

**Situation Analysis Report: West Darfur, Sudan**

**HelpAge International and UNICEF**

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## 1. Introduction

This study is the result of a five-week analysis of the situation in West Darfur and how it affects children and older people. The objective of the study is to gain an improved understanding of the community, its coping strategies for supporting separated children and older people, and what changes to these strategies that may have occurred as a result of the on-going conflict. Finally, recommendations for programmatic interventions are included.

HelpAge has worked in Sudan for over 20 years, but only began operating in West Darfur in July 2004. At present, HAI distributes non-food items to older people in camps, including Sisi and Krinding and advocates on behalf of older people. In Sisi, Krinding, Kerenik and Gokar, Older People's Committees (OPCs) have been established and OPCs are planned for Mornei and Riyadh. The OPCs are made up of representatives of older members of the community, both men and women, who monitor the condition of the more vulnerable older people, especially those who live alone. HelpAge has also initiated a project promoting fuel-efficient stoves, which can be easily made in the camps and 290 people have so far been trained in Sisi. The fuel-efficient stove projects have a protection element as well as ensuring that the use of firewood is maximised. There are additional benefits in that the amount of smoke is reduced and the fire itself is controlled, so that burning accidents, especially involving children, are minimised.

UNICEF works with other UN agencies, 39 NGOs and local authorities in the Darfur region to provide humanitarian assistance to the vulnerable population in the area. UNICEF's key programme interventions include Water and Sanitation, Health and Nutrition, Education, Child Protection and Relief and Shelter. For example, more than 263,000 children, between the ages of 6 and 13 years, have enrolled in schools through the construction of over 1,200 temporary classrooms and the rehabilitation of 68 permanent classrooms. In addition, 105,486 children in Darfur have been provided with psychosocial support through the establishment of child friendly spaces, which are safe places free from violence and conflict and meant for promoting the psychosocial well being of children and re-establishing a sense of normality in their lives. They offer an environment conducive for children who have been the victims of serious children's rights violations.

## 2. Methodology

Three locations within West Darfur were identified as focal points for the study: Mornei, Sisi and Gokar IDP camps, with Krinding as an alternative to Gokar in the event of Gokar being inaccessible for security reasons. (Table 1: IDP Populations – WFP figures from 2004). In the event, it was decided to go to Krinding camp on the outskirts of Geneina, as UNSECOORD, the security personnel of the relief operations, would not give clearance to drive to Gokar.

**Table 1: IDP Populations**

Location	Total Population	Children (under 15)	Older People (over 60)
Mornei	67,968	15,649	5,353
Sisi	4,104	952	603
Gokar	2,709	529	180
Krinding I	23,092	4,454	1,363
Krinding II	16,463	N/A	N/A

<b>Totals</b>	<b>114,336</b>	<b>21,584</b>	<b>7,499</b>
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Source: WFP (Registration date March/April/August 2004)

Each location was visited and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and semi-structured interviews (SSI) conducted. Each FGD comprised up to 20 people representing a cross-section of age, gender and ethnicity and the interviews were held with 10-20 older people and the children for whom they care. In practice, in certain locations, these numbers were difficult to maintain, especially as the Humanitarian Affairs Commission (HAC) and its representatives, had created a certain amount of expectation amongst the displaced people of Mornei. FGDs were, with the permission of the participants, tape recorded. The numbers were reduced to about 10, at least for the FGDs, in Sisi and Krinding, though again, in practice, once a gathering is noticed people will try and join it.

In addition, key stakeholders were consulted and these included local authorities, UN agencies and international NGOs and local committees, particularly Older Persons Committees, where these have been established.

Two Focus Group Discussions were held each morning and two interview sessions in the afternoon. The morning sessions were largely successful, but for the afternoon sessions some difficulties arose as early afternoon is set aside for market purposes and the mid-afternoon period becomes very hot and uncomfortable. Even later in the afternoon it was difficult to gather together the required interviewees, but finally, a mutually agreeable time was set and sessions were held as soon as afternoon prayers were over.

### **3. Constraints**

Limiting factors in organising and conducting the study included:

- Security - the main constraints to any operations in Darfur concern security. Travel between Geneina and Mornei is somewhat restricted due to the necessity of travelling in convoys of not less than three or four vehicles. Sisi lies along the same route and therefore the same restrictions apply.
- HAC - the capacity of the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), within the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs to support the international humanitarian community. HAC is often the first point of contact between INGOs and the IDPs and is, at least in theory, a partner in the international intervention. In Mornei, mainly due to the size of the camp (75,000 IDPs), it was necessary to seek their cooperation and assistance to organise the FGD and SSI groups. This assistance was channelled via the Omda of Mornei and the host and IDP sheikhs, most of whom, it appears, have been appointed by HAC and who, therefore, promote the agenda of HAC rather than representing the interests of the IDPs.
- Focus Group Discussions – FGDs were almost impossible to restrict to a manageable size in each location, but particularly in Mornei, where they were often primed beforehand by the sheikhs. Interviews in Mornei often became difficult to manage as the perception of the community, encouraged by HAC or the HAC representatives, was that vulnerable people in general were to be registered for distributions or support. The FGD in Hai al-Salaam ‘C’, Mornei,

ended early after the participants complained that they were bored of talking and that the exercise was meaningless. The same meeting included a HAC representative, who at one point reminded the group to speak only on the issues about which he had instructed them. The FGD in Hai al-Imtidad al-Sharg 'A', Mornei, was disrupted by a HAC sheikh who tried to persuade the gathering that life in a camp as an IDP was better than life in a village and that he, for one, was going to stay in Mornei. Fortunately for the discussion, he decided to leave the gathering.

- Limited infrastructure - the camps have few permanent buildings where discussions could be held, thus meetings tended to be fairly public making it difficult to prevent the groups becoming larger as time went on.
- Reliance on translators - certainly, in Mornei the problem was magnified due to the fact that the IDPs come from a wide spectrum of tribes, speaking different local languages, and Arabic is by no means understood by all, particularly women and children. During one meeting in Mornei four different languages were represented, in addition to Arabic: Masalit, Fur, Tama and Daju'. Translation is also a skill, involving interpretation as much as a direct translation of words from one language into another and this skill is integral to conducting good research.
- Local staff capacity - all INGOs working in West Darfur have similar problems as most national staff, especially those local to West Darfur, have little experience of working with INGOs and have had limited training in information gathering skills and using the tools required for effective research in displaced communities. Capacity building has been shortchanged by the immediacy of the emergency and the need for timely intervention.
- Limited access to quantifiable data - population figures, for example, are a year on from the first interventions by the international community, still little more than at best good estimates and at worst purely "guesstimates". WFP have been updating their registrations, which have improved their figures, but there remain wide diversities in the numbers of displaced peoples or of any specific groups, such as older carers, working children, rape victims or deaths.

#### **4. Overview of the situation in West Darfur**

According to the latest Humanitarian Profile available from the UN, there has been an increase in the IDP population in the whole of Darfur of 39% (about 17,800 people) since January 2005, bringing the total IDP population to 1.86 million, 38% (700,000) of whom are in West Darfur. The UN claims that, due to better registration and increased access, 88% of the total population is being accessed with relief at the moment.

#### **5. Security and Protection**

Over the past twelve months, the security situation in Darfur has not improved, despite condemnation by the international community and the UN. The government of Sudan has done little to disarm the militias and the IDP population still has very real fears that any proposed return to their homes cannot be achieved without their security being guaranteed. The police forces remain ineffective, and either collude

with or ignore militia attacks on IDPs. Indeed, many of those recruited into the police in the last year come from the militias themselves, and the impunity with which the militias seem to be able to act is a result of this. The continuing presence, around and close to many of the camps, of the Janjaweed militias, who are constantly mentioned by the residents of the camps as being the cause of insecurity and the perpetrators of aggression, assaults and rape, can only be seen as threatening and a means of intimidation.

The African Union monitoring teams have too limited a mandate to be effective, and, except for reporting incidents and investigating reported rapes, there is little that they can do. However, although the AU teams have begun patrolling some firewood collection areas, IDPs have little confidence in their ability to help the security situation and even the physical presence of the AU makes little difference to their lives.

