

Health worker experiences of and movement between public and private not-for-profit (PNFP) sectors in post conflict Northern Uganda: Lessons for health system resilience

Authors: Justine Namakula(1), Sophie Witter(2), Freddie Ssenooba(1) 1. Makerere University School of Public Health, Uganda 2. Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, UK

Background and Objectives

Northern Uganda suffered 20yrs of conflict which devastated lives and the health system. Since 2006, there has been investments in reconstruction, which includes efforts to rebuild the health workforce.

Study objectives

- To understand health workers' experiences of working in public and private not-for-profit (PNFP) sectors during and after the conflict in northern Uganda,
- To understand the factors that influenced health workers' movement between public and PNFP sectors during and after the conflict.

Study methods

Life history method

- 26 life histories with purposively selected health workers (19 female, 7 male) who had worked in the region for at least 10 years and above

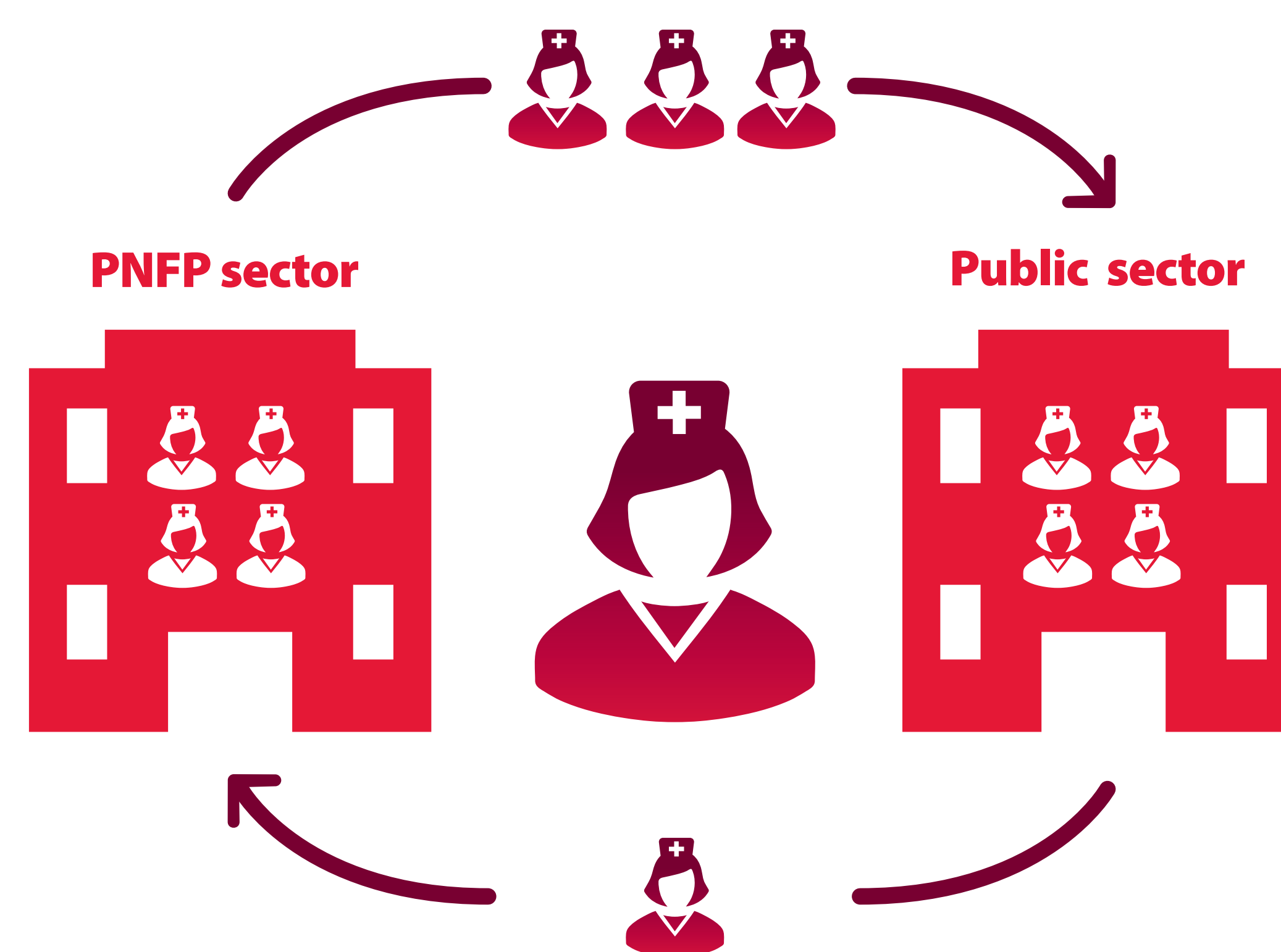
Advantages of using life history method

It is participatory and enables gathering of data on health worker experiences of conflict, and motivation to stay or move from one job/sector to another across a long period of time

Timelines enable iterative probing on key events (as perceived by individual health workers) and decisions made by health workers across their career paths

Timelines are very useful research outputs; an illustrative summary of the interview & life of the health worker, and can be souvenirs for participants.

