

# Challenging choices: Protection and livelihoods in Darfur

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A review of the Danish Refugee Council's programme  
in West Darfur

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**About the Humanitarian Policy Group:**

The Humanitarian Policy Group at ODI is one of the world's leading teams of independent researchers and information professionals working on humanitarian issues. It is dedicated to improving humanitarian policy and practice through a combination of high-quality analysis, dialogue and debate.

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# Map of Darfur



## Acronyms

ACF	Action Contre la Faim
AMIS	African Union Mission in Sudan
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CAC	Community Area Councils
DCPSF	Darfur Community Peace and Stability Fund
DHP	Darfur Humanitarian Profile
DLF	Darfur Liberation Front
DPA	Darfur Peace Agreement
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FES	Fuel efficient stoves
GOS	Government of Sudan
HAC	Humanitarian Aid Commission
HH	Household
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICI	International Commission of Inquiry
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement
KPSG	Khartoum Protection Steering Group
LoU	Letter of Understanding
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PWG	Protection Working Group
RDL	Rally for Democracy and Liberty
SDG	Sudanese Pounds
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SLM/A	Sudan Liberation Movement/Army
UNAMID	United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMIS	United Nations Mission in Sudan
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme of the United Nations



# Introduction

This Working Paper is part of a study on ‘Livelihoods and Protection in Conflict’ by the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI). The aim of the research is to understand how greater complementarity between humanitarian protection and livelihoods approaches might strengthen analysis and intervention in order to reduce the risks facing conflict-affected populations. It draws on analysis of responses of those at risk in order to provide recommendations for humanitarian programming so as to achieve maximum impact on both protection and livelihoods.

This work builds on an HPG Working Paper published in 2007, which drew on relevant literature and interviews with practitioners to examine current efforts by humanitarian agencies to link livelihoods and protection in analysis and action. Co-authored with Elisabeth Stites of the Feinstein Center at Tufts University, the 2007 Working Paper provides practical examples of ‘joined-up’ programming, and discusses some of the institutional and programmatic challenges involved. The paper, along with additional information on the research programme, can be found on HPG’s website: [http://www.odi.org.uk/HPG/protection\\_livelihoods.html](http://www.odi.org.uk/HPG/protection_livelihoods.html).

This Working Paper draws heavily on a review of the Danish Refugee Council’s work on livelihoods and

protection in the Zalingei corridor in eastern West Darfur. It focuses in particular on threats to physical safety, freedom of movement and access to adequate means of subsistence, and their resulting impacts on people’s livelihoods and protection. It provides an overview of the work of different agencies engaged in protection and livelihoods in Darfur, but focuses in particular on that of the Danish Refugee Council. It is hoped that the findings of this work will be of broader relevance to agencies active in Darfur, as well as to others interested in issues related to livelihoods and protection.

The review of DRC’s programme in Darfur is one of three programme reviews that the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) has carried out for the DRC in 2008. These reviews constitute part of DRC’s global Livelihoods and Protection Initiative, the objective of which is to strengthen DRC’s learning and understanding of how livelihood and protection approaches can be combined and mutually reinforce each other for the benefit of the people assisted.

While this Working Paper draws heavily on the review of the Danish Refugee Council’s work in Darfur, the Paper reflects the analysis, and views and opinions of the authors. The views and opinions expressed are not necessarily shared by the DRC.





# Part 1: The impact of the conflict on livelihoods and protection

## 1.1 The nature of the crisis in eastern West Darfur

### *Origins and nature of the crisis*

The Danish Refugee Council's programme in eastern West Darfur stretches from north Wadi Saleh (Waro and Urdi) through rural Zalingei and the Azoum valley (Trej, Orokum and Abatta) and up as far as Nyertete and Golo in the Jebel Marra. This area is the heartland of the Fur, who along with the Masaleit in the western reaches of West Darfur along the Chadian border are the two most populous tribes in the area. West Darfur also has a large number of Arab tribes, many of whom arrived from Chad during the 1970s. Larger groups include the camel-herding Aballa Rizeigat, Beni Halba, Misiriya, Khuzam and Mahdi, as well as the Misseriya Jebel and Salamat cattle herders (De Waal and Young, 2005).

Violence in this area of West Darfur has a long history, with years of neglect, marginalisation and exploitation. Cycles of drought in the 1970s and 1980s and the resulting desertification of the northern parts of Darfur pitted different groups against each other in disputes over increasingly scarce natural resources. Although early conflicts occurred without particular reference to 'Arab' versus 'non-Arab' or 'African' distinctions (Polloni, 2005; Srinivasan, 2006), ethnic tensions increased from the 1970s, culminating in the Arab–Fur war in the Jebel Marra from 1987 to 1989. Thousands of Fur were killed, their livestock looted and villages burnt. Fur villagers organised self-defence groups, while Sudanese government support for Arab militia increased. The Fur involved in this early conflict were mainly from the east of Jebel Marra including Wadi Saleh, Zalingei, Kass, Kebkabiya and Nyala (Flint and de Waal, 2008; Polloni, 2005; de Waal and Young, 2005).

Violence escalated in West Darfur following a redrawing of administrative boundaries in 1994, which divided the Fur amongst the three states and split the traditional homeland of the Masaleit in West Darfur into 13 *imarat* (emirates), five of which were allocated to Arab traditional leaders. A two-year war between Arabs and Masaleit resulted in a fragile peace settlement, but this met with little respect, and in December 1999 a state of emergency was declared in Darfur.

Although the start of the most recent crisis is usually dated to an attack on Golo in February 2003, military training among the Zaghawa and Fur began

in the Jebel Marra in 2001, with a series of attacks in 2002 by the Darfur Liberation Front (DLF). In early 2003, the insurgents changed their name to the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A), and increased their military activities. The Sudanese government responded using militia drawn mainly from impoverished camel and cattle herding nomads, the so-called '*Janjaweed*', and combined air and ground attacks. *Janjaweed* attacks were associated with mass killing, large-scale burning of villages, looting of assets and displacement. Displacement has been highest in West Darfur, particularly in the Zalingei corridor. Many believe that the nomadic groups engaged in counter-insurgency operations have been promised the land of settled farming communities in return for their services in the war (Flint and de Waal, 2008; Polloni, 2005; Tanner, 2005). Some villages in West Darfur were burnt down some time after the original inhabitants were displaced, possibly in a bid to prevent the return of the original inhabitants (UNHCR, 2005, November). Violence has continued despite the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) on 5 May 2006 between the Sudanese government and the Zaghawa-dominated faction of the SLM/A, the SLA-MM. The DPA was rejected by the Fur-dominated faction of the SLM/A, led by Abdel Wahid Mohammad Nur (the SLA-AW), whose stronghold lies in eastern Jebel Marra, and by the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM).

Violence in West Darfur is further complicated by the presence of Chadian rebel groups. There are close links between the Chadian rebel group Rally for Democracy and Liberty (RDL), based near Geneina, and government-aligned militia in West Darfur, many of whom have Chadian origins.

### *The current context*

As a result of the conflict, an estimated 300,000 people have been killed and almost 2.5 million displaced, while an additional 1.8m are considered in need of humanitarian assistance (UN OCHA Darfur Humanitarian Profile No. 31, 2008). Many displaced camps have now existed for over five years, becoming increasingly violent and volatile, with reports of deaths, riots and the arming of inhabitants. The government of Sudan continues to promote return, particularly to central or 'cluster villages', which is in turn actively discouraged by the DPA's non-signatory groups. In eastern West Darfur, where there is a high level of support for the SLA-AW, the very mention of return provoked hostility from camp leaders (*Sheikhs*).

### Box 1: Land and conflict in Darfur

Most Arab groups in Darfur do not own land on the basis of the *hakura* (landholding) system. This system, which dates back to pre-colonial times, was built upon by the British administration, which allotted *dars* (homelands) to various settled and transhumant tribes. Several Arab transhumant camel herding groups, in particular the camel herding Rizeigat in North Darfur, but also smaller cattle herding Arab groups such as the Salamat and Tarjam, were not assigned any land, though access to land and water along transhumant routes was generally accepted through customary practices. The devastating droughts of the 1970s and 1980s left many pastoralists impoverished and deprived them of a sustainable livelihood base. When the conflict broke out in Darfur, landless Arab groups saw an opportunity to expand their access to land and water. The conflict therefore became partly a violent assault by landless tribal groups against groups with land.

Research shows that secondary occupation of land has taken place in West Darfur, where nomadic Arab groups like the Mahariya, the Missiriya, the Salamat, the Beni Halba and the Beni Hussein have occupied grazing land originally inhabited by non-Arab sedentary groups such as the Masalit and the Fur. The area around Awalla-Nankuseh, near Garsila, hosted more than 50,000 non-Arab communities before the conflict, but is today inhabited by nomadic groups of Arab origin (Intersos, 2006).

Adapted from Pantuliano and O'Callaghan, 2006.

The conflict is now characterised by fragmented and localised violence between different Arab, as well as non-Arab, groups. Arab tribes have started to create new ties with non-Arabs; some have joined or created Arab-led rebel groups (International Crisis Group, 2007). There has also been an increase in banditry and looting on the roads. At the same time, government aerial bombardments as well as military clashes between different SLA and government-aligned factions continue, including in the Jebel Marra area (Lefebvre Chevallier and Crahay, 2008).

A transition from the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) to a 26,000-strong UN/AU hybrid peacekeeping operation in Darfur (UNAMID) began in 2007. However, the deployment has faced difficulties regarding composition, equipment and training. Civilians in eastern West Darfur reported no

perceptible difference between the UNAMID mission and the ineffective and under-resourced AMIS.

Humanitarian agencies are currently able to access only 71% of the affected population in Darfur. In rural Jebel Marra, access has been limited since 2006. Banditry and direct targeting of humanitarian staff and assets resulted in the deaths of 13 aid workers and the disappearance of 28 WFP-contracted drivers, the hijacking of 181 humanitarian vehicles and 93 attacks on humanitarian facilities and compounds in 2007. In the first four months of 2008 alone, figures had already reached 50% of the previous year's total (UN Darfur Humanitarian Overview, 2008). A decrease in World Food Programme convoys due to problems with banditry has resulted in a cut in general food rations of more than 40% since May 2008. By the middle of 2008, the UN Country Team issued a warning that the situation of communities in Darfur would be precarious during the annual hunger gap. It was estimated that at least 2.7m people would be affected by a reduction for at least the next two months (Sudan UN Country Team, 2008).

In 2008, people have continued to be displaced because of conflict and, increasingly, crop failure. The poor harvests of 2006 and 2007 have crushed rural people's remaining coping strategies and led many to move to camps in order to access food and services. This is particularly the case in South Darfur, where UN officials estimate that approximately 50% of new arrivals are 'harvest-' rather than 'conflict'- affected. This has prompted a recent move by the government to insist on a clear differentiation between 'conflict-affected' and 'harvest-affected' groups, with only conflict-affected individuals considered eligible for assistance as IDPs (UN OCHA Darfur Humanitarian Profile 31, 2008). WFP's policy is to provide emergency rations for two months to new arrivals due to crop failure, but in practice this is not always done. With Darfur in a continued situation of acute crisis, where many groups have suffered severe asset depletion and erosion of their livelihoods, it is impossible to make a distinction between 'conflict-affected' and 'harvest-affected'.

The 2007 emergency food and nutrition survey for Darfur is the first since the start of the conflict to show a significant increase in the prevalence of acute malnutrition. Malnutrition decreased from 21.8% to 11.9% between 2004 and 2005, but increased to 12.9% in 2005 and 16.1% in 2007. Whilst North Darfur showed the highest prevalence in 2007, the increase in malnutrition was greatest in

West Darfur, from 6.2% to 12.5% between 2005 and 2007. With no comprehensive peace deal in sight, Darfur remains in an acute humanitarian crisis.

## 1.2 Livelihoods and protection in Darfur

The conflict in Darfur has been waged in direct contravention of international law. The International Commission of Inquiry (ICI) – which investigated violations of international humanitarian and human rights law in Darfur in 2004 – catalogued horrific crimes against Darfuris, including targeted and indiscriminate attacks on civilians, murder, torture, destruction of villages, rape and other forms of sexual violence and forced displacement. The level and type of violence experienced by civilians has meant that Darfur is the first crisis to be labelled a ‘protection crisis’ (Pantuliano and O’Callaghan, 2006). The UN has said that all the parties to the conflict deliberately target civilians (UN White Paper, 2007).

The early stages of the conflict were associated with severe depletion of assets, either directly through looting and destruction or indirectly through loss of access to natural and economic resources. Restricted mobility has affected the livelihood strategies of all population groups, as it limits ability to farm, livestock migration, gathering of wild foods, access employment and markets (Young, Osman et al., 2005; Buchanan-Smith and Jaspars, 2006). Markets are barely functioning (Buchanan-Smith and Abdullah Fadul, 2008). Journeys to obtain

firewood, cultivate land or access markets expose civilians to the risk of murder, rape and theft. With the reduction in livelihood opportunities for all groups, competition over resources is fuelling conflict, for example between pastoralists and IDPs over firewood (Young, Osman et al., 2007).

Reports of involuntary return and relocation continue, whilst at the same time there is evidence of secondary land occupation, particularly in western and south-western areas of the region. In many locations, communities have been forced to provide protection taxes in the form of cash or crops (Buchanan-Smith and Jaspars, 2006; InterSoS, 2007).

The conflict has resulted in threats to people’s life and safety, restrictions on freedom of movement and limited access to adequate means of subsistence, all of which are key protection issues.<sup>1</sup> The security context, freedom of movement as well as the effectiveness of local governance and policy are key determinants of people’s livelihoods options, and in the livelihoods framework would be considered under an analysis of ‘policies, institutions and processes’. Lack of safety and the inability to move to access land and markets restrict people’s livelihoods strategies and have combined to undermine people’s ability to survive. This study therefore analyses the links between livelihoods and protection in terms of these three protection and livelihoods themes.

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<sup>1</sup> Sudan is bound by a number of international treaties on human rights, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Article 3, common to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, is thought to have entered into international customary law and thus would apply to warring parties in Darfur. Sudan and many rebel movements have signed a number of legally binding international agreements, many of which contain provisions on international humanitarian law. A number of these treaties and agreements contain provisions which recognise the right to life and the right not to be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; recognise that those *hors de combat* should not be subject to attack; recognise the right to freedom of movement, and to choose one’s own residence and hence not to be displaced arbitrarily; the right to adequate food and to water; and the right of humanitarian organisations to offer assistance.



## Part 2: The links between rural livelihoods and protection: community responses and decision-making

### 2.1 Introduction

For the purposes of this study, the population of concern has been divided into the following livelihoods or risk groups.<sup>2</sup>

- Settled rural villagers in government-held areas.
- IDPs in rural areas.
- Rural villagers in SLA-held areas. Fur in Jebel Marra.
- Semi-settled Arabs in *damras* (settlements of nomadic or semi-nomadic populations surrounding villages). A number of camel and cattle herding Arab tribes, some of whom established *damras* before the conflict.
- IDPs in camps. All Fur (Zalingei and Nyertete).
- Seasonal migrants from IDP camps moving to farm in rural areas, either their village of origin or other villages.

Risk groups are groups who are facing similar risks, in terms of their freedom of movement and physical safety. The risks are to a large extent determined by people's ethnicity and residence status (e.g. IDP, rural resident), previous livelihood (farmer, agro-pastoralist, pastoralist) and whether people are living in GOS- or SLA-controlled areas. The discussion which follows describes the impact of the conflict on these risk groups in terms of their current geographical location. Thus, settled rural villagers in GOS-held areas, as well as IDPs who have fled to those areas, are discussed together. Seasonal migration is discussed in the context of IDPs in camps. Table 1 gives the different ethnic groups in the areas visited by the review team.

### 2.2 The inter-relationship between villagers and nomads

#### *Co-existence before the conflict*

The farming population of eastern West Darfur is dominated by Fur. In the West Jebel Marra lowlands (Zalingei, Garsilla, Wadi Saleh), the livelihoods of previous and current Fur populations consist of rain-fed farming following the rainy season (mainly

<sup>2</sup> Further details on methodology are outlined in Annex 1 The identification of risk groups was based on earlier livelihoods studies, in particular Buchanan-Smith, M. and S. Jaspars (2006), and Young, H., A. Osman, et al. (2007).

