

Key messages

Symposium on Managing the Transition from Humanitarian to Development Aid: East African Symposium on Aid Effectiveness and Health Systems Development

**August 15-16, 2018
Serena Hotel, Kampala-Uganda**



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INTRODUCTION

THE East African Symposium on Aid Effectiveness and Health Systems Development was held on August 15 and 16 at the Serena Hotel in Kampala-Uganda with the tag line: Managing the Transition from Humanitarian to Development Aid.

The theme was; *Aid and Aid Effectiveness in Post-Conflict settings: Transitioning from Humanitarian Assistance to Developing Capacity for Health Systems.*

Deliberations focused on: general financing for health; human resources for health; community livelihoods and how to manage the transition. Lessons were highlighted from the following areas;

❖ Transitions in the area of human resources;

- 1) From expert-hires to a stable and local workforce
- 2) From non-state provisions to government-led provisions
- 3) From targeted and well financed essential benefits to fairly diffuse entitlements.

❖ Transitions in the area of community livelihoods;

- 1) How communities survive during conflict and immediate post-conflict
- 2) How the transition from humanitarian support to post-conflict reality is managed
- 3) Voices and experiences of affected communities

❖ Transition and the burgeoning private sector;

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1) The mechanisms to harmonize services provided across and private sectors

2) Integration of the new growth of private providers into the national service delivery system

Below are the key messages from the deliberations

KEY MESSAGES

Importance of aid

- ❖ The region has challenges that continue to create crisis, yet most times, governments are not ready when conflicts emerge.
- ❖ Humanitarian needs continue to grow and their drivers are increasingly more complex in the setting of other vulnerabilities such as poverty, climate change, natural disasters and diseases outbreaks.

Challenges related to aid

It was noted that aid also involves several challenges which donors and recipients should seek to address.

These are:

- ❖ Aid has a bad side in that the money destabilizes the macro-economies of the recipient countries
- ❖ Plentiful aid may induce corruption
- ❖ It increases public consumption, and not investment
- ❖ It induces aid dependency, thus weakening a government's capacity to generate domestic resources, and undermines the democratic process
- ❖ Donors have put so many conditions on aid that it has reduced aid effectiveness.
- ❖ It is unpredictable in that funders can pull out any time, which creates



funding gaps with implications on service delivery.

❖ Aid agencies have a risk-averse nature and they pull out of a country once government partners make mistakes in accountability.

❖ Funders operate as if they are in stable states and insist on error-free accountability, which might not always be possible during and after conflict.

❖ During conflict, there is usually not enough evidence to direct aid actors on what to do. Data to is critical to support thinking and evaluate humanitarian assistance to inform robust plans and interventions. Therefore, it is important to build

In conflict, usually there isn't enough evidence to direct aid actors on what to do. So, it is important to build evidence to inform future programming

evidence to inform future programming and maximize the benefits. There is also need for capacity building in research.

❖ There are many actors on the ground, especially during the crisis phase, and it could be difficult to coordinate all of them and prevent duplication of services/ roles.

❖ The push for government-led systems is well appreciated, but in many cases, governments in conflicts don't play the desired leadership role. This is usually because there are many humanitarian actors and not so many of state machinery. Governments usually lack capacity to lead and coordinate activities, are often not facilitated, and sometimes the govt officials lack experience to

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coordinate the partners who are often better in all forms - technically and financially.

Aid must have impact

Aid, whether for humanitarian or development, is meant to produce impact. For aid to have impact the following must be ensured

- ❖ Conflict and post-conflict challenges require collective effort to identify locally-relevant solutions. There is need to address norms and practices that might have significant impact on the outcomes of the project.

- ❖ Aid givers should first understand countries well, know their actual needs and how they can be addressed so that responses to conflict and post-conflict settings are more

There is need to coordinate the plethora of actors to ensure that resources do not get wasted

appropriate to the needs of the communities.

- ❖ There is need to strengthen coordination of aid; both humanitarian and development aid programmes, so as to have more impact for both. Coordination between government and aid

agencies is key, but governments should take the lead.

