Ziviler Friedensdienst (ZFD) - Nyala
South Darfur Resettlement Scheme

The problem: Physical and economic insecurity of IDPs

One of the world’s longest ongoing civil wars, combined with repeated famine crises, have earned the Sudan the record of being the country with the world’s largest numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs): an estimated four million or more. Huge numbers of these IDPs are only able to edge out a very precarious living. For decades, they have depended on exploitative labour relations and external relief, and they often live and work in volatile physical circumstances. This has largely prevented them from building up assets to escape the circle of poverty.

A way out: Empowerment of IDPs

Under its conflict transformation programme (ZFD), DED contributes prominently to an ambitious project aiming to demonstrate that alternative solutions are feasible for Sudan’s IDPs. By giving IDPs guaranteed, long-term agricultural land-titles in a physically secure environment and helping them to establish themselves on this land as a farming community, they are empowered to take charge of their own livelihood as citizens of their country until and beyond the date when an end to the conflict will allow them to return to their home areas should they choose to do so.

The project: South Darfur Resettlement Scheme

To test the feasibility of this idea, a number of international organisations together with the Government of South Darfur and national partners developed the South Darfur Resettlement Scheme (hereinafter, “the Project”). First conceived in 1998, this Project aims to secure the physical, economic, and socio-cultural well-being of 20,000 IDPs, mostly Dinka Malwal originating from Northern Bahr el-Ghazal who are presently dwelling in several camps in Adila and Ed-Da’ein Provinces, South Darfur State. At their present location, they have very insecure access to land and therefore have depended on external relief for their survival for about a decade. In autumn 1998, the Government of South Darfur, through the Ministry of Agriculture, made available 90,000 feddan (382.5 sq. km) of land from unused agricultural schemes at Sanam an-Naga (Burm Province) and Abu Salala and at-Tugga (Nyala Province) for the resettlement of these IDPs, so that they can be given a chance to build sustainable livelihoods.

Under this scheme, the Government of South Darfur allocates to the resettled IDPs 20 feddan (8.4 ha) of agricultural land per household in the designated areas, on a 20-year, no-cost, renewable leasehold basis, plus a 20 m * 20 m housing plot. Implementing agencies provide access to water, housing materials, latrines, and basic agricultural inputs, together with food aid for the first year or two. To protect natural resources in the area, controlled access to wood for fuel and carpentry is planned to be developed.
Phased implementation

In a pilot phase financed by Save the Children UK (SC UK) and Oxfam Great Britain, 107 households (HH), comprising a total of 332 individuals, were resettled from Jadd al-Sid camp (Adila Province) to Sanam an-Naga on 23-26 April 1999, based on voluntary registration. Following the success of this pilot phase, DED secured financial and human resources to help implementing the resettlement of a further 500 households (Phase One). Ca. 494 HH were effectively registered by SC UK in Jadd as-Sid and al-Gura camps (Adila Province). These are currently being moved. Transportation began on 21 March and is scheduled to be complete in mid-April, in time to prepare the ground for the coming agricultural season. In Phase Two, following the harvest in November 2001, the remaining 3500 households are planned to be resettled with a grant from the European Commission under its NGO Food Security Programme (application submitted earlier this year).

Sectoral responsibilities

The project is implemented by a consortium of agencies with Oxfam GB and SC UK taking a lead role on the NGO side. DED joined this consortium in early 2000 and by November 2000 had secured funding to allow the project to go ahead with the resettlement of 500 HH. During this phase, DED assigned the implementation of certain sectoral tasks to Oxfam GB and SC UK. Chief sectoral responsibilities are currently as follows:

- Selection & relocation: SC UK
- Land survey & demarcation: Oxfam GB (with Ministry of Agriculture)
- Water (drilling of boreholes, maintenance of water yards): Oxfam GB (with National Water Corporation)
- Shelter (provision of materials): Oxfam GB
- Health: SC UK (with UNICEF and Global Health Foundation)
- Sanitation: SC UK
- Agriculture & management of natural resources: DED (with MoA and SC UK)
- Credit & income generation: DED
- Education: SC UK (with UNICEF)
- Social Monitoring: DED

Management

Since its inception, the project has been characterised by different levels of management and coordination. Currently, for all practical purposes, the situation is as follows:

