

The Food Economy of the Displaced Dinka
living in camps in South Darfur,
Sudan

Report for SCF-UK

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1. SUMMARY

- ◆ For more than 10 years Dinka have been displaced by war to northern Sudan from their homes in Bahr el Ghazal State, in southern Sudan. Currently there are estimated to be around 40,000 people living in camps in South Darfur State¹. These people who are displaced to Darfur leave behind the subsistence economy of war-torn south Sudan and enter the commercial environment, and cash economy, of northern Sudan. Many find this transition, coupled with the loss of their cattle and farms, almost impossible to survive. When the Dinka enter South Darfur they have virtually no social, economic or political capital: few Dinka are found amongst South Darfur's elite and, as an ethnic group, the Dinka are marginalised.
This means that the relationship between the displaced and host communities is unequal. Generally, the Dinka displaced are employees of the hosts, either working as daily labourers or engaging in a sharecropping agreement.
- ◆ The population of all the displaced camps in Buram, Adilla and Ed Daein Provinces is Dinka. The food economy assessment identified four types of household, based on the household's major economic activity: sharecroppers (60-75%); land leasers (10-15%); agricultural labourers (5-15%) and small households who don't engage in agricultural activities (5-10%). The proportion of each type of household varies little between the camps in Adilla and Ed Daein, but is different in Buram, where access to land for cultivation tends to be easier for the displaced.
- ◆ Dinka who sharecrop enter into an agreement, annually, with the host farmers at the beginning of the cultivation period. This states that the crop production will be split between the two parties. In this agreement the farmers must provide the sharecroppers with sustenance for the cultivation period, from June to December. However, the amount of food and cash provided totals less than 3 sacks of grain and is insufficient to meet the needs of the sharecropper and his family. Therefore the sharecropper is forced to take cash and food loans from the farmer. These loans form the major part of the sharecropper's annual income. They have to be repaid out of the sharecropper's part of the production, at harvest time. Therefore commonly Dinka sharecroppers are left with no production, for sale or consumption. The relationship between the Dinka sharecroppers and the south Darfur farmers or merchants is commonly agreed to be an exploitative one.
- ◆ Few of the displaced are able to lease land to cultivate themselves. The fact that the Dinka are recent arrivals to South Darfur, and the unequal power relations between them and the hosts, makes it difficult for them to access fertile land. Another major reason the Dinka don't cultivate is the lack of resources, particularly sufficient water to drink and food to eat throughout the cultivation period, when the men are far from the villages. The households who do lease land are generally the better-off Dinka, who may be traders or the camps' leaders (the Sultans), who have strong links with the host community. These households support many dependent family members, and have higher income levels than the other types of households.

¹ **Source of data:** SCF-UK South Darfur Area office, "Food Allocation list for IDPs in Ed Daein Camps" – Buram, Adilla and Ed Daein Provinces - September 1999.

- ◆ Households who engage in agricultural labour rather than sharecropping earn more cash income than the sharecroppers. Although this option makes more economic sense few households engage in it because of the perceived benefits of sharecropping. The displaced prefer to sharecrop as it provides them with a link to the host community and it gives them access to loans. This means that households are assured of accessing the food and cash they need, throughout the wet season, from the farmer. If households are in a sharecropping agreement they can always turn to the farmer, for a loan, in unforeseen circumstances, such as illness. The Dinka have few links with the northern economy or society and they perceive the sharecropping relation with farmers/merchants as important. It may even provide them with physical security such as protection from reprisals by tribes, like the Rizegat, when the Dinka army in south Sudan is fighting the northern militia.
- ◆ The small households are typically female headed households who are not attached to another household, which may have someone involved with agriculture. Outside of Ed Daien town it is relatively difficult for women to find work and there are few women who live separate from relatives, and support their young children alone. In Khor Omar camp near to Ed Daein there are more of these types of households and the women can generally find domestic work on a monthly or daily basis.
- ◆ Every year people find it difficult to access their food and non food needs and households commonly face a considerable food deficit. During 1999, for most this deficit was filled by relief food. Kinship support is common to those with insufficient food, for example families that don't have a ration card are assisted by their fellow clan members. This is a continuation of the Dinka customs, which operate in Bahr el Ghazal.
- ◆ The displaced Dinka have extremely low levels of cash income, which affects their access to health care and education. Virtually no households spend any money on education and consequentially children do not attend the local schools in the villages and towns, near to the camps.
- ◆ Most households spend less than 5% of their annual income on health care, and ill health and lack of health care is considered by the Dinka to be one of their greatest problems.
- ◆ Relief food plays a role in allowing households to spend more on health or enabling them to take fewer loans. The majority of households, the sharecroppers, purchase half or more of their food from the market. When more relief food is distributed they do not have to buy so much. Therefore less money has to be borrowed to buy food, and/or more is available for non food spending. In 1999, the distribution of relief food during the agricultural season decreased the number of loans the sharecroppers took and this will have a positive effect for 2000. After loan repayment, at the harvest, more households will have more of their production left for themselves than has been the case in recent years.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 BACKGROUND

This study was commissioned by Save the Children UK (SC), which has operated a programme in South Darfur, Sudan, for most of 1990s. The programme has focussed on Dinka displaced from northern Bahr el Ghazal, Sudan, and now living in camps in South Darfur Province. The study, and following report, concentrates on that population group.

Although agencies like SC-UK have operated agricultural and income support; health and sanitation, and food aid programmes, in the camps very little information exists about the economy of the camps. However, SC is planning to produce regular reports on camp residents' access to food and cash income. This report has been written both to illustrate how, currently, the displaced households are surviving in Darfur, and to provide a baseline for future information collection and analysis.

2.2 METHOD AND SCOPE OF ASSESSMENT

This baseline assessment was conducted in November 1999 using the food economy approach. The food economy approach is a framework for understanding the dynamics of household level food and income access. The approach identifies the mechanisms by which households acquire food and income, and it quantifies the relative importance of each method to the household. Within a given area, the approach divides households into 3 or 4 or 5 similar types, whom are subject to the same risks to their food security.

Because the contribution of various food sources to the household's annual requirement is quantified, whether, and to what degree, a household faces a calorific deficit can be calculated.

Within the food economy baseline, information was gathered using rapid appraisal techniques and over forty interviews were conducted with a variety of focus groups and key informants. Interviews were conducted in camps in Buram, Adilla and Ed Daein Provinces of South Darfur. See Appendix 1 for further details.

The findings of the assessment represented in this report generally are relevant to the Dinka in the displaced camps of Adilla and Ed Daein provinces (referred to in the remainder of the report as the Ed Daein area).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The field team for the assessment was the consultant, Pippa Coutts, and Abdel Rahim Hussein, Food Security Information Officer, SC-UK, El Fashir. However, 6 staff members from SC Ed Daein's programme played an active part in the collection and analysis of the information.

The team is extremely grateful for all the information, facilitation and logistical support which the whole of the SC Ed Daein office provided throughout the assessment.

2.3 BACKGROUND TO THE FOOD ECONOMY OF THE DISPLACED IN DARFUR

All of the residents of the displaced camps in the Ed Daein area are Dinka from southern Sudan, and the majority are Mulwal Dinka from Aweil county in northwestern Bahr el Ghazal. Most come from either Ayat, Majak Bai, Gom Yuer, Pieth, Doluet, Atok, Thou or Koroc areas. This is eight areas (each represented by discrete, traditional, southern courts) out of a total of the twenty three courts of Aweil.

