

HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: SECTOR CHARACTERISTICS AND THE POTENTIAL FOR COORDINATION

Bjørn Ivar Kruke¹ and Odd Einar Olsen²

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Abstract:

The purpose of this paper is to examine the concept of coordination in complex emergencies and to identify humanitarian sector features that may influence on the coordination potentials. The paper is part of a project studying emergency management networks. Relief work and measures to reduce hazards in complex emergencies has to rely on cooperation between independent organisations with different mandates, resources and objectives. Thus, cross-sector coordination calls for alternative strategies because the well-known approach relying on “command, control and communication” has little legitimacy. Coordination problems in complex emergencies are often identified as organisational problems within the coordinating body or the organisations involved. This paper focuses on characteristics within the different humanitarian sectors in order to explain divergence in coordination success.

Empirical data was collected during the spring of 2005 in Kalma IDP Camp in Darfur. Preliminary findings indicate that different humanitarian sector features, such as degree of standardisation and expertise, resource demand and cross-sector dependency, may influence the sectors coordination dispositions. High degree of standardisation and expertise seems, together with resource demand, to make coordination an easier exercise. High degree of standardisation, expert and resource demand seems to make adaptation to emergent changes difficult. Acute emergency situations call for increased intra- and inter-sectoral networking, including information exchange and collective planning in order to utilize existing resources in a resilient manner.

Introduction

A complex emergency may be defined as “*a humanitarian crisis in a country, region or society where there is total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict and which requires an international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency and/ or the ongoing United Nations country program*” (IASC 1994). The conflicts referred to in the definition could cause – or has been caused by - problems concerning food insecurity, poor health conditions, a collapse in infrastructure and economic life, environmental problems, violence

¹ Department of Media, Culture and Social Sciences, University of Stavanger, Norway
E-mail: bjorn.i.kruke@uis.no

² Department of Media, Culture and Social Sciences, University of Stavanger, Norway
RF-Rogaland Research, Stavanger Norway, E-mail: oddeinar.olsen@uis.no



against humanity, refugees and IDPs³ trying to escape the conflict areas and harassments from fighting groups. In the worst cases, this could lead to a breakdown in state or local authorities. In order to reduce human suffering and to improve the security situation, the only strategy that has proved any kind of efficiency is interventions from external actors. Most often, the security situation is poor both for the local population and for the humanitarian relief community.

Complex emergencies are by definition very difficult to handle for one single organisation or entity. The massive scale and the complex interdependencies between different problems call for contributions from many different organisations possessing different capacities (Kruke and Olsen 2005). According to the humanitarian principles for relief work everybody has the right to receive, but also to give humanitarian aid. Relief work has become big business and the number of international relief organisations has grown significantly (from 900 to about 30.000 since the 1970s). Due to this situation, reliable humanitarian operations in complex emergencies need to be organised in a networking structure (Kruke and Olsen 2005). Thus, coordination of organisations attracted by complex emergencies has appeared at the top of the humanitarian agenda. Based on a review of the literature, Kruke and Olsen (2005) identified the most challenging problems in relief coordination;

- Nobody has got the authority to instruct others,
- Relief organisations have different mandates, agendas and resources,
- The competition among them direct their attention away from collective action and reduce the sharing of information,
- Politics among donors and relief organisations reduce the potential for efficient cooperation between the organisations.

In most complex emergencies, the relief work is organised as sector based clusters of organisations trying to coordinate their efforts. During the last year, the UN has tried to strengthen overall coordination in humanitarian emergencies by launching the cluster approach to coordination (OCHA 2006). Within this strategy, a cluster is a group of specialised organisations with a designated lead agency within 9 defined humanitarian areas⁴. The strategy aims to improve the effectiveness of the humanitarian response capacity and to define roles and responsibilities within future operations. The clusters should be responsible for assessments, capacity building, preparedness, advocacy, resource mobilisation, identify gaps, predictable action, and coordination with other clusters.