- The Advisory Committee in Khartoum, consisting of the country representatives of Oxfam GB, SC UK, and DED, controls allocation of funds and supervises overall steering of the Project. It meets upon request by one of its members.
- The Supreme Committee for IDP Affairs in South Darfur, chaired by the Humanitarian Aid Commissioner (HAC), coordinates implementation of the work of the different agencies participating in the Project. The Supreme Committee is
informally constituted and meets at irregular intervals according to need. Its most active members represent HAC (chair), Oxfam GB (Nyala), SC UK (Ed-Da’ein), DED/ZFD (Nyala), OCHA (Ed-Da’ein), WFP (Ed-Da’ein), GHF (Nyala), SPCR (Nyala).

- The Settlement Management Committee on site in Sanam an-Naga, chaired by the Ministry of Agriculture, manages day-to-day implementation of the project. Its most active members (all resident in Sanam an-Naga) represent MoA, Oxfam GB, SC UK, the nurse (MoH), the teacher, and the police sergeant. 2 male and 2 female representatives from the resettled IDPs, plus 3 male and 2 female members from the local ‘host’ community of Miseiriyya Jabal (resettled to Sanam an-Naga in 1997) attend fortnightly meetings; the Executive Director of Qureida Council (to which Sanam an-Naga belongs administratively) is occasionally represented. The Settlement Committee reports directly and is accountable to the Supreme Committee.

- Three sub-committees were formed on site in Sanam an-Naga for agricultural, health, and educational issues. They mainly serve as channels of information between the Settlement Committee and the community.

**DED contribution**

By November 2000, DED was able to secure financing (€ 465,450 obtained through the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation) for the resettlement of 500 IDP households during 2001. This allowed the Project to go ahead with Phase One. DED subcontracted Oxfam GB and SC UK for the implementation of activities in land demarcation, relocation, water and sanitation, shelter, health, and education. DED committed itself to provide 4 expatriate Development Workers (each joined by a Sudanese Assistant Project Officer) in agricultural development / management of natural resources (1 unit each for Sanam an-Naga and for Abu Salalah / at-Tugga), income generating activities, and social monitoring. The Social Monitoring Unit began its work on 21 January 2001. An agricultural expert is expected to arrive in Sanam an-Naga in June 2001. The remaining units should be active by autumn 2001.

**Social monitoring**

Organised resettlement of IDPs has never before been attempted in the Sudan on a scale comparable to what is envisaged in this Project. To prevent negative social consequences of ill-informed planning, and to help keep conflicts within the resettled communities and between them and the host communities manageable, the project will seek as much as possible to listen to and involve the settlers themselves and the host communities. For this purpose, the Social Monitoring Unit (SMU) was given two main tasks:

- To monitor socio-cultural dynamics among the IDPs and between them, the host communities, and implementing agencies, especially with regard to issues of conflict and peace and community peace building mechanisms;
- To promote the participation of IDPs and host communities in decision-making processes.
Based on continuous monitoring of social and cultural developments in the resettled communities, the SMU contributes to the overall integration of the project by providing feedback to the management on how the different components affect the overall welfare of the people. It is thus not an ordinary sector but an advisory body that operates together with and across the individual Project sectors to help strengthening community capacities and community cohesion. The SMU reports to senior project management staff (currently, the Advisory Committee in Khartoum, as well as Oxfam GB Nyala, SC UK Ed-Da’ein, and HAC South Darfur). This should help the management to make better-informed decisions and more effectively coordinate between the implementing partners.

The SMU also coordinates with UNDP’s conflict transformation unit in Khartoum (to be revived). Beyond the immediate project, the SMU is also expected to play an important role in contributing to IDP policy in the Sudan more generally through exemplary analysis of programme impact and information dissemination directed at donors and policy makers.

Objectives

The long-term objective on which DED activities focus is:

**Resettled IDPs have taken ownership of and responsibility for the Project. Settlers are well accepted in their host communities, and are able to govern their own affairs and sustain their livelihood relying on their own capacities.**

For the SMU in particular, this translates into a number of short-term objectives to be achieved by the end of active DED involvement:

1. Resettled communities have a strong, functioning system of community organisation that supports their economic, social, cultural, and political capacities.
2. Resettled and host communities participate fully in decision-making processes affecting them.
3. Mechanisms are in place peacefully to solve conflicts within resettled communities and between them, neighbouring communities, and Project implementing agencies.
4. IDPs, host communities and agencies implementing the Project have strengthened Project design and implementation through mutual learning processes.
5. Structures are in place to sustain medium- and long-term viability of the resettled communities on a self-reliance basis.
6. The SMU has continually monitored and regularly reported on socio-cultural dynamics among the IDPs and between them and the host communities, issues of conflict and peace, and community peace building mechanisms.