Although it was beyond the scope of the assessment to conduct a thorough analysis of why the Dinka migrated across the lines of the Sudan conflict to Darfur, it was clear they were pushed to their limit by the war. Talking to people it is apparent that the hunger and starvation which brought them to the Ed Daein area stems from war related looting, burning and stealing of property: most lost all their cattle, crops, grain stores and, even, homes.

The first camps to be established were Abu Jabra and Adilla during the Bahr el Ghazal famine of 1988. In 1991 others were opened, including Khor Omer, which is the largest camp with a current population of over 10,000. Most of the camps' current residents either came in 1991 or in the last two years, because of hunger and famine.

The Dinka of northern Bahr el Ghazal cross the Bahr el Arab river and enter South Darfur with nothing. People try to go immediately to the settlements where their relatives are living. Not all of the displaced are living in camps; many live in groups on the edge of the larger villages in South Darfur, and in Taweisha and El Laiet provinces of North Darfur. In the Ed Daein area most of the 8 camps are in areas occupied by the Maalhia people; Khor Omar and Abu Jabra are situated the land of the Rizegat ethnic group. The three camps in Buram are in areas settled by ethnic groups thought of as being from West or North Darfur – the Fur and Musalit. These people have lived in South Darfur for a much shorter time, for example the Musalit settled Joghana in the 1930s. The relationship between the Dinka and these ethnic groups varies, but, as an ethnic group, the Dinka tend to be dominated economically and politically by others. For example, they seldom stand for office in local elections and they find it difficult to access fertile land. The displaced in the Ed Daein area often find it more difficult to access services and economic opportunities than other people living in the same geographic area. This is not only because of their poverty. For example, although the local authorities agree that the displaced should be included in EPI campaigns, even when surrounding villages are vaccinated the camps are not².

The relationship between the Dinka and their "hosts" in Darfur is highly complex. For example, although the Rizegat have been instrumental in the fighting and looting in Bahr el Ghazal they have been neighbours with the Dinka for more than a century, and there is degree of intermarriage between the two. This means that, on a case by case basis, the relationship between Rizegat and Dinka individuals may be stronger than that between the Dinka displaced and the Maahlia, for example. For example, in Abu Jabra a Dinka and Rizegat representative have taken on the task of resolving conflict, e.g. around farming and loan agreements, between individuals from the two groups. During the heavy fighting near the Bahr el Arab in 1998, the Dinka in South

² EPI is the extended programme of immunisation, operated by the Ministry of Health. SC, UNICEF and other agencies have been encouraging the MoH to include the camps in this since 1992 – see SC food security and nutrition reports of 1992/93 – but this has not happened.

Darfur expected reprisals from Rizegat militia, but the leaders of the Abu Jabra community promised the Dinka living there protection. The Dinka stayed there and were unharmed.

The Dinka who are displaced to Darfur leave behind their subsistence economy and enter the commercial environment of northern Sudan. The Dinka from the villages of Bahr el Ghazal have no economic base in South Darfur. This makes them dependent on non-Dinka groups for their livelihood. This high level of desperation and dependency is advantageous to the commercial farmers of South Darfur. Since the 1960s, groundnuts have been grown commercially in the state, using cheap labour rather than tractors and other machines. This labour is a mainstay of the South Darfur economy, for example, merchant farmers state that the main factor securing a plentiful and profitable groundnut harvest is a large number of Dinka sharecroppers.³ (Merchant interview, Ed Daein, June 1999).

Most of these issues and examples highlighted reflect the low status of the Dinka in Sudan's political economy. This, and its effect on the economy of those who have been displaced, has been examined in other studies.⁴ In Darfur, as in other areas of Sudan, the marginalised position of the displaced within the country's political economy negatively affects households' food security. It must be taken into account when assessing households' food economies and the risks to which they are subject.

3. THE FOOD ECONOMY OF THE DISPLACED DINKA

3.1 OVERVIEW

3.1.1 The Context

Generally, the Dinka in Darfur have few economic links with towns or areas outside of their immediate surroundings. There is no evidence that people in the camps own, or currently have regular access to, cattle or other assets in Bahr el Ghazal. Therefore, in Darfur, when considering differences in households' economic means, it is inappropriate to use the parameters used by analysts in south Sudan, for example dividing households into wealth groups according to cattle ownership.

None of the Dinka in the camps has cattle, and small-stock ownership has little economic value. In most of the camps (excluding Abu Jabra) goats can easily be stolen and, therefore, few of the Dinka keep them for long periods of time. However, goats, as well as grain, are used for marriage payments, and to settle fines and disputes. This implies their contribution to the social coherence of the displaced is probably greater than to households' food, or cash, income.

Overall, the displaced people in Darfur have few or no material assets, low levels of cash income and little chance of increasing their wealth. ***Every year people find it extremely difficult to access their food and non-food needs, and households commonly face a considerable food deficit.*** Despite engaging in a variety of farming and casual employment activities, people's income levels are inadequate to meet basic expenditure on grain, fish, milk, water and medicine⁵. Therefore levels of borrowing and debt are high.

³ The system of share-cropping will be explained below.

⁴ For example, The Socio-Economic Study of the Displaced in Khartoum. Jeremy Loveless, 1999.

⁵ In this assessment often the levels of expenditure cited by household informants were significantly greater than their income. This is uncommon in food economy assessments. It could reflect

The constraints the Dinka face to accessing productive land, influencing the elite and competing in the northern economy, mean for the majority there is little hope that their economic status will improve. Hence, it seems inappropriate to divide the displaced households into various wealth categories, as is common in food economy assessments. However there are a few clear differences in the way households in the camps are able to use the limited economic options available to them.

3.1.2 Differences in Household Types and Agricultural Activities

Consistent information from a the range of interviews led to a division of households into 4 major types, according to what the households consider to be their major economic activity.

The majority of Dinka displaced households engage in sharecropping with local farmers, or merchant farmers. An agreement is made between the two partners whereby each will receive half of the land's annual crop production. When the agreement is signed the farmer provides the Dinka sharecropper with seed, and cash, grain and drinking water for his time in the field. However, this cash and grain is much less than what the sharecropper requires to cover his and his household's needs until the harvest. Therefore he often resorts to taking more cash (and/or grain) from the farmer, on the basis that it will be repaid from his share of the harvest.

In the baseline year, 1998/99⁶, sixty to seventy five percent of households were involved in sharecropping. Only ten to fifteen percent were able to lease land to cultivate themselves.

GROUP	DESCRIPTION of the Household	TYPICAL HOUSEHOLD SIZE	PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS
SHARECROPPERS	Women are seldom allowed to make sharecropping agreements. Typically it is the male hh head who makes the agreement, occasionally it may be older sons, for example if the family is a new arrival from BeG, in the dry season. Men from large, labour poor households are not favoured by the farmers. Only 1-15% of these households will also have a family member working on agricultural labour.	5	60-75%
LAND LEASERS	The land size and method of farming used varies, eg chiefs and traders occasionally use Dinka sharecroppers, but typically households lease 5-10 <i>mukhamas</i> ⁷ and this they cultivate themselves. These households have the closest connections to the host community, and are the wealthiest in the camps, so have many (extended) family members living with them.	9-10	10-15%

households' perceptions about how much they need to purchase but can't. Some cover the gap by taking loans, but households are unlikely to include the cash from these within their income.

⁶ The assessment team considered the baseline year to be November 1998 to October 1999.