The collection of firewood has been identified as a major protection issue, which to some degree is being addressed by AU patrols, but also by HAI and other agencies through the training of trainers in the making of fuel-efficient stoves. The stoves are made from locally available materials and are a simple means of maximising the use of firewood and of reducing, at least a little, the frequency of having to seek further supplies and thereby exposing oneself to risk.

## **6. Key Stakeholders**

Preliminary consultations were held with UNICEF in Khartoum and Geneina, WFP in Mornei and Geneina, Save the Children US (SC-US), Oxfam, MSF-F and Concern in Mornei, Medair and the Older Persons Committee in Sisi and the Humanitarian Affairs Commission (HAC) in Mornei. All of these actors had specific concerns about older people and children:

- UNICEF expressed concern about the assumption of responsibility by the UN or INGOs rather than the promotion of responsibility through community coping strategies.
- Oxfam in Mornei had two main concerns: the numbers of older people coping with living alone, and the fact that older people within a household are considered beneficiaries of the household, rather than beneficiaries in their own right.
- MSF-F had registered 390 unaccompanied older people in Mornei after home visits. They were concerned about blind older people living alone, who occasionally set fire to their shelters as a result of cooking accidents as well as older people who have resorted to begging.
- Concern's main concern in Mornei related to the WFP registrations for rations. They felt that the registration in the Hai al-Wadi sector in particular, was carried out without sufficient community structures being established and with poor communication, so that many people were unaware that it was taking place. In addition, the registration site was about 1 kilometre away from Hai al-Wadi and older people, and especially those looking after children, were unable to physically reach the site.
- SC-US has established four children's centres in Mornei, which are well attended. However, the number of children attending was fewer than the potential numbers, as many children must work to help support the family.

- Medair indicated their concern that older people remained marginalised and susceptible to being overlooked during distributions of both food and non-food items.

## **7. Information on Mornei, Sisi and Krinding camps**

### **A. Mornei**

Mornei, two years ago, was a small settlement of barely 3,000 people. Today it holds a population of approximately 75-80,000 internally displaced people. WFP estimates a more conservative total of 67,968, while HAC puts the total population at 94,399 of whom only 2,144 have been registered by HAC to date. The IDPs are a mixture of Masalit, Fur, Tama, Daju’ and Jebel peoples, who have fled from villages in a wide radius around the town. It is the largest IDP camp in West Darfur and is divided into 10 sectors (Table 2: Sectors and population figures, Mornei). WFP has a base in Mornei and MSF-F, Oxfam, Concern and SC-US are the other main INGOs operating within the camp. Although a complete breakdown of the population has not been made, a figure of 10%, based on HAI’s experience in Darfur, indicates that there may be a displaced population of roughly 7,500 older people in Mornei alone.

**Table 2: Sectors and population figures, Mornei**

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Households/Families</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>OPs (@10%)</b>
Hai el-Jebel	N/A	9767	977
Hai es-Salaam ‘A’	955	5317	532
Hai es-Salaam ‘B’	N/A	7016	702
Hai es-Salaam ‘C’	N/A	8358	836
Hai el-Wadi ‘A’	762	8282	828
Hai el-Wadi ‘B’	N/A	7650	765
Hai el-Wadi ‘C’	1237	6140	614
Hai el-Imtidad esh-Sharg ‘A’	N/A	15293	1529
Hai el-Imtidad esh-Sharg ‘B’	2051	11326	1133
Hai el-Imtidad el-Gharb	N/A	15250	1525

Source: HAC Population figures

Focus Group Discussions and semi-structured interviews were held in each sector (one additional FGD and interview was held in Hai es-Salaam ‘A’), following separate meetings with HAC and with about 50 Sheikhs. Preliminary meetings were also held with the representatives of the INGOs.

### **B. Sisi**

Apart from a police post on the road between Geneina and Mornei, there was previously no settlement at Sisi. The camp has been established on both sides of the road and is divided by a wadi – a dry riverbed, which, bisecting the road, cuts the camp into four. The larger proportion of the population has settled in the north-western sector of Jaboon and most of the IDPs come from 10 small villages, which were scattered around the area. FGDs and SSIs were held in each sector of Sisi. The main INGOs working in Sisi are HelpAge, Medair, SC-US and the Saudi Red Crescent.

### **C. Krinding**

Krinding is a large camp established across the wadi on the southern edge of Geneina town. The road leading southwards to Nyala and east to El Fasher divides the camp,

which sprawls widely on each side and for about a kilometre southwards. The camp has been divided into two, Krinding I on the west side and Krinding II on the east and is home to about 39,500 people. One FGD was held in Krinding II, two were held in Krinding I, and two SSIs were held in each part of the camp. The main INGOs working in Krinding are HelpAge, Islamic Relief Worldwide, SC-US, the Saudi Red Crescent, ADRA, and Mercy Malaysia.

## **8. Information**

The FGDs and interviews aimed to gather information and gain a better understanding on the following topics and themes:

- The status of children and older people
- The affect of the crisis on their status
- Cultural attitudes to children and older people
- Coping mechanisms for caring for vulnerable older people and vulnerable children
- The affect of the crisis on these mechanisms
- Older peoples' concerns in supporting the physical, mental and psychosocial needs of the children they care for
- Issues faced by separated children living with an older carer
- How these issues affect their ability to access resources
- Attitudes of others towards children who are not living in a traditional family structure
- Gender issues: the affect of conflict on traditional roles and responsibilities

## **9. Findings**

The discussions and interviews attempted to focus the attention of the participants on the situation and conditions in which they find themselves now and how they are coping with them. The responses were compared to conditions in the past and how the strategies for coping with them differed from the present. There were many differing responses regarding both past and present conditions, but, in general, all the groups put forward similar views and opinions and coping strategies tended to be common to all groups and to all locations.

It was also difficult to get a uniform sense of where “the past” was. It is common amongst displaced and refugee populations to talk of their previous lives in rosy terms, but many are vague as to when this past existed. In Darfur, this problem is compounded as there have been relatively few periods of time in the last 30 years, which could be described as normal. However, generally speaking, when people talked of how they coped before the current conflict, they were talking of a time when they were not displaced. There may have been insecurity, lack of governmental services or famine, but they were settled in their villages and able to lead a relatively “normal” life, where they were self-reliant, but had their family and neighbours around them when they needed support, owned goats, sheep and cattle, farmed their land and produced most of their own food. Displacement has changed all of that and the choices for coping have become very limited.

### **A. Status**

The present conflict has fragmented the status of all people, but particularly that of older people. Respect and dignity has been eroded and older people have become more open to abuse and neglect, through isolation, reduced mobility and the loss of family and community networks. Respect comes from being an active and useful member of the community and, as long as one is able to contribute in some way, dignity can be retained.

In the village, whether as an individual or as a family, one owns land and has assets in terms of livestock and the produce of one's land, and one can contribute by different means to the welfare of the whole community. Disability and frailty do not always indicate a barrier to status or independence, even in times of relative poverty. One's history is known and the support of the community is never far away.

Older people are traditionally the preservers of cultural and social identity and traditions. They can be problem solvers and advisors, though not exclusively so, as in most communities, the members of the community are well aware of the individual limitations and strengths of other members. Wisdom is not necessarily age related, as one group member asserted. (Table 3: One respondent's breakdown of old age).

**Table 3: One respondent's breakdown of old age**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
Over 50	Still active, can collect firewood and grass
Over 60	Less active, but can still work at home and look after grandchildren
Over 80	Inactive, needs to be looked after

Culturally, children are seen as an essential part of ensuring the continuation of one's name, as well as a practical addition to the family for assistance in agricultural activities, looking after livestock, domestic activities and in the case of girls, a means of increasing one's assets through bridewealth. The ownership of livestock and productive land ensure that even orphans retain a certain status in the community and, although they may require additional support through kinship networks, their inherited assets are there for them to fall back upon.

Even when their parents are alive, children as young as three years old may be sent to live with a grandparent. The child will be taught gender appropriate skills and the behaviour and attitude expected of them. In return, the child will help in the home, on the farm or with the livestock and will provide company for the grandparent or, for example, in the case of a blind person, will perform the important function of guide.

*"In camp, you don't know people well enough. Before you could consult the elders: now you can even ask advice from younger people who you know."* A young man in Hai al-Jebel sector, Mornei.

