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Strengthening the humanity and dignity of people in crisis through knowledge and practice

Targeting in Complex Emergencies: Darfur Case Study



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Cover Photo: A woman in Rosay, West Darfur, shows the difference between WFP food aid before and after processing (photo by Helen Young).

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The Authors

Prologue

This report was first drafted in December 2008 and reviewed in early 2009 before the expulsion of the thirteen international NGOs and closure of the three local NGOs by the Government of Sudan on March 4th 2009. Four key WFP Cooperating Partners, including CARE, Save the Children (US), Action Contre la Faim, and Solidarités, that previously had reached 1.1 million food aid beneficiaries (35 percent of WFP's distribution), were expelled.¹ WFP was able to continue distributions and organized an emergency distribution of two-month rations from 15 March, through local Food Relief Committees and with the help of staff borrowed by WFP from some of the expelled NGOs on a temporary basis. The role and importance of the Food Relief Committees has thus significantly increased since this report was first written.

Although this report does not reflect on the practical implications of the expulsions it does provide insights and evidence of these local capacities and the participation of local communities through the Food Relief Committees. As such it is an important background on the evolving situation and international humanitarian response in the Darfur region.

The Authors

April, 2009

1 WFP, 2009, WFP Seeks to Overcome Operating Setback in Sudan, *WFP News*, 31 March 2009, <http://www.wfp.org/stories/wfp-seeks-overcome-operating-setback-sudan>.

Acronyms

AMIS	African Union Mission in Sudan
ANA	Annual Needs Assessment
AU	African Union
CBT	Community Based Targeting
CFSAM	FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission
CFSVA	Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis
CP	Cooperating Partner
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSB	Corn-Soy Blend
DDDC	Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation
DFSNA	Darfur Food Security and Nutrition Assessment
DPA	Darfur Peace Agreement
EMOP	Emergency Operations
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization (UN)
FBM	Food Basket Monitoring
FIC	Feinstein International Center
FLA	Field Level Agreement
FRC	Food Relief Committee
FSIS	Food Security Information System
GAM	Global Acute Malnutrition
GOS	Government of Sudan
GFD	General Food Distribution
HAC	Humanitarian Aid Commission (Government of Sudan)
HPG	Humanitarian Policy Group
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
NGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IOM	International Organization on Migration
JEM	Justice and Equity Movement
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PDM	Post Distribution Monitoring
PRRO	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation
SLM/A	Sudan Liberation Movement/Army
UNAMID	Joint UN/Africa Union Mission in Darfur
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMIS	United Nations Mission in Sudan
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
WFP	World Food Programme

Executive Summary

The Darfur conflict is now in its sixth year, and has drawn in a complex web of local, national, and transnational interests, which play out in different types of inter-connected conflict throughout the region. From the start of the conflict in 2003, protection threats and restricted access have been major challenges to the humanitarian community. Since then the level of insecurity, the numbers affected, and degree of humanitarian access have evolved and changed. From the early days, the caseload of WFP has coincided with the general estimates of numbers affected, and other, more general humanitarian needs often followed and were based on the registration of beneficiaries for food aid. The peace process and ceasefires have not generated a sustainable peace in Darfur, and security has deteriorated significantly since the partial signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement in 2006, and the fragmentation of the Darfur rebel movements.

The WFP Darfur program is the one of the largest WFP humanitarian programs globally reaching 3.7 million in 2008 out of an estimated total population of about 6 million. Its main objectives are to save lives and reduce or stabilize malnutrition among conflict-affected and displaced populations experiencing loss of access to livelihoods. The three main groups targeted include IDPs, mixed IDP/host groups, and rural non-displaced groups. Since May 2008 there has been a general ration cut because of long-distance transportation problems resulting from insecurity.

This research is one case in a study commissioned by the World Food Programme to investigate the participation of recipient communities in the targeting and management of humanitarian food assistance in complex emergencies. The study involved a substantial desk review of existing documentation, and two weeks of field work in October 2008. The purpose of the study was to understand the ways in which participatory or community-based approaches to targeting have been attempted, within the definition of community-based targeting suggested by WFP. The study was not an evaluation of targeting methods, although some critical examination of targeting was necessary in order to understand the constraints on community participation. The six essential food aid targeting questions relate to who needs it, when and where they need it, what is needed and how much, how they will be targeted, and lastly why they are receiving it, in terms of objectives of the program. These are addressed at different stages of the program cycle, from assessment to distribution and final evaluation.

An analysis of the interests and influence of stakeholders in relation to different stages of the program cycle identifies fifteen different stakeholder groups all of whom either influence or are influenced by the targeting and distribution of food assistance in Darfur. This illustrates the way in which targeting of food aid directly and indirectly affects and is affected by a wide range of interest groups.

The primary sources of information for planning and targeting purposes include the annual Darfur Food Security and Nutrition Assessment (DFSNA) and more localized needs assessments conducted in response to changes in local situations. Distribution lists were set by the 2005 re-registration process, and have been altered only marginally since. Generally, results of the DFSNA are not directly applied to targeting questions—most of the targeting resources are set by what happened the previous year, or by localized needs assessments that are conducted as

required by local circumstances, and which alter local targeting. The study identified several operational constraints, which affect targeting and the extent to which communities have a say in targeting. These include geographic access, insecurity, limited program options, and resource diversion.

The report presents an analysis of local governance and implications of the recent conflict, which is important to understand for enhancing local participation in food distribution and targeting, even more so since the recent expulsions of thirteen INGOs. Local governance based on traditional tribal systems in the Darfur region has been undermined and politicized over the past thirty years, and more severely disrupted and challenged as a result of the displacement, deaths, and migration occurring since 2003. As relief distributions got going, where traditional leaders were absent or stepped aside from their former role, new leaders were quickly appointed. The former traditional functions of tribal leaders have changed, as their role has shifted to become more of an interlocutor with the agencies, with a different type of power and authority. Despite this changing role, the tribal administration has renewed importance to people in Darfur generally.

There are currently three parallel governance structures: local government or civic administration; the tribal administration for different tribal groups; and humanitarian governance structures which include the United Nations organizations, international, and national non-government organizations, and donor countries. All of these structures have linkages among them and either a direct or indirect relationship with the Food Relief Committee which, as a new governance institution, has its own systems and rules. On paper, the Food Relief Committee is intended to promote both representation and participation—in reality it is mostly about helping in food distributions. FRCs also ensure continuity of operations in many insecure locations where WFP and its partners cannot go—in these locations the FRCs are conducting food distribution without direct supervision. The work of the FRC is not entirely separate from politics in Darfur, in part because some members are in fact influential tribal leaders whose leadership role overlaps with their more administrative role within the FRC. FRC members are nominated and selected by “sections” within an IDP camp, or geographic area, and are not generally democratically elected. In two locations visited, the original FRC had been contested by local groups and reformed with new membership. Despite stipulations to the opposite, women play a relatively small role on the FRCs, and functioning complaints mechanisms were mostly not in evidence.

While the FRCs are seen by the humanitarian community as a means of promoting participation, they were also a means of shifting power and authority over food distribution away from local leaders (i.e., challenging elite capture of resources). With the re-registration of 2005, the authority and power of these leaders was significantly diminished and was superseded by the authority and control vested in the registration process and ration card. This marked a shift in responsibilities for humanitarian governance—away from local leaders, and toward a system more under the control of international agencies.

Food assistance has an important role to play with regard to protection. This includes, first, by upholding the right to adequate food and freedom from hunger; second, by providing a secure safe source of food to IDPs; third, by upholding dignity; fourth, by minimizing protection risks

during distribution; and fifth, by organizing registration so as to minimize threats of violence or attack.

Locally within Darfur, agency personnel sometimes mentioned “food for protection” or “food for access,” referring to the strategy of providing food assistance to potential aggressors who threaten the humanitarian convoys, personnel, or the other beneficiaries. While this is not an official category of food aid, it is perhaps a pragmatic approach in some specific situations. However, this practice is not based on impartiality and undermines the commitment to provide humanitarian assistance on the basis of assessed need.

The study concludes that there is very little household targeting of food aid at the local level. The accepted basis of entitlement of food assistance in Darfur is based on group status (IDP, host/resident, rural), not need (food insecurity).

The IDP claim or “right to food” is closely interwoven with the claim for protection more broadly and, as such, this claim which is directed at WFP is closely intertwined with other politicized claims which lie at the heart of the IDP’s own narrative or IDP identity. While the categorization of beneficiaries as IDP, resident, etc., is a pragmatic and practical response to the problem of targeting, the risk is that it continues to reinforce a politicized claim for food aid. As long as food aid entitlements are so closely linked with wider and more highly politicized claims, there remains very limited potential for community-based targeting in this complex setting.

The report ends with a series of six recommendations.

I. Introduction and Background

Background to the conflict

The current Darfur crisis has a long and complex history that predates the beginning of the Darfur rebel insurgency against the government of Sudan in early 2003. As the crisis nears the end of its sixth year the conflict has developed and evolved and has drawn in a complex web of local, national, and transnational interests, which play out in different types of conflict throughout the region. This complexity has its roots in the history of Darfur, of Sudan, and of the wider region, including relations with Chad and Libya.

In early 2003, the armed resistance groups, the Sudanese Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), were successful in launching a number of strategic attacks against government property, which caught the government of Sudan off guard and raised the national profile of the rebels. As a result the rebel groups took control of certain mostly rural areas in all three Darfur states. The government of Sudan responded with the tried and tested tactics that it had previously used in the war against the south: mobilizing civilians (and appealing to specific ethnic groups) to join armed forces (militia or Janjaweed), who in Darfur were supported by the Sudan Air Force, to quell the insurgency. But this fighting force was directed at civilians, particularly those who belonged to the same ethnic groups as the rebels were thought to represent (largely Fur, Masalit, and Zaghawa). Thus, civilians of Darfur were brutally attacked and forcibly displaced, their property looted, and their homes destroyed. The worst of this counter-insurgency took place in 2003, and was followed by the worst of the forced displacement. The displaced sought safety and many headed for the urban areas, swelling town populations and putting pressure on local services, while many of those close to the border with Chad became refugees. Displaced camps formed, some spontaneously, others in a more organized fashion. Not all camps were safe, for example the camp at Kebkabiya was attacked in December 2003, and as a result the displaced moved into the town and are still there today. As a result of the general insecurity and threats to civilians, the Darfur conflict has been described as “first and foremost a human rights crisis” (Minear 2005, 86) and has raised the importance of protection concerns generally.²

Since 2003, the level of protection threats, the numbers affected, and degree of humanitarian access have evolved and changed. At the height of the government insurgency operations from mid 2003 to early 2004, human rights abuses were probably at their highest, whereas humanitarian access was almost totally restricted. So the worst of the counter-insurgency was over by the time humanitarian access was assured and continued to be relatively good up to mid/late 2005. The international humanitarian response, though slow initially in 2003, rapidly gained momentum in late 2004 and 2005, both in advocacy and in humanitarian action. Although Darfur experienced greater humanitarian access at this time, the limited capacity of the UN and other agencies restricted the impact of the response. Gradually the capacity of the international humanitarian community expanded and the numbers reached increased; by the end of 2005 (with

2 In late April 2004, a high-level UN mission, led by the WFP executive director, Mr. James Morris, visited the Darfur region and raised serious concerns about the protection of the affected population.

the re-registration exercise by WFP, IOM, and OCHA), WFP's caseload was more than three million. Importantly, the caseload of WFP coincided with the general estimates of numbers affected, thus food needs and general humanitarian needs were conflated, and presented as concomitant, which is contrary to a more nuanced understanding of humanitarian needs and obviously risks entrenching food aid as the sine qua non of humanitarian response.

In 2003 displacement was caused primarily by direct attacks, while in 2004 and 2005 displacement was increasingly a result of lost livelihoods caused by insecurity, restricted access, and possibly the pull factors of relief provided in camps (Young et al. 2005). Numbers affected have changed relatively little since 2005, as the conflict has shifted from all out counter-insurgency operations to more sporadic and strategic attacks. From 2006 onwards a new pattern of localized yet violent conflicts have emerged linked to localized tensions between tribal groups (Young et al. 2007).

More broadly the conflict has devastated the wider economy by ripping apart the social and economic fabric of rural Darfur, removing many of the sedentary farmers, and thereby destroying the rural market systems which provide the foundations of Darfur's agriculturally based economy. For local communities that were not displaced, livelihood strategies were severely eroded and even wealthier households suffered. For example, Darfur's traders were put out of business, along with the networks of agents, guarantors, and middlemen (Buchanan-Smith and Fadul 2008).

Box 1. The importance of understanding local and national causes of conflict to ensure impartiality

The causes of the conflict have been widely discussed and documented (Flint and de Waal 2005, Tanner 2005, Young et al. 2005). For the purposes of this study on the role of the community in distribution and targeting, there are some important dimensions of the conflict that need to be understood from a humanitarian perspective. It is widely agreed that the root cause of the current conflict lies in the long-term social, economic, and political marginalization of Western Sudan (as well as the South, East, and other peripheral regions) by the Government of Sudan. The neglect by national policies of these regions contributed to gross inequities in development that were subsequently presented in the "Black Book" (prepared by the Justice and Equality Movement as part of their manifesto). While the marginalization and neglect of the region are well recognized internationally, there is less understanding of the disparities within the region that have contributed to resource conflict between groups (particularly between the sedentary farmers with land rights and the pastoralists who as a group have no collective land rights or "*dar*" (homeland). Thus land and the natural resources associated with it, lie at the heart of the local rivalries and conflicts between livelihood groups (who often correspond to tribal groups).

At the local level, government legislation in the 1970s led to weakened social institutions by abolishing and later reinstating the tribal administration, and to failed economic development interventions by the Government of Sudan (GOS). This "crisis of development" combined with a history of ecological hardships including erratic rainfall, drought, and famine has led to massive pressures on populations, thus perpetuating insecurity and ethnic resource-based rivalries. When the Darfur region emerged from the 1984/1985 drought and region-wide famine, it was quickly followed by the Fur Arab tribal conflict in the late eighties, and soon after that the region slid into another devastating conflict between the Arab and the Masalit ethnic groups in West Darfur. These ethnic conflicts raged amidst a climate of armed banditry

and general lawlessness, fuelled by government inaction or, more importantly, actions that exacerbated or even played on existing ethnic tensions. The pattern of social and resource-based conflicts that was established in the 1980s intensified over the last twenty years, setting the stage for the current crisis. The tactics employed by the Government of Sudan, including ethnic manipulation leading to the polarization and politicization of tribes, have also continued.

At the regional level, Darfur has remained closely tied with the people and governments of Chad, Libya, and Central African Republic. For more than thirty years, various Chadian and Libyan groups fought proxy wars in and from bases in Darfur. Darfur has been the base for the different Chadian rebel groups that destabilized and carried out assaults in Chadian territories (Young, Osman, et al. 2005). Relations between Sudan and Chad began to deteriorate in 2005, and several incidents occurred on both sides of the border destabilizing this area. By early 2006, Chad said it was in “a state of belligerence” with Sudan, which it blamed for attacks on its border towns, thus deepening the regional dimensions of the Darfur crisis. The recent conflicts between Sudan and Chad reveal the complex regional patterns of the Darfur crisis and show that its implications reach far beyond Darfur’s borders.

The Darfur crisis has local, national, and transnational dimensions and underlying causes, which are important to differentiate and understand from a humanitarian perspective, particularly in terms of assuring impartiality and neutrality of humanitarian response (Young et al. 2005).

Peace processes, ongoing conflict, and the ICC

International engagement in the Darfur crisis has been wide-ranging, including African Union (AU) sponsored peace processes in Abuja, their peace support mission in Sudan (AMIS), the subsequent UN-AU hybrid force (UNAMID) that became operational on 1 January 2008, wide-ranging international diplomatic engagement, the series of indictments issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC), and not least international humanitarian action.

The peace process and ceasefires have been littered with broken promises. As early as 2003, the GOS began to engage in indirect talks with the SLM/A and JEM, but all the while was continuing its military strategy. The GOS and SLM/A signed the first six-week ceasefire in September 2003 and agreed to allow free and unimpeded humanitarian access within Darfur. Yet by April 2004, the conflict had created over one million IDPs in Darfur, as compared to 250,000 in September 2003 when the ceasefire had been agreed (Darfur Humanitarian Profile (1) 2004). After considerable international pressure, the SLM/A, the JEM, and the GOS signed the Humanitarian Ceasefire Agreement on 8 April 2004 which was followed by improved access and a temporary decrease in the level of conflict and hostility. Although the worst of the counter-insurgency was by then over, a continued sense of insecurity in Darfur remained.

The UN Security Council then referred the situation of Darfur to the International Criminal Court (pursuant to article 13(b) of the ICC Statute), which resulted in the indictments of Ahmad Harun (currently Sudan’s deputy minister for humanitarian affairs) and Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-al-Rahman, also known as Ali Kushayb,³ after twenty months of investigation. Then, more

3 Ahmad Harun was a senior government official in charge of the military and police and intelligence forces in Darfur. Ali Kushayb was the militia leader who led fighters in a brutal campaign of violence against civilians.

significantly, on July 14, 2008, the chief prosecutor of the ICC charged President Omer al-Bashir with war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide in Darfur, which was the first indictment against a serving head of state. Bashir did not take this lightly, and has actively sought support from Sudan's neighbors against the indictment, including Libya, Kenya, and Egypt. The government of Sudan has claimed that it has stepped up efforts to try Darfur violators itself. The indictments raised widespread concerns about repercussions and UNAMID raised the security alert for its staff.

Starting in July of 2004, the AU sponsored the Inter-Sudanese Peace Talks on Darfur (the Abuja Negotiations), with seven separate rounds of the peace negotiations, which culminated in the partial signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement. Two key rebel groups did not sign, which generated violent local protests in Darfur, especially in those towns and camps home to rebel supporters (Zalingei and Nyala in particular). Since then, the rebel groups have continued to fracture with multiple political groupings, which are increasingly distanced from the growing lists of local commanders who claim local authority. Since 2006, the local dimensions of the conflict have been ratcheted up particularly in terms of escalating local tribal conflict in South Darfur. For example, very recent reports from South Darfur indicate that 250 people have been killed in tribal clashes over land and natural resources (BBC News 2008).⁴

It is now clear that the partially signed Darfur Peace Agreement has failed to make significant progress towards peace. Currently the international peace process driven by the U.S., British, and French in particular has stalled, following unsuccessful attempts to get it back on the road with an initiative in September 2007, supported by Gadaafi to bring together the parties in Sirte, Libya.⁵ Since the ICC indictment of President Omar El Bashir by the International Criminal Court (ICC), there have been efforts to mobilize an alternative peace process mediated by the Arab States, and led by Qatar. This has been supported by the Government of Sudan, but some of the key rebel groups or their representatives have refused to participate, including Abdalwahid el Nur (SLM/AW) and also the Justice and Equality Movement.⁶

Locally, the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation (DDDC), the creation of which was one of the provisions of the Darfur Peace Agreement, has moved forward in its efforts to bring together tribal leaders within Darfur. Although there continues to be a lack of clarity about the role of the DDDC given the wider failures of the DPA, and there are also questions about the representativeness of the tribal leaders.