⁷ 1 *mukhamas* is approximately ½ a hectare.

GROUP	DESCRIPTION of the Household	HH SIZE	%age of HOUSEHOLDS
AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS	Typically, youths are agricultural labourers. Some female headed or elderly households contain these youths. Others in this group are those with a man who is prepared to take on the comparative risk. Having two fit men who can do this work decreases the risk of not accessing steady, sufficient income, so most households in this group have 2 men working.	5-7	5-15%
SMALL HOUSEHOLDS who are labour poor.	These are considered to be labour poor as they have no one who can access any of the above. Often they are women who aren't married, nor been taken into to a man's household. They do daily work, eg selling firewood.	2-3	5-10%, but this percentage is higher in Khor Omar, where hhs like this gravitate.

The types of each household and the proportion of the total households in each category have not changed significantly since the camps were opened. The proportion of households whose major activity is the cultivation of their "own" land does not change significantly between years, because of the ongoing constraints to this option. However, between years (and camps) there is some variation in the number of households who choose sharecropping against agricultural labour. For example the insecurity in the first half of 1998 meant last year households were reluctant to tie themselves into a sharecropping agreement and more men tried to access agricultural labour. (Source: SC Ed Daein).

A comparison with the situation in the displaced camps in Khartoum is interesting. In Darfur male labour is more in demand than female labour. The opposite seems to be true in Khartoum, where much of the work available is domestic labour. Hence, the men of the displaced families in Darfur still have a major role in the provision of a household's food and cash. If women come from Bahr el Ghazal with small children it is extremely difficult for them to survive alone, economically, so often they will join another household. However, there is a small percentage who don't, and these women collect and sell grass and wood, wash clothes, weave mats and sell water to earn a living. There are more women doing this type of work, and also working as house servants, in Khor Omar than in the other camps. The position of the camp next Ed Daein town attracts households like this, where the woman is the only person who can work.

3.2 SHARECROPPING HOUSEHOLDS

3.2.1 The Agreement, and the calendar

The Dinka usually begin to discuss sharecropping arrangements with the local farmers in the dry season, as early as February, when the clearance of new land begins. Then, the sharecroppers⁸ usually start work in the fields in April/May, when it

⁸ Throughout this report the sharecropping partner who has the rights to the land (there is not individual land ownership in Darfur) will be referred to as the 'farmer' and the Dinka worker, as the 'sharecropper'.

is time to prepare the land for cultivation. However, often the agreement is not finalised until June, when the rains begin and the farmers want to plant. From then until after the end of the weeding in September the sharecroppers go to stay in the fields, which are often far from the camps and villages.

The agreement involves a cash and grain payment to the sharecropper for each mukhamas to be cultivated. Sharecropping is so common in South Darfur that even smaller farmers may employ a few sharecroppers to cultivate millet and, or, groundnuts. Large farmers, like the village *sheikhs* contract more than 10 sharecroppers, and merchants 50- 100. The level of payment included in the agreement varies slightly between years and camps, but in 1999 it was 5-8,000 pounds and 5-6 *malwas*⁹ per mukhamas. Typically a sharecropper would be contracted to cultivate 5 mukhamas of groundnuts. This means that a sharecropping household would gain just less than a sack of grain (82-100kgs) and about 35,000 pounds from the transaction. One important part of the agreement is that the farmer will provide the sharecropper with water. This is vital because the farms are remote, and usually in the dry, sandy *goz*¹⁰ land. Normally, it is agreed that the sharecropper can cultivate a little millet or sorghum around the groundnuts, but the area cultivated is less than 1 mukhamas, and sometimes the sharecropper has to share the production with the farmer. Hence, often the sharecropping family consumes this "own crop" when in the field harvesting. It can account for 5-10% of their annual food needs.

The farmers want to discourage sharecroppers from taking their dependants to the groundnut fields, because of the corresponding increase in the number of people requiring food and water, and the risk they may consume a significant proportion of the production. However, often the sharecroppers do take their families during the peak labour periods of weeding (in July and August) and harvesting (in November/December). Hence, the farmers prefer to make agreements with men who have smaller, active families. A few of the displaced say that if there is an alternative source of food (other than the sharecropping arrangement), such as relief food, then their families will stay in the camp. This is not always the case because the displaced feel they cannot rely on relief: they never know when or how much will be delivered. Another reason the whole household tends to go the field is because the Dinka families feel safer if they are together. However, the degree of physical security granted by sharecropping could be a perception more than a reality. In 1998, when the Dinka in Darfur had a real and immediate fear of attack men were less keen to enter sharecropping agreements and take their families to the fields, because it is more difficult to run away from aggressors with their families than alone.

3.2.2 Household Food Sources

The Dinka see the sharecropping arrangement as an important source of food for the whole family during the cultivation period, from April up to December. The below pie chart shows that the payment in kind only covers about 5-10%¹¹ of the household's food need and, in 1999, if the whole of the cash from the agreement were used to buy grain then the sharecropper could only buy one to two sacks of 100kgs. ***In total, the sharecropping agreement would only provide the family with less than 3 sacks of grain during the nine months of cultivation.*** This is clearly inadequate to meet their food needs. Hence, every year the sharecropper takes loans from the farmer to buy food and other items. These loans are repaid out of the sharecropper's

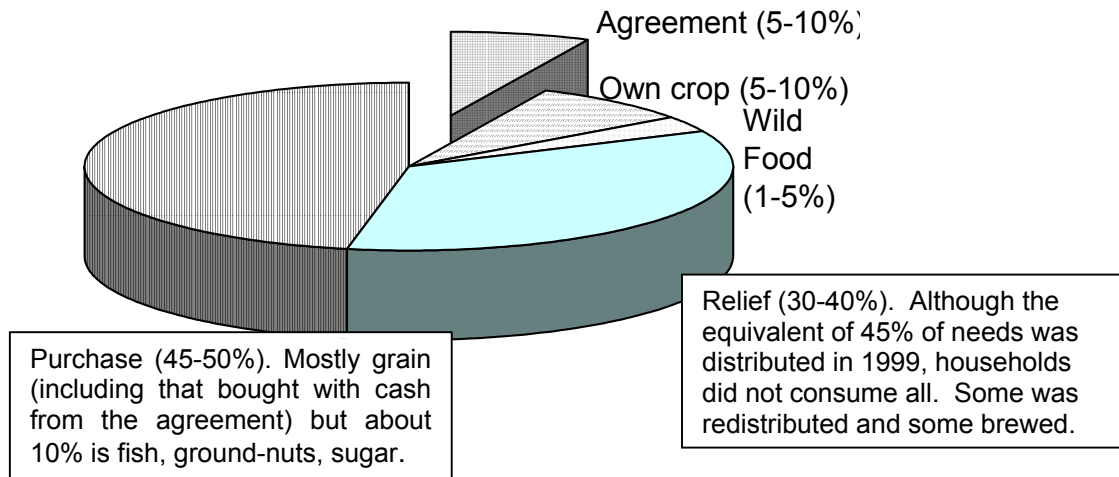
⁹ A malwa is local container for grain. It holds 3.3kgs of grain.

¹⁰ This is the sandy soil commonly found in the plains of Darfur.

¹¹ Called "agreement" in the pie, as it is food given to the sharecropper as part of the agreement.

half of the harvest. Usually, if the agreement is made in June, throughout July and August the farmer will bring the sharecropper the contractual food and cash in instalments, when he takes the water to field. By September it is finished and the sharecropper has to borrow food and cash from the farmer. At this point, the labour intensive weeding work is over and the man's family goes back to the camp where the woman will look for casual work. The man may also go back for a few weeks.