However, as a displaced person, regardless of status, respect is diminished. Everyone has been brought down to the same level and depends on support from outside, whether from a host community or from international intervention. As a sheikh, one's authority and control over events has been lost. Indeed, many sheikhs find the problems that they have to deal with, too overwhelming and the solutions to them so much out of their hands that their people no longer look to them for support. In many

cases, the sheikhs have been replaced, due to their absence or for political reasons, and much of their traditional authority has been replaced by that of camp management, HAC or international agencies. As people flee, they scatter and the former sense of community is broken.

*“We used to be useful. Now we are useless – we can do nothing in the camps.”* An older person, Hai el-Wadi ‘C’ sector, Mornei.

The human impact of living in camps is even more acute for older people, and many older people expressed a reduced sense of self-esteem. They claimed to feel their age and frailty more, as well as expressing feelings of worthlessness. They complained of feeling useless or of not being able to contribute more to the community, their families, and supporting households. Another complaint of older women was that they seemed to have lost the social contact that they used to have. They were well known in the village and when anyone met them or passed their home, they would stop to talk to them. In the camps, however, they feel that they have become invisible and no-one talks to them anymore.

Yet, the younger members of the FGD groups reported that the older generations were the storytellers and the singers. It was more often than not, the grandmother who would fulfil this function in the village and it was an important aspect of the younger peoples’ childhood years. Older men and grandfathers, on the other hand, concentrated more on spiritual matters and provided guidance and teaching from the Qur’an. Both older men and women, therefore, felt they had had a position and a role to fill within the community as well as in the family, but with displacement these had been lost.

*“We (older people) have no future, so we have no status here. Even children have a higher status, because they can be useful in the future”.* Halima, Nuri sector, Sisi.

When status is diminished, vulnerability levels are increased. An old widower complained that he was now vulnerable because he had no wife to look after him and no means to marry again. Another older man with a severe speech impediment due to a cleft palate, felt vulnerable and particularly useless, because no-one could understand what he was saying any more. Back at home, everyone was used to his disability and were able to elicit meaning from his words. In the camp, he felt isolated, ignored and scorned for his disability. In a male dominated society, diminished status, loss of control and the increased awareness of vulnerability are not easy for men to accept. Together with the reduced role as providers that men are being forced to take, the psychological strains on men, particularly older men, are overwhelming many of them.

In Mornei’s Hai al-Imtidad al-Sharg ‘B’ sector, the FGD group complained that older people occasionally suffered verbal abuse, especially at water points, and that, more often than not, this abuse came from younger women of the host community. Occasionally the verbal abuse will be aimed at the IDPs in general, emphasising their displacement and the fact that they ran from the Janjaweed. However, none of the groups admitted to other forms of abuse, either physical or sexual, within the camp communities, although incidences have been recorded. In Sisi, one older woman was identified as suffering psychological abuse as she was being neglected and any items

she would receive from distributions would be stolen from her. The only abuses reported were ascribed to the Janjaweed and included rape of girls and women and beatings of older people.

### **B. Coping mechanisms and support strategies.**

*“In the village, everyone knows everyone else and their condition. The vulnerable people are known or are very few.”* A Sheikh, FGD group, Hai el-Salaam ‘A’, Mornei.

Rural life in a typical village in West Darfur could never be described as easy, even in the best of times. Now, most of the population of these scattered communities are themselves widely scattered. Previously families and individuals owned camels, cattle, goats and sheep in numbers and farmed enough land to provide for themselves and have a small surplus to buy clothes, household goods, and other essentials. The essential ingredient for a satisfactory life was choice; one’s diet could be varied, and though sorghum was the staple, a wide variety of vegetables and fruits were available most of the time, either from one’s own garden, from neighbours or from the local market. If cash was needed to buy clothes or a new cooking pot, one could potentially sell a goat or two or, for more expensive items, a bull or heifer. Milk was more readily available from camels, cows and goats as required and one’s neighbours, and the community, as a whole, was seen to be always there to provide needed economic and social support.

#### **a. Community structures - Village**

The community relied on mutual support and collaboration, but most families or individuals had a high degree of independence, through the ownership of livestock. Vulnerable families or individuals were known and older people, the disabled or the chronically ill could rely on their neighbours to help with repairs to homes, work on the farm or domestic chores.

The *adara*’ is a traditional method of ensuring that older men in particular, have the opportunity to socialise and have a meal. *Adara*’ is a communal meeting place, often the home of the sheikh or the imam, where men gather, some of them bringing some food with them. Any male in the community may join the gathering and the meal. It can also be a place where male guests to the village are accommodated or entertained.

Each village had a sheikh, usually a hereditary position, and the sheikh had full control over the affairs and business of the community. The Imam led the spiritual affairs of the people and oversaw the education of the village children. Minor problems and disputes were solved, initially, within the family or the wider kinship network, but could be taken to the sheikh if they proved insoluble. Support of the family was taken for granted and older people and young children enjoyed a preferential status within the community.

The “community chest” (*sandug*: fund, literally box) holds funds contributed by the community as *zaka* and is responsibility of the sheikh. *Zaka*, one of the pillars of Islam, is paid by every individual at certain times of the year, such as after the harvest or on religious holidays. It can be paid in kind or in cash and the sheikh, in consultation with the community and based on local knowledge of the community, ensures that those in need of support receive it. Individuals also may apply for support

and access the funds to help pay for school fees. Older people are looking after children are often specifically targeted for this kind of assistance.

*“Here in Mornei (camp) you are lucky if you have family left to look after you. Back home, the whole village knows when you need help and you know you will get it.”* An older woman, Hai al-Salaam ‘A’ sector, Mornei.

#### b. Orphans and separated children - Village

The English word “orphan” usually refers to a child who has lost both parents, but when translated from Arabic indicates one who has lost one parent. In Arabic, there are different, yet related, terms for orphans and single parent orphans. A child with no parents is *yateem* and one with a surviving parent is *ateem*, regardless of which parent remains. Separated children were largely an unknown phenomena in more settled times, as there was always an aunt or uncle or grandparent to look after them. (Case Study 1: Khadija).

In the case of orphans, the sheikh is responsible for ensuring that a relative is found who is able to take care of the children, if the family has not already done so. Again, if there are no identifiable relatives, the sheikh will arrange for placement of the children in a suitable and willing foster family. The sheikh is also responsible for ensuring that the older members of the community are not neglected and for organising community assistance when required, particularly in the case of an older person who has no relatives remaining in the village.

*“Our WFP card is our only asset – it has replaced all our land and animals.”* A middle-aged woman in Krinding.

In circumstances of displacement, the strategies outlined above have become fragmented and much more difficult to maintain. The present conflict has caused massive displacement by violence and attacks on villages, which usually results in the loss of assets, particularly land and livestock and generally reduces the displaced to a uniform level of poverty. Therefore, in the camps it is much more difficult for these coping strategies and support systems to function, not only because people depend on food aid, but also because so many family structures have been broken down and community and kinship networks scattered in different directions.

The ties of relationship and neighbourliness have been severely affected by a universal loss of assets, which has reduced the opportunities for giving and receiving support. Furthermore, as everyone relies on relief assistance, there is little surplus food that can be made available. However, people will do what they can if they are able. Yousif, a member of an FGD group in Hai al-Salaam ‘B’ sector in Mornei told how he had found an older woman, Aida, living on her own and struggling to survive. She had come from the same village as his own father, but was not related to him in any way. She is now living with his family in the camp and is sharing their rations. This was considered by the discussion group to be a good act of neighbourliness, but they admitted that it was unusual for someone to take a completely unrelated individual into their family.

*“The Sheikh (of the village) used to deal with any problems. Now all the Sheikhs are hiding. They do not want all these extra responsibilities.”* A man in Jaboon ‘A’ sector, Sisi.

### c. Community structures - Camp

Even the hierarchical structures are fragmented and changed and many sheikhs now representing sectors of camps have little or no connection with the people they are meant to represent. Often, they are appointed by HAC, as in Mornei, or camp administration and have become suborned to the necessities of political expediency. Indeed, in more than one group, the sheikh or appointed representatives, urged the group to keep to the prearranged topics of discussion or diverted the discussion away from sensitive issues, such as security. However in Sisi, the groups felt they had better representation on the whole, as the camp, made up of families from several different displaced villages had retained some of their separate community identities. They were concerned, though, that their sheikhs, faced by the enormity of the communities' problems, were holding back on their responsibilities.

