

Thematic evaluation of MYHF in the Sudan

Formative report

Formative Evaluation Report, June 2016



Executive summary

This formative report is the third in a number of outputs from the thematic evaluation into Multiyear Humanitarian Funding (MYHF). It sets out preliminary findings following initial rounds of enquiry. This provides a summary of work to date, and is intended to be of principal benefit to the Department for International Development (DFID) and its partners in programme design work. For the evaluation team it is a useful exercise in consolidating work done to date and helping refine the thinking on next steps.

The DFID humanitarian portfolio in Sudan is £88 million over four years from 2013-2017. Of this, £27.5 million is granted as MYHF to two consortia – a Catholic Relief Service (CRS)-led programme in Darfur and a United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF)-led programme in Kassala. The evaluation primarily covers the work of these partners, as well as the use of contingency funds which are substantial at £21 million.

The evaluation has three major questions. These include looking at building resilience and humanitarian response, the use of contingency funding and value for money (VFM). The approach chosen by the evaluation is a combination of qualitative panel enquiry for the first question and a mix of more standard evaluative techniques for the second and third questions.

The thematic evaluation was initially commissioned in early 2014 and, following a six-month inception period, started work properly in November that year. In Sudan several applications for visas for the team leader came to nothing, initially delaying the work. Once it became clear that visas were going to be problematic the decision was taken to go ahead under the leadership of the senior national consultant based in Sudan. Because time had already been lost the initial round of primary research in Darfur was limited in scope and ambition to ensure it was delivered. Following the Darfur research an additional two senior Sudanese colleagues were engaged and the work in Kassala was then undertaken. In total there were approximately 125 households interviewed across 10 villages in the two locations in addition to 11 focus group interviews in Kassala. Interviews were recorded by separate note takers, translated and then coded using qualitative software.

The initial findings are set out in the main section of this report. What is striking is the similarity of the long-term changes affecting communities in both Darfur and Kassala, despite experiencing quite different shocks. These trends appear to be quite similar to those affecting communities in neighbouring Ethiopia, and are also observed by research undertaken by Tufts University in the same project area in Darfur. What seems to emerge from interviews is that a previous way of living, one primarily based on self-sufficiency (through farming or livestock, or both) with some aspects of monetary or market activity, is fading. In its place people are more reliant on earning a living through selling their labour or produce, with farming and livestock as a supplement.

These transformations seem to be adaptations to successive shocks such as conflict, drought and flooding, that has made previous livelihood systems unviable. In particular climate unreliability is a major factor, but reduced assets or land as a result of the shocks may also play a part. In place of an old system of livelihoods people have resorted to earning income from many different sources – being a “jack of all trades” as one respondent put it. Selling charcoal, once a coping strategy in hard times, appears now to be a major source of income for many, as proven by recent riots in Darfur when the government tried to crack down on this activity.

The evaluation has not been as successful yet in gathering data on VFM, or studying the use of contingency funds. The restricted ability of the team to visit Sudan played a part in this, meaning that in the first year of implementation most effort went into setting up and delivering the primary data gathering. In the coming year there will be a major emphasis on these two questions, as well as further rounds of primary data gathering in both Darfur and Kassala.

Contents

List of Acronyms	4
1. Introduction	5
1.1 Background to the evaluation.....	5
1.2 Sudan context.....	6
1.3 DFID portfolio.....	14
2. Methodology	21
2.1 Methodology development	23
2.2 Selection of the study regions, sampling and initial constraints	24
2.3 Researchers and training	26
2.4 Research area Darfur	26
2.5 Research area Kassala.....	27
3. Findings	32
3.1 Question 1a: Are vulnerable individuals and households more resilient to shocks and stresses as a result of the work of DFID funded interventions?	32
3.2 Question 2: Has the availability of contingency funding enabled DFID and its partners to respond more quickly and effectively when conditions deteriorate? ...	42
3.3 Question 3: To what extent does DFID MY and pre-approved contingency funding provide better VFM than annual funding for DFID and partners?	42
4. Conclusions	44

List of Acronyms

AHS	Academy of Health Sciences (research arm of the Ministry of Health)
CAFOD	Catholic International Development Charity
CAG	Community Action Group
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DFID	Department for International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation (of the UN)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HAC	Humanitarian Aid Commission
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
INGO	International non governmental organisations
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement
MY	Multiyear
MYHF	Multiyear Humanitarian Funding
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
RoS	Return on Savings
SHARP	Sudan Humanitarian Assistance and Resilience Programme (of DFID)
SHF	Sudan Humanitarian Fund (previously the Common Humanitarian Fund)
SILK	Skills and Integrated Learning Centre
SLA	Sudan Liberation Army
Taadoud	CRS-led consortium implementing the DFID resilience programme in Darfur
UMCOR	United Methodist Committee on Relief
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
VE	Valid Evaluation
VFM	Value for Money
WFP	World Food Programme
WVI	World Vision International

1. Introduction

The thematic evaluation of the Department for International Development's (DFID's) Multiyear Humanitarian Funding (MYHF) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Sudan and Pakistan was commissioned in early 2014. It is part of the Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Programme, seeking to broaden the evidence base and improve practice in humanitarian action.

The study takes place over three years, provisionally ending in late 2017. The purpose of the evaluation is to generate learning and evidence on whether and how a MYHF approach has enabled DFID programmes to:

- 1) ensure a timely and effective humanitarian response
- 2) build disaster resilience and
- 3) achieve better value for money (VFM).

The evaluation will provide evidence to contribute to the management of these programmes at country level as well as inform DFID's humanitarian policy more broadly. The evaluation findings are also expected to contribute to the global evidence base on good humanitarian practice and on how to build resilience in the most fragile and conflict-affected states.

1.1 Background to the evaluation

The evaluation has been slower to get started in Sudan than in DRC or Ethiopia due to administrative constraints, and latterly insecurity.

The first major constraint was an inability to secure visas for key members of international staff. Although this still applies the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) have now agreed in principle to assist and it is therefore anticipated that visa applications will become more successful as a result.

The initial plan of the evaluation was that international staff would train researchers and accompany them and the senior national consultant on the first research rounds to ensure things went smoothly. It was also intended that the team leader would make initial contact with partners and authorities and periodically update the DFID Sudan team on progress.

In the event this was not possible and a mitigation plan had to be developed. This involved bringing the senior national consultant to Ethiopia several times for training and field work as well as latterly hiring staff with dual Sudanese and British citizenship with research and representation skills.

The second constraint has been an upsurge of violence in Darfur at the beginning of this year leading to the postponement of the second round of research. As will be explored in greater detail in the method section, this has disproportionately affected the findings in this report as it was compounded by the first constraint (no ability to train and accompany in the first round). This resulted in quite basic research from Darfur. Early indications are that security has since improved so that it may now be possible to deploy researchers for the second round.

1.2 Sudan context

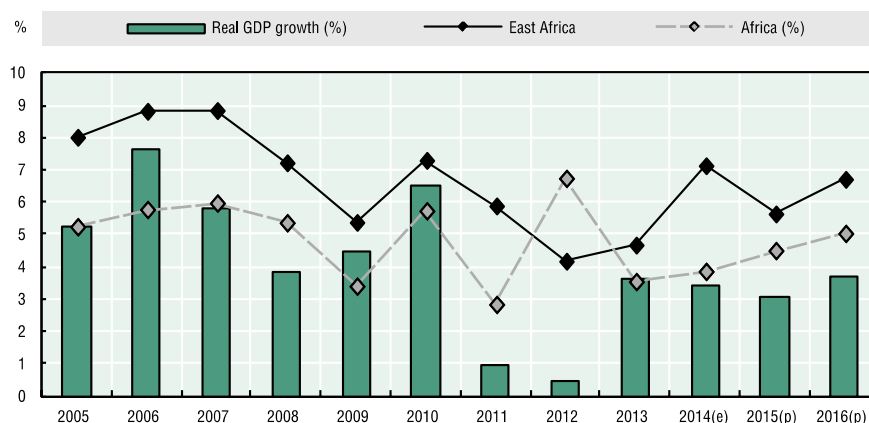
Since independence in 1956 Sudan has been plagued by poor governance, military dictatorship and internal conflict. This has been overlaid by frequent food shortages and famine induced by a changing climate and conflict, at times simultaneously. While the Nimeiry government of the 1980s effectively absconded responsibility for the humanitarian response to, in particular, the famine that affected eastern, southern central and western states of the northern part of the unitary Sudan, subsequent administrations under the autocratic rule of Omar al-Bashir sought to manipulate assistance in support of conflicts with the southern Sudanese and “Arab” and “black Arab” populations of the west.

The long running war with South Sudan, prompted by ethnic and religious differences and a contest over the rich oil reserves of the “transitional zone” between northern and southern communities, resulted in the birth of a new nation in 2011. Similar conflicts have, at different times, engulfed the Red Sea Hills, the Nuba mountains (entailing both armed violence and kidnapping for slavery), Kassala, Kordofan and Darfur, although in some cases local competition for resources has been co-opted for wider political purposes. In all cases simmering conflict and all-out war and displacement has made life for millions at best marginal and at worst untenable.

The imposition of international sanctions in 1997 spearheaded by the US, (which designated Sudan a sponsor of state terrorism), and their later expansion in 2007 following the Darfur conflict (see below), did little to abate the internal strife. In 2009 President Omar al-Bashir’s indictment for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur further isolated the country but had little impact on the wars being fought. The exploitation of Sudan’s oil reserves since then has alleviated much of the impact of international circumscriptions. China’s, and more recently India and the Gulf States heavy investment in the country’s infrastructure, agriculture and extractive industries, has helped to mask the massive under-investment by the government itself.

The Economy

As a result of conflict and international isolation Sudan’s economy has grown intermittently and development has been constrained. Prior to South Sudanese secession the economy grew at a steady 7%, driven primarily by oil flows and Chinese investment. Without access to oil revenues Gross Domestic Product (GDP) initially collapsed but has subsequently climbed again to a respectable 3-4% annually.



Source: AfDB, Statistics Department AEO. Estimates (e); projections (p)

Table 1. Macroeconomic development

	2013	2014(e)	2015(p)	2016(p)
Real GDP growth	3.6	3.4	3.1	3.7
Real GDP per capita growth	1.6	1.3	0.9	1.4
CPI inflation	36.1	37.7	21.8	21.3
Budget balance % GDP	-2.3	-0.9	-1.1	-0.8
Current account % GDP	-8.7	-8.4	-6.8	-6.5

Source: Data from domestic authorities; estimates (e) and projections (p) based on authors' calculations.

Figure 1: GDP growth over the last decade.

Table 1: Macroeconomic development

Sudan remains primarily reliant on agriculture, which constitutes about a third of the economy. Much of this is rain fed subsistence agriculture, meaning that exposure to climatic risk – floods and drought – is high. Minerals and oil dominate export income. Inflation is high at 21% and Sudan remains heavily indebted, constraining its ability to borrow internationally.

As a result of the political and economic uncertainty, Sudan remains towards the bottom of the United Nations Development Programme Human Development Index, ranking 166th out of 187 in 2013 (this being an improvement on 2012 when it was 171st). Nearly half the country lives at or below the poverty line (46.5%), although this is heavily skewed towards rural areas (57.6% of rural inhabitants are poor compared to 26.5% urban inhabitants)¹.

	2009	2013
Agriculture, forestry, fishing & hunting	32.6	34.5
of which fishing
Mining and quarrying	11.5	5.1
of which oil	11.4	3.1
Manufacturing	8.5	9.0
Electricity, gas and water	0.6	0.9
Construction	4.4	4.8
Wholesale & retail trade; repair of vehicles household goods; Restaurants and hotels	15.0	16.8
of which hotels and restaurants
Transport, storage and communication	10.3	13.6
Finance, real estate and business services	9.1	8.0
Public administration and defence	6.8	6.4
Other services	1.1	0.8
Gross domestic product at basic prices / factor cost	100.0	100.0

Source: Data from domestic authorities

Table 2: GDP by sector (percentage of GDP at current prices)

¹ National Baseline Household Survey 2009.

