

# Coping and change in protracted conflict: The role of community groups and local institutions in addressing food insecurity and threats to livelihoods

## A case study of North Darfur

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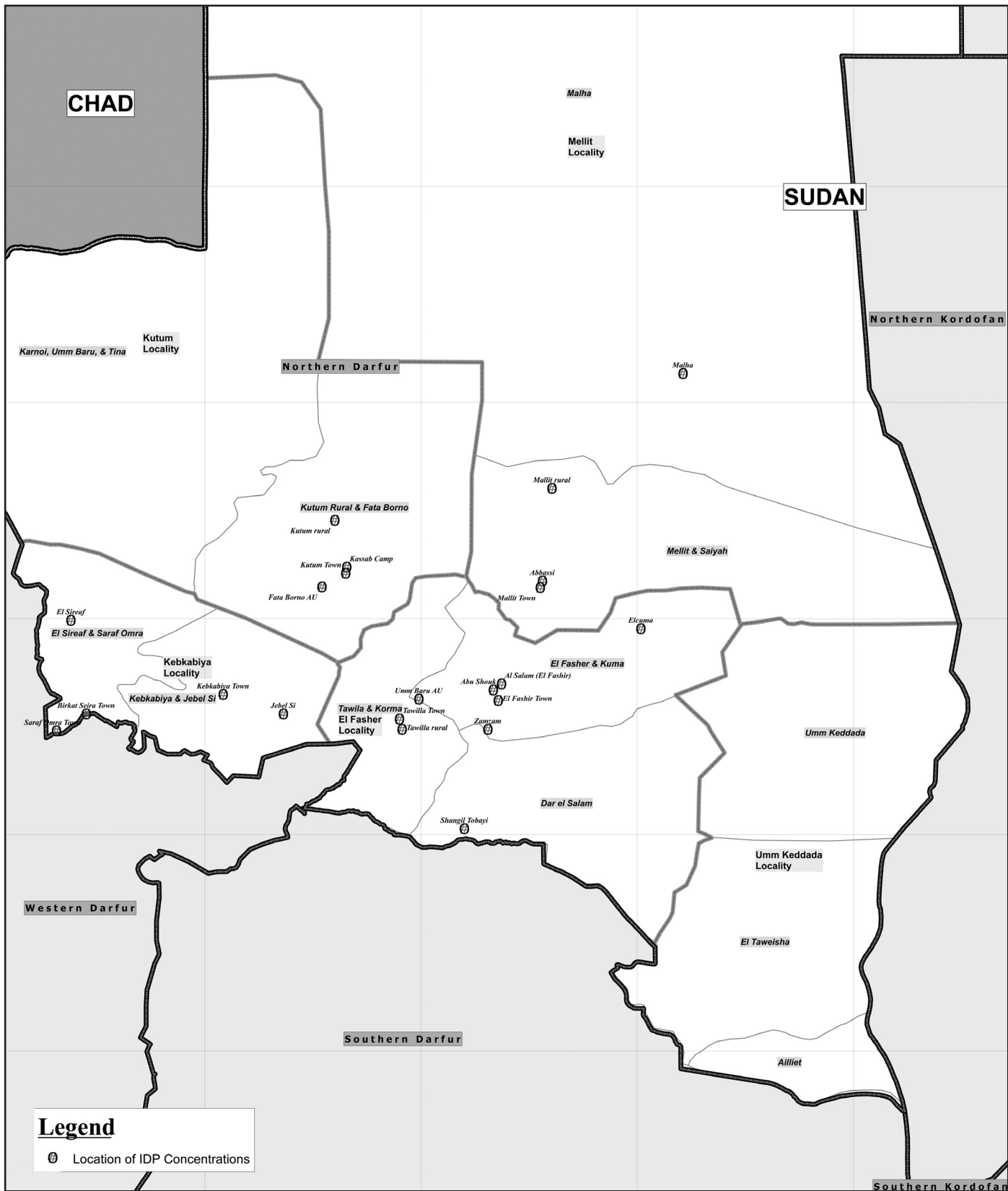
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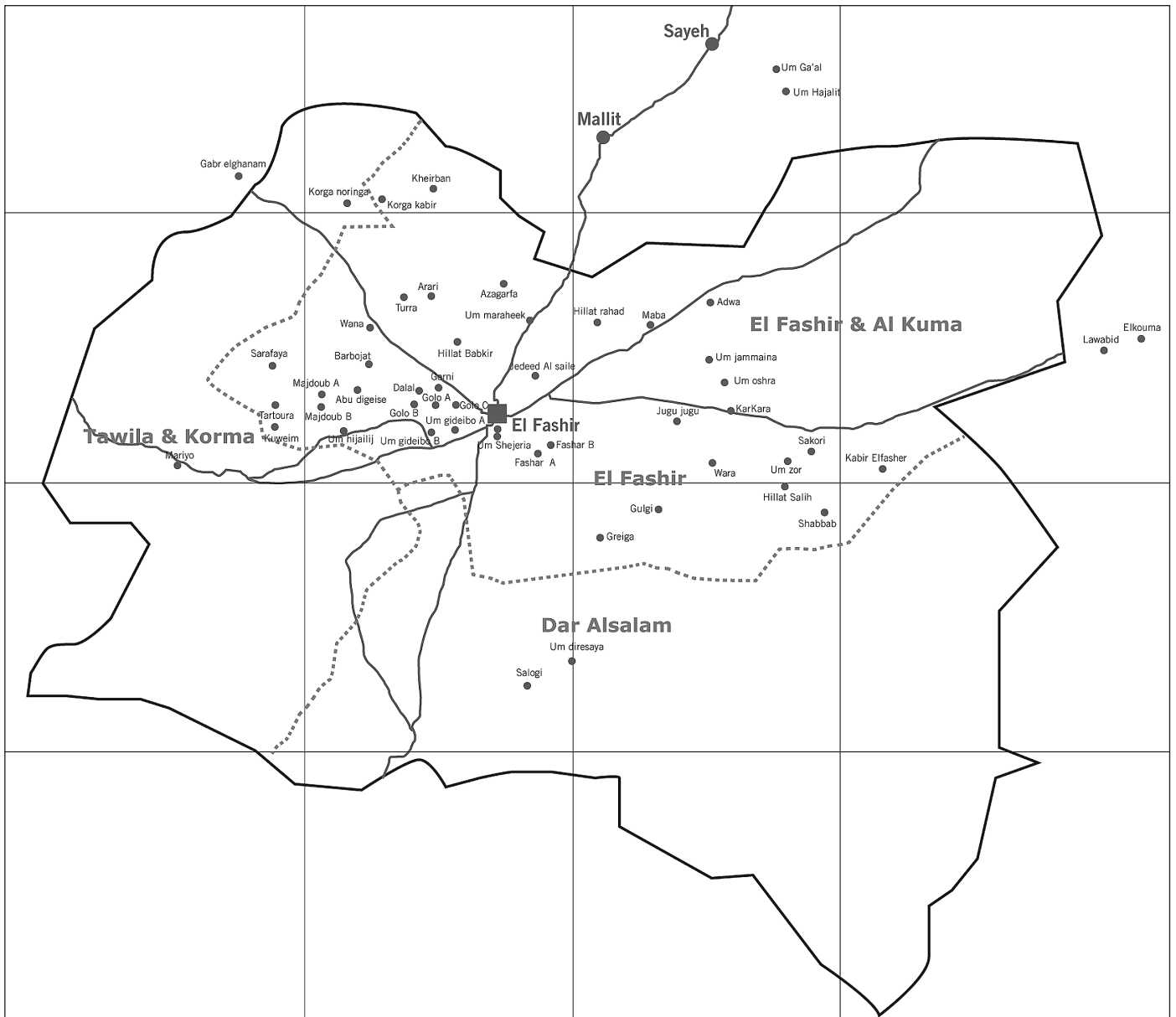
# Acronyms

<b>CBO</b>	Community-based organisation
<b>DDA</b>	Dar Es Salaam Development Association
<b>DDDC</b>	Darfur–Darfur Dialogue and Consultation
<b>DPA</b>	Darfur Peace Agreement
<b>DRA</b>	Darfur Relief and Reconstruction Agency
<b>FRC</b>	Food Relief Committee
<b>HAC</b>	Humanitarian Aid Commission
<b>ICC</b>	International Criminal Court
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>IGA</b>	Income Generating Activity
<b>JEM</b>	Justice and Equality Movement
<b>KSCS</b>	Kebkabiya Smallholder Charitable Society
<b>PA</b>	Practical Action
<b>RDN</b>	Rural Development Network
<b>SLA</b>	Sudan Liberation Army
<b>UNAMID</b>	United Nations Mission in Darfur
<b>VDC</b>	Village Development Committee
<b>WDA</b>	Women’s Development Association
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme

### Locations of IDP concentrations – North Darfur



Map of El Fasher locality







# Executive summary

This report presents the findings of a study carried out in November and December 2009 on the role of community-based organisations and groups, as well as local institutions more generally, in addressing food security and threats to livelihoods. The overall aim was to examine ways in which to support food security and livelihoods in protracted crises such as Darfur, where conflict has been ongoing now for seven years. The study was funded by Christian Aid, hosted by Practical Action and carried out together with the Darfur Relief and Reconstruction Agency. It focused on North Darfur.

Food insecurity and threats to livelihoods persist for many population groups in North Darfur. The conflict is now characterised by banditry, crime and localised clashes between government and rebel movements, within different SLA factions and between different Arab groups. There are also periodic large-scale attacks. Continued violence causes fresh displacement and restricts movement and therefore trade, access to markets and land. Cereal prices are at their highest level for five years. This is in part due to high transport costs, associated with the fragmentation of armed groups and consequent increases in checkpoints along roads, and a lack of supply, in part due to low or unevenly distributed rains. Livelihood strategies for most IDPs in camps remain limited and work is badly paid. The expulsion of NGOs following the International Criminal Court (ICC) indictment of the Sudanese president in 2009 has led to a decrease in employment opportunities. Theft and other crime is reportedly on the increase.

## Changes in the institutional context

The institutional context changed significantly in Darfur during the conflict. Government institutions including line ministries largely ceased to function in rural areas, as did systems of tax collection such as *zakat*. Taxes in towns increased and numerous informal taxes are demanded at checkpoints along key roads. Popular committees still exist in many villages, but their composition has changed in line with changes in the political context. Many traditional leaders were separated from their communities, and social networks within and between communities have contracted and changed. Pre-conflict markets in grain and livestock are barely functioning, while new institutions have emerged, such as camp markets, informal taxes and various agreements between opposing groups over access to land and markets.

Many NGOs and CBOs also ceased to function or changed their way of working dramatically as a result of insecurity and displacement. A large number of new NGOs came into Darfur from 2004. These agencies created numerous committees in camps to assist with camp management, service delivery and

capacity-building. In rural areas, some agencies also set up new committees to improve aid distribution. This is in contrast with approaches before the conflict, when the objective was often to empower communities or strengthen governance.

## Professional associations

Some professional associations are doing very well during the conflict, in particular blacksmiths, and to a lesser extent potters and tanners. The main reason for their success appears to be that they have skills that are in demand and they are able to continue their profession. With external support, blacksmiths earn a larger income than before the conflict and are also more respected. For others, working as a group means that the costs and time involved in obtaining inputs can be shared. The scope for supporting other professional groups needs to be investigated further. These groups also have the potential to influence policy as they have a legal identity.

## Women's groups and CBO networks

The role of women's groups also changed considerably during the conflict as they have come to play a key role in negotiating safer movement, trade and access to assistance. A number of examples are given in the report. The study team consider that the reasons for this might be that women are most directly affected by the risks associated with farming and travel to markets; they constitute the majority of the population in many areas; and they are seen as less violent or political. These groups need to be supported, and the best way of doing this is in consultation with the groups themselves. Similarly CBO networks, established as a way of remotely managing projects in rural areas, are playing an important role in negotiating free movement in their areas, and resolving disputes between villages. They are seen as less partial actors than other leaders in the community, who are close either to the government or the opposition. Ethnic heterogeneity within networks appears to be a key factor.

## Camp committees and livelihoods

In camps, IDP committees are responsible for coordination with international agencies, representing the interests of IDPs and assisting with the distribution of assistance. Many IDP leaders are not traditional leaders, and in some cases are thought to be linked to rebel groups or the government. In the camps and towns visited (Abu Shook, Shengel Tobai and Kebkabiya), there are also a large number of other committees, e.g. for food distribution and water, as well as skills training and income generation. Most are closely linked with or controlled by the IDP committee, thus potentially compromising the

accountability and impartiality of committees established for assistance provision. Similarly in rural areas, a number of committees are closely linked to political leaders, indicating again the need for accountability measures.

Skills training and income generation activities rarely reach the poorest groups, as they cannot afford not to work. It is also difficult for those trained in new skills to generate income, either because they cannot purchase the equipment or materials needed or because there was no demand for their products. Income generation in groups is difficult because they often comprise people who do not know or trust each other. Income generation in groups tends to work best if people are from the same area of origin or tribe, or come together to meet specific income needs. It is therefore recommended that, whilst skills training can be done with ethnically heterogeneous groups, income generation is best confined to homogeneous groups or individual households.

### **Rural committees and livelihoods**

In the rural populations visited (El Fasher rural and Dar Es Salaam), support for existing CBOs continues in some areas in rural El Fasher, but not in Dar Es Salaam, and in both cases new committees were established. Village Development Committees (VDCs) and networks enabled continued support by remote management, including longer-term food security support such as seed banks, paravet training, water reservoirs and dams. This was more difficult in Dar Es Salaam because it was further away from El Fasher, and part of the population is more closely aligned to the opposition. The potential for working with networks elsewhere to address different aspects of food insecurity and threats to livelihoods needs to be further investigated.

In addition to groups and committees established by external agencies, there are 'needs-specific' groups, formed on the initiative of communities themselves to resolve specific problems around land, trade or water. Several examples are in the report. Support for such groups needs good understanding

of local power relations, the motivations of each group and the benefits to be gained. At a minimum, any agreements should be closely monitored.

### **International agencies**

The findings of this study show that there are a number of ways in which local organisations or institutions can contribute positively to food security and livelihoods. At present, there is an increased focus by international agencies on working with local organisations in Darfur because of the heightened insecurity for international staff, 'sudanisation' and an emphasis on capacity-building as part of longer-term livelihoods programming. The latter may also include working closely with staff from line ministries through secondments, close coordination and joint skills training.

International agencies have concerns around the capacity of local organisations and their neutrality and impartiality. Capacity does need to be built in management, finance, planning and proposal writing, and this needs long-term commitment. There are a number of ways in which neutrality and impartiality can be promoted, for example by working with CBOs that are close to the community, ensuring separation from political leaders and involving CBOs in 'soft' services including monitoring, training and extension services. The conclusions of this study provide a framework for analysing the strengths and weaknesses of different community groups, to help in determining what type of organisation is best suited to addressing specific food security and livelihoods issues.

Ultimately, the creation of an accountable and effective civil society requires trust, faith in the future and a secure environment in which human rights are respected. These remain key issues in Darfur. Furthermore, in the current context community-based approaches will not be able to address the scale or severity of food insecurity or threats to livelihoods. A combination of approaches is needed, bringing together more traditional forms of relief and innovative ways of generating income and improving access to land and markets.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction and project rationale

This study examines the role and effectiveness of community-based organisations and community organisation in addressing food insecurity and threats to livelihoods in protracted crisis. The underlying assumption is that better understanding of the role of these organisations, and of local institutions more generally, can lead to more effective ways of improving food security and livelihoods in protracted conflict situations.

Food security and livelihood support in protracted crises has gained increasing prominence within the international aid community. In a number of countries, there is 'a significant proportion of the population which is acutely vulnerable to death, disease and disruption of their livelihoods over a long period of time' (Harmer and Macrae, 2004). Protracted crises are most commonly associated with long-term armed conflict, political collapse and repeated natural disasters. Protracted crises also involve some of the most severe food emergencies. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), in the last ten years emergency food crises have been declared in 33 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, and in ten, including Sudan, a food crisis was declared every year. Sudan is also amongst the top recipients of long-term humanitarian assistance (Development Initiatives, 2009).

