile. Fundamental differences in principles and approaches emerged between Oxfam and other agencies, including MSF, over whether the best course of action was to find emergency water by exploiting all available sources at any cost, despite the risk of damaging their long-term sustainability.

Oxfam had consistently lobbied UNHCR to find more suitable alternative sites to which people could be moved from Jamam, but this process was delayed several times between January and June, which led to confusion for agencies working there. There was also a lack of coordination of WASH actors by UNHCR, and there was no culture of support and shared learning between agencies. Although health information is dispersed in weekly situation reports, consolidated data and analysis over the period was not available. This report will examine both the external factors and internal constraints that contributed to delays in Oxfam's response.

Timeline of key events

November 2011

- Oxfam was the first agency working on humanitarian water provision in Maban County.
- **11 November:** Oxfam withdrew all staff from Maban County for security reasons.
- **30 November:** Security was cleared for staff to return.

December 2011

- UNHCR registered 30,000 refugees in Doro and Jamam camps.
- Oxfam started hygiene promotion in Doro, following community consultation.
- Oxfam started drilling in Doro camp: four bores holes completed and handed over to MSF and IOM; five were rehabilitated. Water access in Doro up to > 15 litres per person per day.

January 2012

- Poor rains during the 2010–11 rainy seasons, and the closure of the South Sudan-Sudan border, made it harder and more expensive to bring goods and food items into South Sudan.
- Despite the peace agreement between South Sudan and Sudan, political, economic, and security issues were not resolved.
- The IPC (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification) warned of a humanitarian emergency in some areas of South Sudan, with an impending food crisis in March–April.
- As people started to arrive in Jamam, Oxfam handed over the Doro programme to IOM, but continued to support sanitation and hygiene response in Doro until February.
- Oxfam's response in RENK with returnees continued.
- Until March, the issue of unexploded ordnance in Jamam 1 affected work.
- Oxfam started its advocacy work on the need to move Jamam camp.

February 2012

- WFP established routes other than via Sudan for food transportation.
- Oxfam drew up plans for a combined public health and food security programme, and requested a significant injection of funding to help start a larger programme.
- A hydrogeological survey in Jamam was undertaken for Oxfam by an external firm; the interpretation of this work was subsequently questioned.
- MSF began drilling in Doro despite frequent lobbying from Oxfam to focus on Jamam as a priority.
- **10 February:** Oxfam presented its first position paper on site suitability to UNHCR, warning that the refugees must be moved as there was not enough water in Jamam.
- **24 February:** Oxfam declared the situation a category 2 humanitarian crisis.

March 2012

- Jamam camp had grown to over 34,000 people.
- Oxfam called an ‘emergency’ meeting at field level with UNHCR, ACTED, MSF, InterSOS, to discuss the fact that there might not be water in Jamam.
- UNHCR and ACTED (the agency responsible for camp management) were reluctant to move refugees, as they felt this should be on a voluntary basis only and that there was a risk of family groups being split.[3]
- Oxfam met with UNHCR to request use of project funds one month earlier than planned.
- Oxfam continued to truck in water at a rate of about 5–6 litres a day per person.
- Oxfam planned to upgrade the size of the water trucking fleet using bladder tanks, but these took several weeks to arrive.

April 2012

- Oxfam produced a second lobbying paper to advocate for moving refugees from Jamam.
- UNHCR agreed to relocation of refugees from Jamam and started assessing new sites. The decision was taken to move 15,000 refugees from Jamam to Batil.
- Latrine construction put on hold as Jamam camp was supposed to be moving, causing a delay of 2-3 weeks.
- Very light rains started, but haffirs (surface water points traditionally used by the host community) were being depleted at a rate that was potentially unsustainable for the duration of the dry season.
- MSF Belgium confirmed that they would hand over Jamam support to MSF Holland between May–June. By July, the formal transfer was complete.
- Oxfam built tanks and tap stands in Bantiko, 15km from Jamam town.
- **5 April:** Oxfam water supply to Jamam reached its lowest point in the month—6 litres per person per day. Monthly average was 6.4 litres per person per day.