Similar to Ethiopia and DRC, whilst GDP per capita has shown a steady growth in overall terms (Figure 2), for the vast majority of the population there has been little, if any, positive change; for a large minority in the conflict-ridden areas of Darfur and Kordofan, it has become measurably worse.

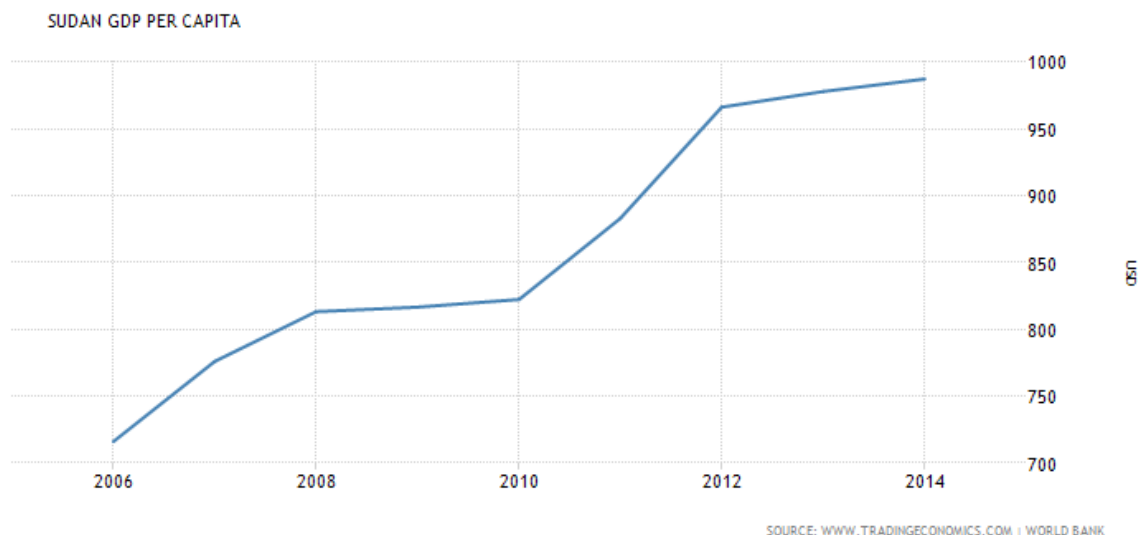


Figure 2: GDP per capita

Despite the dire situation for a large section of the 38 million population, mortality fell from 128 to 77/1000 between 1990 and 2013, with girls having a better survival rate than boys (71:81/1000). Life expectancy stands at 62 years. While the literacy rate is measured at 73%, primary school access is only 52%, and secondary school enrolment about 30%. Immunization coverage is surprisingly high at around 71% across the six “core” vaccinations², 64% of the population has access to safe water³ but only 29% to improved sanitation (all statistics: State of the World’s Children, Unicef, 2015).

Land tenure

“Customary land tenure systems exist throughout Sudan and govern the practices of pastoralists in the north, the semi-feudal systems that developed on land close to the Nile, and the practices of southern and western tribes. Customary law varies throughout the country, but tends to share the following general characteristics: land is considered to belong to the people; land is not formally registered; land remains with the tribe or clan and cannot usually be sold to outsiders; most land rights are use rights, and land is considered retained by a household until abandoned [for at least ten years, author’s addition] (and in some circumstances even if abandoned); and rights to land and its natural resources may overlap. Most groups distinguish between land used for grazing and hunting and land used for farming and residences, and different rules apply to the various land categories. Local leaders determine who has rights to land and other natural resources and who must seek permission for use of land” (United States Agency for International Development: Sudan Country Profile; Land Rights and Property Governance, 2014)

² Although this is probably a measure of the “accessible” population

³ ditto

Sudanese statutory law⁴, including Islamic law, overrides customary and community legislation and provides that all unregistered land (estimated to be 90% of the total surface area of the country) belongs to the government. In land terms this means that central government is empowered to allocate land as it pleases and where it pleases⁵.

While the Comprehensive Peace Agreement acknowledged the duty of the governments of both Sudan and South Sudan to regulate land tenure issues, nothing has been done to address the problem in the “transitional zone”. The Darfur Land Commission, established in 2007, has insufficient technical capacity, financial resources and political weight to push through changes that would go a long way to addressing the fundamental drivers of conflict and displacement in the region. As a consequence, the Khartoum government continues to tacitly or overtly approve the co-optation of land by the various warring factions in Darfur, ensuring that the dispossessed remain so for the foreseeable future.

The conflict between statutory and customary law applies equally in Kassala, where a number of colonial and post-colonial ordinances culminated in the Unregistered Land Act of 1970 which confirmed government ownership over unregistered land and empowered it to use force to establish that right. Thus customary law (which assigns a number of rights, mostly usufructuary and time limited according to the duration of the abandonment or non-use of land by the recognised holder) is overridden and populations made potential victims of commercial and political interests (International Union for Conservation of Nature Baseline study, 2011)⁶.

Humanitarian need in Sudan

Sudan has been a beneficiary of the humanitarian appeals system since its inception in 1992. Cumulatively this has resulted in \$18 billion of humanitarian assistance. In that time the crises have shifted geographically but have all followed familiar themes of contested state legitimacy and the inability of the centre to ensure (or apply) the rule of law at the periphery. Asserting claims on power – by force if necessary – has been the only tactic available to groups who are not at the heart of the governing elite. In turn the centre has used the tactics of divide and rule to enforce its will on restive populations and groups. Conflicts once started become difficult to stop, engendering continued insecurity and resentment.

The combination of a largely post-Cold War hostile international environment and a fractious internal patchwork of low level conflict has severely constrained development. Despite a well educated urban population, and a reasonable degree of technocratic competence in government, the economy has remained (as noted above) largely subsistence rain fed agriculture based. A few large irrigated schemes have provided much of the produce for the urban centres, but for most rural dwellers life and livelihoods remains marginal, periodically disrupted by conflict. With regular drought and perennial flooding, perhaps exacerbated by climate change and population growth, a cycle of humanitarian need has been created.

⁴ Deriving from the colonial Land Resettlement and Registration Act of 1925

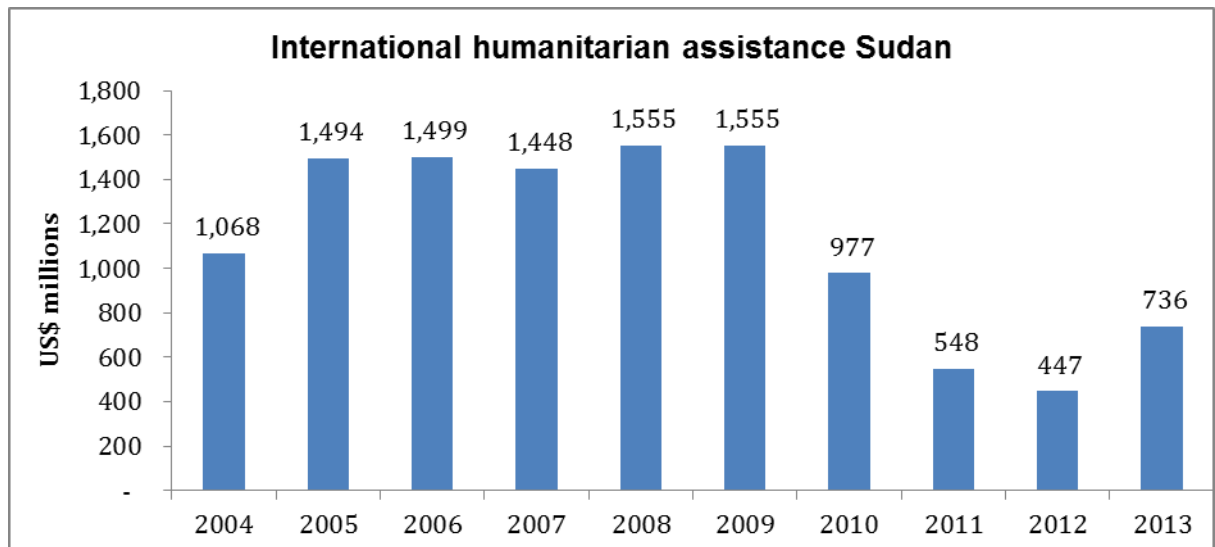
⁵ In rural areas, it is highly likely that any attempt to reassign ownership under the provisions of statutory law would be met with resistance, land being viewed as owned in perpetuity.

⁶ This rule of thumb does not apply in areas where new dam projects are being implemented (Kassala and Gedaref) or in the oil-rich states.

Droughts heavily impact livelihoods, whether pastoral or sedentary agriculture, and the scarcity becomes another contributor to residual conflicts and age old grievances. Floods displace large sections of the population, and degraded infrastructure and poor preparedness exacerbates the suffering.

The international isolation of Sudan also provides few options for the big development donors in responding to this need. Loans from the international financial Institutions for infrastructure and mitigation works are problematic because of previous history; bilateral development aid is all but impossible because of sanctions and political differences. This leaves humanitarian aid – essentially a non government financing mechanism – the only option, confusingly making the US one of the largest donors to Sudan over the last 20 years whilst simultaneously its biggest critic. Latterly, as noted above, the entry of China, India and the Gulf States into Sudan’s extractive and agricultural industries has begun to change this picture, but has had little impact on the conflict issues of Darfur, and acute poverty and humanitarian vulnerability in Kassala.

Sudan continues to command the largest share of the international humanitarian budget despite a falling off of total annual assistance between 2009 and 2012.



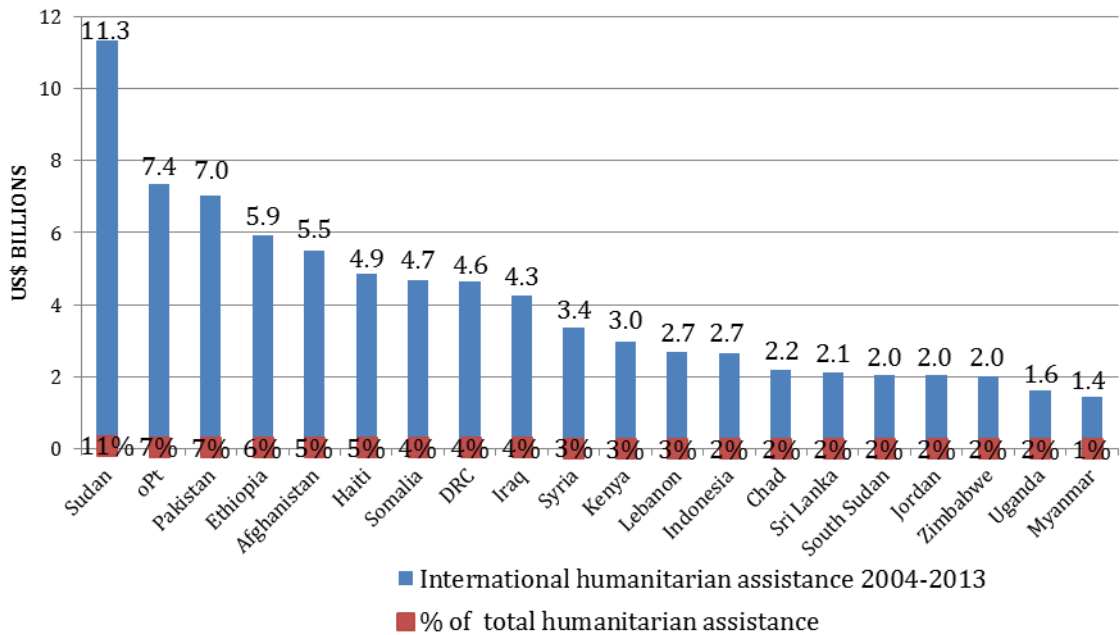


Figure 3: Humanitarian assistance both in real terms and as a % of the global share, 2004 – 2013. Source: Development Initiatives, Global Humanitarian Assistance, 2015

In 2015 the United Nations (UN) reported that Sudan housed 3.2 million internally displaced people and refugees in need of some form of assistance, and 1.2 million children under five who were acutely malnourished. One billion US dollars was requested to serve 5.4 million people (13% of the population). Figure 4 (below) shows the main populations in need, with Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states the worst affected.