Areas of concern

In the two months that the SMU has been active so far, three key areas of concern have been identified:

1. **Management and planning**
   
   There is currently no clear, universally agreed upon distribution of management responsibilities, nor a reliable system of operative planning. From the perspective of donors and
implementing INGOs, day-to-day coordination should lie in the hands of two Resettlement Coordinators appointed by Oxfam GB and SC UK and operating under the overall management of the Advisory Committee in Khartoum who bear ultimate financial responsibility. This dual management, however, has not formally and effectively been established yet (so far, it is still at the proposal stage, and the two Senior Managers from Oxfam and SC UK have not been appointed). In the meantime, the Supreme IDP Committee (which has been prominently involved in planning since the Project’s inception) has taken on effective management of Project implementation, under the chairmanship of HAC. While HAC South Darfur has played a very constructive role overall, the fact that the body effectively coordinating project implementation so far is not financially accountable for implementation and has no power of directive over participating agencies has led to shortcomings in operative planning and coordination. In particular, guidelines and criteria for action are not sufficiently coordinated and made transparent to all parties concerned; deadlines are frequently set without controlling how realistic they are; and responsibilities for control of implementation and follow-up are too often left vague. This has led, for example, to the recent critical situation where 207 households were transported to Sanam an-Naga without effectively controlling for the prior availability of sufficient water and food and without taking into account the limited capacity of absorption on site, including that of available health services.

- It is therefore urgent to establish an effective and streamlined system of management with appropriate responsibilities that is trained in operative planning and can be held accountable for proper project implementation.

2. Sustainability

Ultimate sustainability of the Project depends on three key factors: a sound economic base, careful management of natural resources, and the taking over of responsibility for the Project by the resettled communities themselves. The present Project is not the first attempt at organised IDP resettlement in Sanam an-Naga. A previous scheme involving 450 HH was implemented 1983-86 but collapsed when external aid was withdrawn. It is imperative for the success of the whole idea of IDP resettlement in the Sudan that the setting of objectives and the management of the Project be primarily based on criteria of sustainability.

a) Economic base

As laid down on paper, the Project envisaged providing free food aid to resettled IDPs during the first year (full rations up to the first harvest). From the second year onwards, IDPs were expected to become independent of regular food aid.

In reality, current settlers are facing a food gap of 3-7 months this year, even though the rains are reported to have been reasonable. They will thus need further direct external assistance beyond what was originally expected; financing for this has yet to be secured. Pending a proper assessment, it appears that there are two main reasons for this failure to achieve self-sustenance so far.

First, even though IDPs have been given a tradable asset (land), their lack of access to and control of marketing forces them to sell the products of their labour (grain and groundnuts) at rather low prices. Most money spent on buying goods (gravy, sugar, tea, soap, etc.) and services (transport) leaves the IDP community since these are largely pro-
vided by outsiders (host communities, members of the Settlement Committee). Thus, unfavourable terms of trade for the IDPs mean that surplus value created by the IDPs flows out of the community instead of helping them to build up assets.

Secondly, shortage of capital and expertise combined with the remoteness of the area have so far largely prevented IDPs from successfully engaging in economic activities other than farming. Daily labour – one of the strategies to cope with income gaps – is not an option for most due to the physical distance from the nearest towns. With few exceptions, credit provided so far has not been sufficient for IDPs to establish small businesses. With hardly any capital available within the community itself, market opportunities have remained extremely limited so far.