For problem solving, some residents of the camps claim to be able to go to the sheikh, but more often than not *hakuma* is the new source of support. *Hakuma* can mean government, or its representatives, namely HAC, or it can refer to the international intervention agencies, the UN and INGOs. Traditional responses and responsibilities are increasingly being abrogated to the UN and INGOs.

### d. Food aid

In the camps, people depend on a monthly ration, which is considered meagre and from which they can spare very little, if anything. (Table 4: WFP monthly rations). Therefore, people tend to look out for themselves first and their close relatives next. Some neighbourliness is occasionally re-established, but the support given is limited and irregular. For example, a neighbour can call an older person whom they know to be vulnerable, to join the family when they are eating. One strategy available to older people, who are alone, but who have been included in the registration for rations, is to trust a neighbour with one's card. The neighbour will collect the ration and add it to their own, and will include the older person when meals are prepared. Occasionally, though, this strategy is abused and the neighbour will keep the card and not feed the older person.

**Table 4: WFP monthly rations**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Kilograms</b>
Cereals	15
Pulses/CSB	1.5
Oil	0.9
Salt	0.15
Sugar (Occasional)	0.75

Cereals are distributed as whole grain and are either milled into flour if a machine is available or pounded by hand. Milling incurs a small charge, payable in cash or kind. Sorghum is the main cereal distributed and is usually of a variety not generally popular, but especially amongst older people due to its coarseness and difficulty to chew (*dura* rather than *dukhn*).

### e. Labour and income generation

The major strategy in the camps for coping with the loss or reduction in assets and the lack of variety in the diet, is through labour. Most people rely on small income

generation activities such as the sale of firewood and grass or on labouring to supplement the rations they receive from WFP and to buy other essentials. The workforce, in this sense, is mostly women and older children, as the dangers for men are seen to be too great if they leave the immediate surroundings of the camp.

Women, girls and boys will collect firewood and grass, which can be sold, and from the profits onions, tomatoes, okra and perhaps sugar will be bought. Women will work at brick-making and charcoal burning, and children can often be given paid domestic work in host family homes. For the residents of Krinding camp, there appears to be more opportunity for remunerated work for both men and women, as Geneina has a large host population, not to mention the international community, which offers a variety of working opportunities. These opportunities tend to be menial and include portering in the market, cleaning houses, laundry, building site fetching and carrying, street cleaning and rubbish collection.

*“We (women) didn’t used to have to work so hard. Now we have to work constantly and it is very heavy work”.* Khaltouma, Tongore sector, Sisi

Grass collecting, usually for animal fodder, and firewood collection, are the two main activities for income generation in the camps. However, the effort required in the collection is not reflected in the reward of a sale. After a year of displacement, the areas of collection for firewood are further and further away from the camps. Often women and older children have to walk up to three hours to find trees which can still yield enough firewood. The dangers of rape, abuse and physical assault are also increased the further from the camp people have to go. If a donkey is available, the load can be larger, but many women carry the loads themselves.

One bundle of firewood, a load for one adult, can bring in SD50-200, the equivalent of 20-80 cents. School fees are said to be up to SD200 and a *malwa* of sorghum (about 4 kgs) about SD600. Often, as in Sisi, firewood is taken to traders who do not necessarily pay for it until they, themselves, have sold it. This may take some time as the firewood is stockpiled and later loaded onto lorries and transport the wood to Geneina or other locations further afield such as Nyala.

Opportunities for older people to earn money are much more limited in the camps, with the exception of Krinding where older people can also find work in Geneina. A considerable number of respondents during the SSIs, mainly older women looking after grandchildren, said that the parents of the children had moved to the camps in or around the larger towns such as Geneina and Nyala. In the main, the reasons for this secondary movement of displaced people were to do with employment, as the large host populations and considerable reconstruction or building associated with the international community, offered better opportunities for casual and menial labour. Men certainly have a better chance of finding work in the towns as they are not able to go outside the camps into the countryside due to the dangers of attacks.

Older people tend to be left at home to look after children whilst the mother is working or they have some disability, health or mobility problems, which prevent them from going out to work. Many of the activities outside the camps, such as firewood and grass collection, require walking long distances and often this is just not physically possible for some older people.

This lack of opportunities means that many older people, upon receiving their monthly ration, will sell a proportion of it so that they can buy other food items, such as vegetables or meat. The sale of some of their ration, in turn, means that what remains is usually finished well before the next distribution is due. Several of the groups in both Mornei and Sisi claimed that the ration for an individual older person was less than for individuals within families and that it did not last for more than a few days. According to WFP, however, the ration for every individual is the same, whether they are living alone or in a family group.

For older people, especially those with no relatives or who are blind, another strategy they will admit to is begging. Several older people, especially those with eye problems, claimed to beg in the markets and receive either cash or small contributions of food items or occasionally prepared food. *Zaka* was often given on Fridays or Muslim holidays, and one blind old man in Mornei claimed to be contributing to school fees for his grandson, who is also his guide, from this source.

#### f. Orphans and separated children - Camp

The support systems for looking after orphans and separated children have likewise been eroded, but most people agree that a greater effort is made to deal with these cases and that there is no stigma attached to them. Children identified as separated are referred to the sheikh who will make enquiries about relatives or former neighbours, and failing that as a preferred solution, will seek out a family who is willing and able to look after them. The family should preferably be of the same ethnic group as the child, but exceptions can be made. (Case Study 2: Aisha)

There is a conventional pattern to deciding on how orphans, whether *yateem* or *ateem*, are placed with relatives. If the father of the children dies, the paternal grandparents or relatives, usually have the initial responsibility for looking after the children and their mother. If the mother dies, usually the father places the children with their maternal uncles and aunts or with the maternal grandparents, and, more often than not, he will remarry and start a new family.

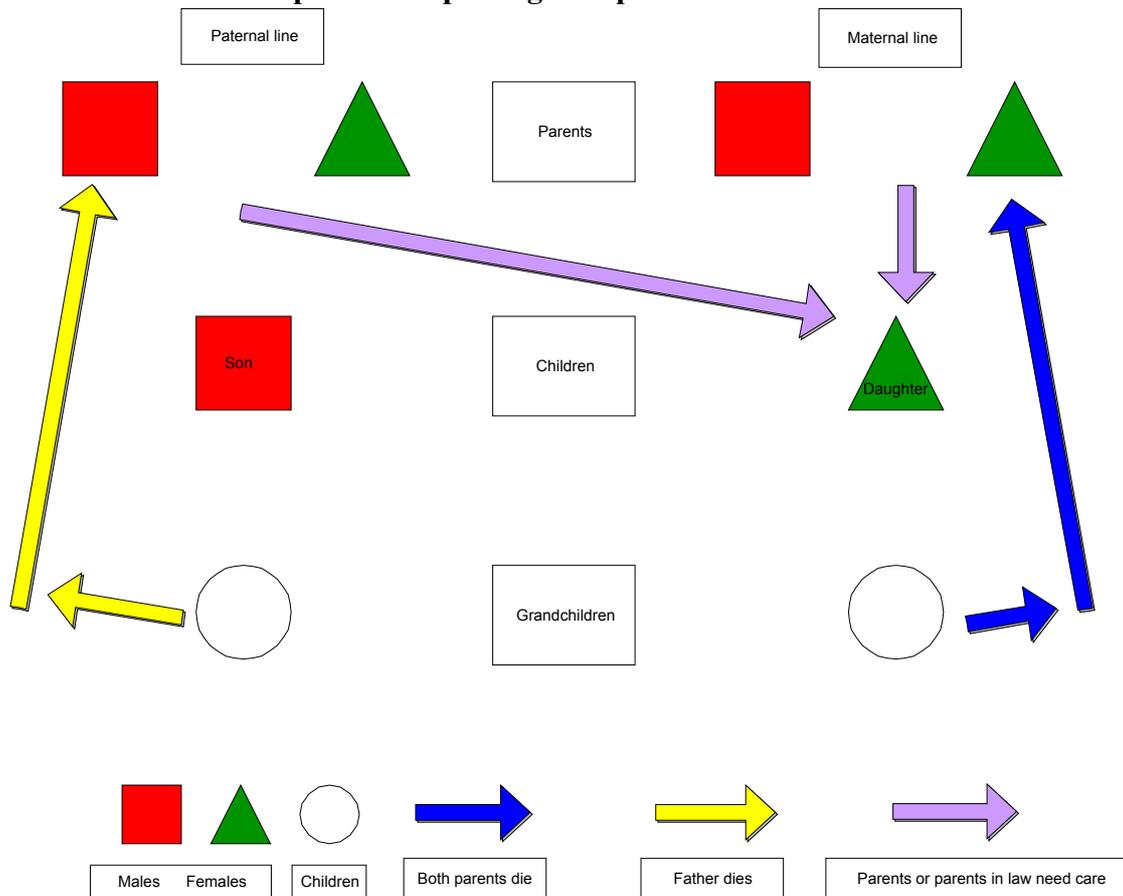
If both parents die, then it is usually the responsibility of the maternal relations of the children to look after them or to decide who is best placed to take them into their own family. In the case of elderly parents, who become too infirm to look after themselves, the convention is that they will stay with their daughter's family, rather than their son's family, as the wife of a son is said to be less sympathetic to her in laws, than a son in law. (Chart A: Relationships and the placing of orphans).