Almost all literature has focused on problems concerning organisational structures, politics and competition as main factors hampering coordination. At the same time, different activities seemingly have different potentials for coordination. Thus, it is reasonable to ask if there are any inherent characteristics within humanitarian sectors affecting the coordination potentials? The purpose of this paper is to examine the concept of coordination in complex emergencies and to identify sector characteristics that may influence on the coordination potentials.

³ Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs): Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, or other natural or human-made disasters⁷ and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border (OCHA 1999:6)

⁴ The sectors are (lead agency in brackets): Water & sanitation (UNICEF), nutrition (UNICEF), health WHO), emergency shelter (UNHCR, IFRC – and NRC), service provision telecom (OCHA and others), service provision logistics (WFP and others), camp coordination (UNHCR, IOM), early recovery (UNDP), protection (UNHCR and others).

Theoretical framework: Coordination challenges in complex emergencies

Coordination may be defined as *“the systematic use of policy instruments to deliver humanitarian assistance in a cohesive and effective manner. Such instruments include strategic planning, gathering data and managing information, mobilising resources and ensuring accountability, orchestrating a functional division of labour, negotiating and maintaining a serviceable framework with host political authorities and providing leadership”* (Minear et.al. 1992:3). The definition focuses on effectiveness based on rational decisions and participation among many actors. But this might not always be the case. Bernt Bernander, a former Coordinator of UN Humanitarian Assistance, puts it this way: *“Everybody wants to coordinate and nobody wants to be coordinated”* (Minear et.al. 1992:7).

Coordination in complex emergencies has in most cases to build on a mix between resiliency and anticipation (Kruke & Olsen 2005), whereas the success depends on the coordinated response capacity (Adinolfi et.al. 2005). Wildavsky defines resilience as *“the capacity to cope with unanticipated dangers after they have become manifest”* (1991:77) whereas anticipation is defined as *“prediction and prevention of potential dangers before damage is done”* (Wildavsky, 1991:77). Resiliency implies flexibility in organisations and management and diversity in resources and resource bases, whereas anticipation is based on planning and training (Kruke and Olsen 2005).

Even though emergency areas normally have inadequate amount of resources and specific expertise, available diversity in several humanitarian sectors implies the possibility for better utilization of available resources and expertise through increased coordination. Diversity, or several service providers within some sectors, entails multiple coverage, duplication and overlap (redundancy) (Rochlin *et al.*, 1987) and thereby also *resource slack* (Schulman 1993) in personnel and desired resources not yet utilized in ongoing humanitarian projects.

Whenever multiple activities share some limited resources (e.g., money, storage space, or time), a resource allocation process is needed to manage the interdependencies among the different activities and actors (Malone and Crowston 1994). But, *even though most humanitarian organisations share a vague vision about why they are present in the emergency area, no formally accepted superior management or coordinating function normally exists. As a consequence, reliability in management of complex emergencies relies in most cases on coordination between more or less autonomous organisations* (Kruke and Olsen 2005:278).

Effective interagency cooperation and coordination is required to cope with increased systems complexity through anticipation of risk and also to respond in a resilient manner (Comfort et.al. 2001). This can be obtained by forming organisational networks defined as *“any collection of actors ($N \geq 2$) that pursue repeated, enduring exchange relations with one another and, at the same time, lack a legitimate organizational authority to arbitrate and resolve disputes that may arise during the exchange* (Podolny and Page 1998:59). These actors often have different philosophies and practical approaches (Anderson and Woodrow 1998), differences that may inhibit a coordinated response and undercut the disposition of field-staff to be flexible (Minear et.al. 1992). These differences are calling for information-exchange to sort out misunderstandings and misconceptions, information exchange and coordination to increase effectiveness of disaster management (Comfort 1993; Comfort et.al. 2001, 2004; Reindorp and Wiles 2001; Minear 1998; Lautze *et al.* 1998; Kruke and Olsen 2005).