Figure 1: Sources of Food for Sharecropping Households



Loans continue to be taken up until December, when the harvest is finished. **The amount a sharecropper borrows for food depends on the whether other food sources are available.** Therefore relief food is important in decreasing the sharecroppers' rate of borrowing. However, even if significant amounts of food aid are distributed loans might have to be taken for other expenditure. Medicine is often paid for with cash loans, and the period when the sharecropper can access loans (from June to December) coincides with the peak of malaria season.

3.2.3 The exploitative nature of the Loan System

This loan system is exploitative in several ways. Firstly, a sack of groundnut is given a very low value when it is used in repayment. Typically, it is considered to be worth half the sale price at the start of the harvest. For example in October 1998, a sack of groundnuts sold for about 15000-17000¹², but the sharecropper would have to pay back every 7,000 pounds borrowed with one sack. Some of the displaced interviewed even quoted values as low as 4,000/sack. To assess the degree to which this is an unfair deal, it is interesting to compare this valuation with the worth a sack is given in the formal loan system of the Agricultural Bank of Sudan - the *selam* agreement. The *selam* system operates through the client taking a cash loan and repaying in kind at the harvest, using the previous December's groundnut price. The lack of previous years' price data and exact information on the value of a sack for the Dinka borrowers makes it difficult to assess the degree of underpayment, but 1999 can be used as an example. This year, it is estimated the *selam* clients repay at a rate of 8,000 – 11,000 per sack, but the sharecropping repayment rate is about 7,000 per sack.

¹² The latter price was price collected by the SC team, from Ed Daein market. The former price is information gathered in the assessment, and likely to represent the price if the nuts were sold in the field, which is generally where the sharecroppers sell them.

The displaced and less wealthy farmers never access The Bank of Sudan's credit system because it requires guarantees, one of which is land ownership, which is unobtainable for the Dinka. In addition, selam also requires the client to pay substantial administration fees, which poor households can't do.

The sharecroppers often think the mode of administration of the sharecropping leads to their exploitation. They are seldom literate, but the farmer often keeps an account book in which he registers his out payment, against the agreement and, later, the loans. Although farmers say they give a copy of the transactions to the sharecroppers, the latter accuse the farmers of "cheating". For example, a farmer's outgoing of cash and food on a loan basis are recorded mixed up with payments made as part of the agreement, and it is never clear where the agreement ends and the loans start until the farmer claims his dues at the harvest.

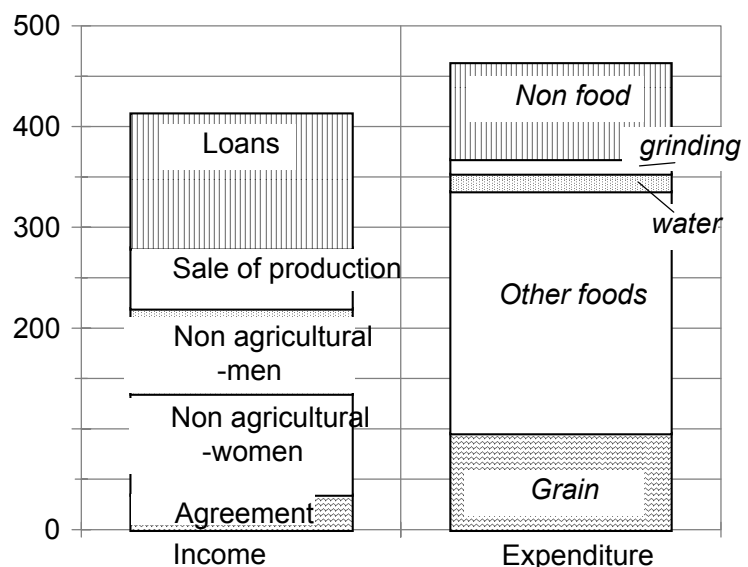
The level of debt amongst sharecroppers is high. Although sharecropping is an agreement only valid for one season, it is in the interest of the farmers to keep sharecroppers tied into working with them over the years. They have to do this if their harvest is not enough to repay all they owe to the farmer. Normally, if sacks are still owed, the farmer will employ the same man as a sharecropper in the following year. During the assessment, key informants consistently estimated that at the end of the 1999 harvest this could be true for nearly half of all sharecroppers.

3.2.4 Household income sources and expenditure

The below bar chart illustrates the relatively high importance of the loans to the sharecropper's income. This illustration assumes that all loans are taken as cash, and then repaid at the harvest, so reducing the amount of production the sharecropper can keep. In the base year, sharecroppers typically kept 0 to 7 sacks of their groundnut production, which they sold immediately in the field. The sharecroppers sell the groundnuts to the landowners, as they are unable to pay the transport costs to take the sacks to the market.

Figure 2. A Sharecropping Household's Annual Income & expenditure (Sudanese pounds '000s)

A household's annual income is 410-490,000 Sudanese pounds. The sale of 3-4 sacks generated thirty five to sixty thousand pounds in 1998, but sharecroppers generally gave five or six times as many sacks to the farmer as loan repayment. The loans contributed 115-157,000 pounds to the sharecropping household's income. Sharecroppers who take fewer loans have more production to sell and a higher level of income. For those who have no



groundnut to sell they might be able to increase their non-agricultural earnings. This is the most likely way households can stretch their income to meet their expenditure. Men collect and sell wood during the four months of the dry season, January to April. Women make mats¹³; wash clothes; sell water; grind grain or collect and sell wood, for most of the time when they are not in the fields. It is noticeable that the cash given to the sharecropper as part of the agreement is less than 10% of their total income.

In absolute terms this is an extremely low level of income, equivalent to less than one hundred sterling per year.¹⁴ It is also not sufficient to meet the needs of the displaced. In a year like 1999, when food aid supplies reduced the need to purchase large amounts of grain, households still only bought 3-4 other types of food, and not for the whole year.

Non-food items are only 20-25% of a household's annual expenditure. Expenditure on clothes and medicine is only six to thirty eight thousand per year. Figure 2 assumes that 10,000 is spent on clothes (which is the price of one adult and one child second hand dress), but this may not be affordable if the household's income is at the bottom end of the range, around four hundred and ten thousand. ***The low levels of income mean that there is no money available for education and parents seldom send their children to school.*** Some children go to schools in the camps run by The Camboni Fathers, which have a small syllabus of religious education, English and Dinka. These schools are free and there is no requirement to buy books or uniforms.

3.3 HOUSEHOLDS WHO LEASE LAND AND CULTIVATE THEIR OWN CROPS

In the baseline year, 10-15% of households cultivated their own plot of land. There was no evidence to suggest that this number varies greatly between years.

3.3.1 Why don't more households cultivate their own plot?

The local village leaders – the *sheikhs* and *omdas* - hold land tenure in Darfur. However, all citizens of the villages have a right to land, on application to the leaders. Land is granted to a farmer for several years (or a lifetime), on the condition that he pay the leaders one tenth of the production. This is used for things like *zaka* – the money collected from all Muslims to be given to those in need of assistance. Village leaders are emphatic that the Dinka displaced have a right to land in the camps' districts. Yet the low political and social capital of the Dinka means that they often face difficulties in acquiring land for cultivation. This is particularly the case when land is scarce, but only in Joghana did there seem to be an absolute shortage of land. In the other areas the major problem for the displaced is accessing good land: generally the displaced farm infertile land, close to the villages.