**Table 1: Ethnic groups in villages and *damras* in rural areas**

	Villagers (farmers and agro-pastoralists)	Nomads (nomadic and semi-nomadic groups)
Trej	Fur Misseriya Jebel (arrived in the 1980s) Tama	Baggara nomads: including Salamat, Misseriya Jebel, Tarjam. Abbala nomads: including Beni Hussein, Mahadi
Orokum	Fur Tama Gimir Mararit Zaghawa Berti	Baggara: including Salamat, Beni Halba Abbala: including Awad Rashid, Nawaiba, Mahadi
Abatta	Fur Zaghawa (only about 1%)	Abbala: including Awlad Rashid, Jalul, Maharia, Beni Hussein Baggara: including Hottiya, Beni Halba
Wadi Saleh (Waro and Urdi)	Fur	Abbala: including Nawaiba, Mahadi Baggara: including Misseriya, Tarjam, Salamat

millet, sorghum, groundnuts and sesame) and irrigated wadi cultivation during the winter (vegetables, onions and wheat). Some also cultivate fruits (mango) and tombac. In the past, many also had livestock, and those with large numbers of cattle also migrated with their livestock or hired herders to travel with their livestock. Migration to Khartoum, Egypt or Libya provided an additional livelihood source for some. In the Jebel Marra highlands, fruit and vegetable production was a more important source of income, as well as wood and forestry products, and people were less dependent on livestock (Buchanan-Smith and Jaspars, 2006).

Rural areas in Zalingei and Wadi Saleh are dotted with *damras* (settlements of nomadic or semi-nomadic populations). Many *baggara* (cattle-herding) Arabs are traditionally semi-nomadic (depending in part on farming); the only traditionally

semi-nomadic camel-herding (*abbala*) group is the Beni Hussein. The main livelihood source for both groups is the sale of livestock and livestock products. Zalingei and Wadi Saleh localities are not the original tribal centres for these groups. Many arrived following the famines of the 1970s and 1980s, while others were encouraged to come to boost the numbers and political influence of these tribes in Darfur (De Waal and Young, 2005). In Waro, the Arab groups in Futi *damra* said they had been there for 22 years; IDPs from Abata in Zalingei said that many Arabs started to settle around Abata about 20 years ago. This included mainly Salamat and Jebel Misseriya around Orokum and Trej, and Awlad Rashid, Jalul and Mahadi around Abata.<sup>3</sup> Others are thought to come from Chad, for example some of the Aballa Rizeigat, Beni Halba, Misiriya, Khuzam and Mahadi camel herding nomads, and Salamat cattle herders (De Waal and Young, 2005). These tribes also have centres in Darfur, with traditional migration routes moving into West Darfur. The Salamat followed similar migration routes. The tribal centres of the Abbala nomads are mainly in North Darfur, except for the Nawayba and Awlad Rashid, who had their tribal centres in Geneina (Al Massar, 2003). The livelihoods of nomads (whether new settlers or mobile groups) and farmers were inter-dependent. Nomadic and semi-nomadic groups sold livestock and milk in the village markets, and bought grain. Camels grazed on the stalks remaining after fields had been harvested. Villages also provided basic services such as grinding mills, water and schools. In northern Wadi Saleh, Arabs worked on farms to plough the land before cultivation (this continues today).

The degree to which there was peaceful co-existence in the past, and the mechanisms that were used to facilitate co-existence, vary from location to location. In Trej and Orokum, villagers and *damra* Arabs co-existed fairly peacefully until the start of the conflict. There was inter-marriage between the two groups, and people used to invite each other for ceremonies. A reconciliation committee was established to resolve disputes, composed of both villagers and Arabs. The dispute most commonly mentioned to the review team involved Arab-owned livestock destroying someone's farm. In Orokum, the review team was told that one of the roles of the reconciliation committee was to determine the time to open farms

to nomads. In Abata and Wadi Saleh, there was no evidence of this type of previous co-existence.

Other nomads also came into regular contact with villagers on their annual migration routes. The busiest route of the northern Rizeigat passes to the west of Jebel Marra (Al Massar, 2002), with villages like Trej and Orokum along it. The migration routes of the Beni Halba and Salamat also passed just to the west of Jebel Marra. With declining rainfall and increasing desertification, migration routes became increasingly squeezed by expanding cultivation along the wadi, leading to conflict between farmers and nomads over land rights (Al Massar, 2003: 115). Nomads also started moving south earlier, in some cases leading to the destruction of crops. In Trej, villagers complained of widespread looting by nomads, and pastoralists in the surrounding *damras* complained of robbery (implying that the surrounding villagers were involved).

#### *Relationships during the conflict*

The conflict in West Darfur has led to the displacement of almost the entire rural population. Those farmers that remained in villages in GOS-held areas around Zalingei, Jebel Marra and Wadi Saleh did so under various forms of 'protection' arrangements, some more voluntary than others. In each location, Arab groups indicated that they worked in parallel with the government, obtaining weapons and in some cases vehicles. This has led to a major shift in the balance of power between villagers and Arabs in the *damras*.

Villagers in Trej and Orokum paid a 'protection force' formed from the Arab members of the former reconciliation committee, and provided food for their protectors. This protection money was paid for about a year, from 2003. In Abata, Urdi and Waro protection arrangements were more coercive, with payments demanded by both local Arabs and 'outsiders'. Here, villagers were forcibly stopped from fleeing and movement outside the town was strictly controlled. Protection payments were made from 2003 until 2007, with some villagers saying that money was still being paid to travel to Zalingei and to protect farms. In Trej and Orokum, the 'protection force' was drawn mainly from the surrounding *damras*; in Abata, arrangements appeared more ad hoc and more closely associated with Janjaweed from the north. No such arrangements were possible on much of the western slopes of Jebel Marra, in particular north and east of Nyertete, where there was no history of co-existence before the conflict. Other forms of coercive practices are also in evidence, for instance in Abata, where villagers reported that it was not possible to collect firewood as this was 'controlled' by Arab groups. In

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<sup>3</sup> The transnational character of tribes in Darfur is not exclusive to the Arab tribes. The Zaghawa, Masalit, Tama and Gimir are also found both in Darfur and Chad.

other areas, people complained that Arab groups were controlling the price of meat.

The balance of power also shifted as the number of settled farmers in rural areas decreased and the number of Arab nomads in the surrounding *damras* grew. Since the start of the conflict, Abbala have been concentrated around Zalingei, Kebkabiya, Damra and Nyala because they lack access to the northern parts of their migration routes (Aklilu, 2006). Many new Arab tribes also came to places like Trej, particularly in 2005 and 2006, because the villages on which they had previously relied for services no longer existed. Many new *damras* were created during the conflict, with a total of 13 now surrounding Trej. The number of nomads around Abata and Waro also increased, in part because of limited access to former migration routes (many are Abbala).

A number of factors have been important in determining whether villagers stayed in rural areas. The previous existence of Arab *damras*, and a dispute settlement committee between villagers and Arabs, has already been mentioned. Another key factor is the existence of important markets prior to the conflict. For example, Trej was a major livestock market before the conflict,<sup>4</sup> and is the only one remaining in the area. Traders used to come from as far afield as Nyala and Kass to purchase livestock in Trej. The villagers of Trej and Orokum informed the review team that, early on in the conflict, Arabs from the *damras* told them that they needed them to stay. Similarly, Abatta and Waro were main market towns. Other factors include a need to maintain access to services, such as grinding mills, health care and schools, as well as the need to purchase grain produced by the villagers. Whether communities were ethnically mixed was also important, in particular where some of the tribes are settled Arabs (Jebel Misseriya) or those who sided with the government during the conflict. Villages without a previous Arab presence or without surrounding *damras* were largely destroyed. Likewise, villages with major livestock markets before the conflict, such as Kuja, but which were exclusively Fur, were also destroyed. Orokum, which was ethnically mixed and had a previous reconciliation committee, was preserved, but Fur villages in the immediate surroundings were destroyed.

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<sup>4</sup> The major livestock markets in West Darfur before the conflict included Geneina, Foro Boranga (Habilla), Amar Gedid (Wadi Saleh), Trej (Zalingei), Kuja (Zalingei; camels mainly) and Umm Dukhun (Mukhjar). Al Massar, 2003.

## 2.3 Livelihoods and protection for villagers in GOS-controlled areas

### *Physical safety*

The over-riding determinant of risks to both the livelihoods and protection of villagers in GOS-controlled areas is whether there was an ‘agreement’ between Arabs and villagers, and the nature of that agreement. In some cases (e.g. Abata), the villagers told the review team that Arabs acted as ‘protectors’ by day, but would loot them at night. Specific examples of protection payments are given in Box 2. Protection payments stopped in some places for a number of reasons. Some mentioned the presence of NGOs, others the establishment of a police station. Elsewhere, villagers threatened to move to camps if they had to continue to pay, or refused to do so (as in Waro and Urdi). However, in Urdi, while protection payments have decreased in the village, attacks and robberies on the road have increased.

Neither the GOS police, the military nor UNAMID is able to provide security for villagers. In Abata in particular, villagers (including *Sheikhs*) mentioned that they had asked the police or the military to make the place safe, or respond to incidents like crop destruction, but little had been done. When police came to Abata, however, they started looting and raping. In Urdi and Nyertete, people said that, when they reported an incident to UNAMID or the police, nothing happened. Although people expect UNAMID to help provide security, there is little confidence that it can. Several people mentioned that the presence of large numbers of others made them feel safer. For example, IDPs come to Trej because there are still a large number of people living there. In Orokum, some Fur residents said they encouraged people not originally from there to settle.

Many villagers, including in Abata, Waro and Nyertete, reported continued looting and attacks both within towns and villages, and when travelling on nearby roads. In many places, farming and firewood collection is still associated with a high risk of rape or attack, for example in and around Nyertete, Zalingei and Abata. But in others, for example Trej and Orokum, security has improved since the start of the conflict, and farming in areas close by and firewood collection is now considered relatively safe. Farming and firewood collection far from the village remains unsafe in all areas visited. Crop destruction by nomads or Arabs from the *damras* is still reported to be a common problem everywhere.



## Box 2: Examples of protection payments

*Trej/Orokum:* 'Protection' was organised by people from the *damras*, often the same people who were on the earlier 'peace and reconciliation committees'. They got weapons from the government, and in Trej two men from each *damra* stayed in the village at the police station. Initially, the revenue from the grinding mill was used to pay for protection. After this, every household paid 2SDG/month and some sorghum. Each day, ten households would be identified to feed the militia breakfast, and a different ten lunch and dinner. The people from the *damras* said that they provided protection voluntarily. In Orokum, people from the *damra* similarly set up a 'police station' to protect the village, and received food from the villagers for about eight months.

*Abata:* In Abata, a one-off payment protection payment was made in 2004 of ten sacks each of sorghum and millet to Janjaweed manning checkpoints. Later this changed to protection payments mainly to protect farms and to prevent crop destruction. Initially (in 2005) payment was ten sacks of millet. Transport to Zalingei was initially only allowed on camels, and had to be paid for. Large payments stopped in 2005, but people with irrigation pumps on their farms still pay 3SDG/month. Other payments continue for those with farms in isolated areas. Villagers in Kalgo (close to Abata) said that they had to pay 30 bags of sorghum and 15SDG/year.

*Waro/Urdu:* According to villagers in Waro, the GOS brought in the Janjaweed for protection. Everyone had to pay 5SDG/month, for two years. This stopped in 2005, when the police station was established in Waro. In Urdu, villagers paid 5SDG/month to local Arabs for protection.

### *Freedom of movement*

In all villages visited, some villagers stayed whilst others fled to bigger villages or camps in Zalingei, Dileig, or Nyertete. Those with money could go as far as Nyala or Khartoum. Some families split, with some remaining in the village to farm and others leaving for the camps. In Abata, Waro and Urdu, people were forcibly prevented from leaving, particularly in the first years of the conflict. The Janjaweed established checkpoints, and when people tried to flee, they would be brought back. It was only in 2006 that significant numbers were able to leave Abata for Zalingei. In Waro and Urdu, only male youth left as the Arabs did not want them in the village. In many places, it was the richer people who left, either because they were targets for the

Janjaweed, or because they were able to pay the transport costs and associated taxation at checkpoints.

Limited freedom of movement, particularly for the Fur, remains one of the main constraints on livelihoods. There is evidence that both the GOS and SLA/AW have been placing travel restrictions on populations under their control in the Jebel Marra. Early in 2008, after the road to Golo from Nyertete was reopened, the SLA/AW limited movement from its territory in Jebel Marra into Golo. This was reportedly with the aim of maintaining the size of the Sorong market in the Jebel Marra. The policy was reversed after the GOS stopped commercial traffic into the Jebel Marra. More general restrictions on movement related to insecurity are also affecting access to markets. Travel between Nyertete and Golo was reported to be particularly unsafe, with several robberies every market day. The only option in many cases is to go on foot, or not to go at all. As a result of insecurity, prices in the market have gone up, for example of sugar and soap, which has to be imported from elsewhere. Access to markets has also decreased because of a decrease in the number of markets.

### *Means of subsistence*

People in the villages do not have access to all of their previous livelihood strategies. Much livestock was looted early on in the conflict and labour migration is no longer possible due to insecurity. Most farmers reported having at most only one donkey, whereas in Abatta, for example, villagers said that an ordinary family before the conflict would have had around 20 cows and 30 goats. Meanwhile, wage labour in Abata is limited as people do not have the money to hire. For all villagers, the land safely accessible for cultivation is limited. In Abata many families share farmland, thus reducing the area planted per family. For the Fur population, access is limited to a 1km radius around the town. In Waro and Urdu, many farmers reported that some of their land was occupied by Arab groups, who were collecting the mangoes from their orchards. Safely accessible land had decreased by two-thirds, production was much lower and farming was largely on a subsistence basis. In Urdu, farmers who used to produce five or six sacks of grain were now producing just one. All the grain is consumed, while groundnuts are all sold, whereas previously some was kept back to make oil. Sweet potatoes are also a source of income. Despite the restricted access to farmland, farming is still the main livelihood strategy for most rural populations, although this is now mostly limited to subsistence. As with IDPs in camps, new



#### **Box 4: Family splitting as a coping strategy**

A large family from Siday (Wadi Saleh) fled the village in 2003 when it was attacked. Twenty-five family members went to Dileig. Some stayed in Dileig and four were later registered for food distribution. Others moved to Waro, where it is possible to farm, and two got ration cards there. In Waro they get some farmland for free, and they rent some land. The father has also received training in carpentry from DRC, from which he receives an income. Carpentry is safer work than farming, as crops often get destroyed by livestock. The father returns to Dileig for food distributions. In 2004, the remaining ten family members went to Zalingei, to Khamsa Digaig camp.

Another family of 16 (seven of them children) travelled from Kulo to Dileig in 2003. The head of the family sent five children and their grandfather to Kalma, as they did not have to pay for education there. In 2004, six family members went to Waro because of insecurity in Dileig (the male head of the household, two wives and two children). Family members in Waro are farming, and they divide the produce in three, sending some to Dileig and Kalma. Five of the family also have ration cards in Dileig (about 25km away). In addition, an uncle, his wife and two children are in Dileig; three of these four have ration cards.

Some large families from SLA-held villages in Jebel Marra have also split up. Some family members stayed to farm in the village, but the available land is insufficient to support the whole family as well as the IDP population. Some moved to Guildu to stay with relatives, initially expecting that relief would be provided there. Some moved to Zalingei, because even if not registered it is possible to get an income from collecting and selling wood. Other family members moved on to Zalingei in 2006, when they heard that new arrivals were being registered. IDPs in Zalingei sometimes travel back to Golo and Guildu to visit relatives and may take them some flour and okra if they have earned enough money from the sale of firewood.

or expanded livelihood strategies include firewood collection, charcoal preparation and brickmaking, though the market for bricks in rural areas is limited and firewood collection is not possible in Abata as it is largely controlled by the Arabs surrounding the town.

IDPs in rural areas mainly rely on the assistance of relatives (IDPs usually move to places where they have relatives), and on labour on agricultural farms.

Firewood collection is common in places where it is possible. Many IDPs, particularly those who missed registration in camps, moved into Trej in search of safety and an income from farm labour, while others gravitated towards Abata. Orokum is also attracting many people, including IDPs in Zalingei. These displaced go back to Zalingei to receive their rations and for access to secondary schools (villages only have primary schools). According to village *Sheikhs* there is enough land for everyone to farm, and land is provided to IDPs from other areas.<sup>5</sup> Very few return to their villages permanently, but many do so on a seasonal basis to farm, often leaving part of the family in the camps (this is described in more detail in Section 2.7).

Splitting families has become a major way of coping with limited livelihood options and protection risks. Families are spread over a number of different locations, with some perhaps farming in their home area, some with ration cards and others working. Three examples are given in Box 4.