With all these constraints, why do the actors see a need to coordinate? The discussion about cross-sectoral coordination has much to do with dependencies between different humanitarian sectors, where one activity produces something that is used by another activity (Malone and Crowston 1994). The emergence of problems with the requirement to inter-organizational and inter-sector collaboration forms some compulsory needs for cooperation (Kapucu, 2003). But coordination is also urgent within a humanitarian sector: *“Humanitarian coordination is based on the foundation of sectoral coordination”* (Reindorp and Wiles 2001:39). Coordination is, in accordance with Malone and

Crowston, *the management of dependencies between activities* (1994:90). In this way, humanitarian action can be broken down into more or less coordinated sector initiatives or a group of activities that are all 'subtasks' for achieving an overall goal (Malone and Crowston 1994) of reliable humanitarian action. Thus, a network structure (Kruke and Olsen 2005), or a system wide response (Duffield, 1994), is preferable for humanitarian relief operations.

Dependencies between different humanitarian sectors may result in a sort of social network or structure between the actors. It is a question of forming a “*pattern or network (or “system”) of relationships obtaining between actors in their capacity of playing roles relative to one another*” (Nadel 1957:12). Reindorp and Wiles also mention relationships between emergency managers built over time, a shared technical expertise and the feeling of added value as features calling for coordination (Reindorp and Wiles 2001). *Effective coordination must add value to a humanitarian operation by facilitating better quality and more effective and efficient responses to help those in need than would be done in its absence* (Reindorp and Wiles 2001:15). The contextual rationality of emergencies is calling for increased trust in social networks and thereby, as Stephenson puts it, in ongoing and repeated conversation ... conversations “*centred on the aim of securing the most effective use of resources on behalf of those suffering. To the extent that these communications occurred, they would heighten the potential for bottom-up coordination and lead to more effective inter-organisational relationships and thereby to improved coordination among humanitarian organisations and outcomes* (2005:348).

According to the previous arguments, a successful coordination has to rely on communication between different actors. As long as there exist interdependencies between sectors and within sectors, it is easier for ‘independent’ actors to realise that they will benefit from coordinating their activities. Efficient communication depends on trust and a shared language. This is easier to establish if the counterparts share some technical expertise and a feeling of added value in the form of flexible resource availability. Thus, the degree of interdependency between sectors and the degree of expertise required to operate within a humanitarian sector, should influence on the potentials for coordination. The higher cross-sector dependencies that is present in a sector, the higher need for coordination. The higher degree of expertise required providing a service, the easier the coordination should be.

Comfort states that uncertainty of outcome, a feature of most disasters, entails a requirement for exchange of information (Comfort 1990). Experienced risk, or shared risk, (Comfort et.al. 2001) and security/insecurity (Reindorp and Wiles 2001) are related features calling for cooperation. Due to the connection between coordination and the provision of key services as understood by each major humanitarian organisation, it is paramount to recognise the transitory character of the operating environment and therefore to integrate inter-organisational coordination into the humanitarian organisations core mission (Stephenson 2005). According to these arguments, the need for risk reduction and uncertainty of outcome should stimulate coordination. In humanitarian sectors characterised by a high demand of resources and high cross-sector dependency, the risk is normally higher than in sectors with a low resource demand and few dependencies to other activities. Furthermore, a high degree of standardisation in operations should normally reduce risks and uncertainty about outcome. Thus, sectors with a high degree of standardisation in operations should have a low need for coordination.

In the next sections, different humanitarian sectors will be discussed with regards to the degree of expertise needed, degree of standardisation, resource demands and cross-sector dependencies. This will be compared to the coordination activities observed in Kalma IDP camp.

The context and findings

The complex emergency in Darfur escalated in early 2003 and has so far resulted in the death of 2-300 000 people and displacement of some 2.4 million people. Most of them are internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in settlements, villages, cities and camps within Darfur. Almost ten percent of the IDPs live in Kalma, a camp some 20 kilometres east of Nyala, the state capital of South Darfur. Darfur is of the size of Spain. Kalma is approximately 1300 kilometres from Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, and even further away from the nearest port.

Kalma IDP camp was established in January 2004 and is from the outset self-settled. By March 2005 more than 150.000 IDPs were registered in Kalma. The influx of IDPs is due to the war in the region, but the health service and food distribution in the camp may also be pull-factors.