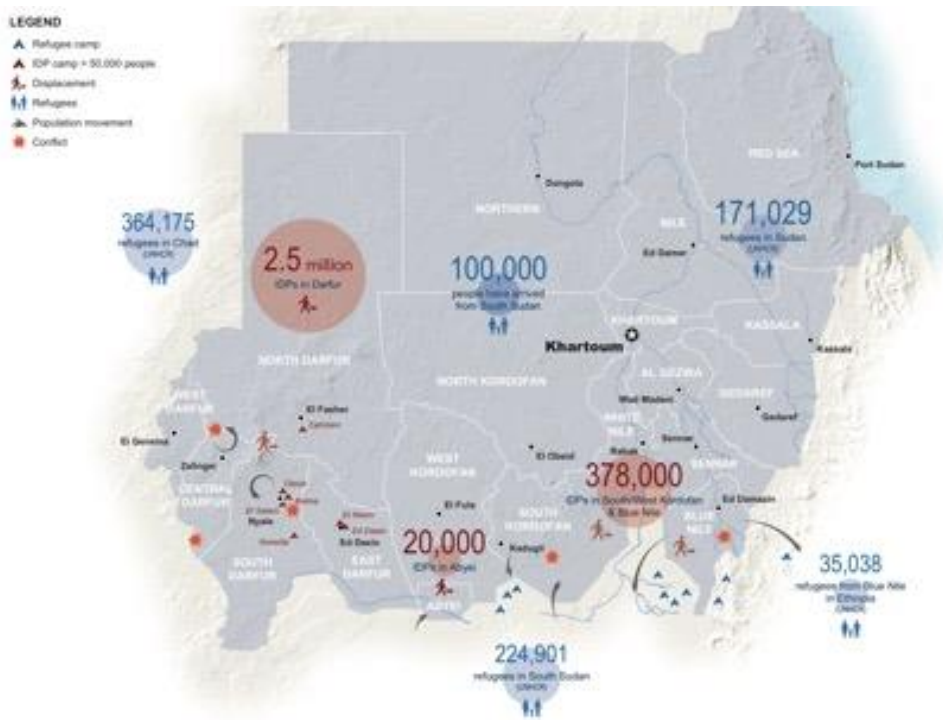


Figure 4: Internally displaced people in Sudan. Source: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

The conflict in Darfur

Darfur, with a population of 7.5 million spread over an area the size of France, has seen conflict of varying intensity since the late 1980s. This has stemmed from:

- Inter-tribal (“Arab” vs “non-Arab”) struggles over access to productive land as the Sahara Desert has encroached on western parts of the region; this was exacerbated by successive droughts
- Conflict in the “transitional zone” between North and South Sudan
- Since 2003 insurrection with its genesis in a perceived neglect of the region by the al-Bashir regime.

The current conflict saw the unleashing of regime-backed “Arab” militias against the civilian population in retaliation for the armed activities of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), resulting in displacement and sequestration of large sections of the population in camps in Darfur or in neighbouring Chad, served by an international humanitarian community working under severe government constraints and regular security threats.

Whilst the conflict abated in 2006 with the establishment of an African Union peacekeeping force and the signing of the Darfur Peace Accord, fierce fighting has continued periodically – barring a relative lull in 2008/9 – which prompted the commander of the UN force to say that the conflict was over. Fighting has continued since then, with some “Arab” groups feeling that they were ill-catered for in the 2006 agreement, and members of the various militias taking issue with their sponsors and changing sides or fighting amongst themselves. This has only served to prolong the misery of the tens of thousands who continue to live marginal lives in camps or in their home communities.

The 2011 Doha Document for Peace in Darfur failed to attract the signatures of the JEM and SLA, whilst the Liberation and Justice Movement, an agglomeration of smaller factions, profited from signature with seats in the federal government and the Darfur Regional Authority. Since then there has been a constant shifting of alliances and fragmentation of the various factions leading to a number of conflicts being fought with different objectives, playing into the hands of the Khartoum regime. Meanwhile the 18,000 strong African Union/United Nations Mission in Darfur force, which replaced the African Union force in 2007, suffers from under funding and severe restrictions on access to the population it is mandated to protect.

Kassala

Kassala saw a major transformation in the 20th century from a largely pastoralist or agro-pastoralist economy dominated by two or three ethnic groups, to a multi-ethnic and international population competing for land rights, as investment in extensive mechanised farming transformed the relationships between existing groups, and between these groups and the incomers. This transformation was accompanied and complicated, from the 1960s onwards, by large flows of refugees escaping conflict and political repression in Eritrea and Ethiopia, and by incursions by opposition groups finding refuge in those same countries, or from South Sudan (Hamashkoreb province was occupied between 1999 and 2000). And whilst the cross border issues

might have abated in the early 2000s, refugee movements from Eritrea in particular have imposed new pressures on the state⁷.

Because of its historical links to the Khatmiyya branch of Sufism, Kassala has always been seen as an important testing ground of Al-Bashir's Islamic regime; both are challenged by the rise of the Jamat Ansar al Sunna, itself co-opted by less powerful ethnic groupings in the state to establish their political power. Kassala is, therefore, roughly characterised by large elite landowners occupying 80% of the rain fed arable land for mechanised farming, in direct competition with traditional and incoming groups vying for access to viable livelihoods. This promotes political and armed conflict between the groups whilst a livelihood dependency on rain fed agriculture is put at risk by drought and, at times, devastating flooding of the state's three main rivers, the Gash, the Atbara and the Rahad. A recent development has been a move by the Rashaida, themselves immigrants from Saudi Arabia, to occupy land made more valuable by dam and irrigation development.

The immediate future

The effects of the 2015 El Niño, already apparent in the eastern escarpment areas of Ethiopia, will manifest itself in Sudan (in particular Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile States) in 2016, with severe underproduction in the surplus areas of Gedaref and Kassala having a national knock-on effect.

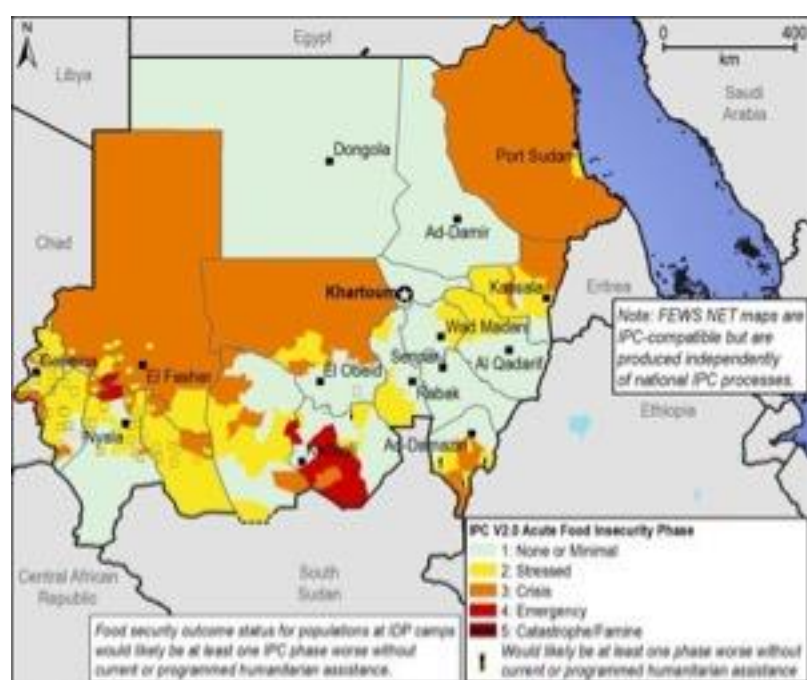


Figure 5: Food security outcomes March-May 2016. Source FEWSnet February 2016

It can be supposed that stress sales of livestock will increase, especially since the shortfall in large scale production has severely constrained the wage earning potential of migrant workers. With the World Food Programme's (WFP's) Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation already underfunded, and with continuing conflict (especially in the Jebel Mara area of Darfur) displacement and urban migration are

⁷ Kassala is now an established people trafficking route, bringing with it a vigorous trade in small arms and, less prominently, drugs.

likely to exacerbate an already difficult situation in the Valid Evaluations (VE) project area.

1.3 DFID portfolio

The Sudan business case originally set out a three year plan (2013-16) to respond to chronic and acute humanitarian needs. This comprised £67 million for UN Agencies, International non governmental organisations (INGOs) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and a further £21 million to cover spikes in need. The timeframe of implementation has been extended to the 31st September 2017, primarily to cover the extended implementation timeframe of resilience components.

The outcome statement for the Sudan Humanitarian and Resilience Programme (SHARP) business case is: “in targeted areas existing capacity of beneficiaries to absorb shocks and stresses is enhanced whilst relevant humanitarian response mitigates negative consequences in a predictable manner.”

For a breakdown of the £67 million see table 3 below.

	Total estimated expenditure
SHF	£31.0m
ICRC	£7.5m
UN agencies	£15.5m
INGOs	£12.0m
Evaluation	£1.0m
TOTAL	£67m

Table 3: Sudan Humanitarian and Resilience Programme (SHARP)

The Sudan Humanitarian Fund (SHF)

The SHF is a multi-donor fund that supports needs as defined by the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) or any agreed upon strategy by the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC). It provides funding to INGOs and national non governmental organisations (NGOs) and UN agencies; it receives voluntary donor contributions and supports humanitarian responses year round. Established in 2006 it has to date received more than US\$1 billion from joint donor resources to meet the most critical needs identified by the humanitarian community.

The SHF has three main objectives:

- To improve humanitarian response by increasing the extent to which funding is allocated to priority humanitarian needs through an inclusive and coordinated process at the field level.
- To strengthen the leadership of the HC.
- To contribute to the delivery of the HRP within the context of the Humanitarian Program Cycle or any agreed upon strategy by the HC.

The HRP 2015 appealed for \$1.03 billion in funding to help 5.4 million people. It has four strategic objectives:

- To provide emergency relief to people affected by conflict and disaster
- To provide humanitarian protection to affected populations
- To reduce food insecurity and malnutrition
- To strengthen resilience and facilitate durable solutions.

In 2015 DFID provided \$28.3 million to the SHF which comprised over half of the total contributions (54%). Whilst the 2015 report is not yet available, the figures will be roughly similar to 2014 (see figure 6 below).



Figure 6: The 2014 SHF in numbers.

The Taadoud (CRS-led) consortium

The Taadoud programme is a £12 million two year collaboration to help displaced families in Darfur return home following the peace agreement. It aims to help them re-establish livelihoods and become more resilient in the process. It involves five INGO's working together with a number of national partners (see table 4 below), with the Catholic International Development Charity (CAFOD) acting as a technical resource. The project has four main areas of work;

- Agriculture: helping people plant groundnuts, sorghum and millet through a combination of seed and extension services.
- Prevention of malnutrition: through the promotion of better dietary diversity.
- Disaster risk reduction (DRR): helping people cope with environmental stress and other threats.
- Access: to services.

There is a geographic and technical division of labour, with each implementing agency in one state (although CRS and Oxfam have two). Technically Norwegian Church Aid lead on agriculture and livelihoods, the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) on peace-building, the CRS on nutrition, Oxfam on micro-finance and market analysis and CAFOD on DRR.

Implementing Partner	National Partner	No. of national partners
Oxfam	Jabel Mara Charitable Organization	5
	People Organization for Development and Rehabilitation	
	Darfur Development and Reconstruction Agency	
	Kebkabiya Small Farmers Charitable Association	
	Voluntary Network for Rural Helping and Development	
World Vision International (WVI)	Global Aid Hand	4
	Community Building Foundation	
	Green Family Organization	
	Reahin El Salam for Maternity and Child Care	
UMCOR	under selection process	0
NCA	Mubadirun	1
CRS	Trust Development and Rehabilitation Organization	2
	West Darfur Youth Organization for Development	

Table 4: the Taadoud consortium

The programme works in 470 villages, and is focused as much on behaviour change as direct assistance. The annual report states that, “Taadoud directly supports’ 63,924 conflict-affected households (HHs) in all five states of Darfur, Sudan, to rebuild their livelihoods and to prepare them to deal with future shocks and stresses”.