Research in protracted conflict situations has highlighted the need to combine the provision of relief with a range of food security interventions to meet basic needs and support livelihoods (Young, Osman et al., 2007; Alinovi, Hemrich et al., 2008; Jaspars and O'Callaghan, 2008; Jaspars and Maxwell, 2009). More attention is also needed on the policies, institutions and processes (PIPs) which determine who controls assets, what livelihoods strategies are available and thus ultimately who is vulnerable. PIPs may include safety nets and social networks, markets, access to land and pasture and other natural resources, remittances and security and power relations between groups, civic, political and economic institutions, or any other customs, rules or common law, government institutions, civil society (CBOs, NGOs) and traditional forms of governance.

In recent years, a number of new approaches and funding mechanisms for working in protracted crises have been developed. These include social protection (including safety nets), 'early recovery' and 'twin-track' approaches. All face substantial challenges in protracted conflict situations. In these instances, states are often unable or unwilling to provide basic services, and informal institutions become vital partners for humanitarian and development actors. Such informal institutions might include traditional governance systems and civil society, including CBOs. In Darfur, working

with local organisations has become particularly important as international agencies' access to conflict-affected populations has declined. In the wake of the expulsion of 13 agencies in March 2009, the Sudanese government stated that all organisations in Darfur should be 'sudanised'.

The specific research objectives for the study were:

1. To examine the role of community-based organisations and community groups in addressing food security and threats to livelihoods, and how this has changed during the conflict and with changes in the local governance environment.
2. To examine the benefits and risks of working with local institutions, including an analysis of why and how different international agencies engage with and make decisions about working with CBOs and local institutions.
3. To assess the implications of working with CBOs and local institutions for programming to help meet basic needs and support livelihoods in protracted crises.

The first step in the research was to examine the key institutions in food security and livelihoods in Darfur, and how these have changed over time. This is reported in section 3 (section 2 provides a brief description of the conflict context). This is followed by an examination of different types of organisations and their emerging role in Darfur, in section 4. Sections 5, 6 and 7 examine international agencies' approaches to working with CBOs and local committees and some of the constraints they face. The report ends with key conclusions and recommendations.

### 1.1 Research methods

The research was carried out with the Darfur Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency (DRA), hosted by Practical Action and funded by ChristianAid. WFP assisted with security arrangements. The research focused on North Darfur because it is in this area that international NGOs have had the greatest input into the development of CBOs.

Insecurity in rural areas and travel difficulties outside of El Fasher town meant that a much smaller range of communities was studied than originally planned, and most interviews outside of El Fasher were done by a DRA-recruited Sudanese researcher. The international researcher (Susanne Jaspars) was only able to visit Abu Shook camp in El Fasher, and Abu Digaise village in El Fasher rural area. She also interviewed representatives from Kafod, Kuem and Shagra. The Sudanese researcher (Mohamed Zakaria) visited Shengel Tobai camp,

Kebkabiya and Lawabid. A large number of key informants were interviewed in El Fasher town, including many Darfurians with long experience of food security and livelihoods work, as well as representatives of CBOs, local NGOs and international agencies. Given the constraints on the field research, these initial findings should be seen as the basis for further, more in-depth research; this report does not present a definitive analysis of the role of community-based approaches and local institutions in protracted crises.

As far as possible, interviews in camps and rural areas included a range of community groups (IDP committees, women's groups, village development committees and occupational groups such as potters and blacksmiths). Checklists included questions on the role of the CBO/committee, its representativeness and accountability, the types of food security initiatives being undertaken, changes over time and constraints faced during the conflict, links with other institutions and livelihood strategies and social networks.

## Chapter 2

# The current Darfur context

The Darfur conflict is now in its seventh year. Over that time, the nature of the conflict has changed considerably. In 2003–2004, it was characterised by violent attacks, destruction and large-scale displacement. Government of Sudan (GoS) and aligned Arab forces (the ‘Janjaweed’) fought the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). Initial GoS targets were Zaghawa and Fur heartlands such as Jebel Si and Jebel Marra in West and South Darfur.<sup>1</sup> Amongst the Darfur states, North Darfur has the highest proportion of people remaining in rural areas.

Violence continued despite the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) on 5 May 2006 by the GoS and the Zaghawa-dominated SLA faction Minni Arcoi Minnawi (SLA-MM). The DPA was rejected by the Fur-dominated faction of the SLM/A, led by Abdel Wahid Mohammad Nur (the SLA-AW). Non-signatory groups splintered, and confrontations multiplied. Today, the conflict is characterised by localised clashes between Arab groups, as well as continuing violence between signatory and non-signatory factions. Arab tribes have started to create new ties with non-Arabs; some have even joined or created Arab-led rebel groups (International Crisis Group, 2007). Banditry and looting have increased. Periods of relative stability (but ongoing human rights abuses) are interspersed with episodes of acute violence. Some areas have been more stable than others, for example El Fasher rural.

In North Darfur, fighting between SLA factions focused on the Korma-Kafod area in 2008 and 2009, involving the SLA-AW and the SLA Freewill, a Tunjur group and a signatory to the DPA. The fighting displaced thousands of people to El Fasher. There was also fighting in 2009 between the SLA-MM and the GoS-supported Birgit group SLA Popular Will, another DPA signatory. An estimated 30,000 people were displaced from South Darfur (Shaeria, Malam) to Shengel Tobai and Zamzam in early 2009, and a further 1,500 or so were displaced in October. Tensions between the government and the JEM have focused on Dar Zaghawa and Dar Meidob.

Arab militias also fragmented following the DPA. Some turned to banditry, while others made alliances with rebel groups or formed new groups. To regain some measure of control the GoS integrated Arab paramilitary forces into the police and army (Flint, 2009). According to key informants for this study, many former Arab militia are now deriving

<sup>1</sup> The conflict’s early years have been described in detail elsewhere. See for example V. Tanner (2005), *Rule of Lawlessness: Roots and Repercussions of the Darfur Crisis*, Interagency paper of the Sudan Advocacy Coalition; and J. Flint and A. De Waal (2008), *Darfur: A New History of a Long War* (London: Zed Books).

income from checkpoints along roads and by using the vehicles provided by the government to provide transport in return for payment, for example along the route from Kutum to Kebkabiya. The fragmentation of the SLA has further increased transport costs, as different factions now control different parts of a road; the road from Kebkabiya to El Fasher is divided between seven different groups, making travel along it all but impossible.

Ongoing violence between parties to the conflict, displacement, banditry, looting, informal taxes and increased transport costs all pose significant threats to livelihoods. These threats separate people from their livelihoods, assets are lost and livelihoods options restricted. Limited freedom of movement hinders access to markets and land. Food insecurity remains a significant problem,<sup>2</sup> and cereal prices are at their highest level for five years following late and unevenly distributed rains in 2009. The recent collapse of Mawasir market in El Fasher, an investment scheme, has resulted in loss of assets and savings for many, as well as a (possibly temporary) increase in the price of grain and meat. Acute malnutrition rates in North Darfur are alarmingly high (34.5% in Malha in June 2009, 26% in Abu Shook and 25% in Kebkabiya in May) (UNICEF, personal communication).

Security has markedly deteriorated since 2005, with an increase in attacks and kidnappings of international agency staff from 2009. Darfur is now one of the most violent contexts for aid workers (Stoddard, Harmer et al., 2009). As a consequence, access to rural populations has declined. In October 2008, agencies were only able to reach 65% of the affected population (Pantuliano, Jaspars et al., 2009).<sup>3</sup> In March 2009, 13 NGOs were expelled following President Omar al-Bashir’s indictment by the International Criminal Court (ICC). Affected agencies include Oxfam-GB, Action Contre La Faim (ACF) and CHF in North Darfur. ACF was a major food distribution partner for WFP, and also carried out a number of other food security interventions. Oxfam GB and CHF were involved in a variety of food security and livelihoods interventions, including income generation, vocational training, the provision of fuel-efficient stoves and agricultural and livestock support. The expulsions were followed by a presidential statement to the effect that all international organisations in Darfur had to be ‘twinned’ with local counterparts. This coincides with an increased focus on recovery within the UN, working with local civil society organisations. Capable local organisations are however in short supply, and working with local groups may potentially

<sup>2</sup> Based on the preliminary findings of a post-harvest assessment (FAO, 2009), and increasing cereal prices (WFP, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> This appears to be the most recent information on humanitarian access.

undermine the neutrality and impartiality of international humanitarian assistance. This has led to a situation where, on the one hand, the population in Darfur continues to face

ongoing threats to their lives and livelihoods, while on the other the international community is moving from relief to recovery approaches.

# Chapter 3

## Key institutions and changes over time in Darfur

As explained in section 1, local institutions are crucial in determining control over and access to key livelihoods assets and resources. Assets may include land, water, forest products, property and income. Institutions influence the choices that households make about their livelihood assets, and the types and amounts of assets they are able to access (Messer and Townsely, 2003). Institutions have been defined as the ‘rules of the game of a society’, or the ‘humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic and social interaction. They consist of both informal rules (sanctions, taboos, customs, traditions and codes of conduct), and formal rules (constitutions, laws, property rights)’ (North, 1991). Formal institutions tend to be more visible, and include political movements, government bodies and private companies. Informal institutions tend to be less visible. They include markets, social networks and safety nets, traditional laws governing access to natural resources (land, forestry products, water) and institutions of justice and conflict mediation. To assist in analysing institutions in Darfur, the following categories, developed by Hesselbein et al. (2006), are appropriate (*italics added*):

- rule systems adopted by the state (statutory law *and government institutions*);
- the rule systems evolved over time by older communities (customary traditions *for example over resource use and social networks*);
- the rule systems that communities or groups have devised for survival (*for example agreements made between opposing tribes, for access to land, markets, trade*);
- the rule systems hatched by non-state centres of power (warlords, bosses, criminal gangs; *such as taxation at checkpoints, payment for protection, and those based on various forms of violence*).

Institutions established by aid agencies (humanitarian and developmental) can constitute a fifth ‘rule system’.

Institutions and organisations may overlap. Institutions determine normal behaviour and organisations establish a common purpose for the people that set them up. Some organisations are also institutions in that they determine access to certain resources or meet people’s needs, and a given institution may or may not be an organisation, for example markets are institutions but not organisations (Messer and Townsely, 2003). Community-based organisations, committees and professional associations established by humanitarian or development actors are examples of organisations that can

also be institutions to the extent that they determine access to services and assistance. As such, they present new or alternative forms of governance.

In most contexts, these rule systems interact and overlap, for example state and traditional systems regulating access to land, or aid systems, state and traditional systems, and systems of extortion established by ‘warlords’ in the allocation of food resources. People often find themselves operating in more than one of these rule systems, and at times groups and power-brokers rely on one set of rules to gain advantage in systems where other rules hold sway (Hesselbein, Golooba-Mutebi et al., 2006).

This section begins by describing government institutions at local level before the conflict began. This highlights how, even before the conflict, the role of traditional leaders in determining access to land and income and resolving disputes over natural resources was being eroded by new forms of state governance. This section also outlines the interactions between aid agencies and traditional and state governance. This is followed by a discussion of the changes these institutions have undergone during the conflict, the emergence of new institutions and the key institutions influencing food security and livelihoods.

### 3.1 Local government and administration before the conflict

Local government in Darfur is a combination of state and traditional administration. In the system of traditional tribal governance, tribal leaders such as village sheikhs were responsible for land administration, tax collection, dispute settlement, law and order and ceremonial activities (Abdul-Jalil, Azzain Mohamed et al. 2007).<sup>4</sup> Over time, however, tribal administration eroded with the introduction of new systems of local government. This process began during the colonial period, when Sudan’s Anglo-Egyptian rulers developed a system of native administration. Under this system tribal leaders retained their traditional responsibilities for administrative, judicial and police matters, but now these functions were exercised under the laws of the colonial administration (*ibid.*).

With independence in 1956, new systems of local government were introduced, progressively sidelining traditional gover-

<sup>4</sup> Higher levels of administration included the shartai, malik, nazir and omda, depending on the tribe. The paramount chief (shartai, malik or nazir) was in charge of the entire tribe, assisted by omdas as leaders of tribal sub-sections and sheikhs as village heads.

nance structures. In 1971, native administration was abolished to weaken the grip of traditional leaders and Darfur was divided into provincial, area and rural councils. Village councils were elected and often included the village sheikhs, but their role changed from a judicial to an administrative one. At higher levels of administration, the new system enabled one tribe to control localities belonging to another, promoting tribal competition and politicising the system of tribal administration (Abdul-Jalil, Azzain Mohamed et al., 2007; Young and Maxwell, 2009).

In the early 1980s, some members of rural councils were appointed. The councils were led by local elites (teachers, small traders and government employees), but had wholly inadequate resources (Abdul-Jalil, Azzain Mohamed et al., 2007). At village level, Village Development Committees (VDCs) were responsible for service provision and development, while village-level political functions were carried out by Sudanese Socialist Committees. After the NIF military coup on 30 June 1989, the village councils and Sudanese Socialist Committees were replaced by Popular Committees (also known as Salvation Committees, after the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) for National Salvation), thus merging political and administrative roles. The committee head was appointed by the government and was thus usually a government supporter. This enabled closer government control at community level. Popular Committee members received government training, including political orientation and in some cases paramilitary training.

From 1994, the way sheikhs and omdas were elected also changed. Previously, the sheikh had to be from the village, and this was normally an inherited position. The omda was elected by the sheikhs. Under the new system, two or three candidates can be put forward (not necessarily from the village) and the final appointment is made by the state governor (the Wali). Omdas receive an income from the government and are considered government employees. In some cases traditional leaders were stripped of their authority and new ones appointed. In West Darfur this meant the state was divided into 13 emirates including six for Arab tribes, which threatened the tribal homeland of the Masalit and immediately led to conflict.

### 3.2 Aid governance in Darfur before the conflict

The famine that hit Darfur in the mid-1980s led to the first major relief operation there, with significant involvement from outside agencies. Relief was first targeted to rural councils, while at lower levels targeting and distribution was done by village councils and relief committees, supplanting the native administrations. Sudanese staff of international NGOs played a crucial role as interlocutors between rural communities and the authorities, sidelining traditional rural structures (AfricanRights, 1995). These relief structures therefore had a significant impact on local government institutions. First, they to some extent revived the village councils which had become

largely ineffective by that time. Second, they influenced the later establishment of the Popular Committees, as by the time the NIF took power the relief committees were the most active committees at village level: 'As western agencies scaled down their relief activities, the NIF took over' (AfricanRights, 1997).

Following the relief operation in 1984–85, a number of agencies stayed on in Darfur to set up development programmes, including Oxfam GB and Practical Action (then called the Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG)). Other key agencies included SC-UK, GTZ and UNDP. Years of neglect by state institutions created the need for an alternative form of service provision. Using community-based approaches, agencies worked with village committees and gradually established more formal community-based organisations. Although these built on the experience of relief committees in the mid-1980s, new committees were often established at village level, to ensure representation of the poor, in particular women. Most were established in the 1990s. Oxfam GB had established 23 CBOs by the late 1990s, six in Jebel Si, 11 in Dar Es Salaam, two in Kebkabiya, two in Malha and two in Kutum (Jaspars, 2004). Oxfam also supported the creation of the Kebkabiya Smallholder Charitable Society (KSCS) and the Dar Es Salaam Development Association (DDA). The history and evolution of the KSCS is described in Box 1.

Practical Action/ITDG has worked in Darfur since 1988, initially closely with Oxfam in Kebkabiya, focusing particularly on donkey ploughing and water harvesting. ITDG also established Village Development Committees. ITDG provided support to the Kebkabiya association until 1996, and also supported Oxfam projects in Jebel Si and Dar Es Salaam. Between 1997 and 2000 ITDG's work broadened to include other livelihoods interventions, including seeds and tools, transport and agro-processing. A new food security project was established in June 2002 in El Fasher, Korma and Taweila districts (Martin 2005). This was the first project in which ITDG worked completely independently from Oxfam.