- ❖ Different donors come with different interests. Therefore, there is need to coordinate the plethora of actors to ensure that resources channeled during crisis situations do not get wasted. Coordination will prevent over-investment in some areas, thus duplication of roles, and neglect in others.

- ❖ There is need for the right leadership (both on the side of



recipient countries and countries that give aid).

- ❖ There is need to ensure proper accountability.
- ❖ Where there is no legitimate government in place, key actors should consider decentralized planning, analysis and funding
- ❖ More resources and energies need to be put into reduction and prevention of conflicts and crises since they take a lot of resources.
- ❖ Starting to plan early is key in order to ensure aid effectiveness.
- ❖ People who are vulnerable need to be placed where they can access services.
- ❖ Every intervention has to be adaptive as time

Aid recipient countries should increase investments in infrastructure, health and education to reduce structural constraints

goes based on needs. Therefore, from time to time there is need to undertake a needs assessments to determine needs and act as required.

Aid recipient countries should

- ❖ Increase investments in infrastructure, health and education to reduce structural constraints.
- ❖ Build and strengthen local leadership capacity to achieve aid effectiveness.
- ❖ Implement governance reforms, especially with regard to improving the efficiency of public resource utilization controls (fight corruption, improve public expenditure).
- ❖ Improve fiduciary standards: sound accounting procedures, budget management capacity and



audit.

- ❖ Raise domestic financing, which is key in ensuring sustainability of services.

- ❖ Start to plan early in order to ensure aid effectiveness.

Decisions taken early can set direction for development.

Donors should

- ❖ Understand the specificity of individual countries - scaling up aid must take into account the constraints to growth in individual countries, including institutional, structural and policy constraints.

- ❖ Support accountability in domestic institutions.

- ❖ Make firm commitments and ensure predictable flows. They should disburse aid according to the previously agreed plan.

Donors should provide more aid through the budget in order to improve alignment with need of recipient countries

- ❖ Improve coordination and harmonization as uncoordinated and numerous donor demands contribute to aid ineffectiveness.

- ❖ Respect leadership of the country receiving aid.

- ❖ Work through existing structures, which will

enable the response to leave behind a system and ensure sustainability.

For example they should use the countries' own systems of budgeting, accountability and financial management and support their improvement so as to leave better governance structures.

- ❖ Develop exit strategy to stop aid dependency.

- ❖ Align their programmes to the priorities of the recipient countries and fit themselves in the development plans of the countries in order to

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build state capacity and systems. For instance, they should provide more aid through the budget, which will improve alignment with the needs of recipient countries; and ensure effective utilization of aid.

From aid to building systems

On the aspect of transitioning from humanitarian aid to developing capacity for health systems, issues discussed included the nature of funding, the role of non-state service providers and human resources for health. It was noted that:

Given the right conditions, aid can make a major difference in the development trajectory of a country

❖ Sometimes, governments are not willing to undertake projects when donors leave because they were not budgeted for.

❖ Sometimes, people may find the temporary arrangements in settlements better than

their everyday life where services are not available. Therefore, it is important to support local systems to transition from humanitarian aid to longer term development.

❖ Given the right conditions, aid can make a major difference in the development trajectory of a coun-



try. What is required are effective governments and institutions that use external resources to support development strategies over which they have complete ownership.

- ❖ Transition happens in phases, but, unfortunately, at the time of focusing on development, funding is usually low.

- ❖ The first phase of aid is humanitarian/relief stage, which usually has an influx of actors and funds intervening in a conflict situation. The transition to the next phase of reconstruction takes between six months to three years and features a dramatic drop in funds and resources. However, at this time, the community needs are on the rise. It takes a further 10 years for the

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development phase to take off, with intermittent levels of resources available for the huge task.

- ❖ While humanitarian aid focuses on saving life and providing the basics of life, once conflict ends, funders depart, leaving

communities struggling, without essential funding and sometimes human resources to sustain them. Therefore, there is need to explore opportunities to leverage the generous humanitarian-driven aid towards long-term development such as enhancing health systems in line with the universal health coverage goal. Aid needs to be as humanitarian as necessary and as developmental as possible.