Table 5 (below) shows progress to date on the project components. Despite both a flare up in conflict and erratic rains, implementation has mostly been possible throughout the last year.

Output	Output Indicator	Baseline (2014)	Milestone 2 (M2) (Early 2016)	Achievement ⁸ (January 2016)	Achieved vs. M2
Output 1: 47,705 farmer & pastoralist households have adopted project promoted techniques	1.1 % of farmer and pastoralist trainees who retain knowledge of livelihood techniques post-training (disaggregated by sex)	0% with pre-training knowledge test score of 15% (17% M/12% F)	80% of trainees retain knowledge of techniques post-training	95% of trainees retain knowledge of techniques, with 66% average post-test score (68% M/64% F)	119%
	1.2 % return on savings (RoS) on Skills and Integrated Learning Centre (SILC) group share outs	0%	13% RoS on SILC group share outs	15.7% RoS from group share outs	121%
Output 2: 39,000 households have adopted the Essential Nutrition Actions	2.1 % of beneficiary trainees who retain health, nutrition and hygiene knowledge post-training	0% (with pre-training knowledge test score of 32%)	80% of trainees retain knowledge post-training	99% of trainees retain knowledge, with 71% average post-test knowledge score	124%
Output 3: 247 community support systems are established and/or strengthened	3.1 Number of <i>Ajawid</i> (or comparable community groups) that operate throughout the year	5	172 <i>Ajawid</i> operational throughout the year	78 <i>Ajawid</i> operational throughout the year in three states (data delay for two states)	45%
	3.2 Number of functioning Community Action Groups (CAGs) as per project standard	0	172 CAGs function according to project standard	158 CAGs function according to project standard	92%
	3.3 % of functioning CAGs that have implemented CAPs	0%	50% of CAGs have implemented CAPs	98% of CAGs have implemented CAPs	196%

Table 5: Taadoud progress at the end of 2015.

The Taadoud consortium has engaged Tufts University as a research partner to help them study and better understand resilient livelihoods in the context of the project with a view to influencing design and implementation. The study is arranged in three parts including desk and initial scoping studies and a final report. The scoping study is now available⁹ and makes important observations on the theory of change of the

⁸ Partially informed by post-test knowledge survey conducted in December 2015 and January 2016 with 2,994 farmers.

⁹ Young, H and Fitzpatrick, M (2016). The Road to Resilience. A scoping study for the Taadoud transition to development project. Feinstein Centre, Tufts University.

project. In essence it makes the point that the adaptations to climatic change and social changes brought about by the conflict challenge the simple idea of communities recovering to a previous system of livelihoods.

UNICEF-led consortium (with WFP and Food and Agriculture Organisation [FAO])
Joint Resilience Project

The Joint Resilience Project in Kassala state is a partnership between FAO, UNICEF and WFP. It aims to achieve a coordinated, holistic approach to increase resilience by addressing the effects of flood and drought shocks on the health and nutrition status of women and children in four localities in Kassala state, Eastern Sudan. It is conceived in two phases – a consultative phase followed by implementation.

The programme was slow to start as a result of various administrative issues, but has now completed the first consultation phase (see table below for progress to date). An internal review of the programme was undertaken in the second half of 2015 to adapt it based on learning to date. This has resulted in some overall changes to the programme approach, including focusing on clusters as opposed to individual villages to ensure more holistic thinking in programme planning. The foundation of the programme has been further strengthened by the completion of a detailed baseline survey.

Planned Output	Indicators	% Actual vs Target
1. Community owned action plans to strengthen resilience to floods and droughts (WFP).	Number of targeted villages where at least 50% of people involved in the community dialogue are women.	100%
	Number of targeted villages with resilience plans developed.	100%
2. Increase access to maternal and child health and nutrition services (UNICEF).	Number of children 0-24 months with access to infant and young child feeding promotion and counselling services in the targeted villages.	58%
	Number of pregnant and lactating women and children under five in the targeted villages receiving acute malnutrition treatment services.	SAM: 39% MAM: 0% Women: 0%
	Number of children receiving appropriate health services for childhood illnesses.	84%
3. Increase the availability of improved drinking water, use of improved sanitation facilities, and hand washing practices in two localities (UNICEF).	Number of targeted villages that declare and are certified Open Free Defecation (ODF) in the two localities.	0%
	Number of targeted households with access to functional water facilities at any given time.	0%
4. Increase the resilience of livelihoods to shocks that impact agriculture, food, nutrition and economic sustainability (FAO).	Number of villages with improved and sustainably managed vegetation cover (valuable local tree, shrub and grass species) and/or water management facilities (terraces, dykes, stone chains, small dams, haffirs and basins).	145%
	Number of small holder agro pastoralists with more sustainably productive small ruminants and poultry producing nutritious food (milk, meat, eggs) for household consumption and income generation.	135%

Table 6: UNICEF-led consortium progress against outputs end 2015.

According to the annual report the WFP-supported community-led action plans appear to have, for the most part, resulted in adult education and income generation programmes, supported by food aid. UNICEF note they have not been able to fully respond to water requirements of villages, and that another DFID funded water project is also unlikely to meet these needs (this will be explored in more detail by the evaluation during 2016).

The annual report also notes that El Niño is already seriously affecting Kassala (something that also shows in the research for this evaluation), and that further action may be needed.

Contingency

SHARP has a substantial contingency component over its lifetime, at £21 million. Table 7 (below) shows allocations to date.

2013	£3.5m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICRC: £1m for NFI and food • UNHCR: £0.5m for NFI core pipeline, • WFP: £2m for new Blue Nile state response.
2014	£7m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CHF: Additional £7m (yet to be announced).
2015	£7m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNHCR: £1.85m for South Sudanese refugees and £5.15m for the CHF.

Table 7: Contingency spend to date

The internal DFID annual SHARP report notes that the contingency has been used quite passively in the past two years with it essentially being spent towards the end of the financial year to top up the SHF if no other pressing humanitarian needs have arisen.

2. Methodology

The method for the evaluation was developed over a six month inception period from April to October 2014. The inception report sets this out in detail¹⁰.

The method has been developed around three main questions that form the core of the original terms of reference:

1. Are vulnerable individuals and households more resilient to shocks and stresses as a result of the work of DFID funded interventions? How do investments in resilience contribute to/compromise delivery of humanitarian outcomes?
2. Has the availability of contingency funding enabled DFID and its partners to respond more quickly and effectively when conditions deteriorate?
3. To what extent does DFID multiyear (MY) and pre-approved contingency funding provide better VFM than annual funding for DFID and partners?

At the heart of the research approach for the evaluation is the need to test the hypothesis that MYHF can yield a different (better) way of working in protracted crises. The evaluation sets out to examine each link in the logic chain that connects MYHF with better programming and builds upon existing work in this area.

The methodology adopted for the current research builds on a number of previous exercises.

Question one uses an experimental, qualitative approach. The MY nature of the evaluation, and the funding that is being examined, allowed for the adoption of a longitudinal study with a panel approach. This means that the research teams return to the same individuals at six month intervals to follow how their lives change in the face of crisis, from changing opportunity and, where this occurs, from the receipt of international assistance. It also provides an opportunity for a much deeper understanding of population coping mechanisms because of the possibility to use repeated interviewing to verify and expand upon information already recorded.

There were focus group discussions (FGDs) with communities at the outset of the qualitative research, primarily to establish the context, but also to inform sampling (see below). In Darfur, because of the presence of security personnel, only one focus group was convened consisting of village elders. In Kassala, where the constraints were not the same, 11 focus groups were convened (see below for breakdown). Because of the unique social environment amongst the Bajar people, focus groups for men and women had to be convened as they do not mix in public. All focus groups contained a cross section of ages and included elders and village leaders. Data was recorded by dedicated researchers and all of the researchers were present during these FGDs to allow a good understanding of the context. None of those participating in the focus groups were subsequently interviewed in household interviews.

By trying to understand how people are living day to day, what sorts of problems they are encountering and how they are coping, or otherwise, with these, the research arrives at an understanding of resilience (with coping being used as a proxy for

¹⁰ MYHF Thematic Evaluation Inception Report accessible at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a089e9e5274a27b200030b/61123-MYHF_thematic_evaluation_inception_report_FINAL.pdf

resilience in the early stages of the research). This builds on an earlier approach developed by VE in Ethiopia in the course of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Real Time Evaluation of the Response to the Drought Crisis in Ethiopia of 2011, and used in an adapted form for a 2012 review for the World Bank on the workings of the Risk Financing Mechanism of the productive safety net programme. While the approach taken in the early stages has been purely qualitative, provision is made for quantitative analysis in the future.

The method for question two was originally envisaged as similar to a mini real time evaluation involving studying an intervention of the contingency funds in each country in some depth. What has become clear over the lifetime of the study to date is that there are in essence three separate models of contingency in operation between Sudan, Ethiopia and Pakistan. In Sudan contingency is held by DFID and used at the discretion of the DFID team. In Ethiopia the funds are held by the partner and spent at their discretion, albeit with reference to DFID. In Pakistan the contingency is a negotiation between DFID and partner. The evaluation will basically take a comparative approach, looking at the pros and cons of each of these models based on case studies as they arise. There will also be an element of trying to understand if contingency allows for earlier response and what the benefits of this might be.

Question three initially builds on work that agencies themselves are undertaking to examine VFM. In the majority of business cases this has been one of the objectives agreed with agencies, for instance with UNICEF. As a result these agencies have already been collecting some of these data and have been eager to collaborate with VE to further refine this. A framework for structuring these data has been developed based on earlier work related to MYHF and VFM¹¹. On the basis of this self reporting, the evaluation will at a later stage undertake some primary data gathering to corroborate findings.

In addition to work collecting primary data through HH interviews, and secondary data with agencies, the evaluation has undertaken regular rounds of key informant interviews. This has included semi-structured interviews with government, donor, UN, local and INGO officials at national and regional levels.

Preliminary analysis and coding of primary qualitative data has taken place using qualitative coding software. The approach of the study is referred to as 'grounded theory'. This is an inductive methodology where research does not start with a theory (which would include, for example, a predefined coding pattern), but instead looks for theories to emerge from a systematic analysis of the findings. In practical terms this means that the coding (what the research is looking for) evolves during the study as ideas evolve for explanatory theories (i.e. whereby patterns are identified that explain the range of testimony given about life, crisis and coping which are then systematically analysed to see how well these patterns really fit what is said). The information that the study looks at includes not only the interviews from the panel respondents, but also different perspectives gathered from interviews with a range of other people (stakeholders) and from an analysis of secondary data gathered by government, donors, the UN system, NGOs and research programmes.

The methodology developed and tested in Ethiopia has been adopted and adapted for use in the three other countries that are covered by this thematic evaluation (DRC, Sudan and Pakistan).

¹¹ Cabot-Venton, C (2012). REF.

2.1 Methodology development

As set out in the inception report, the current methodology was developed over a period of six months. The primary data gathering for question one was tested in two pilot exercises in Ethiopia in September and November 2014.

The qualitative enquiry for question one (the panel interviews) is loosely based around a set of four questions (with some suggested sub-themes). These are:

Problems

- What are the problems that people have experienced/foresee? Why can't they avoid them? Who faces them and who doesn't?
- What is the impact of these problems on different people?

Solutions

- What do you rely on to get through hard times?
- What are you trying to do in "getting through"
- What are your and your family's minimum objectives/plans?
- What helps or prevents you from using these solutions to get by?

Assistance

- What help do you get?
- What do you rely on?
- Is this from your family / community / government?
- Can help from the family be from outside the community such as relatives in town or outside the country?

Terms and Conditions (Dependency/client relationship)

- Is there an expected repayment for assistance?
- What does a repayment look like? Is it material or moral?

Recovery

- What does getting through look like?
- How long does it take to get back to a situation where you can say you have got through?
- Are you better or worse off as a result?
- Are you at the same point?
- How does this look for different kinds of household crisis?

