The long road home

Opportunities and obstacles to the reintegration of IDPs & refugees returning to Southern Sudan & the Three Areas
The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed in Jan 2005, ended more than 2 decades of war.

Heralded a time of great opportunity, but also uncertainty.

New government formed in S Sudan out of rebel movement (SPLM/A) – facing enormous challenges to establish itself and reverse years of underdevelopment.

Three Areas: uneasy power-sharing between SPLM & NCP. Root causes of conflict still not addressed.

CPA remains a very fragile agreement. To have held for 3 years a major achievement. Alternatives horrendous to contemplate – the stakes are high.
The north-south civil war had displaced around 4 million, esp. to the north.

Post CPA – opportunity for IDPs to ‘freely choose’ where to live.

Huge social and economic impact of around 2 million people resettling in the south, in impoverished post-war environment.

Yet successful return & reintegration is critical to the future of the CPA – re. pace of return, process of reintegration and support provided.

NB additional political incentive to encourage return – 2008 census.
Background to this study

- Initiated by UNMIS, to inform future strategic planning on how to support return & reintegration
- Phase 1 (May 2007) – focused on 2 states with high levels of return – Southern Kordofan & Northern Bahr El Ghazal
- Phase 2 (Feb 2008) – focused on 2 areas with particular issues: Juba town (urban reintegration), Jonglei (conflict issues)
- Methodologically: holistic approach based on ‘Adapted Livelihoods Framework’
The return process

• Push and pull factors eg wretched conditions in Khartoum, desire to be back home
• Different drivers according to socio-economic status
• Pace of return increasing, with a surge in 2007 and 2008
• Risk-averse return strategies eg splitting families between locations, staged return
• Most return is spontaneous. Major organised return process, but assisting barely 2% of returnees
• Some villages more than doubled in size with returnees
Implications for assistance to return

- Organised return – logistically demanding. Need to find more efficient ways of supporting return eg voucher system

- Has overshadowed monitoring and support to reintegration – yet this is crucial to the success of the process
Assistance policies and structures

- Return & reintegration policy (GNU, UN etc) states commitment to return IDPs only to secure areas and to provide protection – not really happening
- Lack of strategic framework: ‘the pressure of returnees once they are back is a silent issue’
- Aid agencies struggling to shift out of the humanitarian paradigm
- Pooled funding mechanisms - inadequate instruments for recovery assistance in Sudan – typical of post-peace agreement contexts?
- Generally inadequate support to the reintegration process at community level – burden falls on host communities
- But where there have been recovery interventions, communities reporting their positive impact – some models of good practice to build upon
Implications for ongoing assistance to reintegration

- Security issues have to be addressed as a matter of priority
- Reintegration support must be part of an area-based recovery strategy
- Addressing land issues should be a central component, treated as a priority
- The role of local government is key to successful reintegration. Demands rapid progress in establishing and/or reforming local government structures
- Adequate access to services contributes to successful reintegration
- The ‘usual’ pooled funding structures post-peace agreement need to be reformed
- Have we created overly complicated institutional structures?