A reason for this is their lack of resources, which is the primary explanation behind why so few Dinka cultivate. A supply of drinking water is the major resource required for farming. Water is generally taken to the fields by donkey cart, but very few Dinka own carts and renting them can cost around 10-20,000 per week. Therefore the majority of the displaced who cultivate rent the worked out land

¹³ This includes collecting the strong grasses from which the mats are made. The mats are called *sergania*, and commonly used for fencing.

¹⁴ Assuming an exchange rate of 4,500 Sudanese pounds/pound sterling then an income of 440,000 Sudanese pounds is only worth 98 pounds sterling.

close to the villages, where they may be able to carry water on foot. Seeds and sustenance for the cultivation period are also required. In addition, many farmers ask the displaced to pay rent of 5-10,000 pounds per mukhamas, in addition to the one tenth of the harvest.

Finally, the Dinka farmers are prone to having their belongings or produce confiscated or damaged. For example, the farmers in Adilla camp complain that, because their land is near to the town and considered grazing land, planted crops are often damaged by livestock. There is an accepted way to gain compensation for this: if the farmers catch the grazing goats they can take them to the police and later bring a court case against the livestock owner. However, the experience of the displaced Dinka is even if they go to court they seldom get any recompense: they normally lose the case, being told that they should not be cultivating in grazing land.

These difficulties mean that most of the Dinka feel that farming won't necessarily secure them a financial profit. As was highlighted above, the displaced also feel that farming is physically more insecure than sharecropping, where the farmer or merchant may provide protection.

3.3.2 Who are the Dinka farmers?

The people that can afford to pay land rent and buy their own food and water throughout the wet season are the better-off families. These are the households who farm their own land. They are the wealthiest in the Dinka community and, therefore, have many dependant relatives staying with them. Typically, there are 9-10 people in each household.

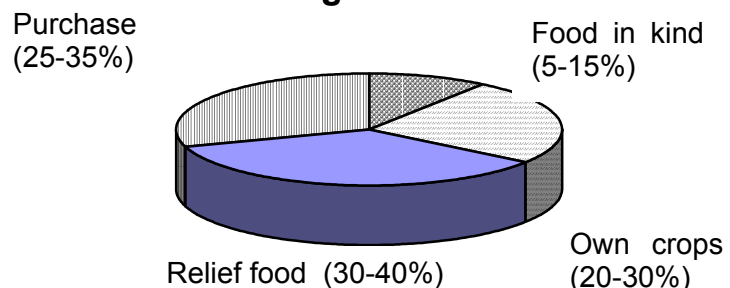
The wealthiest Dinka in the camps are the Sultans, who are considered to be the camps leaders, and the traders, especially those who deal in fish. These people tend to employ labourers to work on their farms. However, most of the Dinka farmers use their own family labour and cultivate around 5 mukhamas – 2 of millet or sorghum and 3 of groundnut with some *kakadi* and watermelon, which can be both sold and eaten.

3.3.3 The Food Economy

In the base year the 2 mukhamas yielded 3 sacks of 100kg, all which were consumed by the household. In addition, the equivalent of one sack of grain was eaten straight from the field, and 2 sacks of groundnuts were consumed. This accounts for 20-30% of the household's annual food needs.

The production of groundnuts is not sufficient to generate all the cash that the household needs, so often one family member will go to work on another person's farm. All his food needs will be covered whilst he is there, and this "food in kind" contributes 5-15% to the household's annual food income.

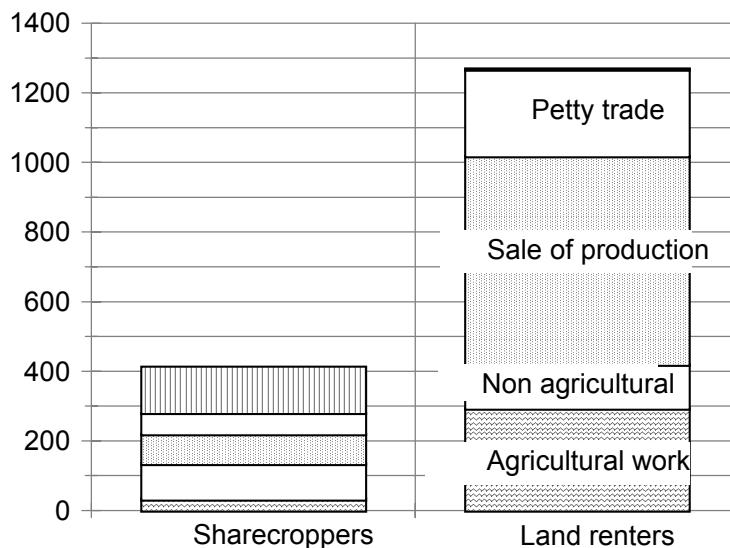
Figure 3. Food Sources of Land Renting Households



These sources of food mean that a smaller proportion of the household's food has to be bought from the market, 25-35%.

Only 5-10% of the household's expenditure is on grain. This proportion may increase slightly in a year when less relief food is distributed, at the expense of expenditure on non food items and the purchase of so much sugar. **However, in every year non-food expenditure is significantly greater than in the case of the sharecroppers. It is about 500,000 per year or 40-45% of all expenditure.** This is partially accounted for by the fact that around 20% of the household's expenditure is on gifts to other households in the camp, possibly as medicine or food, but normally just cash. Whether or not the gifts go specifically to any one of the other 3 types of household, eg the "small households" who have the lowest level of income, isn't clear. It seems that gifts are given to any household who is has an acute need, for example if they are new to the camp or if someone is sick.

Figure 4. A comparison of the annual income Of Sharecroppers and Land Renters. ('000s pounds)



Although the income of those who rent land is much greater than of the sharecroppers, it must be remembered that they have larger households and are required to buy a greater quantity of items like salt, fish, sugar and soap to meet their needs.

Half of their income is from the sale of cash crops,

particularly groundnuts. From 3 mukhamas a household can sell 30 sacks at price of 15-25,000 pounds per sack, and so generate around 600,000 pounds. However, the big households need as much again to cover their expenditure. Hence many men invest part of their agricultural income in small shops. In many cases these do not generate enough income to cover the family's needs, so one member of the family will look for agricultural work on local farms. Like the sharecroppers, normally one woman from the house will generate income by making mats and selling wood. (This is the non agricultural income). Women in these households are also likely to brew beer for sale, which can generate up to 100,000 pounds per year, although it's likely to be only half of this amount.

3.4 HOUSEHOLDS WHO HAVE MEMBERS ENGAGED IN AGRICULTURAL LABOUR

3.4.1 A Description of these Households

Most sharecroppers are not allowed, or not able, to take time away from the sharecropped farm to find casual work on other farms (about 5-10% do). Therefore, households who have members involved in agricultural labour tend not to sharecrop in the same year, but 2 people may go to work on the farms. The families with 2 working are likely to have 5-7 people in the household.

Men who work as agricultural labourers one year may sharecrop the next, and visa versa, provided they have no debts binding them to sharecropping. Generally those who work as agricultural labourers are more prepared to take a risk than the sharecroppers. Although no key informants reported having trouble finding work in the base year, people are only employed by activity (eg for weeding, which may only take a month). Therefore, unlike those sharecropping, no one is guaranteed work, and income, throughout all of the agricultural season.