It became clear as a result of the pilot exercises that simply asking people what problems they faced now was not the most effective approach. It was decided instead to use the first interviews to invite people to talk about historical problems and challenges they had faced and to describe their lives in broad terms; to throw the net as widely as possible and direct responses as little as possible in order to allow people's stories and experiences to emerge as naturally as possible.

The first modification therefore was to ask the researchers to ask people to talk about their histories in as much detail as possible to get a general life narrative as well as details of shocks they had experienced and how they coped with them. It was hoped that this would help contextualise stories. The second modification was to ask the researchers to structure the interviews around how respondents told their stories rather than interrupting the flow with questions. A third modification involved the detailing of household income and expenditure.

Overall therefore the loose outline of the enquiry was retained – problems, solutions, assistance and recovery – but with less emphasis given to the sub-questions. It became clear to the research team that one of the advantages of the panel survey method was that information not captured in the first round could be followed up in subsequent visits, especially if the same research teams could be involved throughout.

2.2 Selection of the study regions, sampling and initial constraints

The study regions were chosen according to where DFID has MYHF programmes. In Sudan this is Darfur, through the CRS consortium. In eastern Sudan it is Kassala through the UN.

The first area where the primary data gathering was launched was Darfur. However the evaluation had a number of serious constraints not least the inability to secure visas for international staff.

The original intent, as outlined in the introduction, was to bring in international staff to train the national researchers. The senior national consultant would be responsible for logistics, liaison with the DFID partners, choosing the research team and overseeing day to day work. Without visas it fell to the senior national consultant to do everything, including training the research team and dealing with every aspect of the work.

This was not apparent initially however as visas for staff were never refused, they were just never approved. On more than one occasion the team leader was asked to submit his passport to the Sudanese Embassy in London on the basis of information from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office that a visa had been approved, only to find out subsequently that this was not the case. As a result of these delays and lack of progress getting visas the decision was taken to proceed but to a limited degree.

In order to get the research back on track the senior national consultant was flown to Ethiopia for training in the research techniques that would be used. When it became clear as a result of the visa situation that he would have to take the lead on the first round of questioning the decision was made to reduce the scope of the research to five villages in South Darfur that were all relatively close and were not in areas that were overwhelmingly challenging or problematic.

Gaining permission to undertake research in Darfur was also challenging. Sudan's Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) has to approve work in this field and questions and methods used must be submitted in advance for approval. On this basis the team decided to collaborate with a government research institute in Sudan in the hope of giving the HAC confidence in the transparency of the research and increase its chance of getting permission.

As a result Valid opted to work with the Academy of Health Sciences (AHS), a research arm of the Sudanese ministry of health, based on the fact that the senior consultant had prior positive experience working with them and because they have a reputation for rigour and professionalism. This proved to be the case with staff provided in a timely fashion and work carried out properly.

Despite this, using a health research team to carry out new in-depth qualitative research, alongside a trainer new to the work himself, was challenging. It was thus a

significant achievement that the research went ahead and has enabled further rounds of research to take place subsequently and experience to be built.

What this means in practical terms however is that the Darfur interviews, and subsequent interviews in east Sudan, are below the standard of other countries.

The Darfur interviews suffer from two problems in particular:

- Gender bias towards women: the selection process for beneficiaries is supposed to be via FGDs that identify a cross section of the village. Based on the FGDs there is then 'purposive' sampling which aims to capture the most diverse cohort for the research and individuals who might not normally be interviewed. In the event only 12 of the 66 interviews were men, meaning that over 80% were women. Additionally there was only one man aged between 30 and 65, with most being either very young or very old. This suggests a 'time of day' bias whereby researchers only met those primarily home based since working age men were out.
- Superficial interviews and no overall picture: many of the interviews are quite similar. For instance nearly everyone interviewed is a farmer, all grow the same crops and have similar land sizes. Almost all of them cite their two main problems as insecurity and pests. Whilst this is almost certainly true, it is superficial. We know from other contexts that there is usually a degree of variance in individual stories, and this does not come through in the same way.

The poor quality of the Darfur interviews is a direct outcome of the less than ideal conditions in which this first research round was completed. Despite this there is enough material to draw some preliminary conclusions, enhanced by the lucky coincidence of the Tadoud transition project at Tufts University releasing highly complementary research in its report: the "*Road to Resilience*"¹² which has a high degree of correlation with the interviews in this study. As it takes the analysis further it is also an excellent resource for the project and more widely.

In the second round of interviews for this research there will be an opportunity to fill gaps and this will certainly be informed by the Tufts report. It may also be necessary to include additional households to redress the sampling issues.

As a result of the Darfur experience, the senior national consultant engaged two senior colleagues to help with training and research in Kassala. El Khidir Daloum, originally from Darfur, is a highly experienced aid professional with over 20 years experience managing Save the Children country programmes around the world. Arwa Khogali is a participatory training and livelihoods specialist who recently completed her master's degree at the Institute of Development Studies in Sussex and who has experience working for DFID, ECHO, Oxfam and War Child in Sudan.

With an expanded and experienced team, and a good understanding of the types of researchers needed, the Kassala exercise was better planned and implemented. When FGDs were held researchers were paired to ensure proper note taking and translators were included from the outset to ensure they were familiar with any technical terms. As a result interviews were better and closer to the standard achieved in other contexts.

¹² Fitzpatrick, M and Young, H (2016). The Road to Resilience. A scoping study for the Taadoud transition to development project. Feinstein Centre, Tufts University.

Again in Kassala the main determinant for choosing the study areas was the presence of the DFID funded MYH consortium. A discussion with the consortium lead at UNICEF helped identify which areas would give a diverse overview and from these a list of villages were identified for the team to choose from on a random basis. Households in these villages were then chosen by purposive sampling. FGDs gave the team a good idea of the types of households present. Simple criteria were then developed for choosing households and these were identified together with villagers and local authorities.

2.3 Researchers and training

As outlined above the researchers for Darfur were supplied by the AHS and trained over a week in the qualitative methods. This included a day's practice field work and in-depth analysis. In the event this proved to be less effective than hoped, due mainly to the quality of researchers available. This has been a learning point and is being rectified in the second round in Darfur, shortly to be implemented.

As a result the researchers from the AHS employed in Kassala were supplemented with others from local NGOs and Kassala University. They were interviewed ahead of the research using criteria developed as a result of the Darfur experience. This resulted in a significantly more capable team. The training was also revised based on the Darfur experience and crucially the senior national consultant was supported by two senior colleagues meaning that there was capacity to reliably deliver the syllabus. There was also more time built into the initial work for collective analysis, meaning researchers could improve as the work progressed.

2.4 Research area Darfur

Due to the constraints outlined in the method section above there were no FGDs undertaken in the first round of research in Darfur. This will be rectified in the second round, to be conducted imminently. As a result there is no original descriptive or analytical material on the general project area beyond the household interviews (unlike Kassala – see below).

Dorti	15
Faieg	10
Haraza	16
Hassabona	13
Nur Alhuda	12
TOTAL	66

The households interviewed were in five villages in West Darfur. All the villages were agro-pastoralist and the cohort was exclusively from this group. People plant sorghum and millet and a variety of cash crops from peanut to vegetables. They also keep small livestock holdings, engage in charcoal

production and a variety of on and off farm labour. Services are generally poor and, as in Kassala, access to potable water is variable.

2.5 Research area Kassala

Locality	Village	FGD	HH
Aroma	Akla Almahata	2	10
	Um-Barakat	1	8
North Delta	18 Eissa-Elhaj	2	9
	Saboon	2	9
Telkuk	Elatyout	2	11
	Timekeet Almasjid	2	10
TOTAL		11	57

Table 9: Household interviews and focus groups in Kassala

Akla Almahata

Akla Almahata is the nearest village to Kassala among those chosen. It has rocky soil and few trees with soil encroachment and dust accumulation easily noticeable. It is close to the tarmac road and used to have a train station. It is predominantly agro-pastoralist with a mainly Beja population. It is served by a health unit and children attend school in Tuglay, the next village along. Like many Beja villages, houses are scattered over a wide distance and are not close to each other. The residents are used to moving in the area, close to or some distance from the tarmac road as needed.

Small ruminants, mainly goats and sheep, can be spotted around the village. The main type of housing is semi-mobile since, as Beja colleagues explain, tents are more suited to coping with soil accumulation since they can easily be moved or lifted up once the soil reaches a certain level. Water scarcity is a big issue. This was heard again in the FGDs and was visible by the lack of hygiene among the citizens.

During the rainy season farming is the main activity. Residents work in fields west of the El-Gash River which are flood irrigated and produce vegetables and cereals. The vegetables are sold in Kassala while the cereals and some vegetables, mainly okra, are kept for personal consumption. During the off farming season residents reported seeking paid labour in Kassala in charcoal and firewood production in the nearby forests and keeping livestock. Another reported working for the Halanga or Hausa tribes as guards for cane tops fodder storage for which payment is usually in kind.

The livestock keepers in the village can be divided into three groups:

1. Mobile owners who own livestock and need to move during the lean season in search of fodder and water.
2. Mobile herders who work for others, usually the the Rashayda¹³ tribe, and keep their animals.
3. Immobile cattle owners engaged in selling milk.

¹³ The Rashayda tribe could be traced back to Arabia. The tribe settled in Eastern Sudan during the late nineteenth century and is now considered one of the tribes in Eastern Sudan. Kassala is one of the main concentrations of the Rashayda. The tribe is one of the wealthy tribes in the region, and this is mainly related to the fact that they are involved in smuggling and trafficking.

The village used to have a working mill but this was out of action at the time of the visit because the generator was broken. Water is provided by a well connected to a water storage facility but the flow is not stable so that in some cases residents have to fetch water from Gardayeeb, a nearby village. Gardayeeb is also served with a school, and some households reported sending their children to this school.

Um-Barakat

Um-Barakat village, located on the banks of the Atbara river, has plain land with silt soils. Agriculture is the main livelihood activity, performed on the river basin (Sawagy). The inhabitants are mostly farmers with fixed housing. Although it is close to a large mesquite (*Prosopis* spp.) forest the village itself is well cleared so that there are almost no mesquite trees left. Cattle are visible in many houses around the village.

At the entrance to the village there is a community centre constructed by the resilience project; it also has a school and health facility. However the villagers mostly seek health services in Kassala, New-Halfa or the health centre in Goz-Doja, a nearby village.

Villagers produce cereals and vegetables. Vegetables are used for personal consumption and sold. There are two agricultural seasons, winter and rainy. Winter season is for irrigated vegetable production on the river bank and the rainy season is for rain fed cereal production. Cereals grown include sorghum and millet. Sorghum is cultivated in 'Saboot'¹⁴. Millet is cultivated at the river bank as it is considered a woman's crop. The main vegetables grown are okra and onion.

Residents keep goats and cows. Animal fodder is sourced from cereal cane tops and the remains of okra and onions. They also reported having to purchase fodder using their savings or cash got from selling animals in New-Halfa town. Although some residents said they look for seasonal wage labour in Kassala this was mainly the youth. Another source of income in the village is gained from renting agricultural fields. Two arrangements were reported, either renting the field or engaging in a partnership with an outsider. The renters were described as people coming from Shendi, a town in River Nile State, or army officers. The rented fields are used for producing tomato and banana. Some residents, described as the poor of the village (possibly those that do not own land), seek wage labour in the New-Halfa agricultural scheme.

18 Eissa Elhaj

18 Eissa Elhaj is the most modern village among those targeted. It is close to the tarmac road and was named after a main well which is now dry due to the encroachment of mesquite trees.

Mobile phones are common in the village. Furnishings, utensils and style of living is more similar to a town than a village. Homes built from clay with iron doors are common with many having beds. The village is on the road connecting Kassala to Port Sudan so is well connected to the port.

The residents are currently a settled community working in agriculture, livestock keeping and casual labour. The tarmac road means residents can look for casual

¹⁴ Saboot is a location for cultivation.

work in Port Sudan, Aroma and bigger towns. Families used to move back to the village during the farming season but this is no longer the case. Sorghum is the main crop which is used just for personal consumption though the remains are used as animal fodder.