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❖ Countries should plan early during the humanitarian phase, which involves a lot of money, to be able to increase access to services by those who need them long-term. Long-term development should be factored into the funding efforts injected during the humanitarian phase early enough. This way, even when the relief phase closes, the development phase continues with sustainable resources.

❖ Donors should identify how they can support implementing partner organisations and their workforce to better link relief, rehabilitation and development. Humanitarian agencies wishing to support infrastructure development should do so within the district development plans in order to ensure sustainability.

❖ Consider how resource distribution may support or hinder linkages between governments, humanitarian

Multi-year financing is a better model for longterm achievements and easier transition

and development actors.

❖ There is need for civic education and empowerment of communities from the ground. There is need to integrate livelihood interventions in programming, for example, refugees need to be empowered to meet some of their basic needs themselves. There should also be women economic empowerment to strengthen social networks.

Multi-year financing recommended

❖ The programme design should be such that the system can address both the emergency and transition to providing longterm needs of the communities. Therefore, multi-year financing, rather than short-term programmes, is a better model for longterm achievements and easier transition.

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Non-state service providers

The role of non-state service providers in building systems and ensuring sustainability cannot be underestimated. Private actors are invested in their communities where they deliver services.

❖ Therefore, there is need to promote greater partnerships, including funding, between government and private healthcare providers.

Governments should stop shunning private providers under the pretext that they are business-minded.

❖ Private/ non-state actors, too, need aid to stay afloat, which will also promote universal health coverage. The divide between private and government actors in receiving aid should not exist.

❖ Partnerships can also be nurtured by other institutions such as religious foundations, and military forces which have medical teams.

Government should stop shunning private providers under the pretext that they are business-minded

Human resources for healthy

During conflict and post-conflict, local capacity become overwhelmed, health workers often become a target and so they

run away or withdraw their services.

In addition to displacement of health workers, there is also a challenge of post-conflict migration of specialists to new areas, leaving systems to crumble.

Issues are made worse by the fact that there is usually a limited supply of qualified indigenous health workers. Subsequently, national systems may not cope with providing services.

Therefore, in order to achieve long-lasting sustainable systems, workforce shortages need to be handled with innovations. The following were

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recommended:

- ❖ Health workers need to be motivated in order to build resilience for them to work in conflict or post-conflict situations where they are needed most. This should be done by putting incentives in place, which should include ensuring their security.

- ❖ Improve financing and coverage to stabilize the workforce so that they continue to provide care

- ❖ Investing in a sustainable local workforce by ensuring continuous capacity building. To begin with, the local workforce can work alongside the technical support from humanitarian agencies to sharpen their skills.

- ❖ Building refugee workforce is important, especially where refugee communities are located in very

There is need to invest in a sustainable local workforce by ensuring continuous capacity building

remote areas where health workers are not available. In some societies, recruiting sons/daughters of the soil works better.

- ❖ Donors should implement models that plan for longer term financing

and employment (multi-year programming) because they lead to job security, and thus health workers will not look for jobs elsewhere.

- ❖ Plans need to be made early for governments to take over infrastructure and health workers.

- ❖ Health workers on the front line need to have their psychosocial needs addressed because they are heavily affected, which demoralizes them.

- ❖ There is a need to strengthen health systems before the crises so that they can handle situations of conflict.



Role of the community (bottom-up responses)

The last plenary session focused on the contributions made by communities and the related issues. The key messages included:

- ❖ Community-led approaches yield great results and, therefore, community needs should guide the aid response.
- ❖ Meaningful development is people-centered. When donors go into a community, they should first consider the real needs of the people and work in that line so as to achieve impact.
- ❖ Governments and aid agencies should recognize, acknowledge, document and show appreciation for the contributions made by the host communities towards the welfare of

Contributions made by host communities towards the welfare of refugees should be acknowledged and documented so that they are motivated to continue getting involved in refugee care

refugees. Not doing so could demoralize the host communities and they may stop providing care, which kills the bottom-up approach to refugee care. Ultimately, this also undermines the building of capacity to transition to self-reliance.