One of the most important implications of this background and history of the conflict are the challenges presented in trying to understand the complexity of the conflict at a local level given the different types or layers of conflict and links between them. For example these include local-

4 The BBC reported that "150 people died as hundreds of members of the Fallata and Salamat ethnic groups attacked the Habaniya in South Darfur. About 100 more died in clashes between two groups from the Gimir group".

5 In April 2008, British prime minister Gordon Brown offered to host London talks between the Sudanese government and Darfur's rebel groups but this went nowhere.

6 In March of 2009, the ICC issued an arrest warrant for President Bashir, leading to the expulsion of thirteen international NGOs operating in Darfur and elsewhere in Sudan, and the closure of three Sudanese national organizations.

level resource-based conflict, national-level rebel insurgency and government counter-insurgency each of which has strong transnational dimensions. A further challenge for WFP and its partners is recognizing and navigating the different local interests which are almost certainly linked to higher level agendas, and which within Darfur are found to co-exist in close proximity of each other. A further major issue is the continuing and sometimes worsening insecurity (partly as a result of the failures of the international peace processes and the ability of UNAMID to secure a stable and secure environment within Darfur), which has had a major impact on WFP's program as a result of deteriorating humanitarian access. Despite earlier optimism, the situation in Darfur shows little improvement (except limited localized improvements) and delivery of food relief by the WFP is increasingly hampered by bandit attacks on convoys and a lack of funds for the air service. At the same time there has been pressure internationally to shift from emergency programming to "early recovery," a move that some INGOs have contested as inappropriate. What this means for the role of emergency food distribution five years on is not yet clear.

The WFP in Darfur

WFP operates a single country-wide program in Sudan. It is the largest WFP program in the world, with different components for different parts of the country—Darfur, Southern Sudan, and one region including Central, Eastern, and the Three Areas (CETA). The Emergency Operation plan for 2008 is not significantly different from those of earlier years. In Darfur, the main objectives are to save lives and reduce or stabilize malnutrition among conflict-affected and displaced population experiencing loss of access to livelihoods. (There are objectives related to IDP returns that mainly affect Southern Sudan. Other objectives relate to maternal/child health and nutrition and education that mainly affect other areas.)

The Darfur program has evolved over time. Prior to the outbreak of the insurgency in 2003, the WFP program in Darfur was quite small. WFP was first alerted to the situation on the ground in Darfur in 2003, because of their ongoing relief programs to Southern Sudanese in Darfur, but also because of their direct involvement in the WFP/FAO Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission and Annual Needs Assessments (CFSAM). Up to May 2004, humanitarian access was severely restricted, and WFP and other humanitarian agencies were not permitted in many areas of Darfur. During 2003 and 2004, logistics was the big push and WFP rapidly expanded its program, initially focusing on the displaced populations. Cooperating Partners were few, and registration was haphazard. A 2006 evaluation notes, "The emphasis was on life saving interventions, not on targeting or registration. WFP Sudan faced a choice between concentrating resources on a rigorous registration exercise or beginning immediate food distribution in a situation with a very real and very obvious need for food. This was an example of WFP Sudan putting the humanitarian imperative ahead of other considerations" (Cosgrave et al. 2006). The report goes on to note, however, that this resulted in food aid rolls being inflated at some sites.

By 2005, registration and verification had become a bigger issue, as it became clear that the total numbers of food aid recipients exceeded the affected population (i.e., over-registration), as a result of localized corruption and multiple card-holders. Particularly in the larger more politicized camps, registration and ration cards were controlled by local leaders. Resistance to improved registration on the part of sheikhs and other leaders who had acquired multiple ration cards became a significant security issue. There were no population figures and rumors were rife

that the Government of Sudan Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) wanted to get people out of camps and sent back to their home villages. Rumors quickly spread that the re-registration was about identifying people for forced return, which made the registration process much more difficult and dangerous; in many places the registration was undermined and the resulting lists were not an accurate reflection of the actual number of IDPs. The re-registration exercise in 2005 was largely successful in rationalizing numbers of people in IDP camps at the time, but a comprehensive means of tracking IDP movement and of registering new arrivals was still a problem a year later (WFP 2006) and to some degree is an issue that is still unresolved.

After the Darfur Peace Agreement was partially signed in 2006, security deteriorated significantly for the humanitarian agencies. The difficulties in delivery of assistance currently are not a result of resource shortfalls but because of security problems. And the incomplete or inadequate registration of recipients continues to be an issue. There is some attempt to use high-tech approaches to improve targeting and registration (satellite imagery, etc.) but so far they have been unsuccessful.

The Emergency Operation (EMOP) in 2008 calls for food assistance for 5.6 million people. Of those, 3.7 million are in Darfur, making the Darfur operation by far the largest operation within Sudan. Of 632,000 metric tons of food for Sudan, 475,000 were earmarked for Darfur. Of this, 446,000 metric tons (more than 90 percent) were for general food distribution. Thus general food distribution (GFD) is by far the most prevalent food aid modality in Darfur—and hence the main topic of this report on the targeting of food aid and particularly the role of the recipient community in managing and targeting food aid.

There are an estimated six million people living in Darfur in 2008 (exact figures are not known, and the 2008 census was not able to reach all parts of Darfur). In 2007, 3.3 million people received some form of food assistance, including roughly 1.75 million IDPs living in camps and largely reliant on food aid (WFP 2008). The EMOP notes that food aid will be provided to all IDPs and conflict-affected populations, but also notes that, “for long-term displaced populations, assistance will be provided on a more targeted basis, based on household characteristics and identified special needs.” The EMOP is silent on the issue of the role of the recipient community in this targeting, however, and it is not clear what constitutes a “long-term displaced population.” Most of the IDPs in Darfur were displaced between mid 2003 and early 2004, although there has been movement in and out of camps and more recent displacements as a result of localized conflicts.

The basic ration in Darfur includes six commodities—cereal, pulses, oil, salt, sugar, and corn/soya blend (CSB). At full ration, this provides just over 2,100 kilocalories per person per day as well as 65 grams of protein and 45 grams of fat (see Box 2 for a brief review of ration changes). However, due to insecurity and a resulting problem with long-distance transportation, there has been a general ration cut in Darfur since May of 2008. Initially, this cut reduced the rations by half. With a somewhat stabilized pipeline, the ration was at about 70 percent of the intended level in October 2008. This ration cut is shared equally across the board—within IDP camps (with very few exceptions) there is no attempt to target certain groups. In other (non-camp) contexts, adjustments are made to ration contents, ration scales, and seasonal coverage as a means of targeting certain groups or times of the year. There is also some amount of food

assistance in Darfur that is not of WFP origin (mainly through the ICRC). However, WFP is by far the largest provider of food assistance.

**Box 2 Changes to the WFP General Food Ration Scales since 2004
(grams per person per day)**

	2003	2004	2005	2005	2006	2007	2008
Cereals	450	450	450	500ⁱ	450ⁱⁱ	450.0	450
Pulses	40	50	50	50	50	50.0	50
Vegetable oil	30	30	30	30	30	30.0	30
Salt	5	5	10 ⁱ	10	10	10.0	10
CSB	50	50	50	50	50	16.5 ⁱⁱⁱ	16.5
Sugar		–	25ⁱ	25	30 ⁱⁱⁱ	30.0	30
Kcal	2131	2130	2225.5		2245 (2100)	2125.0 (1974)	2156 (2006)

Notes

- i. In 2005, rations were modified in order to compensate for milling losses, and increase the market availability of food. The general ration of cereals was increased from 13.5 kg to 15 kg per person per month “to enable IDPs and affected residents to participate in the market, and increase the availability of cereals on the market to meet remaining effective demand” (Hamid and Salih 2005). The ration was increased with a view to increasing market sales of food aid, thereby reducing market prices and benefiting non-beneficiaries of WFP assistance. The rationale for including sugar in the ration was a combination of the large price differentials in the cost of sugar between Darfur and Khartoum (\$1,500 per tonne in Darfur versus \$928 per tonne in Khartoum) and the belief that Darfurian beneficiaries would be purchasing sugar at this elevated price anyway because of their strong cultural preference for sugar. Other changes to the ration included an increase in iodised salt from 5g to 10g in recognition of the severe levels of malnutrition in the Darfur states, which included iodine deficiency disorders.
- ii. In 2006, the cereal component of the ration was cut back from 500g per person per day (pppd) to 450g, in part a result of difficulties in sustaining the generosity in donor funding. In April 2006 rations had to be cut by half as a pragmatic operational response to a massive drop in donor funding relative to the situation in 2005. Questions were also being raised about the sustainability of the program on the scale of that in Darfur in the longer-term.
- iii. In 2007, the quantity of CSB was reduced to one-third of the 2006 level, in response to concerns about utilization, acceptability, and storage capabilities of CSB. The 2007 levels were intended to cover the needs of only the most vulnerable groups: women and children under five. After the CSB reduction, net kcals in the 2007 Darfur rations dropped to 2,125 kcal per person per day, with a net nutrition value of 1,974 kcal per person per day, accounting for the estimated 10 percent milling losses. Total kcals were again increased in 2008, to 2,156 kcals per day, or approximately 2,000 kcals.

Sources: EMOP documents (EMOP 10048.02, EMOP 10339.0, EMOP 10339.1, EMOP 10339.1 Budget Revision 1, and EMOP 2007, Young 1999)

Almost all WFP programming in Darfur is implemented indirectly through Cooperating Partners (CPs). These programs are governed by Field Level Agreements (FLAs) that specify numbers of people to be assisted, and metric tons of food to be distributed. FLAs are renegotiated every six months. In general, in Darfur, Cooperating Partners work through Food Relief Committees (FRCs) at the community level—whether in IDP camps, mixed IDP/host community settings, or rural, non-displaced settings (although sometimes there are parallel, customary village

institutions in rural non-displaced settings that play the role that FRCs play in camps or other IDP contexts).

Overview of report

This study is essentially guided by two different conceptual frameworks: one is the understanding of governance and political economy of participation; the other is the more pragmatic understanding of how operational decisions are made that affect targeting and related programmatic issues on the ground in complex emergencies. It is at the intersection of these two areas that the real question of analysis in this study lies. The following two sections of this report provide the essential background to that analysis. Section II lays out the more operational issues involved. This includes a discussion of the essential practical questions that any system of targeting must address; a description of the roles of the multiple stakeholders in the process of targeting and distributing food assistance; an examination of the information systems (particularly assessments and monitoring/evaluation) that underpin decision-making; a review of the evidence regarding inclusion and exclusion, the targeting errors that result from inclusion and exclusion, and the post-distribution dynamics that either correct or exacerbate these errors; and a discussion of operational constraints.

Section III is a discussion of participation and governance structures that influence participation. It specifically deals with local and tribal governance, how this has been changed by the conflict, and new forms of governance (including humanitarian actors) in the current context. This section deals in depth with the Food Relief Committees introduced by WFP and its partners in the past several years, including representation, legitimacy, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and the inclusion of women. Section III also reviews the broader concepts of participation, dignity, and protection.

The final section summarizes the main findings of the study, again along the lines described above in terms of operational considerations and participation/governance consideration. The report concludes with several recommendations to WFP. Annexes include notes on research objectives and questions, research methodology, and references cited in this report.

II. Operational Aspects of Targeting in Complex Emergencies

Six essential targeting questions

The targeting of humanitarian assistance is defined as ensuring that assistance reaches people who need it when and where they need it, in an appropriate form, in appropriate quantities, and through effective modalities, and conversely does not flow to people who do not need it (Barrett and Maxwell 2005). However, the most commonly thought-of element of targeting is answering the question of who requires assistance—the assumption usually being that if these groups are included, everyone else should be excluded. Hence much analysis of targeting is focused on the question of “who?”

Of nearly equal importance, in a situation of a broad-scale emergency or of several competing crises, is the question of geographic targeting, or where the targeted groups are physically located, and the way in which needs compare between the groups or areas. So a secondary component implicit in targeting decisions is the question of “where?”

A third element of targeting, overlooked in some contexts is the question of “when?” This includes not only an assessment of the urgency of response in the short term in response to a shock, but also is a consideration of seasonal adjustments to entitlements, and an assessment of how long such assistance will be required (or, at a minimum, when needs should be re-assessed).

All these questions are presumed to be addressed by emergency needs assessment, but in some cases, the humanitarian imperative takes precedence over targeting in an acute emergency. Targeting systems therefore need a built-in mechanism to ensure that such questions are addressed periodically in any operation.

Any targeting system must address the question of how all these factors will be taken into consideration and what kind of targeting will be done (“how?” questions). Generally, there are only a handful of methods for this: administrative targeting, in which criteria are set by assessments and actual targeting done according to indicators that represent these criteria; community-based or participatory targeting, in which the recipient community prioritizes criteria and the members of the community who fit the criteria; or self-targeting, in which it is left to the discretion of the individual whether to participate or not.

Equally critical to the more operational issues raised above are the objectives of the program (“why?” questions). This includes the intended outcomes of the actual provision of the assistance, and also the objectives of the targeting itself. These may vary from the objectives of the overall operation (protecting life, reducing malnutrition, etc.) to the objectives of the targeting (maximizing the usefulness of an inadequate level of resources, maximizing the number of people reached, etc.). And where participatory approaches are implied in the operational plan, the objectives of participation must also be clearly laid out (for example to uphold the rights of local communities, to improve the efficiency of the food aid operation, or to engage the participation of local communities in targeting decisions).

Often overlooked however, is the question about the type of assistance (“what?” questions). Perhaps that is because the type of intervention is not really up for question—either because of organizational mandates or donor preference (food aid is by far the major, if not only, response in most WFP emergency operations). But even if food aid is the response, there are still questions about modality, ration scales, and composition of ration, and changes in these over time.

The analysis of the targeting of humanitarian food assistance in Darfur, and especially the participatory elements of it, follows this general outline of questions.

Stakeholders analysis (program cycle version)

Understanding stakeholders, their interests, and their influences is of paramount importance to understanding targeting procedures (formal and informal). Two different versions of a stakeholder analysis are presented in this report. The program cycle version identifies functional

stakeholders—some of whom have an intentional and deliberate role; others may exert some influence, but it is not deliberate—rather it is because those stakeholders control some element of the process. A second analysis in the following section shows how institutions involved in targeting practices relate to local governance frameworks and systems—in other words, how and where they relate to local power structures or authorities. This illustrates the integration of humanitarian governance with local governance, and also the power of food aid—how it is contested by different groups, and how this is managed by local institutions.

In a complex emergency like Darfur, there are multiple stakeholders in any process involved in providing assistance to affected communities. Table 1 lists the main stakeholders involved with, influencing, or influenced by the targeting and distribution of food assistance in Darfur. The degree of influence of each of these stakeholders varies depending on location and circumstance, but they are listed roughly in order of importance. Each is discussed below. Note that some of these roles are formal and some are more informal.

Figure 1 depicts the relationship among stakeholders and demonstrates the influence of each over some element of the program cycle. Figure 1 only captures the formal, operational roles of the stakeholders as outlined in Table 1.

1. **World Food Programme.** WFP is responsible for many elements of the process, including overall policy on targeting. WFP is the agency primarily responsible for the registration of recipients, although there are many other parties. This particular element of the process has many implications beyond the provision of food assistance. Registration for food aid is not only the means by which other forms of assistance are provided, particularly in the IDP camps, but holding a WFP ration card is also the primary form of identification as an IDP. Field Level Agreements with Cooperating Partners set the program for a period of six months, including decisions about ration composition, ration scale, the timing, and the modality of support. WFP conducts the major needs assessments that determine levels of support, the Darfur Food Security and Nutrition Assessment (DFSNA) which justifies total needs to the donors, as well as occasional market assessments. WFP is also responsible for the logistics of the food aid operation and the pipeline management, which has major implications for targeting.

Table 1. Stakeholders in Targeting Food Aid in Darfur

Primary Stakeholders	Influence targeting practices through	Influenced by
1. WFP	Policy Assessment Registration Field Level Agreements with CPs Logistics/pipeline management Provision of assistance Decisions about ration composition, scale, timing, and modality of support	Feedback and monitoring Complaints Pressure (from donors) to minimize inclusion errors/wastage
2. Cooperating Partners	Assessment Registration Oversight of distribution Non-food interventions	Feedback and monitoring Complaints
3. Traditional leaders (sheikh, <i>omda</i> , <i>sultan</i>)	Initial registration Oversight of FRC Complaints Redistribution	Feedback and monitoring Complaints Accountability to community and higher level agendas/stakeholders
4. Camp leaders (sheikh, camp committees or “sheikh of sheikhs”)	Initial registration Oversight of FRC Complaints Redistribution	Feedback and monitoring Complaints Accountability to community and higher level agendas/stakeholders
5. Food Relief Committees	Management of distribution Continuity of operations Complaints	Complaints Accountability to community and higher level agendas/stakeholders
6. Government of Sudan (Humanitarian Aid Commission)	Policy Registration Coordination	Complaints Pressure from international community
7. IOM/OCHA	Verification Maintenance of data base Coordination/other sectors	Feedback from WFP and CPs Donor expectations?
8. Recipient communities	Voluntary redistribution Sales (Sometimes participatory mechanisms)	Inclusion and exclusion error Timing, ration composition, and scale
9. Local administration	Security Access	Complaints
10. Armed Groups	Security of convoys and distributions Alternative consumers of aid	
11. Bandits	Security of convoys	
12. Cereal traders	Market for food aid	Market sales of food
13. Commercial truckers	Logistics and pipeline	
14. Non-targeted communities	Security Agreements for convoys to pass	
15. Multiple ration card holders	Diversion of food aid away from targeted beneficiaries and to markets or other users	

2. **Cooperating Partners.** CPs are responsible for more local level assessments. They usually play a significant role in the registration of beneficiaries in both camp and community settings. They are responsible for distribution of food, for the training and oversight of Food Relief Committees, and for conducting post-distribution monitoring. Given their multiple-function mandates they are more significant than WFP in non-food interventions.
3. **Traditional leaders.** Traditional leaders in non-displaced communities include the most local leader, the sheikh, as well as the *omda* and *sultan* or *shertai* (higher level traditional authorities—see section below on governance for further explanation). With regard to humanitarian assistance, these leaders are responsible for the initial registration of recipients and for the oversight of FRC. They often play a role in handling complaints. Under some circumstances, they may be responsible for significant redistribution of assistance after the WFP/CP-managed distribution. This can be for the purposes of correcting targeting errors on the part of the formal distribution—ensuring that community members who were inadvertently left off food aid roles receive at least some amount of assistance. However, it can also be for the purpose of diverting assistance away from recipients either towards traders or other consumers.
4. **Camp leaders.** Camp leaders include *sheikhs*, camp “executive committees,” or committees appointed by the “sheikh of sheikhs.” Their roles with regard to targeting and humanitarian assistance are similar to traditional leaders in non-camp settings, but the difference is that many of their other traditional roles are significantly curtailed in camp settings—meaning that supervision and control of assistance, in addition to security, is one of their main current roles. Much has been noted about the emergence of a different kind of leader in the IDP camps—often younger, more literate and numerate, and one who is better able to negotiate between the IDP community and the humanitarian agencies (Barsa 2008). This does not necessarily imply shared values with the agencies, however (see following section on governance).
5. **Food Relief Committees.** FRCs were introduced in Darfur operations beginning in about 2006/2007. Given the nature of the institution, and their similarity to the institutions that sometimes play a significant role in facilitating community participation in targeting and distribution of food aid, they are described here in some detail. However, it should be noted at the beginning that, although the rhetoric of “participation” pervades some of the discussion of FRCs, the facilitation of community-based processes is not formally listed on any of the FRC terms of reference that the team was able to review; in interviews, few FRC members described their task as one of community facilitation. The main role of the FRCs, particularly in the IDP camps, is to help with the management of the distribution. This includes informing the recipients about the time and dates of distribution and mobilizing group leaders in their area group distributions; taxing recipients to pay porters; receiving food, accounting for it, and providing for the security of food from the time it arrives until it is distributed; crowd control; and in some cases, serving as a complaints mechanism. However, the main stated purpose for FRCs is to ensure continuity of operations in the event that the security situation

deteriorates to the point that even CP staff cannot make it to distribution points (WFP/World Vision 2007).⁷