In almost all the communities visited, representatives said they had had long experience with committees, and that recently established committees were the result of community initiatives.

### 3.3 An overview of local institutions during the conflict years

Important institutions influencing food security and livelihoods identified by key informants in North Darfur in 2009 are given in Table 1. As can be seen from the table, they include government and SLA institutions, as well as agreements between opposing tribes over access to land, markets and water, private institutions, formal civil society institutions and new institutions established by aid agencies during the conflict. How these changed, emerged or were created during the conflict is described in the remainder of this section.



**Box 1: The Kebkabiya Smallholder Charitable Society**

Oxfam began development work in the Kebkabiya area in the mid-1980s. In working with communities, the agency encouraged the creation of different structures for community consultation and representation. Existing village councils were male-dominated, and a key aim was to ensure the representation of women. One of Oxfam’s earliest interventions comprised seed-banks managed by local committees. The project covered 120 villages in Kebkabiya and Jebel Si.

Subsequent activities included agricultural extension, animal traction and animal health, including providing training for animal health workers (paravets) chosen by villagers themselves. This required new management structures. Each village elected a representative to a Village Centre Committee (VCC). Each of the 14 VCCs elected representatives to a Project Management Committee (PMC). The PMC gradually took on more responsibility from Oxfam, and was registered as an independent organisation in late 1990 as the Kebkabiya Smallholder Charitable Association (KSCS). It could now undertake its own fundraising, hold budgets and recruit staff. The handover was completed in 1993, though Oxfam continued to provide funding until 2001. Financial sustainability was meant to be achieved through membership contributions and through government sources, but when Oxfam funding ceased staff salaries stopped being paid.

Even before the current conflict, insecurity and banditry posed a threat to the project, and several project staff and VCC representatives were killed during this period. In 2003, many of the villages in the KSCS project area (Kebkabiya and Jebel Si) were destroyed and the population was displaced to Kebkabiya town, Kutum or El Fasher. Committee members fled, VCCs ceased to function and the management board collapsed. Eventually, a steering committee formed drawn from the eight remaining project villages. Between 2003 and 2005 the KSCS worked mainly in Kebkabiya town, focusing on hygiene promotion with IDP and resident populations, in partnership with Oxfam. KSCS resumed work in rural areas in 2005, and despite increasing insecurity this has continued. Following the 2009 expulsions, KSCS took on Oxfam’s national staff. Support came from WFP, UNICEF and Oxfam America.

This case example shows how, with adequate support, local organisations can continue to function during situations of acute and protracted conflict. Despite losing members, KSCS was able to continue to operate. It was also able to adapt and modify its activities to meet the new needs of IDPs and other conflict-affected populations, and to manage the risks associated with working in conflict contexts. In many ways, the long-term presence of organisations like KSCS makes them better suited to carry out long-term food security and livelihood support than some international agencies.

**Table 1: Some key institutions in food security and livelihoods**

Formal	Informal
<p><b>Government</b>                      Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock                      Farmers’/pastoralist unions                      Zakat institutions                      Rural Councils                      Taxation (increased since conflict)                      Humanitarian Aid Commission</p> <p><b>SLA factions</b>                      New institutions for taxation at markets, services (water, protection)                      SLA HAC (coordinates with GoS and UN).</p> <p><b>Civil society</b>                      CBOs/NGOs                      CBO networks – linked with VDCs                      Professional groups (e.g. blacksmiths)</p> <p><b>Private</b>                      Mobitel (used to transfer small amounts of money)                      Hawala (more flexible)                      Banks (need ID), for larger transfers</p>	<p><b>Markets</b></p> <p><b>Social networks for helping the poor</b>                      Dara (communal meals), nafir (farm work parties), Faza (recovery of stolen herds)</p> <p><b>Informal credit</b>                      Shael (between farmers and merchants in cash crop zone)</p> <p><b>New institutions</b>                      Women’s and youth groups                      Informal agreements between opposing tribes to negotiate access to land, trade and water</p> <p><b>Camps</b>                      Camp omda and sheikh committees (informal because not registered, but formal for camp populations and international community)                      Service delivery committees (e.g. water, food). Incentives are given, so being on committee is a form of livelihood.</p> <p><b>Rural</b>                      INGOs developed ‘grassroots’ institutions for remote access                      Community agricultural extension and animal health workers</p>

### 3.3.1 Changes in existing institutions in Darfur

The governance context changed completely with the start of the conflict in 2003. Existing government agencies and CBOs all but ceased to function in rural areas, markets and social networks changed and new institutions were created as part of the relief operation, or emerged as part of the war economy. Changes in elements of the institutional context are summarised in Table 2 (page 12).

#### *Government/SLA institutions*

After seven years of conflict the Sudanese state no longer functions in much of Darfur, and government line ministries can no longer reach many rural areas. Government infrastructure was destroyed and most staff stationed outside of El Fasher were brought back to the town. Administrative services by the different SLA factions were said to be confined to collecting money, but little of this is used to provide services.

Another government institution that has effectively ceased to function is the Zakat Chamber. Over time, governments under Jafaar Nimeiri and then Omar al-Bashir transformed *zakat* from a traditional religious tax into a form of government levy. *Zakat* committees at village level collected taxes, mainly in the form of livestock and agriculture, for redistribution to the poor and to fund projects. Thanks to the war, the Zakat Chamber in Darfur has been unable to collect these taxes. According to the Zakat Chamber in El Fasher, IDPs are not included in assistance provided through the Chamber as they do not pay the *zakat* tax.

#### *Traditional leadership*

Traditional governance structures underwent significant changes. Many tribal leaders were killed or separated from their communities during displacement, while new leaders were appointed in the IDP camps. In areas under SLA control, sheikhs and omdas left because of their previous association with the government, and new leaders were appointed by the SLA. In Kafod, for example, a new omda was assigned by the SLA as most of the original omdas had left the area. Many are now reported to be living in the main urban centres and are no longer accepted by their communities. Traditional leadership has also been challenged by a younger generation of educated professionals (Young and Maxwell, 2009).

#### *CBOs and local NGOs*

Many CBOs and national NGOs changed or ceased to function, either because their target population was displaced or became inaccessible, or because funding was stopped. For example, Practical Action had to stop its work in Korma and Taweilla as much of the population from these areas was displaced. Even in relatively stable areas, such as El Fasher rural, Practical Action had to ask VDC members to come into El Fasher town for training, and established 'networks' to allow for remote management (see section 6 below). Practical Action's activities remain focused on food security and livelihoods, including agricultural support, water for agriculture, grain banks, animal health, restocking and credit

activities. The agency has also started working in the camps, including training in the preparation of fuel-efficient stoves, agro-processing, the provision of fodder and paravet training.

Oxfam ceased its work with many CBOs in rural areas, in part because many rural populations were displaced and in part because of a focus on water, sanitation and hygiene for camp or IDP populations. The activities of the Oxfam-supported Dar Es Salaam Development Association (DDA) were largely suspended between 2003 and 2006. It was more difficult for the Zaghawa population to come to El Fasher for training as they were closely aligned with the opposition, and thus faced danger coming into a government-held town.

Christian Aid partnered with the Sudan Social Development Organisation (SUDO) from 2004 in both camps and rural areas. However, restricted access north of El Fasher meant that, by the end of 2007, SUDO had handed over those projects to the community and largely confined its work to El Fasher locality. Christian Aid continues to support CBO Networks (through Practical Action) and the Sustainable Action Group (SAG), strengthening natural resource management, consensus-building and civil society capacity-building in the more stable areas of North Darfur, as well as relief interventions in South and West Darfur with NCA and ACT/Caritas partners.

#### *Markets*

The rules and regulations around markets and trade remained important influences on people's livelihoods, but these changed substantially during the conflict. Pre-existing markets barely function because of limited production, a decrease in the number of traders and an excessive number of formal and informal taxes. Meanwhile, new markets have been created in food aid, and in some cases traders and local leaders have made new arrangements to maintain or resume trade along certain routes. This subject has been extensively investigated elsewhere (Young, Osman et al., 2005; Buchanan-Smith and Abdullah Fadul, 2008); key points are given in Box 2.

#### *Social networks*

Social networks have contracted and changed as families moved to camps, leading to a reduction in traditional sources of support, including mechanisms grounded in the Islamic faith, and a deterioration in mutually beneficial systems of exchange between groups and communities. Traditional safety net systems include *dara*, where rich and poor eat together in public, sharing their food, work parties for farming (*nafir*) and the communal recovery of stolen herds (*faza*). Islamic relief might include assistance to the *fagiir*, described as those who do not have enough food for one year, and *miskin*, who do not have enough food for one day (De Waal, 1989). In contrast to traditional safety nets, Islamic relief includes assistance to 'strangers'. *Zakat*, as a religious tax (rather than a government levy) is paid by wealthier individuals direct to poorer members of the community; this reportedly continues. While *zakat* is a duty, *karama*, in contrast, is similar to charity.

**Box 2: Changes in trade and markets in Darfur**

Markets in goods such as millet, sorghum and cash crops are barely functioning because of limited production, the abandonment of rural markets, a decrease in the number of traders due to displacement, bankruptcy or political affiliation, and an excessive number of formal and informal taxes. New markets have developed in rebel territory, and within the IDP camps. Markets in the camps are out of the government's reach and have become de facto tax havens. Grain markets have kept going because of the food aid operation, keeping traders in business and grain prices low. Many tobac (chewing tobacco) and groundnut traders have gone out of business. The orange trade has adapted, with deals between opposing groups and payments for protection. Livestock trading routes have become longer and more dangerous, and therefore also more expensive, to the extent that the trade has almost ceased between some markets. The timber trade in contrast has gone from strength to strength due to the construction boom associated with the presence of international agencies, and the need to build wooden shelters and latrines in IDP camps. Trade in timber and fuel wood has become a major livelihood source for traders, IDPs and pastoralists.

Buchanan-Smith and Abdullah Fadul, 2008; and Buchanan-Smith and Bromwich, 2008

At present, a key strategy is for families is to split up, with those in need of services (largely children and the elderly) remaining in the camps, while others travel in search of work or stay in the village of origin (Jaspars and O'Callaghan 2008).

*3.3.2 New institutions**Committees established as part of the relief operation*

A huge number of new international NGOs moved into Darfur in 2004. More than 85 were present by 2008. Most agencies initially focused their work in camps, although some started working in rural areas from 2005 onwards. These organisations created new forms of governance, with its own systems and rules: humanitarian principles, Sphere standards for humanitarian response, policies on targeting, etc. (Young and Maxwell, 2009). This is discussed in more detail in section 6.

Humanitarian agencies created new committees in IDP camps and in rural areas. In camps, the main committee is the IDP leaders' committee, with a role in camp management and responsibility for coordinating with international agencies, representing the needs of IDPs and assisting with the distribution of assistance. It is widely believed that, in some camps, the leadership is linked to the political agendas either of the rebel groups or of the government (Young and Maxwell, 2009). Large IDP camps in government-held areas, such as Abu Shook, are considered highly politicised (Kahn, 2008). Armed factions enhance their political power by controlling the IDP constituency and involvement in aid distribution enhances their status as leaders. In some cases, IDP leaders were the original sheikhs of

the displaced populations, but often they were newly elected (as in the case of Abu Shook and Shengel Tobai – see section 5). It remains to be seen whether these new leaders will retain their positions when the conflict ceases and people return home.

A large number of committees were set up for service delivery and capacity-building. Committees for service delivery might include food relief committees, water committees, health committees and education committees. Committees concerned with capacity-building include human rights, vocational training and income generation, often as women's or youth committees. In rural areas, some NGOs work with existing CBOs, but many also established new organisations specifically for the distribution of relief. Working with local committees became a necessity when insecurity for international staff increased, and remote management became the modus operandi in many rural areas.

A recent report by Partners in Development, commissioned by UNDP, highlights a 65% increase in the number of formal civil society organisations in Darfur since 2003, with the majority (104) in North Darfur (Partners in Development, 2009). Some of these are closely aligned with the government. According to the report: 'A conspicuous feature of present Sudanese CSOs is the blurred dividing lines between governmental and non-governmental organizations as processes of political manipulation are quite visible and apparent' (Partners in Development, 2009).

After the expulsion of the 13 international NGOs in March 2009, service delivery to conflict-affected populations has been seriously affected, in particular in health, nutrition and water and sanitation. In food security and livelihoods, WFP was able to continue working with the local Food Relief Committees it had established, and as an interim measure it also took over the national staff of its former cooperating partners. Other food security and livelihood support came to a complete halt, however, as almost all agencies involved had been expelled. Similarly, and perhaps most obviously, all international agencies with any involvement in protection were expelled (Pantuliano, Jaspars et al., 2009).

*New institutions emerging as part of the war economy*

The war economy also created new institutions based on violent, coercive or exploitative practices, sometimes related to the benefits or profits to be made from the lack of formal regulations or from the restriction of livelihoods options. For example, IDP camps are outside of government control and are now de facto tax-free havens, and much of the urban trade has moved there (Buchanan-Smith and Abdullah Fadul, 2008). New 'rules' have been established in relation to the movement of people and goods (e.g. between government and opposition-held areas), and informal taxes are imposed by militia or opposition movements along main trade routes or along the routes that people take to access markets and employment in population centres. Issues of access to land and markets are central for many, for example due to insecurity or land

**Table 2: Timeline of institutional change**

	<b>CBO/NGO</b>	<b>New groups formed by external actors</b>	<b>Private</b>	<b>Informal networks and agreements</b>
Pre-2003	<p>CBOs involved in development activities CBO network only in Umm Keddada</p> <p>Oxfam support for CBOs in Kebkabiya, Jebel Si and Dar Es Salaam. Practical Action in El Fasher rural, Taweilla, Kebkabiya</p>		Hawala	Shael for credit Dara, Nafir, Faza
03–06 (up to DPA)	<p>Huge influx of INGOs Some CBOs become defunct. Some international agencies stop working with local partners</p> <p>New CBOs and CBO networks (established by PA)</p> <p>Creation of GANGOs (government-aligned NGOs)</p>	<p>Camp committees Service delivery committees</p> <p>Establishment of women's and youth groups (04) by agencies involved in livelihoods and protection programming</p>	Mobitel starts in 2004	<p>Shael decreases as farmers displaced and merchants leave.</p> <p>Credit arrangements between traders contract due to cashflow problems and distrust Safety nets contract and operate within smaller groups. Transfers reduced</p> <p>Faza less common as herding is unsafe</p> <p>Women's and youth groups formed. Informal trade agreements</p>
06–09	06 onwards CBOs experience difficulty in registering as networks	<p>INGOs start working with grassroots institutions in insecure rural areas</p> <p>Ag. extension and CAHWs become more important because of limited access by government (supported by NGOs but links with line ministries)</p>	Coverage of mobile phone networks increases, creates business in rural areas, facilitates monitoring of market prices and of security	<p>Splitting of families as safety net/coping strategy</p> <p>Informal agreements between opposing tribes for trade and access to land</p>

	<b>CBO/NGO</b>	<b>New groups formed by external actors</b>	<b>Private</b>	<b>Informal networks and agreements</b>
Post-March 09 (expulsion of some INGOs)	<p>Expulsion of INGOs. Lost capacity and resources. Sudanese NGOs cannot fill the gap. Services are inadequate. 14,000 staff and incentive workers lost work</p> <p>More GANGOs registered. Receiving more support because of 'nationalisation'</p> <p>Loss of key agencies involved in livelihoods work: Oxfam, ACF, CARE, CHF</p>	<p><i>Capacity-building committees (livelihoods) face difficulties continuing to function</i></p>		<p><i>Informal agreements become more important to support livelihoods as key livelihood oriented agencies leave</i></p>

Note: Italicised text added during the writing of the report. All other information gathered during a half-day discussion with key informants.

occupation. This has forced many communities to develop new institutions and livelihood strategies, in particular for movement for work, trade and access to land (see sections 3–6). New institutions also include 'protection' arrangements between Arab and Fur (and other) groups (Buchanan-Smith and Jaspars, 2006; Jaspars and O'Callaghan, 2008). More recent arrangements include agreements between previously opposing tribes to regain access to trade, grazing, farmland and water (see sections 3–6 for more information).