Kalma is divided in eight geographical areas. Each geographical area is of the size of a “normal” refugee camp. There are several service providers in most humanitarian sectors. There was from the outset no infrastructure. Agencies, local, national and international, have together with the population constructed everything from scratch. Kalma is precisely an example of how a refugee camp should not be (ref Sphere 2004, UNHCR 2000, NRC 2004). The camp layout is not based on an overall strategic planning, shelters have been erected with no focus on flood-areas, there are inadequate number of latrines, inadequate systems for waste disposal, no fire-walls between the sectors, and a very complex water distribution system. These shortcomings in camp construction are only partially handled through a massive effort by all actors. This is not easy in a camp receiving about 30 000 new arrivals only in December 2004 - January 2005. In addition, the security situation in the region is very difficult, with a complex and fast-shifting character of the emergency.

Humanitarian sectors

The humanitarian sectors established in complex emergencies varies based on the context (e.g. Sphere 2004, UNHCR 2000, NRC 2004, de Waal 2005, OCHA 2006, HIC Liberia 2006), and are broadly divided into two groups. The first group consists of the sectors to be found in almost all emergencies, such as Coordination/Management, Food distribution, Non-Food-Item (NFI) distribution, Water, Sanitation, Hygiene, Primary Health Care (PHC), Nutrition, Education, Protection and Community support. The second group consists of more context specific sectors and clusters such as:

- Agriculture, Disarmament Demobilization, Rehabilitation & Reintegration (HIC Liberia 2006),
- Population estimation and registration, Site selection and planning, Shelter, Environmental sanitation, Supplies and Transport (UNHCR, 2000),
- Camp security, Livelihood strategies for self-reliance, youths and recreation (NRC 2004),
- Personnel, Livelihoods and Urban Search and Rescue (Adinolfi et.al. 2005),
- Emergency telecommunications, Logistics and Early recovery (OCHA 2006).

In Kalma IDP Camp, the following sectors are represented: Camp management and Camp coordination (the management sectors), Food distribution, Nutrition, NFI distribution, Water, Sanitation, Hygiene, PHC, Immunization, Epidemic Treatment, Education, and Community work. These sectors vary with regards to sector characteristics (standardisation, expertise and resource demand, and cross-sector dependency) illustrated in table 1.

Degree of standardisation

Standardisation of service and service delivery in humanitarian sectors is a proactive strategy for preplanning of, and transparency in, humanitarian aid and therefore important for reliable humanitarian action. Some humanitarian sectors, such as Food distribution, Nutrition, Water, PHC (including Epidemic treatment, and Immunization) and Education, are more standardized than others. These sectors are based on routine deliveries, standard content, fixed regulations, memorandum of understanding with lead agencies and the government, etc. The health sectors are regulated by



international and domestic standards, standards coordinated with WHO and Ministry of Health (MoH). Education is also a standardised sector. Implementing partners in the different camps construct and organise schools mostly based on local tradition and standards. The curriculum in all schools, except the Quaranic schools, is national.

Other sectors are less standardised and therefore more flexible both in content and in implementation. While Food distribution and Water are very regulated, especially with regards to content, but also implementation, the management sectors, Camp management and Camp coordination, are highly flexible both due to the context and also available resources. Hygiene promotion, Community work, Protection and Sanitation are also to different degrees context specific and based on less standardised approaches.