3.4.2 A Description of the work

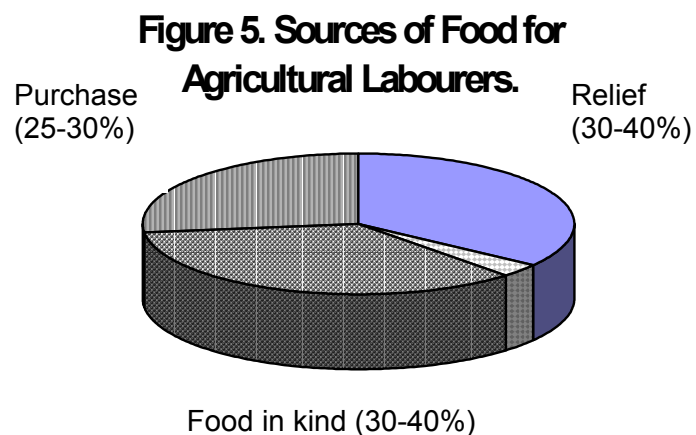
It is common throughout Darfur for poorer households to have one or more family members engaged in casual farm labour. Annually people migrate from the less productive areas of North Darfur to South Darfur to find work, and more people move when the rains are poor, in the north, than in a good year. Traditionally, youths have come from Bahr el Ghazal looking for work in the agricultural season. Reportedly, that still goes on, although their number is far exceeded by the number of Dinka living in South Darfur who are seeking sharecropping or agricultural employment.

Most of the employment is to be found on groundnut, rather than millet, farms. The employment begins with the land clearing in April and May, prior to the rains. Then there is planting and two rounds of weeding, followed by the harvesting which starts in October/November. As for sharecropping, men are preferred for employment, although a few strong women may be employed in the peak weeding and harvesting periods. In Darfur, women are often employed to harvest and winnow grain, but women from local families or migrants from North Darfur are selected rather than the displaced.

Payment is generally on a mukhamas basis, and each man can work about 5 mukhamas for planting and weeding and 10 during the collection and threshing of the nuts. The amount paid for one mukhamas depends on both the activity and the farmer, but it ranges from 3,000 and 2.5kgs of grain, for the collecting and threshing, up to 10-20,000 and 7kgs of grain, for planting and weeding.

3.4.3 The Food Economy

When all of the grain payment is added up it comes to a total of 3 to 4 ½ sacks per household, when 2 people are working. This is 35-40% of the household's annual food income. The men are given this grain in instalments, but they tend not to consume it all themselves, and send some home to their families.



Like the households who cultivate their own plot, because these families have food from another source – payment in kind – they can minimise their purchase of grain. In a year, they buy slightly more than 200kgs, mostly in the dry season when the men are not working and there is little relief food. This accounts for just over a quarter of their annual food needs, and 5-10% of their annual expenditure.

A third of their expenditure is on non food items, but the bulk is on food. They buy dried fish and groundnuts for sauce, as well as sugar and tea, all year.

The men generate 456,000 to 800,000 per annum from agricultural labour, depending on the rate of pay and the number of mukhamas they can work. Usually, this work provides 80-85% of the household's income. The remainder comes from dry season work by the women (10-15% of total income) and the men (less than 10%). ***The men in this group tend to do less work during the dry season, but these households generate more cash from agricultural labour alone than the total annual income of a sharecropping household.***

3.3.4 Why do more households not choose agricultural labour against sharecropping?

The above analysis illustrates that it makes more sense economically for a household to seek agricultural labour than to involve in sharecropping. Yet only 5-15% of households are in the category of the casual labourers.

One obvious reason for this is that not all households have enough strong, fit men to have 2 working as agricultural labourers. However, there a number of households who have and who have laboured in the past, but now sharecrop. The amount of labour available in the household is not the only reason so few households make a living through agricultural labour.

Another reason is the difficulty of finding work. During this short study it wasn't possible to estimate how frequently men look for work but don't find it. Some mentioned in years like 1996, when the harvest was poor, they found it hard to get work, but there seems to have been sufficient work in the last 2 or 3 years, including this year. It is likely that in some years the men may not find work during the planting or harvesting (pulling) periods which are not as labour intensive as weeding. This makes deciding to work casually rather than sharecrop more risky, in terms of being able to earn, and provide food for the family, all year.

Lastly, it appears as if ***the displaced Dinka prefer to sharecrop because it provides them with a link to the host community.*** As one woman in Jadel Seid camp said, it provides the Dinka with "a relationship with the Maaliha", and one that provides food and cash. As discussed above this relationship may be exploitative, but ***the Dinka have few links with society, or the economy, in northern Sudan and they perceive this relationship with the farmers/merchants as important.*** The major reasons the displaced give for this importance are that the relationship provides them with economic benefits, patronage and some physical protection from attack.

3.4. SMALL HOUSEHOLDS WHO ARE LABOUR POOR

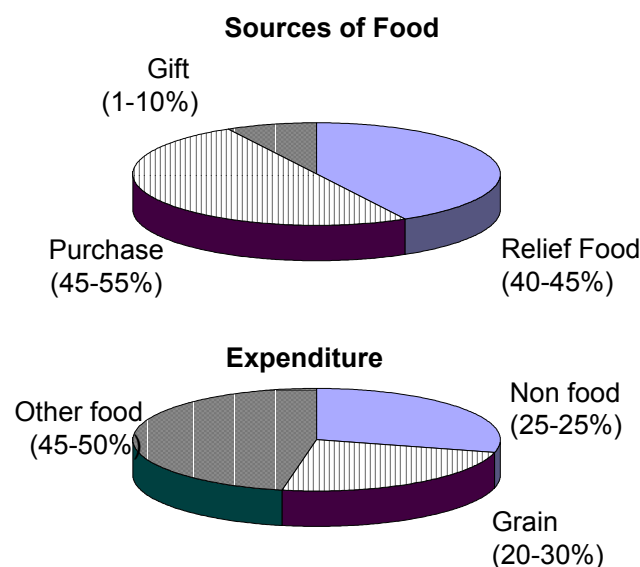
3.4.1 The characteristics of these households

The small households, with less than 4 people, are either households headed by an old or sick man or female headed households with young children. In the camps there are few women living alone without being attached to another household with whom they share cash or food. Those who do make up the majority of the 5-10% of all households considered “the labour poor” group. In fact the household may have a relatively ‘normal’ ratio of fit, economically active to inactive people, compared to the other groups. For example, in a household of 3 made up of one woman and 2 children 33% could be economically active and in a typical sharecropping household of 5 with 3 children 40% may be economically active. The problem for female headed households is most of the labour opportunities in Darfur are in agriculture and are for men. This is the opposite of the situation in Khartoum where often employers prefer women, because most of the available work is domestic labour. In Darfur, only in Ed Daein town, which is accessed by those in Khor Omar camp, are women employed in domestic labour on a monthly basis.

3.4.2 The Food Economy

The women of these households look for the same type of work other women seek in the dry season when they are not at the farm. They may find daily work washing clothes or sweeping houses, at a rate of 500pounds/day, but most of their income is from collecting and selling water or wood all year. Water is collected from the borehole and sold in the villages at a profit of about 200 pounds per jerry can and the women sell 3-4 each day. In addition, the majority of women make mats called *sergenia*. This is from August to December, when the grass is available. In the first half of year, work is available shelling groundnuts, especially immediately prior to planting but it’s limited and it’s tedious so households only earn 12,000 pounds or less from it.