6. **Government of Sudan—Humanitarian Aid Commission.** HAC is the main office involved in the administration of humanitarian assistance from the Government of Sudan. Formally, its tasks involve receiving and verifying the original lists of recipients from displaced groups, ensuring that WFP registers such groups and that the registration list is verified by IOM. It is also responsible for overall GOS policy on humanitarian assistance. It is widely believed to have a security function as well as a humanitarian function.
7. **IOM/OCHA.** IOM is responsible for verification of recipient lists in IDP camps and mixed IDP/host community settings. It maintains a database on displacement that should be able to track IDPs if they move from one camp or location to another. For much of this year, IOM has not been able to do on-the-ground verification, due to a dispute with HAC, and hence is limited to cross-checking new registrations against its existing data-base. OCHA is responsible for overall coordination of humanitarian response.
8. **Recipient communities.** Recipient communities are of course the intended beneficiaries or clients of the targeting system and are thus influenced by the targeting process, but they are also exerting influence over it through the FRC or through more direct means if they feel excluded. Recipient communities are affected by the timing of assistance, by ration composition and scale, and obviously by targeting error—both inclusion and exclusion. As is reiterated throughout this report, there are limited mechanisms for community participation in targeting food assistance in Darfur. Sometimes community institutions have a formal input into the question of who is targeted (see Box 3 on Um Labanaya), but more frequently the influence of the recipients on targeting is informal, and in the form of post-distribution dynamics that alters who actually ends up consuming the food—either through voluntary contributions to other members of the community who were excluded or did not receive adequate food or other consumers, or through sales of food to merchants (which extends the impact of food aid through the market). Beneficiaries are heterogeneous, representing a diverse range of experiences of the conflict and political affiliations.
9. **Local administration.** Local councils are usually not directly involved in food aid management, but may be responsible for security, particularly in communities with IDP camps or mixed IDP/host settings.
10. **Armed rebel groups.** Armed groups have an indirect influence on targeting in that some areas may not be accessible, depending on the actions and policies of such groups. As such, these stakeholders primarily play a constraining role on targeting. But as the *de facto* local authorities in territories they control, they may also play facilitating roles as well. Armed groups are also believed to be the recipients of some food aid diverted from camps or recipient communities.

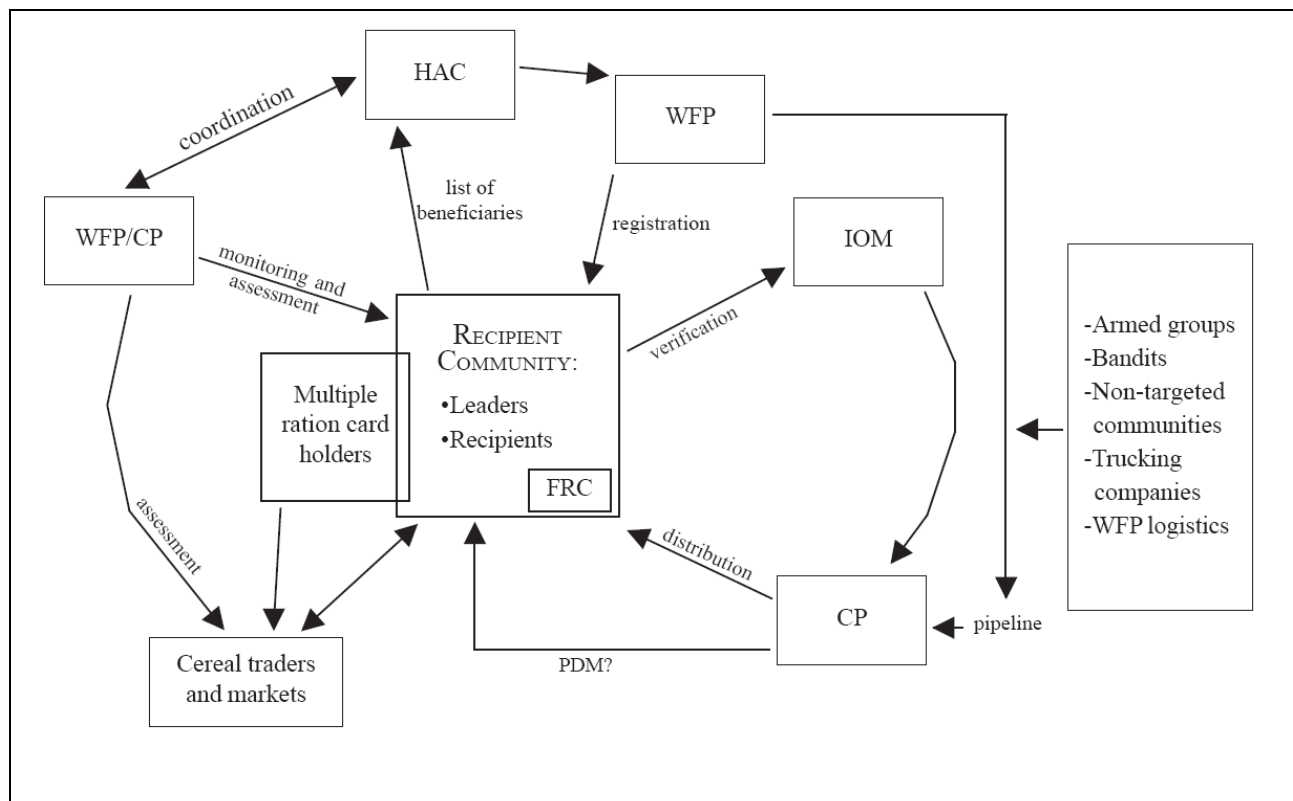
7 It is worth noting that the “objective” of the FRC in this memorandum is “community empowerment and active participation during food distribution” but the actual functions are those listed above, most of which simply help in the running of the distribution or address the continuity of operations issue. Targeting, much less facilitating community involvement in targeting is not addressed.

11. **Armed bandits.** Lawlessness and associated armed banditry may make access difficult or impossible. Little is known about these groups, membership of which is likely to be fluid and possibly linked to rebel groups or militia activity and securing a share of the spoils of war. Unlike political groups, they rarely if ever play a facilitating role. (Armed bandits have an indirect influence on targeting in that their presence may make access difficult or impossible. Unlike rebel groups, they rarely if ever play a facilitating role.) In Darfur currently, banditry has led to a slowdown in the pipeline that has forced WFP to cut rations—initially to half rations, but as of October 2008 about 70–75 percent of the intended ration is being met by most distributions.
12. **Cereal and other traders.** Cereal traders influence targeting by providing a demand and a commercial outlet for food aid. This enables individual recipients to monetize some portion of their allocation to pay for other needed expenditures, but it also provides a ready “pull factor” for the diversion of assistance from intended recipients. A recent study (Buchanan-Smith and Fadul 2008) notes that cereal markets in Darfur have been kept afloat by food aid and would have collapsed otherwise.
13. **Commercial truckers.** Given the high number of attacks on convoys carrying humanitarian assistance, commercial truckers have begun refusing to go to certain places or refusing to go unless given adequate security escorts.
14. **Non-beneficiary communities.** Communities that were not targeted for food assistance on the basis of a needs assessment, but through which convoys have to travel or that are located near targeted communities, often demand some amount of food for themselves. This is sometimes provided, both to prevent convoys passing through their territory from being attacked, or to prevent members of these communities from attacking neighboring communities that may be recipients. An example applies particularly to Arab pastoralist groups (because in 2004 the distribution prioritized IDPs in urban or camp settings). As early as 2004 these groups petitioned to be included in the distribution although they were generally perceived by the international community as less vulnerable because they frequently had livestock and were not thought to be displaced (in fact they were often perceived as responsible for the forced displacement and violence). Many of those living in proximity of urban areas were registered during the re-registration exercises of 2005 when rural communities were included as well as IDPs. But after nearly eighteen months of being excluded from distributions these groups perceived that the food distribution program was not impartial (Young and Osman 2008). Some non-targeted communities rely on the market for their food purchases (WFP DFSNA 2007) and are therefore influenced by market prices, which in turn are affected by the food aid program
15. **Multiple ration card-holders.** Some individuals hold multiple ration cards and thus receive considerably more food than that to which they are entitled. This influences targeting in two ways. First, it means that some of the food is channeled away from the intended recipients—either to traders or other consumers. In other words, it leads to both inclusion and exclusion errors. It is widely believed that the holders of multiple ration cards are often related to camp leaders, and that some of the food so diverted is actually used to redress exclusion errors in targeting within the camps, but the greater portion of it is diverted to other purposes.

However, little direct evidence of this system was found during the field work. Indirect evidence includes the amount of food in the market place (which has declined since the ration cuts), the numbers of unoccupied *tukuls* in camps that have names of people assigned to them, and the “negotiations” over the number of recipients in any new episode of displacement.

Figure 1 depicts the formal operational roles and relationships among these stakeholders. Boxes in Figure 1 represent stakeholders; arrows are labeled to represent the tasks of each in regard to others. The next section (on governance) discusses many of these stakeholders from a more political perspective.

Figure 1: Operational Stakeholder Map—Food Aid Targeting and Distribution in Darfur



Information systems and their impact on targeting

Any Emergency Operation needs information, and the information system is the primary source of data for targeting purposes. This sub-section briefly reviews the information system and its components in Darfur. An excerpt from the 2008 EMOP document describes the way in which the information system is intended to work. “*Consistency in programme approaches throughout its operations is ensured through the harmonization of methodologies, standards, and tools.*”

Rolling assessments and issue-based studies such as the EFSNAs, the Darfur evaluation and other studies are the main tools to improve response design and planning” (WFP 2008).

Assessment

A Food Security Information System (FSIS) is in the process of being put in place, which will address issues of monitoring and geographic targeting. This system will include non-targeted households to improve overall food security monitoring. In the meantime, however, there are two main sources of information for program planning purposes: the Darfur Food Security and Nutrition Assessment (DFSNA, later called the DFSLA with a focus on livelihoods—for the purpose of this report, the term DFSNA is used), and more localized needs assessments conducted on a demand-basis in response to changes in local situations (the DFSNA has been conducted on an annual basis every year since 2005). The DFSNA includes nutritional assessment, and other one-off nutrition surveys provide important additional information. The DFSNA is usually done in August-September, but was done significantly later in 2008. The DFSNA is generally more for the purpose of assessing overall need, and justifying the figure of overall need to donors, than it is for assisting in targeting. In the past, the DFSNA could be disaggregated to the state level (i.e., results were statistically valid for comparison between different states in Darfur) but that is not the case with the 2008 DFSNA. The sampling frame for the DFSNA is built on the previous year’s distribution lists—no alternative population-based sampling frame is available and security considerations have made it impossible to develop an alternative sampling frame. Hence there is a built-in mechanism that tends to keep the assessment focused on the same population groups, and some groups and geographic areas are not included.

More localized assessments provide information for geographic or household targeting. However, distribution lists were set by the 2005 registration, and have been altered only marginally since, so in many ways, localized assessments are required only when something significantly changes—either when there is fresh fighting and new displacement, or crop failure, pest infestations, etc. Most information about geographic targeting is set by what happened the previous year.

Conducting accurate local assessments is extremely difficult, in that any attempt to gather information about needs or livelihood options is seen by the targeted community as the first step in imposing ration cuts on the recipient population (see Section III). This is reported not only by WFP and its Cooperating Partners, but also by non-food agencies. For this reason, there is little community participation in assessment.

Some CPs are attempting different approaches to assessment, with the intent of improving targeting not only with regard to the “who?” and “where?” questions, but particularly the “what?” question. This approach involves some amount of engagement with community leaders in order to secure participation of the whole community. The discussion is often preceded with some recognition of people’s right to assistance, but then trying to identify what the best form of assistance is. If this message can be gotten across, there is less resistance to the notion of conducting an assessment—however it puts a greater onus on the CP to come up with an appropriate response to non-food aid needs, which may be more difficult to fund, and may

involve significantly less overhead for operations. It does, however, link assessment more to livelihoods and the issue of “early recovery.” The record is unclear how successful this has been in triggering successful “recovery” intervention strategies.

A Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment (CFSVA) was conducted in the whole of Sudan, Darfur included, in 2006. However, while nationally representative, this information is generally less detailed than the information from the DFSNA.

In short, while assessments provide important information about food insecurity and livelihoods under some circumstances in Darfur, generally speaking conducting assessments is difficult, and their results are generally not applied to targeting questions beyond geographic targeting. Even in circumstances where there is an assessment in response to new displacement (such as Kass in 2008), the actual process of registering new recipients of food aid involves negotiation with sheikhs as well as assessing needs. And often “assessment” means finding out what happened in the area from which people were displaced, not assessing their food security status or livelihood options.

Monitoring and evaluation

The main monitoring and evaluation system associated with food distribution in Darfur consists of food basket monitoring (FBM) and post distribution monitoring (PDM). FBM is conducted at distribution sites by WFP and CP staff, and is purely a means of ensuring that the distribution staff is providing the actual rations specified—it is not a targeting mechanism at all. PDM is conducted in camps on a monthly basis by WFP and CP staff; elsewhere it is done less regularly, and in some places not at all. PDM could help with targeting questions if sampling was done on the entire population of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, but in the case of Darfur, PDM is conducted only with the population specified by the distribution lists, i.e., it is a check on errors of inclusion and end-usage only—it can’t detect errors of exclusion. And as noted below, food aid is so highly politicized that many WFP and CP staff don’t consider PDM results very valid information. A major evaluation of the Darfur operation was conducted in 2006 (Cosgrave et al. 2006). It notes that “monitoring was very weak on aspects other than logistics and denied managers the information to take steps to ensure the maximum effectiveness of the programme.” The report went on to note that the annual DFSNA was not an appropriate substitute for regular monitoring. However, it notes that monitoring was improving by the time of the evaluation.

Targeting: inclusion, exclusion, and timing

There are really three main targeted groups: IDPs, mixed IDP/host groups, and rural non-displaced groups (there are also a few groups that are targeted for other reasons—see below). In theory, all IDPs are targeted for food assistance, without regard to status (other than being displaced). Some rural non-displaced communities are targeted on the basis of some assessment of their food security status. Hence, one of the biggest sources of targeting error—both inclusion and exclusion—is the determination of IDP status. There is no mechanism other than WFP targeting that makes an independent assessment of displacement status. In 2006, 3.7 million people (out of an estimated population of 6 million in the region) in Darfur were affected by conflict and were receiving some form of assistance. Two million were living in camps for

displaced people and were reliant on food aid. WFP and its partners were able to reach nearly three million people in Darfur during the peak of the hungry season (WFP EMOP 2007). With a population of this magnitude, and given the highly politicized nature of the determination of who is displaced, it is not surprising that there is some error.

The DFSNA report provides one calculation of targeting error. In 2005, the calculated inclusion error for IDP households in camps (those households which had received aid but were judged by their assets and income to be able to afford an adequate diet from their own means) was calculated at 12.9 percent. Exclusion error (households that met the criteria but who had not received aid) was calculated to be 4.9 percent. Considering the realities of targeting and distribution in camp settings, these percentages were judged to be acceptable, as it would be difficult to attempt to exclude only 13 percent of IDP households, particularly given the fact that these households are likely to be the more powerful members of the camp. Inclusion errors were slightly higher for IDPs in host communities (15.2 percent) and resident households (16.3 percent); the exclusion error was highest for IDPs in communities (6 percent) and lowest for residents (3.6 percent).

Overall estimates of exclusion error in 2007 were 28 percent, calculated by the addition of the severely and moderately food insecure households who did not receive aid during July and August, and the food secure households who did not receive aid but who did use risky coping strategies during the same two months (2007 DFSNA). Inclusion error was estimated at 22 percent, composed of the food secure households who received aid in July and August but who otherwise could have used their own resources to consume an appropriate diet.

A common source of exclusion error is that households now often have more members than their ration cards noted. The last major registration took place in 2005. Since then, households have grown, either through the birth of more children or through absorbing other people who had not been present during the 2005 registration. At the same, there is no accurate registers of deaths, and households have an incentive to report the addition of members, but not to report the loss of members.

Also, it should be noted that existing calculations of targeting error were based on the sampling frame of the DFSNA, which in turn was based on the registration lists. Thus these figures do not represent an attempt to calculate total exclusion error, because some people were left out of the registration in 2005. Correcting for this would be a nearly impossible task for an assessment, since it would involve a judgment, among those not on the food aid role, of who is and is not a genuine IDP—a judgment that is so highly politicized that no effort since the registration of 2005 has attempted to address it, except on an occasional, case-by-case basis, requiring intensive interviewing and factual cross-checking. Nevertheless, everyone recognizes that there is evidence of targeting error: from the many people who arrive at distributions with no ration card and plead for some amount of assistance, to large areas of camps with long-abandoned *tukuls* for whom there are still residents listed on the registration sheets. While the 2005 registration was done mostly by head count exercises, there is little reason to believe that head counts could be done in 2008—for both political and logistical reasons.

There were clearly attempts to include people in the registration who weren't IDPs, and to manipulate the count so that registration lists would be inflated. The estimates of inclusion and

exclusion error may be somewhat off-setting figures, but there is no way in the current environment to judge for certain whether some of the inclusion error helps to off-set some of the exclusion (see next sub-section). Sheikhs and FRCs claim to redistribute some amount of food to excluded members of their communities, and indeed many officials presume that “managing” the inclusion and exclusion error of the humanitarian agencies is one way that emerging camp leaders stake their claim to legitimacy. But relatively little evidence was found from people who claimed to be excluded from distributions that they were receiving help from sheikhs—particularly sheikhs who might be manipulating the system to generate a surplus from which to assist people. People who claimed to be excluded said that in the past they had received some assistance from their relatives or others who received food aid, but that in the current context of ration cuts few people were willing to help them.

In limited situations it was clear that the involvement of the community could help to determine either which members of a group or community fit pre-established criteria for targeting or could help to determine the criteria. But in the context of displacement, the window of opportunity for this may be quite short-lived. In rural, non-displaced situations, involving the community could work fairly well (see Box 2).

There is little evidence to suggest that the timing of assistance, and whether late delivery is a cause of exclusion, is a major concern. The time required between confirmation of a contribution and the availability of food for beneficiaries can be up to six months, thereby requiring that EMOP contributions begin in January and remain constant throughout the year. Surface transport and dry-season pre-positioning are only possible between January and May, creating an additional urgency to the need for timely donations if WFP is to reach the targeted populations. Transport costs are significantly increased if resources are not available in the first half of the year, as air transport—as opposed to overland transport—becomes a necessity (WFP EMOP 2007). Data on total assessed need compared to actual distribution on a monthly basis was not available. However, with the exception of the current ration cuts—which are the result of security constraints, not poor logistical coordination or donor shortfalls—there were few gaps noted between requirements and actual distribution. Hence the issue of timing of food distributions (the “when?” question) seems to be much less a concern in Darfur than it is in Southern Sudan (see Maxwell and Burns, 2008). This is mostly because of a highly successful logistical operation and good donor support that managed for the most part to keep the pipeline full and to preposition substantial amounts of food before the rainy season (Young et al. 2006, Cosgrave et al. 2006).