Selected findings



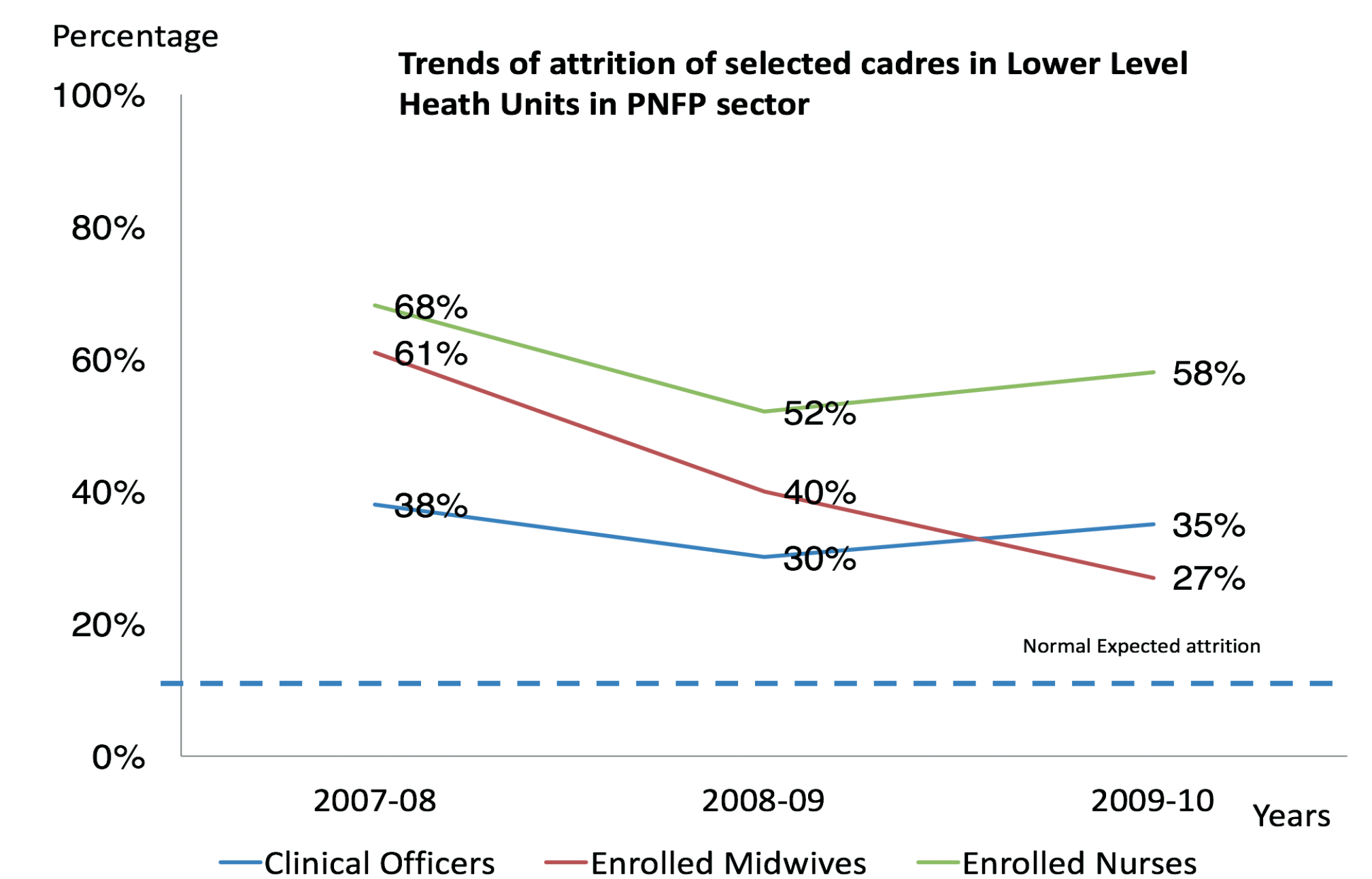
Reasons for movement from PNFP to public sector during conflict

- Comparatively stricter management styles in PNFP vs public
- Perceived higher workload in PNFP vs public sector

Reasons for movement from public to PNFP sector during conflict

- Desire to share work experiences with expatriates
- Desire to benefit from comprehensive incentives packages

"[...] my first job [in PNFP] was interesting for me. [...] However, the work was too much and [...] there is no freedom, every time you are supposed to be on duty! [...] life became very difficult. So I applied to government service commission and got the job [...]. PID 15 Female, Public, Gulu.



Reasons for intention to move from PNFP to public sector- post conflict

- Desire to benefit from retirement benefits in public sector (e.g. pension scheme)

[...] because of the benefits that government gives. There is pension when you reach retirement age or if you have any medical problem that makes you unable to continue with your work, they can give you your benefits. PID 11 Female, Public, Kitgum

Lessons learnt

- There is need to ensure balanced health worker labour market incentives which take into account:
 - the changing context
 - the needs at different points in individuals' life cycles and across all core service delivery sectors
- Both public and private not-for-profit (PNFP) sector need to stay strong to ensure their continued contribution to a resilient health system in conflict and crisis affected contexts

Resources

For a full list of ReBUILD's resources from its research on human resources for health in post-conflict and post-crisis settings, see:

<http://bit.ly/2eJDBX2>