#### **2.4 Livelihoods and protection for Fur villagers in SLA-controlled areas<sup>6</sup>**

As a result of large-scale attacks and looting, villagers living in SLA-controlled areas have moved to the higher-altitude areas of Jebel Marra, from both the plains around Jebel Marra as well as insecure areas in the mountains. IDPs live with host populations, sharing resources with them, in camps, or dispersed along wadis or in the hills. This has resulted in pressure on natural resources, including water, farmland and wood (Lefebvre Chevallier and Crahay, 2008). Movement for Fur within SLA-controlled areas was generally reported to be safer than either moving between GOS- and SLA-controlled areas or within GOS-controlled areas. The most insecure areas are on the border with GOS-controlled zones, where movement to pursue livelihoods is associated with a high risk of attack and rape.

An ACF survey in eastern and central Jebel Marra found that agricultural and horticultural production and animal production have significantly declined due to looting of assets, restrictions on movement

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<sup>5</sup> Orokum was planned as one of the model villages, so this could be part of the reason why more people are attracted to the village.

<sup>6</sup> This information is based on interviews with DRC staff, interviews with other key informants, secondary sources (such as the ACF survey) and interviews with IDPs from Jebel Marra in the Nyertete camps. The area could not be visited for security reasons.

and displacement. Collection and sale of natural resources has become much more important (Lefebvre Chevallier and Crahay, 2008). Interviews for this study indicated a similar situation in the western Jebel Marra villages, although there was reported to be little scope for selling natural resources such as firewood in the area. Family members had to migrate out for casual labour (see Box 4). The area farmed is smaller than it was before the conflict, and consequently agricultural production is much reduced, in particular in 2007 due to low rainfall. The influx of IDPs in many places has further limited the amount of safely accessible land, as land has to be shared between a much larger number of people. According to the FAO/MoA post-harvest assessment, Golo and Rokero localities face some of the largest food deficits this year (able to meet only 23% of their needs through own production), with the hungry season estimated to start in March.<sup>7</sup>

Access to markets is much restricted. Travel between Nyertete and Golo locality is unsafe, and robberies on market days are common. Taxes at checkpoints make trade in fruits and vegetables much less lucrative, and have contributed to a decline in this business (as well as a reduction in areas being planted). Trade in oranges from Jebel Marra has continued, with large traders moving into SLA-controlled areas with escorts from the 'Border Military Force' and payment of numerous formal and informal taxes (Buchanan-Smith and Abdulla Fadul, 2008). Residents mentioned that producers were bringing small amounts of oranges to Nyertete, where they are bought by small traders for onward sale. In recent years, opportunities appear to have emerged for market exchange between nomads and villagers along the borders of SLA-controlled areas. The ACF assessment mentions six such markets in central and eastern Jebel Marra alone.

There are indications that the prevalence of acute malnutrition in rural Jebel Marra is amongst the highest in West Darfur. An ACF survey in 2007 showed a prevalence of over 15% during harvest time, an extremely grave level for a fertile area and higher than the average (12%) for West Darfur. Other evidence includes MSF-F information that most of the children in its feeding programmes appear to be coming from rural areas outside of Nyertete, and that, on the opening of an MSF hospital in Golo, its capacity of 70 places was filled almost immediately by malnourished children. Whereas many of the health-related factors

considered in the ACF survey were thought to be chronic, the food security factors were acute and an immediate consequence of conflict (Lefebvre Chevallier and Crahay, 2008).

## 2.5 Livelihoods and protection for nomadic and semi-nomadic Arab groups in rural *damras* and *feriks*

### *Physical security*

In sharp distinction to the responses of resident and displaced farming populations, daily threats to personal security were not highlighted as a major concern by nomadic and semi-nomadic communities interviewed during this study. Some groups, particularly those around Trej and Orkum, indicated that, since 2003, there had been a movement of people from temporary settlements or *feriks* into larger, permanent settlements (the *damras*). The reason for this movement was said to be both insecurity as a result of conflict between the GOS and rebel groups, and an influx of Arab pastoralists as services were no longer available elsewhere due to the destruction of villages. Some villagers from Trej also fled to the surrounding *damras* if they had relatives there through inter-marriage.

Migrating Aballa groups posed a risk both to personal safety and to crops and livestock. Women in particular noted that this had increased due to the absence of cultivation in surrounding areas because villagers had fled. This had made them more vulnerable to attack. However, according to women in Katti *damra* near Trej, the depopulation of surrounding areas had improved security for some due to reductions in criminality. Overall, the local security situation was felt to be good, and semi-nomadic groups interviewed did not report major difficulties in travelling around their locality. Women in Trej experienced no major constraints in accessing markets or farms or collecting firewood. In Reij Al Talata *damra* near Orokum, the situation was similarly safe, with the residents there suggesting that they could help secure the roads to facilitate humanitarian access.

Each of the four pastoralist groups interviewed acknowledged their role in protection forces from 2003 onwards. The period of time involved ranged from three months to one year, but each stated that they had received military supplies and vehicles from the government and had worked alongside the police or other government personnel. They indicated that food was provided by villagers in return for their services but that – in contradiction to village reports – no money had changed hands.

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<sup>7</sup> Note that these areas were not visited by the assessment teams.

Community leaders from Reij Al Talata *damra* near Orokum stated that the villagers' agreement to the protection forces was critical to whether the village survived. They mentioned that Katilingei village near Orokum had refused to cooperate and was subsequently attacked.

Whilst the general conflict in Darfur has had limited impact in terms of security on the pastoralist groups interviewed, localised clashes between different nomadic groups are increasingly frequent, including in the Zalingei corridor. In particular, fighting between cattle-herding Hotiya and the camel-herding Nawaiba in Abtta locality in late 2005 and early 2006 resulted in hundreds of deaths and the forced displacement of approximately 5,000 Hotiya into Taiba camp in Zalingei; thousands of head of cattle were stolen (UN Situation Report, 2006).<sup>8</sup>

#### *Freedom of movement*

While semi-nomadic groups interviewed did not report major difficulties in travelling around their locality, there are difficulties in moving further afield. Violence in Darfur has significantly affected the movement of semi-nomadic groups for seasonal migration in search of pasture and the trekking of animals to markets for sale and export. In 2005, Young et al. highlighted severe restrictions by rebel movements on livestock migration, warning of a potentially disastrous impact on livestock health due to the depletion of pasture and water resources, as well as an increase in the risk of disease. Hemorrhagic Septemia, sheep pox and tick-borne diseases have increased mortality rates to approximately 15–20% for sheep and 10% for camels (UN, 2007: 72). For agro-pastoralists in Reij Al Talata *damra* near Orokum, looting and attacks have curtailed movement which used to stretch into Chad, CAR and South Sudan to a local area extending from Abata in the north to Wadi Saleh to the south and Mornei to the west.

Pastoralists indicated that insecurity had had a major impact on their trading, both in terms of volume and in terms of the costs involved in movement. Men from Futi *damra* near Waro indicated that exports to Egypt and Libya had stopped, and that trekking camels to Omdurman market in Khartoum was taking three months rather than the normal 40 days as the 'road goes in circles' due to insecurity. New routes have been devised to maximise travel through Arab-controlled territory. In addition, rebel groups and local militias have started to impose taxes on passage through areas under their control. The men from Futi indicated

that, in the case of the SLA, this was a fixed SDG500 (\$150) when encountering a commander, as well as arbitrary individual payments to soldiers. Instead of changing their route, those from Jeddah near Abata have opted for military escorts for their animals. While this means that animals reach markets more quickly and safely, it costs SDG3,000 per trip, and even with government assistance security is not assured. This is consistent with other reports on the livestock trade which show the cost of moving cattle on the hoof from Nyala to Omdurman had increased four and a half times since the conflict began: animals are now transported in smaller numbers, more animal drivers are required and soldiers are hired for protection. Movement within Darfur is similarly affected. Over a third of the SDG2,097 it costs to transport cattle by truck or on the hoof between Nyala and Al Fashir is accounted for in payments to pass through checkpoints. Overall, there has been a major decline in livestock trade and profitability (Buchanan-Smith and Fadul, 2008). Meanwhile, pastoralists engaging in agricultural activities highlight a decline in cultivation due to the arrival of new groups into *damras*, resulting in a reduction in available cultivation land.

#### *Means of subsistence*

For semi-nomadic groups the impact of the conflict on means of subsistence has been less severe and less direct than that on many sedentary farming groups. Pastoralist groups have also been victims of their own making. The destruction of villages and the flight of the Fur has led to the collapse of markets and thus a drastic reduction in local trade. Pastoralists in Orokum claimed that, before the conflict, 'every day was market day', with markets in nine nearby villages. Now only Orokum, Treij, Abata and Kurleik have markets. Insecurity also keeps outside traders away, compounding the problem. The depopulation of rural areas has also meant a reduction in the availability of farming labourers for those with land. Pastoralist communities are also affected by increasing commodity prices, with the price of sorghum in Abata doubling from SDG50 to 100 between 2007 and 2008. Table 2 demonstrates the impact of these factors on pastoralist communities in rural Zalingei.

There is strong evidence that some pastoralist groups or individuals are also deriving benefits from the conflict. Villages indicated the direct involvement of neighbouring groups in the violence and looting in 2003–2004, as well as in the continued crop destruction and looting experienced since then. As mentioned above, it seems that groups around Abata are making efforts to control

<sup>8</sup> UN OCHA Sudan Situation Report, 12 Mar 2006

**Table 2: Changes in pastoralist livelihoods in rural Zalingei between 2002 and 2008**

Livelihoods before conflict	Livelihoods in 2008
1. Livestock herding and trade: camels, cows, goats, sheep	1. Livestock herding and trade: camels, cows, goats, sheep but negatively affected by:  Lack of planting, making animals weaker Movement restrictions Disease in 2004 due to lack of mobility
2. Farming: millet, sorghum, groundnuts. Winter crops: tomatoes, sweet potatoes	2. Farming: millet, sorghum, groundnuts. Winter crops: tomatoes, sweet potatoes, but income has become very low because: Nearby villagers have left so there is no one left to labour on their farms Rains have been poor. Insecurity is not an issue.
3. Migration for work: labouring as welders, builders, herders in Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Libya	3. Unaffected
4. Charcoal-making	4. Unaffected

the collection of and trade in firewood collection, whilst in northern Wadi Saleh, the team observed Arab groups trading in mangoes, which was consistent with reports of secondary occupation of land and looting of orchards in the area. This suggests the emergence of new livelihood strategies for some pastoralist groups, including engagement in government militia and looting of livestock and other valuable possessions, as well as increased income through charging taxation for the protection of villages and crops and for passage on roads. The degree of benefit and extent of involvement was impossible to verify in this review, although as outlined above each of these groups acknowledged their involvement in protection forces early in the conflict.

The longer-term goal of gaining entitlements to land is thought to be a reason for the engagement of pastoralist groups in counter-insurgency operations (de Waal, 2004; Polloni, 2005; Tanner, 2005). As mentioned earlier, secondary occupation has been a particular issue in the fertile areas of western and south-western Darfur (Intersos, 2006). What was

striking during the review was the level of self-identification of pastoralist groups as farmers, despite the obvious presence of large herds of livestock and the relative lack of significance accorded to farming during discussions about livelihoods. There are two explanations for this: the desire to expand agricultural and horticultural activities into areas abandoned by farmers, and second, to gain access to humanitarian assistance, which in rural areas has predominantly focused on supporting resident farmers with agricultural inputs. The desire to access humanitarian assistance is also a function of the neglect and underdevelopment that these groups have endured (Young and Osman, 2007). Statistics show, for example, that over 50% of male and 75% of female pastoralists have never attended any form of schooling (Al Massar, 2003: 41). With the exception of a few organisations, DRC among them, the humanitarian response has largely focused on displaced populations or resident farmers in rural areas. The less severe impact of conflict on pastoral livelihoods is underscored by the assistance priorities they highlighted, which focused on longer-term projects such as education, agricultural support and veterinary services, rather than security and food, which were consistently prioritised by displaced and resident farmers. Longer-term planning is also more likely to be a characteristic of livestock herders than farmers.

## 2.6. Camp livelihoods and protection and the link with rural populations (Nyertete town and camps)<sup>9</sup>

Nyertete is situated in the foothills of the Jebel Marra, along a north/south nomadic migratory route. It is a stopping point on the road between Zalingei and Nyala. Nyertete's strategic location has meant that its pre-crisis population of approximately 10,000 people has swollen to an estimated 44,000 (Darfur Humanitarian Profile 31, 2008). Many arrived in late 2003 and 2004 from villages in the Jebel Marra and Shaeria localities, although the influx has continued since. An estimated 4,500 people arrived in 2006 and 2007. Between January and May 2008, a further 3,000 or so were thought to have moved to the town from Derganga, Waranga and Fudiko.

<sup>9</sup> Analysis of livelihoods and protection *in* camps draw on interviews with host communities, IDPs and new arrivals in Nyertete town in Jebel Marra, where DRC runs a large-scale food distribution programme. The discussion of seasonal migration and return draws on interviews in Nyertete and Zalingei camps, as well as in places of rural villages.

### *Physical safety*

Nyertete has been the target of numerous attacks since 2003, prompting many residents and IDPs to leave for other locations in Darfur or further afield. Although the town was attacked in 2007, the main period of insecurity appears to have been in 2004 and 2005. This was felt to be linked to the presence of a *Janjaweed* camp in Khor Rambla close to Nyertete. The harassment has declined since 2005, in line with a reduction in the number of *Janjaweed* around the town. Nonetheless, both resident and displaced populations raised concerns about ongoing insecurity, including harassment, looting, physical assault and sexual violence. Market day is particularly dangerous as many militia come into the town, and livestock and other valuables are often looted. According to IDP leaders in south camp, the main reason why people stayed behind in Nyertete was lack of funds to move elsewhere, but presumably other factors, such as family links, proximity to SLA-controlled territory and, later, the difficulty in receiving humanitarian assistance, must have played a part for some. In general, people said that the larger numbers in Nyertete meant that it was safer than their home villages.

Camp populations complained of incursions and harassment by armed men in the camps after nightfall, despite a curfew of 9pm, and a lack of effective action by the police and UNAMID. There is much discussion of increasing militarisation in Darfur's camps. A recent review by the Khartoum Protection Steering Group links the presence of arms and armed groups to attempts by different factions to gain control of the camps, as well as efforts by camps residents to defend themselves (KPSG, 2008). While those who had been displaced for a number of years reported little change in security since the transition to the UN-AU force, new arrivals claimed that there had been some improvement.

Relations between Fur camp and host populations remain good, but have soured between Fur and Zaghawa groups since the signing of the DPA. Relations between long-term displaced and new arrivals also appear to be deteriorating. While initially the older displaced populations shared their assistance, this arrangement has not been maintained. In a context where any power, however small, is used to gain control over scarce resources, the 'new arrivals' also spoke of problems in accessing water. There were incidents of beatings by 'old IDPs' if new arrivals did not grant them precedence in queues. 'New arrivals' do not come under the governance of *Sheikhs* from their areas of origin. Instead, they appoint new *Sheikhs* to

represent them, which means that they have relatively weak representational capacity.

Freedom of movement has improved since 2005, when people claimed that they were 'prisoners in the town', and few risk movement outside the perimeter to collect firewood. Movement is still however strictly regulated. Local residents spoke of an informal demarcation by local militia of the town's peripheral areas and the systematic collection of taxes. However, risks are faced most frequently by the poorest, including newly arrived IDPs, who depend heavily on firewood collection for income. Young men are especially targeted, and so older men and women are generally sent. Insecurity and crop destruction is a major barrier to cultivation for the town's residents. Some Zaghawa residents from the south of the town spoke of trying to make arrangements with local militia for the protection of the crops, but these had failed, which they felt was due to the fact that 'Arab groups' were taking over the land.

Road travel is only possible for those with money to pay the high taxes extorted by different groups at regular checkpoints. The cost of travel between Nyertete and Zalingei, for instance, is SDG30-40 (see Box 5). People travel in commercial trucks between Nyertete and Nyala, Boldong and most especially north into the Jebel Marra. The risk of attack and looting is high, and people said that every week there are reports of armed robberies. Such looting is one factor in the soaring prices in the town, with prices for soap, for instance, rising from SDG1 for three bars in March 2008 to SDG1.5 in May. Road travel may be prohibitively dangerous and costly for many, but there is frequent travel by foot and donkey between Nyertete and surrounding areas, especially north to SLA-controlled territory. This was done in order to visit relatives, collect mangoes or wood from their houses for trade, or seasonal migration to plant. When AMIS troops conducted firewood patrols then people would move with them, otherwise they go by foot or with traders. People are also travelling into Nyertete either for the market or to join the displaced camps.