Post-distribution dynamics

In the absence of good data from post-distribution monitoring, clear conclusions on the extent of the sharing of food aid are difficult to draw. Virtually all respondents noted that prior to the ration cuts in 2008, some of the excluded households in IDP camps have been able to meet some proportion of their needs through the sharing of food, but that since the ration cuts, this practice had declined significantly, and was restricted mostly to sharing cooked food (i.e., one meal at a time). When asked to quantify the amount of sharing through proportional piling or some other graphic illustration, it proved for the most part to be quite minimal—but this is in the context of a

ration cut of roughly one third (i.e., most recipients were getting about 70 percent of a full ration).

Some evidence was found of sheikhs or FRCs requiring some kind of “contribution” from individual or household entitlements to a common resource pool to help people who had been excluded from the registration, or who had recently arrived, but this was mostly described as voluntary. FRCs mostly denied any kind of “taxation” like this, but did say that they encouraged voluntary assistance on the part of recipients to non-recipients. This is discussed at greater length in the following section.

When asked a more hypothetical question—not about actual sharing, but about the issue of who the recipients of food aid should be—the answer was, nearly universally, “everyone,” regardless of current food security status. This is particularly true in IDP camps, but also to a degree even among rural, non-displaced populations. Hence the same general view that external assistance should not be subject to targeting was found to be as strongly held in Darfur as it was in Southern Sudan (Maxwell and Burns 2008). There seemed to be a relatively lower level of post-distribution sharing under the current circumstances. It is important to note, however, that while post-distribution monitoring is more institutionalized in Darfur than it was in Southern Sudan earlier in the year, it is much more difficult to observe post-distribution dynamics in Darfur than in the South, and many CP and WFP staff have doubts about the validity or usefulness of some of the PDM data in Darfur.

Community involvement in targeting

Generally, there is little involvement of the recipient communities in the assessment of food security, in the setting of criteria for who should be targeted, or in checking whether those who actually receive food assistance meet the criteria delineated by HAC, WFP, and its partners. The question of participation is investigated in much greater detail in the following section. One example was found of a community that had taken the issue of targeting more seriously, and had used existing community mechanisms to ensure that the food assistance was both targeted to those who needed it the most, while at the same time ensuring a measure of fairness across the community. This community is hardly representative of all of Darfur, but the case study is nevertheless narrated in Box 3.

Box 3. Um Labanaya: A case study of community involvement in targeting

Um Labanaya is a cluster of small hamlets fifteen kilometers south of Ed Daein. The community consists of seven different tribes. The village has never been attacked, and although there have been some IDPs from other places who came to settle with relatives in the community, no one has been displaced from Um Labanaya. The 2007 harvest was poor due to erratic rains and infestations of pests, so a combined FAO/WFP team targeted Um Labanaya for a seeds intervention that included a Food for Seed Protection component—seasonal food aid support aimed at ensuring that seeds were planted instead of being consumed or sold. Um Labanaya had never received any kind of food assistance in the past. The seeds intervention was intended to be targeted at the most vulnerable, and the food is intended for the people who receive seed.

Unlike other villagers where food distributions have taken place, there is not a Food Relief Committee in

Um Labanaya. Instead there is a pre-existing “salvation committee” that had been in place long before the humanitarian intervention. This committee first informed HAC about the food security situation in the villages, and agreed to work with the humanitarian agencies. The committee is linked to the village sheikh, but works independently. It is made up of one member for each hamlet in the community—ten members in all. While the sheikh is responsible for tax collection, security, and resolving disputes, the salvation committee is only concerned with the welfare of the community.

By their count, there are 347 households in the community. The seed packages were intended to be distributed to 161 households. These were determined by the committee on the basis of several criteria: only households that had no seed, no livestock, and little or no education were eligible, but the household had to have physically able-bodied members to be able to do the farming. The food however, presented a different issue. If the food were targeted to the same households, it would in fact miss the most vulnerable households in the community, and probably cause problems. Although the WFP Cooperating Partner refused to sanction the idea, noting that the food was supposed to go to the households that received the seed distribution, the salvation committee decided to allocate both the seed and the food to the neediest households, as determined by a community meeting. There were three distributions of food during the agricultural season in 2008 (July, August, and September—the latter was a combined distribution for two months of September and October).

Meetings were held in each hamlet, and the community in each hamlet targeted the households to receive assistance. There was no quota—but in each hamlet the community, facilitated by the committee, identified the most vulnerable households. The total for the whole village came to 222 for the first two distributions, and nearly every household in the community received food during the last distribution—322 households or all but the most well to do. Thus some of the originally selected households did end up receiving food, but the food aid was targeted according to food insecurity, not according to who got seeds.

The actual amount of food received was calculated based on the household size and the total amount of food available for distribution. It came to about one *malwa*—about three kilograms—of grain per person in a household. So each household received assistance according to the number of people in the household. The distribution took place in front of the community in each hamlet so everyone could see that it was fair. The chairman of the salvation committee had the distribution lists in his briefcase when the research team visited. The committee insisted that had they decided on their own how to distribute the food, the community would have rejected their decision and it would have caused a dispute. This more transparent way of allocating the resources was critical to maintaining a consensus in a multi-ethnic village to keep the peace.

Recipients reported being satisfied with the process, and with the allocation of food they received. It should be noted that women were not on the salvation committee, and women did not participate in the community meetings. They were informed by the committee which households had been selected by the (all-male) community meeting, and were informed of their entitlement at the time the distribution took place. Women recipients all reported the same story about their allocation, the amount received per household member, and that they were generally happy with the process. They reported that after the first two distributions, there was some sharing of the food with households not included in the distribution, but it was mainly in the form of cooked food—i.e., shared consumption—rather than simply giving people grain. The food provided lasted less than two weeks after the distribution or, with three distributions, less than six weeks total during the 2008 growing season. Nevertheless, people were happy to have received the assistance. Nutritionally it provides only enough for about six to eight days depending on other sources of food. This suggests that community involvement in targeting might work best when the food aid is supplemented by other food sources.

Ironically, the salvation committee quarreled with the WFP Cooperating Partner about targeting this way. The CP insisted that they had to select only 161 households to receive the entire package. Even when the committee explained their rationale, the CP refused, and in fact in the end, the CP relented only if the committee agreed to provide a report that said 161 households had been targeted (the research team had already visited the CP and didn't have time to cross-check with the CP for their side of the story). Despite being in a conflict area and despite being a multi-ethnic village, many elements of this story come close to describing the classic set of conditions for community-based targeting. No one had been displaced from the village, traditional leadership was still intact. Indeed, maintaining community consensus among different tribes was one of the objectives of the leadership; this no doubt enabled the kinds of targeting practices that the committee thought up. And perhaps most critically, the cause of the food insecurity was crop failure due to poor rainfall and pests. Nevertheless this case study has important elements to it in terms of understanding the potential and scope for community based targeting in Darfur.

Operational constraints

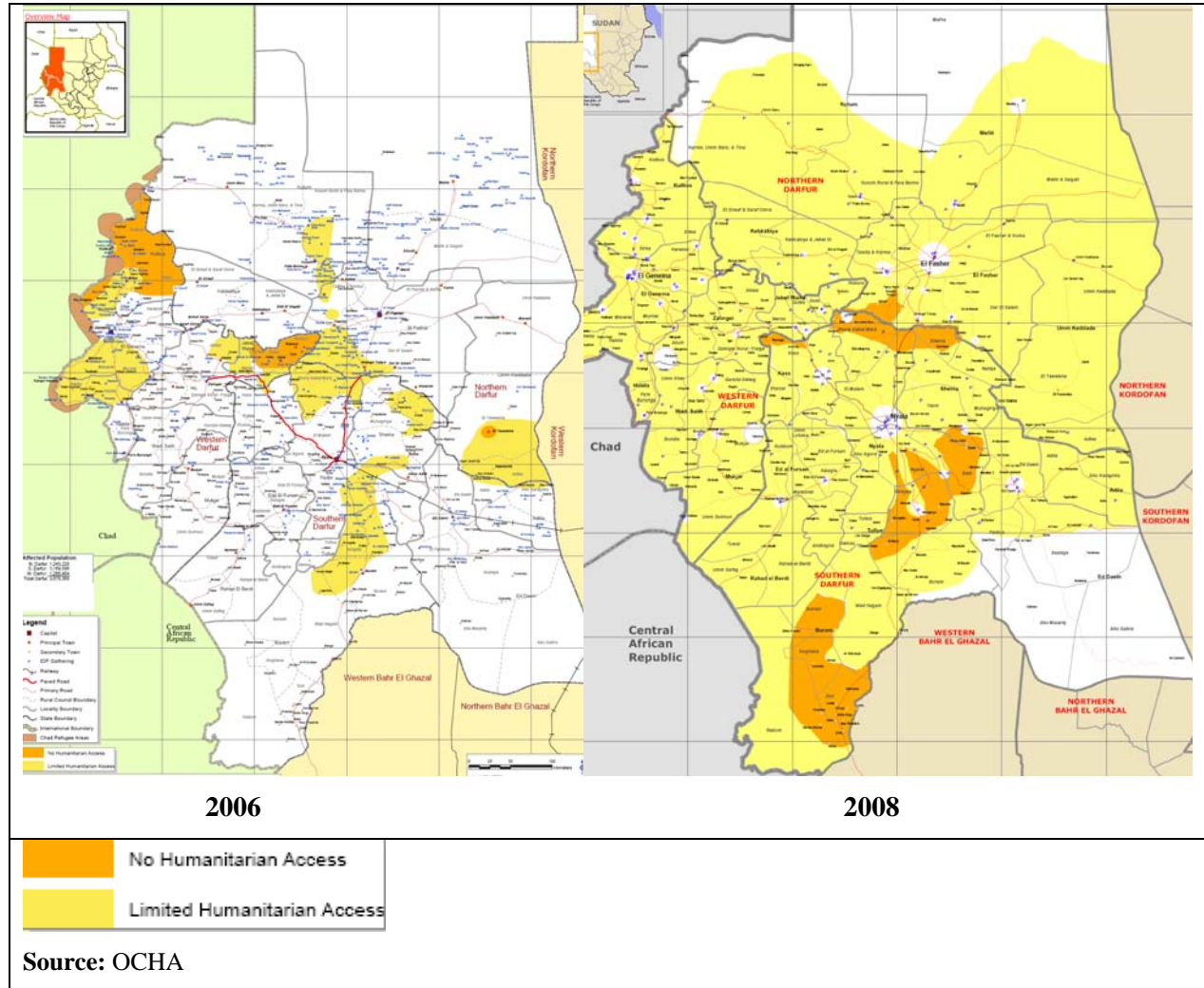
WFP faces a number of operational constraints in Darfur, which in turn affect targeting and the extent to which communities have a say in targeting. These include geographic access, security, limited program options, and resource diversion.

1. **Geographic access.** Operations in Darfur are complicated by the quantities of assistance required, as well as the size of the geographical area to be reached, and distance from landing ports (Port Sudan). These characteristics make it difficult to reach the most remote areas, and to do so on a timely basis, i.e., to move commodities to their final distribution points before the roads become impassable. While the demand for local trucking capacity has increased, there is inadequate availability in the areas where final distribution points are located. For Darfur, WFP maintains 190 trucks and five support vehicles (WFP EMOP 2007) but most local delivery is out-sourced to local contractors (Young et al. 2006). Logistics are an ongoing challenge in the region, and emergency road repairs are frequently necessary. There are few paved or all-weather roads in Darfur.
2. **Security.** Although the Darfur Peace Agreement was signed in 2006, only one rebel faction was included, and the security situation in Darfur has not improved. During the second half of 2006, security deteriorated, as armed groups fractured and new alliances formed and changed wherever a "power vacuum" was created. The situation remained unpredictable through 2007. Though not at the levels of 2003–2004, on-going insecurity led to more displacement and prevented WFP from reaching identified beneficiaries, with an average of 250,000 targeted individuals cut off from assistance each month of 2006, and 103,500 each month of 2007. At the same time, security deteriorated for WFP. Although it is difficult to get accurate data, the security situation for the humanitarian agencies and the security situation for the war-affected or displaced population of Darfur are rather different. After the humanitarian ceasefire agreement was signed by the government and the parties in April 2004 security for humanitarian operations was not a major constraint, at least for the remainder of that year. While the civilian population still faces significant security risks, the level of conflict and new displacement has declined as compared to the period of 2003 to early 2004 which was the height of the Government's counterinsurgency operations. In the

first nine months of 2007, 98 humanitarian vehicles were hijacked, 61 convoys ambushed, 100 humanitarian staff kidnapped, 66 assaulted, and five killed (WFP DFSNA 2007). The increasing conflict and the resulting civilian casualties and attacks on humanitarian actors contributed to a delay in the WFP-planned shift into a PRRO in 2007. Instability and insecurity has worsened in the Darfur states, with no visible political solution on the horizon. The worsening humanitarian access situation due to security threats to WFP and other agencies is graphically depicted in Figure 2.

This insecurity has resulted in the current ration cuts which are made necessary not by overall declines in donor support for the EMOP, but because of logistical constraints inside Darfur due to the need for heightened security for vehicle convoys, and a decreased number of transporters willing to run the risks of delivery inside Darfur. It is now estimated that there are over twenty different rebel groups operating—most of which are off-shoots of either the SLA or the JEM. The UMAMID force—intended to provide civilian protection as well as protection for the humanitarian operation—has never been sufficiently strong to be able to do either.

Figure 2. Humanitarian Access in 2006 and 2008



3. Limited program options. Given these factors, WFP faces a severely restricted set of options for programming in Darfur, and limited options for addressing the expectations about continuing assistance. These options include altering the ration scale and composition, altering the seasonal levels of support, or changing intervention modality. These are all targeting variables, but they omit the “who?” question because of the extreme difficulty of changing the registration lists.

4. Resource diversion. While it is extremely difficult to get estimates on the levels of food assistance that are diverted to uses other than consumption by food-insecure or conflict-affected populations, most respondents note that some amount of food is diverted. Even monitoring major markets for the volume of food aid changing hands is not necessarily an accurate measure. At times in the past, extra food has been provided in an attempt to defray

the costs of milling, etc. And in addition, some of the diversion is internal and may be utilized by FRCs or sheikhs in part to address actual targeting (exclusion) errors. But stories abound of “ghost IDPs”; clear evidence was seen of whole areas in IDP camps in which no one was living, but “households” (empty *tukuls*) were registered for distribution. Many CPs report that while new movement into an area is always reported to HAC, movement out of an area is rarely reported, meaning that people’s names may still be on distribution lists long after they have gone. And food can clearly be seen being taken out of camps after distributions (whether this is diversion, or only signifying the fact that some IDPs stay with their kin outside of camps, can only be verified on a case-by-case basis—there is no comprehensive survey of this phenomenon).

Discussion: information, analysis, and targeting

In brief, there is no inter-household targeting in IDP camps, although there is some evidence of both inclusion and exclusion error. There is some targeting in non-camp settings, particularly rural, non-displaced settings. In very few of the locations visited by the study team was there any evidence found of the involvement of the community in assessment, targeting or monitoring. Food Relief Committees (discussed in much greater detail in the next section) are in place, but are primarily about assisting in distribution and in continuity of operations, not targeting or representing the “voice” of a recipient community. The objectives targeting or the rationale for community involvement in targeting are not clear to either staff or communities themselves. To explore these issues further, the next section is an analysis of local governance and participation.

III. Governance and Participation

Evaluations and reviews show that CBTD functions best in stable situations with good local governance traditions and no displacement, where communities are not fractured along ethnic or other lines (Jaspars and Shoham 1999). While displacement and tribal conflict have characterized the Darfur conflict, the region has benefited from a long-standing and well-established system of local governance. To better understand how local participation in food distribution and targeting can be enhanced, it is important to understand local governance and implications of the recent conflict. Governance reflects the local political and social institutions and their responsiveness and accountability, for example how well they uphold the law and defend people’s basic rights and participation. Some have described it as “the way in which societies develop rules, processes, and behaviors necessary for their survival and their accomplishments” (Anonymous 2006). Governance is poor or lacking where the local political and social institutions are unresponsive to their constituencies, lack accountability, and fail to uphold the law and defend people’s basic rights.

In the past thirty years, local governance in the Darfur region has been undermined and politicized as a result of government legislation and economic and political marginalization of the region generally. It has also been directly affected by the past five years of conflict and international interventions. The next section provides a background on local governance in the Darfur region, and how it has changed as a result of the conflict. This provides an important background for better understanding the role and functioning of the Food Relief Committees, in

terms of their legitimacy and authority, their representativeness, their accountability and transparency, and finally their responsiveness to problems or complaints.

Background on local governance in the Darfur region

In the Darfur region there are two parallel and often overlapping systems of local governance in operation. These include the national state administration based on national, regional, and local level government civil and political structures and the local traditional tribal administrative systems that have evolved over the past two hundred years. The former has undermined and weakened the latter in recent decades, leading to increasing localized conflict associated with tribal affiliation and increasing polarization between educated Sudanese and local tribal leaders.

The traditional tribe-based systems originate in the feudal systems of the Fur Sultanate and have subsequently been shaped and institutionalized by consecutive governments, including the colonial administration from 1916 to 1956, and national governments thereafter. In the past they represented a powerful indigenous system of local governance and customary law. Under the colonial administration, the British maintained and further institutionalized the tribal systems of the Fur and Masalit sultanates in order to provide a practical and relatively cheap form of local administration and control. Essentially their approach was to leave local populations free to manage their own affairs through their own local leaders, though under the guidance of the British and subject to the laws and policy of the colonial administration. They were in charge of maintaining law and order, mobilizing communities and organizing labor, collecting local taxes, allocating land for agriculture and grazing (under the *hakura* system) and settling related conflicts, and presiding over tribal local courts (*judiyya*). Thus tribal leaders were incorporated into the structure of government.

Under national government, the power and authority of the traditional tribal administration was subsequently challenged by the 1951 and 1961 Local Government Act which paved the way for a greater role for local councils. However the tribal authorities continued to wield considerable administrative responsibilities and power. The 1971 Peoples Local Government Act radically changed this as it essentially abolished the powers of the traditional leaders, by transferring them to the provincial governments and the newly elected local councils established by the act. Their role was essentially changed from a judicial one to a purely administrative one, with responsibilities for land administration being maintained.

The initial idea behind the imposition of the state administrative system was to weaken the traditional administration. However as the government lacked capacity to impose a new system at the village level it had to continue relying on the lowest level of traditional administration—the sheikhs. This meant that administrative officers had to coordinate their work with the second level of tribal administration—the *pmdas* and *furshas*—in order to be able to reach the sheikhs. Thus the upper levels of the traditional administration lost part of their power, while the power of the lower levels was maintained or even increased.