Figure 6. The Food Sources and Expenditure of the Small Households



A household’s annual income and expenditure is 280-335,000 sudanese pounds. Compared to other household types a relatively high proportion of their income is spent on grain – 20-30%. That was in the base year, when relief food was supplied in 7 months. Relief is 40-45% of their food income, as they seldom give away it or brew it. In years when there is less relief these households will spend a higher proportion of their income on grain. This is likely to be at the

expense of medicine, grinding and clothes, which in the above example are half of the total non-food expenditure.

3.5 GIFTS, KINSHIP AND LINKS WITH SOUTHERN SUDAN

The displaced Dinka living in South Darfur are not well integrated into the province, socially or economically. Very few are independent producers and most rely on selling their labour in relationships where they have little or no power. A considerable proportion of the camps' residents speak little or no Arabic and they do not mix with the 'host' groups.¹⁵

At the same time as this lack of integration and economic success is evident, it also appears as if links with Bahr el Ghazal and a social cohesion amongst the clans remain. For example, ***the custom of sharing resources within a clan is still evident***. Whereas previously a family who was experiencing a food shortage may have been lent a cow now they are given grain; normally relief grain. Grain is also used for marriage: key informants stated that a man has to pay 10-15 sacks of grain and a few goats, the majority collected from (clan) relatives in the camp. This assistance at the time of marriage seems to be related to the sharing of relief food. The gift of grain (relief food or otherwise) is not simply from wealthier to poorer households, but also involves helping your clan members who later, when you need help e.g. during weddings, will assist you. Grain is also used in repaying damages or fines imposed by the Dinka courts. This assessment was not able to compare the court system of the camps with the system common in Bahr el Ghazal, but it is evident that all of clans (and courts) found in the camps have representatives who play a part in the camps' own courts.

Gifts are also sent from family and clan members who live in Khartoum or other large towns, in northern Sudan. These gifts are periodic and not quantifiable, but are often clothes. The Dinka in Darfur don't commonly send money or goods out of the camps to others who are displaced, but occasional gifts – cash, clothes and other items – go to Bahr el Ghazal.

It was difficult to ascertain the extent of the movement of people to and from Bahr el Ghazal, but a considerable number of the displaced have close relatives remaining in Bahr el Ghazal. Prior to the upsurge of fighting and looting in early 1998, many of the young men would regularly go south, at least as far as the Bahr el Arab, to fish. However, this has not been possible during the last 20 months, due to continued threats, or bouts, of insecurity.

Insecurity in Bahr el Ghazal, or around the Bahr el Arab has other effects on the displaced living in the camps. They fear reprisals if their kinsmen raid and/or kill northern militia, many of whom are Rizegat. However, as was mentioned above, there are now only two camps in the Rizegat areas. This fear is most likely to affect freedom of movement, for example to the agricultural areas, and it leads to individuals insulting and arguing with the Dinka.

3.6 KHOR OMAR AND JOGHANA CAMPS

3.6.1 Khor Omar Camp, Ed Daein

¹⁵ Children from both the Dinka and the host community were admitted into a supplementary feeding programme during 1999. In all of the feeding centres the children were encouraged to play, but the children from the two groups always played separately, never together.

In Khor Omar, as in the other camps, the majority of households engage in sharecropping and the women tend to go to the fields during June to September. However, at other times of the year women work in Ed Daein town. Most engage in domestic labour and are paid on a monthly basis at a rate of 25,000 pounds / month. This means that the annual income generated by women is twice as much as in other camps, and ***the annual income of the sharecropping households is about 100,000 pounds more than in the other camps.***

The camp's proximity to a relatively large urban settlement means that no wood is available for collection close to where the Dinka live. Therefore the collection of firewood and building wood requires a donkey cart. It also requires a license issued by the government forestry department, who police the collection of wood around Khor Omar and Ed Daein. Therefore, unlike in other camps, the Dinka men do not collect and sell wood. However, men can make an equivalent amount of money, during the dry season, from other activities such as carpentry and building fences and daily labour in the market.

Household's which are headed by women are economically better off in Khor Omar than in the other camps. This is because of the availability of domestic work in the town. The sultans of the camp report that this has led to a migration of female headed households to Khor Omar and that there are more of these, small, households in their camp than in others. It is estimated that 15-25% of households are female headed, compared to less than 10% in the other camps.

One reason that female headed households are better-off is that most of the domestic labourers receive at least 2 meals per day. In a household of 3, this "food in kind" accounts for about a quarter of a household's annual food income. Therefore it is likely that less grain will be purchased and cash will be made available for other, non-food, items. However, it should be noted that it is when grain prices are highest the women find it most difficult to find work. This is because the economy of Ed Daein town is closely connected to the rural economy and in poor production years households have less money to spend and are not as likely to employ domestic labour.

The proximity of the camp to a town implies that Khor Omar may exhibit some of the economic and social trends noticed in the Khartoum camps but less prevalent in most of the South Darfur camps. For example, female labour is required, in the town, and women may often bring in the bulk of a household's income. (This would particularly be the case if the man of the family can't find or doesn't look for work in the dry season). Some of the women in the camp are involved in prostitution, although, as this is a difficult subject to discuss as an outsider, it is hard to assess the exact nature and extent of it.

3.6.2 Joghana Camp, Buram Province

The residents of Joghana moved there in April 1998, when they felt so unsafe in their previous camp in Ferdos, which is a Rizegat area. The sultans moved their people, by truck, without any formal assistance from local or international organisations.

Joghana village is lived in by people from the Musalit ethnic group. Relations between the Dinka and the Musalit are very peaceful, and during the Dinka's first year in the area the Musalit leaders promised them land for the next cultivation period, 1999/2000. However, land is scarce in the area, and many Musalit families find it hard to make a living. When it came to the time to distribute the land, early in 1999, not all of the Dinka were given a plot and many of those who were received

infertile or low lying land, which flooded. Not only is land for own cultivation scarce, but also the Musalit are not financially able to take on Dinka sharecroppers. Hence the displaced turned to agricultural labour to make a living, yet few Musalit hire labour and those who do pay very low wages and employ for very short periods.

Most households in the camp have one or two men migrating to find agricultural work for about half of the year. They go to Ferdos and Sumta, where they used to live. When the Dinka men first went back to work, they looked for farmers who they worked or sharecropped with when living in Ferdos camp. This clearly demonstrates the importance of the relationship the Dinka displaced have with their sharecropping partners: these partners are really the only men in the local community who the Dinka know.

The Dinka in Joghana earn more cash through this migratory labour than most of the households in the other camps. However, they wish to leave Joghana. They don't want to go back to Ferdos because they feel unsafe and threatened there, but they wish to go somewhere they can cultivate and where they can be with their family throughout most of the year.

4. HEALTH CARE, FOOD AID AND PROGRAMMING

Ill health is a primary concern of the Dinka living in the camps. Reviewing the food economy it is evident how much families rely on their own labour for survival and how important it is for the adults to be physically fit all year round, to access the food and cash needed.