The livelihood activities of women were similar and involve mostly village based activities such as the production of handcrafts and mats to construct huts for personal use and for sale in bigger cities. Women own livestock, usually as a result of a dowry when they get married, and have the right to use them as they want. Women are usually supported by their parents, brothers and husbands. In some cases married female respondents reported moving with their parents. In the villages of Um-Barakat and 18 Eisa Elhaj women also reported engaging in agriculture – in Um-Barakat they even reported seeking casual labour opportunities in the New-Halfa agricultural scheme.

The village has one primary school for boys and girls. Water is provided from a water tanker which residents pay for. The village received support from several organisations in the form of a nutrition project and training for women in small income generation activities. The village is not equipped with a health facility though there is a certified midwife.

Saboon

Saboon is the most isolated village of those targeted. Although it is not the furthest from Kassala it is difficult to reach as the road is hard to track and the village hard to find without a guide. It is a long way from the main road (around 45 minutes to drive the 9km from Wagar, the capital of the locality and nearest town). The village is cut off in the rainy season which can last from five to seven months a year, depending on the intensity of the rains and the amount of water in the Gash river.

Saboon has plain land with silt soils. Water is scarce as flood irrigation is dependent on the availability of water in the Gash River and this hinders farming.

The village is inhabited by a settled community engaged in agriculture, charcoal production and animal rearing. Animals are usually fed the remains of agriculture. Farming is done in flood irrigated areas which usually fill with mesquite in the off-farming season making clearing of fields an annual activity. Residents are also engaged in casual labour in Port Sudan.

Children in the village attend Quranic school (Khalwa) at the one school in the village. Girls can attend until sixth grade but some stop going after primary school, which lasts eight years in Sudan. The village has a health centre, a medical assistant and a doctor who visits once a week. It also has a water point and water catchment area. The main issue is its isolation which makes access to market difficult.

Elatyout

Elatyout is nearly three hours drive from Kassala. Unlike most of the Beja villages the houses are very close to one other. Talkook has generally rocky soils with scattered small rocky hills.

In the early 90s the village was affected by the war with Ethiopia, possibly because it was inhabited by supporters of the Eastern Front. There were reports of troops invading it though for a relatively short time only so that the impact was minimal

compared to other areas. As a consequence a number of NGOs moved in to support the village with services and livelihood activities for women. As a consequence the village has health facilities, a child nutrition centre and training and business (livelihood) activities for women incorporating a farming area. Water is scarce but the village is able to depend on wells and pumps provided by these NGOs.

The village is known to be a conservative segregated community but a few men were present in the women's zone during the day, something that is rare for a Beja community and not expected for a Talkook locality.

Elatyout is largely inhabited by a settled community engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry. Farming is practiced in areas around the village that are mainly flood irrigated by the El-Gash River as well as in water catchment areas. Some respondents also reported working in agricultural fields in the El-Gash basin near Kassala, either on their own farms, as casual labourers, or in partnership with owners. Residents also work in charcoal and firewood production, mainly from mesquite trees. Keeping livestock is another activity with the sourcing of fodder reported as one of the main issues meaning herds get taken up to Gadarif state in search of water and fodder. Seasonal labour was not widely reported in the village as it appears only a few households seek labour opportunities in Port Sudan. Most of the respondents own livestock, and reported difficulties obtaining fodder this year as a result of the drought. Others reported localised livelihood activities in Elatyout and petty trade.

The village has a school for boys (two classrooms were constructed by aid organisations), and a Quranic School for girls. The respondents reported that the Tripartite Company promised to construct a Hafir (water catchment) in the village but had not yet done so although it had provided villagers with water free of charge during the lean season.

The livelihood cycle of Elatyout needs to be explored further in coming visits. As a number of NGOs support the village, discussions reflected on the aid provided and support received including a paved road built by aid organisations that is said by respondents to have blocked water coming from El-Gash river and thus limited access to irrigated farming areas.

Timekeet

Timekeet is more than four hours drive from Kassala, the furthest away of the villages chosen. It has rocky soils and is surrounded by hills in all directions and a number of seasonal streams. Despite this water is only available during the rainy season for short periods because the streams are connected to the Gash River which is located in a lower area. It is one of the few areas where indigenous tree species such as Sanganeeb (*Acacia Tortilis*) and Kitir (*Acacia Mellifera*) have been spotted.

The villagers are engaged in farming, charcoal production (from mesquite and acacia trees) and livestock keeping. Its proximity to the Eritrean border also means it gets passing trade from travellers and merchants. It has a small market and some of the

residents are engaged in localised activities in the market, while others search for seasonal employment in Kassala.

Timekeet is the village most affected by the war in the 90s when residents fled and sought refuge in Eritrea for years. As a result of this they lost their livestock and belongings but on their return have been supported by a number of NGOs and the East Development Fund with projects and livelihood activities. The area has been affected by landmines which slowed the return down, especially of women, to between seven and 10 years. The village has a primary school, mainly attended by boys, hand pumps, health centre, latrines, mine clearance, agricultural projects and seeds to support agriculture in the village.

3. Findings

The findings presented here are exclusively from household interviews due to access constraints for members of the core team. As a result this is a 'work in progress', presenting perspectives from those being assisted. The material is loosely grouped around the main themes of the interviews, namely problems, solutions, assistance and recovery. Within those categories the headings and discussion is structured on the basis of the most frequently recurring themes from the respondents.

3.1 Question 1a: Are vulnerable individuals and households more resilient to shocks and stresses as a result of the work of DFID funded interventions?

General

(from interview) The problems you face in Dorti:

- Mainly the lowering in the amount of rainfall beside the spread of some insects.
- The cowboys always breed the cattle in farms.
- Lack of medications and health practitioners.
- Didn't grow cattle at home because that they always exposed for stealing.

Man, head of household, Dorti village, Darfur.

"The matter is very clear to me to the extent that I suggested that we move to Kassala town or Aroma. This idea was rejected so firmly by my wife that I dared not mention it again. She thought mindless to leave our relatives and our native village for a place so different and people so different for the sake of an unguaranteed future. I can see clearly that my opinion about agriculture is proving to be right. Rains are getting less, and consequently the sustenance of the family lies in sometimes far away from animals and crops. All these are losing their charm and are leaving the field from something else. That's the good schooling for our children upon whose shoulders lies the future of the village and the whole country. I am waiting for my wife to change her mind, and until she does so I will be bound by my wife's point of view."

Man, head of household, Alka Alhamata village, Kassala.

Fitzpatrick and Young¹⁵ observed that adaptation is a key element in the stories of those interviewed. This was also observed in research for this MY humanitarian study in DRC and Ethiopia and is strikingly similar in Darfur and Kassala. The livelihoods of the past are no longer viable in these times.

The drivers of this change are ostensibly different in Darfur and Kassala and at first glance the contexts seem different. Darfur is notorious for the internal conflict that broke out in 2003, which saw tens of thousands of civilians killed and hundreds of thousands forced to flee. Kassala is much less well known, isolated on the Eritrean border, periodically affected by the wider conflicts of the region but otherwise relatively normal.

¹⁵ Fitzpatrick, M and Young, H (2016). The Road to Resilience. A scoping study for the Taadoud transition to development project. Feinstein Centre, Tufts University..

Climate and its impact on rural livelihood systems

What is clear from the interviews done as part of this study is that people in both places are struggling with similar problems. The first set of interconnected issues seem to be related to climate, its impact on rural livelihood systems and the changes this has necessitated. Droughts in Darfur and Kassala have led to sharp declines in grain reserves and livestock holdings. In Darfur this is compounded by the conflict – people deliberately keep livestock holdings low because they might attract attention, and consistently complain about cattle eating their crops. But even without these constraints it seems that yields no longer provide enough and what used to be coping strategies (such as charcoal production and labour) have now become adaptive strategies.

In Kassala this is also the case. The devastating drought of 1984 and the Eritrean war that forced some in the cohort to flee appear to have irreversibly affected the livestock herds (at least amongst those interviewed). Subsequent droughts have also resulted in people losing assets or reserves and having to rebuild, or try to rebuild. But there also seems to be an underlying trend toward agricultural yields covering less of the cyclical needs of households. Fitzpatrick and Young (op cit) describe Darfur rural systems as working over several years. Reserves of either grain or livestock are built up in good times and drawn down in lean. This appears to have been the case in Kassala too, and in both places there no longer seems to be the surplus that serves as a buffer in lean times. Climate certainly plays a part with less reliable rains cited in all places, and droughts and flash floods occurring more frequently. Perhaps also population increases, the impacts of conflict, changing aspirations and expectations are also part of these changes.

Whatever the exact mix of these casual factors, the reality in both places is an ongoing and profound adaptation. One respondent described her husband as a “jack of all trades”, but this might be a wider description for most of the population. Charcoal production is ubiquitous as a reserve, but increasingly common livelihood, albeit a dangerous one for some. Many men look for work in nearby urban centres, and some further away. Working as farm labourers, instigating crop diversification where possible, trading, handicrafts – all form part of the mix.

This quest for different livelihoods and income streams has also affected the role of women. In Kassala in particular there appears to be a disparity between the assumed and actual role of women since ongoing livelihood adaptations are changing that cultural role. In practice this means women work for income more than was previously the case, and more than is commonly understood. The biggest change is that women can now work as agricultural labourers. Previous changes had meant the freedom to engage in petty trade, livestock rearing and sale and making construction materials (mats). The villages in the study are predominantly Beja, a culturally conservative group who maintain the practice of separate women’s and men’s villages. Traditionally there are tight rules governing behaviour, but these are dissipating as livelihood changes drive cultural change.

Cost of and access to services

The second set of issues people generally grapple with seems to be around the cost of and access to services. Most acutely this relates to health care, followed closely by access to potable water.

In Darfur and Kassala the death or injury of a family member can have a major impact on how a family copes. This is particularly challenging if that family member is economically productive or the main breadwinner. Medical costs can be overwhelming – in both locations villagers often club together to pay for serious medical costs when travel to tertiary centres is needed. Additionally the provision by health centres and healthcare workers in the villages studied is limited so that almost anything beyond simple care requires travel to a tertiary centre.

Lack of drinking water is an issue in Kassala. In Darfur there appears to be sufficient potable water from wells though their biggest issue is obtaining water for agriculture.

The picture in Kassala is to some degree contradictory. In all villages drinking water was mentioned as a problem, but the nature of the problem differs. In one of the villages on the main road they are reliant on purchasing water from a tanker service. The four others have some form of borehole/reservoir set-up, which have been installed by government or aid agencies and these rely on self-maintenance. Typically there is a small fee paid for maintenance, but conflicting information on how well this works.

In both places diminishing and unreliable supplies of rain water is a major theme, as outlined above. In some villages irrigation is possible but there are issues around hiring pumps and whether there is sufficient river water. In one Kassala village a road provided by an aid agency cut the flow of water to the fields which had a big negative impact on the livelihoods of the villagers who then had to try to overcome the problem by improvising a culvert.

Conflict in Darfur and its impact on rural livelihood systems

“The shepherds hit us and they fire bullets on air to fright us and take their cattle inside the farm. The sheikh can’t solve this problem and the government people do not arrive in the same time saying they have no petrol or the car is not ready or any excuse.”

Woman, Dorti village, Darfur.

“We have problems with Arabs – their elder people are good to us and lives with us but their young guys goes to the water pump, sit in people’s jerry-cans and frighten them – we don’t ask them because they said that they raped a girl. We tell the sheikh. Sheikh himself is afraid of them because they hit him last year, but he tell their father.”

Woman, Faeig village, Darfur.

“The situation is getting better every day from Arabs side and the living standard since Kosovo¹⁶.”

Woman, Haraza village, Darfur.

The conflict in Darfur is by far the greatest problem reported by people in the study. For nearly all of those interviewed this takes the form of cattle invasions of crop fields. There also appears to be a lesser issue of livestock theft and some reports of violence and rape.

The main issue appears to be that cattle belonging to Arabs eat and/or destroy crops and whenever villagers try to address this problem they are attacked or intimidated. They report being powerless to stop this for fear of violent retribution with impunity.

¹⁶ People call the conflict in 2003 ‘Kosovo’.