An anomaly in this system was the nomadic camel-herding groups, collectively known as the Northern Rizaygat, who had no officially allocated homeland or *dar*. Their livelihood systems as camel herding pastoralists meant their pastoralist domain and livestock migration routes spanned many hundreds of kilometers of Darfur from the arid edges of the Sahara in the north to the

southern fertile savanna zone of the south. Under the colonial administration, the various sub-branches of the Southern Rizaygat (cattle herders of South Darfur) had been united under one tribal administration with headquarters in Ed Daein in South Darfur, and each sub-branch was awarded their own respective homeland or *dar*. In contrast, the various sub-branches of the Northern Rizaygat were small and efforts by the British to unite them under one nazirate failed. Under national government rule and democratic systems, the control of a *dar* became linked with political representation (i.e., the tribe that controlled the *dar* was the majority group within the local council area, and hence could control who they would return to the national assembly). This politicization of the tribal administration is one of the roots of the current crisis and cause of tensions between groups (Young et al. 2005).

The reorganization and creation of multiple administrative units triggered tribal conflicts on a wide scale in Darfur, as a locality belonging to one tribe could be controlled by another. The government continues to the current day to reorganize and upgrade different administrative units, for example in Kebkabiya locality, and in Um Dokhun where administrative units have been upgraded to become localities with their own commissioners. This has implications for the political importance and representation of these areas, as commissioners obviously have greater political authority than an administrative officer (see Box 4).

A further criticism of the traditional tribal administration was that it created an unhealthy dichotomy between educated Sudanese and tribal leaders, with the latter perceiving the former as a potential threat to their own power and prestige.

In 1986 the Native Administration Act reinstated many of their powers and returned many of the old responsibilities to the native authorities, but it failed to fully define their new relationship with the elected local councils. This situation was further confused by the adoption of a federal system of government in 1992, which decentralized certain legislative powers to the state governments. This created a body of federal law on the one hand, and a parallel body of customary law on the other; thus the tribal administration exercises its powers on both a *de jure* and *de facto* basis.

Box 4. The Tiers and Titles of Local Administration

There are three layers of government administration including the governor (*wali*) at the Darfur state level (*wilaya*), the commissioners (*mu'tamid*) at the level of the locality (*mahalliyya*), and administrative officer (*dabit idari*) of the administrative units (*wahda idariya*).

The tiers and titles of the tribal administration are sometimes confusing as they differ between tribes, and new titles have been introduced in the 1990s. For example in 1995, in West Darfur, the government introduced a new layer and title of *emir* (prince) as the senior leaders of Arab groups in West Darfur. This was perceived as a direct threat or undermining the Masalit who ultimately control the Masalit Sultanate within which these *emir* fall and an extremely serious tribal conflict followed which became a national emergency. The different layers of the tribal administration for some of the larger tribes are shown below. These positions are all held by men, and while it is possible for there to be parallel positions held by women, particularly at the local or village level (*sheikha*—female sheikh), these positions do not exist among all tribes; for example, they were not found among Arab groups of the northern Rizaygat.

Tier	Arabs*	Fur	Zaghawa	Masalit
Leader or chief		Maqdam	Sultan	Sultan
District leader	Nazir	Shertai	Melik, Shertai	
Sub-district leader	Omda	Omda	Melik	Firsha
Local or village leader	Sheikh	Sheikh	Sheikh	Sheikh

* Among Arab groups in West Darfur a new senior position of *amir*, which is above PRRO *omda*, was introduced by the Government of Sudan in 1995. This triggered an extremely serious tribal conflict between Arabs and Masalit that was declared a national emergency (Young et al. 2005).

Traditional means of dealing with vulnerability and needs

The *zakhath* system of giving of alms or charitable gifts is the traditional social safety net system which is administered by the tribal administration. A portion of this is passed on to the sub-district chief and head of the tribe for distribution, while the rest is given to the sheikh for dispersal. The *zakhath* system is still present, even in the IDP camps but often on a much smaller scale. But it was widely reported that leaders would provide assistance according to their capacity and the need. For example, he would mobilize support for the sick or for funerals, or organize a work party to construct houses, or otherwise assist the household in need. During the early days of displacement this system was used by residents to support the newly displaced.

The system is obviously under considerable strain given the increasing number of vulnerable groups since the beginning of the conflict, with increased numbers of orphans, women headed households, disabled, and poor people.

In short, the implications of this background and history of local governance for participatory targeting in Darfur are several:

1. There are well-developed traditional governance systems for maintaining law and order, resolving conflict, and even dealing with problems within the community including vulnerability and need although over the past thirty years these systems have been severely undermined and politicized. There are two well-developed but overlapping systems, the relative power of which varies according to the level of administration, with the tribal structures being stronger at the local or village level.
2. The traditional tribal structures, particularly at the upper levels, have become politicized as a result of new government appointments of *amir*, the link between tribal homelands and political representation, and also the way in which tribes have sought to influence local civil administration by having their own members seek positions within this.
3. The government's reorganization of local government and administration has generated serious local tribal conflict, and thus local governance in any form is a highly contested area between groups and likely to generate tensions and even local conflict.

Changes to local governance as a result of conflict and crisis

Conflicts in Darfur including the rebel insurgency/government counter-insurgency, and the local tribal conflicts, have impacted heavily on local governance systems, with varying effects on different groups according to their situation and political alliances. These changes are of relevance to this study in terms of understanding or relying on traditional systems; for example, changes in local governance had a direct impact on the composition and functioning of the Food Relief Committees, which is discussed later.

The growing rebel insurgency movement was orchestrated by younger educated professionals, which to some extent challenged the authority and power of the most senior traditional tribal leaders. For example, the creation of rebel groups, the SLA and the JEM to a large extent, bypassed the traditional tribal administrative structures of the Fur, Masalit, and Zaghawa. Although at a local level sheikhs and *omdas* continued to exercise considerable power and authority among their people.

Challenges and changes to the traditional role of leaders among the IDPs

The forced displacement of 2003 had a huge impact on the tribal leadership of the affected groups. A significant number of local leaders were directly killed in the conflict. In all areas the displacement was not always direct to towns or safe areas, often people were in hiding for weeks or months, and were often separated from their sheikhs. In West and North Darfur, in the areas bordering Chad, some leaders fled over the border sometimes leaving their people behind. Subsequent displacement inevitably undermined local leadership by breaking up communities.

The traditional role and function of local leaders significantly changed in accordance with their new situation and duties. Within camps, depending on the context, local power structures and governance quickly evolved reflecting their new circumstances. In West Darfur, the people and

leadership in the larger displaced camps, for example Zalingei, Mornei, and Geneina, were drawn from the communities, families even, of many of the rebel leaders. These camps were also located close to rebel controlled areas. Because of these links, these camps have always been highly politicized. As a result some of these camps became closed to the outside world to a degree, meaning that they evolved their own governance structures, markets, even possibly security, which to some extent controlled and governed these populations. This can be seen in their demonstrations against the re-registration in 2005, and again in the partial signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement in 2006.

In the absence of a traditional leader, new leaders were quickly appointed. The authority and responsibilities of the newly appointed camp sheikhs was different than that of the traditional sheikh in the village. In the village the sheikh was considered a *hakim*, a respected authority or wise person with the capacity to wield local power. Previously the sheikh would have had his own wealth, and used that to entertain visitors, etc. As one respondent put it, “In the village the sheikh is the ruler, here he is just the organizer. Before in the village they were self-sufficient but in the camp they are like a chicken in a cage.”

A further difference is that before in their home villages all sheikhs were known to all the government departments, and were responsible for tax collection—the *zakhat*, and even had the power to arrest criminals, to sort out local disputes, and issue fines. His relations were principally with the government. Displacement has cut their former relatively close contact with government, although some leaders continue to liaise with the authorities and also police, for example, to report crimes and ensure security. After displacement the main contacts and relations for sheikhs were with international organizations and NGOs. However, in both periods (before the conflict and currently) the sheikhs do work to solve their people’s problems.

Most of their former functions are lost in the camp and with them their role has shifted to that of a coordinator with the agencies, with a different type of power and authority. They play a particularly important role in communications between the agencies and the people. Even with the development of the Food Relief Committee, communications with communities require networks of leaders to convey the correct information. This is illustrated by the registration process in 2005, an example of poor communications and misunderstandings, and fears that it was linked to returns. The result was violent protests and severe delays in the registration process. Some Cooperating Partners (CPs) felt that if they had had more educated staff to better communicate with the sheikhs around the purpose of the re-registration in 2005, some of the subsequent violent protests could have been averted. Some sheikhs also had their own reasons for wanting to undermine the process.

The displaced widely believe that while the traditional position and authority of the sheikh from the village has been temporarily suspended it will ultimately be maintained on their return. In contrast, the role and status of the new sheikh is temporary and linked to their camp duties only. This illustrates the different perceived roles of the new IDP sheikhs and traditional sheikhs. Usually the traditional village sheikh supports the new IDP sheikhs.

In smaller and more rural camps and IDP populations, or where IDPs were living within towns or larger villages, the most senior leadership continued to be dominated and controlled by local residents, many of whom had strong links with the local civic administration. For example, in

both Ardamatta and Kerenick in West Darfur, IDPs explained that individuals “close to the government” continued to dominate the management of the camp including the Food Relief Committees. One interviewee explained that the government through HAC managed to appoint their people or supporters to the FRCs. This infiltration of the FRCs illustrates how the agenda of the local representative is often driven by a higher level agenda. Although the larger more “politicized” camps were not visited by the team, it is widely believed that the leadership in these camps is similarly linked to higher level “agendas” of rebel groups, or also likely to be infiltrated with government stooges or supporters.

Overall, for all groups it would appear that conflict and insecurity has given the tribal administration renewed importance given the disruption, displacement, and loss or separation of people from their former leaders. However, its role and function have significantly changed.

Among the groups who were not displaced, for example among many of the pastoralist groups, the tribal administration remains relatively intact and continues to function as before, particularly in terms of its links and interface with local civic governance, from the local level up to the sub-district and locality level. Multiple tribal sub-branches usually come under the umbrella of one *omda* who is accountable to them. In contrast, among the IDPs in Kerenick for example, there are 129 sheikhs with little or no overall coordination or leadership, i.e., no overall sheikh of sheikhs or system of *omdas*.

Women’s representation in the tribal structures

The traditional tribal structures of *omda* and sheikh include a parallel structure of women *omda*, sheikh etc., who have specific responsibilities to represent women. This applies to all groups, sedentary farmers and pastoralists, although among some pastoralist groups there is no sheikha or female leader. Again these structures and roles were affected by the conflict, and in many cases of IDP displacement where communities have been split up IDP groups have lost their original sheikha, and a new sheikha has been re-appointed, while in others it is lacking.

In Kerenick and among the nearby nomadic groups of Rosay in West Darfur all communities had both a female sheikh and *omda*. The Women’s Commission, a government body, also continued to function in Kerenick. Overall, women’s representation within local governance is at best patchy and at worst non-existent.

New governance structures linked to international presence and humanitarian response

A further significant dynamic was the introduction of a new parallel structure of governance related to humanitarian governance and management of the camps. Before, the tribal leadership had overlapped with the Salvation Committee, who represented the Village Council, which is part of the local Administrative Unit and Locality (civic structures). The Salvation Committees are missing in the camp setting and instead the local sheikhs interface with the humanitarian structures. Thus, for displaced populations a new parallel governance structure was introduced which was the international humanitarian community—the INGOs with responsibilities for camp management, the WFP Cooperating Partners, the UN agencies responsible for sectoral coordination and management, etc. Local government of course continued to play a role

particularly through the state-level Humanitarian Affairs Commission, but also of course in terms of the role and function of the governor and local commissioners, and their responsibilities for local security, etc. The presence of local government representatives within the camps varies—in some of the larger camps close to state capitals, including Kalma, Abu Shouk, Zamzam, and the Zalingei IDP camps resist strongly any formal visible presence of government.

The three different yet parallel governance structures are illustrated in Figure 3: local government, tribal leadership, and humanitarian actors. The precise configuration and strength of connection and integration between each of the three legs of governance depends on the political affiliations of the community in question. The tribal administration of pro-government groups for example will more likely be closely aligned with local government, while the relationship between leadership in the IDP camps and the government is likely to be weaker and antagonistic. “Tribe” is one aspect or one layer of multiple layers of a people’s identity, and putting too much emphasis on tribe is unhelpful. It is worth noting that “tribe” is only loosely associated with place of residence, livelihood, and political affiliation. On the other hand “tribe” cannot be ignored completely and a basic understanding of different groups is helpful as a starting point to promote non-discrimination.

council and tribal administration among pastoralist communities than among most IDP groups. One displaced group described how their link was to HAC, not the wider civil administration.

Food Relief Committees and humanitarian governance

The development of the Food Relief Committees has created a new governance institution within the humanitarian governance system linked to the tribal leaders and government. This new parallel system of humanitarian governance brings with it its own systems and rules, in the form of humanitarian principles, overarching policies, and operational guidelines. For example many INGOs have operationalized the Sphere Minimum Standards of Disaster Response in their programs. The Sphere Standards include common standards on targeting and participation, which emphasize the participation of the affected population in targeting decisions. They also emphasize that “Targeting mechanisms and criteria should not undermine the dignity and security of individuals, or increase their vulnerability to exploitation” (The Sphere Project 2003).

As a protection crisis, international efforts were explicitly directed at “protecting civilians from violence, displacement and deprivation of the means of subsistence, including access to relief” (HPG 2004). While agencies were concerned with protecting and upholding human rights on the one hand, the IDPs as “rights bearers” became increasingly aware of their humanitarian entitlements and have been quick to learn and acquire the language of the international humanitarian community and demand their humanitarian rights.

Changing role of traditional leaders within the camps—from local authority to humanitarian actor

In 2003 and 2004, following the initial forced displacement the original and newly appointed tribal leaders played a critical role working with the humanitarian agencies. From the start WFP cooperating partners worked through this leadership. One group summarized the new role of these leaders as follows:

- to look after the welfare of their people;
- to represent their people;
- to follow up about “needs”;
- to handle the distribution of assistance;
- to represent the concerns, and individual cases of their people;
- to resolve all the problems facing their people;
- to mediate disputes;
- to assist the most vulnerable and needy groups, either “from their own pocket,” or by mobilizing other help;
- to facilitate help for families without ration cards; and
- to help provide security—at least liaising with local police where possible.

Their new role is more concerned with assisting their community to meet its needs. As one group of leaders put it, “A new thing for a sheikh is to consider the vulnerability of the people—‘needy’ people who depend on assistance.” For example, the sheikh may present the case of new

arrivals to the NGO. Linked with this new role of “helping the vulnerable” is supervising food distribution and delivery and assisting in raising funds for those who need medication. This contrasts with their former role when their people were self-sufficient. The sheikhs may also help to identify strangers within the community, people who have entered the camp or attended the distribution who were from the surrounding area but not members of the IDP community. WFP and partners began to establish Food Relief Committees from about 2006 to 2007 in all geographic areas of operation. The introduction of the Food Relief Committees coincided with the shift in distribution approach, from the “scooping” system to individual households to “group-based distribution” (in most locations) organized through group leaders by the Food Relief Committee. Groups are usually defined on a geographical basis, i.e., a designated area within an IDP camp, administrative zone within an urban area, or a hamlet in a rural community.

On the other hand this new role is also about making the international system work for them. As one respondent put it, “some people have understood how NGOs work—they understand how to work the system. . . . Sheikhs will be replaced if they don’t get the goods from the NGOs.”

The Food Relief Committees

The Food Relief Committees provide a formal local mechanism for coordinating and implementing the food distribution, facilitating access and coordination with the community leadership and their people. In theory, the FRC is accountable to the wider community, and ensures both representation and participation in the distribution of resources.

The CP has a field level agreement with the FRC which outlines their roles and responsibilities which broadly include:

- An information campaign which informs beneficiaries of their entitlements and of the distribution date.
- Receiving, handling, and storing food until distribution.
- Assisting the disabled and elderly by carrying or delivering their food aid entitlement.
- Organizing people in groups⁸ or queues if necessary, and controlling crowds.
- Taking over the relief distribution of food in case of WFP or CP evacuation.
- Producing a monthly report on the distribution process.
- Passing information to the CP and HAC including complaints or concerns about shortfalls in the delivery of food. They also usually provide the basic information (demography, size, available services, and infrastructure) for any NGO that needs to work in the area).
- Starting the process of verifying totally new needs, new arrivals, etc., and informing CPs and HAC.
- In theory, updating the beneficiary caseload to include newborns, new arrivals, and returnees, although no actual examples of this were found.

8 Generally the group system is much preferred by both beneficiaries and members of the committee as it is much quicker, taking less than one day. In contrast, the scooping system often involved people waiting for several hours in long queues to receive individual household entitlements. Individual distribution also tended to generate crowds, while with group distribution there were fewer complaints as people had a fixed time and place and attend in smaller groups accompanied by their group leaders.

In contrast with operations pre-2004, when sheikhs were able to give out and authorize ration cards, the FRC has no authority over ration cards and targeting. The vast majority of current ration cards were distributed during the 2005 re-registration exercise. This means that the FRC has virtually no authority and no responsibility for decisions on the allocation of resources, in contrast to the general principles of community-based targeting where the community decides who gets the food.

Although the primary role and function of the FRC relates to food assistance, they are used widely for the distribution of other types of assistance. As expressed by one actor, the FRC is “like the frontline, the entrance for the other programs.” For example, in Kerenick the FRC may also supervise the water and sanitation committee, the health committee and the education committee.

The founding of the FRCs is also based on certain theoretical principles of operation, including for example, the following:

- Based on voluntary work
- Gender balance in the membership
- Honesty, trustworthiness, experience of members
- Includes opinion leaders, or those able to mobilize the community
- Availability
- Democratically elected
- Educated and literate, preferably with some English (at least three members)

However, no single FRC was encountered that lived up to these criteria. Particular weaknesses included lack of representation of women and lack of democratic processes in the appointment of committee members. Among Arab groups, committee members also suffered a lack of literacy and numeracy skills.

Since 2006 security has generally deteriorated and access for humanitarian agencies has become more restricted. In many insecure locations the FRCs are conducting food distribution without supervision (remote management). For example, Save the Children-US covers fifteen remote locations, of which eleven are villages in Geneina rural which include local residents, while the other four are in the south west corridor where the majority are IDPs. There are no flights to these areas, instead they use police escorts but are threatened often by bandits, carjackers, etc., and have lost four vehicles. In these locations, the FRCs receive the food and then await the CP official who notifies the FRC of the household entitlement, and then the FRCs carry out the distributions themselves.

Catholic Relief Service has introduced a new category of personnel known as “animators,” who support and assist a number of FRCs to do their work and are paid by CRS. CRS provides guidance to the FRC on how to select their animator, but the FRC does the actual selection. They are trained to coordinate between locations (the FDPs) and the CRS office. According to CRS “They played a very good role for us—especially where [we] have no access . . . the hot areas, where sometimes [we] can lose access for three to four months.” Since 2007, in Kulbous, for example, seven out of nine FDPs are inaccessible. These animators are unique to CRS but are described in their agreement with WFP. They are responsible for more than one site, and often

involved with more than one FRC. They have diverse roles, including, for example, the following:

- Acting as local food monitor
- Reporting any problems within the committee, e.g., internal divisions that the CP would not otherwise know about
- Record keeping
- Training the FRC
- Reporting on the movements of beneficiaries, total food distributed per site, specific problems, and exact rations.