May 2012

- Senior UNHCR WASH advisors visited Jamam.
- The UN agreed to relocate some of the refugees in Jamam out of areas at specific risk of flooding. The population of Jamam 0 was moved to Jamam 2.
- The work of building tanks and tap stands at Bantiko finished.
- An Oxfam drilling rig was sent to Batil and a second rig continued to drill around Jamam. UNHCR asked for the second Oxfam drilling rig to be moved to Batil.
- Oxfam’s dedicated sanitation team leader arrived. Latrine construction began in earnest.
- MSF made a statement about their concern over sanitation, and said they would initially build 200 latrines and work up to 500 units.
- Refugee population at El Fuj reaches 30,000.
- Pipeline 1 T45 from Oxfam borehole to Jamam constructed. Direct pumping starts on 19 May.
- Oxfam’s Regional Technical Coordinator surveyed surface water sources around Jamam, including haffirs.

June 2012

- Rain intensified throughout the month.
- Use of Water Yard commences, distributing water to three tanks across Jamam 1 and 2.
- The UN identified a suitable site for a new camp at Melut,[4] a town on the East Bank of the Nile. The intention was to relocate about 30,000 refugees from Jamam there.
- The majority of latrines in Jamam were now in place.
- Heavy rain causes major flooding in Jamam—two thirds of Jamam 1 flooded, increasing the urgency to move people. Some latrines collapsed or filled with rain.
- 10,000 El Fuj refugees arrived in Jamam Transit 3. Oxfam led the WASH response for new arrivals.
- **6 June:** The water supply to Jamam camp managed by Oxfam was 3.6 litres per day.
- **7 June:** Water supply drops in Jamam camp to 1.4 litres per day.
- **8 June:** Water supply increases to 7.7 litres per day, closer to the monthly average of 8.5 litres.

July 2012

- Bantiko rehabilitation completed.
- 10,000 El Fuj refugees in Jamam moved to Batil 1.
- Oxfam assessed Batil 2, but discounted it as it flooded during rains.
- Location for Batil 3 identified, renamed Gendrassa.
- UNHCR appointed Oxfam and IOM as agencies for WASH in Gendrassa.
- Oxfam WASH work started in Gendrassa and, on 13 July, Oxfam's drilling rigs were on site. Oxfam finished the first borehole in Gendrassa.
- Solidarities start building latrines in Gendrassa.
- Refugees started to be moved from Jamam to Gendrassa.
- There was a Hepatitis E outbreak in Jamam.[5]

Technical implementation issues

Insufficient water in Jamam camp

There is simply not very much groundwater in the Jamam area. The water situation is chronically fragile and one of the reasons that the region is usually so sparsely populated. Oxfam had strong concerns about the suitability of the site and, since February 2012, clearly and consistently lobbied UNHCR for movement of the camp to a more appropriate location. Oxfam's advocacy for early closure of Jamam was unsuccessful. However, the situation became more urgent as camps flooded during the rainy season and UNHCR began to move refugees to alternative camps, specifically Batil and Doro. This was halted because of a new influx of refugees; Gendrassa was opened as a result of Batil becoming full. Water shortages in Jamam camp remained acute, although above survival levels, until July.

Failure to find sustainable water sources

Lack of water sources meant that Oxfam needed to truck water into the camp at a rate of 5–6 litres per person per day. Oxfam concentrated on drilling for medium-depth (30–100m) groundwater, and tried to find new sources or rehabilitate a number of existing wells in the area. However, Oxfam's drilling rigs were in very poor condition due to years of inadequate maintenance and the efficiency of their use[6] was challenged by other agencies, who felt that Oxfam's drilling teams were working at a 'development pace' rather than an emergency one. However, the camps were on average 60km from the border and, due to high military presence, there were curfews in the area. Oxfam prioritised finding water, but focused on finding sustainable water sources, not on looking for shallow and potentially non-sustainable sources.