Table 1: Humanitarian sector characteristics⁵

Sector/features	Degree of standardisation		Degree of expertise		Resource demand		Cross-sector dependency	
	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
Camp Management		X		X		X	X	
Camp Coordination		X		X		X	X	
Sanitation		X		X		X		X
Hygiene promotion		X		X		X	X	
Community Work		X		X		X		X
Protection		X		(X) ⁶		X	X	
NFI- Distribution		X		X	X			X
Food Distribution	X			X	X			X
Nutrition	X		X		(X) ⁷		X	
Water	X		X		X			X
Primary Health Care	X		X		(X)		X	
Epidemic treatment	X		X		(X)		X	
Immunization	X		X		(X)		X	
Education	X		X		X		X	

Degree of expertise

Expertise is a prerequisite for effective humanitarian action in many humanitarian sectors. Expertise can be divided in personal qualifications, general relief aid knowledge and particular professional, technical expertise. Personal qualifications such as stamina, flexibility, diplomatic skills, adaptability and cultural sensitivity are mandatory general qualifications. Relief aid competence, especially through practical experience, is another mandatory qualifications requirement in many humanitarian organisations working in complex emergencies. Some sectors are however also dependent upon specialized skilled staff (Water, Nutrition, PHC (including Epidemic treatment and Immunization) and Education). Medical doctors and nurses perform complicated health services. Action Contre la Faim (ACF), the major nutrition actor in Kalma, run a Therapeutic Feeding centre (TFC) for the severe malnourished children, requiring medical treatment. Water engineers plan, dimension and construct water distribution systems. The planning of a piped water distribution network in Kalma

⁵ This rough differentiation of the humanitarian sectors are conducted for the purpose of discussing coordination challenges. A more detailed discription of the different sectors is required to differentiate the humanitarian sectors.

⁶ The narrow, security aspect of protection entails specific expert knowledge, whereas the broad aspect of protection requires a more general knowledge.

⁷ Nutrition and the health sectors are not as resource demanding as for instance Food- and NFI distribution. These sectors do however require external specific, specialised equipment and resources.



was complex, because of the flat terrain, the need for pumps and pipes, the specification of the diameter of pipes, the amount of pipes from different wells, day reservoirs, water pressure, the amount of local labour requirements, etc. Educationalists, or pedagogues, plan and implement education.

Even though the other sectors do not have the same specific expertise requirement, aspects of Camp coordination, such as site planning, do need specific expertise. The narrow, security aspect of Protection entails in-depth knowledge of UN policy and guidelines pertaining to protection of civilians and in particular the policy and practice of collaborative response.

Resource demand

The humanitarian sectors do also score differently with regards to their degree of resource demand. This has much to do with the context, the emergency itself and to what degree it is possible to purchase resources locally. Purchasing resources locally is cheaper than purchasing externally, easier to coordinate, less resource demanding (than huge logistical operations) and would entail buying items familiar to the displaced population and also serve as a boost for the local economy. The complex emergency in Darfur is however of such a scale that purchasing resources locally is only a limited option. Some resources are also not available locally (e.g. medical items, food, plastic sheeting, soap, water pipes, water pumps).

Food- and NFI distribution, Water and Education are resource-demanding sectors and therefore also fund-intensive. A good donor relationship is therefore important in these sectors. Most of the items required must be transported into the emergency area. The supply lines are 1300-1500 kilometres on bad roads and a fairly inoperative railway (due to the security situation). Education does however buy most of the items locally, with the exception of most of the school material. The Education sector seeks to provide primary school education for some 16 000 school-aged children in Kalma, as specified by UNICEF.

The health sectors and Nutrition are also fairly resource demanding. They bring with them their own external “full package” of specialized equipment and resources.

Less resource demanding sectors, such as Community work, Hygiene promotion and Sanitation are purchasing most of items locally. Some sanitation NFIs (e.g. concrete for latrines and showers, and plastic sheeting) is however transported into the emergency area.

Cross-sector dependency

Some sectors are heavily dependent upon effective service deliveries in other sectors, while other sectors are fairly independent. Especially the management sectors are together with Nutrition, the health sectors, Hygiene promotion, Education and Protection to different degrees dependent upon service deliveries in other sectors. Nutrition is closely linked to food distribution and the health status in the camp. A good hygiene standard is dependent upon effective service delivery in NFI distribution (especially soap⁸), Water, Sanitation, PHC and Education. Poor sanitation standard affects most of the activity in the camp, from the health status, the number of admissions to health clinics, the nutrition level, the mortality level, education, community activity, etc. The health status of the residents is therefore a good indicator of the status in several sectors in the camp. Hygiene promotion campaigns are conducted as joint efforts by actors from many sectors in the camp, such as PHC, Nutrition, Water, Sanitation and Education, and also as unilateral initiatives, such as the *Oxfam Public Health Promotion team* effort. Education is a key sector with regards to dissemination of key survival