On occasions the support systems collapse completely or the circumstances are too complicated for them to cope. One example of this can be seen in Mornei, where two young children, in the care of their grandmother, have become a cause for concern for community members and the agencies working there. The grandmother, Fatima Suleiman, tries her best to look after the children, but is defeated at every turn. An aunt who is also in Mornei will not do anything for them because she cannot and has her own children to worry about. The children have been described as autistic, feral, and many other less sensitive words and suffer from taunts and teasing from neighbouring children. They are included in feeding programmes, but remain in danger of malnutrition. If the grandmother has to leave them alone, they have to be

tied up for their own safety. The community does not know what to do with them or how to help and consequently no support for them or their grandmother is forthcoming. Their case has been well documented, yet no long-term solutions have been put forward.

However, this is an extreme case and there were several other examples of children and young adults with learning and developmental problems or disabilities, who were obviously being well cared for. Fatima Ahmad is an older woman living in the Nuri sector of Sisi. She looks after her twin grandsons, who are about ten years old. One of the boys has developmental problems and is restless and hyperactive, yet is happy and playful and is looked after, very affectionately, by his twin.

**Chart A: Relationships and the placing of orphans**



**C. Concerns of carers**

*“Night-time is the worst time. Then I remember all the things that I have lost, and am now too old to replace. So what is to become of my grandchildren?”* Hawa, Hai al-Salaam ‘C’ sector, Mornei.

During most of the FGDs, and during other informal discussions, most of the older participants claimed to be looking after young children, either as sole carers or as principal carers. This was certainly reflected in the numbers of participants in the SSIs, at least in Mornei and Krinding, but some of the sheikhs in Sisi found it difficult to gather 10 older people, who were looking after children. This may have been

because the SSIs were generally held in the afternoons and people were not so readily available. Or it could have been simply that families in Sisi had been able to keep together more than in the other camps. Whatever the reasons, it is clear that very little concrete information on the numbers of older, or younger, carers is available and it was not possible during this study to gather sufficient data on this issue.

#### a. Older carers

Older carers expressed concerns around their ability to provide for the children, especially in terms of food, clothing and education. Communities had been, in the past, sufficiently close knit and relatives and assets widely accessible, so that there was less concern about the future of the children if the carer died. The only concern, then, was to stay healthy and strong enough to be able to provide for them. Now, many are worried about being able to get support or assistance from neighbours whom they barely know and who are, anyhow, experiencing similar circumstances to themselves. Mariam, in the Hai el-Jebel sector of Mornei camp, complained that older people and especially older women are not used to being consulted by the *khawajat* and feel that their views and opinions are not regarded as being important.

Aida, an older woman, living in the Hai el-Salaam 'B' sector of Mornei, expressed her worry that, whilst Yousif, the son of a former neighbour, is caring for her, she feels she is not able to make enough contribution to the family, except through providing childcare. Another woman was so used to being independent and living on her own, that she moved out of the shelter, which she shared with her family and built her own in another place. She had been helping to look after the children, but felt that it was too much for her and she complained that, as she had to eat with the children and was slow in eating, she was not getting her share of food. She now lives alone and relies on the family to send her food separately. One of the children is also sent to her every day to fetch her water.

#### b. Younger carers

Security and protection are a constant worry. One 14 year old boy, who almost single-handedly supports his grandparents and mother, will not allow them to go out to collect firewood and grass with the other women, as he fears that the danger of rape is too great. (Case Study 3: Breadwinner). He goes out with some neighbouring boys to gather these items himself. The fear of gender based sexual violence is constant, but, in most cases, women are forced to take the risk in order to generate income to supplement the family's rations.

The risks are very real and a recent case occurred in Sisi, when three girls from the aged 17 to 25 were badly beaten and repeatedly raped by Janjaweed. Medair, themselves taking a risk in reporting the incident, treated and are counselling the girls. The incident was fully documented and reported and the African Union Monitoring team came out to investigate the incident. However, the local authorities are not interested in pursuing the case and the regional authorities are criticising INGOs who submit any reports on rape. The camps themselves are not entirely secure and the IDPs are often harassed and verbally abused by Janjaweed. The insult of choice is *torabora* a term used to describe the rebel SLA, JEM and others.

#### **D. Access to resources**

Access to resources is not a problem in the village. Most individuals have their own assets and any further requirements can be bought or exchanged using these assets. In fact, on many occasions it is not necessary to travel to a market as most necessities can be obtained from the village from neighbours and family. Most villages are largely self-sufficient and a wide variety of foodstuffs is available. Water is usually obtained from a hand-dug well and milk and other animal products are available from stock. Education is usually provided through the imam and is based on religious training and education, rather than official Government of Sudan schools.

Resources are still available in the camps, but the variety is greatly reduced and some sections of society may have restricted access. Food resources, for example, are limited and access to variety depends on having the means to pay for it. WFP food rations are distributed once a month and if they are consumed before the next distribution, the family must remain hungry or buy extra by earning money through labour or trade.

Some people, notably older people, expressed a concern that WFP's registration of older people was not completed correctly and that many were still not included in the distributions. The registration process depends on the physical presence of all of the members of the family group. If a person was sick on the day of registration and unable to be at the registration point, they were not included, but even a year later, no follow up registration has been done, though WFP has been engaging in new registrations over the past few months.

Distributions themselves can pose some problems of access to older people. In Sisi camp, there is one distribution point under the sisi trees at the side of the wadi, and each sector of the camp has a specific time for collecting rations. It is not a central point, but as the camp is relatively small, the problems of access are not great. However, in the bigger camps of Mornei and Krinding, access becomes more of a problem, especially for the mobility challenged, sick or infirm. Both camps have one distribution point, in Mornei, right in the centre of town and in Krinding, nearer the southern edge of the camp. Again, each sector of the camp has a specific day or days for collecting rations, but no concessions are made for older people or vulnerable groups. Donkeys or donkey carts are available for hire, if affordable, otherwise older people rely on relatives or friends to carry their rations home for them.

There appears to be no efficiently functioning system to follow up those omitted from the registration process. Complaints and pleas passed to HAC or the local sheikhs are often not forwarded to WFP. A number of IDPs also complained that there was no effective procedure for applying for a replacement ration card if it is stolen or lost. WFP, however, assert that there is a procedure for following up these kinds of complaints during post-distribution assessments. At the distributions themselves, many of those who have a visual impairment claim they are not given their full ration, and they cannot see well enough to check. Others claimed that people actively steal some of their rations from under their noses.

Firewood and grass are good marketable commodities, but natural resources are gradually becoming more difficult to access due to over-exploitation and insecurity. Remunerated labour depends on the activities of the town or area where the camp is

situated, and often men's access to them is restricted by security concerns. Water is usually made readily available by the international community and access is only restricted by the individual's own ability. However, older people have less access to income-generation activities, due to immobility, infirmity or sickness or because they are relied upon for childcare duties more and more, as mothers take on the burden of earning.