There was no real possibility of medium-depth ground water in the Jamam area, but it was not possible to say this for certain until the end of March. This may have delayed UNHCR in initiating the decongestion of the camp, although at this point UNHCR had not done enough contingency planning for an alternative site, despite lobbying from Oxfam. On the evidence of a hydrogeological survey conducted by an external firm in February, Oxfam teams kept drilling in the hope of finding medium-depth groundwater. Ultimately, this advice proved to be flawed. Oxfam felt there was shallow ground water available and told MSF this. MSF had well-jetting equipment and time to carry out the appropriate work to access this water; Oxfam left this task to them as it was not an established practice for them.

Seeking 'emergency' water sources

Oxfam only considered the potential of shallow water sources as a last resort, because of issues around security and sustainability. In late May, Oxfam did a survey of haffirs, but was reluctant to deplete these, particularly as water supply levels in Jamam camp were above survival levels. This stance by Oxfam was controversial, as MSF put the highest premium on water quantity well above 'survival levels', and thus expected all water sources to be exploited at whatever the short-term cost, i.e. the risk of creating conflict between refugee and host communities if water ran out. This situation highlights fundamental differences between Oxfam and MSF (who do not explicitly acknowledge or use Sphere minimum standards)[7] and UNHCR (who use their own standards). MSF thought that water quantity

supply level requirements should be above Sphere survival indicators[8] and wanted more immediate action to boost water supply from all available sources regardless of the possible consequences, including extraction from haffir water supply. In the March–June period, Oxfam came under strong pressure to look more widely for water solutions, and tensions between the agencies ran very high. According to MSF's Essential WASH Requirements for Camps 2009, 15–20 litres per day should be supplied as soon as possible, rising from 3–5 litres per day after the 'first few days'. As supply in Jamam remained low for a considerable period of time—certainly beyond the first few days—this may have been a key driver for MSF's criticism of Oxfam and its move to become more actively involved in water supply.

Addressing the water shortage

Oxfam was ultimately unable to deal with a possible critical water shortage, while MSF succeeding in finding 'emergency' water. However, Oxfam's view was that if the water found was not sustainable, agencies were putting both refugees and host communities at risk by locating them in such areas. In February, MSF Belgium jetted wells[9] near two haffirs in two locations based on information from Oxfam. Subsequently, MSF Holland used remote techniques and pilot shallow-well drilling in identified locations that enabled them to drill four productive shallow wells (15–24m) in one location and others in a second location. While these shallow wells may be considered non-sustainable water sources, they supplied significant quantities of water to Jamam. From 30 July–13 August 2012, the MSF shallow wells were providing around 37 per cent of the camp's daily water supply.

There were very different groundwater conditions and potential in Jamam and Doro, making direct comparison of limited value. However, at the end of July 2012, refugees in Doro were being provided with an average of 13 litres per day, while those in Jamam were receiving 7.7 litres.

Water quality and distribution

Oxfam's main priority was to find sufficient quantities of water to meet the needs of people living in Jamam. Achieving the right standards for water quality and water accessibility—i.e. the extent to which the piped water tap stands reached into the camps—came after this. In January, Oxfam used Emergency Preparedness and Response equipment to build water systems in Jamam, but progress in extending water distribution systems to reach most parts of the refugee population was hampered by a lack of funds and equipment until mid-April. In addition, there was a lack of forward planning to ensure that the right water equipment was ordered as funds became available. It took until the end of July to get water collection distances mostly within the Sphere indicator for maximum walking distance. As well as insufficient funds and planning, there was ongoing uncertainty about whether Jamam would be moved and also organised movements of populations within Jamam itself. In mid-August, the arrival of more water equipment from Oxfam allowed the further extension of water distribution systems in Jamam.

Achieving systematic and quality-controlled water chlorination took time to accomplish. By July, Oxfam had introduced more systematic chlorine residual monitoring and, by this point, 100 per cent of household samples showed some chlorine residual.

Building latrines in refugee camps

Oxfam did not build enough latrines in Jamam between March and May to meet the needs of the population. By June, the pace of Oxfam's work had increased, following the arrival of the dedicated Oxfam sanitation team leader and more material resources. The construction rate for June was nearly double that of May, with 1,006 new latrines (stances) constructed.