⁸ The current soap ration in Darfur utilized by WFP and the U.N. Joint Logistics Center (UNJLC) is 250 g. USAID recommends that the minimum soap ration should be no less than the Sphere humanitarian guideline of 450 g (USAID/DART 2005).



messages (INEE 2004:5). Education is at the same time dependent upon deliver of water and sanitation in the schools, and the school-feeding programme coordinated by WFP and UNICEF.

The humanitarian sectors and their coordination dispositions

Effective coordination is about an optimal use of resources and accountability for them (Donini, 1996:14), facilitation of better quality and more effective and efficient responses to help those in need (Reindorp and Wiles 2001:15), and the systematic use of policy instruments to deliver humanitarian assistance in a cohesive and effective manner (Minear et.al. 1992:3). When discussing the humanitarian sector coordination dispositions some criteria's or characteristics are relevant to distinguish between the quality of coordination:

- Gathering data and managing and distributing information is important to reduce risk and uncertainty (Comfort et.al. 2004).
- Collective planning (short to medium term) is another criteria for effective coordination in emergency operations (Minear et.al. 1992).
- Collective action. Management of information and collective planning are then the baseline for collective action through mobilising, sharing and flexible resource allocation aiming in particular to avoid duplication of effort and also gaps in service delivery.

In the following discussion, we use these criteria's to differentiate between humanitarian sectors coordination dispositions. The sectors score differently with regards to extent of information exchange, collective planning and collective action. This is partly because the sectors have different characteristics, but also because some sectors do not have permanent implementing partners/service providers, while other sectors have one or more service providers.

Camp management and Camp coordination, are responsible for overall coordination, especially of cross-sectoral issues. They are “cross-cutting” sectors, sectors with specific relevance for all the other sectors (Sphere 2004, OCHA 2006, NRC 2004, DPPC 2004). The relevance of the management sectors has much to do with information and information exchange. The management sectors must know more than other agencies about what is going on in the camp. Even though data gathering and information management is conducted in most sectors in Kalma, it is only the Camp Coordinator that, through registration of the IDPs, collects data in a structured way, making these data available for the other sectors. Registration is important for most other sectors, and in particular Food- and NFI distribution, PHC, Water and Sanitation, Education and Immunization. In addition to overall registration of all IDPs in Kalma, the Camp Coordinator monitors the service in several sectors (water- and sanitation status monitoring, cooking and hygiene habits surveys and protection monitoring).

All sectors participate in the weekly coordination meeting for information exchange between the humanitarian sectors. A survey through 31 of the minutes indicates that the meeting run on a standard agenda, covering most sectors. The limited information about immunization and epidemic treatment are covered as part of the health sector. Hygiene promotion and the narrow aspect of Protection are only to a small extent discussed. Increased focus on Hygiene promotion March/April 2005 came as a result of the diarrhoea situation in the camp.

There are also sectoral Kalma meetings in the management sectors, and in Water and Sanitation.

The management sectors have, together with Protection, NFI distribution, Nutrition, Epidemic treatment (Outbreak Preparedness & Response), Health, Water/Sanitation and Hygiene promotion (Health Promotion/Hygiene Education), weekly coordination meetings on regional level (South Darfur State level), while Food Distribution and Education have bi-weekly meetings on regional level. The sectors do informal information exchange on an ad-hoc basis, but sectors, such as PHC, Nutrition

and Protection, do not include all actors within the sector in these informal talks. World Vision (WVI) is the only service provider for Food distribution in Kalma, while World Food Program (WFP) is responsible for the “food-pipeline”. Information-exchange within Food distribution is therefore a matter of communicating the requirement for food between WFP and WVI, while execution of Food distribution is an internal WVI issue. Nutrition is conducted by a variety of organisations, but the main service provider is ACF. ACF did initially periodic blanket food distributions for all children below 5, prior to taking over the Therapeutic- and the Supplementary Feeding centres from MSF-H. Other nutrition initiatives for children, pregnant and lactating women are conducted by a variety of small organisations, of which most of them are local. These are however only unilateral initiatives without structured information exchange. Information exchange is nevertheless necessary to handle the reasons for the nutrition requirement and also to secure nutrition for all vulnerable groups.