As the Fitzpatrick and Young study¹⁷ of the same area cautions however, this is only one side of the story as those interviewed are exclusively agriculturalists rather than Arabs. However, even these distinctions are problematic, as the Arabs are not nomadic but rather appear to be settled and proximate. And there are hints that things are not exclusively one way, with stories of cattle houses where stray cattle are corralled until the owners collect them and self-defence groups that can protect against raids.

Whilst there is general concern across all villages and most households interviewed, there are signs that things are improving. Several respondents talked of things improving since 2003 (many call the conflict 'Kosovo'). There are also reports of negotiating committees where disputes can be resolved. Fitzpatrick and Young describe these as *ajawid*, traditional dispute resolution committees that are active, and partly reinstated by the Taadoud project and MoA, but powerless to either impose fines or resist the greater armed force of the pastoral groups.

Most problems facing us during agriculture is cattle, which leads us to stay all day in the farm to guard it and if the cattle entered the farm we make announcement in Habilla. The committee arrives and takes the cattle to the cattle house.
Man, Dorti village.

During harvesting, shepherds are our main problem – they enter into our farms at night. Luckily now a days the popular committee solves the problem, with lengthy discussion with the authorities. Our sheikhs organized groups from our village to guard the village and the farms they help to reduce these big problems. Now we are much better.
Man, Hassabona village.

A lesser but significant concern is the stealing of livestock. This appears to have led to a reduction in the numbers of goats or cattle that the villagers breed, with the majority reporting that they have to be reared either within their houses, or within protected enclosures close to the house. One respondent told interviewers that anything over four goats would attract unwelcome attention.

One area that needs further study relates to reports of restricted access, or conflict over forests and charcoal product. A number of those interviewed talked about charcoal production being dangerous because the Arabs would not permit them to cut trees, or would beat them if they were caught. Speculatively it is possible that forests are seen as a pastoral resource and the decline in agricultural livelihood driving villagers to use this leads to conflict in the same way pastoralists competing for grazing with farmers does. This will be investigated further in subsequent rounds of interviewing, but is certainly an additional flash point/cause of conflict.

Impact of drought and floods

This year is very difficult because it is rainless. We look at our barren waste land with great sorrow and ruminates the years of abundance and prosperity.

Some of us don't have regular meals. It is a hard feeling when you don't know where and how you are going to dine. This feeling is practiced by many who don't have a regular job or animals.
Women's' focus group, Umbarakat village, Kassala.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Our men used to cultivate their lands and to work also in animals pasture and in baked bricks kilns. Now the rain is far less, this has resulted in many troubles. For example, we now purchase sorghum. We buy the bag of sorghum (dura) for 400 pounds. We were forced to sell some of our animals and consequently we buy milk. Water itself became very rare. We always think of the days of abundance, when the Gash River was full in the season, and we didn't need to sell our animals or buy dura. *Women's focus group, Timekeet village, Kassala.*

There is currently a drought in Kassala so that in three out of the five villages this has led to reported crop failure, a decrease in cereal and milk production, a decrease in the terms of trade and decreased surface water. In several interviews the price of a bag of dura (sorghum) has increased from £200 pounds to £350-400. The ongoing impact of the drought will be followed in subsequent interviews, as will any response.

The drought appears to be following a pattern of increased and prolonged dry periods interspersed with flooding. All villagers report that rains are less reliable than in the past and this has eroded their ability to maintain previous livelihoods. This is also the case in Darfur, where unreliability of rains and pests are cited as the number two major problem after conflict.

In Akla Almahat village, Kassala, a flood four years ago resulted in loss of life and people are still displaced. Whilst floods seem to be less widespread as a problem, affecting fewer people, they are still of major significance.

The long-term cycle of drought has diminished many aspects of people's livelihoods, as explored in the opening section above. Whereas previously people would store grain in holes in the ground called sucks to see them through hard times, this appears to no longer be possible. So too the reliability of milk production and the sale of associated products such as ghee has now all but disappeared and become something they report having now to purchase as it is a staple). Mesquite (prosopis) has invaded much of the arable land, resulting in lots of land clearance work.

The unreliability of previous livelihood systems has forced people to change their livelihood strategies. Many have resorted to renting fields – although this drought year has reduced this income source too – charcoal production has significantly increased as a part of income and the men and women have increasingly moved in search of labour. This can be to major cities such as Kassala and Port Sudan, agricultural schemes such as New Halfa and El Girba, large irrigated farms near to markets (as a porter), working as livestock guards for the Rashida (big livestock owners, although this too seems to be diminishing), or simply working on neighbours' farms. Handicrafts and mat making for building materials also figure in income generation.

Access to health; cost of illness

She has health insurance card for herself and the kids, and an aid card for 6 persons – each person gets 2.5 dish for a month but still it is not enough and that's why life is so hard.

Woman, Dorti village, Darfur.

The goats were useful but last year one of my children got ill and at the same time I was not feeling well. We didn't have money to for treatment so we sold one goat to buy medicines, food and wood.

This year is very hard because I am hurt and my mother has been hurt by a wood stick in her shoulders and she can't plant. My sister is pregnant and now she is sick and sleeping inside the house. There is no health centre here, we have to go to Habilla but we have no transport.

Eight months ago we had a cow and 11 goats – we sold them and left two because last November I broke one leg and wound the other by bullet. They stole all goats from the village and mine too. We made a group for searching and returned them and mine was six. I sold four for curing.

Difficulty emerges when somebody is ill. We have got a medical centre, but it cures only minor illnesses, and it is not free. With big cases we are transferred to Kassala town, and one has to pay three hundreds or more, just for the car. When I was ill with one of these diseases, I sold 3 goats, so as to be able to go to Kassala and see the doctor. I remember the period of 6 months which I spent in Kassala for medical treatment. My husband, who accompanied me and I lived with some relatives of ours. My husband found a job with a daily wage which was enough for our daily expenditure. As for my children, their married sisters stayed with them, and cooked their meals.

Woman, Timekeet village, Kassala.

Access to health care is a big issue in Darfur and Kassala. All of the villages report having only basic health facilities available and having to travel to main hospitals, in all cases some considerable distance, for anything complicated. Childbirth complications seem to be the main reported regular cause of travel to tertiary care, and finding ambulances or similar transport for this is a major headache as well as expense.

Cost of health care is the next biggest barrier beyond simple physical access, and as Helen Young reports this can be the biggest single shock to individual households and one that is comparable to major catastrophes such as conflict, drought and floods. In the jargon these are idiosyncratic shocks (individual) rather than covariant (collective). This has also been the case in the other countries under study for this evaluation.

Idiosyncratic health shocks cost families on two levels – loss of income from economically productive family members and the actual health care costs themselves. Often this means families are forced to sell assets or go into debt to pay for health care, and are then less able to support themselves.

For those who are better off there is a health insurance scheme in Sudan, and several respondents reported having the health card. Further details of how this works in practice will be explored in subsequent analysis, but for those with the card there is far less expressed worry about health shocks. For those without, and who cannot pay, they will often resort to local, traditional medicines because they are cheaper, or simply forgo treatment. One woman in Darfur told interviewers that she had a hernia that meant she could no longer work properly, but could not afford to have it treated.

In some places in Kassala there are stories of villagers clubbing together to pay for health care, or transport to the clinic. There are also reports in Darfur of collective savings schemes whereby people can access emergency funds. Additionally there are reports of government medical deployments following floods in Kassala and of Zakat funds paying for health care periodically.

Livelihood systems have changed, but farming still predominates in our cohort

As I told you in the past, there was enough milk to make butter and fat and sell it to purchase some of my family's needs.

Woman, 18 Eissa Elhaj village, Kassala.

Both the general and the drought section above have discussed the changes in livelihood systems brought about by a combination of shocks over the life time of the respondents in our study. What is clear is that individuals and communities have adapted to these shocks, be they war, drought or flood, by finding new ways of surviving.

There is lots of detail in the interviews about collecting grass and stalks to sell as fodder in Darfur; charcoal production in both Darfur and Kassala and labour in both places. What is clear and runs as a theme through all contexts is that farming and livestock rearing alone, combined with some hunting and gathering of wild fruits, no longer suffices.

The predominance of paid labour and the sale of various products at markets, makes it clear that this adaptation – and a longer term trend – is toward a more urban, market economy. The old rural paradigm of self-sufficiency combined with some small money earning for goods people could not make themselves has been turned on its head. Increasingly the prevailing model is earning money by whatever means possible, supplemented by own production of grain, vegetables, milk and meat. This has also gone hand in hand with urban, or peri-urban migration. Whilst permanent urban migration does not show in our study, it is clearly massive in Darfur where the major cities have tripled and quadrupled in size as a result of the conflict. What does show in this study though is the periodic migration for work, and the fact that the young appear to be routinely looking at migration or working away from home.

Urban and larger rural settlements may also make more sense for people because this is where services are. Whilst the quote at the beginning of the general section above shows the tensions clearly – the pull between the old life and the new life – the trend appears to be toward the latter.

Assistance

Some of our animals were drowned, and we received some aid in the form of canvas for tents and some food materials. Our return was after 7 months of suffering because many people got ill and shocked especially the children. The government was aware of our suffering, so many physicians visited us and distributed medicines and the needed help. Many were wounded or had some of their limbs strained, and all found treatment.

Women's Focus group, Akla Alhamata village, Kassala

Sometimes Zakat Association helps us in animal's vaccination and takes 5 SDG in every animal and the organisation gives us 2.5 kora of sorghum monthly for every person.

We are from Dorti but during the wars we moved to Habilla and the WFP organisation supported us with 2.5 kora of sorghum monthly for every person. This

was not enough so we returned back to Habilla for agriculture and other jobs like brining woods burning charcoal.
Man, Dorti village, Darfur.

There is a large amount of self help in Darfur and Kassala. It appears to be common practice in both places for villagers to contribute money when people are sick. Typically this appears to be five or 10 Sudan pounds (SDG), either in the form of a general collection or when people come to visit the sick person. In one interview villagers also collected funds to buy a new horse for someone when theirs was stolen.

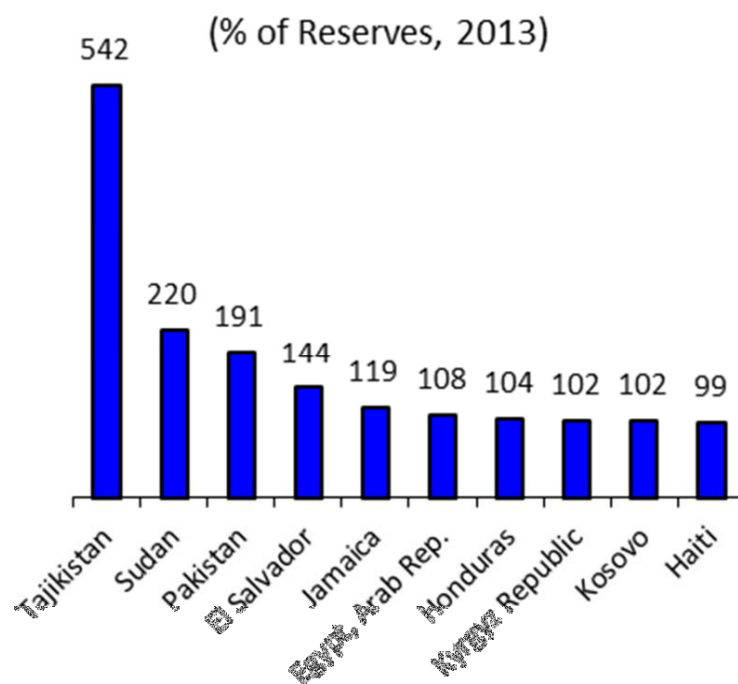


Figure 7: remittance flows as a % of foreign currency reserves. Source: IMF, 2013.

Within families there are lots of examples of relatives sending money when people are sick, suggesting this is prioritised and ubiquitous. Relatives also send money more routinely when they are working far away (remittance) and when people fall on hard times.