*Communication systems*

Finally, key informants mentioned that the advent of mobile phone networks in Darfur had a major impact on livelihoods.

This started in 2004, and coverage expanded significantly in 2006. This network has become the main way of transferring remittances from Khartoum or outside of the country to conflict-affected people in Darfur (Young, Jacobson et al., 2009). Mobile phones were said to have both positive and negative impacts, however. In addition to assisting the flow of remittances, they have had a positive impact on markets and personal safety, and make it easier for people to keep in touch with relatives. Negative impacts included the fact that bandits use phones to monitor the movement of goods, which makes looting easier. Within the wider war economy, money transfers by mobile phones have also been said to provide funds to rebels, militia or paramilitary troops.



# Chapter 4

## Emerging roles of professional associations, women's groups and networks

Community-based approaches (CBA) may have a number of different objectives (see Box 3). Community-based organisations (CBOs) are, or at least should be, representative of their communities (membership-based), and usually work in partnership with external agencies and service providers, including local government, the private sector and NGOs (Slaymaker, Christiansen et al., 2005). CBA in Darfur have a number of different objectives, although the predominant ones before the conflict appear to have been community empowerment and building social capital. NGOs and CBOs filled the gap left by the government by providing basic services in the form of relief, healthcare, marketing, resource management and animal health.

During the conflict, in particular in the IDP camps, the predominant objective of humanitarian agencies in working with CBOs has been to improve service delivery. Local organisations are often created as 'local intermediaries in the aid process', for instance relief committees, local NGOs or CBOs, or autonomous aid offices within rebel movements, as was also the case in Southern Sudan during the conflict there (AfricanRights, 1995); more sub-contractors than local partners. Humanitarian agencies generally do not go beyond this, for fear of compromising their neutrality and impartiality. In addition, supporting CBOs is perceived as threatening by the government as it provides alternative or competing forms of political representation, in this case reinforcing opposition to the government. This is particularly true in IDP camps and SLA-held areas. Committees in rural SLA areas, and committees established in camps, have therefore found it extremely difficult to register officially as CBOs. The danger of being seen as facilitating political organisation was also pointed out in an evaluation of ITDG's programme in 2005 (Martin, 2005).

### 4.1 Professional associations: blacksmiths and potters

Those with skills in demand prior to the conflict managed to continue to work and in some cases earned more during the conflict than beforehand. The blacksmiths' association in El Fasher is a good example. Several potters' and tanners' groups have been able to resume their businesses.

Practical Action started working with blacksmiths in Dar Es Salaam and Kebkabiya in the late 1980s, to produce agricultural tools and assist with marketing. Blacksmiths used to travel to

### Box 3: Objectives of community-based approaches (CBA)

1. Empowerment of people and communities. CBA have the potential to be inclusive, to empower communities and to strengthen links between civil society and government and non-state actors.
2. Improve the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of interventions. Critics say CBA simply shift the financial burden of service delivery. As such this may be inconsistent with a rights-based approach.
3. Build organisational capacity at the local level. The aim is typically to enhance social capital, but this is often applied without a good understanding of the cultural and political context.
4. Strengthening governance and links between the state and communities. However, it is often very difficult to integrate CBA with traditional sectoral and government approaches. Providing better services is not the same thing as strengthening governance, though it is often taken as such.

Source: Slaymaker, Christiansen et al., 2005.

rural areas to sell tools in weekly markets (e.g. in Taweila and Korma). During the conflict, many blacksmiths were displaced to El Fasher, and travelling to rural markets became unsafe. Similarly, rural traders could not come to El Fasher as the risk of travelling with money was too high. When they first arrived in El Fasher, the blacksmiths worked independently. However, counterparts from Kebkabiya showed them how to form an association and link with Practical Action, which then provided assistance. This included finding a space to work, facilitating contracts with international agencies and improving skills. Within a year the blacksmiths had organised themselves into an association, which was registered in 2005. Working as an association has enabled the blacksmiths to win major contracts with agencies including ICRC, FAO and Oxfam, in addition to Practical Action. In terms of income, they are doing better than before the conflict, and socially speaking they are more respected. Their business success has also led to increased political influence. According to one Practical Action evaluation, the chairman of the association in El Fasher was selected to be a member of the state parliament (Dengu, El-Garrai et al., 2006).

Potters' and tanners' groups formed spontaneously in some IDP settlements, and in the case of Kebkabiya they were supported by KSCS. In Abu Shook camp, female potters from Fata Borno formed a group to work together, comprising 300 women in total. Initial materials were bought with the women's own contributions, the assistance of their original omda and a small contribution from the Al Zibair Al Khariya charity and the African charitable association for motherhood, an Islamic agency. It took two years, from 2007 to 2009, for the women to secure enough funding to set up their group. Previously, members had worked mainly as domestic labourers or as potters' assistants. Members work in groups of 40 for two months, during which time they receive training in pottery-making. Working in a group means that the women share the costs of materials and water. Part of the motivation for forming the group was to preserve traditional pottery-making skills. At the time of writing the group was not registered by the HAC.

In Kebkabiya, women potters preferred to work individually rather than in a group. Whilst all materials are free, permission from landowners is required to collect mud, and the women have to pay to store their goods in the market before they are sold (5 SDG a night, or around \$2). Both male and female tanners set up businesses in Kebkabiya. One women's group established in 2003 has over 50 members. Demand for leather is high, and tanning is a more profitable business than pottery-making. A 5 SDG profit can be made from one skin and one person might produce ten skins a day. While pots might earn a similar profit, they take much longer to produce. The discarded wool can also be sold. Demand for leather is high. The main constraint tanners face is competition from traders, who can pay in cash upfront.

These examples show that, where people have skills that can be applied in any context and that are in demand by both local people and aid agencies, they can continue to function and even improve their situation during conflict. The establishment of a formal association enables members to attract large contracts from a range of actors. Working as a group also means that the cost and effort of supplying materials and inputs can be shared.

## 4.2 Women's groups

Women's groups played a key role in providing initial assistance for newly displaced and conflict-affected populations at the start of the conflict, and in negotiating for safer movement, trade and access to assistance. Oxfam and Practical Action began supporting women's groups in the late 1980s, and PA continues to do so. Activities focus on income generation through skills training (agro-processing, food storage, fuel-efficient stoves and handicrafts) and the provision of credit, as well as leadership training. These activities have an important role in bringing women together to share concerns and solve problems (Martin, 2005; Dengu, El-Garrai et al., 2006), and enhances their status as decision-makers in their communities.

The impact on actual income is less evident due to problems with marketing.

### 4.2.1 Women's negotiating role

Women play a key negotiating role between the government, the SLA and community leaders, as well as in the peace negotiations as part of the Darfur–Darfur Dialogue and Consultation (DDDC). Three examples can be highlighted here. The first concerns the Women's Development Association (WDA) in Kafod. Although the WDA was established in 2000, the women had previously worked together, including on a communal farm. Practical Action gave the women training on how to prioritise their activities, and built a kindergarten and a seedbank.

Kafod came under the control of the SLA in 2004. According to a representative from the WDA, agencies were prevented from working there because the SLA feared that they would gather information for the government. The WDA met local SLA commanders to explain their work with Practical Action, and in 2005 a meeting was organised between Practical Action, WDA and the SLA, at which it was agreed that the agency could resume its activities in the area. The omda was not involved until the signing of the agreement. Work continued until 2008, when most of the population of Kafod was displaced to El Fasher.

In the second example, women in Shengel Tobai played a key role in persuading local leaders to negotiate safe passage for them to El Fasher and Nyala, to access work and markets and visit relatives. In this case, there was no separate women's group, but the IDP committee includes ten women. Women in the camp discussed the issue of insecurity on the road with women in the IDP committee, who in turn raised the problem with the rest of the committee. In 2008, the IDP committee organised a meeting with the SLA-MM, the government and the African Union/UN Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). Following the meeting, the government and SLA-MM agreed to provide security along the road. While the situation has improved, checkpoints remain in place, and the 'tax' for using the road, levied by the SLA-MM, has increased from 20 to 100 SDG.

Our third example concerns an initiative called 'Kebkabiya free from arms', which aims to exclude armed individuals from the town's market. The initiative includes a women's group, the GoS commander, the town commissioner and the native administration. The initiative became possible following the appointment of a new commissioner for Kebkabiya in 2009, who was from the area.

There are several possible reasons why women came to play such a prominent role during the conflict in negotiating with political leaders to resume aid or improve safety. Women are most directly affected by restrictions on livelihoods, as they farm and travel to markets. They constitute the majority of the population in both IDP camps and rural areas. They also tend to seek practical solutions to immediate problems. Finally, they are likely to be seen as less violent or political, and



therefore perceived to be more neutral than many other actors in the conflict.

#### 4.2.2 *Assisting the newly displaced and others affected by conflict*

The WDA in Kafod provided assistance to IDPs in 2003 and 2005, using emergency stocks from Practical Action. Further assistance was provided in 2008, when much of the population of Kafod was displaced to El Fasher. Using a bank account in El Fasher, WDA distributed 200 SDG to 30 women, to be used for income-generating activities.

The WDA in Shengel Tobai was established in 1996, but its main activities (food processing and tailoring) collapsed at the start of the conflict. Nonetheless, the association continued to support needy members. The WDA also assisted new IDPs with shelter and food when they first arrived, alongside other CBOs. The WDA resumed its activities in 2008.

Providing assistance to newly displaced people is not unique to women's groups. KSCS distributed seeds stored in its warehouse when IDPs arrived in Kebkabiya, and established a committee to highlight the problems of IDPs to the Commissioner. Many IDPs also received assistance from individual host families.

### 4.3 CBO networks

The Rural Development Network (RDN) was established in 2005, and registered in 2006. The 18 VDCs in rural El Fasher supported by PA were in both GoS and SLA-held areas. As a 'neutral' actor, the network is in a better position to negotiate with the government and the SLA than traditional leaders, who are close either to the government or to the SLA, depending on who controls the area. As such the RDN has played a key mediating role between the two. The fact that El Fasher rural is home to a large number of ethnic groups, most of whom are not directly involved in the conflict (e.g. the Berti and Tunjur) is also a factor here: it would have been more difficult for CBOs from predominantly Zaghawa or Fur areas to play a similar mediating role.

In 2004–2005 security was poor: villagers faced high security risks when travelling to and from El Fasher town, and farming and other livelihood activities were very difficult. Many thought of migrating elsewhere. The RDN took the initiative and approached the government authorities to discuss travel conditions. Discussions were also held with SLA commanders, after which agreement was reached that people should be allowed to move freely within their home areas, and to and from El Fasher.

More recently, in 2009, the RDN mediated in a dispute between two villages, Dalal and Abu Digaise, over the Abu Degas Dam, which was rehabilitated by PA in 2007. Villagers in Dalal, downstream from the dam, complained that, during periods of drought (as in 2008 and 2009), the dam prevented water from reaching them, and argued that Abu Digaise wanted control over the water and was seeking to marginalise them. In August 2009 a group of 100 villagers from Dalal created a breach in the earth embankment at the *hafir* (local water reservoir) in Abu Digaise, raising the possibility of serious water shortages. The matter was referred to the police and the locality commissioner, who referred it on to the Ajaweed committee (a local conflict resolution mechanism). A recommendation was made by the committee to create a spillway where the hafir had been breached. At the local level, the RDN brought the two communities together in a workshop to discuss the issue and to improve relations between the two communities. Dialogue is ongoing at the time of writing.

The examples in this chapter show that community groups have been very successful in addressing common problems. They have formed associations and groups to generate income, and have negotiated safe access to farmland, markets and water. Women's groups and CBO networks have played a particularly prominent role. Neither is seen as pursuing an obvious political agenda; unlike government committee members and traditional leaders, many are ethnically heterogeneous and approaching the government as a group raises fewer suspicions than doing so as an individual.



# Chapter 5

## CBOs and committees in camp environments

### 5.1 Food security and threats to livelihoods

#### 5.1.1 Livelihood strategies

A number of studies and assessments have been done on the food security and livelihoods of IDP populations in Darfur.<sup>5</sup> Like them, this study found that, whilst IDPs' sources of livelihood have changed over time, livelihood activities remain marginal and badly paid. In Abu Shook and Kebkabiya, the main income sources for IDPs include brickmaking, domestic work, petty trade, water selling and seasonal migration for farm work (Taweila, Korma) or farming close to Abu Shook (e.g. in Abu Digaise). Brickmaking is done in two ways; either as labourers in brickmaking kilns or individually. The poorest are those working as labourers in the kilns (Adam, 2007). In Shengel Tobai the main income-earning strategy was work on tombac farms, which can be worth up to 20 SDG a day. Both brickmaking (in kilns) in El Fasher and tobacco farming in Shengel Tobai are highly lucrative for businessmen and landowners based in El Fasher, who can take advantage of cheap IDP labour.

In some cases IDPs have reached agreements with the current occupants of their land allowing them to resume farming on at least a portion of the land (see Box 4). The reasons for this are thought to be a loss of confidence in the peace process, a need to return to the land to maintain land rights regardless of any exploitative or coercive conditions and, on the side of the 'occupiers', a need to rebuild positive relationships with landowners.

While social networks continue to exist in camps, they operate within smaller groups than was the case before the conflict, with assistance being provided to extended family or people living close by. In Abu Shook and Shengel Tobai, women reported helping each other with celebrations by collecting money from each member of the social group, collecting money for people who need medical treatment or sharing meals with poorer neighbours or relatives. In Abu Shook, some women reported making 1,000 bricks for a poor household, which the household could then sell. Tanners in Kebkabiya similarly said they were able to assist the needy by making skins for them to sell. Sharing meals remains one of the most common means of social support, either with people living nearby or who are known from before (this was mentioned in Shengel Tobai).

<sup>5</sup> See for example E. F. Adam, *Interagency Livelihood Assessment in Abou Shook, Al Salaam and Zamzam IDP Camps, North Darfur, El Fasher, El Fasher, North Darfur Assessment Task Force, 2007*; H. Young, A. Osman et al., *Darfur: Livelihoods Under Siege*, FIF Center, 2005; and M. Buchanan-Smith and S. Jaspars, *Conflict, Camps and Coercion: The Continuing Livelihood Crisis in Darfur, W. Sudan, 2006*.

#### Box 4: Agreements between IDPs and current occupants of their land

Some informants reported that, in 2009, IDPs in Kebkabiya made arrangements with people occupying their land either to share the harvest or to farm part of their original holding. If sharing the harvest, the payment is two or three sacks of dura, depending on the harvest and the area of land planted. These arrangements may be motivated in part by a desire on the part of the IDPs to maintain their land rights and prevent loss of identity. On the other (Arab) side, there may be a desire to rebuild relations with other groups.

Similar arrangements were reported in West Darfur, where IDPs made agreements with those 'occupying' their traditional land enabling them to farm at least part of their land. An agreement was reported between the sultan of Masalit and Arab leaders who formed farming committees in 11 localities. This initiative started in 2008 and was supported by UNAMID. The ICRC has supported such agreements, for example just south of Al Geneina in Sandikoro and Hillat Zaghawa. In Hillat Zaghawa, there is a Crop Protection Committee consisting of returning Masalit and Awlad-Zeid and Mahajeriya Arabs. In Sandikoro, the committee comprises Masalit and Shigerat nomadic tribes. The ICRC runs a joint dialogue with the committees. Assistance often includes support for water and agriculture. In this particular case, ICRC provided donkey carts with drums for water, reducing congestion at water points. The agency also distributed seeds and tools. All interventions were discussed in detail and agreed via the Crop Protection Committees, and local purchases of inputs were made jointly with all tribes represented. Distributions and the monitoring and evaluation of projects were also conducted jointly. Follow-up with the individual communities is critical.