The residents of Sisi camp reported being denied access to firewood by the Janjaweed, who are still a threatening presence around the camp. They stated that in April, the Janjaweed had informed the people of Sisi that they would not be allowed to move outside the confines of the camp and that anyone doing so would "face the consequences".

In addition, in the case of Sisi camp, and perhaps less overtly in other camps, access to markets in order to sell firewood, for example, is restricted by traders. Sisi appears to be a large warehouse for firewood and wooden building materials where stockpiles await trucks to transport the goods to other locations, usually the large towns. The traders often pay the wood collectors a small proportion of what they themselves have been paid for it, and usually only after they have received that payment.

*"Our sons have to work too much to be able to go to school."* A mother, Gerenyo sector, Sisi.

Common concerns relate to health and access, or lack of it, to education. The opportunity for education is important to most children, but the necessity of helping to support the family usually takes precedence. Access to educational resources can be increased through camp residence, but at the same time decreased depending on the circumstances of the individual. Many camps have established small Qur'anic schools, as well as the former government run schools or schools set up and supported by UNICEF and the INGOs. However, some children have no access to schooling either because they are working in the market or fetching firewood. Some children are able to combine both activities, but also may be forced to work extra hours or miss some school days in order to earn enough money to pay tuition.

The UNICEF schools do not, in theory, charge for attendance, but teachers claim to be unpaid or poorly equipped with incentives, and request small amounts of money from the children as fees. One Masalit woman in Mornei claimed that when she took her son to register for school, registration was denied because neither she nor her son spoke Arabic. Another boy of about 14 years told how he was desperate to go to school, but could not because he had taken upon himself the role of main breadwinner for the family. He refused to allow his mother to go for firewood, because he feared for her safety. In contrast, another boy of about 11 years was able to attend school despite being his blind grandfather's guide. His grandfather would receive some money during Muslim holidays or from *zaka* and put some of it towards his grandson's education. (Case Study 4: Muhammad)

UNICEF has established some schools in the camps and supports some of the existing ones. In Mornei, there is a large UNICEF school mainly catering for the displaced population and a government one catering to residents. At Sisi, there was no school before the present crisis, however UNICEF has since established a small one on the

southern edge of the camp. Krinding has several schools established by UNICEF for the displaced. It was not possible, during the period of the study to determine the extent of non-attendance at school and the numbers of children who were working instead of attending school.

Access to jobs and land were much more contentious issues, with many IDPs claiming that better paid jobs, though not necessarily skilled ones, with INGOs and UN agencies were reserved for host populations or filled by nationals brought in from Geneina. Indeed, the local authorities actively excluded the IDPs, it was claimed, from the application process, unless the work was of a voluntary nature. Again, several members of the FGD group in the Hai al-Imtidad al-Sharg 'B' sector in Mornei claimed they had had to pay the local residents for a small piece of ground on which to build their shelters. In addition, they had to pay to rent a plot of ground at the wadi side in order to grow vegetables. In fact, most of the vegetable plots and their produce were owned by the local residents, but worked by IDPs.

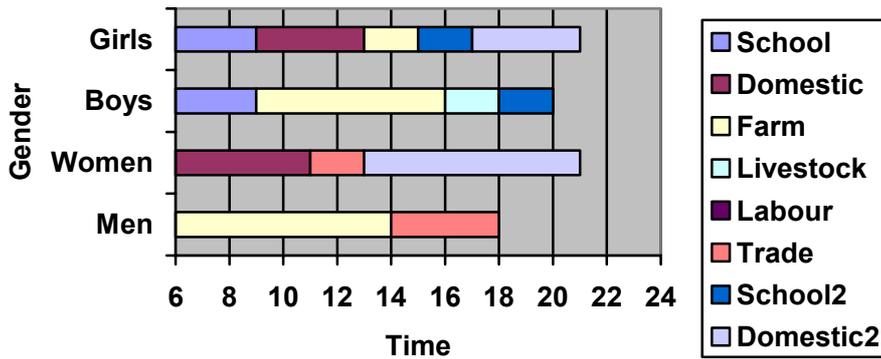
In general, older people have much more limited access to all resources in the camps. Many are included in family groups for rations, but have no control over them and most are not physically able, by reason of age, infirmity or health, to walk the distances required for the collection of firewood let alone the burden of bringing the load back. Some agencies provide activity centres for women and for children, but the perception of some older women is that they are for the younger women, and there are no equivalents for men. SC-US has four children's centres in Mornei and activities such as football, volleyball and other games are presided over by local animators, mostly younger men and women.

#### **E. Gender issues - roles and responsibilities**

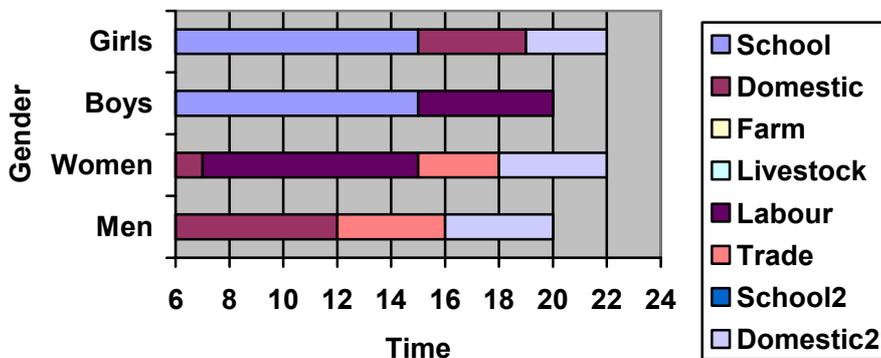
*"Men and women have changed places. In Sisi (camp), we (men) are like women. We have to stay in the house, while the women go out to work."* Musa, Tongore sector, Sisi

Gender roles and responsibilities are generally well defined, but have been affected in various ways by the present conflict and the situation in which the displaced find themselves. Older members of the family, if they are living within the family unit, will participate according to traditional conventions with an added educational role in cultural, traditional and spiritual aspects of life. Male activities centre around agriculture and livestock and building and maintaining the family home. They will collect wood and other local materials for building or for making items for use in the home, such as beds, mats and fencing, as well as for marketing, such as firewood and charcoal. Their main agricultural activities deal with cash crops for trading and marketing. The boys in the family will attend school and spend most of the remainder of the day looking after the livestock or attending to the fields and crops. (Chart B: Daily routine – village; Chart C: Daily routine – camp; Table 5: Main Activities – village; Table 6: Main Activities – camp). The charts and tables represent the changes in roles described by several different FGD groups from both Mornei and Sisi and they have been compiled as a generalised representation from different groups.

**Chart B: Daily routine - village**



**Chart C: Daily routine - camp**



**Table 5: Main Activities - village**

Older men	Older women	Men	Women	Boys	Girls
Quran	Child care	Cash crops	Domestic crops	School	School
Farm	Farm	Firewood	Domestic	Farm	Domestic
	Traditions	Charcoal	Cleaning	Livestock	Water
		Trading	Farm		Farm
		Building			

**Table 6: Main Activities - camp**

Older men	Older women	Men	Women	Boys	Girls
Quran	Child care	Domestic	Labour	School	School
Childcare	Firewood	Trading	Domestic	Portering	Domestic
			Cleaning	Dung collection	Water
			Firewood	Firewood	Firewood
			Grass	Grass	Grass
			Charcoal	Cleaning	Cleaning

*“Women used to stay in the home and our men used to control everything.”* Woman in FGD group in Tongore sector, Sisi.

Women’s roles are more domestic and centre around the home and the provision of food. They attend to the kitchen garden and the main crops for feeding the family, collect firewood for use in the home, fodder for the animals and water. The girls will often attend school, at least for a few years, and will spend more of their time at home, taking care of younger siblings or helping with domestic chores, than in agricultural or animal activities. In short, women felt that they did not have to work so hard, had some time for relaxation or socialising and income generation was not regarded as normally the responsibility of women.

Older people contribute in various ways to the life of the village. As well as having their independence, they also have family and neighbours in close proximity and they could be consulted or approached for advice and had an important role in the education and training of their grandchildren. They feel, very keenly, that what has been lost, are not only their physical assets, which represented their future well-being, but their independence.