With limited opportunities for agricultural production and income generation and loss of livestock, humanitarian assistance is the main source of food and income for those who are registered for assistance, as well as basic services such as health and education. Those registered for assistance are currently mainly IDPs who arrived in 2004. DRC is providing food assistance to some 32,900 IDPs. Otherwise, brickmaking, firewood and grass collection, labouring and agricultural



**Box 5: cost of travel from Nyertete to Zalingei**

Payment for car:

Police checkpoint outside Niertiti: SDG1

Checkpoint at Kusumba: SDG5

Checkpoint at Furedeno: SDG5

Checkpoint at the small bridge: SDG10

Checkpoint at Hekebede: SDG10

Checkpoint at Shaya: SDG2

Payment for passenger: SDG5 in 2007. SDG15 in 2008.

production are the main sources of income for residents and displaced populations. In terms of physical safety and access to livelihood opportunities, the situation of the town's residents is similar to that of the displaced. In the early stages of the conflict, they hosted overwhelming numbers of IDPs. Residents still spoke of sharing compounds, food and land with up to three additional families. However, due to WFP funding shortfalls in 2006 host populations were excluded from food assistance, which led to riots in Nyertete town over food shortages. Some host populations are still receiving food assistance due to a lack of distinction in the initial registration process between host and IDP populations. Many IDPs now sharing their assistance with the town's residents.

New arrivals are also excluded from humanitarian assistance. Repeated efforts to update registration lists since 2004 have been frustrated by the camps' leaders. A malnutrition survey by MSF-France in the new arrivals section of the camps estimated global rates at 14% and severe malnutrition at 2%. Even if a re-registration were possible, new IDPs may not be registered as camp residents, given WFP's current policy of only providing food aid for two months for 'harvest-affected' people. Apart from humanitarian assistance, other livelihoods strategies include agricultural activities, brickmaking, firewood, grass and wild food collection and petty labouring. Resident populations claimed to be accessing only about 50% of their land due to concerns about security and crop destruction, and whatever was harvested had to be shared with displaced families. It is difficult to gauge how much cultivation is undertaken by displaced populations. Some mentioned returning to Gornay or Waranga to cultivate, but having to pay 50% of the harvest back to 'Arab' militia. IDPs from north or east of Nyertete reported that they could not plant in their villages of origin, but that some went back to harvest fruits. Collecting fruit was safer as it did not need extended stays in the village. Few IDPs had access to land in Nyertete.

The main activities in Nyertete were grass and wood collection, both firewood and wood for construction. Those collecting by hand rather than on donkeys can earn 3–5 SDG (\$1.5–3) per day. The Jebel Marra region also produces a specific type of grass that is used for construction. Collection is possible after harvest time, between October and December. Brickmaking fetches about 2–4 SDG (\$1–2) per day. Opportunities for petty labouring in Nyertete were much less evident than in Zalingei, where women in particular spoke of being able to earn money through working as labourers on farms, in people's houses or on wadis.

Lack of access to humanitarian assistance was a key determinant of the level of engagement in more risky or less productive strategies, with new arrivals reporting daily firewood collection for income. IDPs who arrived in 2004 claimed to collect on a weekly or bi-weekly basis, and would not collect when attacks were reported. New arrivals were also more dependent on the collection and sale of wild fruits, which was not mentioned by other groups as a source of food or income. While it was too early to analyse the impact of the ration cut on people's livelihoods strategies, some mentioned a higher level of firewood collection.

## 2.7 Relations between displaced and non-displaced populations: return, seasonal migration and information<sup>10</sup>

Displacement and return of populations in Darfur is being used for political and military purposes. It is thus a highly contentious issue. The UN reports continuous pressure from the government to relocate IDPs or press them to return to their areas of origin without consideration of the security situation in these areas. Counter-pressure to stop returns has been applied by armed groups (UN Workplan, 2008) interested to maintain visible evidence of the suffering in Darfur and to ensure that return occurs in the context of a peace agreement. As outlined above, both GOS and SLA factions are controlling the movement of groups for economic and political purposes.

IDPs from Abata in Hamidia camp in Zalingei said that they could not go back to their villages, even for short visits, because the *Sheikhs* would take their ration cards if they did so. For IDP leaders in Zalingei, non-return indicates that the situation is still bad in Abata, which conforms with the SLA-AW agenda. At a local level, groups place restrictions on

<sup>10</sup> This section draws on interviews with displaced and resident populations across the Zalingei corridor.

movement for economic gain. As described above, in some locations, such as Abata, Waro in Wadi Saleh and Gornay in Jebel Marra, residents were forced to stay in villages by neighbouring pastoralist communities who recognised their dependence on the markets and services the villagers provided. In other cases, populations have been used to attract humanitarian assistance to an area.<sup>11</sup> While the issue of returns remains locked within this extremely politicised context, the reality is that the levels of insecurity in Darfur have meant that little spontaneous voluntary return has been observed. According to UN sources, while there may be opportunities for small-scale return to limited locations in West Darfur, most returns are likely to occur in response to push factors in places of displacement, such as insecurity or a reduction in humanitarian assistance.

It is very difficult to discern patterns of return along the Zalingei corridor, where the very mention of return was felt to pose a security threat to humanitarian officials. However, discussion about historical returns by IDPs in Zalingei and Nyertete highlighted its temporary and precarious nature: lack of safety, issues of land rights and land use and crop destruction jeopardise sustainable return. IDPs from Abata locality said that they fled at first to the camps in Abata, but returned to farm in their villages in 2006, paying protection money. However, their village was attacked soon afterwards, which is when they decided to come to Zalingei. Similarly, in 2006 IDPs in Nyertete went back to their village to farm, but were again attacked and decided to stay in the camp in Nyertete. Women in Orokum said they had fled their village multiple times for Zalingei between 2004 and 2006. While everyone spoke positively of their life before displacement and many indicated a desire to return as soon as possible, insecurity and the lack of disarmament among Arab groups was mentioned time and again as the key barrier. Many IDPs also said that they could not return because their land was occupied or there were ‘strangers’ on their land. Young people in particular were beginning to recognise that return may not occur, especially those who found other opportunities in their places of displacement. When asked, young girls in Zalingei’s IDP camps claimed to be ‘from Zalingei’, rather than from their home villages. As the period of displacement continues, local integration will continue.

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<sup>11</sup> Reports indicate the establishment of ‘ghost’ camps in Jebel Marra in order to attract humanitarian resources. Humanitarian assessments found camps in Fata Borsikri that were populated by day but empty at night.

#### **Box 6: Seasonal migration to Waro from Zalingei**

Awatif – not her real name – is a 15-year-old girl from Waro. In 2003, her father was killed and her family fled Waro. She ended up in Zalingei with her relatives and then moved to Hasahisa camp with her mother and two younger sisters (aged 6 and 8). None of her family has ration cards and so she and her mother work in Zalingei to get money for food and to pay for her sisters’ education. Awatif used to go to school but now has to support her family. In Zalingei, she works as a farm labourer in the wadi in Zalingei or as a brickmaker. She does not work every day, but when she does, she gets between SDG2 and SDG5 per day (\$1 to \$2.5 per day).

Awatif’s family used to have land in Waro, but it has been destroyed by flooding in the wadi. She has come back alone to Waro for the first time in 2008 to plant as this year her cousin has given her some land. She will use the crops she gets from planting money to support her family. She would like to stay in Waro if her relatives will allow her. If not, she will return to Zalingei.

Seasonal migration for planting is evident, both to villages of origin and to new areas where land is available for rent. People in every location the team visited spoke about seasonal migration openly and said that it was happening on an annual basis. For instance, a number of IDPs from Neima and Turkelme villages in rural Wadi Saleh who are living in Zalingei camp were farming rented land in Trej rather than their own lands. The cost of renting 1 muhammas of land is SDG60 (\$30). There are many cases of IDPs establishing protection agreements with local Arab groups to access and cultivate their land. In all cases where seasonal migration occurred families had split, with some members returning and others staying in the camps to collect rations and look after children. Sometimes this happened in rotation, while in other cases either the man or the women came back to farm. In general, interviewees indicated that those with larger families and those with money were able to return. However, there was also evidence that those without ration cards were coming back to plant, in order to supplement the income that they were able to generate in larger urban areas (see Box 6). With the cut in rations, movement to supplement meagre rations may become more prevalent.

Whilst some people go back to their village of origin to farm, there is some indication of movement

between places of origin and displacement to visit markets and for social reasons. In Jebel Marra and rural Wadi Saleh, people reported travelling to areas such as Golo, Guildo and Trej to visit markets and relatives, and for weddings and other occasions. Others, mostly men, receive information about their village through people travelling to markets in town, mostly traders, with women finding out details from their *Sheikhs*.

Despite the level of interaction between displaced populations and their places of origin, there was a high level of hostility from IDPs towards those who have not fled. This appears to be because the presence of Fur populations in rural areas suggests that survival is possible, and thus could be used to undermine assistance to camp-based populations or to underscore the government's attempts to return camp populations. As such, camp *Sheikhs* consistently reinforced the idea that they were the true 'conflict-affected' populations and anyone in rural areas was not. Fur who have stayed in villages in GOS-held areas are seen as having sided with the Arabs, and in some cases their ethnic identity is being denied by IDPs. In the Zalingei camps, the review team was told by IDPs that none of the people remaining in the villages was really Fur, but either Arabs or tribes that aligned themselves with GOS (such as Tama and Gimir) and who have learnt the Fur language. This hostility is also stopping some displacement into camps. People in Waro, for example, spoke about not being welcomed by the displaced populations in Zalingei.

The hostility of camp-based IDPs is also directed at organisations supporting rural populations, either in villages or in *damras*. In both Nyertete and Zalingei camps concerns were consistently raised that these organisations are assisting Arab populations in settling in rural areas, which could support secondary occupation and make return more difficult. Questions were asked as to why organisations were supporting the 'Janjaweed' when people with the real needs were in camps. In Nyertete, for example, IDPs from Kurumbra village 7km away spoke of international organisations building mosques, schools and water points for the Arab groups that had settled in the Fur and Zaghawa areas of the village. In Zalingei, there was particular concern about any permanent structures being developed in rural areas. IDPs from Trej locality spoke of their concern that the committees set up by organisations to ensure that water points and other permanent fixtures were not built on farmers' lands were not getting permission from the genuine landowners. There was also concern about the provision of agricultural training to Arab groups, which was felt would teach them how to farm land that was not theirs. There is a high degree of suspicion about any organisation working in rural areas and there appears to be little distinction between the work of different organisations, for instance humanitarian agencies and the government. In Zalingei, after a heated discussion IDP *Sheikhs* said that they would welcome more involvement with organisations working in rural areas in order to better understand, and inform, their work.



## Part 3: Livelihoods and protection analysis and action

### 3.1 Livelihoods and protection strategies and approaches in Darfur

#### *Protection approaches*

Protection of civilians affected by the crisis in Darfur has been recognised as a priority issue for humanitarian agencies from the beginning of the response. The focus on protection has led to an unprecedented number of humanitarian agencies engaging in this work, many for the first time. Traditional protection work involving monitoring violations and training and dialogue with parties to the conflict has been undertaken by ICRC, UNHCR and UNICEF. There has also been a large amount of advocacy towards the international community, to encourage action to resolve the crisis. Protection programming, particularly in camp settings, was aimed at reducing civilian exposure to risk or reducing the consequences of such exposure. In 2004, largely due to a lack of more effective alternatives for civilian protection, 'protection by presence' by humanitarian agencies was agreed as the strategy underpinning the humanitarian response. However, the fact that the aid effort in Darfur has predominantly focused on camps has reduced the potential of this strategy. While the camps have facilitated the necessary option of flight for civilians at risk, five years on the protection problems associated with large displacement camps are becoming more evident.

The large number and scale of protection issues has resulted in a variety of different responses by humanitarian agencies. To protect civilians against targeted attacks and mass displacement, agencies have focused on encouraging parties to the conflict to comply with their legal responsibilities to protect civilians, as well as engaging with international peacekeepers to maximise the potential for civilian protection. For instance, NGOs have played an important role in facilitating contact between peacekeepers and displaced populations to ensure more effective patrolling for firewood collection, planting and harvesting. The scale of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in Darfur has resulted in a large number of different activities, including facilitating reporting to, and action by, security and legal services, as well as programmes that provide medical and psycho-social support to survivors. Freedom of movement, as well as return of displaced populations, is another central issue. For instance, mechanisms have been established by IOM and UNHCR to monitor the voluntariness of return. Other concerns include protection of children, forced relocation and insecurity in camps.

The scale of the violence, the widespread lack of adherence by parties to the conflict to their responsibilities to protect civilians, as well as the Sudanese government's intimidation of humanitarian agencies active in protection, has made progress difficult. Work on sexual and gender-based violence has been particularly contentious. As a result, the active participation of NGOs in protection-related activities has declined over the duration of the conflict.

### 3.2 Food security and livelihood support interventions

The humanitarian community has focused on food aid as the main form of food security and livelihood support. Food aid is mainly provided to meet basic food needs, but the expansion of the coverage of food distribution to rural areas had an important role in helping people to remain in their areas of origin, as well as encouraging production. In addition, the increase in rations in 2005 allowed for the sale of food aid which lowered the price of food in markets, thus increasing access to food for those not included in distributions, and had a major role in keeping the grain markets functioning (Buchanan-Smith and Jaspars, 2006; Buchanan-Smith and Abdulla Fadul, 2008).

Studies on the Darfur crisis have consistently highlighted the importance of complementing food aid with other forms of food security or livelihoods support to help meet immediate needs and protect assets, as well as influencing the wider policy and governance environment (see for example Young et al., 2005; Buchanan-Smith and Jaspars, 2006). In 2005, some agencies started small-scale food security/livelihoods programmes, for example seeds and tools distributions and veterinary care to rural populations, as well as fodder distribution in camps. However, arguably the main stimulus for an increased focus on livelihood support came with the Darfur Joint Assessment Mission (DJAM) following the peace agreement in 2006. The DJAM identified early recovery, development and reconstruction needs in a range of sectors, with the UN coordinating the assessment of early recovery needs (track 1) and the World Bank covering development and reconstruction (track 2). Priority livelihoods and protection interventions recommended by the DJAM are summarised in Box 7.

In 2006 and 2007, the main objectives of food security and livelihood support interventions remained meeting immediate needs and protecting

### **Box 7: Examples of recommendations for early recovery interventions**

- Addressing impunity through establishment of justice mechanisms.
- Monitoring return processes to ensure voluntariness.
- Promoting rule of law through human rights monitoring, establishing Darfur Human Rights Commissions and supporting Darfur lawyers.
- Establishing DDR programmes for children.
- Mitigating the impact of SGBV through psycho-social support, legal reform and improving police and State Committee practice.

#### *Trade*

- Improving physical access to markets through road improvements.
- Provision of micro-credit or loans to returning farmers and traders.
- Grants/loans to women grain retailers.
- Formulation and adoption of investment-friendly policies.
- Technical assistance in policy development to the compensation commission.

#### *Agriculture*

- Seed multiplication and protection projects, other mechanisms to promote the availability of local seeds, supporting the development of tools locally.
- Training programmes in blacksmithing, improved agricultural techniques, environmental conservation, improved water harvesting, animal traction techniques.
- Training to agricultural extension workers.
- Continued food aid as a social safety net until the first successful harvest.

#### *Horticulture*

- Training to establish small nurseries for vegetables and fruit trees.
- Micro-credit to re-establish water systems and seedling purchases.

#### *Livestock*

- Organise restocking committees in all three states, comprising farmers, pastoralists, NGOs, government in anticipation of the work of the compensation commission.
- Reformulate the pastoral commission to reach agreement on stock routes and locate and rehabilitate problematic water points along the routes.
- Restoration of animal health services and training of community animal health workers.

#### *Land*

- Managerial, legal and administrative assistance to build capacity within the customary system to manage land and property disputes, including support for ad hoc courts as an immediate measure.
- Technical assistance to the customary system to improve customary land management systems.
- Managerial, legal and administrative assistance to the formal courts to perform land and property restitution proceedings.
- Policy, technical and legal assistance to the land commission.
- Establish and coordinate legal counselling facilities for IDPs.

#### *Alternative livelihoods*

- Cash for work to rehabilitate hafirs, dams, etc.
- Training in mini-dairy processing.
- Training in apiary management (bees).
- Vocational training in blacksmithing, carpentry, leather production, construction, food processing.

#### *Environment*

- Creating new resources through reforestation.
- Establishment of tree nurseries in camps and rural communities.
- Collection and multiplication of suitable pasture species and range rehabilitation.
- Agree and promote standardised design for fuel-efficient stoves.
- Promote the use of alternative fuels.
- Upgrade state and locality capacity to guide and coordinate natural resource management.

Sources: DJAM (2006); UN White Paper (2007).

assets. In addition to food aid and production support, income-generation projects in IDP camps became more prominent. This continued humanitarian focus is justified on the basis of a high proportion of the population remaining acutely food insecure (70%, according to the WFP assessment), and continued threats to livelihoods and protection.