Source: Key informants in El Fasher and Khartoum.

Only people who have relatives who are traders in town are able to get loans.

A key strategy for all IDPs is to split their families, either as a direct consequence of displacement or to maximise livelihood options. As families fled, members moved in different directions. For example, a group of women interviewed in Abu Shook informed us that they had family members in Nyala, Kutum, Kebkabiya and Khartoum. They were not able to reunite because they were registered for food distribution in different places. Similarly, some family members of displaced blacksmiths in

Abu Shook fled to Kebkabiya, where they remain. For others, seasonal farming either in areas of origin or areas near to the camp has become a regular livelihoods strategy. Some family members remain in the camps because of the education and healthcare services available there.

### 5.1.2 Threats to livelihoods

The IDPs in the camps visited continue to face risks to their safety, although the nature of these risks has changed. In Abu Shook, IDPs face particular problems with increasing theft, both inside and outside the camp. Rising levels of theft were put down to reduced livelihoods opportunities since 2008, and the fact that thieves are not punished. Women said that they found it difficult to leave the house if no one else could guard it. Harassment associated with firewood collection appears to have decreased for IDPs (fewer people are collecting firewood), although some risks persist and women prefer to find work in town than to collect firewood or farm for income. Another key issue in Abu Shook, according to both women and youth groups interviewed, is violence associated with the use and trafficking of drugs and alcohol. In Shengel Tobai, security outside the camp has improved since the DPA, with a reduction in acute conflict between the government and the SLA, but IDPs face new forms of harassment, abuse and theft from SLA-MM soldiers when going to farms or the market (most IDPs are Fur and are perceived to support the SLA-AW). In Kebkabiya, unknown assailants have been burning down IDP shelters. According to IDP representatives, 39 houses were burnt down in a two-week period in December. Why is unclear. Rape of women continues whilst farming or collecting firewood, but goes unreported.

Increased fragmentation of the SLA and Arab militia and banditry (see section 2) limit trade along certain routes (e.g. the El Fasher–Kebkabiya road), increasing the cost of transport and thus the price of goods in the market. In some areas, local leaders or community groups have been able to make agreements for the resumption of trade (see sections 4 and 6), but in Kebkabiya this has not been possible because part of the road is controlled by ‘unknown’ armed groups. Even where such agreements can be made, transport costs have increased because longer routes have to be taken, entailing more checkpoints and thus more ‘taxes’.

The drought in 2009 has also reduced the livelihoods options for IDP populations, as this affects the availability of water to make bricks and the availability of farm work. Combined with increased transport costs, this has pushed up market prices. For example in Kebkabiya the cost of a sack of millet has risen from 90 SDG to 225 SDG. In addition, the NGO expulsions in March 2009 have reduced income from INGO salaries and incentives, as well as income from specific interventions. The money circulating in Kebkabiya from INGOs was substantial; MSF/B alone employed 260 people, and Oxfam 60. These NGOs also increased demand for goods in the local market. According to one focus group, the number of people making

bricks in Abu Shook has increased, possibly because of the arrival of UNAMID, which has fuelled a construction boom (Buchanan-Smith and Bromwich, 2008).

## 5.2 IDP committees, service delivery and capacity-building

### 5.2.1 Types of committees and control of IDP populations

Most camps have a number of committees to assist with the provision of assistance. This includes a main IDP committee, as well as committees established to assist with service provision and for capacity-building or training activities. In Abu Shook and Shengel Tobai, the IDP committee consists largely of newly appointed sheikhs and omdas; in Abu Shook, for example, only seven of the 24 sheikhs on the committee are original tribal leaders. The others moved to urban centres in Darfur or to Khartoum, as they were too closely aligned with government. In Shengel Tobai old camp, the main IDP committee consists of 93 sheikhs and five omdas, all of whom are newly elected. The traditional sheikhs and omdas fled to Kalma, Otash and Mershin in South Darfur. The large number of new leaders in Shengel Tobai is due to the fact that one sheikh now represents one village, and thus a much smaller group of people than in Abu Shook. Each of Kebkabiya’s 16 areas has one IDP leader and one leader from the resident community on the main committee responsible for humanitarian assistance.

The main responsibilities of the IDP committee include assisting in camp management, coordination with international agencies, representing the interests of IDPs and assisting with the distribution of assistance (Abu Shook), following and monitoring rations, keeping order at water points and health centres (Kebkabiya), structuring and organising the camp and giving approval to NGOs to operate in the camp, forming and monitoring new committees and resolving disputes (Shengel Tobai). This differs significantly from the responsibilities traditional sheikhs had in their home areas.

In the camps and IDP settlements visited (Abu Shook, Shengel Tobai and Kebkabiya), there was a huge number of different committees; generally, each agency working in these sites established its own committee to help implement its interventions. This includes service delivery committees, e.g. for food distribution, water and healthcare, and capacity-building committees for income generation, vocational training and human rights training. These committees were established by the IDP committee when new agencies came in, or when new programmes were started.

Membership of the different committees overlaps, with sheikhs and omdas from the IDP committee sitting on almost all the other committees too. This is mainly to allow them to exert as much control as possible over the provision of assistance, and will also enhance their status as leaders. As such, it could also further any political agendas they may have. The diagram in Figure 1 illustrates the overlap in membership and

links between the different committees in Abu Shook. Three committees stand out, the Food Relief Committee (FRC), which is entirely composed of omdas and sheikhs, and the women’s and veterinary committees, which are the only ones without omdas or sheikhs and have no direct link with the IDP committee. It therefore appears that maintaining as much control as possible over food distribution is most important to IDP leaders. Food aid is distributed in far larger quantities and is more valuable than the assistance provided to women or people with livestock. The numbers of beneficiaries involved in the latter is relatively small.

Tensions between the women’s committee and the IDP committee in Abu Shook illustrate what happens when committees that potentially control high levels of resources try to establish some independence. Many NGOs now focus their assistance on women’s groups, and the women’s committee tried to source funding independently from the IDP committee. The IDP committee would not allow this and removed the head of the women’s committee, claiming that it had become a political movement. Similarly, when DRA tried to establish a more representative and independent committee, it faced opposition from the sheikhs, who wanted to appoint the committee members themselves. In the end, a compromise was reached and a committee of six omdas, three youth and two women was set up. It is therefore difficult, in some camps

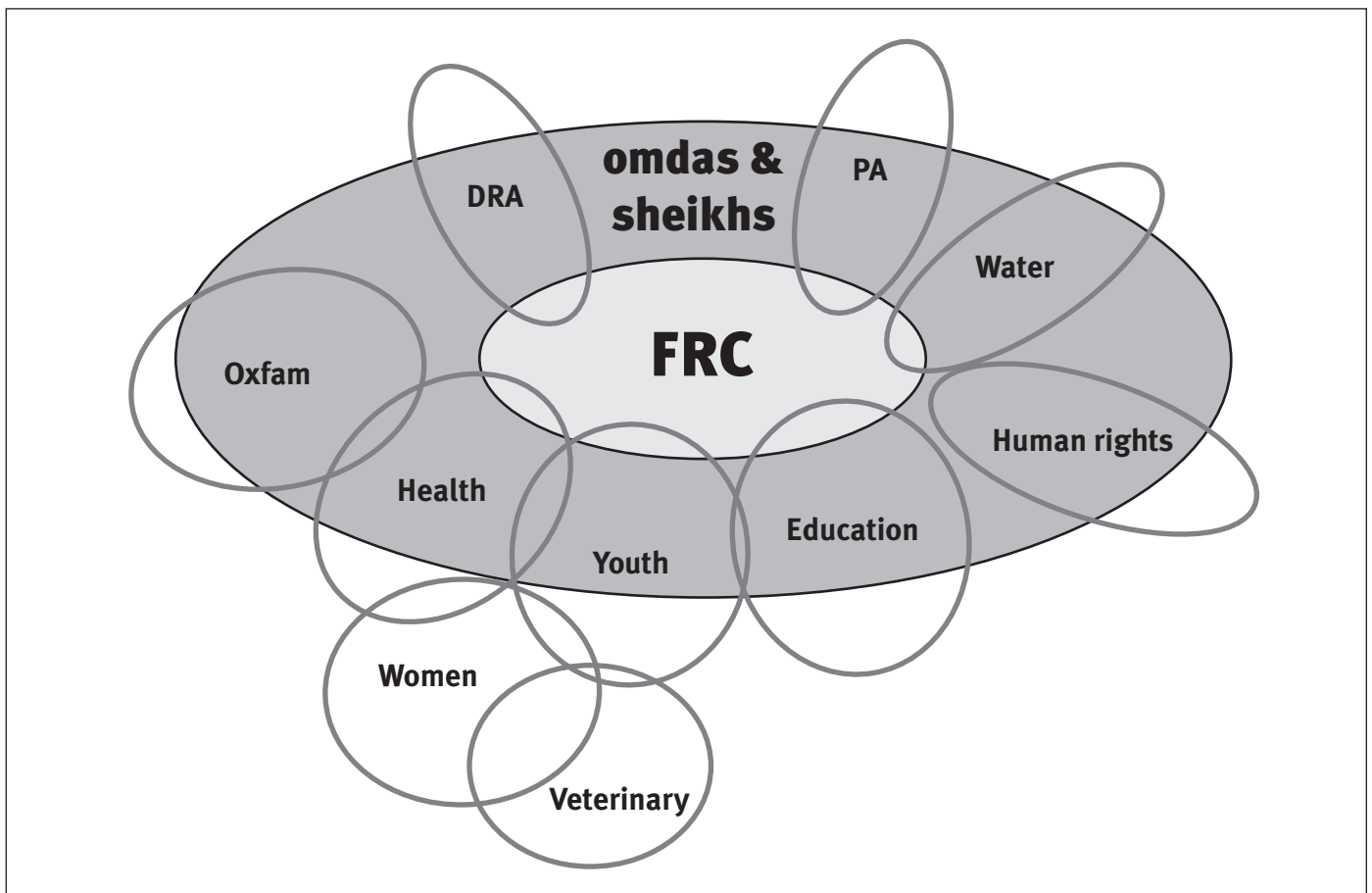
at least, for committees to function independently from the IDP committee and therefore to be truly representative and accountable to the IDP population.

5.2.2 Skills training and income generation

The first to be trained tend to be those who can read and write, who are then asked to train others. The poorest are less likely to receive training; according to women brickmakers, ‘you have to have some education and be able to provide input’. Those working in kilns do not have the time, and those working individually said that they had not been selected for training as the sheikhs and omdas usually chose their own relatives.

Income-generating activities for women included handicrafts and fuel-efficient stoves, with the agency providing training and possibly materials. In some cases the agency also organised sales or bought the goods made themselves. There is not much demand for these items. Demand for fuel-efficient stoves was initially high, but the income earned is only about 3 SDG per stove. For youth, training included brickmaking (stabilised soil bricks), masonry, welding and driving. Some skills training has led to improved income; examples include masons in Abu Shook, who can earn 40 SDG a day, compared to 7–10 SDG a day for unskilled labour. UNDP also reported successful training in Kalma camp in South Darfur, where

Figure 1: Committees in Abu Shook



young girls and boys received training in how to repair mobile phones, satellite dishes and computers.

Most activities became more difficult after the agency expulsions, due to lack of money to buy inputs or lack of equipment. One exception was a women's group in Abu Shook, which continued to make handicrafts (women's purses) at a profit. Youth groups have found it difficult to apply their new skills to generate income, as there is little demand in the camps and it is difficult to compete with skilled labour in town. In Shengel Tobai, women were only given training and were not able to buy the inputs or materials required to set up businesses. In all the camps and settlements visited, IDPs reported that the loss of income from NGO salaries and incentives had a much larger impact.

Another challenge to income generation following skills training is that trainees were selected from different blocks or sections in the camp and were thus from different areas of origin or different ethnic groups. This approach did not build on existing social networks, and in the current climate of political fragmentation and mistrust this makes it difficult for ethnically heterogeneous groups to work together. According to women in Abu Shook, people from different areas found it difficult to organise themselves as a group for income generation. In contrast, when people do organise themselves for social assistance or income generation, they do so according to their place of origin. The women potters in Abu Shook provide a good example of this, as do the various forms of social assistance. People said repeatedly that they would work faster, and more efficiently, with people from the same group or village.

Some committees, for example the youth group in Abu Shook, expressed a desire to register as a CBO and thus attract funding from a wider range of sources. However, they reported that, even though there has been a call from HAC for new organisations to register, this has generally not been possible for IDPs. This appears to be for two reasons. First, it might encourage IDPs to stay in towns rather than return to their areas of origin. Second, it could facilitate political organisation and mobilisation within the camp. A third reason, according to brickmakers working in kilns in Abu Shook, is that the owners of the kilns would not allow them to organise themselves as this would enable them to demand better working conditions and higher wages. There are some indications, however, that groups may be able to register according to their areas of origin, for example some of the women's groups in Abu Shook.

Capacity-building by local NGOs is difficult. Both DDA and DRA reported great resistance from IDPs to their presence in Abu Shook and Shengel Tobai. They are seen as part of a government initiative, and are also considered less efficient than international NGOs and less able to attract resources. Establishing programmes in the camps therefore took time, with extensive communication and numerous meetings, and in some cases could only be done with the mediation of international NGOs like Oxfam America. It did not help that these NGOs came in with more developmental livelihoods approaches, which expected contributions from the IDPs themselves and were small-scale, rather than simply distributing goods or providing services.

# Chapter 6

## CBOs, committees and institutions in rural populations

Research into community-based approaches in rural areas examined in particular the work of Practical Action in El Fasher rural, and the work of DDA in Dar Es Salaam. Villages visited included Abu Digaise and Lawabid in El Fasher rural, and committee members were interviewed from Kuem and Shagra villages. In Dar Es Salaam, Gered Basham was visited. Secondary information was also collected from key informants in El Fasher and Khartoum on areas closer to the heart of the conflict, mainly in the Jebel Marra area and West Darfur, where in some cases local committees were formed spontaneously to improve access to land or water, or local agreements were made to facilitate trade.

### 6.1 Food security and threats to livelihoods

#### 6.1.1 Livelihood strategies

Crops grown in the area include sorghum and millet as staple crops, and tombac and vegetables as cash crops. Tombac was sold in El Fasher or Khartoum. During the first phase of the conflict key issues were access to markets and the risk of attack. Trade was also affected by the inability of traders to travel to villages and towns close by El Fasher, and between places like Kuem and El Fasher. Initially, traders paid low prices for goods in villages because of insecurity. Transport costs and taxes increased for tombac traders, and many went out of business. This also meant that traders were no longer able to provide credit to farmers to hire labour (Buchanan-Smith and Abdullah Fadul, 2008). Prices increased again after the DPA as security improved. For example in Abu Digaise the price of tombac rose from 60 SDG/guntar before the DPA to 100 SDG. It was also easier for traders to cheat when insecurity was high, as payment had to be collected in El Fasher town. After the DPA, a key issue is increased transport costs along main roads. Women in Graiweid Basham cannot sell their agricultural products in El Fasher because the cost of transport is so high that they would not make a profit, despite wide disparities in prices (a box of okra, for instance, costs 30 SDG in Gered Basham and 65 SDG in El Fasher).

In Gered Basham a new livelihood strategy for women is to roast meat for SLA soldiers, which can earn up to 200 SDG a day. The main source of livelihood, however, remains the agricultural scheme, in which 450 feddans<sup>6</sup> is irrigated by the Malam Alwadian dam. The way in which the agricultural scheme is administered has changed since the SLA took control of the area. Before 2002, the government distributed

land and provided inputs; 50% of production had to go back to the government. When the SLA took over, land became available to anyone who could pay 20 SDG for a feddan, but no assistance was given in terms of training or inputs. In 2009, the agricultural research station was able to start a demonstration farm again, with assistance from the Ministry of Agriculture.

