

Case Study

The mixed-community committees in Burkina Faso

Case Study Information

Project location	Year of implementation
Fada, région de l'Est, Burkina Faso	2020-2023
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Key words	
Mixed-Community committees (MCC), Gestion des Sites d'Accueil Temporaire (GSAT/CCCM)	

Context

In 2019, a significant influx of displaced populations fleeing armed violence, notable since 2015, reached Fada, a town in the eastern region of Burkina Faso. This unprecedented displacement, following attacks on civilians, posed a major challenge for local authorities and humanitarian services, particularly in Fada, where some areas saw their populations double. The government's approach was to encourage the hosting of internally displaced persons (IDPs) with host families rather than in designated sites. Therefore, the national strategy recognizes sectors and districts as key areas hosting a substantial number of IDPs. This broader urban configuration is referred to as "Zones d'Accueil de Déplacés" (ZAD, Displacement Hosting Areas). In 2020, Acted and its partner IMPACT Initiatives conducted an area-based assessment as part of the [AGORA approach](#).¹ This collaborative approach, involving communities and authorities, aimed to guide programming over three years. The assessment focused on identifying pressure points in areas with a high concentration of IDPs, or ZADs. The process included mapping key social infrastructure to guide activities and understand the context and needs of the affected communities. The goal was to strengthen government structures responsible for humanitarian action, with a particular focus on site management support².

¹ Under the Pilot Programmatic Partnerships Project financed by ECHO in Burkina Faso among nine countries

² Aims to strengthen the skills of the designated site manager so they can effectively fulfill their roles and responsibilities

Implementation: steps, achievements, and tools

To improve understanding of local dynamics and prioritize needs in areas with a high concentration of displaced people, where CCCM interventions could have the most significant impact, the team conducted a zone-based assessment. This process used OpenStreetMap (OSM) and maps to facilitate the delineation of sectors hosting displaced persons and socio-communal infrastructure, including health centers, water points, latrines, and



schools in the targeted areas. Simultaneously, Open Data Kit (ODK) played a crucial role in collecting quantitative and qualitative data to understand the number, functionality, and condition of these infrastructures. Since the designation or creation of a temporary hosting site or ZAD is a prerogative of government authorities, in collaboration with humanitarian actors, the selection of areas to investigate was made in close cooperation with relevant government actors, taking CCCM's activity coverage capacity into account. The participatory analysis of these data, combined

with data from the ministry in charge of humanitarian action highlighting areas with a high concentration of IDPs, led to the prioritization of four sectors among the 11 assessed for CCCM activities, initially grouped into two ZADs. The mapping of infrastructure also contributed to the overall effectiveness of interventions and resource optimization for actors with response capacity but lacking budget for needs assessments. The results allowed these actors to refine their targeting and follow GPS points for implementing repairs, such as the rehabilitation of water points.

The next crucial step was the establishment of a mixed community committee (MCC) in each of the two ZADs. The committee formation followed a phased approach: initially, the team collaborated with local authorities, engaging the existing focal point who supported the site manager in mobilizing the community through two public general assemblies, where the committee's composition, roles, and responsibilities were explained. During these assemblies, individuals interested in joining the committee were encouraged to volunteer. The selection was done in small groups, where candidates presented themselves, and members were chosen by a show of hands. Following this process, the selected members met in another general assembly to confirm the general agreement on the committee's composition and membership. The committee brought together men and women of different age groups from both the host communities and the displaced persons. As noted by the program teams, they successfully achieved representative participation in this activity, with the involvement of diverse and highly respected members. After their training, the MCC's active involvement in decision-making proved crucial in promoting ownership and sustainability of interventions. Each MCC held weekly meetings in its area of responsibility, encouraging discussions and facilitating information exchange regarding the challenges related to the ZAD, promoting inclusive decision-making, and ensuring the engagement of affected populations. MCC training covered two levels: on one hand, the roles and responsibilities of the MCC, community participation, and conflict resolution, and on the other hand, humanitarian principles, site safety and risk prevention, gender-based violence, and other relevant topics for potentially self-managing their ZAD. Additionally, the MCCs conducted awareness campaigns and community initiatives. They also dedicated some of their weekly meetings to planning, organizing, and communicating the results of maintenance assessments. They identified areas requiring special attention, such as inaccessible roads or open pits, and collaborated with Acted's CCCM staff, the ZAD managers appointed by the ministry in charge of humanitarian action, and host communities to plan and implement the necessary work to address the identified gaps. These activities gradually enabled the MCCs to gain credibility and acceptance within the community. As the MCCs became more adept and autonomous in conducting activities and more engaged in CCCM activities, communities increasingly turned to them for complaints or information. The staff in charge of the complaint management mechanism, which served as a parallel secure channel, also contributed to creating a feedback loop with the MCCs so that complainants were referred to the CCM for grievances that could be resolved at the community level. Furthermore, the provincial director of the ministry in charge of humanitarian action in Fada recommended collaboration with the MCC to agencies and non-governmental organizations that approached him, ensuring that interventions addressed the specific needs of each ZAD. Other humanitarian actors and NGOs sought the mixed community committee's help in mobilizing the community for specific activities, ultimately granting it legitimacy as a community-led governance structure within the ZAD.