Despite this most **households spend less than 5% of their income on health care.** This does not reflect that medicine is free nor that it is a low priority for the displaced, rather that most of a sharecropping household's income has to be spent on food. In Joghana camp there is no clinic and key informants reported using traditional, herbal medicines rather than purchasing drugs. In the other camps there are clinics but typically households are given prescriptions for medicine, which they then have to buy from the market. For households with low levels of non-food expenditure (the sharecroppers and small households spend less than 30% of their income on non-food) this normally means they have to take cash loans. **This is one reason the displaced prefer to sharecrop rather than engage in agricultural labour: they can access cash loans from the farmers to pay for medicine.**

Although it was beyond the scope of the assessment to assess the health care available within the camps, for the purposes of monitoring food security and change in the camps it should be noted that some camps appear to be "healthier" than others. Key informants in Sharif and Adilla camps were particularly concerned to stress the lack of health care. Khor Omar, whilst being the biggest and possibly the most crowded camp, is close to Ed Daein and relatively better health care. As income levels are higher in Khor Omar than other camps, this means that households living there generally have better access to services.

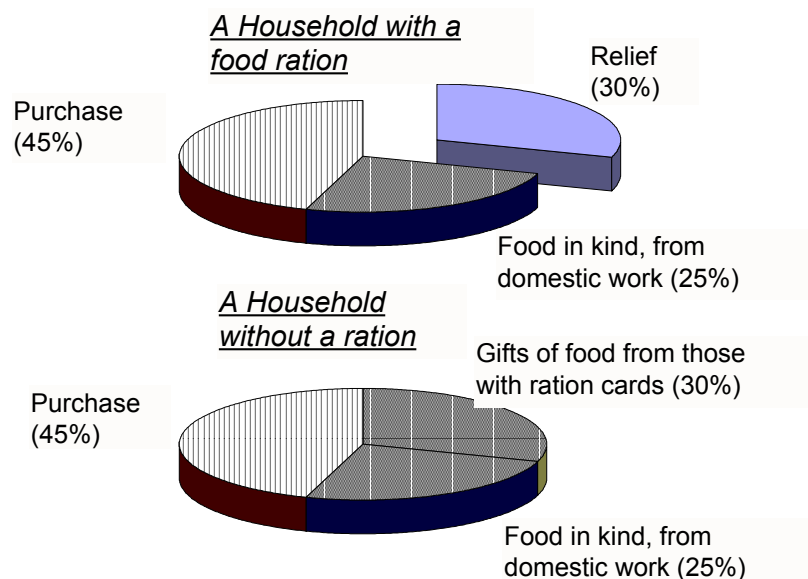
Given the low levels of income, providing free or subsidised drugs and health care in all of the camps should be seen as a priority. This could have a positive effect not only on the health status of the population, but also in assisting households to balance their meagre budgets. Improved healthcare will decrease households' need to take loans for medicine. If they do not wish to take loans for other items, e.g. food or clothing, this can promote a more equal sharecropping relationship between the Dinka and the local farmers, when the former are not always indebted.

Food Aid

For the first few years after the influx of people into the camps in 1991, a full ration of food aid was delivered for most of the year. Since 1995, food aid has been delivered only for a few months of year, typically during the cultivation period, and often at a level of a half ration. In 1999 more relief food was distributed: it was supplied in 7 months¹⁶, four times at half ration level and three times at full ration.

The calorific importance of this aid to the food economy of all types of households living in the camps can be clearly seen from the above pie charts, but food aid is also important in other ways. In a context where the Dinka are constrained and have few economic or social options open to them, it slightly increases these options. For example, cash normally spent on food can be used for other purposes and the support traditionally given to poorer households can be maintained. There are households who do not possess ration cards in all of the camps¹⁷ (just as there are likely to be those who possess more than one card). The below picture, comparing two female headed households in Khor Omar, illustrates the contribution of relief food to their food income and how this food is shared between those who receive it and those who don't.

Figure 7: Sources of Food for female headed households with & without a ration card



Relief food when distributed during the agricultural season decreases the number of loans the displaced sharecroppers take from the farmers. Although some households may need to take cash loans, e.g. for medicine, the effect is such that the increase in food aid in 1999 means that more sharecropping households will have some of their groundnut harvest left, after the repayment of debts, than in recent years. The relief food decreases the subordination of the displaced Dinka to the local merchants and farmers. Of course, this concerns the latter, as the

¹⁶ The exception to this was Joghana camp, which is inaccessible to road transport during the rains, and where no food assistance was delivered after June until November. A double ration was given in June.

¹⁷ It was difficult to assess what proportion of the camps' population has no ration card, and to find out how many have left the camps this year. However camp residents commonly state that one quarter to a third of the population either recently arrived from Bahr el Ghazal, and have not yet been able to claim relief themselves, or were away when the registration was done in 1999.

exploitative nature of the farming, labouring, loan relationships between the two groups depends on the Dinka being dependent on them for cash and food. Conversely, the effects of delivering less food are also likely to be multiple. The simplest effect is the reduction in the availability of one important food source. For sharecropping households the amount of food they can access from their own production or from the agreement is primarily determined by the farmer. The only options that the Dinka households have for filling any deficit left by a decline in food aid are to collect more wild food or to purchase more. Wild food is not available close to all camps, in all year, so families turn to the market. Given the low levels of income and lack of cash surplus or assets held by the Dinka, this option may not always be accessible and it is likely that often families remain with a food deficit and go hungry.

To understand in detail how households survive without food aid, it would be necessary to investigate the food economy of those Dinka households who live outside of the camps and don't receive any relief assistance. It may be that those households have a different demographic make-up from those in the camps (for example some have close relatives working in towns like Nyala where there are more, better paid labour opportunities) or access to more equitable share-cropping relationships or their own land. Dinka households, not matter whether they live inside or outside of the camps, in South Darfur are fully engaged in agricultural activities. Considering this, there seems to be little evidence that food aid is encouraging the Dinka to be less active, although levels of assistance like 1999's may lead to a decrease in the number of men looking for daily work, or collecting wood for sale, in the dry season.

Currently the positive effects of food aid in the camps outweigh any negative effects. Although it is recognised that food aid is not a sustainable programming option, it has to be remembered that the displaced Dinka are not in an environment where they can achieve a sustainable livelihood. Many are indebted and few own assets, like livestock or surplus cash or grain. Although it seems as if the tradition of sharing amongst the clans remains, the proportion of wealthy households to poor is extremely small and this negatively affects the independence of the Dinka community, and its ability to support itself in difficult times. It may be argued that the community needs to become less self reliant and more integrated into the northern economy, but the question that must follow is, "on what, or whose, terms?" Currently, the low position of the Dinka socially, politically and economically means that they are being brought into the northern economy as labourers, who are not able to achieve equality with other ethnic groups.

Programmes seeking to increase the Dinka's economic opportunities are likely, at some level, to promote the integration of the Dinka into the northern economy. Therefore, the constraints to meeting the programme's objectives and all the costs and benefits to the different parts of Sudanese society have to be fully considered.

The camps in the area assessed, including a note of those visited by the team.

Province	Camp	Ethnic Group of hosts	Visited	Population*
Adilla	El Goura	Maalia		2146
Adilla	Jad el Sid	Maalia	yes	2060
Adilla	Mazroub	Maalia	yes	2732
Adilla	Abu Karinka	Maalia		2864
Adilla	Sharif	Maalia	yes	3185
Adilla	Adilla	Maalia	yes	6144
Ed Daein	Abu Jabra	Rezigat	yes	5619
Ed Daein	Khor Omar	Rezigat & mixed.	yes	10826
Buram	Sanidelaida	Fur		20445
Buram	El Joghana	Musalit	yes	1779

* **Source of data:** SC-UK South Darfur Area office, "Food Allocation list for IDPs in Ed Daein Camps", September 1999.