All communities visited received some displaced people. Abu Digaise took in people from Korma in 2004 and Kafod in 2008 (about 37 families in total). In Shagra and Kuem IDPs passed through on their way to El Fasher, and in Lawabid IDPs arrived from Abu Gow, Marica and Kuma (about 200 households). In Abu Digaise and elsewhere, IDPs largely carried out farmwork as share-croppers. In Gered Basham, residents complained that less agricultural land was available because of the influx of people from elsewhere.

#### 6.1.2 Threats to livelihoods and community responses

El Fasher rural has been less affected by conflict than other areas, and is also traditionally a relatively wealthy part of Darfur, in particular the tombac-growing areas to the west of El Fasher town. Another key feature of El Fasher rural is the mix of tribes that live there: Tunjur and Berti in Abu Digaise, and Berti, Zaghawa, Fur, Tunjur and Borgo in Kuem. Both Abu Digaise and Gered Basham hosted agricultural schemes before the conflict (with the one in Abu Digaise supported by Practical Action during the conflict). Dar Es Salaam, especially its western part, has been more heavily affected by conflict as it is primarily inhabited by Zaghawa, who arrived there in the famine decade of the 1970s; in the early years of the conflict, access to El Fasher and other government towns was severely restricted.

During the early years of the conflict, fear of attack severely restricted farming, even in villages that were not physically affected by the conflict. In Shagra, for example, rain-fed farms went unvisited for two years. In Kuem, which suffered repeated attacks up to 2008, about 20% of the population was displaced and livestock looted. Social networks contracted, and now consist only of networks within villages, not between them. There is too much mistrust and fear for communities to work together.

In almost all the villages visited, village representatives tried to make arrangements to improve their safety and freedom of movement and therefore their ability to farm and access markets. The role of the RDN in rural El Fasher, as described in section 4.3, is one example. In Kuem, village representatives organised a reconciliation meeting with a

<sup>6</sup> The official unit used for land measurement. One feddan = 4,200 sq m or 1.038 acres.

neighbouring Arab village (Umm Jabakh) after the DPA. The reconciliation conference involved all community leaders: traditional leaders, but also the Salvation Committee, the women's committee and the VDC. In Lawabid, a government-held village throughout the conflict, the community established 'self-defence forces' armed by the government, to keep the road to El Fasher secure. These forces also carried out night patrols. In Gered Basham, it was not possible to negotiate safe access to markets and farms and the situation did not improve until after the DPA. Before this, people got supplies from El Fasher by smuggling, using donkey carts at night.

## 6.2 Village development committees, food security and livelihood support

Beginning in the late 1980s, Oxfam and Practical Action encouraged the formation of VDCs and WDAs in Kebkabiya, Jebel Si, Dar Es Salaam and, later, El Fasher rural, Korma and Taweila. During the conflict PA continued to provide this support, albeit in the relatively safer area of rural El Fasher. According to evaluations of PA programmes, it has achieved considerable success, particularly in terms of developing and maintaining social capital and social cohesion (Martin, 2005). Much of PA's most recent food security programme was carried out during ongoing conflict, but even then the number of VDCs increased significantly. The projects themselves include institutional development, such as management, planning and finance skills, as well as technical skills and access to services, including seed and grain banks, goat restocking and paravet training, and agricultural support including construction of terraces, earth dams, water reservoirs and shallow wells, and training of agricultural extension workers. Interventions supported through the WDAs included handicrafts, fuel-efficient stoves, food processing and micro-credit. In Abu Digaise, villagers said they were better off during the conflict than they had been before because of the training, inputs and services that they received.

Even at the height of the conflict in El Fasher rural, VDCs continued to function. Between 2003 and 2005, VDC members came to El Fasher for training or to receive inputs to take back to the village. PA staff could no longer visit villages directly due to insecurity and difficulties in getting travel permits for SLA-held areas. Some villages ceased activities, for example Shagra, as they were concerned about looting. Some of the risks associated with project implementation during this time are given in Box 5. In Lawabid, the VDC was able to link its movements and the movement of supplies with convoys protected by armed guards. People from Dar Es Salaam, however, found it more difficult to travel to El Fasher to receive support from DDA. The distance was greater, and as the majority of Dar Es Salaam's inhabitants were Zaghawa they were perceived as the enemy by the government in El Fasher.

The Rural Development Network VDC network was established in 2005, following a meeting between Practical Action and VDC representatives. The creation of the RDN was important

### Box 5: Some risks and constraints in project support

- **Theft.** Project assets such as seed banks, community grain banks, revolving funds and small livestock were stolen, and were very difficult to recover. PA advised people to store grain and other items in several houses, rather than keeping them in a single store. Goods were taken at checkpoints. VDC and community leaders protected water points.
- **Difficulty in moving goods.** Between 2003 and 2005, there were difficulties in getting supplies, particularly fuel and cement, into SLA areas.
- **Increased transport costs.** Food and transport costs increased by 300% in 2006, and transaction costs also increased (Dengu, El-Garrai et al. 2006).

in enabling continued support for the VDCs when PA was not able to reach rural areas; it was the link between PA and the VDCs (and thus a form of remote management). Later, it enabled the VDCs to attract funding from different sources and allowed the network to expand. The RDN started with 18 VDCs and now works with 56. These villages all receive more development inputs now than before the conflict.

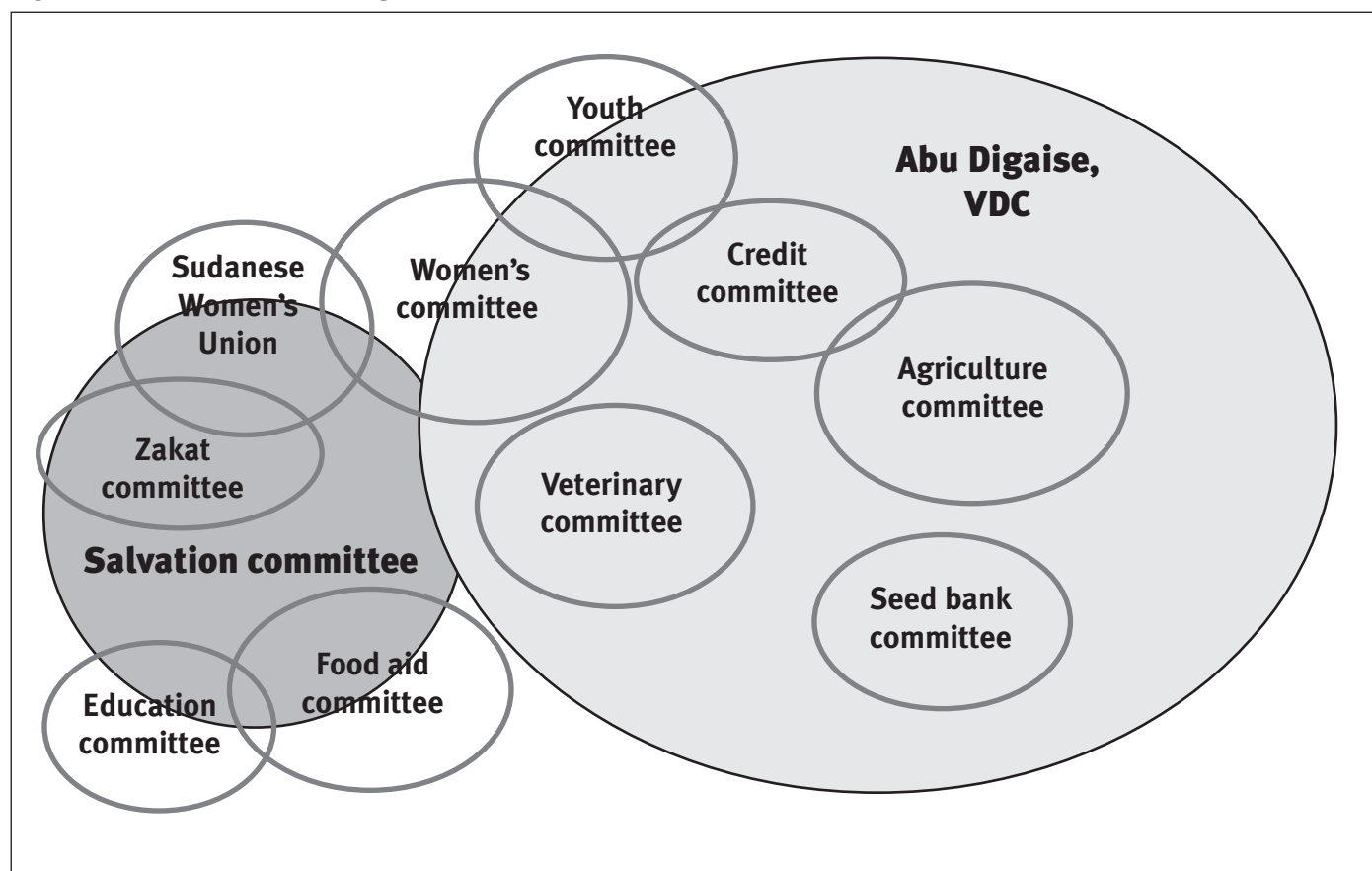
Two other networks were also established, a WDA network and a market network. One of the roles of the market network was to provide marketing and price information to its members, advising farmers of the best times and places to sell their produce. Knowing prices in different markets also gives farmers greater bargaining power with traders. In some cases, the network sent questionnaires to member villages, in others it made use of mobile phones, which it distributed to ten societies. However, this project was not extended in 2006 due to lack of funding as market interventions were not seen as part of the humanitarian response. The market network is now mainly involved in interventions to improve agricultural production.

## 6.3 Types and functions of different committees at village level

At village level, several other, overlapping committees exist in addition to the VDC. Some of the committees in Abu Digaise, and the relationships between them, are shown in Figure 2. The two main committees are the VDC and the Salvation Committee. While most of the VDC sub-committees are separate from the (government) Salvation Committee, food aid and education are closely linked to the government. In Lawabid, the food aid committee was said to be essentially the Salvation Committee, apparently because Salvation Committee members represented the community in discussions with WFP. Whether this is significant depends on the nature of political leadership within the village, but it does indicate a lack of independence, suggesting the need for some accountability measures, such as giving the VDC or women's groups monitoring responsibilities. It should also be borne in mind, however, that the VDC is itself not



Figure 2: Committees in Abu Digaise



necessarily truly representative if significant population changes have occurred during the conflict. IDPs are usually not included in VDCs, as the committee is only elected once every two years.

In some VDCs members found it difficult to keep up their financial contributions. In Kuem, for example, many could not afford the 1 SDG/month subscription, making it difficult for committee members to raise funds to travel to El Fasher to visit PA or RDN offices.

Selection of beneficiaries is not necessarily according to criteria of vulnerability to food insecurity. Beneficiaries were usually selected on the basis of existing ability or interest (in particular in the case of training). Whilst IDPs may not be on the VDCs, in most villages visited or about which information was gathered residents assisted IDPs and they were included in food assistance if they arrived before 2005 (when the registration was done). In Gered Basham, residents alone were perceived as being entitled to assistance. In this respect, the provision of services such as veterinary assistance and healthcare is particularly appropriate as services are provided for everyone in the community, as opposed to restocking or skills training, which benefit only a select group. PA has close links with line ministries; for example, training of paravets is done by the Ministry of Health, and agricultural extension is carried out with the assistance of the Ministry of Agriculture. Other agencies take a similar approach.

#### 6.4 Negotiation roles of local committees: increased social and political capital

Overall, and as previous evaluations have also concluded, the PA project in El Fasher rural has contributed to increased social cohesion within communities. It has also increased coordination, collaboration and information-sharing between villages and with external agencies. More importantly for conflict environments, however, it has also increased political capital,<sup>7</sup> as the formation of networks enabled villages in government and SLA-held areas to come together and liaise with both parties to keep the area safe for farming and enable access to markets (see section 4).

The heterogeneity of ethnic groups in El Fasher rural and their history of living together no doubt contributed to this, as did the fact that many tribes were not directly associated with the conflict or with the SLA. Interviews with networks and VDCs indicated that the training they received in crisis management helped them to liaise with both sides of the conflict and assert their neutrality. Such an approach would be more difficult in areas where people are more directly linked with one of the opposition movements, such as areas inhabited predominantly by Fur (e.g. Kebkabiya) or

<sup>7</sup> Political capital can be interpreted as proximity to power, for example through representation and a role in local institutions or connections to structures of power.

Zaghawa (e.g. the western part of Dar Es Salaam). In this case, individual arrangements are much more likely (see below).

### 6.5 Need-specific groups: local agreements over water, trade and land

The role of the RDN in negotiating with the SLA and the government, or the role of women's groups in mediating with leaders in Shengel Tobai and Kebkabiya, represent different examples of negotiations over access to land and markets. In addition, there are 'institutions' that regulate the use of natural resources within groups or negotiate agreements between previously opposing ethnic groups. These usually centre around land (access to farms or grazing land), water and trade (access to markets and trade routes). They take the form of committees which develop rules for accessing these resources within communities (e.g. water), or groups which make agreements between communities (this could include development committees, women's groups and traditional leaders). These committees or groups are different from the ethnically heterogeneous committees established by international agencies such as CARE in Kass and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) in Zalingei, which have dual objectives of livelihood support and peace-building (Jaspars and O'Callaghan 2008; Bromwich, 2009).

In contrast with the committees established by some NGOs, communities' own initiatives tend to be what we term 'need-specific': intended to resolve specific problems around land, trade or water. Examples in Jebel Marra are shown in Box 6. We have already seen examples of land agreements between IDPs and those currently living on their land in Box 4. In most cases, these 'need-specific' initiatives tend to involve traditional leaders and other community groups, such as the VDC or women's groups.

Another example of a trade agreement between Arab and Fur groups is given in Box 7. Whilst some arrangements to continue trade existed from 2004, they have increased since the DPA. Agreements are largely concerned with establishing or re-establishing markets, migration routes and access to services (for nomadic groups) (Flint, 2009).

These kinds of agreements between opposing tribes are only possible where the frontlines are relatively stable. In situations where control is continuously shifting, as in Taweila and Korma, it is difficult for the local population to make such agreements, because the authorities may change from one day to the next and any agreements made would not hold. In addition, the increased fragmentation of militia and SLA groups means that making agreements to keep roads open is becoming more difficult.

#### Box 6: Committees in Jebel Marra

In the Fur area of Kurifal in Jebel Marra, the local population spontaneously formed a water committee to regulate the use of water from a dam and four handpumps. The Kurifal community is scattered amongst several villages, and currently 27% of the population are IDPs. The ICRC proposed building a dam, which was expected to benefit 5,000 people. The villages have a history of community work for small dam construction, road repair, school construction, crop harvesting, etc. During the preliminary discussions, it was stressed that year-round truck access to the wadi would be indispensable to the realisation of the dam project. Within three weeks, a new community road was cleared by hand linking the wadi to the dam site.

The role of Kurifal Water Committees in Jebel Marra is to establish a schedule and rights of use for water sources (wells, pumps, dams, streams) to a community or group of communities. They are usually composed of sheikhs and farmers. In Kurifal, the use of the water-pump is carefully regulated, with each household given a narrow window once every three days to fill a maximum of two 20-litre jerry cans. The right of use for the seasonal dam is administered in a similar fashion.

In the zone between SLA-AW and the GoS in Jebel Marra, a Fur committee came to the ICRC to ask for help in opening up land. The committee had negotiated access with Arab tribes, and in a written agreement between the two it was stated that 1-2 feddan had been given to Arab tribes for cultivation, that grazing for fodder after the harvest would be available for them and that the transportation of produce to market could be outsourced to Arab tribes. The ICRC assisted with ploughing over 150 feddan of land by tractor in 2008 and again in 2009. The project had multiple benefits: it opened up fertile land and facilitated links between pastoralists and farmers. Since then the ICRC has been inundated with requests for similar help, though it is unlikely that further ploughing will take place this year.

Source: ICRC Khartou.

#### Box 7: Agreements over access to trade

In 2006, Fur living in Jeldo in Jebel Marra made an agreement with Arabs south-east of Kebkabiya, so that they could continue to access livestock for meat, and Arab populations could access agricultural products, such as grains, fruit and vegetables. Various community leaders were involved (traditional leaders, militia leaders, IDP leaders and women's groups). The main aim of the agreement was to enable each side to safely use the road which linked their two areas, facilitating trade between the two groups.