Jamam refugee camp (including Jamam 1, Jamam 2, and Jamam transit 2) evolved in a very unpredictable fashion, and the agencies operating there arguably faced the most difficult working environment of all the camps. In its role as camp manager, ACTED encouraged the spontaneous settlement of refugees without sufficient discussion of the implications for service provision. In addition, uncertainty about the proposed relocation of Jamam camp caused latrine construction to be put on hold for 2–3 weeks in April, as it was thought at that time that the camp would move. In January and February 2012, Oxfam's Emergency Preparedness and Response team mobilised the community to voluntarily build 1,700 latrines using their stocks of materials. Progress stalled from March until May because the stocks ran out and there were insufficient funds to replenish them; thus, in April, only 259 latrines were built. Also, the method of building latrines had switched from voluntary self-build in the more developmental phase to cash-for-work construction by refugees and some host community workers/contractors.

The environment in Doro camp was more organised and predictable than in Jamam. By the end of July 2011, IOM had achieved a ratio of one latrine per 30 refugees in Doro for nearly 41,000 refugees; in Jamam, Oxfam had built one latrine per 41 refugees for around 30,000 refugees. These figures may not offer a true picture of Oxfam's achievement, as they do not reflect levels of latrine use nor the number of latrines that Oxfam had to build due to changes in Jamam's layout. However, although work in Jamam camp was less predictable than in Doro, the figures suggest that IOM were able to overcome some obstacles that Oxfam had found difficult.

Quality of latrines provided

There were differing views about the effectiveness of Oxfam's latrine-lining approach and whether trial pits should have been dug. There are no easy solutions and it is not the purpose of this report to resolve this technical debate. Oxfam fully lined the 3 metre-deep pit of the six-stance trench latrines with corrugated sheets to prevent pit collapse. This was based on Oxfam's own technical advice, but proved to be unnecessary and expensive due to the use of costly material, and the decision was challenged by UNHCR. Oxfam changed its approach to lining just the top section or building unlined pits, but these filled up quickly. This presented unanticipated decommissioning problems, which UNHCR felt that Oxfam was slow to solve. In June, Oxfam latrines were collapsing and filling with rain, and needed to be rebuilt. There were requests from the communities for Oxfam to add roofs to stop pits filling up with rain, and later latrines were built on an upgraded design.

Because of concerns about the rate of construction, MSF Holland committed to build 500 latrines in Jamam camp. However, they were faced with more operational challenges than anticipated, and were able to build only 67 first-phase latrine stances. In light of this, constraints faced by Oxfam can now be seen as more significant than had originally been understood by some actors.

WASH Activities: Hygiene promotion, hygiene items, and accountability

Oxfam's hygiene promotion work was established as part of the Emergency Preparedness and Response project at the start of January 2012. Oxfam took the lead in hygiene promotion work, notably through stocking and early distribution of soap, cloth for menstrual hygiene and plastic sheeting for bathing cubicles, which were quickly delivered to refugees. Although there were higher rates of diarrhoea in Jamam than in Doro from March–July, rates subsequently decreased to a more stable level, and Oxfam's work to support hygiene practice appears to have contributed to this and to preventing cholera outbreaks in the camp. Overall, good hygiene practices were evident in the camps, and there were high levels of participation by beneficiaries in hygiene promotion activities. Women's knowledge of hand washing at critical times was generally good, and their involvement and influence through water committees was very strong. Some communities had well-maintained latrines, although this and hand-washing knowledge varied across communities, which may suggest the need for more targeted approaches. The threat of cholera was followed by an outbreak of Hepatitis E and, in response to reduced uptake of hand washing at the communal latrine facilities, household-level hand washing was promoted.