### **3.3 Livelihood recovery**

There were three significant developments in 2008. First, early recovery was incorporated explicitly into the UN workplan. Second, initiatives are underway to link humanitarian assistance to peace-building activities. Third, there has been a much-discussed desire to expand programming into rural areas. Early recovery is understood as the application of

development principles within a humanitarian context. The purpose is to restore the capacity of national institutions and communities to recover from a conflict or a natural disaster, enter transition and avoid relapses. It aims to generate and/or reinforce national processes for post-crisis recovery that are resilient and sustainable. It encompasses the restoration of basic services, livelihoods, transitional shelter, governance, security and rule of law, environment and other socio-economic dimensions, including the reintegration of displaced populations. It strengthens human security and aims to begin addressing the underlying causes of the crisis (IASC, 2008). Although early recovery usually commences upon a cessation of hostilities, it is increasingly being viewed as relevant before a peace agreement or a cessation of hostilities. Although done in parallel with humanitarian activities, its objectives, mechanisms and required expertise are different. It aims to establish the foundations of longer-term recovery and is thought to contribute to peace-building by addressing underlying causes of conflict and by using an approach that brings different tribes together.

The types of livelihood early recovery interventions suggested for Darfur are illustrated in Box 7, and incorporated in the 2008 UN workplan as a greater focus on vocational training, income generation and agricultural support services. Vocational training in particular is aimed at providing skills that can be used in the future, after the conflict has ended. This is mostly provided by NGOs, and can include tailoring, carpentry, food processing and sometimes brickmaking, welding, metalwork and blacksmithing.

These livelihood support interventions are coordinated by the Resident Coordinators Office (RCO). This gives the RCO in Darfur an unprecedented role in humanitarian response. The RCO also designed the 'Darfur Community Peace and Stability Fund' (DCPSF), which aims to support local peace-building initiatives in rural areas by providing assistance to communities which have shown a willingness to work together to resolve disputes (these may not necessarily be those in greatest need). Assistance may include social services, livelihoods diversification and income generation. These initiatives can be seen as a significant shift away from humanitarian principles or the provision of assistance based on humanitarian need. In reality, the early recovery agenda is much more debated than put into actual practice. Even in the 2008 workplan, funding for WFP still represents 94% of the requested funding for food security and livelihoods. The only aspect of WFP's programme that could be considered 'early

recovery' is the assistance provided to rural populations to enable them to stay in their villages. Many of the proposed early recovery interventions shown in Box 7 can contribute to improved protection and basic subsistence as well as to livelihood recovery. However, the objectives of these interventions depend on the severity of crisis. The current context of continuing widespread risks to protection and livelihoods as well as acute humanitarian need means that the focus should remain on addressing acute needs. This is explored in more detail below in relation to DRC's programmes.

### **3.4 Linking livelihoods and protection approaches**

There is some recognition amongst humanitarian actors in Darfur of the linkages between livelihoods and protection. The livelihoods studies referred to earlier highlighted protection issues affecting livelihoods, including restricted movement, land occupation and extortion. These concerns are now reflected in strategy and, to a certain degree, practice. The 2008 workplan focuses on lifesaving humanitarian assistance, strengthened humanitarian protection and support to people's coping strategies and livelihoods. However, the workplan provides no strategy for linking the two. Most agencies interviewed for this review recognised the linkages, but the extent to which this resulted in linked analysis and action is variable. The provision of humanitarian assistance in rural areas is the clearest example of a strategy with both livelihoods and protection objectives, as it allows people to remain in their areas of origin and may prevent displacement in some cases. However, few agencies have expanded to rural areas and coverage remains low.

In terms of specific interventions, fuel efficient stoves (FES) were the most commonly mentioned intervention in terms of linking livelihoods and protection. A recent review by USAID found that FES reduce the consumption of firewood, with fuel savings of between 30% and 60%, and had an impact on food security by reducing the income spent on fuel wood and the sale of food rations, but do not provide a total solution to protection issues. Women continued to collect firewood as a source of income, to join other women collecting firewood for social and security reasons and because firewood collection is often combined with the collection of other natural resources such as grass, shelter materials and wild foods.

There are other examples of livelihood-support activities indirectly addressing protection issues.

For example, MercyCorps changed what were previously 'women's protection centres' into 'livelihoods centres' following recommendations from the women involved. Income generation activities have the potential to address a number of different objectives (protection, livelihoods early recovery), but it is questionable whether all can be achieved. Most income-generation activities are conducted in IDP settings. Little information is available on the actual impact of these projects on protection. An exception is a paper by CHF which showed that its income generation, FES and community milling projects reduced the need to venture far from the camps and provided alternative means of livelihoods, increasing income and improving IDP protection (Hill, Diener et al., 2006). ACF has introduced vouchers for milling as a new intervention to reduce milling costs and hence the need to generate income through unsafe strategies. WFP plans to adopt this on a larger scale.

Other initiatives to link protection and livelihoods have been at the advocacy level. For instance, ACF has undertaken work on land access, and UNHCR and others are working on issues related to return. Many NGOs have been active in developing links between peacekeepers and IDP communities to promote patrols for firewood collection, agricultural activities and markets, although these links have declined since UNAMID took over peacekeeping. Most agencies working in Darfur are acutely aware of the potential risks associated with humanitarian programming and have made efforts to mainstream protection into their work. Issues of access to land, land occupation, relations between different ethnic groups and whether people can safely access and receive assistance are the most prominent concerns. Whilst some agencies, CRS is one, include assessments of land access and usage in their approach, others including the ICRC do not.

ICRC currently has the most well-developed operational framework for linking livelihoods and protection. It takes a protection-driven approach to its work, which then involves an integrated response.

1. Identify the protection concerns (for ICRC this involves an analysis of violations of International Humanitarian Law).
2. Analyse which communities are affected and prioritise those most affected by protection issues.
3. Identify the humanitarian consequences of the violations.
4. Identify who is responsible for the violations.
5. Identify a potential protection vector – i.e. a humanitarian response which could mitigate the humanitarian consequences of the violations.
6. Identify which perpetrators/actors can be approached in order to create a dialogue on protection issues.

These steps are similar to those described for implementing DRC's rights-based approach in that they include an analysis of rights violations, as well as using humanitarian response as a means of mitigating the consequences of violations. However, the ICRC framework is different in that it provides a way of prioritising communities and individuals most affected by protection concerns, thus integrating protection and livelihoods. However, there are difficulties in implementing this approach. In Darfur, it is difficult to distinguish 'conflict' from banditry or crime (IHL only applies to conflict). It is also difficult to identify the perpetrators behind incidents, and so creating a dialogue has been difficult. In many locations, access is only possible if assistance is provided to all groups, and so in practice the ability to provide assistance may be the determining factor, rather than protection.

## 4. The DRC programme

### 4.1 Description of DRC's programme in Darfur

#### *History and evolution of the programme*

DRC has been operating in Darfur since 2004. Over the years, its programme has evolved from a purely relief operation to one incorporating both humanitarian assistance and protection activities. More recently, the programme approach has shifted to the stabilisation of livelihoods. A key element of DRC's approach is a focus on rural, or non-camp, populations. 'Livelihoods' and in particular 'protection' relate more to the overall objectives and approaches, rather than specific programme activities.

DRC started its work in Darfur in August 2004, with the distribution of food aid to 120,000 residents and IDPs in the Golo locality of Jebel Marra. This programme was scaled down in 2006 for a number of reasons, including an attack on Golo and consequent loss of access and the printing of cartoons of the prophet Mohamed in the Danish press, which meant that DRC had to close down its Nyala support office. Zalingei was chosen as a new base for DRC because it had a lower coverage of humanitarian agencies than elsewhere in Darfur. 2006 marked a shift in programme approach. DRC stopped food distribution in Jebel Marra after ICRC agreed with WFP to operate in the area. DRC started using a more developmental approach in Zalingei, focusing on income generation and agricultural support, with food distribution limited to the hungry season and school feeding programmes. From 2007, the rural programme was expanded into northern Wadi Saleh and Abata. DRC took on food distribution to about 30,000 IDPs in Nyertete from February 2006, along with NFI distribution and the construction and rehabilitation of schools. The Golo office was reopened in December 2007, with a distribution of NFIs to 24,000 households. As the first agency to restart activities in Golo following the 2006 attack, DRC paved the way for the engagement of other agencies in the area, including MSF.

DRC's programme objectives were as follows:

**Overall Objective: Durable solutions found for the conflict-affected population in West Darfur based on humanitarian standards and fundamental rights.**

Intermediate Objectives:

1. Protect secure and safe access to meet basic **subsistence needs** in accordance with

minimum acceptable standards (Sphere) for the conflict-affected non-camp populations in West Darfur.

2. The **livelihoods** of the conflict-affected non-camp population, living in rural areas in West Darfur, have been protected and people are moving towards recovery on the basis of their own resources and capacities.
3. Local policies and capacities that promote and support human rights and democratic, accountable and transparent governance conducive to **peaceful handling** of conflict have been supported.

In 2007 and 2008, DRC included self-reliance and self-sufficiency objectives, as well as facilitating the recovery process. This reflects the thinking of the humanitarian community as a whole. In 2008 the third objective, which focused on peaceful handling of conflict, was removed. The programme objectives in 2008 were thus as follows:

**Overall Objective: Contribute to the protection and stabilisation of livelihoods of the conflict-affected non-camp rural populations in Zalingei and Jebel Marra localities of east West Darfur.**

Intermediate Objectives:

1. Meet basic shelter and NFI needs of the conflict-affected non-camp rural population.
2. Improve agricultural production and food self-sufficiency/self-reliance of conflict-affected non-camp rural populations.
3. Strengthen the social (and economic) capacities and facilitate the recovery process of the conflict-affected non-camp rural populations.
4. Rehabilitate/construct schools and community infrastructure in order to provide basic services for conflict-affected non-camp rural populations.

#### *Basic subsistence and livelihoods*

Livelihood support is a major focus of DRC's programme. Livelihoods protection and recovery was one of three objectives in 2006/07, and livelihoods protection and stabilisation have become the overall objective in 2008. Food aid, NFI and activities such as agricultural and livestock support and income generation, all contribute directly to meeting people's subsistence needs and protecting livelihoods, as they support livelihoods assets and strategies. DRC tends to view food aid and NFIs as humanitarian relief to save lives and meet immediate needs, and food security as well as some aspects of social rehabilitation are seen as helping communities to become self-reliant,

contributing towards medium-term recovery. Education has similar objectives in the longer term. Like many actors in Darfur, DRC also views vulnerable and competing livelihoods as part of the root cause of conflict, and believes that the restoration of livelihoods will contribute to a solution of the crisis (DRC, 2006).

#### *Social rehabilitation and environment-building*

DRC defines protection broadly as ‘all activities to support the right to life, food, shelter and life with dignity’. Other than a broad aim of achieving protection through its presence in rural areas, there are currently no specific protection objectives in the programme. In 2006 and 2007 the aim was instead to achieve ‘peaceful handling of conflict’. This was supported through DRC’s social rehabilitation programming including recreational and social activities, as well as DRC’s work with area councils. The establishment of Community Area Councils (CAC), introduced in 2007, is unique to Darfur. These are councils consisting of both villagers and Arab groups from neighbouring *damras*. The purpose of the Councils is two-fold: first, to help identify and implement appropriate interventions, and second to promote ‘peaceful handling of conflict’ through facilitating dialogue between the two groups. Two specific protection activities are undertaken. The first is monitoring and mapping of returns, funded by UNHCR, which involves surveying different locations in order to establish the rate of return and the availability of local services. DRC also runs a support project for extremely vulnerable individuals (EVIs), which aims to provide a safety-net for those most affected by the crisis. Protection is mainstreamed into broader issues of access to food and livelihoods, and ‘do no harm’ approaches are used. For instance, DRC has established feedback and grievance mechanisms through ‘suggestion boxes’ to promote accountability to beneficiaries within the programme.

#### **4.2 Humanitarian or recovery approaches: an unhelpful dichotomy?**

DRC’s approach of assisting rural populations is appropriate in Darfur as the provision of assistance to rural areas potentially reduces new displacement where the means of subsistence is under threat. This is especially appropriate in the context of failed or poor harvests and where new ‘harvest-affected’ arrivals to IDP camps may only be assisted for short periods or not at all. The provision of assistance to rural populations has both immediate benefits in terms of helping people meet their basic needs and improving personal safety, and longer-term benefits in that villagers in particular are able to hold on to

their land. There are few other agencies working in rural areas in Zalingei, and thus DRC fills a gap in terms of the coverage of humanitarian assistance. In addition to the provision of assistance, no other actors in the area of DRC’s operation are able to monitor the protection situation in rural areas, and thus DRC also has a major role to play here. DRC’s approach, combining a range of different project activities to meet people’s basic subsistence needs, is also appropriate. Particularly in a context where food rations are cut, it is important to consider any possible strategy that conflict-affected populations have to meet their basic needs, as each is only likely to meet a small proportion of those needs.

While many of DRC’s livelihoods activities are thus appropriate interventions in the current context, linking livelihood support with recovery or improving agricultural production with food self-sufficiency/self-reliance are not. The situation in Darfur is typified by continued disruption of livelihoods, human rights violations, non-functioning institutions, family and community breakdown, limited access to basic needs and services and insecurity. In addition, humanitarian needs are not being met. Interventions which are aimed mainly at providing people with livelihood skills for the future, but which do not have any immediate or medium-term benefits, will therefore need to be reconsidered.

The need to complement traditional relief measures such as food aid with other forms of food security and livelihood support has been identified in past research, and is supported by this review. This does not suggest that early recovery interventions are inappropriate, but rather that the objectives of these interventions need to remain on addressing acute needs – whether directly through relief or indirectly through assisting communities to meet their own needs – rather than seeing them as laying the foundations for recovery and peaceful co-existence. In addition to food aid, interventions like the provision of agricultural inputs and training, livestock support and income generation, along with interventions that reduce expenditure, can all contribute to meeting basic needs and supporting livelihoods. These programmes may eventually lay the foundation for recovery, but in the current context this cannot be the main priority.

Livelihoods support is not limited to meeting subsistence needs and providing assets to support strategies such as income generation and production. Using the livelihoods framework, livelihoods interventions can be divided into those that:

- Support the assets that people need to carry out livelihoods strategies.
- Interventions that support policies, institutions and processes to address the constraints that people face in carrying out their livelihoods activities.

(Adapted from Young and Osman et al., 2007)

The latter has not been sufficiently addressed in Darfur, by both DRC and others, but is crucial to maximise the impact of interventions that support assets and strategies, as well as addressing some of the causes of livelihoods and protection risks. This element has close links with protection, as the causes of many of these constraints on livelihoods are often the same as the key protection concerns.

Focusing on acute needs has implications not only for the expected outcomes of interventions, but also for the targeting of these interventions to areas and populations facing the greatest humanitarian need. Linking livelihood support with early recovery in this context is misleading, and an increased focus on early recovery within the humanitarian community is potentially dangerous if it draws attention away from addressing acute humanitarian needs. Arguably, the most important early recovery interventions are those that monitor and map issues of land use and occupation, as well as working on policy and governance issues on land, dispute settlement and compensation. Without these, no recovery will be possible. Yet these are precisely the interventions that are neglected or underdeveloped.

DRC's 2006/2007 objectives aimed at 'peaceful handling of conflict' or 'peaceful co-existence' were premature. More immediate protection concerns which impact on people's safety and ability to access an adequate means of assistance would have been more appropriate. Darfur is a highly complex, conflict environment and local level peacebuilding efforts are unlikely to be within the current capacity of most international humanitarian organisations without a large investment of additional expertise. It is also unclear that the current environment is conducive to prioritising peace building. Furthermore, the objectives aimed at 'promoting and supporting human rights and democratic, accountable and transparent governance' were too broad and not sufficiently related to DRC's work. As such, the reviewers endorse DRC's decision to reorient its programme objectives. Whilst dedicated protection programming may not be advisable in the current context, where NGOs undertaking protection activities are the target of harassment and intimidation, DRC should not completely abandon

protection, particularly in light of its work in rural areas. DRC can strengthen the protection component in its current assistance programmes, as well as undertake new activities which promote freedom of movement and access to a basic means of assistance.

There are a number of ways in which DRC can sharpen its focus on acute needs. First, carry out needs assessments on a regular basis. There have been few assessments of either risks to livelihoods or protection in DRC's programme area, either by DRC itself or by others. Currently, DRC initially assesses needs through the mapping project and later through discussions in the Community Area Councils. Neither provides an in-depth assessment of needs. Given the nature of the relationship between Arab and village groups, it may be necessary to assist both sides in order to gain access to the worst-affected groups. Working with both sides to get access is very different from working with both sides to promote peace and reconciliation, however. This issue is discussed further in section 4.4.

