Historical context & lessons from famine in South Sudan

World Bank FAM ‘first mover’ workshop in Juba

28 & 29\textsuperscript{th} November, 2018
David Keen’s (1994) ‘Benefits of famine’

• First to show historical **perspective & root causes** in South Sudan;

• Famines should **not been seen as isolated** but part of a long **history of exploitive processes**; destroying livelihoods of local inhabitants;

  E.g. winner from famine in 1989 and 1998 – Kerubino ‘war lord who swept across GBEG for a decade!

‘The straw that broke the camels back’: Not always a major shock but cumulative shocks that sends a HH into IPC 5 or ‘catastrophe’
Typology of famine 1937 – 1998 (Luka Biong Deng) across 12 counties with five illustrated below from GBEG: County/ date/ name of famine/ meaning/ trigger or cause:

- **1988 & 1998 famines over large areas**
- Also ‘famine’ conditions across smaller areas in multiple locations e.g. Phase 5 HHs in 2018 & from historical record

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Date 1</th>
<th>Date 2</th>
<th>Name of Famine</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Trigger or Cause</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Awiel West County</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Ruon Korony (C)</td>
<td>Year of grasshopper</td>
<td>Grasshopper</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chok Magua (R)</td>
<td>Famine of groundnuts</td>
<td>Insecurity and drought</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1988</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ruon Makurup (E)</td>
<td>Year of massive death</td>
<td>Insecurity and drought</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1989</td>
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<td>Chok Kerubino (C)</td>
<td>Famine of Kerubino</td>
<td>Insecurity and drought</td>
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<td>4. Gogrial County</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ruon Korony (C)</td>
<td>Year of grasshopper</td>
<td>Grasphopper</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1988</td>
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<td>Ruon Moraja (E)</td>
<td>Year of moping</td>
<td>Insecurity and drought</td>
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<td>1998</td>
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<td>Ruon Kuanyin (C)</td>
<td>Year of Kerubino</td>
<td>Insecurity and drought</td>
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<td>5. Twic County</td>
<td>1948</td>
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<td>Ruon Korony (C)</td>
<td>Year of grasshopper</td>
<td>Grasphopper</td>
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<td>1988</td>
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<td>Ruon Moraja (E)</td>
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<td>Insecurity and drought</td>
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<td>1998</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chok Mavo Kaart</td>
<td>Famine with bell foot</td>
<td>Insecurity and drought</td>
</tr>
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<td>6. Wau County</td>
<td>1948</td>
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<td>Kec Baanya (C)</td>
<td>Famine of grasshopper</td>
<td>Pests</td>
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<td>1988</td>
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<td>Kec Paale (R)</td>
<td>Famine of knives</td>
<td>Insecurity and drought</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1998</td>
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<td>Kec Abanjan (R)</td>
<td>Famine of migration and displacement</td>
<td>Insecurity and drought</td>
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<td>7. Tonj</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chok Korony (C)</td>
<td>Year of grasshopper</td>
<td>Grasphopper</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1988</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chok Biok (R)</td>
<td>Famine of skin</td>
<td>Insecurity and drought</td>
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</tbody>
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Lawlessness & slavery 1820 – 1920s

- **Subsistence**: agro pastoral/ fishing/ cultivation/ wild foods & especially livestock (GBEG & GUN)
- **Perennial food insecurity**: famine (work of Douglas Johnson):
- **Main drivers & causes**: context of lawlessness & slavery:
  - **Natural shocks as proximate causes but often preceded by extended periods of asset loss!**
    - Drought
    - Flooding
    - Rinderpest (eradicated early 2000s by OLS network of CAHWs)
Native administration/ Anglo Egyptian colonists 1920s – 1950s

• Colonialism & Independence:
  – *extension of trade*, markets, commercialization, wage labour;
  – *advent of Jallaba* (merchant class) start of shift to more market oriented production systems – *may not have left people more resilient?*

• **1941-42 Equatoria**: famine driver colonial procurement of cereal crops for WWII effort

• Example of annual *food aid approx.. 3,000MT*
Counter insurgency warfare 1950s – 1990s

1956 – 1972 first civil war
• Early 1970s see the first real use of **significant food aid** – 15,000 MT

1983 – 2005 second civil war
• Strategy by all sides **to disrupt trade and production**
• **Food aid increases** – 70,000 MT

• **1998 – 99**: approx. **100,000 deaths** comparable to famines in Ethiopia 73/84; Darfur 84 and Niger 74
• Similar situation in **1988 – 89** even prolonged to 1992
Famine in The Sudan: causes, preparedness & response by Luka Biong Deng – 1998/99 famine

Causes:

Protracted conflict:

- History of warfare & counter insurgency designed to destroy way of life & remove assets
- **Increased vulnerability** to exogenous shocks:
  - 40% lost all cattle
  - 80% displaced at least 3 times in a year

Historical erosion of assets (as in the current crisis 2013 – present)

El Nino

- Abnormal rains affecting crops & wild foods
Causes of 1998/99 famine continued

**Market failure:**
- Sorghum **prices** rose & livestock declined
- Market **disintegration** with surplus regions in Equatorias

**Social collapse:**
- **better off survived**/ social safety nets broken (feedback 2001 & 2002)
- **Migration** to W. Equatoria (relatives refused to assist);
- **Livestock fenced** to avoid spearing;
- **Some + features:** famine courts activated/ milking cows shared/ meat contribution activated/ early return of cattle from toic

**Governance:** lack of food & deaths in SPLM area;
- Armed struggle priority & famine responsibility of international agencies
- Equatoria food supplies not mobilized & migrants there not warmly received
Lessons from the humanitarian response

**Response:** late/ poorly coordinated/ poor targeting (access not an issue); failed to avert famine:

- GBEG received less assistance compared to other areas despite the downward spiral of vulnerability since 1993
- Feeding programmes below international standards
- Limited WASH & Health support → poor hygiene → main cause death diarrhoea & pneumonia
- Response late but **effective from late 1998**: direct food assistance & sorghum and livestock prices stabilized

**Information systems:**

- Lack of quality monitoring & no early warning
- Levels of vulnerability under estimated
- Use of HH food economy approach did not deliver the information needed and Did not assist in targeting

**SRRA system** correctly predicted vulnerability but no one took them seriously - Media that ultimately alerted the crisis

**Lessons learnt from 1998:** Lack of early warning/ Lack of logistical capacity/ Insufficient quantity of food
Post comprehensive peace agreement (CPA) 2005 – present day

Context
• Increasing **urbanisation** and **market production** systems/ reliance on wage labour (food insecurity in response to rising food prices)
• Includes current 2013 – 2018 crisis
• **Food aid up to 200,000 MT** annually (at another scale compared to earlier)

Main drivers of food insecurity:
• **Conflict**: national/ inter/ intra communal (latter intensifying even post 2005 CPA)
• **Economic crisis** (especially after oil production shut down 2012)
• Other more ‘normal’ shocks: drought/ floods/ pests/ diseases (livestock & human) at time of **heightened vulnerability**: multiple shocks
• Plus: worst **cholera** 2017/ 2018 and arrival of **FAW 2018**; and risk of Ebola in 2019

Unprecedented number of People in Need (severely food insecure):
• 2017/ 2018/ 2019 unprecedented levels of severe food insecurity IPC 3, 4 & 5: 6 million at the height of the 2017 and 6.1 million in 2018 lean season (July – August)
  – 2019 forecast marginally worse than 2018 (worst ever!)
  – Multiple areas ‘at risk’ with HHs in phase 5:
Spread of food insecurity 2016 – 2018 as captured by the IPC maps
Lessons from Central Unity (Leer/ Mayendit) famine declaration February 2017:

Context:
- Targeted campaign to clear population and disrupt livelihoods: agricultural production/ livestock losses/
- High GAM rates and population flees to the SUDD
- Lack of humanitarian access due to conflict

Positives:
- IPC established since 2008 with data from FSNMS – early detection
- High ‘elevated risk of famine’ from September 2016 analysis (never officially released)
- WFP logistics scaled up in October 2016 otherwise would have taken 4 months
- Infrastructure/ supply chain/ volume of food assistance in place for immediate scale up once access provided
- Famine abated by May 2017

Negatives:
- Delays in scaling up Blanket Supplementary Feeding Programme
- Human resource shortages
- Nutrition sector pipeline challenges
- Deterioration outside of Central Unity e.g. Ayod with focus on Leer & Mayendit
- Lack of follow up multi sector interventions, livelihoods and sustainable basic service provision in on-going context where needs outweigh resources across the country
2012 - 2018 Peak of Lean Season Trends

- Given the current delivery capacity of humanitarian assistance, Phases 2 and 4 have stabilized but Phase 3 is increasing at a significant rate.

- Population % in Phase 4 has also doubled since 2016.
Finally normalizing a protracted crisis:

- **Protracted complex emergency** comprising **multiple crises**: food security, economic, protection, public health, governance (lack of law & order) appears to be ‘normalized’ after decades of conflict with only brief windows of stability.

- Today even **IPC 3 crisis** is becoming ‘normal’ when even this classification reflects:
  - Severe reduction in consumption scores
  - Loss of significant household assets
  - Eroded coping capacity

- **Final lesson** from a PRA practitioner: importance of community participation as key information source for understanding hunger & how it relates to previous periods of ‘extreme hunger’