Rapidity of Oxfam's response

Decision-making process around the emergency categorisation and scale up

The decision to upgrade the situation to a category 2 humanitarian crisis in response to the situation in Maban County was based on the wider conflict and displacement, the possibility of returnees, and the food insecurity that Sudan and South Sudan were facing. The fact that this decision was made by the Regional Centre, rather than at the country level, led to the country programme feeling disempowered. However, this decision unlocked additional organisational resources for the programme.

Funding

The critical constraint upon this programme until the end of March was the lack of funding. This restricted all action for two to three months in early 2012, when secured funding to deal with the expanded caseload rose from $180,000 in March to $2.7 million in April.

Oxfam did not ensure that it had the necessary capacity and experience in dealing with emergency donors and working at pace to be able to quickly acquire the scale-up funding. The active involvement of the Regional Funding Officer and the recruitment of an experienced International Funding Officer towards the end of May meant that secured funding commitments increased considerably from this point.

Logistics

In early January, key assets such as vehicles and radios were in very poor condition. Oxfam's ability to scale-up depends on having the transportation to move staff around. In environments like South Sudan, car hire for remote locations is not feasible for reasons of safety and cost. The poor condition of vehicles severely hampered work progress; again, the lack of funding was a major limitation, as new vehicles could not be ordered in March. After the funding issue was resolved, complications around vehicle importation arose. It took eight

weeks between placing an order for vehicles and their arrival in South Sudan. Once in country, six vehicles remained in Malakal for eight weeks. Similarly, radio and communications equipment that was ordered in February stayed in customs for a month. These delays were attributable to both internal problems and external constraints, but Oxfam's time to get customs clearance for vehicles was one of the slowest for agencies operating in this environment.

Human resources

Another critical limitation on Oxfam's ability to scale-up at pace once funds were mobilised was the lack of experienced staff. All of the senior management team were new to Oxfam South Sudan at the start of the year. Some programme staff, for example the Sanitation Team Leader, arrived in post in early June and only after this did progress of latrine construction pick up dramatically.

Staff turnover was high, and there were frequent changes in management structure. Recruitment processes were felt by staff members to have been overly complex, with high transaction costs. HR processes were not undertaken in a timely manner, which created a further major impediment to Oxfam's ability to scale-up rapidly between April and June 2012.

Cost

Maban County is among the most remote areas of South Sudan. During rains, the only way to deliver equipment is by plane or boat. This, combined with the high cost of fuel, the scarcity of materials caused by South Sudan's economic crisis, and the impact of the closure of the border with Sudan, increased the cost of the humanitarian response in Maban. Many necessary items (especially WASH materials) were not available in local markets and needed to be brought in from outside. The cost of doing so, by air or by water, was very high.

Conclusion

Although it was not until June that Oxfam really started to deliver at pace and was seen as a dynamic and responsive solution finder, it is important to note that Oxfam undertook a lot more work than the refugee caseload suggests, due to often changing demands and provision of support to other agencies. As well as being the lead agency in Jamam, Oxfam worked with IOM to identify water sources in Batil and worked with other agencies to identify water sources; on water trucking, storage and distribution; latrine construction; and hygiene promotion in Gendrassa.[10] However, effective scale-up requires preparedness plans and specifically the means to have people and materials on standby, or at least having quick access to them. Long-term commitment is needed to maintain key assets for response, and long-term investment is needed for building staff capacity. Programme strategies also need to be clear on scaling-down and exiting.

Factors that affected Oxfam's ability to scale-up quickly enough on emergency WASH are as follows:

- The Oxfam team had limited capacity, and there were delays in recruiting additional staff. This meant that Oxfam did not secure essential funds early enough in the process.
- Insufficient funding and inadequate contingency planning meant that the teams had very poor vehicles and communications equipment with which to work. This also prevented the ordering of further critical materials.
- Oxfam's drilling rigs were in very poor condition. Functionality was low and utilisation was not as high as it should have been, leading to Oxfam spending a long time trying to find medium-depth groundwater before confirming that there was none in the area.
- There was a lack of planning based on probable scenarios to ensure that more of the right water equipment was ordered as funds became available. When vehicles and equipment were ordered, mistakes were made regarding import procedures and it took a long time to process customs clearance and get them to the areas where they were needed.
- Decisions regarding scale-up and crisis categorisation were made by the Regional Centre, which led to the country programme feeling disempowered. There were concerns about connectivity to the rest of the country programme, particularly as the Upper Nile programme reported directly to the Deputy Regional Director.
- The exit strategy was undecided, which mean that related decisions could not be taken.