This information would usually be obtained from the food monitor but in this case the animator is considered to be part of the FRC, and close to their internal workings. This undoubtedly entails some blurring of roles as the animator is formally paid and accountable to the NGO, but on the other hand is a member of the community, associated with the FRC, and obviously has local loyalties and interests, which may undermine humanitarian accountability. There are in total twenty-four animators for all thirty-five sites.

Nomadic groups reported that receiving food through their sheikh is generally more convenient as they can either attend the group distribution, or if they are absent at the time of distribution they can collect their food later. For example, the mother of the omda in Rosay, near Kerenick, held ration cards for about forty others, and held their food until they came to collect it. While it was not possible to confirm absolutely that these people later received their food, this holder of multiple cards on behalf of others was very transparent about the process which suggests that she was not holding the cards in order to divert food. According to one CP who distributes food to both IDPs, and nomadic FRCs: “In general, the nomad FRC is not as organized as the IDP FRC, and to some extent depends on the residents to organize work for them. They have the authority to control people but in terms of practical organization of work they suffer because of lack of literacy and numeracy skills (and residents have to help them). They also do not have confidence, or much respect between the FRC and the community. They may discriminate between sub-tribes.”

Legitimacy and authority

Although the role of the FRC is essentially administrative (distributing resources) rather than political, the work of the FRC is not entirely separate from politics in Darfur. For example, according to one CP, “They [the FRCs] have a great role to play, and work as partners, increasing transparency, trust and cooperation.” But in order to do this they have to embody a degree of local authority, which is often a result of their close links to the tribal leaders—and humanitarian actors.

The FRC membership usually includes some local sheikhs. Generally their work is supported by local leaders, who are often actively involved as group leaders or generally involved in disseminating information to their people. The FRCs therefore have an important local governance function, and as such are closely linked with other governance structures, including the tribal administration, civic structures (HAC), and humanitarian governance (see Figure 3). As

the main if not only locus for the administrative distribution of resources, the FRCs are highly contested domains, with at least some degree of corruption and a fair amount of political struggle and vying for power.

Sheikhs exert considerable local power and authority and are considered generally to represent their people. The development of the FRCs and the group system of distribution was intended to reduce the domination and control of individual sheikhs over food distribution and, to a large extent, has succeeded. As one CP put it, “sheikhs are everything. . . people belong to the sheikh, whereas the FRC is something common to many,” i.e., not limited to just one tribe. For example, if the sheikh was also a group leader, he would still receive food on behalf of his people but this would be a smaller group than before. Through the FRC the process of handling and distributing the food is also more transparent. Everyone comes to collect food at certain time and date, which generally means distribution is quicker. Despite this aim of reducing the power of the sheikhs, there appears to be a degree of nepotism in the appointment of the members of the FRC who are nominated by the local community, usually by the leadership which might be traditional leaders from before, new IDP leaders, or local resident leaders (Box 4). Those nominated are not necessarily leaders themselves but usually have their respect and the respect of the wider community.

Representativeness—selection of members of the FRC

Members are nominated and selected by “sections,” or geographic areas, within an IDP camp. These areas or sections may sometimes correspond to a sub-tribe, but in some areas are mixed depending on how the camp was set up. The process of nomination is sometimes through public meetings as in the recent case in Ardamatta, in West Darfur. A new FRC had been appointed to take over from a previous FRC that was thought to be closely linked to HAC and dominated by members from earlier displacements, i.e., pre-2003. A youth focus group described how this previous FRC had tried to encourage returns which was extremely controversial, and also allowed, endorsed even, the inclusion of outsiders in the distribution. In many other cases, focus groups of beneficiaries were not aware of how their FRCs were selected.

In Kerenick, there have been three different FRCs. The first committee was dominated by the town residents and did not take account of IDP interests. The second committee was a transitional one and lasted for one year, while the third committee was only recently democratically elected. Since arriving, IDPS had appointed their own new sheikhs (about 120), which were not represented on the original FRC; however the new FRC better represented these new leaders and IDP interests.

Incentives or benefits of being a member

The FRC committee members receive no official incentives for the work that they do. The official line is that their participation is voluntary and that this represents the communities’ contribution. Numerous focus groups generally confirmed this to be the case and said the only benefits were possibly the empty sacks or even the small amounts of food left over after the distribution. But others said these leftovers were often then redistributed to those households without a ration card.

Several respondents mentioned the authority, power, and status attached to being an FRC member while others often confused the FRC with the local leadership. For example, one respondent in a focus group captured the common belief that “it [membership] can be a source of power since they will be in charge of all types of assistance in the camps.” One women’s focus group felt that “The benefits are all positive of being on the committee, sometimes money sometimes food.”

The food distribution also potentially provides benefits to the sheikhs (who are outside the FRC) as it reinforces their authority and respect. For example, a focus group respondent notes that “it could also be a source of power for the sheikhs. In many occasions the sheikhs do charge the group members in cash or kind for services of getting the food from the distribution center.” This payment of one Sudanese pound (SDG1) from each household every month to their sheikh is relatively common, and may be indirectly linked to their role in the food distribution. The 2007 WFP report of the Post-Distribution Monitoring in West Darfur reported that “13 percent of the households interviewed reportedly paid to receive their ration either in cash or in kind. The variation is large by FDP: in Dorti, for instance, 50 percent and 23 percent of the households mentioned that they paid in cash and in kind respectively. The amount paid ranges from 1–2.8SDG in cash and from 0.5–5kg in kind” (WFP El Geneina Area Office 2008 #2138, p. 5). While in Kerenick, no households reported making such payments during the PDM exercise. Thus, despite the general picture of FRCs not receiving any tangible benefits in the form of food or cash, there are reported incidents of corruption whereby some sheikhs might be diverting food. The study team didn’t come across obvious evidence of systemic abuses (but this was also not the subject of this study).

Role of women on the FRC

Despite the founding principle that the membership of the FRC should achieve a gender balance, the participation of women is generally very weak and certainly not equal. Only two examples were found of women playing a senior role on the FRC; in Mornei and Masteray, there is a deputy head woman on the FRC, but nowhere is a women the head of the FRC. One obstacle to the inclusion of women was felt by one CP to be the weaker literacy of women, as in order to understand and implement the FRC procedures they needed to be able to read and write. Women are also actively discouraged from participating by their husbands. Attitudes within the community lead to frowning upon such a public role for women. In one case, a woman was threatened with divorce if she accepted the deputy position on the FRC.

Yet as pointed out by one CP, the number of women with ration cards is greater than men, which means there needs to be greater participation of women. Other than gender, the FRCs are usually more broadly representative of different tribal groups. Among the nomad groups visited none of the FRCs included women, yet women were involved in secondary distribution (holding rations awaiting return of other families).

In Darfur, women are generally considered very hard-working, yet they are often excluded from decision-making roles and instead have very specific task-related roles. This is reflected in their negligible role in decision-making on the FRC which was recognized by both men and women’s focus groups.

The involvement of women tends to be limited to very specific tasks of disseminating information and the dirty, less desirable jobs; for example, they will be involved in distribution of oil, lentils, and CSB while other more economically important (and cleaner) commodities, including cereals, sugar, and salt are distributed by men. Men are also more likely to take care of the book-keeping.

Accountability and transparency

The shift from the scooping system to the group distribution method is also generally associated with greater accountability and transparency. For example, in one location it was claimed that a previous committee used to save a significant amount of food while the scooping method was in use. They were apparently found guilty of selling hundreds of sacks of cereal; the case was reported to the police which in turn led to suspension of the old committee for more than a year. Now it was generally felt that with the grouping method of distribution, the room for corruption by FRC and staff of the CP has diminished, because the food is arranged in piles according to the number of groups, in the presence of an elected food relief committee; it is more transparent as more actors are involved and distribution is public. A less-frequently expressed view is that the group system also might allow diversion on a larger scale because entire bags or stacks of bags might be diverted rather than under-scooping a few ounces for every ration.

As part of the post-distribution monitoring, beneficiaries are asked if they pay money to receive food. According to CPs, the response of beneficiaries is that they are not required to pay anything. But the CP staff are not convinced this is accurate, as they are aware of the wider system of payment of SDG1 each to the sheikh.

Accountability is further strengthened by the procedures for renewal of the FRC or replacement of individual members. There were several situations (Sirba, Kerenick, Ardamatta) where the FRC was failing in some way, and so it was changed.

Responsiveness (recourse or complaints mechanisms)

There do not appear to be well-developed complaints mechanisms linked to the FRC. Several focus groups reported that the only way to complain was through their sheikhs.

One women's focus group said there was no point complaining to the FRC as they "did not listen to complaints" but that they did "trust their *fursha*, and once complained to him about the clothes distribution and he told them to be patient," which was obviously one step better than not being listened to. Other respondents also confirmed that complaints to the FRC were futile and that it was preferable to complain to your leader.

There is clearly an issue about having a complaints mechanism organized through the same group that is responsible for the distribution. In Nyala, for example, interviewees pointed out that if you had a complaint about the FRC, the group that you complained to was the FRC.

Another issue was that women had no means of verifying their ration entitlement for a particular distribution. Sometimes the ration is reduced, particularly sugar, but they just have to take whatever is given to them. If they question it, the sheikh usually justifies the smaller amounts by

saying that the quantities received were reduced from the CP. They have no means to verify this, and therefore see no point of complaining.

One CP reported that “the tribal leaders are there to solve any problem between the FRC and the community and only then is it referred back to the CP.” Where there is a camp coordinator he or she may also play a problem-solving role.

Where there are disputes between the FRC and the local leadership, either side is able to lodge complaints through the CP and therefore these parallel lines of authority provide additional accountability. Where the lodged complaint is against an individual FRC member who is a tribal leader, the CP has to mobilize the local tribal authority at a more senior level, i.e., the omda, in order to deal with it properly. This illustrates how the two local governance institutions, the FRC and the tribal administration, have to work together.

Participation—a WFP policy objective

One of the roles of the Food Relief Committee is to ensure both representation and participation in key decisions about allocation of resources. WFP has made explicit policy commitments to uphold broad-based participation, meaning that all program participants (including beneficiaries, national and local governments, civil-society organizations, and other partners) “contribute their knowledge, skills and resources to processes that influence their lives.”⁹ WFP advocates the use of participatory approaches to promote inclusion of the most vulnerable, to improve representation in the FRC, and to overcome gender inequalities. This is indeed ambitious, and possibly naïve, but it indicates the importance of the Food Relief Committee in achieving this policy goal. While the goals of promoting inclusion and improving representation are indeed worthy goals, they are naïve if they do not consider the complex and often competing political interests that drive decision-making.

Participation is a broad concept, and from a development perspective ranges from co-opting volunteers to undertake specific programmatic tasks (like scooping) to the development of an empowered local institution with full decision-making responsibilities. This continuum from perfunctory administrative duties on one end of the spectrum to decision-making and authority on the other is essentially concerned with delineating the power vested in participation. Since 2004 the power and responsibility of local leaders in the distribution have been significantly reduced, specifically as a result of limiting the responsibilities of the FRCs to administrative functions. The shift from the individual scooping method to the group distribution method has promoted wider participation of the community, involving group leaders; at the same time the group distribution has promoted or improved the conditions of distribution, upholding dignity as people do not have to queue for hours waiting to receive their entitlement.

9 Various policy documents describe WFP’s commitment to participation: “WFP will involve women and men beneficiaries wherever possible in all activities and will work closely with governments at the national and local levels to plan and implement assistance.” For example, see: WFP. 2004. *Humanitarian Principles. Policy Issues. Agenda Item 5. Executive Board Annual Session Rome, 24–26 May 2004*. Rome: World Food Programme. Also see: WFP. 2005. *Consolidated Framework of WFP Policies. An Updated Version. Executive Board Second Regular Session Rome, 7-11 November 2005*. Rome: World Food Programme.

In contexts where community representation is contested or opaque, stripping or limiting power of controlling groups may be desirable as it limits opportunities for diversion or abuse of the system (Jaspars and Shoham 1999), and consequently reduces the likelihood of “elite capture” and errors of exclusion. Beyond Darfur, the control and diversion of resources by powerful people or groups for themselves has been widely recognized (Dasgupta 2007). Concrete examples of this “elite capture” were not seen firsthand by the study team, although stories from CP or WFP staff were common. The single best example of elite capture in the Darfur context is the way that some sheikhs controlled the distribution of ration cards early on in the relief program which led to serious inflation of numbers of beneficiaries with multiple registrations. In some larger camps where this occurred, the 2005 re-registration exercise dramatically reduced the numbers of beneficiaries thus indicating that multiple registrations had been a problem.

The re-registration process of 2005 was challenged by local leadership,¹⁰ in large part because they mistrusted the motives behind it and suspected it was linked to a Government of Sudan agenda of “returns” of IDPs to their place of origin. But it could also be attributed to a challenge to their power and authority. In the past, CPs had used local leaders to come up with numbers affected and to distribute ration cards but, in the post re-registration period, the authority and power of these leaders was significantly diminished and superseded by the authority and control vested in the registration process and ration card. This marked a shift in responsibilities for humanitarian governance—away from local leaders and toward a system more under the control of the international community.

A further dimension of participation is community service. As one CP described it, “one reason for developing the FRCs is to ensure a contribution from the community, which is why the work is voluntary.” Focus groups also recognized the importance of this “spirit of serving the community.”¹¹ Though, as noted above, motivations of individual FRC members vary, this recognition of service to the community is reflected in the respect that is accorded to FRC members, which may be a means of upholding dignity within the community.

Within the community, participation is expressed in different ways and is frequently linked with local values and perceptions. In Kerenick for example, one CP believed that participation in supporting and maintaining water pumps was higher among nomads. They took their role very seriously and understood it very well, for to them water was a matter of life and livelihood. Conversely, the CP explained that among IDPs if a water pump breaks there is likely to be another source nearby and therefore its maintenance through community participation is less imperative. The CP complained that among the IDPs every month a pump is broken, and that people take or steal the spare parts, as they believe the pump and the parts belong to the

10 To start with the registration process went well, for example, in the Habillah region but, as word and rumor spread, larger more politicized camps located close to rebel areas took direct action to disrupt the registration process. In West Darfur, Mornei was described as the worst place, then Geneina, then Masteray. Protesters stoned the vehicles of the registration teams and prevented them entering the IDP camps.

11 While the principle of service was clearly articulated by interviewees, at the same time they were not necessarily fully satisfied with the performance of the FRC.

organization—not to the IDPs. This example suggests that participation is weaker where there is a lack of community ownership or links with priority needs.

Participation is not a simple concept and participatory approaches can generate multiple outcomes with widely varying implications, some good and some bad, for different groups. It is not enough to consider only the positive aims of participation, such as inclusion of the vulnerable and better representation, without considering the wider political economy of participation in which food distribution is taking place, i.e., the interrelationships between political and economic processes in the distribution of food aid. The re-registration process of 2005 was concerned with achieving a fairer redistribution of resources and the more powerful groups did not like it and protested. The formation of Food Relief Committees soon after this inevitably was linked to some extent with local governance, with either sheikhs as members of the committee or alternatively their supporters and appointees as members. Getting participation right is a difficult balance between, on the one hand, working with and benefiting from local governance systems in accessing vulnerable populations and, on the other hand, ensuring that politically marginalized groups are not excluded by these same often failing local governance systems.

Protection/targeting linkages

Humanitarian action is about both providing assistance and protection. The two go hand in hand, although often they are seen as separate activities by humanitarian actors. Protection has been defined as “all activities, aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law (i.e., human rights, humanitarian and refugee law). Human rights and humanitarian actors shall conduct these activities impartially and not on the basis of race, national, national or ethnic origin, language or gender” (Caverzasio 2001). Protection activities include any activity which: “prevents or puts a stop to a specific pattern of abuse and/or alleviates its immediate effects; restores people’s dignity and ensures adequate living conditions through reparation, restitution, and rehabilitation, fosters an environment conducive to respect for the rights of individuals in accordance with the relevant bodies of law” (Caverzasio 2001).

According to a review of WFP’s Darfur operations in 2006 “Targeting food aid is closely linked to both security and protection. Appropriate targeting ensures that food distribution is impartial—that it is distributed according to need and thereby reduces errors of exclusion and errors of inclusion. This is of critical importance in all contexts, but especially in Darfur where more remote rural based and pastoralist groups have a history of being the last to benefit from international humanitarian aid. Favoring one group over another would contribute directly to localized tensions, and potentially exacerbate conflict (see below). Program strategies are therefore of central importance not only in terms of meeting program objectives, but also in relation to the impact of the program on the wider conflict environment, protection threats and, potentially, on the security of relief workers” (Young 2007) .

In this study it was clear that food assistance has played an important protection role, in several ways:

- By upholding the right of IDPs and others to adequate food and freedom from hunger¹² when this has been seriously threatened.
- By providing a secure source of food to IDPs and thereby preventing them from having to take risks trying to cultivate (Buchanan-Smith and Jaspars 2006).
- By upholding dignity through the promotion of participatory approaches to food distribution and targeting.
- By distributing food in such a way so as to minimize the risks to the recipient, either as a result of theft or violence.
- By organizing registration so as to minimize threats of violence or attack (unlike 2005).

Unfortunately these protection benefits of food assistance were not widely articulated by WFP or partner organization staff. Locally references are frequently made to “food for protection”—the strategy of providing food to potential aggressors (usually portrayed as nomadic groups but rebel groups are also implicated) to prevent them from attacking convoys or IDPs, which although not a formal strategy of any known organization, it is widely talked about in South and West Darfur. As one CP explained, “In Habilla, nomads stopped them [their convoys of food] with guns. They said ‘we observe you, passing through our area, what is your purpose?’ They demanded to be registered, and after discussion [the CP] decided to give to them also. The benefits are security and that they leave the IDPs in peace. But note that the Nomads do need these services.” Another informant said of the same group, that they just wanted food for their schools, and also water, which was the real need. This captures a dilemma, that the nomads are not necessarily in need of food aid, yet food aid is the entry point for other programs. If food aid is cut to these groups, then so is the likelihood of other services, i.e., in areas where WFP might cut the ration this will affect the distribution of other items (because they are linked to food).

This idea of “food for protection” is not limited to certain groups. In Um Kunya, in South Darfur, for example, one CP is providing food assistance in a rural area controlled by a rebel group. Trucks had to pass through this location to get to other areas, and the rebel leaders refused unless this area was put back on the food aid rolls. The CP tried to agree to provide food assistance only for the most vulnerable, but rebel leaders argued it had to be blanket coverage. In the end, the CP and WFP agreed to give half rations as “food for access,” in order to avoid a security risk to convoys, staff, and neighboring communities.

By and large, focus groups confirmed that there is little personal risk involved in receiving food under the current systems. For example, one women’s focus group reported that “no-one ever takes food from them. . . . And that there are no taxes or payments for security.” Note however, that security considerations prevented the study team from visiting the most contested areas.

12 Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights enshrines the right of every person to have adequate food.