# Chapter 7

## Approaches of international agencies

### 7.1 Key food security interventions and changes in approach over time

As in most conflict-related humanitarian crises, food aid is the key food security response. Over time, food aid has been complemented by a range of other food security interventions. These include interventions to reduce expenditure, for example milling vouchers (Mattinen and Palmaera, 2008), production support such as fodder distribution, veterinary care and agricultural support (seeds and tools, water harvesting, seed multiplication, seed vouchers) in camps and for rural populations, as well as various forms of skills and vocational training and income generation. Natural resource management is now also considered an important component of food security and livelihoods programming (for example alternative building technology, tree planting and fuel-efficient stoves), though in practice this is still limited. Examples of income-generating activities include the distribution of donkey carts, start-up packages for businesses and micro-credit. Vocational training often includes the production of handicrafts, food processing, masonry and mechanics. Interventions that support markets, access to land, remittance flows or address other underlying causes of food insecurity are limited. A suggested classification for livelihoods programming in conflict is given in Box 8.

### 7.2 Engaging with CBOs, committees and government institutions

The previous sections have described the various CBOs and committees that international agencies may work with. Section 4 showed that there are a number of objectives for community-based approaches, ranging from community empowerment, promoting sustainability and strengthening governance to improving the effectiveness of service delivery. Developmental approaches aim for the former, and humanitarian approaches are usually limited to the latter.

In Darfur, a key reason for working with local organisations is to gain or maintain access to rural populations. Similar approaches have been used in Afghanistan and Somalia. In these circumstances monitoring becomes more difficult, and it is more difficult to ensure accountability (Stoddard, Harmer et al., 2006). In Darfur, the expulsion of many international agencies and the current GoS policy of 'sudanisation' has made the focus on working with local organisations even greater, though national NGOs and CBOs have found it difficult to fill the gap. Three key national NGOs were also closed down when the INGOs were expelled. The statement on 'sudanisation' revives a policy issued in the 1990s requiring all

#### Box 8: Livelihoods programming in conflict situations

*Livelihood provisioning (directly affecting outcomes).* These are interventions to meet basic needs (through the provision of in-kind goods – including food aid – or cash, or minimising expenditure by providing services free of charge, goods, cash or vouchers for basic items or services), or that contribute to improving personal safety.

*Livelihood protection (protecting assets/preventing negative outcomes).* These are interventions that prevent migration to camps (e.g. support to rural populations), reduce vulnerability by diversifying livelihood opportunities (cash, vouchers, production support, income generation), protect livestock and agricultural assets or help recover assets (inputs for agriculture, small-scale business, micro-credit, extension services).

*Livelihood promotion (improving strategies and assets and supporting PIPs).* These are interventions that create new livelihoods assets (e.g. skills/vocational training), improve access to markets and services (vouchers, infrastructure, producers' cooperatives/organisations), support informal institutions (e.g. CBO capacity-building), promote access to information (services, entitlements and rights), or influence policy (e.g. land rights and land occupation, compensation for lost assets, border controls and remittance flows).

Source: Jaspars and Maxwell, 2009.

international agencies to work with local partners. In fact, the relative freedom international agencies enjoyed in Darfur from 2004 to 2008 was the exception, rather than the rule (another exception was in the mid-1980s).

Modalities for remote management are listed in Table 3. All are currently used in Darfur. Service delivery and relief assistance in rural areas is usually done with local committees, or through national staff. AHA, for instance, works mainly with national staff; international staff usually only make day visits to areas outside of El Fasher. In addition to working with Food Relief Committees, WFP plans to take a more community based approach in 2010, whilst at the same time phasing down the general ration. Plans are to introduce school-feeding and to carry out FFT/FFW for adults in camps, and to support water harvesting, seed banks, bio-fuel technology and other environmental projects in rural areas (WFP Sudan, 2010). WFP has also started working with KSCS in Kebkabiya to carry out food distribution monitoring and health and hygiene education

(‘soft services’ such as monitoring are often considered more appropriate for a remote management approach (Stoddard, Harmer et al., 2006)).

PA is one of the few agencies still working with CBOs in rural areas. Its continued support for trade associations such as blacksmiths is also exceptional. Few other similar examples were found, although there appears to be scope for expanding this kind of intervention, and many NGOs and UN agencies, including FAO and WFP, now work with local networks. Oxfam America works with DDA in Shengel Tobai and with KSCS in Kebkabiya, and is supporting the establishment of a network of CBOs in Shengel Tobai town. Like the RDN in El Fasher, this network is to be ethnically heterogeneous. FAO started working directly with local NGOs several years ago. For UNHCR, working with CBOs is more problematic for bureaucratic reasons. Overall, most CBOs and local NGOs still find it difficult to attract support and funding. A recent UNDP capacity mapping study should assist in identifying suitable local organisations, although the study only looked at formal registered CBOs (Partners in Development, 2009). As mentioned, committees set up in the camps find formal registration difficult.

ICRC has recently taken a different approach, actively searching for local community initiatives which attempt to address lack of access to sustainable livelihoods. This may include IDP and host initiatives, such as the rehabilitation of host resources (land, water, roads). Lessons from 2009, where support was given for agreements between IDPs and those who have settled on their land or between opposing tribes to access land, also indicated that this can yield positive results. The difference is therefore that ICRC will support existing initiatives, rather than create new committees with which to work.

In agricultural and livestock programming, agencies have worked with communities and line ministries for years. Although ministry staff are not able to visit rural SLA-held areas, they can provide skilled staff able to train community workers, including paravets and agricultural extension officers. Thus, international agencies work with secondments from line ministries, while providing vaccines, cold chains, transport and unskilled staff. Programmes are also coordinated to varying degrees by the relevant ministries, or at least coordination meetings take place in the offices of the relevant ministry. FAO works closely with the Ministry of Agriculture on plant protection, range protection and crop assessments. Vocational training is increasingly carried out jointly with government technical schools. A UNDP-funded project in El Fasher, implemented by DRA, follows the government syllabus and works with government-employed teachers.

Another example of more extensive collaboration involves UNICEF, WHO and the Ministry of Health. WHO technical staff have counterparts in the ministry, there is an MOU between the ministry and all INGOs engaging in health care (including in camps), and WHO and UNICEF have channelled funds directly to

specific projects within the ministry. The same approach is used in GoS and rebel-held parts of the state (Collinson, Buchanan-Smith et al., 2009). Similarly, ICRC works with the State Water Corporation, sharing information about water interventions in both GoS and rebel-held areas (Collinson, Buchanan-Smith et al., 2009). Providing direct funding to other line ministries has become more difficult since January 2010, as all funds now have to go into general accounts rather than a separate account for the project. This reduces transparency and accountability.

From interviews, capacity is a key concern for international agencies working with local organisations or taking community-based approaches, particularly in proposal writing and reporting. There is also concern over the high turnover of staff due to the more lucrative job opportunities available with UN agencies. These concerns are reinforced by the capacity mapping exercise cited above, which noted weaknesses in management, organisation and governance, and finance, representation and accountability systems (Partners in Development, 2009). The advantages of working with local organisations are of course that they have in-depth knowledge of local communities and better access, and may actually be more accountable to communities than international NGOs because of their closer proximity (always assuming they are truly representative). Agencies also had concerns about guaranteeing the impartiality and neutrality of their operations, as CBOs clearly represent particular tribes and the political affiliations of their communities. This is discussed further below.

At the same time, procedures for registering CSOs (civil society organisations, which includes NGOs, CBOs and others) are unclear and incoherent between state and federal authorities; screening processes are lengthy and the right of IDPs to organise is restricted, making it difficult for CSOs to register. This in turn makes it difficult for international agencies to work with CSOs to promote livelihoods (Partners in Development, 2009). CSOs are unable to attract external funding without registration with the HAC, but the HAC is widely perceived by both international and local agencies as closely linked to security bodies (Partners in Development, 2009).

### 7.3 Principles and promoting effective local governance

Humanitarian agencies often work outside of state structures with the aim of maintaining humanitarian principles. As such, they pay little attention to processes affecting the social contract between the state and civilians or the relationship between the state and communities in crisis and conflict. The main concern is often to minimise harm and avoid legitimising local authorities (Slaymaker, Christiansen et al., 2005). The focus is on agencies’ own accountability to beneficiaries for direct service provision, rather than the accountability of the state. As the examples above show, however, there may be opportunities to work with a government’s technical departments, and in fact under International Humanitarian Law there is an obligation to assist the state in meeting its responsibilities to protect and assist its

**Table 3: Remote control mechanisms**

Approach	Agent	Description	Potential benefits	Potential weaknesses
Remote control*	National staff	Agency senior staff direct programming and manage local employees from a distance	Continuity of leadership Better oversight	Communications problems National staff bear great responsibility but have little authority
Remote support	National staff	Local staff assume decision-making authority	Capacity-building (individuals) No time lag for decision-making More flexibility	Lack of oversight Dearth of experienced national staff Corruption risk
Subcontracting arrangements	Local NGOs	Programmes formerly implemented or managed by international agency turned over to local NGO	Capacity-building (organisations) Greater acceptance Better targeting	Partiality Lack of contextual analysis Difficult to identify/screen
Community partnership arrangements	CBOs/community leaders	International agency arranges for community group or leaders to implement some portion of its programme (e.g. aid distribution)	More stable and familiar presence to local population Better targeting of beneficiaries Community ownership More resilient to insecurity	Partiality May not be representative Risk of elite capture
Government partnership arrangements	National or local government authorities	INGO develops programme in consultation with government authorities and/or hands over existing programme as 'exit strategy'	Promotes long-term development May promote security via increased community acceptance	More suitable for development aims than emergency relief Independence, neutrality suffer Government may not have local support Corruption risk
Outsourcing	Commercial contractors	Fee for service arrangement with private firm (e.g. trucking company) to do basic provision		

Source: Stoddard et al., 2006.

\* Although 'remote control' has negative connotations to some, we include it as the most appropriate term of reference, particularly to distinguish the direct management nature of these arrangements from mere hands-off 'remote support' operations.

citizens. Opportunities in Darfur are limited, however, particularly given the lack of transparency of many line ministries.

In Darfur, civil society organisations are portrayed as suffering problems of elitism, manipulation and exclusivity and poor capacity. They are also seen as urban-based and urban-biased. Division on political, geographical and tribal/ethnic

lines is a feature of all Darfur CSOs, whether based in Darfur or Khartoum (Partners in Development, 2009). Even within communities, CBOs often represent the better-off or elite sections of society, although this may not necessarily be a problem as long as decision-making is transparent and there are accountability mechanisms within the community. Such inequalities may become more extreme and politicised in

situations of conflict, however, where local organisations are likely to be subject to a variety of political and economic pressures and traditional leaders take on political roles. An agency working with CBOs in such conditions may find it difficult to maintain a position of neutrality and impartiality. That said, this study found that, whereas CBOs may be seen as partial by the international community, they are seen as neutral by local actors, or at least more neutral than traditional or political leaders, and for this reason came to play a key role in mediating and negotiating between different sides of the conflict for access to land and trade. In other words, while they may be subject to political pressures in distributing external resources, in negotiating and mediating with opposing tribes or factions they are seen as much more neutral than traditional community leaders or new political leaders. The findings from examining CBOs in some camps and rural areas indicate that ways of promoting impartiality might include working with

CBOs which are close to the communities they assist; ensuring a separation between committees which have a political function and committees which have a development function; monitoring by CBOs which are not involved in the distribution of resources (e.g. as done by WFP in Kebkabiya). WFP also proposed links with the University of El Fasher to work with university graduates to carry out monitoring.

Strengthening government institutions and civil society needs to go beyond training and needs long-term commitment. With the typically short timeframes of humanitarian actors, it is also difficult to create links between the formal state and community-based institutions and to extend these to higher administrative levels (Serrano, 2009). In protracted crisis contexts such as Darfur, these short-term timeframes can no longer be justified. What is needed is longer-term, holistic support for food security and livelihoods.

# Chapter 8

## Conclusions and recommendations

### 8.1 Conclusions

Local institutions and community-based approaches have changed significantly over the course of the conflict in Darfur. Government institutions such as the Ministry of Agriculture can no longer reach many rural areas controlled by opposition movements. Political leadership (such as the heads of Popular Committees) and tribal leaders fled rural areas or were killed. Existing markets are severely disrupted and new markets have developed as part of the war economy. Social networks contracted and changed, although people continue to provide help to their neighbours and relatives when needed. Many CBOs and local NGOs ceased to function because of displacement, because the areas where they worked became inaccessible, because development funding dried up or because support from international NGOs ceased.

Large numbers of new international NGOs came into Darfur and created new committees as part of their work. These initiatives pay little attention to pre-conflict institutions and are not based on much analysis of how the institutional context has changed. Whilst pre-conflict CBOs were largely established to empower communities and strengthen governance, during the conflict committees were established to improve the effectiveness of service delivery and capacity-building. Both before and during the conflict, there has been a close relationship between traditional and government institutions and those established by the aid community. This raises issues about the longer-term impact of the aid community on local governance.

International agencies also established IDP camp management committees, usually composed of newly elected leaders closely linked with the political leadership of IDPs in camps. Committees for food security and livelihoods work are closely controlled by this group. Growing insecurity for international aid workers and the expulsion of several leading international NGOs in March 2009 increases the emphasis on working with local organisations.

**Some professional associations have done particularly well during the conflict as their products continue to be in high demand.** Some village-based CBOs established prior to the conflict continue to receive support and are able to continue providing a range of food security interventions. **The establishment of CBO networks has been particularly successful, not only because this enables continued access to rural areas by remote management, but also because the mix of tribes and villages within the networks gives them a valuable negotiation and dispute settlement role.** An important feature of both the pre-conflict CBOs and of the networks is that they are

heterogeneous in terms of ethnic groups and livelihoods. The establishment of networks beyond rural El Fasher needs further investigation, particularly those involving ethnic groups more directly involved in the conflict, e.g. the work of Oxfam America in Shengel Tobai and of Ajaweed in Mellit and Kebkabiya. **There are also examples of ‘needs-specific committees’ established on communities’ own initiative to negotiate agreements between opposing tribes in response to specific problems such as access to land, markets or water. Women’s groups have played prominent roles during the conflict, particularly as neutral mediators and negotiators between the government and the SLA or between opposing tribes. Women’s groups are often also the first to provide assistance to newly displaced or conflict-affected populations.**

**Skills training and income generation through women’s groups or youth groups have been less successful.** People are not able to use the skills they have learnt because they do not have the materials to turn them into income, the skills they learn are not in demand (e.g. handicrafts and food processing) or they cannot compete with skilled urban labour, e.g. in masonry and mechanics. **Income-generating projects in heterogeneous groups is rarely successful because group members do not know each other well and do not feel that they can set up businesses together. This is particularly the case now, when people and communities are split along tribal lines and there is a general atmosphere of mistrust.** In some cases, there is no benefit to be gained from working together (e.g. in petty trading). Income generation in groups works best with people from the same area of origin or tribe, who come together to meet specific income needs and in some cases have pre-existing skills, such as the potters and tanners we looked at in this report. Training and income-generating activities also rarely reach the poorest or the most vulnerable, as the poor cannot leave their day-to-day work to participate in training. In any case, most income-generating activities supported by international NGOs yield little income.

Table 4 summarises the strengths and weaknesses of the various CBOs, committees and community groups in addressing food insecurity and threats to livelihoods in North Darfur. The table indicates that different CBOs or community groups address different aspects of food security or threats to livelihoods. For example, for the areas and population groups investigated in North Darfur, women’s groups, CBO networks and need-specific groups are best at negotiating access between opposing tribes around key resources and for negotiating safety between the government and the SLA. Building on pre-existing CBOs is a good way of continuing food security work in rural areas, although given the current politicised context

it is a good idea to include accountability measures for the distribution of resources (monitoring, ensuring separation from political leaders). **Newly established groups in camps, composed of different tribes, are appropriate for skills training, but not for income generation. Income generation is best done with existing ethnically homogeneous social groups or networks, or by providing individual support. This means that linking livelihoods projects with peace-building is not always appropriate.**

The way in which international agencies engaged with CBOs and community groups varied. Broadly speaking, there were four modalities:

1. Continued support for pre-conflict CBOs.
2. Creation of new committees to facilitate project implementation or to enable work in insecure areas.
3. Creation of new committees for capacity-building.
4. Seeking out local initiatives for support.