Sudan has one of the highest remittance flows in the world (see figure 7 above). Young, in a 2006 study of remittance flows in Darfur, showed that these were substantial prior to the conflict – for some communities as much as 25% of income¹⁸. People routinely travelled to Khartoum in the summer months for seasonal work, and further afield to Libya and Saudi Arabia. Whilst this was disrupted by the conflict it has not disappeared. Kassala too has a tradition of people travelling for work, and although this showed up in the interviews, it did not show to the extent expected, leaving the team to hypothesize that people were not willing to share this information in detail at this stage. This will be addressed in more depth in the coming rounds.

Neighbours are also often cited as helping when people have fallen on hard times.

¹⁸ Young, H (2006). Livelihoods, migration and remittance flows in times of crisis and conflict: case studies for Darfur, Sudan. Feinstein International Centre and Overseas Development Institute, Humanitarian Policy Group.

In Darfur there also seems to be a strong culture of savings groups and funds. In interviews three of the five villages talked about having a savings fund, an excused fund or family fund for emergencies. There are also revolving goat loan schemes introduced by aid agencies.

In Darfur and Kassala the Zakat funds are present, although how widely is hard to judge. In Darfur one respondent received food through the Sheikh as part of Zakat whilst another received two health insurance cards. In Kassala the divan tax of alms both gives and takes away, although one focus group reported they give more than they take. One villager in Timekeet reported getting four containers of dura that could feed them for three days. Another remembered a time seven years ago when the Zakat gave a monthly payment for six months after a severe drought. The second quote at the beginning of this section suggests this is also happening now, but the level needs further investigation.

Aid agencies are present in both contexts, not surprisingly given this was one of the selection criteria.

In Darfur the most commonly cited organisation was CRS (the Taadoud project). Again this was not surprising given that the villages are specifically chosen as being in their project area, but at the same time reassuring that they are well known. Respondents talked about receiving goats, sorghum for the weak, seeds, a kargaka for the well, funds for needs and loans, and being taught how to plant. Other organisations mentioned by name were WFP (quote cited above), UNICEF (distributed mosquito nets two years ago) and Manara (local NGO and CRS partner). There are several references to having a card that means people can get certain amounts of sorghum monthly (multiples of 'kora'), but the organisations are not named. There are also quite a few references to aid that has stopped recently without any stated reason, both food and non-food.

In Kassala there appears to be a wider variety of assistance and organisations, but perhaps not the same concentration as in the Darfur villages. Assistance ranges from post flood to development works.

Following the floods in Akla, respondents said that UNICEF gave canvas and tents. The Red Crescent also gave dura, meat and clothes. The same two organisations are remembered in Timekeet for their assistance following the war, bringing tents and in the case of the Red Crescent also doing mines awareness, health care and water. Practical Action are cited as giving tents and the Japanese Society for mines awareness have been giving this village fertiliser stores, a motor and seeds. In Timekeet people only moved back from Eritrea after the war once the mine action NGOs had demined the area; in one interview it is clear that there were still incidents.

There are development inputs in all of the five villages. In at least two of the five villages there have been boreholes and reservoirs constructed by agencies to try and alleviate the water issues. In Elatyout both UNICEF and the Red Crescent dug wells and a reservoir, as well as an organisation called CDF. According to the villagers, both the UNICEF and Red Crescent wells stopped working (they said the Red Crescent one stopped within four minutes!), but the CDF water seems to work; there is a pump and some pipes to houses. There are also some pipes constructed to bring water to the schools, as well as latrines in two of the villages.

As well as the water and sanitation infrastructure there are school classrooms built by the World Bank (also in Elatyout). This is the same village where a new road appears to have restricted the flow of water to the fields.

Beyond these infrastructure works there are a wide range of loan schemes, agricultural projects, adult education and skills training, nutritional education and care and charity during Ramadan. Organisations include UNICEF (education materials), FAO (seeds), the Red Crescent (vegetables and adult education), Practical Action (loans), Subbar (delivery fund), Development Network (revolving loan fund), Souder (farm training and promised animals that were never delivered), and Roeya (removing prosopis).

We used to be given some sustenance from what was called social support. They came and registered our names, but after a brief period in which we received that support, it suddenly stopped, and was no longer given to us. We used to receive 300 pounds and sometimes 400, and it was a real support for us.

Man, Saboon, Kassala.

An organisation came and opened a class for mature students, and they gave the learners some incentives. They also gave some families goats. They gave each family a goat.

Woman, Akla Alhamata, Kassala.

They were giving nutrition for children, but it stopped now, because they didn't hire a supervisor. There were volunteers, but they refused to continue, because they haven't been paid for two months and the clinic need to be fixed.

Men's focus group, Elatyout, Kassala.

Last year, some organisations came here and made dikes and small dams in an attempt to store the rain water, and brought us seeds which harvested almost nothing. They came again and apologized, saying that those seeds were meant for experimentation, and they had proved to be unsuccessful. What we gained from the experiment was the reed and leaves which provided a good feeding for our animals for seven months.

Man, Timekeet, Kassala.

Whilst there is quite a lot of formal aid recorded, it appears to be quite hit and miss, especially in Kassala where the team captured more of the detail. The quotes above illustrate the stop/start nature of the assistance. There are also quite a few examples where aid projects have not worked (vegetables that could not be planted due to lack of irrigation water), are half completed (reconstruction of the East fund dug half a water tank and then stopped!), or were actively harmful (like the road that cut off water to the fields). Overall, the impression is of a formal aid sector that is fragmented and inconsistent (at best!).

Recovery

When we returned we found all the land was well irrigated and ready to be cultivated. As it is said, nothing on earth is absolute evil, because it is God's deed. And as the previous period was the summit of our sufferings, this one after return was the summit of our prospering. Farming succeeded 100%, and our conditions improved greatly. The land became green all over, and our men bought additional animals. We rebuilt our houses, and the sorrows of the past started to fade away, except for the scars left in our hearts by the loss of our dear ones. One year ago the flood repeated itself, but in a smaller scale. A few houses were ruined, but we profited from the irrigated land. This was another successful harvest. The acre (feddan) produced 15-19 bags of dura (sorghum). Our living conditions improved, and people found money

to do many things. Single young men got married; herd's owners multiplied their herds, and those who work in making coal found abundant wood for their industry. Some of us improved the building of their houses. They bought mats made from plain leaves and wood, and the women did the construction (it has been ladies' work since the dawn of history).

Women's focus group, Akla village, Kassala.

Recovery has taken place in certain instances from some of the big shocks. Both following floods in Kassala and the return after being refugees in Eritrea, people recovered and generally prospered (as the quote above shows). In Darfur, despite the conditions being difficult, people generally report improving conditions.

In neither place however have people regained the lives that they lived formerly. Despite greater stability in Kassala, people do not appear to have recovered to a previous state; in Darfur people are making conscious choices about not growing herds or producing surplus due to insecurity.

Clearly this is quite a subjective measurement. Only those old enough to remember previous times are able to comment effectively, and it is certain that some aspects of the previous life will have mellowed with time. It is human to remember the positives more than the negatives, and it is entirely possible that the halcyon days of pure self-sufficiency, when crops and milk were plentiful, was actually harder than that represented.

What is certain though, as has been touched on several times, is that things have changed. People have not so much recovered from one shock to a previous state, but rather they have adapted as a result of the shock to a new state.

3.2 Question 2: Has the availability of contingency funding enabled DFID and its partners to respond more quickly and effectively when conditions deteriorate?

This question has not been examined in any depth during the study period, primarily because of the visa issues discussed in the introduction to this report. These issues look as though they will now be resolved, and therefore it is anticipated a plan to properly study the use of contingency in Sudan will be developed with the DFID Sudan office in early 2016.

3.3 Question 3: To what extent does DFID MY and pre-approved contingency funding provide better VFM than annual funding for DFID and partners?

The VFM aspects of the study are still at an early stage, primarily once again because of the visa issues and the difficulty of engaging partners in detail from a distance. As a result data gathered so far is all self-reported and at a reasonably superficial level. Within the CRS-led consortium only World Vision International (WVI) have replied to the questionnaire so far despite a lot of follow up; UN-led partners have mostly responded although on a limited basis.

Both consortia report some marginal administrative savings, although these are yet to be quantified. For WVI, the ability to MY plan and bulk/pre-purchase has resulted in cost savings. For UNICEF staff costs are lower because longer term contracts have resulted in less turnover (although FAO do not seem to suffer this issue).

UNICEF sign MY contracts with partners but still only advance payments against reporting on a short term basis, potentially limiting some of the pass-through savings.

Interestingly the consortium approach has also provided potential benefits, most clearly for the UN in the east. Being co-located and involved in each other's projects has led programme staff to make linkages and develop a more holistic approach. This may well yield both value savings and better, more appropriate aid.

For both consortia the big advantage of MY reported, but still to be quantified, is in better analysis, planning and design of programmes. A big part of the CRS programme in Darfur is multiplication of improved seed which can only take place with a long enough time frame. Effectively they need time to experiment and innovate. For UNICEF, behaviour change and tackling chronic under nutrition requires time, community participation and deep understanding. They report a six month study, consultation and design phase that would have been impossible without MY support.

Whilst both of these arguments are convincing – and the evaluation will attempt to better quantify these aspects in the next phase – it is also the case that the implementation timeframe appears to be too short to truly yield the desired benefits. The Taadoud project is a little under two years, the UNICEF-led consortium a little over two years. Whether it be helping people forge new livelihoods in Darfur, or change behaviour around diet and hygiene in Kassala, the evidence is clear that longer timeframes are needed. The evaluation will also attempt to explore this in the next phase.

4. Conclusions

In addition to the findings set out above the research team have developed a number of themes that will be explored further in subsequent rounds of research.

West Darfur:

1. Despite the agro-pastoralism nature of the local communities in West Darfur; local communities have made hard decisions and opted for not restocking their livestock or digging new wells though the water table is low. The local communities have made their own risk and threats assessment and concluded that this could become a magnet for government-supported militia. This choice has serious consequences on assets and hence livelihood of households. It increases the dependency on assistance being local, national or foreign. This does not appear to be the case in other parts of Darfur (for instance the north) where Oxfam report households working hard to grow their herds of goats, sheep and cows. The hard choice by households in West Darfur poses a challenge for CRS response as one of its main outputs is livestock capacity building.

Kassala:

2. The role of women in the household appears to be greater economically than previously thought, although there is some contradiction in the interviews. Women also appear to enjoy a significant role in household decision making, again contrary to the perceived wisdom. This theme needs to be further explored as it has potential policy implications.
3. The history of malnutrition needs to be understood in terms of wider household and community resilience, or at least correlated with shocks. Understanding better the role of women is critical at household level (as above), and how this intersects with acute malnutrition in East Sudan.
4. There is an opportunity to better document recovery stories from shocks (1984 and 1991 droughts and the 2005 Floods). The FGDs provide rich insight into how communities have adapted, for instance after the 1984-85 drought. Whilst households and communities could not rebuild their livestock to pre-drought levels, they were able to introduce new sources of income such as farming outside the rainy season and labour in urban centres.
5. Water is the number one issue for FGDs in Kassala, taking a great deal of resource in terms of time, money and energy. However, despite the participatory nature of the programme design, the consortium approach does not prioritise this. This needs to be resolved now otherwise it will create conflict between the local communities and UN agencies operating in the area.
6. There is a significant opportunity to create some form of nascent safety net in the east, perhaps based around the Zakat fund or similar state institutions. This can also be a policy area that VE can explore further in subsequent rounds of work.

Despite administrative obstacles, it has been possible to conduct first rounds of primary data gathering in Darfur and Kassala, with second rounds due imminently. This first round of interviews has yielded sufficient data to build on in subsequent rounds of interviewing, and some insights that can inform future DFID and partner programming.

It is striking that in both of the project locations there are extremely similar long-term changes taking place. It is encouraging that the interviews for this evaluation largely concur with research by Tufts for the CRS-led Taadoud consortium in Darfur. These

long-term transitions challenge current aid models and make a strong argument for the idea of MY funding, although the optimal model needs to be better understood.

The evaluation has been less successful in its first year in gathering data on VFM and the use of contingency funds. This will be a major focus for 2016, based on the assumption that previous administrative issues will be overcome.