Collective planning is conducted both during the weekly inter-sectoral coordination meeting and in planned additional meetings. A constant stream of emergent challenges, calling for rapid response, is mostly addressed in ad-hoc meetings. A Hygiene promotion campaign in April-May 2005 was planned by agencies volunteering to join in based on an open invitation to all agencies in all sectors. The same was the case with the head counting in March 2005.

These initiatives are not based on intra-sectoral collective planning, except in the management sectors, Water, Sanitation and Education. Community Work, Protection, PHC, Epidemic Treatment, Nutrition and Sanitation are based on both unilateral initiatives and planning between some of the actors, but not as collective initiatives comprising the whole sector. Immunization and Protection are planned and executed by many actors, but with no collective planning in Kalma. While the involved actors plan Immunization openly, the narrow scope of Protection is looked upon as too sensitive.

Since there are no permanent service providers in Immunization and NFI distribution in Kalma, agencies volunteer to join in when required. UNICEF, MoH, and a few large PHC organisations in Kalma conduct immunization planning. NFI distribution is planned by a variety of actors from case to case, and not as collective efforts. While Immunization campaigns comprise the whole camp, lack of overall planning for NFI distribution, together with the size of the camp, results in different standards between geographical sectors in the camp. NFI distribution is a sensitive issue in the camp creating tension among the IDPs. Another sensitive sector is Camp management. The Camp management sector is, together with Camp coordination, cross-cutting sectors with a primary goal to bring all the other sectors into information exchange, collective planning and collective action. The Sudanese Camp Manager, Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), is facing difficulties in trying to coordinate cross-sectoral issues due to the humanitarian community’s lack of trust in HAC. The discussion is summarized in table 2.

Table 2: Humanitarian sectors and coordination disposition

Sector	Coordination		
	Easy	Intermediate	Difficult
Food Distribution	X		
Immunization	X		
Primary Health Care	X		
Epidemic treatment	X		
Water	X		
Camp Coordination		X	
Hygiene promotion		X	
Education		X	
Community Work		X	
Nutrition		X	



Camp Management			X
NFI- Distribution			X
Sanitation			X
Protection			X

Discussion: Coordination disposition and humanitarian sector features

There seems to be a correlation between high degree of standardisation and easy to coordinate for several sectors. These sectors are based on routine deliveries, standard content, fixed regulations, memorandum of understanding with the government, etc. In Kalma, Water was however difficult to coordinate because the water distribution system was very complex and large. Education is fairly difficult to coordinate, especially due to the political sensitivity and the link to established local education structures. This correlation seems however to be valid especially during routine operations based on anticipated strategies. When faced with emergent situations, a resilient approach may be required, increasing the need for coordination.

Even with standards for amount of food and water (Sphere 2004, UNHCR 2000), the situation in emergencies may force humanitarian actors to deviate from established standards. Shortages of resources are a regular characteristic of emergency areas. Darfur is no exception. The supply lines are 1300-1500 kilometres and the requirement for resources are vast. During the famine in Darfur in 1984/5, the international system was criticised for not being able to deliver food rations in accordance with minimum standards. Alex de Waal stated that “*the food was committed late, delivered late, and failed to reach the right people*” (2005: 213). The situation in Kalma spring 2005 forced the humanitarian community to reduce service delivery both in Water, Food distribution and Education. These are examples of resiliency in action (Wildavsky 1991), but based on inadequate response capacities (Adinolfi et.al. 2005).