Second, develop stronger links between protection and livelihoods. The first aspect to this is to increase the overall impact of the programme by focusing assistance on areas where protection risks are most severe. As shown by our analysis above, this would include areas or population groups where the means of subsistence is threatened, people are at risk of displacement or people who are unable to meet their basic needs without putting themselves in danger. The second aspect is to increase the complementarity between protection and livelihoods programming. This will be described below in terms of the effectiveness of DRC's individual interventions and how the humanitarian consequences of the violence can be better addressed.

The final aspect is to focus on the causes of protection risks and constraints on livelihoods, as well as the consequences of the crisis. This means analysing and addressing the policies and governance issues that create constraints on people's livelihoods, identifying and influencing duty-bearers and promoting an environment where there is greater recognition of responsibilities. In the current climate, DRC will be able to work more on the consequences than the causes of the crisis, but it also has an important role to play in monitoring causes and influencing others through advocacy. What is proposed, therefore, is an expansion of the remit of humanitarian activities to include livelihoods and protection activities that

assist communities to meet their basic needs in the immediate and medium term. It is recommended that the focus remains on targeting those most affected by the crisis, rather than those most likely to become self-reliant or peacefully co-exist.

### 4.3 Lessons-learnt from DRC's programme activities

#### Community views

When asked, villagers and Arabs from the *damras* often identified the schools that DRC constructed as the most effective intervention, followed closely by food aid (last provided in 2006) and agricultural support. Water and health care, although not provided by DRC, were also regarded as effective interventions. Security was the over-riding priority for all villagers.

There were differing perceptions on the fairness of distributions, and a marked contrast in perceptions of the effectiveness of grinding mills as a source of income between Arab and village communities. Distribution is based on the register of beneficiaries, done by DRC in collaboration with the *Sheikhs* or the CAC. In most cases this was considered to be fair, although some beneficiaries commented that the *Sheikhs* got more, and that some vulnerable people were excluded from the list. The need to share assistance, in particular of food aid and seeds, was mentioned, because the number in need was higher than originally estimated. Individual households often regarded assistance as insufficient. Whilst villagers sometimes did not consider it fair that Arabs from *damras* received assistance, they realised that this was necessary for their own security. Some *damras* thought the allocation of assistance unfair because villagers received more, and because their needs were different from those of the villagers.

#### Basic subsistence needs and livelihoods

##### *Humanitarian relief: food aid*

DRC carries out monthly food distributions in the IDP camp in Nyertete. Other food distribution programmes include a pilot school feeding project in Orokum and Trej and a proposed food for seed programme in rural areas during the hungry season. The need to provide food aid along with seeds at the start of the hungry season was not agreed officially until March 2008, following the publication of the FAO post-harvest assessment. In addition, the procedure for allocating food to DRC was delayed as WFP needed to make adjustments because of security and food supply problems, which took at least three months. By June, WFP was still finalising

its agreement with DRC, despite the post-harvest assessment findings that the hungry season was likely to start early (April in Jebel Marra and May in the Wadi Saleh area). Food allocations were also delayed as a result of delays in GOS authorisation for the release of survey results, without which it is difficult for WFP and FAO to act.

DRC's strategy of providing food assistance to people in camps is justified as other means of subsistence is limited, and both camp and non-camp populations are facing a period of acute food insecurity. Food aid to rural areas is therefore justified on the same basis, as well as by our analysis, which shows that crop production and other income generating activities remain limited and/or may involve risks to people's personal safety. Given the current constraints on food supply into Darfur, providing general rations to camp-based populations and acutely food-insecure rural populations should take priority over more recovery oriented interventions, such as school feeding.

Given the ongoing, and in some cases increasing, risks to people's livelihoods, food assistance will be needed for the foreseeable future, at least at certain times of the year for some communities. DRC therefore needs to maintain the capacity and flexibility to make sure that food aid can be provided in rural areas where people are unable to safely and adequately meet their basic needs. In addition to helping people meet their basic food needs, the provision of food aid in rural areas can also have important livelihoods objectives. For example, this review found that the poorest could not always afford the time to take advantage of skills or vocational training. The provision of food aid in this case would allow people to invest in developing alternative incomes or livelihoods. Other studies in Darfur have shown that having access to food aid enabled people to negotiate for better wage rates. In other words, meeting immediate food needs through food aid releases time and income that can be used to invest in livelihoods.

In the Nyertete camp, DRC has taken a number of steps to increase the accountability of food distributions, in particular through community participation. When DRC took over food distribution in the camp in March 2006 it established a food distribution committee, comprising equal numbers of men and women. The role of the committee is to act as the intermediary between IDPs and DRC, information-sharing, assistance with distribution and addressing complaints. Other measures include the provision of information on ration entitlements prior to distribution (by providing this information to



the committee and by posting it at community halls), the provision of scales at the distribution site so that beneficiaries can check whether they received the correct ration and a complaints box. All of these are important protection measures as well as being essential for good food aid programming.

However, there are concerns about fraud and outdated data. There were numerous reports that registration systems were controlled by the camp sheikhs, many of whom were thought to be directly profiting whilst others were excluded. The biggest problem concerns the lack of new registration, resulting in the exclusion of new arrivals. There are approximately 6,000 new arrivals who are not receiving food assistance. Other complaints included having to pay for ration cards, lack of receipt of ration cards and the registration of multiple and absent family members. Many of the sheikhs are new leaders who derive their power and responsibilities from interacting with the humanitarian community and administering the resulting resources. These concerns are not unusual in the context of a large, well-established food aid system, and whilst DRC's measures to ensure accountability within the food distribution system can, to a degree, address them, the fact that re-registration is impossible in the current climate makes eradicating these practices very difficult.

The committee itself was not accountable to all IDPs in the camp. The camp has both Fur and Zaghawa inhabitants, but the Zaghawa claimed never to have heard of the committee. IDPs were not clear how the committee had been selected. Rather than using the complaints box, IDPs will go to their *Sheikh* if they have a complaint, as the *Sheikh* is seen as most able to influence the distribution. Some women mentioned that, even if they made a complaint to DRC, this was referred back to the *Sheikh*. There is a need for DRC to carry out some independent monitoring to minimise the risk of diversion and as far as possible to address issues regarding payment for cards.

DRC and other agencies should consider providing assistance to new arrivals to increase income and reduce expenditure. This could include the provision of egg-laying chickens, income generation such as the preparation of shelter material and food processing, kitchen gardens in camps and measures to increase access to land for farming, for example through share-cropping arrangements with the host population. This requires further analysis to better understand the availability of water and animal fodder in the camp context, as well as the potential risk of looting. There may also be

difficulties in providing seeds or facilitating share-cropping arrangements as IDPs may link this to a further reduction in food rations. Expansion of the Extremely Vulnerable Individuals programme is not recommended in this situation as it cannot compensate for such a wide gap in services. In addition, DRC needs to continue to lobby WFP for re-registration of new arrivals. The review team was informed that WFP's policy is to provide 'harvest-affected' people with a two-month food ration, but this has clearly not been put into practice in Nyertete.

### **Food security: agricultural and livestock support and income-generating activities**

Agriculture is the main source of food and income for many village populations, and should be DRC's priority intervention. Agricultural support currently consists of the provision of seeds and tools, as well as skills training to improve productivity. The latter has included training in harvesting and storage skills, distribution of sacks for storage and training on soil conservation. Given the limited amount of land that people can cultivate, and the constraints experienced in seed procurement and distribution, skills training to increase production on limited areas of land should be prioritised.

At present, livestock support for pastoralists can be justified on the basis of need due to the greater concentration of animals in limited areas. However, an assessment of needs amongst pastoralist groups in DRC's area is also required to better understand their food security requirements and more effectively target support. Interventions have included vaccination and de-worming. The least effective form of agricultural support provided by DRC was the distribution of grain mills and irrigation pumps, as these could not be effectively shared between Arab and village groups.

In 2007, the distribution of summer seeds should have taken place between April and June, but this was not possible due to delays in delivery of seed by FAO. By the time the seed was distributed in July, most farmers had already bought their own, and ate the seeds provided by DRC. Farmers will generally purchase their seed up to two months before planting. While in 2008 the seeds were delivered in late June/early July, just in time for the planting season, unpredictable funding, procurement and distribution suggests multi-year funding is required.

Given the time and resources required for seed distribution, it is surprising that there is so little information on whether seed access is indeed a major constraint to production. The rapid harvest

### **Box 8: Lessons learned in seed procurement and delivery**

- People started planning their seeds and preparing their lands up to three months prior to planting in June. There should therefore be some discussion with them around April about the provision of seeds.
- Donor turn-around time is not sufficient and reliable to allow procurement of seeds in time for the planting season from May/June onwards. For DRC, proposals to FAO and UNHCR were submitted by October, but were not approved until April the following year. This leaves little time for procurement and distribution before the planting season. It is necessary to have funding agreed in November/December so that the procurement process can start in January/February.
- In 2008, DRC had multiple donors with different funding cycles, proposal requirements and flexibility arrangements. This delayed renegotiation of contracts and limited flexibility. It is helpful to streamline donors and to have additional internal funding.
- The development of accurate beneficiary lists is challenging. To distribute on time, either lists from the previous year can be used, or lists should be updated in January/February prior to ordering seeds in March. If old lists are used, this does not allow for a change in case-loads. Even updating lists in February does not allow for a change in case-loads between February and the planting season. (DRC's case-load changed from 2,000 to 18,870 after it moved into Golo. Pre-agreed Danida funding had to be supplemented with DRC internal funds.)
- Seeds only become available on the market in March for the June planting season, so could not be ordered earlier. The main seed suppliers are in El Obeid and South Kordofan, which means that there are often delays related to insecurity.
- There is a lot of spoilage/wastage of seeds.
- Pre-packaging is considered a better way of ensuring an equitable distribution, but this is more expensive than organising a household distribution in the field. If suppliers or seed donors provide the wrong packaging amount then seeds need to be repackaged or shared between households.

assessment in 2006 showed that, in Wadi Saleh, where no seed distribution had taken place, lack of seeds was mentioned as a constraint for just under half the population. This year, women in Waroreported that there was enough seed in the local market for purchase. An assessment of local seed availability and access is needed before any further seed distributions take place. CRS is currently using a seed fair and voucher approach in their area of operation north of Geneina. As well as supporting local farmers, seed vouchers may be less subject to procurement and delivery delays, and may also help stimulate local markets. DRC and other agencies should consider piloting seeds vouchers in 2009.

Other major constraints to production include lack of labour, insecurity and destruction of crops (the latter being mainly a problem for villagers). Land occupation and ownership is a particularly sensitive issue, and for this reason most agencies have steered clear of distributing seeds to Arab groups. DRC's principle has been that the owner of the land has to be comfortable with nomads farming it. Although DRC staff are generally aware of these risks, a systematic risk analysis has not been part

### **Box 9: Minimising risks associated with seed vouchers and fairs in Darfur (CRS)**

- Assess land access issues, as well as seed availability and need. Make sure that land ownership is not disputed, that farming does not involve security risks and that farmers have consistent access.
- Examine relations between different ethnic groups and residency groups (displaced, resident, returnee), and between potential vendors and recipients, to make sure that the programme does not exacerbate tensions between groups.
- Minimise security risks during fairs by conducting voucher distributions and fairs in one day, avoiding market days or holidays. Ask village seed committees to advise on security issues.
- Make sure that people can reach the fair safely and do not make public announcements if this could increase the risk of attack.
- Change monitoring and payment systems on a regular basis to avoid the risk of manipulation.

Source: Jaspars and Maxwell, 2008.

of programme planning. Box 9 provides an example of CRS analysis in its seed voucher programmes.

Few of DRC's activities currently have the main objective of generating income. However, many of the activities currently carried out under vocational training could be reoriented towards this. Income generation through the provision of in-kind grants to communities, such as grinding mills, have proved highly divisive and should not be repeated. Even in communities where mills were managed just by the villagers, such as Urdi, the community faced significant problems raising the initial start-up funds. Given the shortage of resources in most communities, it is not appropriate to expect large community contributions.

### **Education**

DRC undertakes school building or rehabilitation in each of its areas of operation. Access to education is a basic human right and is increasingly seen as a humanitarian priority. Education can also serve a protective function for children. Apart from longer-term objectives of increasing human capital and potential livelihood opportunities, it also serves more immediate psycho-social benefits and can reduce the risk of child recruitment into fighting forces, child labour and other exploitative practices. DRC's work on education is also justified as it is often people's own priority. Facilitating education is justified from a humanitarian perspective in order to minimise people's expenditure on school fees and other education costs. It is also one of the only forms of assistance that does not create tensions between Arabs in *damras* and villagers, as it does not involve the distribution of valuable resources nor does it generate income.

The main reasons why beneficiaries and teachers considered DRC's work on schools as effective was because construction was perceived as better than schools built from local materials. The provision of school materials and feeding makes it easier for teachers to allow children to stay in school if they cannot pay school fees. However, school fees, lack of teachers and in some places insecurity remain a major barrier to access. In most communities visited, there were families who could not send their children to school, or who only sent some of their children to school whilst others stayed at home. School fees are on average SDG3/month, but SDG2/month in Nyertete and lower for IDPs (SDG16/year). In Nyertete, newly arrived IDPs in particular could not afford to send their children to school. A livelihoods assessment in North Darfur highlighted that one of the coping strategies of

extremely poor families is to increase the number of working children (Adam, 2007). DRC needs to consider moving beyond a focus on physical reconstruction and provision of inputs to ensuring greater access to education. Grants to schools and/or the provision of school materials may be more appropriate than school feeding. As discussed below, social programming to improve access to assistance for the most vulnerable should be a key part of DRC's programmes.

In the proposed school feeding project with WFP, the Ministry of Education provides a teacher, WFP provides the food and communities provide water and firewood to prepare the food. The latter was not seen as problematic in places which were relatively safe, but given the risks associated with firewood collection in Nyertete this needs careful risk analysis.

### **Social rehabilitation and environment-building**

For DRC, social rehabilitation is both a separate sector and a programme approach. It encompasses efforts to facilitate the target group's participation in all aspects of programme planning, implementation and monitoring/evaluation. It also includes a range of activities aimed at re-establishing and strengthening community structures. (DRC Programme Handbook, 2008). In Darfur, there are four elements to this: vocational and recreational training; Extremely Vulnerable Individuals programming; working with communities to ensure acceptance; and working through Community Area Councils.

#### *Vocational and recreational training*

Vocational skills training is designed to 'relieve stress, foster a sense of normality and promote reconciliation' (DRC UNHCR Programme Document, 2007). It includes a whole host of activities, such as grants for recreational activities, adult literacy, fuel efficient stoves, home economics, hygiene promotion and youth activities. While it appears that DRC has been effective in terms of undertaking these activities, there are problems in terms of their outcomes and impact. First, the reconciliation component of these programmes is not effective, as much training does not include a cross-section of communities. This represents an opportunity missed and should be addressed in the future. Second, the exact purpose of the programmes is unclear and appears to be more aimed at strengthening human capital than at 'reducing stress/increasing normalcy'. The activities are similar to other vocational skills training programmes being implemented across Darfur and have not been based on a specific assessment of

needs in each area. Finally, it appears that those who are under most stress are unable to attend training, while communities claimed that those who were better off, and had more time, could do so.

While psycho-social support is important, DRC has neither the expertise nor the capacity to engage in this on a large scale. Recreational activities can play a limited role in reducing stress, but cannot be deemed a priority unless they are undertaken on a more substantive basis, such as for instance through women- or child-friendly spaces. In the current context, the focus should be on activities which have the potential to reduce risk or reduce expenditure and/or increase income. As such, vocational skills training should be viewed as a component of income generation activities, rather than as social programming. The vocational training needs a market assessment to better understand the viability of different vocations and the potential for generating income. Experience shows that, unless training is linked with some form of benefit, participants will become frustrated and attendance will decrease. At present, many of these initiatives are dependent on the humanitarian community itself to sell the products. Access to raw materials, workplaces and finance is a major constraint. Such interventions are unlikely to promote sustainable livelihoods until there are functioning markets (Viray, 2007). Our findings show that the following are potentially the most effective interventions in terms of income generation.

- Fuel efficient stoves, which as noted reduce the consumption of firewood for cooking and thus reduce the level of exposure to risk through decreasing the amount of firewood that needs to be collected, and decrease the income that needs to be spent on purchasing firewood or increase the amount of income that can be generated from firewood collection.
- Food processing, such as the production of juice, dried fruit, jam, biscuits and pasta in places of displacement such as Nyertete or Zalingei, where there is an emphasis on domestic labour. At present this has not been effective in rural areas because beneficiaries do not necessarily have access to the equipment needed and it is questionable whether there is a market in rural areas.
- Carpentry and tailoring in rural areas. In many cases, the customer for these products is DRC itself, but it is also the case that clothes are a key item of expenditure for both camp and non-camp populations. As such, training in tailoring can reduce expenditure on clothes. However, this needs careful assessment to see whether

households are able to purchase the materials necessary and have access to equipment. Another issue to consider is the length of the training, which can last for up to a year.