Roles and responsibilities for men and women have changed with displacement and continuing insecurity. In Mornei, most of the income generating work is carried out by boys and by women and girls, despite the dangers of gender based violence. For men the price of being caught by Janjaweed outside the camp/town is death. This means that men, both old and middle aged, generally stay within the confines of the town and undertake some of the traditional female roles of child-care and domesticity.

Some men claim to be cooking, cleaning and washing while women are collecting firewood or grass for sale, making bricks or attending to charcoal making, the latter two activities, traditionally, being almost exclusively male activities. Some women in the groups agreed that this was so, yet others dismissed these claims, saying that in general their menfolk did nothing for them or the children. Women often spent the whole day working and then came home tired and hungry only to find their husbands demanding food. (Case Study 5: Musa)

Those men who claimed that they did cook and clean would, however, refuse to fetch water as this was a much more public display of their role reversal and therefore too shameful. However, others also claimed to be cleaning the roads and the areas around houses, which would normally be the work of women. In Krinding camp, because of its proximity to Geneina, men found it easier to obtain employment and occasionally from Sisi camp were able to secure temporary work loading lorries for traders who transport firewood to other locations.

Older children are, more than previously, being forced by circumstances to spend more time working in order to supplement the family income. Girls and boys will fetch firewood and grass for domestic use rather than for sale. Boys will also spend time in the local market as runners and fetchers and carriers. They may be paid in kind, with food or in small amounts of cash. In Krinding, some small amounts of money (SD50/sack-about 20 US cents) can be earned by the collection of donkey dung, which is sold to the brick-makers and added to the mud bricks as a binder.

In Sisi, in contrast to other camps, boys claimed to have fewer opportunities for finding work and spent more time at school. Older girls spend less time as child carers and more time working outside the camps or as mud-carriers for brick-making and general labouring on building sites. This increased role in supporting the family results in their spending less time on education. Prostitution, though never admitted to in any of the discussions, is known to be a drastic alternative for girls.

Older people have few opportunities for involvement in income-generation, though women may trade in a small way in local handicrafts. Men still have a role as teachers of the Qur'an and are occasional child carers while their daughters are at work. Older women are taking on a much greater childcare role, however, and there are increasing numbers of older women who are responsible as sole carers. Death has claimed many parents leaving children in the care of their grandmothers, but more and more parents are leaving the camps for the larger towns, such as Geneina, Zalingei, Nyala, or further away. Often, this movement away from the camps is due to economic necessity, and sometimes money is sent back to the camp.

*"Now is not the time for stories. Everyone is too sad."* Older woman, FGD group, Krinding

During some of the discussions, the topic of cultural identity, oral history, story telling and songs was raised. Most people agreed that the traditions of the tribes were many and varied and that it was important that they were preserved. Many felt that the use of these stories and songs as a therapeutic diversion from their present troubles would be a good idea, and the older members of the groups were identified as being the main sources for these traditions. However, many of them were reluctant to talk about these traditions and felt that the time was still not appropriate for singing and telling stories. Indeed, some of the older people claimed that they had entirely forgotten all of the stories they once told, because the war had been going on for too long and there has been no time to remember. Some younger men and women, when asked if they remembered the stories their grandparents had told them, said that they had forgotten them as well.

Camp inhabitants had had a similar reaction to HelpAge's idea of a cultural day, which was organised in Sisi camp. Initially, people said they were too sad and traumatised to participate. In the event, the day passed very successfully and many IDPs took part both as participants and audience. Likewise, in Krinding, while discussing the topic with some older women, most claimed not to remember any songs, but then after some time, two women started reciting a children's rhyming game, and suddenly everyone around, especially the children, sat up and took notice.

One gender issue, which was highlighted as a complaint, concerns sanitary provision. In the village there are well-defined areas for defecation, one for men and one for women. This is not the case in the camp, and many people find it shameful to have to use the same latrine as the opposite gender.

## **10. Recommendations**

### **A. HelpAge International**

- HAI with UNICEF and other child-focused agencies should conduct a survey to determine the numbers of older people who are sole or principal carers of children.
- HAI should develop their concept of occasional cultural days, and these days of cultural celebration be organised in co-operation with OPCs, other IDP representative groups, and agencies such as UNICEF and SC-US and should emphasise the psychosocial benefits for children and older people particularly.
- HAI, UNICEF and SC-US should consider the inclusion of older people as ‘animators’ in children’s, women’s and community centres. Men and women can be identified, who can revive traditional games, oral history, songs and storytelling. A specific day or two each week could be set aside for these sessions, especially in the children’s centres, as well as during social gatherings or cultural days. The inclusion of older people, particularly those who are sole carers of young children, in these activities will go some way to alleviating their concerns expressed during many of the FGDs that they feel useless and have nothing to contribute. However, the issue needs to be handled with sensitivity as many maintain that everyone is too traumatised to be able to tell stories or sing songs.
- HAI should investigate the feasibility of supporting income-generation activities for older people, as a means of addressing the fear of uselessness that older people expressed. IGAs are especially important for older people, but particularly to encourage men to take more of a role in supporting the family, a role many claim to have lost. One of the roles men claimed traditionally was that of makers of household items, such as local beds, ropes and grass fencing panels or palm mats. Some assistance may be needed in obtaining materials, but this could be done through cooperatives, loans or through local traders.
- HAI should widen their brief for fuel-efficient stoves by increasing the number of locations and courses for the training of trainers, through other agencies when necessary and encourage the participation of older people. There are still too many reports of fires burning down areas of camps due to accidents by children and older people. During the visit to Mornei, for example, 25 households were burned after some children tried to cook a meal for themselves. The collection of firewood is a major protection concern.
- HAI should liaise further with health related INGOs, such as MSF-F and Concern in Mornei and Medair in Sisi on the idea of donkey ambulances. At present, MSF-F are operating only two donkey ambulances in Mornei where the population is over 75,000. This is a project which could involve men more.

### **B. UNICEF**

- UNICEF should investigate further the reports of fee charging in schools in the camps. This is also a protection issue, as many women and children find they have to spend a disproportionate time working, often in dangerous environments, to earn money needed to pay for the fees.

- UNICEF should follow up the above mentioned investigations in partnership with the Ministries of Education and Social Welfare and include a greater element of advocacy with locals authorities, camp management and HAC to determine how teachers in the camps can be given sufficient incentives or salaries to prevent their demanding fees from the children.
- In the same vein, UNICEF, with other child focused agencies such as SC-US, should determine how many displaced children are actually attending school regularly and investigate claims that many children are not attending school because they have to work to support the family.
- Having determined the existence and extent of non-attendance, UNICEF, with other child focused agencies such as SC-US, should investigate the reasons which are forcing children to spend more time working to help support their families rather than attending school. Perhaps rations are inadequate or NFI distributions are not addressing their needs sufficiently, or simply IDPs feel that they need to be more active in some way. Host populations are also said to benefit from the domestic labour of children and, in terms of protection issues investigation into these claims be conducted. A greater element of advocacy with the above mentioned authorities and ministries should be part of this investigation.
- The idea of cultural or social days, mentioned above, needs further investigation, particularly concerning the psychosocial benefits for children. UNICEF should take the lead with UNHCR and child focused INGOs such as SC-US.

### **C. General recommendations**

- While all IDPs have fewer opportunities to access resources and have less control over their lives, men seem to be experiencing the reduction of their role more acutely. Most of the international intervention focuses on the needs of women, mothers and children and older people tend to be seen as the beneficiaries within a household, rather than as a beneficiary in their own right. In the same way, men tend to feel overlooked and have a need to be included more. Agencies should coordinate how this engagement can be practically introduced, perhaps as suggested above, through income-generation projects.
- WFP should improve procedures for following up registration omissions and replacing stolen and lost cards. In addition, the ration allocated to unaccompanied older people should be reconsidered to take into account their physical condition. For example, perhaps older people should be given a ration of CSB in addition to *dura*, so that they have an alternative to selling most of their allocated *dura* ration.
- HAC is the national partner with whom all agencies need to cooperate. All UN agencies and INGOs should improve their relationship with HAC, in order to provide better services to the IDPs. Capacity building exercises should include HAC personnel whenever possible.