In addition, several agencies worked with staff from line ministries. This can include secondment of ministry staff to international agencies, or having counterparts within the relevant ministries, working with skilled ministry staff for training of rural extension workers and close coordination and sharing of information with line ministries, as well as providing funding for technical projects if separate project accounts can be established.

**Table 4: Strengths, weaknesses and challenges of working with CBOs and community groups in addressing food insecurity and threats to livelihoods**

Group/CBO	Strengths	Weaknesses	Challenges
Pre-conflict CBOs	Experience with food security work Knowledge Trusted by local community Accountable to local communities Heterogeneous membership (ethnicity/livelihoods)	Very few registered at village level Unable to attract INGO funding Lack of capacity (skills, management, resources) Change in personnel since the conflict started (left to join INGOs, UN etc.) May be partial in distribution of resources	In marginalised and difficult-to-reach areas Lack resources Some INGOs dropped support INGO/UN preconceptions about developmental approaches in emergencies and about neutrality
Professional associations (e.g. blacksmiths)	Legal identity Can influence policy In high demand Indirectly contribute to production Liberating low-status groups Leather – availability of skins Homogeneous in some areas (e.g. KK) but heterogeneous in others	Access to markets  Marketing  Quality (leather)  Difficult to scale up or generalise to all occupations	Little information about them Competition with Chinese products Lack of availability of start-up materials and capital High levels of taxation (many layers)
Women's groups (during conflict)	Pre-conflict structures persist Assisted new IDPs in initial period of displacement Good negotiators because: - present practical solutions - less political than men/more - neutral Credible Represent the majority Persistent Often part of needs-specific groups	Lack of capacity (as above) Poor women not represented Income-generating activities not driven by demand (food processing, handicrafts)	Marginalisation of women within Sudanese culture Insecurity Lack of resources Dominated by better-off Initially little involvement from grassroots groups in peace process (consultation but not involvement)



Group/CBO	Strengths	Weaknesses	Challenges
CBO networks	Heterogeneous (ethnicity) Good negotiators – viewed as neutral intermediaries Dispute resolution between tribes within network Access to insecure areas Able to carry out a range of food security interventions by remote management (El Fasher) Easier to attract funding than for individual CBOs	Low coverage (El Fasher rural mainly) Dependency on CBOs in El Fasher High dependency on external funding Financial and programme/project management capacity Lack of core funding for salaries Male-dominated	Security Not possible to establish networks when large sections of the population displaced or security situation is unstable Generally funding is more humanitarian-focused (e.g. problems of funding for market network) Programme quality assurance
Capacity-building committees	Skills training: select people who will stay (in rural areas) – appropriate for health, vet workers Bring women together – social impact IGA: potential for training in skills that are in demand Potential for addressing protection issues	Type of IGA not always appropriate Difficult to target the poorest Quality of products Marketing Too many committees (one for every project) No coordination Heterogeneous: income-generating projects done with groups that do not know each other (groups only beneficial for supply of materials, to attract funding) Not able to function without external support Skills training initiatives not linked with recognised training institutions (certificates not recognised in other parts of Sudan)	Competition with residents Lack of demand for products Problems with marketing Uncertainty of camp duration Difficulties in registration Little known about interaction with war/parallel economy
Service delivery committees	Improve effectiveness of distribution/service delivery Can continue distribution in insecure areas (where international staff do not have access)	Non-functioning outside of distributions Can be highly influenced by political leadership	Reduction in services/food distribution
Needs-specific groups (income: potters and tanners; also for negotiated access to water, land, markets)	Simple to form Voluntary Address issues around key resources/key threats to livelihoods	No continuity for those established to negotiate access (less an issue around resources because demand may be temporary)	Little knowledge by aid community Needs in-depth analysis of power relations and reasons for agreements (are both sides benefiting?) Whether and how to support (e.g. DDDC supports in terms of transport, meeting in neutral sites) ICRC supports with economic security interventions

Practical Action has continued to support pre-conflict CBOs where possible. This experience has largely been positive, although there have been problems with theft at village level and sabotage of community dams stemming from inadequate consultation between all groups affected. The development of CBOs has enabled work in rural areas to continue. Other agencies have largely worked with local organisations or committees to facilitate the distribution of resources and to help select people for training, and for remote management when rural areas became too unsafe for international staff. The advantages of working with pre-conflict CBOs include that they have good knowledge and experience of food security work. If they were effective before the conflict, they will enjoy some degree of trust and accountability. In addition, ethnically heterogeneous CBOs will have experience of different ethnic groups working together in a less politicised context.

**For many international NGOs, working with CBOs raises issues of neutrality and impartiality, as many are tribe-based and have particular political affiliations. This may affect the distribution of resources according to need, and could lead to the manipulation of resources for political ends. Committees set up for the distribution of food aid are in some instances closely linked with the political leadership of the camp (the IDP committees) or the Popular Committees in rural areas.** In some areas WFP has introduced monitoring by a separate CBO. There are a number of additional ways for promoting neutrality and impartiality in the provision of assistance (see point 4 under recommendations). **In contrast, local people often see CBOs as more neutral than traditional leaders or local government representatives, and some CBOs came to play a key role in negotiating safe access to land and markets because of this.**

An important distinction needs to be made between international agencies making arrangements with local institutions to facilitate the distribution of resources versus genuinely engaging with local institutions to build on what they are already doing to improve their lives and livelihoods. ICRC, for example, actively searches out such community initiatives and supports ‘need-specific committees’ that are already working to negotiate access to land, water or markets. This, however, needs very careful analysis and consultation to determine whether these local initiatives are really of mutual benefit to both sides, are not undertaken out of desperation by one side and are not unequal or exploitative.

Both CBOs and local NGOs face problems of capacity, in particular in proposal writing, reporting, management and financial systems. For local NGOs, retaining qualified staff is also a key issue, as UN agencies and INGOs offer far more lucrative employment. In addition, local NGOs face initial difficulties in working with camp populations. IDPs are suspicious of local NGOs as they are often seen as part of a government initiative and thus are not initially trusted. Gaining the trust of IDPs can

take months of communication and meetings, and sometimes requires the assistance of an international NGO. Camp-based CBOs, or CBOs in SLA-held rural areas, are unable to register as they are seen as potential political movements.

## 8.2 Recommendations

### *Supporting community-based approaches and local institutions*

A number of community organisations and initiatives have had positive impacts on food security and threats to livelihoods. These initiatives need to be supported, strengthened and expanded. This might include:

#### 1. *Supporting income generation*

- Income-generating initiatives that groups are already undertaking based on their existing skills, such as blacksmithing, tanning and pottery, need further investigation. Leatherworking may be a particularly appropriate area for investment as there is high demand and the availability of skins is good. This would also benefit from further investigation to establish whether those who adopted this activity recently will be able to become part of professional associations after the conflict.
- Training in new skills needs to be based on a market assessment of demand for the goods produced, and the level of competition with urban skilled labourers. It is appropriate to train ethnically heterogeneous groups in camp settings. In all cases, active efforts need to be made to include the poorest and provide them with sufficient support to replace the income lost from not working while being trained.
- Group income-generating activities are better done with ethnically homogeneous groups, which build on existing social networks. Income generation in groups rather than as individuals is appropriate when the group works together to supply the goods and materials needed. Working with small homogeneous groups may also be a way of ensuring that all people within the group benefit from the assistance provided. In other cases, it may be more appropriate to provide credit or start-up packages to individuals.

#### 2. *Supporting production*

- Where possible, working with CBOs established before the conflict is recommended. They have experience of food security work and knowledge of how to do it, and are often accountable to the local community. They are also often ethnically heterogeneous, which minimises the risk of political polarisation.
- CBO networks in El Fasher rural have been successful in maintaining programmes in rural areas when they were unsafe for international agencies. The feasibility of such approaches needs to be investigated for other areas.
- Before establishing new committees, it is important to map existing CBOs and community groups.
- Working with line ministries is also recommended, particularly capacity-building through secondments of staff,

training extension workers and close coordination and sharing of information. Before funding projects directly through a ministry, international agencies should ensure transparency and accountability to donors, and make sure that assistance goes directly to the intended target groups.

### 3. *Supporting negotiated access to land, water and markets*

- The role of women's groups in negotiating access to land and markets needs to be further investigated, in particular how these groups can be supported in this role. One possibility might be to expand training in crisis management and advocacy.
- The possibility of establishing CBO networks in areas other than rural El Fasher also needs to be investigated, in particular where it is possible to establish networks composed of a number of ethnic groups. Oxfam America is doing this in Shengel Tobai, and ways to support this work could be investigated.
- Supporting 'needs-specific groups' poses more challenges. At a minimum, the local agreements these groups make need to be monitored. Any support needs to be based on a careful analysis of power relations between groups and an examination of the benefits gained by both sides, and their motivations.

In all cases, the capacity of these CBOs will need to be built in terms of management, finance, planning, proposal writing and reporting. Any new initiatives will need long-term commitment. Practical Action's work shows that it takes at least 5–10 years to establish sustainable village organisations (Martin, 2005).

### 4. *Promoting neutrality and impartiality*

In committees which are responsible for the distribution of aid resources (such as food aid and production inputs), it is important to ensure that they have some degree of separation from the political leadership, or that monitoring is done by a separate group or organisation. Mapping relationships and overlaps in membership between different committees in villages or camps is a good way of establishing how close committees are to the political leadership. Ways of promoting neutrality and impartiality when working with community organisations or groups include:

- Working with CBOs that are close to the communities they assist.
- Ensuring a degree of separation from the political leadership (i.e. IDP Committees in camps, or Salvation Committees in rural areas). This could be determined by examining the membership of different committees and their overlap (as illustrated by the Venn diagrams in sections 5 and 6).
- Involving CBOs mainly in 'soft services', such as monitoring, education or the provision of services such as veterinary help or agricultural extension.
- Promoting roles which benefit the community as a whole, such as crisis management and mediation.

- Making special arrangements to include the poorest in training and income-generating activities.

### *New approaches to food security programming*

A range of food security and livelihoods initiatives is necessary to address the ongoing constraints to food security and threats to livelihoods in Darfur. Many IDP populations still face acute problems resulting from limited livelihood opportunities and ongoing risks to their safety. In addition, new problems of alcohol and drug use and trafficking increase crime and violence. The increased fragmentation of the SLA and Janjaweed (or armed Arab groups) has resulted in an increase in the number of checkpoints, higher transport costs and thus higher prices in the market. Acute malnutrition levels are above emergency thresholds in many parts of Darfur. There will therefore be an ongoing need for food aid, combined with other, more innovative approaches to addressing food insecurity and threats to livelihoods.

As suggested by Oxfam America, there may be opportunities for the greater use of cash transfers or voucher interventions, in particular in areas where transporting goods is costly and looting is a problem. For example, in places where agreements have been made to open trade routes to supply goods (e.g. Shengel Tobai), vouchers may be more cost-effective and logistically easier than continuing to deliver relief goods to El Fasher and then Shengel Tobai at high cost. Such approaches have not yet been implemented.

Livelihood support needs to build on the strategies that conflict-affected people are already using. Some of the most common strategies are brickmaking, seasonal farm work and petty trade. Ways of supporting this may include:

- The provision of credit or materials for starting businesses.
- Monitoring where people carry out seasonal farm work and advocating for UNAMID patrols along these routes.
- Whether brickmaking can be supported, in particular through the use of environmentally sustainable technology such as stabilised soil bricks (SSB), needs further investigation. This includes an analysis of the key actors involved, i.e. the owners of brickmaking kilns, and the potential for engaging with these key individuals. Analysis is also needed of the main buyers and whether they would purchase alternative technology at higher cost.

A particular issue will be addressing the exploitative labour conditions facing IDPs working in brickmaking and farm labour. Brickmaking is now reportedly one of the most lucrative businesses in El Fasher. For all interventions intended to improve food security and income levels, a much better understanding is needed of the political economy.

Another key issue is to ensure that all support for livelihoods strategies should be environmentally sound, and to the greatest extent possible, not promote unsustainable, natural resource-

damaging activities. Where this is unavoidable, agencies must proactively mitigate the damage done through reforestation and other actions.<sup>8</sup>

The promotion of new skills is particularly appropriate for youth, and there are some indications that training in the repair of technology such as mobile phones, satellite dishes and computers could develop skills that could be used to generate income now and in the future. Traditional women's income-generating activities, such as tailoring, handicrafts and food processing, have had little success, though there could be scope for improving the marketability of processed foods. This has been successful in other contexts, though concerted efforts are needed to promote quality and create demand through campaigns and fairs amongst the wealthier urban population, encouraging them to 'buy local' (O'Callaghan, Jaspars et al., 2009). Again, care must be taken that such initiatives include the poorest, as currently it appears to be better-off women who have the time to engage in these activities.

Finally, any food security and livelihoods strategy in Darfur needs to promote access to markets, land and water as critical resources that sustain livelihoods. Practical Action's market support programme promoted the sharing of information on market prices between farmers. This should be revived and the possibility of its adoption more widely investigated. In addition, as indicated above, support for women's groups, CBOs and CBO networks will be a key component in supporting negotiated access initiatives.

#### *Creating an enabling environment*

Community-based approaches alone are unlikely to be sufficient for the effective provision of assistance and services to large numbers of people affected by conflict. CBA need to be combined with a larger system of norms and standards to ensure quality and equity. This needs an enabling environment which provides information, supports identification of solutions and ensures minimum standards. The recommendations above would provide a starting-point towards creating such an environment, for example clear standards and approaches for working with CBOs and community groups, depending on the purpose of the intervention. Standards for ensuring neutrality and impartiality would also be part of this.

In addition, further work could be done with women's groups

<sup>8</sup> For guidance see Tearfund's 2004 report *Darfur: Relief in a Vulnerable Environment*

to determine the causes of some of the new problems faced in the camps, such as theft and drug use and trafficking, and to identify solutions. Providing information would also include wider dissemination on the role of assistance provided by different agencies (local and international) and the responsibilities of the state with regard to IDPs and other conflict-affected populations, as well as the assistance available through the state.

An enabling environment where social organisations can flourish and contribute to effective governance requires trust, tolerance, a degree of stability and faith in the future. These are all hard to find in Darfur. In the absence of peace, options may be limited. Building on the work of Practical Action to create networks consisting of different tribes and across areas held by different parties to the conflict is one possibility. In addition to horizontal linkages with communities facing similar problems, where possible links also need to be made vertically with government line ministries, MPs and other decision-makers, who can be held accountable for improving safety and wellbeing or who can influence policies. As mentioned above, in the current context interventions will work best if they are implemented with groups that trust and are accountable to each other.

This study supports the findings of the recent capacity mapping study by UNDP, which states that an enabling environment requires fostering effective partnership and engagement with government institutions, especially the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Planning Units within ministries and the HAC. The study recommends work on legal and policy frameworks, and engagement forums to enhance mutual understanding, build trust, exchange information and strengthen capacity among partner institutions (Partners in Development, 2009).

Finally, the provision of a secure environment in which human rights are protected is crucial for the creation of an accountable and effective civil society. The ongoing protection threats in Darfur are therefore a key issue. This is a huge gap now that most protection actors have been expelled, and given the constraints facing UNHCR. Some protection threats, such as risks to safety associated with livelihoods activities, lack of freedom of movement and therefore access to land, markets and employment, may to some extent be addressed through the livelihoods interventions described above (also see Jaspars and O'Callaghan, 2010). In terms of monitoring and providing medical assistance to victims of abuse, agencies could consider establishing closer links with UNAMID and the ICRC.

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