➢ To break this pattern which threatens the Project to fail on economic grounds, measures must be taken to improve the terms of trade for the resettled communities, i.a. by helping them better to market their agricultural products and by enabling them, through the provision of training and credit, to produce and market other goods and services needed by the community.

b) Natural resources

Water, soil, and natural vegetation are volatile resources in the Sanam an-Naga area that need to be carefully managed to prevent deterioration of the habitat. It had been the inaccessibility of water that had prevented agricultural use of the area so far. Now that water yards make available deep aquifers, strain on the surface increases. In theory, each household is supposed to plant 5 feddan (2.1 ha) each year to allow for a four-year crop rotation. In practice, many households plant as much as twice as that, arguing that a larger than average family size forces them to do so. This threatens the soil with premature exhaustion. Further, the increase in human population has led to more of the natural vegetation being cut for fuel and carpentry, further threatening erosion of the area.

➢ It is important to work closely with settlers, from the early stages of Project implementation, to raise awareness of the necessity to conserve natural resources, and to develop alternatives for obtaining fuel (solar ovens?) and wood for carpentry. Further, an acceptable solution must be found to the problem of households not being able to cope on the basis of the land presently allocated to them. This will become more acute in the future with natural population growth.

c) Put IDPs in charge

So far, the Project has been managed as an agricultural scheme for IDPs, not by them. In all management bodies, IDPs are only marginally represented. All relevant committees are chaired and dominated by outsiders (Northern Sudanese or expatriates), and if they have IDP members at all, these have no sectoral responsibilities but only sit in to ‘represent’ the IDPs, voice their concerns, and convey decisions to their community. Structurally, they do not have any significant decision-making power over their own affairs. This runs counter to stated Project goals. Since at the present phase, resettled IDPs still lack the ability to direct the Project, their capacities in this regard must consciously be increased.

➢ If the Project is to survive the end of INGO support (foreseen after two years), representatives of resettled IDPs urgently need to receive training to increase their capacity to manage the Project themselves. Settlers must increasingly be involved in decision-making processes at management level to prepare them to eventually take over management of their own affairs.
3. Potential conflicts between settlers and outsiders

The immediate neighbours of the resettled Dinka IDPs in Sanam an-Naga are Miseiriyya Jabal originating from West Darfur who had moved to Ed-Da’ein in the 1980s to escape the drought in their home area. Insecurity in Ed-Da’ein due to tribal conflict between the Rizeigat and the Zaghawa led them to move to Sanam an-Naga in 1997. They settled on land owned by the Government, but did not receive any outside support at the time. It is these people who are labelled ‘the hosts’ (or in Arabic, ‘the citizens’ [al-muwatinun], even though they themselves are newcomers who settled in Sanam an-Naga only two years earlier than the Dinka. People from other ethnic groups (Berti, Mima, Tam, Borgu) also resettled in the area at that time, between Sanam an-Naga and Gireida just south of the Government agricultural scheme, on land traditionally owned by the Masalit of Gireida.

All these people – traditionally agriculturalists – have welcomed the arrival of the Dinka, even though they were not directly consulted prior to the decision to resettle them. If a minimum of services and benefits accrue to them through the Project, the potential for conflict should remain as small as it is right now. The Miseiriyya Jabal living on the Scheme – who are economically and socially better off than the Dinka – are already benefiting from water, health and education services provided by the Project. They are mainly petitioning for obtaining long-term leases of land on the same terms as the Dinka. If this is granted to them, it may be easier to have the local population accept the Dinka raising cattle – something that the Miseiriyya Jabal do and that would signify major progress towards the Dinka regaining confidence in economic security.

While the Miseiriyya Jabal ‘hosts’ are already an integral part of the Project, less attention has been paid so far to the communities living adjacent to the Government Scheme, in particular the pastoralists some of whose migration routes pass close by. With the expansion of the resettlement scheme, potential for conflict between farmers and herders is bound to increase. This will necessitate close monitoring and careful handling, taking into account the interests of both sides.

Tension may also arise due to spontaneous movements of people to the Project sites, lured by the resettlement package. Several dozen such cases are already living at the Sanam an-Naga site. Some of them have been there for almost a year. Being ‘second-class’ residents without rights and formal recognition, they are putting a strain on the resources of families who host them, and they compete for limited labour opportunities. This creates dissatisfaction that may degenerate into local violence if not contained through extensive dialogue and imaginative solutions.

Last but not least, dialogue is also needed with the host communities in Ed-Da’ein and Adila Provinces (Rizeigat and Ma’aliya) who stand to lose from a large-scale movement of ‘their’ Dinka out of their provinces, since they rely to an important degree on Dinka labour for agriculture and services.

Nyala, 30 March 2001