❖ Refugees and aid agencies should show respect for the norms and practices of host communities.

❖ Those who provide humanitarian and relief aid to the refugees should also provide services to members of the host communities because they are usually not better off than refugees. It greatly demoralizes host communities when refugees and their



The MP for Obongi County, in Moyo district in the West Nile region, Hassan Kaps Fungaroo, officiated over the closing ceremony. He urged governments and aid agencies to acknowledge the contributions of host communities to refugee welfare

children seem to prosper because they receive aid, while for them who welcomed them in their communities are not benefiting in any way.

- ❖ Policy makers should to be advocates of host communities so that they can be planned for by aid agencies and they also benefit from interventions implemented for refugees.

Mental health in communities

Mental health is an important aspect of conflict and post-conflict situations because people go through a lot of trauma that affects them.

- ❖ Issues to do with mental health such substance abuse, clinical depression, post-traumatic stress

In conflict situations, men should be encouraged to seek mental health services

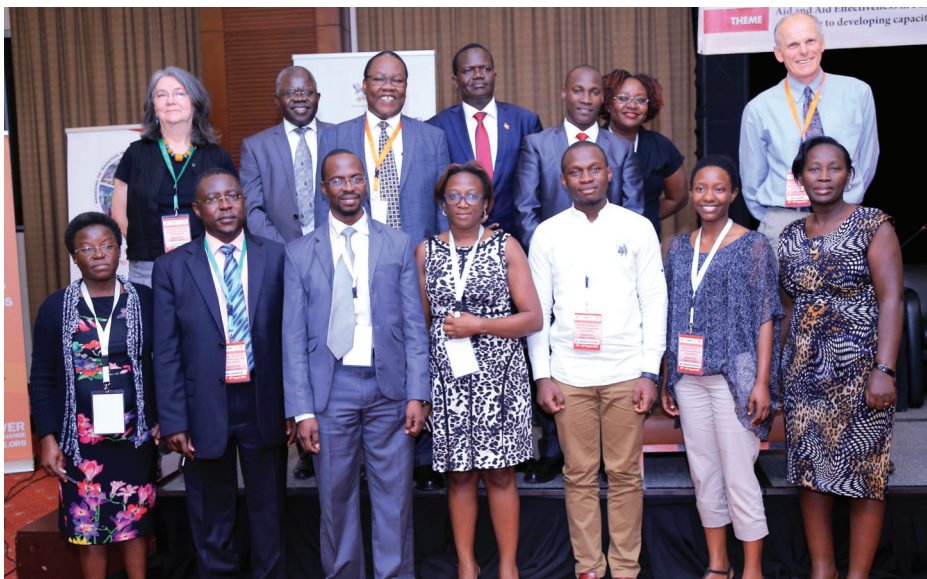
disorder and suicide, in addition to gender dynamics should not be ignored in conflict and post-conflict. ❖ Undiagnosed and untreated mental conditions have been known to drive men to

act aggressively towards the women and children, and also increases interpersonal conflict in the settlements.

- ❖ There is need to scale up mental health services to a point where low-income earners can access them.

- ❖ Train communities and empower them to identify cases of mental health and refer them to the health centres. That way they are able to better link communities to treatment

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Organizers of the symposium with MP Hassan Kaps Fungaroo (centre back row). He recommended that the activities should have included a field tour to a post-conflict area

facilities.

- ❖ Using the community structures helps for mental health patients to be reached easily because they are usually seen from the context of their communities or families.
- ❖ Men should be encouraged to seek mental health services. Deliberate efforts should be made to reach men by creating psychosocial health interventions that suit them.

Closing remarks

- ❖ It was noted that although many discussions had been heavy on the Ugandan perspective, almost everything discussed had global

significance because no situation is peculiar to Uganda.

- ❖ Participants were urged to match the high quality dialogue with transformation in the field.
- ❖ Participants were urged to use evidence and knowledge to inform and influence policy.
- ❖ It was emphasized that health issues in fragile states need to be addressed and if not addressed, we shall not achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. This is because for several issues occur in conflict situations. For example, more than a third of maternal deaths occur in fragile situations.



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