Learning points and recommendations

Oxfam has reviewed the learning from its experience in Jamam and implemented changes accordingly. This included increasing staff capacity following this review. UNHCR has accepted its bid to undertake much of the WASH work in Gendrassa, and Oxfam is now the lead agency there, supplying water, sanitation, and public health promotion. A process of self-assessment for disaster preparedness is currently underway as a means of gauging and then building in-country capacity, which will improve the pace and quality of future responses. This will lead to an organisational capacity building plan. In the meantime however, a 'rescue package' to improve the technical quality of our WASH work has been launched, including dedicated senior WASH staff in key countries such as South Sudan. Specific learning points and recommendations from Oxfam's work in Jamam camp from January 2012 are as follows. Responses from Oxfam to each recommendation are included below, in italics:

1. All agencies should be encouraged to document their WASH approaches and facilitate information exchange between themselves.

   Oxfam prepares programme strategy documents for all Category 1 and 2 responses. These explicitly record our primary approach to the provision of WASH.

2. Oxfam and MSF should have further discussion on the issues around which there have been disagreements and misunderstandings, including:

   - The extent to which MSF holds other agencies to account and conversely their accountability to others (as MSF assert that they are independent).
   - When it is appropriate to make public statements about another agency's perceived failure to deliver.
   - When agencies have different standards, which ones should be used to hold them accountable, e.g. with respect to water quantity.

   An initial discussion has been held between Oxfam and MSF Holland on the different approaches taken in Jamam. This has resulted in clearer mutual understanding on programme and communication issues. This conversation will be followed up around more generic issues.

3. When working on large-scale projects in which there is likely to be a need for high levels of restricted funds, Oxfam should ensure that senior experienced funding staff are available. Experienced staff must be available at national level to make decisions at key times.

   This recommendation has been accepted and it is likely that a funding Humanitarian Support Person will be recruited to be deployed to future crises.

4. There should be a review of the Regional Centre and Juba HR teams' recruitment processes, as these appear to be too complex and transactional for rapid scale-up.

   A self-assessment of the Horn and East and Central Africa's Regional Centre has been carried out ,and a follow-up study conducted to identify specific shortcomings in scale-up capacity. A plan is being developed to follow up the specific recommendations from these processes. The South Sudan team has also carried out a self-assessment and it is likely that they will be one of ten focus countries for intense capacity-building support in the next two years.

5. There should be a fuller investigation into the customs formalities for vehicle clearance, how other agencies performed in this area, and Oxfam Juba's logistics capacity, processes, and performance.

   The Logistics Cluster has agreed to assist agencies in pushing for faster processes with the authorities, including for high-value commodities. All agencies confirm that they have experienced similar challenges to Oxfam. The logistics team in Juba has been replaced, and careful attention has been given to their induction. This seems to have improved performance significantly and progress is being monitored by the Regional Centre.

6. Oxfam should examine its experience of advocacy work on refugee camp location and its ability to assist in suitable alternative site identification to support UNHCR and the host government, as well as lobbying for the early closure of an unsuitable site.

   An advocacy Humanitarian Support Person has been deployed to Upper Nile to produce an advocacy paper on the refugee crisis which examines the response and makes proposals to UNHCR, the host government, donors and humanitarian NGOs. To inform this, Oxfam has consulted widely with UNHCR and national and local authorities as well as NGOs and refugee and host communities. A strategic planning process for South Sudan advocacy will be conducted in Autumn 2013, and this will include an impact review of the past year's work.

7. Oxfam teams need to have much fuller health information and use this to provide a WASH-based health analysis, inform programme design, and communicate health-related WASH problems to other actors.