The degree of standardisation seems in most sectors also to correspond with the degree of expertise. High degree of standardisation corresponds with high degree of expertise. The health sectors score high on both degree of standardisation and expertise demand. They also score high on cross-sector dependency. Cross-sector dependency is a characteristic shared by most of the humanitarian sectors. The standards of the different sectors do not stand-alone: they are interdependent (Sphere 2004:8). This dependency is mainly latent during routine operations, but increases during emergent, ad-hoc operations, calling for functional division of labour (Minear et.al. 1992), not only in specific sectors, but also between sectors. Some sort of social network or a social structure (Nadel 1957:12) is therefore necessary for reliable humanitarian action in emergency situations.

There also seems to be a correlation between high degree of expertise and easy to coordinate.

The management sectors are split with regards to their ability to coordinate. Both sectors are marked as low on expertise (specific expertise). The Camp manager in Kalma faces lack of trust among the international community, making the coordination role difficult. This may be a general problem in IDP-settings in complex emergencies, because the government often is looked upon as one reason for the emergency. The Camp coordinator is at the same time facing problems because of an overall lack of formalization in the humanitarian community (lack of MOUs, LOUs).

A likely correlation between high resource demand and easy to coordinate is also found. A resource-demanding sector such as Food distribution is easy to coordinate, particularly because of the low number of actors involved. NFI distribution is difficult to coordinate due to lack of implementing partners. Another reason for the difference might be that food is distributed routinely every month, while NFIs are distributed as campaigns a few times a year. The health sectors and nutrition are fairly



resource demanding, particularly because of external specialized equipment and resources, making coordination less important. They are also relatively easy to coordinate, because of the standardisation and that they share a common expertise.

The correlation between cross-sector dependency and easy to coordinate is however blurred. Camp management has high cross-sector dependency, but is difficult with regards to coordination. The reason is mainly lack of trust among the international community. The sensitivity in Protection is a likely reason for the difficulty in coordination. Both Food distribution and Water are easy to coordinate and score at the same time low on cross-sector dependency. Food distribution is, as discussed earlier, conducted by one agency. Food distribution is therefore easy to coordinate. Cross-sector coordination of Food distribution has however proven to be challenging, especially due to Food distributions low cross-sector dependency. Water may be characterized in more or less the same way. Water is, as Food distribution, not particularly cross-sector dependent and internal coordination in Water is fairly easy and structured.

Summary and concluding remarks

Both theory and findings point at the need for information exchange, conversations and coordination among involved parties, and thereby more effective intra- and inter-organisational relationships. This is important during routine operations and in particular in emergencies.

The findings and discussion indicate that different humanitarian sector features, such as degree of standardisation and expertise, resource demand and cross-sector dependency, may influence the sectors coordination dispositions. High degree of standardisation and expertise seems, together with resource demand, to make coordination an easier exercise. Low degree of standardisation, expertise and resource demand seems at the same time to complicate coordination.

High degree of standardisation, expert and resource demand seems however to make adaptation to emergent changes difficult. Reliable humanitarian action in the different sectors has primarily two goals; avoid gaps and duplication in service delivery by securing reliable utilisation of available resources in their respective sectors. The emergency itself is calling for humanitarian assistance in a cohesive and effective manner (Minear et.al. 1992) with the aim of securing the most effective use of resources on behalf of those suffering (Stephenson 2005). Information exchange, collective planning and collective action are important characteristics and foundations for effective emergency coordination. Collective planning is important to secure anticipation of possible challenges, (Wildavsky 1991), and necessary prepared capacity (Adinolfi et.al. 2005), such as available resources and expertise. Pre-planned activity can bring the humanitarian community a long way, but not all the way. Resilience (Wildavsky 1991) or response capacity (Adinolfi et.al. 2005) is therefore required to adapt to the shifting conditions of the emergency. This is challenging especially for humanitarian sectors with a high degree of standardisation, expert and resource demand. Effective humanitarian action in these sectors would rely on increased focus on intra- and inter-sectoral networking, including information exchange, and collective planning, to utilize existing resources in a resilient manner and to adapt to the fast changing context of complex emergencies (Kruke and Olsen 2005).

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