Two community centers were built at the heart of the target areas. Despite the limited availability of public land, the municipality provided space in sector 1 and sector 6. The space dedicated to the community center in sector 1 became a preferred center, notably due to the presence of many partners who also built their own centers nearby, attracting small businesses such as kiosks selling water or spices. Whenever possible, site selection aimed to strengthen communities rather than disrupt them. Thus, the centers were positioned in neighborhoods with a high concentration of displaced persons while ensuring accessibility to the host community. The community centers hosted civil society organizations and NGOs that became familiar with the MCCs' role and served as the main meeting place for the MCCs, further strengthening their presence within the community and their availability to affected people. This contributed to ensuring the active involvement of affected populations in activities aimed at improving living conditions in their ZADs through various community engagement activities.

Challenges and Lessons Learnt

The mention of camps in the cluster's name sparked several preliminary discussions on how to adapt and integrate CCCM expertise into a primarily urban and unconventional displacement context. Although community engagement and localization align with many approaches already adopted by Burkinabè institutions, the novelty of a displacement of such magnitude made its reintroduction under the CCCM framework in an emergency context more complex. This situation made it challenging for site managers to adopt this approach while continuing to fulfill their other responsibilities.

The beginning of the MCCs' establishment highlighted the challenge of ensuring a diverse representation among its members in different areas hosting IDPs, while avoiding reinforcing potential dividers within the communities.



This task was particularly complex in Fada, which is an urban area hosting displaced persons and not a designated site, making communication more difficult with scattered communities. Upon the arrival of displaced populations, a registration process is conducted by the Ministry in charge of Humanitarian Action. Representatives are appointed by their village of origin to ensure these villages are included in meetings, distributions, and other activities, and to avoid any perception of favoritism based on origin. The CCCM team observed that communities

maintain this role of village representative in their new reception area. Displaced people from the same villages often settle in the same or neighboring neighborhoods. The village of origin thus became a dimension of diversity that influences perceptions of difference and representation. This complicates the creation of a truly representative committee if all displaced members, men and women of all ages, come from the same village. This is why local services of the Ministry of Humanitarian Action, such as the provincial director of Fada, played a crucial role in facilitating exchanges with these representatives, including the president of the IDPs in Fada. This person, being a respected figure and well informed about community leaders, proved to be a valuable asset for gaining community support and launching initiatives. However, to avoid conflicts of interest and ensure neutrality, the team requested that the president identify another respected person, not involved in politics, to take on the role of the new leader.

Another major issue was the gap between the identified needs and the actual capacity of the actors involved in the multisectoral response. In the area of infrastructure repairs, for example, only a few organizations or entities had the technical expertise and resources necessary to conduct assessments and promptly carry out repairs. Even after identifying urgent infrastructure repairs, several involved actors reported financial constraints. This lack of funding hindered their ability to implement the necessary repairs, impacting the living conditions and overall



safety of the population in the ZAD. The inability to address urgent infrastructure repairs could significantly diminish the overall effectiveness of CCCM interventions. Infrastructure such as shelters, sanitation facilities, and access to potable water are vital to the well-being of displaced populations, and failure to address these gaps could lead to a deterioration in living conditions and increased vulnerabilities. The strain on infrastructure also risks creating tensions in displacement situations. When infrastructure is insufficient to support a larger population, it can create friction between displaced populations and host communities, especially when aid is distributed unequally, turning it into a contested resource. This competition for resources can complicate efforts to find durable solutions, as urgent needs may take precedence over more comprehensive measures aimed at addressing the root causes of displacement and establishing long-term strategies. This challenge underscores the importance of enhanced coordination among actors involved in the humanitarian response. It also highlights the need for resource mobilization efforts to ensure the availability of adequate funds to promptly address urgent needs. Once the mixed community committees began actively identifying and expressing their community's needs, they faced challenges in relaying feedback, as concerns frequently went unaddressed due to limited donor attention and available resources.

In conclusion, the project's implementation underscored the role of area-based assessments in guiding CCCM activities. Despite the challenges, the commitment to transparency through community engagement allowed for a participatory prioritization of the available assistance for displaced populations in Fada. The establishment of MCCs proved crucial, as they effectively communicated the importance of their role to state, non-governmental actors, and affected communities. These committees became a support structure for the state site manager, helping to overcome some of the constraints that hindered the site manager's ability to fulfill the responsibilities related to the ZAD while balancing their regular tasks. The experiences gained emphasize the importance of ongoing collaboration, transparent communication, and adaptive strategies in humanitarian efforts to address complex and dynamic displacement scenarios.