- All agencies should increase the capacity of local and national, even international, staff, where necessary, for research, community participation and consultation exercises. Without a good understanding of the concepts behind a research study or how to gather information through using participatory methods, projects and programmes will not proceed effectively.
- There is still an enormous amount of research to be done before the situation of IDPs affected by the current conflict can be fully understood. Further investigation into the situation of older IDP is certainly necessary, especially concerning the extent of neglect or abuse. This study has not found much evidence of abuse of the elderly, but these issues can only be effectively investigated by trained and skilled local personnel who understand why and how to gather the information sensitively and comprehensively. With the wide variety of local languages, this requires a large commitment to and investment in staff training with an emphasis on interpretation rather than translation and an appropriate gender balance.
- UNHCR and agencies involved in camp management should explore claims that host populations or their representatives are charging the IDPs for the use of land for shelters and market gardening.
- A greater advocacy role on behalf of the IDPs is required from all agencies, with better consultation with host populations and their representatives. In addition, the vulnerable elements in the host populations should be identified and included whenever possible in distributions and access to services provided by the international agencies.

## **11. Conclusion**

The results of this situation analysis assessment cover a very small proportion of the information available; most findings presented are not new, but the different elements have not previously been considered within the contexts of the pre- and post-conflict environment. The conflict has had a dramatic affect on the roles and responsibilities of the different members of the family and those of communities as a whole. Support systems and coping strategies have been disrupted, and communities have had to adapt their strategies to cope with entirely new circumstances. However, in a displaced situation, and having lost many of their assets and possessions, it is inevitable that individuals will look to their immediate family for support and to give support before they can consider helping others who may be more vulnerable. Older people and children under the care of grandparents or older relatives are often those who suffer most under the unstable camp conditions and who are most often overlooked by the fragmented remnants of their communities.

However, many of these fragmented communities appear to be coping with their circumstances and malnutrition, at least at the moment, is not one of the main concerns of the INGOs (although WFP did have to reduce the rations in April and May due to a shortage of donations). Income generation, mainly through labour and the collection of firewood and other local resources, is the main coping strategy for IDPs and this fulfils some of the requirements of the family for extra rations, clothing and household items. However, the psychosocial needs of IDPs are not being

adequately addressed and, again, older people, as well as men from 30-50, are finding their reduced circumstances and status difficult to cope with and these concerns need to be targeted and solutions developed.

After one year of coordinated and concentrated intervention in West Darfur, little improvement is discernable in the conditions of the IDPs, but particularly in the prospects of security so that they can return to their homes. The interest of the international donor community in Darfur has waned or has been diverted elsewhere, and the UN, and the Security Council in particular have been unable to proceed with concerted political pressure on the Sudanese government to solve the conflict, disarm the militias and provide sufficient security to enable IDPs to return home. The mandate of the African Union is too limited and the numbers of observers too few to have much effect on the activities of either the rebels, the Janjaweed or the government.

## **12. Case Study Appendices**

Case Study 1: Khadija

Case Study 2: Aisha

Case Study 3: Breadwinner

Case Study 4: Muhammad

Case Study 5: Musa

## **13. Acknowledgements**

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## Case Study 1: Khadija



**Khadija and her grandchildren, Sisi, April 2005**

Khadija Hama's daughter died soon after giving birth to a girl. Her husband remarried shortly after and moved to a nearby village to live with his new family. His two young children were left with their grandmother, Khadija, and when the Janjaweed attacked their village last year, they fled together to Sisi camp. Their father is said to have fled with his other family to Chad. Khadija has another daughter who has also settled in the camp with her children and helps her mother on occasions by selling firewood and buying her food items to supplement the rations she receives from WFP. She also sends her children round to fetch water for Khadija.

Khadija, herself, feels that she is too old to be able to do the best for her grandchildren. She is lucky that her daughter is able to help her sometimes, but her legs are weak and painful and she cannot go for firewood or do chores that require lifting loads or too much walking. Although the two children are still very young, they go to the school for a time each day.

## Case Study 2: Aisha Musa Sharif



**Aisha and one of her sisters – Mornei, March 2005**

Aisha is about 15 years old, the oldest of six children, the youngest of whom is about 6. Their father died some years ago and, when they fled from their village, Thur, their mother was still with them. They arrived in Mornei about a year ago and made a shelter in the Hai al-Wadi 'A' sector of the town. About four months ago at the end of last year, their mother died, and Aisha has been looking after the family since then. She says that, although there are some other people from Thur in Mornei, they cannot help her because they do not sufficient means to do so. However, one man called Nimeiri, a former neighbour from home helps her sometimes with some extra food, and her new neighbours help when they can and have given them clothes, but she has no relatives in Mornei. One of her brothers went to Khartoum, however, and managed to find an aunt who lives there. He returned to Mornei and says that the aunt is willing to look after them if they can come to Khartoum, but now they have no money to pay for the journey.

Aisha does most of the domestic chores for her siblings and collects firewood and grass for sale. None of the children is able to attend school, though they had all gone to school in Thur. She would like to go back to Thur if there is peace, but thinks that it would be better to go to Khartoum in the meantime. She is registered with WFP for food distributions, and UNHCR or ICRC are apparently looking into her case for reunification with the aunt.

When she was talking about her mother and her present predicament, she wept openly. The responsibility she has had thrust upon her is great, and she feels that she should not have to bear it all on her own. She fears for the future unless they can all go to stay with the aunt, but Khartoum is very far away and she does not understand why the process of reunification is taking so long.

### **Case Study 3: Breadwinner**

The boy is about 14 years old, but has a confidence and articulacy, which makes him seem older. The other boys his age when asked to express an opinion or talk about their life in Mornei, were shy and mumbled vague answers. This boy spoke clearly and confidently, almost aggressively. He spoke of how he felt that older people in the camp were not really being looked after. Unless one knew them and saw them on a regular basis, no-one did anything for them. Perhaps, he was speaking from experience.

He lives with his grandparents, who are both blind, his mother and his younger siblings. He cannot go to school because he is too busy supporting his family. He goes out with some of his young friends, who live nearby, to collect firewood to sell in the market. Some of his friends go to school, and while they are out working he asks them about the lessons they learned. He considers himself the breadwinner for the family, and, although his mother could collect firewood or grass, he will not allow her to because he fears for her safety and that she may be raped.

He would like to go to school, but he cannot afford to, mainly because he is working most of the day, but also because he would have to pay the teacher fees, and he has to keep all his income for buying food.

#### **Case Study 4: Muhammad**

Muhammad is blind and aged over 65. He was a sheikh in his home village for 27 years, but had to retire when he became blind. He was a respected man in his village, but now he is alone looking after one boy and has to beg in the market. His wife and daughter are in Geneina with his other grandchildren. The boy is his daughter's son, aged about 13 years old, and was sent by his mother last year to look after the old man. The boy does not have any other brothers old enough to help, so he was the one who was sent.

Muhammad's wife used to be with them in Mornei, but decided to go to Geneina. They were registered with WFP for food distributions, but for some reason, only one person is now entitled to food from the card that he has. An old woman, a former neighbour, stays with him and the boy and she helps with the domestic chores, but otherwise they are unable to do any work and so find it difficult to supplement their rations, except by begging in the market. The boy guides Muhammad, holding his stick and leading him along. The old man will sit in the market, near the mosque and is sometimes given money or food. The boy goes to the school for a time during the day, but has to pay something to the teacher. Some of these "fees" come from zaka, especially on Muslim holidays.

## Case Study 5: Musa



**Musa and his two daughters, Mornei, March 2005**

Musa is in his fifties, and his two small daughters are aged about 5 and 3 years old. His wife died in Mornei about 8 months ago after a beating she received at the hands of the Janjaweed. They came from the village of Kereba one year ago, and he now looks after the children on his own. He has relatives in Mornei camp, but they have their own problems and cannot afford to help him. He is registered with WFP for food distributions, but he also has to try and supplement the ration somehow. However, there is no work for him to do and regardless, he is too busy looking after the girls.

During the day if he goes to the market or to a distribution, he leaves the small girl with her sister. When he gets grain, he takes it to the mill and, after paying a small proportion of it to the mill owner, has it ground into flour. He does all the cooking for his children and washes them and cleans their clothes.

He worries about the land he has lost, and he does not like to think of it lying unused and unproductive, as he feels himself to be. He relies now on the *khawaja* (foreigners) to keep himself and his children alive.