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

In Southern Sudan earlier in 2008, the study team alluded to the notion of a “game” when describing the nature of determining the best way to target and distribute food assistance. In Darfur, perhaps the metaphor is more like a “wall.” Stakeholders tend to have very fixed positions or claims, with little fluidity or seemingly little possibility for dialogue about ways to move forward. The ultimate outcome of both metaphors is the same—it is all about numbers and not specifically about targeting needs, and which people get assistance. But while the question of numbers overlaps with targeting issues, targeting goes far beyond numbers, whether talking about targeting in the narrow (“who?” “where?”) sense of the term, or the broader sense in which it is used in this study.

Generally speaking, the basis of targeting is the observation of differing levels of need among disaster-affected populations with scarce resources. Darfur has been very well served on the resource side—there has been relatively good coverage and relatively few cuts in rations due to resource shortfalls. But a combination of factors has come together to make intra-community targeting at this point difficult.

The entitlement of food assistance in Darfur is based first on the 2005 re-registration exercise and second on status (displacement, or affected by displacement), not need (food insecurity). This was initially the policy of international humanitarian organizations, but has been embraced by local government and especially by the recipient communities themselves. Two points should be noted. First, general eligibility (or entitlement to food assistance) is solely based on registration and ownership of a ration card. For the majority, this registration process dates back to the re-registration exercises of 2005, and for these populations there has been little or no change since then. Second, specific entitlements (how much—what proportion of the agreed ration¹³) are entirely based on status (IDP, resident, refugee, returnee, nomad, etc.), not other categories of need (food insecurity, or vulnerability as determined by the local community).

The particular status of IDP, resident, nomad, etc. relates explicitly to the conflict and implies a powerful hierarchy of rights to food according to the degree or way in which households have been affected by conflict. IDPs are at the top of this hierarchy as many directly experienced forced displacement as a result of conflict, while the legitimacy of the claim of people lower in the hierarchy—particularly nomads—is frequently called into question (mostly by those further up the hierarchy). The IDP claim or “right to food” is closely interwoven with the claim for protection more broadly. As such the right to humanitarian food assistance has become strongly embedded within the IDP’s own narrative or IDP identity and was similar from one situation to another. The almost universally heard story was that all IDPs are vulnerable, that they risk attack if they leave the relative safety of the town or camp, that returns are impossible partly because of

13 To date, the tools for targeting that have been applied by WFP in Darfur include categorizing the different “target” groups (IDPs, residents, nomads, returnees, etc.) and modifying their entitlement in terms of number of months they should receive food aid and percent of the total ration to be received. In this way, there remains one ration scale for all, which is adjusted proportionately depending on the group (100 percent for IDPs or 50 percent for residents for six months of the year).

this, that the government is at fault and at worst is responsible for direct attacks on civilians, that they are due compensation for their former losses, and that all IDPs are entitled and have a right to humanitarian food assistance. Thus the claim for food is directly linked with the highly politicized claims of IDPs, which can only be realized through local, national, and international peace processes.

This story was presented by respondents so often that eventually it was dubbed the “IDP narrative.” Often this story was presented even in the face of substantial evidence to the opposite—including evidence that had been discussed with the same groups at the same time (for instance, numerous empty *tukuls* in some areas of camps, which were explained in terms of people having “gone for farming activities” but who were still technically resident in the camp). This “narrative” tends to forestall any discussion about alternative forms of livelihood support, reducing the ration, or targeting—which is probably its purpose. But it makes accurate assessment extremely difficult, and therefore is a major impediment to planning and targeting.

While the categorization of beneficiaries as IDP, resident, etc., is a pragmatic and practical response to the problem of targeting, the risk is that it continues to reinforce a politicized claim for food aid. So far, food aid and benefits from a handful of other humanitarian programs are the only forms of compensation that IDPs have received since they incurred their earlier losses as a result of forced displacement. The ration card is a potent symbol for IDPs and probably represents the only tangible form of identification linked to their conflict-affected status. Not only that, it has served them well and assured them access to food since receiving the cards in 2005. It is therefore not surprising that there is massive resistance to change. A large number of interviewed IDPs said that violence would increase in the camps if the food entitlement was changed or removed, including IDPs against CPs. In addition threats to their own security would increase if they were forced to rely on livelihood strategies outside the camp (presenting another perspective on “food for protection”). If WFP or others were to remove or tamper with the cards and linked entitlements it could directly threaten to undermine a cornerstone of IDP identity and therefore risk seriously de-stabilizing the situation and trust that has been built up. But as a result, the criteria for inclusion in food distributions are based on membership in a group that is defined by status *other than* food security.¹⁴

Any attempt at assessment based on more objective food security indicators, or a discussion about participatory targeting or even alternative livelihood approaches, is taken by the recipient community as an attempt to cut rations and deny people their entitlement to food aid (which the humanitarian community itself has told them for nearly five years is their right).

In some cases, such as the IDP camp at Kass where there was an attempt to reassess the population, the issue is not so much “targeting” *per se* as it is a matter of deciding *how many* people there are that require food. And reaching an agreement on that number is more a matter of hard nosed bargaining as it is of accurate or verifiable assessment.

This study was predicated on the assumption that the comparison of targeting methods should examine assessment-based targeting (external or “objective,” indicator-based, oriented to a short-

14 This is not to imply that IDPs do not need food assistance. A large proportion of them clearly do, and some of them still require a full or almost full ration.

term assessment of needs) on one hand, and community-based targeting (internal or “subjective,” perception-based, and oriented towards local views of vulnerability) on the other. However in Darfur, there is little of either kind. People are targeted for food assistance based on group membership not individual need (whether assessed externally by objective indicators, or internally by local perceptions of vulnerability).

This study began by observing and interviewing respondents about existing targeting practices—and focused primarily on the limited sense in which the term was being utilized. The issue of inter-household targeting (“who?”) has already been discussed above, but beyond the broad groups mentioned, there were few examples of targeting practices found, whether assessment based or community based. The few examples that might be labeled “community based” are instructive, but mostly not representative of the larger crisis in Darfur. Several general conclusions can be noted.

General conclusions

1. In Darfur at the moment, there is little actual targeting of food aid at the household level. In some cases there is targeting based on need criteria (see Box 3); in most cases, it is entire groups that are targeted (displaced, or mixed displaced/host community, etc.). The identification of those to be targeted is almost entirely based on the 2005 re-registration of people in IDP camps, and towns hosting IDPs (with some additions in rural areas based on subsequent assessments when needed or in response to new conflicts and fresh displacement or on the basis of other causes of food insecurity). Once included in a targeted group, however, allocations tend to remain the same—there is rarely a re-assessment of needs at the household level by WFP, and several Cooperating Partner agencies that have tried to re-assess needs within already-targeted groups have met stiff resistance from the community because the assessment was perceived to be an attempt to reduce either the number of the recipients, or reduce the ration provided.
2. There is a clear link between group status and entitlement to food assistance. The ownership of a WFP ration card represents a strong entitlement or claim to food assistance, but is also an important symbol of identity. The right to food assistance that the ration card represents is a major part of the “IDP narrative” and the politicized identity of IDPs. This directly affects both the study of targeting and any attempt to change or reform the basis on which humanitarian assistance is provided (manifested in what we had come to label as the “IDP narrative”). This is couched in both the language of vulnerability (it is unsafe for anyone to leave the confines of the camp, so everyone continues to require assistance) and the language of rights (everyone has the right to food; the international humanitarian community is the duty bearer).

There is also a clear link between the targeting of food aid and the targeting of other humanitarian assistance. Pragmatically, it is far easier for other, smaller agencies to target assistance, particularly non-food items, through the WFP/IOM ration cards which are held by households. Food is also usually the first humanitarian intervention that a community receives and without food other assistance is sometimes not forthcoming.

Conclusions on targeting

The level of targeting error under the *status quo* circumstances is difficult to measure. Within targeted groups, the DFSNA provides one estimate of targeting error—both those who are on the recipient list but who have adequate resources to be food secure without access to food aid, and those on the recipient list who are severely food insecure despite the assistance they receive. But the broader issue of targeting error cannot be addressed by the DFSNA because some groups are not included in the sampling frame and no alternative sampling frame is available, nor can one be constructed given the prevailing insecurity which severely constrains data collection activities. Hence the DFSNA admittedly only partially estimates targeting error, but there is no way to obtain better overall estimates under prevailing security constraints. Within specific geographic areas it would be possible to estimate targeting error by constructing a sampling frame that includes all groups (beneficiaries and non beneficiaries, conflict affected and non-conflict affected).

Generally speaking, the level of post-distribution monitoring was better in Darfur than was found to be the case in Southern Sudan. But the PDM is limited to spot checks on usage only among recipients, so in and of itself, PDM is only a check on usage, not on targeting.

Several observations can be made:

1. Generally speaking, the team noted three kinds of inclusion errors (not actually fitting criteria, or not being food insecure) and four different kinds of exclusion errors. Inclusion errors included:
 - a. IDPs who are food secure and don't need the assistance.
 - b. Host communities who were hard hit in 2005, but may no longer need assistance.
 - c. Non IDPs (or other people who don't fit the criteria) on food aid rolls.

Note that these first two categories are captured by the 2007 DFSNA inclusion error calculations but not the last one.

2. Exclusion errors included:
 - a. Self-identified people who were excluded from the 2005 registration (new-borns or people who were absent or otherwise missed the 2005 registration, but now reside in targeted households, but are not on their ration card).
 - b. Those included in registration, but have moved or been displaced again, and can't re-register.
 - c. Newly displaced, or people moving to new areas who can't get registered.
 - d. Other people who are acutely food insecure, but are outside of the current assessment and registration framework.

Again, by and large, the first two categories are captured in the 2007 DFSNA calculations, but not the last two.

3. It is therefore quite likely that the DFSNA underestimates total targeting error—both inclusion and exclusion. In 2004, there was little doubt that the avoidance of exclusion error (i.e., emphasizing the humanitarian imperative) was the over-riding objective; by 2005, it had become clear that there was substantial inclusion error (multiple ration card holders and significant diversion of food) and reducing this was the objective of the re-registration process. In 2008, it is less clear which is the over-riding programmatic objective, and the means to improve targeting—through *either* assessments or community-based processes—are significantly diminished.
4. There are numerous operational constraints that further diminish programming options:
 - a. Access to conflict-affected populations is significantly more difficult in 2008 than it has been in earlier years, and there is no reason to believe that this situation is going to be reversed any time soon.
 - b. General insecurity is also an enormous constraint, especially on the main trucking routes with the increased likelihood of attacks on humanitarian convoys or vehicles. With the splintering of rebel groups, numerous smaller groups are rumored to target humanitarian assets (vehicles, phones, supplies) in order to resource themselves. Although humanitarian assets rather than personnel are usually the target, WFP related personnel have been disproportionately affected, as many food truck drivers have been abducted and killed.
 - c. Food aid has become highly politicized and linked to political claims (see above), so any attempt to change food aid operations will be met as a political challenge.
 - d. There are demands by some groups to be included in food distributions as the price of access (convoys crossing their territory on their way to make deliveries) or protection (agreement not to attack targeted settlements so long as they are included). (See comment/recommendation on this in the targeting/protection section)
5. New displacement or new manifestations of food insecurity from other sources (drought, infestations of pests, or other impediments to local production) are fairly well noted by both the Government (HAC) and the humanitarian community (WFP and its partners). Thus broadly speaking, targeting error is probably relatively minimized in situations of new conflict, displacement, or production shocks. Error is likely to be the highest in places where there is little change in the status quo, and people are relatively “frozen” into whatever groups they were placed during the re-registration in 2005. And these are precisely the places where the constraints on re-assessment are the greatest.
6. The targeting of food aid is closely linked to protection (and security) in several ways. Targeting procedures support protection by upholding the right to adequate food, promoting impartiality, promoting dignity through participatory approaches, and reducing exposure to protection threats (e.g., the need to pursue high-risk livelihood strategies). Conversely the targeting of food aid may exacerbate protection threats or risks by exposing certain groups of beneficiaries, or even CP and WFP staff, to an increased threat of attack, looting, or armed violence. These protection threats are bound up with the local dynamics of conflict; thus, in a complex emergency setting such as Darfur, “targeting and distribution influence not only

who gets the food, but also local systems of power and patronage” (Young 2007, S51). These systems are very close at hand in the form of local governance structures linked in with the Food Relief Committees. Thus WFP must consider a combination of strategies that both promote and uphold protection, and also reduce or mitigate risks, particularly protection risks.

7. In the field, the idea of “food for protection” or “food for access” has evolved from circumstances where groups are effectively paid off in order to gain access to certain groups or areas or to secure protection. Obviously, security and access have to be considered and negotiated on a case-by-case basis, and at times decisions may require innovative one-off approaches. However, this approach is contrary to WFP policy, and must not be supported or endorsed more broadly as a “protection strategy,” as it perpetuates and exacerbates the local power and conflict dynamics that contribute to protection threats. Rather, protection strategies need to be based on direct engagement with all groups and impartial assessments of humanitarian needs (not limited to food aid) (see recommendation 7—engagement with local leaders).
8. IDP identity and food aid entitlement are intertwined. This close link between the claim or right to food assistance and displacing affects of conflict stems back to 2004, when the Darfur conflict was portrayed “first and foremost as a protection crisis” by the international community. This meant that IDPs quickly became aware of their rights and the importance of the international community as the interim duty-holders. This was probably not only a result of the international humanitarian community’s promotion of such but also because of a highly effective Darfuri rebel diaspora who were in daily communications with IDPs in the larger camps (Kalma, Zalingei, etc.) and directly engaged in international advocacy campaigns with human rights organizations.
9. From the start of the crisis response in 2004 (and possibly before), the distribution of food assistance in the Darfur region has been dominated and partly controlled by the local tribal leaders, particularly sheikhs, who represent the lowest administrative level of an important traditional governance system. WFP CPs have worked through the local leadership, which originates in the traditional local governance systems, and has evolved to the appointment of new leaders in the IDP settings. Among the displaced the role of the tribal leaders has changed and evolved with increasing responsibilities for coordination with the international humanitarian community, and in principle ensuring the welfare of their people from a humanitarian perspective.
10. In recent years, WFP’s targeting strategy has been based on a few program variables: Beneficiary category, proportion of the total ration, and seasonal variation serve as the basis for determining who gets what (within the conflict-affected population of Darfur). Since 2006, ration composition has changed little and probably represents the single least explored program variable. In contrast in 2005 there was considerable modification of the ration with clear programming objectives partially linked to compensation for milling losses and to increase the general market availability of food. It is not clear if this strategy was ever properly evaluated in terms of its effects on food security, livelihoods, and markets.

11. The question about comparing external, assessment-based targeting to community-based processes is the “how?” question. As noted, few real examples of either were observed in Darfur, so these conclusions are at best based on very limited information. In brief, our observation would be that where the community has not been displaced or where the displacement is recent, and at least some of the traditional leadership has survived intact, to some degree community-based processes can help to identify the most hard-hit households and ensure that these households receive assistance. But in protracted camp situations, or other contexts where access to assistance has become highly politicized, “community-based” processes (at least processes recognizable to the humanitarian community as community-based) and inter-household targeting practices generally are much less possible.

Conclusions on participatory mechanisms

1. Food Relief Committees are a well-established institution in most of the IDP camp settings which the team visited. These committees play important roles in terms of assisting with distributions and especially in terms of helping to ensure continuity of operations when insecurity makes access impossible for WFP or its partners. FRCs are variable in performance—there are large discrepancies in the amount of training or backup they get from different Cooperating Partners. But as an institutional form, they seem to be working well for these two main purposes (assisting in distributions and ensuring continuity of operations). However, several caveats about FRCs are probably important (and these are *caveats*, based on the limited observations and questions of a few weeks worth of field time—they are not hard and fast *conclusions*).
2. In form and function the Food Relief Committees play a local governance role, in that the FRC is a local institution that in principle is meant to be accountable to the wider community, and is responsible for ensuring both representation and participation in the distribution of food assistance. It is directly linked to wider governance structures, including the international humanitarian community, government structures, and the local tribal administration. It may even include members who have wider governance responsibilities (as tribal leaders or those with links to government or rebels). As such, the Food Relief Committees are subject to the same political pressures as all other institutions in Darfur. They are not some kind of idealized “independent voice” of the recipient community.
3. There are anecdotes—difficult to conclusively verify or disconfirm—that FRCs are the means of informally balancing out some of the errors of both inclusion and exclusion, and ensuring some level of survival for everyone. The ability to manage this balance is likely one of the important characteristics of the emergent leadership in the camps. If this is the case, it is done informally, and the power to achieve this balance means that FRC leaders have independent (i.e., unaccountable) control over some proportion of the food resources in camps. So while some of this food can be used to make up for gaps in formal coverage, some of it can also be used for other purposes. There is also (almost by definition) little accountability for FRC action in places where WFP and CP staff cannot reach.
4. Although the language defining FRCs includes references to community empowerment and participation, they are not first and foremost mechanisms of either empowerment or

participation. Few examples were found where FRCs themselves were democratically elected, consisted of 50 percent women members, or adhered to other criteria by which participation or empowerment of marginalized groups might be measured. No cases were noted in which the FRC was facilitating a community dialogue about who needed assistance and who didn't, although this was not their allotted task. In fact, they are heavily aligned with the "IDP narrative" that insists that everyone is vulnerable and therefore everyone continues to have a legitimate claim to food assistance. FRCs in some cases attempt to reduce exclusion error; none were observed to be concerned with reducing inclusion error (in fact, there were accusations that at least in some cases, FRCs directly benefit from inclusion error).

5. Nevertheless, in some cases, the FRC has become the forum for significant political struggles between different factions in a camp (in the cases witnessed by the team, these factions may be defined by age or by other factors). In a couple of cases, the FRC itself was significantly reformed, but the FRC was not necessarily the entity that in itself led to community change but rather it was an arena for the struggle, facilitating dialogue and participation. In these cases, the very existence of FRCs has provoked struggles over their control (and the resources to which they have access), and these struggles may in themselves enhance participation in the politics of camp management. Likewise, the very existence of these struggles implies that FRCs do have some autonomous control over resources.

In the two cases found in West Darfur, the original Food Relief Committees had been set up and controlled by either local residents or people who had been displaced ten years earlier; i.e., the longest standing residents in the community wielded most power initially. In these cases there were strong tensions between the more recently displaced and longer-term local residents. These local residents were "closer" to the government than the IDPs were, which suggests political differences between them. But the subsequent reform of the FRCs was very much expressed in terms of improving its performance/effectiveness at food distribution, rather than achieving political goals.

There is little evidence on what actually happens in cases where the management of the entire distribution process is left in the hands of the FRCs. There are few checks and balances in these cases, because the only reason for entrusting the process to FRCs in the first place is that WFP and CP staff does not have access. By definition, this means FRCs work in the most dangerous and contested places—where assistance may be the most needed, but also where it is likely to be a significant resource over which belligerents would like to gain greater control. For self-evident reasons, this study was not able to get any direct evidence about how FRCs manage distribution when they are the sole authority. Agencies in West Darfur have attempted to adapt to these difficult circumstances by introducing a new type of personnel—community animators—who are from the community but paid by the INGO to act as go-betweens and support remote distribution. This new layer of personnel in the management system represents the critical interface between local systems of food aid management through the FRC with the international humanitarian governance system. It is this interface which needs to be more fully considered and, where possible, strengthened through similar initiatives.