Construction and brickmaking have been problematic, as there is currently little demand for construction in rural areas, and it is difficult to obtain inputs. Grants for social activities, youths, adult literacy and hygiene promotion should be reconsidered.

#### *Programmes for Extremely Vulnerable Individuals*

The second area of social programming involves an 'Extremely Vulnerable Individuals' programme in rural areas, in which DRC provides support to approximately 30 individuals or families in each project site who are deemed especially vulnerable. Additional assistance in the form of NFIs, agricultural inputs (donkey carts, ploughs, irrigation pumps) or livestock (donkey or sheep) has been provided. While assistance to EVIs is an important step in ensuring a protective 'safety net' in programming, it needs to be justified based on an assessment of existing safety nets within the community, or the extent to which traditional ways of looking after the most vulnerable are functioning and how these can best be supported. DRC needs to carry out such an assessment.

There have been a number of difficulties with the programme, including unclear or poorly communicated targeting criteria, which has led to tensions with excluded groups; predetermined categories of vulnerability (orphans, female-headed households, the elderly and disabled), which may not necessarily coincide with heightened need; and inappropriate assistance, which has in some instances put beneficiaries at greater risk (for example the provision of goats, which were immediately stolen). These are all common issues associated with EVI programming (Crisp, 2002). If DRC decides to continue the programme, based on an assessment of need, it should review its categories of vulnerability in consultation with the community. Community input into targeting should be sought, complemented with an analysis of what is causing vulnerability. If it is associated with social practices or divisions, work to strengthen and improve access to the community's indigenous safety nets should be facilitated. Questions of risk and access to information on services were amongst many problems highlighted in terms of ensuring inclusive, equitable and safe access to assistance – a minimum step in mainstreaming protection into assistance. This includes lack of consultation with different groups (e.g. in Abata women claimed that

### Box 9: Steps to promote inclusive, equitable and safe access to assistance

- Inclusion in decision-making on the type and nature of services
  - Discussions groups and individuals in the community pre- and post-assistance on the type of services, timing, targeting and location. Ensuring different groups (men/women, different ethnic groups, residents/displaced) have a role in decision-making about the type of assistance and who receives it.
  - The formation of community distribution mechanisms, or the nomination of focal points to assist in the targeting of assistance. Ensure a cross-section of the community is represented on any distribution mechanism.
- Ensuring equitable access to services
  - Discussions with groups and individuals in the community pre- and post- assistance on how to ensure inclusion. Ask who is not attending or included and why.
  - Take steps to address exclusion, including perhaps the provision of additional assistance to those unable to attend, or additional inputs to those excluded by virtue of their gender/ethnicity. Try to promote community mechanisms to address exclusion.
  - Ensure wide communication about the nature and timing of assistance, and the amounts each household is entitled to, both to facilitate access and to reduce corruption by staff or beneficiaries.
  - Independent monitoring during and post-distribution.
- Addressing problems and risks in the provision of services
  - Discussions with groups and individuals in the community pre- and post- assistance to understand barriers to full access to services. Consider extending programme to address gaps/barriers.
  - Discussions with groups and individuals in the community pre- and post- assistance to monitor potential problems associated with assistance, including risk to people's safety, as well as their rights.
  - Establish a complaints or feedback mechanism.

- Facilitating access to other services
  - Ensure any rights violations encountered during assistance are reported to senior staff with referrals to other agencies which can respond/provide services.
  - Mobilise other national and international actors to fill gaps in service provision.

Adapted from O'Callaghan and Pantuliano, 2007.

only *Sheikhs* were included in decision-making, in Nyertete Zaghawa groups claimed not to be represented on the food distribution committees).

The focus of the EVI programme needs to be broadened to ensure inclusive, equitable and safe access. This would involve increased consultation with beneficiaries and increased monitoring of engagement in assistance and services, as well as post-distribution monitoring. More generally, DRC could take steps to reduce barriers to access, specifically in the case of education where, as noted above, building physical structures leaves unaddressed the question of teachers and school fees. Finally, DRC could do more to facilitate access to other services, both in terms of referral of individuals in need to other services available in the area, and mobilising other agencies to provide services where there are gaps. In terms of the former, whilst DRC staff are aware that their role is not to interview or document abuses, many were not aware that they had a role in facilitating access to other agencies' services. This is of particular importance in camp settings where national and international actors may be in a position to assist.

#### *Community Area Councils*

The formation of Community Area Councils (CAC) is unique to DRC's work in Darfur. The purpose of these Councils is to identify and implement interventions based on the needs of an area, rather than a specific group within that area. As such, they are also aimed at promoting peaceful co-existence through facilitating dialogue and, ultimately, peace between different groups.

DRC starts by consulting villagers and *damras* in a specific location, asking them to establish a committee representing the different villages and *damras* in the locality. DRC insists on an area-based representation, rather than one based on specific services or issues. Community Area Councils are often the first such mechanism of their kind in the area. DRC has left it to the communities to nominate their representatives, which in practice has meant that the *Sheikh* and deputy *Sheikh* of each village/*damra* has taken up these roles. To assist in

### Box 11: Community Area Council in Trej

In 2005, DRC provided NFIs and agricultural training to the villages and *damras* in Trej locality. A co-operative has existed in Trej village since the 1990s, which had run a community grain mill. The revenue from the grain mill was used for community purposes, but the co-operative collapsed during the current crisis as the funds were used to pay protection money to the nearby *damras*. In 2006, DRC decided to support the re-establishment of the co-operative with a grain mill, butchery and bakery, for the benefit of the villagers, comprising Fur and Misseriya Jebel tribes. This was contested by the *damras*, concerned about favouritism towards villagers, that it would foster tensions between different groups and that the funds might be used by the villagers to buy guns. The grain mill was therefore brought under the control of the CAC. However, the villagers refused to cooperate with the *damras*, who progressively took over the management of the grain mill. It is unclear what is currently happening with the funds from the grain mill, which the villagers are now asking DRC to remove from Trej.

Similar problems are experienced in relation to water pumps provided by DRC to assist in farming irrigation crops in the four wadis around Trej. The Water Committees that were established to manage the use and maintenance of the pumps were subsumed under the CAC. Since then, the villagers claim that the water pumps have disappeared, although the *damra* representatives claim the system is still working well. When discussed, the different groups insist that a major issue was the lack of sufficient pumps for equal distribution amongst the 16 different localities represented in the CAC.

During a meeting with Trej Council in May 2008, hostility between the village and *damra* representatives was evident, with those from the *damra* dominating. The Council Chairman, a Fur *Sheikh* from the village, did not speak. There was disagreement as to the purpose of the Council, with *damra* representatives claiming that problems regarding farming could be solved through the Council, while the villagers separately stated that they could not bring up security matters as they would be 'punished' afterwards. There was also disagreement about the role of the female villagers in attendance at the meeting, who sat with their backs to the meeting and did not speak, even when invited to do so.

Despite the concerns raised by the villagers regarding the control of assets by the *damras*, they insist that the Council is a useful mechanism as the 'people from the *damras* are strong, so you can't exclude them'. They also mention that now, when there are problems, they threaten to leave Trej. The *damras* resolve the problems without any payment by the villagers.

this process, DRC has also done some peace and conflict resolution training, and leadership training. DRC's success in establishing CACs has varied from location to location, but in general they have had more success where there was a history of inter-tribal mechanisms and where DRC has been operational for some time.

Inter-tribal CACs are operational in Waro, Trej and Orokum, and each community insisted that they were positive mechanisms. For instance in Waro, villagers stated that 'DRC's approach of giving assistance to the *damras* is correct as if they don't the *damras* will take everything. If they are refused totally, then they would be afraid that something would happen to them'. Despite this, whilst the Council has been established, according to the villagers it only meets on DRC's request. In Wadi Saleh it has proved more difficult to establish CACs. Two localities refused and so DRC did not proceed with assistance as the CACs were a precondition of involvement. In Urdi, which formerly had a 'public committee' which did *nafir* or community services, a Community Area Council has been established incorporating two other villages, but no *damras*, from the surrounding areas. The villagers refused to comply with DRC's request that the *damras* be included, stating: 'it is not democracy when one group has a gun and the other does not'. According to DRC staff, in Trej communities are beginning to acknowledge that different groups need different forms of assistance. The Councils have not yet reached the stage where they are *preventing* problems between groups, but there are indications of increased dialogue and, at least in Trej, some mitigation of problems.

However, it is important that the limitations to working through Community Area Councils are well-understood and are incorporated into how DRC approaches its work with these Councils. In general, there was a marked lack of collaboration over the equitable division of resources. As discussed previously, *damras* resented what they viewed as disproportionate assistance to villagers, whilst villagers were unhappy about assistance being provided to people they viewed as aggressors, but felt that this was necessary under the circumstances. Shared assistance has been less divisive where it has been apportioned on the basis of numbers (such as the provision of NFIs), or where it is a shared service (such as clinics, schools, community centres, vocational training). However, the Councils should not be used to manage income-generating projects such as the grain mills, or for the distribution of valuable assets such as water points.



The Councils are serving as a pragmatic assistance tool for promoting local acceptance of DRC's work and ensuring that humanitarian assistance provided to villagers does not endanger them. In locations where the Councils have greater longevity, there is some evidence that they are helping to promote greater interaction between divided groups, and in one location, to reduce the problems experienced. They thus have the potential to serve as protection or risk reduction mechanisms in that they may help reduce exposure to threats beyond those associated with the provision of assistance. Given the power imbalances evident within the Councils and the risk of diversion of the resources channelled through them, they should be very carefully managed. While a certain amount of pragmatism about the application of the principle of impartiality (i.e. response on the basis of need alone) is necessary in such divided communities, it cannot be compromised to the degree that assistance is manipulated by the dominant group. DRC should ensure objective monitoring of needs, through needs assessments and independent discussions, so that decisions can be challenged. As other aid organisations do not work through the Councils, DRC should recognise that the establishment of these Councils makes the handover of its work more difficult. DRC is considering handing over its work in Trej and Orokum, but this is not advisable unless it is clear that the incoming agency has the capacity, skills and interest to work through these Councils.

It is difficult to assess the future of these Councils. As many of them have been founded on coercive relationships, and continue to operate with major power imbalances. It is too early to suggest that they can serve as bases for peace-building. While some may grow into more constructive fora, this cannot be predetermined at this point. DRC should thus ensure that the main current objective behind the Councils is to serve as tools for assistance and protection, rather than peace-building. As such, DRC should not make the formation of Community Councils a precondition for the delivery of assistance, as it has done in the past. DRC is advised not to legitimise these Councils by channelling to them funds aimed at peace and stability, such as the Darfur Peace and Stability Fund, and should be careful not to facilitate the independent management of funds by the Councils. Most especially, DRC should not facilitate their evolution into independent structures, such as community-based organisations.

In order to improve the protection benefit that may derive from the Councils, however, DRC should increase its level of engagement with them, as many

do not function in the agency's absence. Where there are opportunities to foster greater interaction between divided communities, such as through the provision of shared vocational training, these should be continued and attendance monitored. DRC should increase its capacity to act as an independent and neutral monitor of the Councils. In particular, DRC's staff require technical training on negotiation and conflict resolution in order to effectively and constructively manage the Councils. This is particularly difficult given the predominance of Fur staff within DRC, who are not viewed as neutral in such fora and who themselves are subject to the power dynamics in the group. DRC's efforts to address the lack of diversity within its staff, and in particular the lack of Arab staff, should be increased.

### **Lessons learnt from operating in rural areas during an on-going conflict**

Like all agencies operating in Darfur, DRC faces a number of constraints. Internal constraints include recruitment, international staffing levels and diversity of staff. In total, there are currently just five international staff. Difficulties in recruiting experienced staff for Darfur, as well as delays in obtaining work visas, have meant that DRC has been operating without a Country Director for at least 18 months. The presence of only one international staff member in the Nyertete and Golo offices puts too much pressure on that individual. It is also necessary to ensure that national staff are not under undue political pressure from local authorities and community leaders, and that DRC maintains its neutrality and independence. Another constraint concerns the funding cycles of UN agencies and donors, which have major implications for DRC's ability to deliver key inputs in a timely manner.

Insecurity is without doubt the main external constraint on effectiveness. In the past two years, armed robbery, vehicle hijacking and closure of roads have had a major impact on DRC's ability to do its work. The hijacking of vehicles has meant that DRC, like other agencies in Darfur, is hiring vehicles, which are often in poor condition, and it is difficult to persuade hire companies to stay in rural areas for extended periods. In addition, when DRC uses private transporters, as with other contractors part of the fees are spent on 'indirect taxation' at checkpoints. In some areas, half of the current transport costs are spent in this way, which either raises the overall costs of the programme or means that the goods to be transported have to be kept to a minimum.

DRC has adopted an ‘acceptance’ strategy in order to facilitate community support for its engagement and minimise security threats. Acceptance, one of three elements of the ‘security triangle’, is understood as cultivating relationships with the local community and conflict parties to engender acceptance, support and, ultimately, security (Van Brabant, 2000). While acceptance has been the cornerstone of Red Cross/Red Crescent and NGO approaches to security, over the years the other two elements – ‘protection’, which involves reducing exposure to threats through the adoption of security protocols, equipment and coordination, and ‘deterrence’, which means presenting a counter-threat such as armed escorts – have become more prominent (Stoddard et al., 2006).

With the possible exception of ICRC, DRC has taken the acceptance approach more seriously than other organisations, with largely positive results. DRC’s acceptance approach has a number of dimensions. First, it involves dialogue with all groups in an area of operation to explain DRC’s work and mission, and to gain local consent. Second, it involves ensuring that the entire community has a stake in DRC’s work through Community Area Councils. Finally, it involves the provision of basic assistance to all groups within the community. DRC’s approach to working in Abata, described in Box 10, is an example of how it gains acceptance in rural areas.

While DRC has suffered a number of security incidents over the past 12 months, including attacks on compounds, abductions of staff and the theft of vehicles and other assets, these must be seen against the level of exposure that the organisation faces given its work in rural areas. In general, humanitarian organisations are working in urban or camp-based settings in Darfur. For DRC, its level of acceptance in some locations has meant that it has been escorted out of areas during periods of insecurity. Given the level of insecurity faced by humanitarian actors, DRC’s acceptance approach appears to be working.

In addition to helping people stay in their places of origin, there are also indications that the provision of assistance and the presence of DRC and other agencies have made some places safer. In some villages, the presence of aid actors was said to be one factor in stopping the payment of protection money. However, this benefit was recognised by villagers as limited. While DRC has managed to gain a level of acceptance from rural populations sufficient to allow the organisation to continue working, it does not enjoy the same level of acceptance among camp-based populations

#### Box 10: Acceptance in Abata

ICRC’s work in Abata was suspended due to security concerns. As part of DRC’s expansion into rural areas, in 2007 the organisation decided to focus on Abata given the lack of assistance in the area. It started by driving from Zalingei to Abata, stopping at each *damra* along the way to introduce the organisation and explain its work. This process was replicated in Abata town. Following this introduction, DRC spoke with two *Sheikhs* from different tribes to gain acceptance for its work.

DRC started with the provision of NFIs such as mosquito nets, kitchen utensils, mats and plastic sheeting. This general approach was based on the fact that communities had told the agency that they would not be accepted unless both villages and *damras* were assisted. Later, the organisation provided livestock vaccination and de-wormers to the *damras*, and rehabilitated a school in Abata town, as well as provision of basic seeds and tools, vocational and agricultural extension training. The organisation is focusing now to develop a Community Area Council for the Abata area which will include representation from both the *damras* and the villagers.

While both the villagers and *damras* were supportive of the organisation, neither felt that the assistance provided was fair, indicating the delicate balance that needs to be struck in such divided communities. Those from the *damras* felt that they were receiving less than villagers and believed that one factor in this is the lack of staff from nomadic tribes in NGOs. Villagers, on the other hand, were unhappy that any assistance was being provided to the *damras* who they felt were responsible for the insecurity in the area. However, they understood that there was no choice, indicating that, unless DRC did so, ‘no organisation would be allowed into the area’.

originating from DRC’s operational areas. As described above, there is hostility towards any organisation working in rural areas, in particular those working with nomadic as well as sedentary populations. DRC should work to increase the level of acceptance among displaced populations, not only for security purposes but also to help inform people about what is doing in their home areas, to show that fears about the compounding of secondary occupation by Arab groups are unfounded. Facilitating more effective links with displaced populations will also ensure that DRC is



well-placed to assist in the return process when it occurs.