   Field WASH teams continue to engage informally and in coordination fora with other agencies in discussions about disease trends. A review of the programme monitoring framework was carried out in July 2012 by a monitoring and evaluation Oxfam staff member from the Horn and East and Central Africa region. It included suggestions on the collection of health data and specific recommendations on the need for the regular collection of qualitative data on the communities' perceptions of disease trends. When triangulated with other monitoring data, e.g. on the delivery of WASH services, this will help Oxfam to review the effectiveness of our interventions, and when compared with health centre data in coordination fora, should contribute to improving the analysis of the response impact.

8. Oxfam should use its experience to implement feasibility studies for processes and designs for latrines, and ensure that they are of acceptable quality.

    In Oxfam's guidance for the Public Health Engineering team, the emergency teams are instructed to test the infiltration capacity of the soil by adding water to the pit. Teams are also instructed to look at soil stability to see whether pits need no, partial or full lining. They are also instructed to check whether there are slumping clays present in the soil, in which case extra support needs to be put into the pit. When estimating latrine life, a full beneficiary consultation is always conducted, as was the case in South Sudan. Oxfam will conduct additional training on these issues at the next Humanitarian Learning Forum, and re-releasing the current technical guidance on excreta disposal in emergencies.

9. Higher levels of investment and more professional support to drilling teams and equipment will be required in future for Oxfam to prove its technical competence in groundwater exploration and exploitation.

    We are now reiterating the guidance that, in all drilling programmes in which Oxfam uses its own rigs, there are suitably qualified drillers and staff to support the mechanical maintenance of the rigs, as well as the installation of submersible pumps. We have also already done one PHE training on well-jetting and plan to do another. We also now have our own Oxfam well-jetting kit, developed from the MSF kit.

10. Oxfam should develop its ability to find and exploit emergency groundwater. Oxfam also needs to improve its ability to judge the quality of hydro-geological advice from external professionals.

    This issue will be discussed at the next PHE Humanitarian Learning Forum in May 2013.

11. Oxfam should produce some overall camp water schematics to illustrate typical design and water point layouts, based on different refugee camp situations. These could be used to predict probable levels of service provision in relation to levels of programme funding. This could be used to ensure that the right water equipment is ordered in a timely fashion.

    New training and a new Technical Brief are being prepared to cover camp design. They will be completed by May 2013 and published on Oxfam's Policy and Practice website.

Notes

[1] The Oxfam classification of emergencies runs from 3 to 1, with 1 being the most severe. A category 2 crisis affects between 250,000 and 2 million people and is located in one country. A response requires moderate deployment of extra humanitarian staff from a region and HQ.

[2] Luff, R. (2012) *Mid-Term Review – South Sudan Emergency Response in Maban County, Upper Nile state*.

[3] UNHCR maintains that it did not want to move refugees, as it thought ground water could be found and that Oxfam should have looked for alternative sources.

[4] At the time of writing, the camp at Melut has not been approved.

[5] The timing of the consultant's visit precluded an in-depth analysis of the Hepatitis E outbreak, other than an acknowledgement in an endnote of the fact that it increased attention on WASH.

[6] Functionality was estimated by the amount of time/working days in each month that the rigs were potentially usable, and the time/working days each month rigs were actually used; Annex 5 of Luff, R. (2012) *Mid-Term Review – South Sudan Emergency Response in Maban County, Upper Nile state*.

[7] The Sphere Handbook is one of the most widely known and internationally recognised sets of common principles and universal minimum standards for the delivery of humanitarian response, see http://www.sphereproject.org/handbook/

[8] Ibid.

[9] Jetting wells is a technique that uses a jet of water to flush a pipe through loose soils into a shallow aquifer. It is used to drill boreholes in soft rock formations. The flexibility of the jetting technology means that it is a good option in the immediate aftermath of an emergency and is often used to clean groundwater sources on the banks of rivers. Its recharge that counts not rivers per se

[10] Annex 5 of Luff, R. (2012) *Mid-Term Review – South Sudan Emergency Response in Maban County, Upper Nile state*

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