6. Other participatory elements of targeting include access to information, transparency of the operation, a complaints mechanism, and feedback channel. With regard to these, FRCs can and sometimes do play a role. In the best of cases, FRCs offer a counter-balance to the power of other authorities in the camps with regard to both information access and a feedback mechanism. But FRCs often lack the capacity or independence.
7. FRCs were introduced in Darfur in 2007 and 2008—some four years after the current displacement crisis began, and after three years of intensive humanitarian engagement. The question remains *when* FRCs or relief committee-like institutions can or should be introduced in a complex emergency. It is unlikely that the introduction of FRCs would have been possible in 2004, and not clear whether the existence of FRCs have been a help, hindrance, or irrelevance to the re-registration of 2005. This question is somewhat moot to WFP Sudan now, but of major relevance to programs elsewhere.

Recommendations

Following from these conclusions, several recommendations can be suggested.

1. Many respondents suggested that the insecurity-caused ration cuts in 2008 appear to have had little impact on the prevalence of malnutrition. If this anecdotal information is confirmed by the results of the 2008 DFSNA nutritional assessment, it would be significant to future WFP planning, and would imply that a managed process of gradual change in the approach to food aid may be possible. It may even be a stimulus to explore alternative livelihood options—limited as the latter may be in some cases. However, it should be noted from the outset that unless alternative approaches are found to assessment or community level dialogue, this approach will be experimental and perhaps contrary to humanitarian principles.
2. The FRCs are now a well established institution, but individual FRCs have very different kinds of leadership and capacities. Although they are not involved directly in targeting, and their role in enhancing community participation may be disputable and varies from case to case, the existence of the FRCs at a minimum ensures an alternative institution to the transformed traditional leadership in camps. Even where the FRC is directly controlled by the existing sheikhs, the control of FRCs can be challenged by disaffected groups—and can be challenged without necessarily directly challenging the position of the sheikhs themselves. The FRCs can and do serve as a complaints mechanism that is somewhat autonomous from the sheikhs, and they can and do serve as conduits of information between the humanitarian agencies and the recipient community. Hence, in some ways, FRCs do serve to improve elements of participation, even if community based targeting is not part of their job description. But the very existence of FRCs, and their near universality, is an accomplishment in itself, and one that can be built on to promote participation and dialogue with the recipient community. This can only be accomplished through more training and through the development of greater accountability mechanisms—both between FRCs and WFP/CPs and between FRCs and the communities they represent.
3. WFP needs to ensure their staff is fully aware of WFP's current strategic plan and mandate. Participation of local communities is a priority based on WFP's executive board statements on participation and community involvement in targeting. However, some WFP staff told

members of the team that this should be a task for other agencies—perhaps CPs, but not WFP. WFP, as was stated to the team by several members of staff, is primarily a humanitarian food aid delivery organization; the task of making FRCs (or targeting) more participatory requires a different skill set from the skills with which WFP staff is equipped. And if strengthening FRCs and making them more participatory is a priority, it is important to articulate not only *why* that is a priority (see next recommendation) but also *how* it will be achieved.

4. From a WFP perspective, it is likely that any attempt to improve targeting or to enhance community participation—the overlap of which is the core of this study—must address two issues: clarifying objectives and broadening the question of targeting. The first is the issue of clarity of objectives:
 - a. When the topic of targeting was raised with staff or partners, there was little clarity about why the study team members were asking questions about targeting in the first place. The issue of targeting seemed to some WFP and CP staff to have been settled in 2005, with a few exceptions made for new displacements or other factors. More thoughtful staff saw a number of issues around targeting, but noted that the objectives of trying to improve targeting aren't clear: Is the objective to reduce exclusion error (and hence prioritize the humanitarian imperative)? Is the objective to cut waste and corruption by minimizing inclusion error? Is it driven by a resource shortfall (real or anticipated)? All of these are no doubt included, but for effective targeting, one of them is usually the primary objective which often changes with the evolution of a crisis and food aid operation. In Darfur, it isn't clear which one is the primary objective at the moment although most donor perspectives allude to reducing errors of inclusion.
 - b. Aside from the fact that participation is generally viewed as “a good thing,” there is little sense of shared understanding about why participation should be promoted in a context like Darfur. Many questions were posed to the team: Is participation an end in itself (the right of disaster-affected people to have a say over decisions affecting their lives)? Is participation simply the means to the end of more effective programming and more efficient utilization of program resources such as food aid? Is it simply about “ticking a box” of programmatic imperatives designed far from the realities of field work?
 - c. Lastly (and perhaps most importantly), at this point—as the emergency enters its sixth year—it is no longer entirely clear what the objective of the general distribution (whole food aid operation) is or should be, and whether and how objectives of general food distribution should be the same for different categories of target group in different parts of the Darfur region. It is clear from the results of the DFSNAs that there are significant differences between nutrition and food security in the three states of North, West, and South Darfur. Differences also exist within states within particular categories, for example between the IDPs in camps in close proximity to

large urban settings versus camps in more rural settings.¹⁵ More broadly within the international community the question of early recovery activities have been raised and in some cases actively supported. WFP must consider sooner rather than later in its program objectives the complementarity between food aid programming and the wider array of “recovery” initiatives that are being proposed.

5. The second issue is about broadening the question of targeting (and thus the question of targeting methods, i.e., an assessment-based approach or a participatory approach) beyond the questions of “who?” and “where?” This leaves the questions of “what?” “how much?” and, “for how long?”
 - a. In general, the question of “what?” has long been presumed to be answered by “food aid.” From a WFP perspective, there may be few alternative sectors to consider—cash transfers have worked in other places and have now been introduced as part of the WFP portfolio although cash programs remain relatively small compared to the scale of needs in Darfur. Also there is only limited evidence on the feasibility of cash programs in Darfur. With the ceiling on cash programs, combined with local market and transportation constraints, cash transfers will probably remain a small component of an overall humanitarian response in Darfur.
 - b. The questions of “what?” but also “how much?” and “for how long?” raise the issue of ration composition, ration size, and seasonal variation in coverage. These three constitute probably the main program variables at WFP’s immediate control in the short term. Decisions about these programming options must be based on the objectives of the distribution, which as discussed above are currently not entirely clear. Ration composition in terms of selection of commodities and their respective amounts is obviously a critical variable in food aid targeting and, given the lack of recent attention to this, it merits a full review in the context of the current program objectives and as part of the wider targeting strategy.

It should be noted, however, that the “what?” question also raises possibilities for intervention outside the food aid arena, even if it cannot be done directly by WFP. One of the few successful examples of assessment that came to the attention of the study team was conducted by a CP that explicitly acknowledged the likelihood that an assessment would be viewed by both the community and the sheikhs as an attempt to reduce food assistance (hence undermining the entitlements of the community and the authority of the sheikhs) and deliberately began with a discussion about entitlements—agreeing that everyone has the right to assistance, but also suggesting that some groups might be better served by some form of assistance other than food aid. With this as a starting point, the CP assessment team was able

15 A series of four workshops in 2007 in Darfur concluded there were significant differences in the livelihood opportunities of more urban communities of IDPs versus IDPs in more rural settings. See Helen Young, Abdalmonium el Khider Osman, Margie Buchanan-Smith, Brendan Bromwich, Karen Moore, and Stacey Ballou. *Sharpening the Strategic Focus of Livelihoods Programming in the Darfur Region: A report of four livelihoods workshops in the Darfur region (June 30 to July 11, 2007)*. Medford: Feinstein International Center, Tufts University. <http://fic.tufts.edu/downloads/DarfurLivelihoods.pdf> (12 September 2007).

to get better information from community key informants and was able to begin to work on different interventions. Again, CPs may be in a better position to do this than WFP is, but a coordinated effort, perhaps even with WFP taking the lead in suggesting such an approach, would serve to broaden the discussion about response to the current situation in Darfur, could serve to make the process both more inclusive and participatory, and could result in better targeted interventions (in terms of targeting the right intervention to the right people).

6. A third issue is what to do about the current registration and associated ration cards. As discussed earlier, for IDPs ration cards represent a broader entitlement than only general rations and so to remove or tamper with the cards as a means of altering food entitlements would challenge a critical aspect of IDP identity and as such could risk undermining or destabilizing relations between the humanitarian community and the IDPs. WFP should therefore consider any major changes to this system with extreme caution. One option for WFP to consider linked to point 5 above is the introduction of new programming modalities that will complement the evolving general ration distribution program.
7. While the question of when the introduction of FRCs or similar institutions may be possible in a complex emergency remains, WFP and its partners clearly have to engage with local leaders. These initial contacts and relationships with leaders in complex emergencies are often developed as part of the institutional relationships and also as part of the security assessment, and are not a central part of the needs assessment. This division between “technical needs assessment” on the one hand, and institutional/operational considerations on the other, presents a subsequent challenge for the development of participatory approaches which require a good understanding of local governance and good relationships with local leadership. It is therefore recommended that from the start of a CPE, including first initial assessments and meetings with the community, there must be an explicit assessment or review of local governance institutions and how they have been affected by the CPE, in terms of their legitimacy and authority, their representativeness, their accountability and transparency, and their responsiveness to local problems. This is necessary for the subsequent development of a Food Relief Committee or similar institution, and to ensure that it is not co-opted to serve the political interests of others.

As has happened in many other protracted humanitarian crises, food assistance has become an institution in the Darfur context and humanitarian actors have become a third pillar of local governance—and a very powerful one at that. As the WFP’s largest humanitarian operation worldwide, the Darfur program currently takes up more than 10 percent of their global resources, which makes WFP the most resource-rich humanitarian player in Darfur.¹⁶ While the achievements and successes of the program must be applauded (especially in the early years), after nearly six years it would appear that in some ways, the program has become “stuck.” For example, ration composition has changed relatively little since 2006 and is generally changed only in terms of proportion of the total ration provided and timing. Another example is that beneficiary numbers have become stuck in the registration figures of 2005, which has meant that

16 This is an estimate, taken from the total food aid tonnage handled by WFP—roughly four million metric tons in 2006 (WFP Web site) and the amount devoted to Sudan that year—about 600,000 metric tons—multiplied by the proportion that went to Darfur—about 75 percent of the total (WFP 2007).

numbers are “sticky upwards” (i.e., while they can go up in small increments they rarely if ever come down). Lastly, the beneficiary categories (IDP, IDP with urban residents, rural residents) are three fairly crude categories which ignore the diversity of the food security of these groups, for example the diversity between the three states of North, West, and South Darfur and between the IDPs in large urban settings versus rural settings.¹⁷

This report has shown that indeed there remains room for maneuver and for tailoring a relevant program more in keeping with the needs and realities on the ground in 2009. Continuing business as usual in response to claimants is likely to reinforce the way in which these claims have become deeply politicized. Not only does targeting and participation need to be rethought in the Darfur context, the role of food aid itself should also be reconsidered.

17 A series of four workshops in 2007 concluded there were significant differences in the livelihood opportunities of more urban communities of IDPs versus IDPs in more rural settings (Young et al. 2007).

Annexes

1. Research objectives

The Darfur study is one case in a broader research project entitled “Targeting in Complex Emergencies.” The objectives of this research are to the following:

- a) Identify and describe success and failure factors associated with current WFP targeting and distribution approaches in complex emergencies, and what role community dynamics and levels of participation play in these approaches.
- b) Identify and analyze the linkage between assessment findings, specific programming objectives, targeting criteria, and WFP’s current targeting approaches in complex emergencies—with due consideration of the process and elements of CBTD—and how these can be strengthened.
- c) Identify a range of pragmatic options for the implementation of participatory targeting and distribution approaches in complex emergencies that achieve programming objectives and are consistent with WFP targeting policy.
- d) Propose a framework for determining the suitability, feasibility and effectiveness of implementing participatory targeting methodologies across a range of complex emergency contexts and WFP programming interventions.

2. Research questions

The research questions of the study include:

- a) How is targeting currently done in the context of a complex emergency?
- b) What role can CBTD play in ensuring that food assistance reaches those most in need of assistance in complex emergencies?
- c) Can CBTD contribute to improved representation of poor, marginalized, or excluded groups in a complex emergency?
- d) How can a community-based approach to targeting in complex emergencies enhance the potential for protection, and conversely, how does it exacerbate the potential for conflict or fuel existing tensions and conflict?
- e) What are the main lessons for general program guidance on the CBTD process in complex emergency situations, including how to match elements of CBTD to specific conditions on the ground?

3. Research methodology

The research involved a combination of secondary and primary data collection following a protocol established for all the case studies in this project (Feinstein International Center 2007a).

The research team

The Darfur case study research team consisted of two Tufts researchers. Upon arrival in Sudan, the Tufts team was joined by three senior members of staff from the WFP Sudan for the full study. Translators were provided by WFP, as well as security.

Literature review and preparatory work

Part of the secondary data collection and analysis was carried out before arrival in country by the Tufts research team. Documentation was gathered on the nature and political economy of conflict in Darfur, the history of targeting issues, and food aid modalities. Country-specific secondary data for Darfur was requested from WFP in advance. Any reports actually used are listed in the reference section. Also, in preparation for the study, WFP Country Office staff was consulted on the identification of organizations influencing or engaged in, or supporting, targeting of food assistance (or other) for interview. WFP Sudan staff was also consulted on the selection of study sites to visit according to the criteria in the study protocol in order to reflect as wide a variety as possible of different contexts. This process was begun two months prior to the study and reviewed upon arrival.

Data collection in country

An introductory meeting was held at the start of the visit. The study aims, the independent nature of the researchers, and the voluntary and anonymous nature of the participation were communicated directly by the researchers with support from WFP staff allowing time for clarification questions from the community. Interviews were held following a semi-structured protocol, with the same initial questions for respondents, but with ample latitude for in-depth exploration of issues arising in the course of the discussion. The key informants included WFP staff, partner and non-partner NGO officials, other humanitarian actors and UN organizations, and local officials and authorities. The groups interviewed included:

WFP Sudan country office staff

- Introductory meeting at the country office
- Meeting with senior management, VAM, program, security, section coordinators
- Meetings with state office staff in Darfur

Interviews with local authorities

- State or local offices of the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC)
- The most local leaders (sheikhs, or committees of sheikhs)
- Camp executive committees and Food Relief Committees

Interviews with WFP partners

- World Vision
- CARE
- Save the Children (US)
- CRS

- German Agro Action
- Sudan Red Crescent Society
- United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)
- Solidarités
- Samaritan's Purse

Interviews with non-WFP partners

- ICRC

Interviews with UN agencies

- FAO
- UNICEF
- IOM

Focus groups

Focus group discussions were held with twenty-three community groups comprised of traditional leaders, women, men, and mixed men's and women's groups. The focus groups were initially organized to attempt to interview recipients and non-recipients separately, but it quickly became clear that this was not possible, since much of the exclusion was within households. Attempts were still made in all locations to identify and talk to non-recipients. All interviews were semi-structured, lasting between one half hour to two hours, and involved as few as five people to as many as fifteen people.

Voluntary, informed consent for carrying out the research was obtained verbally during the introductory plenary meeting as laid out in the study protocol, and during each interview or focus group discussion. Great care was taken to ensure those present understood participation in the study would not affect their present entitlement to food assistance from WFP.

Participatory appraisal techniques were used to collect some of the data in the interview guides. The following main techniques were used in the communities to complement the semi-structured interview guide, including proportional piling, transect walks, and group as well as individual interviews.

Limitations to the study

Several difficulties were encountered with the field research, which serve to limit the extent to which the findings of this case study can be presented as verified by adequate triangulation, or can be broadly generalized. These are outlined below. But it should be emphasized that the findings of the study should be accepted as tentative findings, because of the constraints encountered.

- a) All of Darfur is under UN Security Phase IV, meaning essential emergency operations only. Due to security considerations the team was not able to visit North Darfur at all, and movement/access was very limited in West Darfur. Given these constraints, the team focused on as many different population groups as possible within reach of four different locations—two of which were accessible from the state capitals of El Geneina and Nyala.

This limited geographic sample is not representative of all of Darfur, and the findings from this study should not be taken as representative—in part because of the limited number of places visited, and in part because the team was, by definition, visiting places where security was not as serious a constraint as other places.

- b) The population of Darfur, especially the IDP population, has been interviewed so many times, and the level of politicization among the IDPs is so high, that the team immediately began to recognize a sort of *pro forma* “IDP narrative” that is simply on display for outsiders in the camp. Despite the fact that some elements of this narrative are incompatible with other elements of it, it was a story that the team heard again and again. This narrative is built on at least four seemingly universal points:
- There is no distinction within the camps in terms of need. Everyone is an IDP, and therefore everyone is vulnerable. There is no need for any assessment (in fact an assessment would be vigorously resisted or undermined).
 - There are many people who were missed by the most recent registration and verification exercise (lots of exclusion error) but there are no townspeople included (no inclusion error).
 - Any apparently unused *tukuls* belonged to people who “had gone for farming” and who would be back (so not a form of inclusion error).
 - Because of the ration cuts (in place since May 2008), no one has enough food for even their own families, and therefore the amount of voluntary redistribution is very limited. People would like to help those who were left out of the registration, but there isn’t enough to go around.
 - Besides food aid and other humanitarian assistance, few people have any source of income; there are few livelihood opportunities and it is dangerous to go outside the camp.
- c) As a result, it often took quite some amount of discussion with community groups before they became convinced that the visit of the research team had nothing to do with an assessment and would not result in changes to food aid allocations. This was perhaps particularly accentuated because the research team was accompanied by WFP staff. This no doubt colored the focus group discussions—particularly the first part of them. Data were treated accordingly.
- d) Likewise, in many (not all) locations, the local leaders either tried to limit respondents only to those directly chosen by the leaders, or assigned “minders” to the research team. In some circumstances, the team was able to get away from minders and select respondents independently, but not in all cases. This may have influenced what was said in interviews.

Selection of study sites

The selection was done to include as wide a variety of communities as possible including:

- Different kinds of aid targeting, in particular relief modalities and community based methods

- Different modalities of food assistance (General Food Distribution and Seasonal Support)
- Different population groups targeted for assistance (IDPs, mixed IDP/host communities, rural non-displaced groups)
- All of these, however, were subject to severe constraints in terms of security and access

Table 2 on the following page provides a summary of sites and respondents interviewed in each.

Table 2. Targeting in Complex Emergencies—Darfur Case Study

Communities Visited by Research Team			Interviews with Target Groups					
Location	Population / Groups	Food Aid Modality	HAC Officials	Sheikhs	FRC	Recipients	Non-recipients	Cooperating Partner (Name)
West Darfur State								
Geneina/ Ardamatta	IDP	GFD	X	X	X	Women, men, youth		SC-US
Kerenick/ Abuja	IDP/ Host community	GFD		X	X	Women, men, youth		
Kerenick/ Rosay	Pastoral	GFD				Women		
Geneina/ Korti	IDP	GFD	X	X	X			
Geneina Other CPs								Save the Children-US Sudan Red Crescent CRS
South Darfur State								
Ed Daein Khor Omer	IDP (Dinka and Arab)	GFD	X	X	X	Women, Youth		Sudan Red Crescent
Ed Daein Al Neem	IDP/Host community	GFD	X	X	X	Mixed groups	X	UMCOR
Ed Daein Um Labanaya	Rural resident	Seasonal support	X	X	X	Women and mixed group		
Nyala Otash Camp	IDP	GFD	X	X	X	Mixed groups		
Nyala Other CPs								Solidarités Samaritan's Purse CARE World Vision
Other CPs and organizations (Khartoum)								IOM FAO UNICEF ICRC GAA

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