The most appropriate starting point for this is in Nyertete, where DRC is already working with camp populations and so has a degree of acceptance. A 'links with land and markets' programme could be established to help create and build economic links between places of origin and displacement, and at the same time to serve as an information channel. Economic links could, for example, be built around market access and price information, whereby a camp-based representative from the place of origin provides information about security, market prices and supply in the place of displacement so that farmers can decide whether to come and sell their produce.<sup>12</sup> Information about markets, security and land access could be provided to displaced populations on market days, as well as during the planting and harvest seasons to facilitate seasonal migration for planting. Opportunities for land rental could also be explored. At the same time DRC could foster links with camp residents to inform them about its programmes and gain insights into issues of land occupation. Building on experience and learning from the Nyertete programme, DRC could introduce a similar programme in Zalingei, potentially partnering with an NGO already undertaking livelihoods programming. While DRC would need to be very cautious during the initial stages to ensure that the programme was not perceived as a precursor to return, it could build on this channel in the future to facilitate seasonal return (through assistance with travel costs, agricultural inputs and seeds), as well as, in the longer term, information campaigns and go-see visits. Any work to facilitate information and access to markets should be developed on the basis of a study to determine the feasibility of such activities, as well as any other potential interventions to stimulate markets.

#### **4.4 Addressing causes of livelihoods and protection risks**

Despite the elaboration of a Protection Strategy in 2005 focusing on greater analysis of protection risks, more effective coordination with other agencies and increased advocacy, more concrete initiatives to tackle the causes of the humanitarian crisis, either through programmes or advocacy, do not feature heavily in DRC's current work. Similarly,

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<sup>12</sup> Practical Action runs a similar Market Access Network programme in Al Fasher. See Viray (2007), 'Fact Finding Mission Report' On Search of Opportunities for Sustainable Livelihoods in Darfur. Khartoum: UNIDO.

DRC's work in livelihoods is focused on supporting assets and strategies, without sufficient analysis or action to address the wider policy and governance environment. While DRC is not alone in this, it clearly limits the potential impact of interventions and fails to address the major constraints on people's livelihoods (Young et al., 2007).

In a complex crisis such as Darfur, comprehensive analysis of the conflict environment in terms of war-related policies, processes and governance is critical. First, it provides information about the protection and livelihoods difficulties faced by different populations, such as control of population movements, taxation and coercion, lack of law and order and the role of humanitarian assistance in mitigating the consequences of such difficulties. As described earlier, better understanding of these constraints will help ensure that assistance is provided on the basis of need. It will also help in deciding when the shift from humanitarian assistance to early recovery can be made, ensuring that this shift is made on the basis of a needs assessment rather than political pressure. Better analysis will also allow DRC to recognise the limits of its work and to understand when it needs to draw in other actors, either to respond programmatically to needs it cannot meet, or to address policy issues relevant to its programme. Finally, better analysis facilitates an appreciation of power relations between and within different communities in order to understand how this may affect people's livelihoods and protection, as well as how power may result in the manipulation of assistance. For instance, there are indications that, in certain areas, specific groups are controlling the trade in meat. Better understanding of these issues, their effect on different groups and the motivation behind them will enhance DRC's work in divided communities and will help reduce the potential of doing harm through programming. Currently, DRC's analysis is strong, but it is not exploited sufficiently to inform programming and direct more appropriate interventions. There is also a risk of bias given the lack of diversity within its staff. The absence of needs assessments or specific analysis on key issues relating to DRC's work means there is limited opportunity to deepen overall analysis of the conflict environment.

DRC's monitoring and mapping project is an excellent platform for improved analysis, but as described in Box 12 it should be broadened to address the priority issues identified in this review, such as freedom of movement, personal safety and access to subsistence, with particular emphasis on issues of access to land and land occupation. DRC is

### **Box 12: Monitoring and mapping of rural settlements and returns in eastern West Darfur**

Since 2006, DRC has been a partner in UNHCR's monitoring and mapping project. This research project involves profiling settlements (both villages and *damras/feriks*) in rural areas to obtain a comprehensive picture of population demographics; socio-economic situation (health, education, water etc); security situation (presence of police, relations between different groups, key protection issues); humanitarian priorities and assistance. Information is sought on pre- and post-conflict conditions in order to understand the impact of the crisis and to gain insights into displacement, return and settlement by new groups.

The aim of the project is twofold. Firstly, to highlight needs in different areas in order to mobilise agencies to respond and to inform the ongoing work of agencies operational in the area; and secondly, to inform policy discussions on return, through highlighting the rate of return, as well as barriers to return including land occupation, the settlement of new groups and lack of assistance.

This project is an excellent initiative, but partly as a consequence of the dual aims of the project, but also due to a lack of strategy and limited capacity, neither aim is fully realised. The survey is quantitative in nature and provides a perfunctory overview of the number of water points, schools, clinics etc, but does not have the rigour of a needs assessment that would properly inform programming. Whilst useful statistics on protection issues such as vulnerable groups, relations between populations and population movements are collected and fed into a central UNHCR system, there is no clear strategy for the use of this information. The statistics obtained are not supplemented with qualitative analysis necessary to inform policy. Unlike InterSoS (see <http://webgis-darfur.intersos.org>), DRC does not publish an annual report on its findings, nor are maps developed. The information is useful to increase general knowledge of conditions in different areas, but it is not sufficiently in-depth or analytical to inform programmes and policy, nor is it systematically used to mobilise actors to respond to gaps identified. Whilst UNHCR may use the information as an evidence base for discussions on return, DRC does not have a strategy to encourage, participate or direct these debates.

There are problems too with the collection and management of data, again due to insufficient

capacity and strategy. Information is not collected systematically both in terms of timing and the types of information, so gaps emerge making it difficult to cross-correlate. There is a need to broaden the information collected to capture information on key issues affecting livelihoods and protection in DRC's programme area, such as land occupation and access to land, as well as mapping uninhabited villages. More too could be captured on the potential of different actors to respond (community, local actors, national and international). DRC has faced security concerns related to aspects of this work in Jebel Marra, so deepening the analysis and increasing its use will need to be carefully managed in the context of Darfur's insecure environment. In particular, questions relating to the number and activities of security personnel and institutions may need to be omitted in certain locations, although it should be possible to retain questions relating to people's protection if this is approached cautiously.

aiming to expand its work to include destroyed, abandoned and occupied areas, and this should be prioritised. The review team found that using livelihoods as an entry point for discussions of these issues was an effective way of building confidence and facilitating dialogue. It is recommended that DRC continues to use livelihoods, and adopts the livelihoods framework, as a means of tackling both livelihoods and protection issues, in its analysis and its policy discussions.

Access to markets has emerged as a key livelihoods issue in this and other studies (see in particular, Buchanan-Smith and Abduljabbar Abdulla Fadul, 2007). The presence of a market was one reason why some areas were not attacked, and markets remain a forum where divided communities interact. There are some indications of the re-establishment of markets by opposing sides (Boulong on the northern border of SLA-AW-controlled territory in Jebel Marra was cited as one example). DRC's work to support livelihoods will, however, necessarily be limited without efforts to address limited access to markets. DRC should not only incorporate a better analysis of current opportunities and constraints to accessing markets, but should also seek to stimulate and facilitate access. As outlined above, DRC should explore the introduction of seed vouchers to address issues of supply and to stimulate local markets. The 'links with land and markets' project recommended above could also be used as a platform to establish market networks.

In its advocacy work, DRC should focus on the key issues arising from this analysis. Freedom of movement has been discussed throughout this report and is a critical issue in terms of people's protection and livelihoods. DRC could do more to highlight the limited level of return in its areas of operation and the difficulties associated with return to rural areas. It could also facilitate a more constructive debate around seasonal return, so that this is better recognised as a positive means of retaining links to land and areas of origin. Seed procurement and the provision of assistance to divided communities are priority issues. UNHCR has developed guidance on what assistance can be provided to people occupying the land of others, namely food and NFIs based on an assessment of need, but not permanent water points, schools, health clinics, shelter or livelihoods assistance. DRC could build on this to discuss acceptance

strategies, the inappropriateness of valuable inputs and community councils.

Advocacy can be achieved in part through better coordination with other agencies. DRC coordinates well with other agencies at a local level, but lack of presence beyond Zalingei means that it does not have sufficient capacity to engage other national and international actors in order to highlight key concerns and gaps in the response and push for programmatic solutions. In fact, DRC's work is little known beyond Zalingei. DRC attends protection coordination meetings in Zalingei when time and capacity allow, but it has had limited success in advocating for policies and practices that might more effectively address some of the protection and livelihoods concerns that it encounters. DRC's work in encouraging other agencies to respond to needs in Golo demonstrates its potential in this regard.



## Conclusions

This study in Darfur demonstrates how threats to people's livelihoods and protection are closely linked. While no group has been immune to the conflict, there are clear differences in terms of the impact of the crisis on people's livelihoods and protection. In general, those with the most limited livelihood opportunities are facing the greatest protection threats, whilst those facing the greatest protection threats have the most limited livelihood opportunities. This review also illustrates that, in making choices about how to respond to threats, people also balance risks to their livelihoods and to their safety and dignity.

Camp-based populations eke out a meagre living based on relief, and low-income and risky livelihood strategies. New arrivals or those without access to humanitarian assistance are particularly vulnerable and are less well represented through the leadership system in camps. Their limited livelihood opportunities leads to greater exposure to risks associated with firewood collection and exploitative labour practices. On a more long-term basis, camp-based populations are faced with invidious choices. Displaced for more than five years, realising their rights to previous land and property is becoming ever-more difficult (UN, 2007). Many may choose not to return home. However, the limited income opportunities in urban areas mean that these groups will remain vulnerable to exploitation and protection risks for the foreseeable future.

In GOS-held areas, villagers are more food insecure than neighbouring Arab *damras*, and face greater risks to their livelihoods and protection. Groups living in areas with less historical co-existence with nomadic groups were most at risk, such as in Abata, where 'protection' arrangements appeared more coercive and enduring. IDPs in rural locations faced similar threats to their protection as the host population, but their livelihood opportunities were generally more constrained, which again resulted in their taking greater risks. Every village visited had faced difficult choices between whether to flee to camps or pay protection money, a decision which in many cases was not made voluntarily. A common strategy was to split families, both to minimise risk and to maximise access to as many possible livelihood opportunities as possible.

While camp-based IDPs and villagers face the most acute threats to their livelihoods and protection, pastoralist and nomadic communities have also

been affected through insecurity and taxation, constraining migration for pasture and trade. This does not appear to have yet reached proportions where people's basic subsistence has been undermined, although further assessments should be undertaken to properly analyse this. The longer-term erosion of nomadic lifestyles coupled with these immediate barriers is prompting these communities to pursue other livelihood strategies, often at the expense of sedentary farming populations. This may undermine prospects for peace and recovery in the longer term by reinforcing tensions between different groups.

The inter-relationship between people's exposure and responses to livelihoods and protection threats presents a strong argument for more closely linking aid agencies' livelihoods and protection interventions. The clearest example of integrated protection and livelihoods programming is the work of the Danish Refugee Council and other agencies which choose to target their assistance to rural populations. This review has shown that the availability of assistance in rural areas has played a part in people's decisions as to whether to flee to camps or to remain, thus providing these communities with greater options for subsistence and safety. The presence of aid agencies was also believed to have played a role in the stopping of protection payments in some areas. The provision of agricultural inputs and support in rural areas has the potential to play a significant role in helping communities in rural areas meet their basic needs. If these interventions also help increase yields from the limited tracts of land that are safely accessible from villages, this work will also be important in reducing risks associated with farming further afield. Other aid organisations can learn much from DRC's efforts to foster acceptance of its work in rural areas. The provision of assistance to divided communities has helped people to stay in rural areas and thus retain access to their land and livelihoods.

However, this review of the work of the Danish Refugee Council and other agencies in Darfur also suggests that, without efforts to proactively connect what are often parallel programmes, the potential for livelihoods activities to positively impact protection and vice-versa will be limited. Opportunities exist to link the two areas at a number of different levels. *Firstly*, and at a minimum, aid organisations can incorporate protection (or risk) analysis into their work, in order to minimise

unintentional harm. A critical issue for DRC and other agencies working in rural areas is to guard against reinforcing secondary occupation of land. Consultation with current land occupants is not sufficient: DRC and other agencies should consider making links with camp-based populations to ensure that their interventions in rural areas are not undermining the land rights of legitimate owners.

*Secondly*, with a good understanding of protection issues, aid agencies can also target their interventions to geographical areas, populations or individuals most at risk. This allows those affected to benefit from the ‘protective presence’ of aid workers, which as outlined above has helped reduce protection payments and allowed populations to remain in rural areas. The assistance provided can also reduce vulnerability and increase protection. Whilst combining food aid with other livelihoods interventions can reduce the need for people to adopt strategies that involve risks to their safety, unless those at risk are specifically targeted the protective benefit of these livelihoods interventions will not be felt. DRC should consider facilitating inclusive, equitable and safe access to its services, through strengthening the safety net offered through the ‘Extremely Vulnerable Individuals’ programme and ensuring that vulnerable populations can access its services.

More generally, focusing on those most at risk in the current Darfur context, means that humanitarian, rather than recovery, needs must remain the priority. Continuing violence and displacement, limited agricultural production, income-generation opportunities and market access, poor access to basic needs and declining humanitarian access have combined to ensure that the situation in eastern West Darfur is still an acute crisis. This has been confirmed by recent figures showing rising malnutrition rates. Despite the rhetoric of recovery amongst policy-makers, neither current conditions nor immediate prospects suggest that focusing on longer-term objectives such as self-reliance should be prioritised over supporting people to meet their basic needs. The protracted nature of the violence and vulnerability mean that, even in the unlikely event of an immediate improvement in the security, agricultural and livelihoods situation, it will take time before this translates into a perceptible improvement in the position of affected populations (WFP et al, 2008).

Sharpening the humanitarian focus means emphasising protection and helping people meet basic needs through a variety of livelihood support activities, including food aid, agricultural support

### **Box 13: Recommendations for Community Area Councils**

- Do not make the establishment of a Council a pre-condition for assistance.
- Undertake an assessment of the different needs of different groups represented in the Council.
- Recognise the power imbalance in the group and the resulting risk of manipulation of assistance.
- Do not provide valuable assets unless it is clear they will be used equitably and will not be diverted by more powerful groups within the community.
- Meet different ethnic groups separately in order to ascertain different needs.
- Councils should be elected with greater community participation, with female representation and participation in the Council.
- Train staff on conflict mediation and negotiation.
- Monitor Councils closely to ensure resources are used equitably.
- Recognise risk in handing over to other organisations with different approaches.
- Do not legitimise Councils through provision of external funding or facilitate their evolution into community-based organisations until power imbalances are rectified.

and income generation, but not with the objective of peace-building and recovery. For DRC, this does not require a radical shift in terms of the type of activities undertaken, but rather in the objectives underpinning the work, how activities are approached and who is targeted. First, assistance should not be conditional on peace-building activities, but rather on the needs of affected populations. Community Area Councils have had some success as protection mechanisms, through assisting in promoting local acceptance of DRC, the safe delivery of assistance and, perhaps, as protection or risk reduction mechanisms through promoting greater interaction between divided groups. However, due to power imbalances between groups and the risk of compounding these imbalances through establishing formal structures, the Community Area Councils should be viewed as temporary process and not as a mechanism for future peace-building.

*Thirdly*, interventions with joint livelihoods and protection objectives have the potential to tackle both the causes and consequences of threats. Given concerns about undertaking stand-alone protection activities in Darfur, one possibility is to tackle

protection concerns that have livelihoods dimensions. DRC should consider the introduction of a programme aimed at facilitating safe movement to land and markets in Nyertete through the creation of communication links between displaced and non-displaced populations. This could have immediate benefits in terms of facilitating safer movement to markets and for seasonal agricultural production, and may also help maintain linkages between displaced populations and their places of origin. This could be drawn on to inform current programming in rural areas in order to minimise harm, and could also assist in the provision of information and assistance in relation to return, if and when this is appropriate.

Finally, linking protection and livelihoods can provide a less contentious way of engaging in protection issues. While any efforts to address the causes of risks will be limited by the overall policy

environment in Darfur, DRC's work in this area could be increased in order to highlight protection and livelihoods issues and promote policies regarding freedom of movement (including displacement and return), as well as access to means of subsistence (land, markets and humanitarian assistance). This could include influencing and working with local authorities and UN agencies, as well as traditional and newly emerging governance mechanisms. DRC's mapping and monitoring work is an excellent platform for this, but needs strengthening to cover key issues related to protection and livelihoods, to deepen the quality of analysis and to link it with a strategy for programme and policy influence. Monitoring and mapping land occupation and access to land, as well as facilitating links with areas of origin, rather than peace-building activities, are likely to be the most important foundational activities for early recovery.





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