

# Livelihood Assessment in Darfur IDP Camps: A Case Study Abushouk IDPs Women, North Darfur, Western Sudan

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## ABSTRACT

The people of Darfur are caught up in a conflict resulting from years of marginalization, resource-based disputes over land and water, and political/military engagement. The marginalization of the conflict affected population already deprived of their original livelihood sources has only increased, pushing them to the edge of the food insecurity. The conflict in 2003 has only further aggravated the stressed livelihood situations in Darfur. Never before in the history of Darfur has there been such a combination of factors causing the failure of livelihood strategies and the loss of assets. These factors include systematic asset-stripping, production failures, market failures, failures to access of natural resources and constraints on the remittances of the migrant workers.

This study tries to investigate the impacts of the current conflict in Darfur on livelihood of Abushouk IDPs women and the new livelihood strategies they adopt. Also to identify the challenges Abushouk IDPs women face

The method used: - 1. Literature review and secondary data related to the theme. 2. Own researcher field observation, interviews through questionnaires for the primary data. 3. Discussions with individuals and groups. The main results are: Abushouk IDPs women depends mainly on agriculture as a main source of livelihood before the conflict beside trade and animal rearing, trade (especially petty trade) is the main source of income post conflict. As a result of conflict on their income 61.7% of the respondent their income was decreases, and 29.2% their income change and decrease. The negative effects of the civil strife on IDPs Women in Abushouk includes: losses of housing and assets, losses of markets and source of income, destruction of basic infrastructure, losses of economic livelihood opportunities, displacement and family dislocation, pressure on services. Women may turn to illegal activities, which provide lucrative opportunities, but can carry a high risk of violence. High level of insecurity persists around the IDP camps, make IDPs afraid of attacks and fear losing their lives causing the IDPs to remain confined to the IDP camps affecting their livelihood activities, the challenges that Abushouk IDPs women faced during conflict and after displacement related to: Providing staple food for their families, Finding suitable work (job opportunities), Difficulty in access to services due to the large number of IDPs (crowded) and limit of the services and insecurity in and outside the camp (security is the basic dimension in livelihood sustainability). Through discussions the study found that the youth women have the desire to change and high ability to forget sad memories to cope with the new situation more than older ones. The study recommended 1. Providing security in and outside the camp help IDPs to return to their home land voluntary. 2. Ensuring security of livelihoods, access to economic activities, provide adequate training on survival skills, health issues, leadership, introduce and support vocational training opportunities. 3. Improvement of credit system helps IDPs women to create new income generating activities to improve their livelihoods (there is entrepreneurial spirit and desire for self-reliance).

**Keywords:** *Livelihood, Darfur, IDPs Camp, Sudan*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Darfur IDPs

The war in Darfur began as skirmishes between farmers and herders over concrete material resources, land. With progress of time and increase of loss of life and material belongings, ethnicity began to immerge as a second cause of conflict. Further aggravation of the fighting and grater loss of life and belongings shifted the ethnic to the fore as the most important motivation for the conflict. The conflict become ethnic and resource conflict still further and grater loss will transform the conflict into an identity conflict [7]. The conflict of 2001-2004 has left the people of Darfur in complex emergency situation, as it is not safe for people to return to their original villages. they forced to live in the IDP camps that have been strained to the fullest capacity to accommodate IDPs [9, 1,11]. More than 2500 village have been torched and completely destroyed, over two million people have been driven away from their areas of origin and are living in the IDPs camps, in addition to more than 200,000 who

crossed the borders to take refuge in Chad and Central African Republic

El Fasher is the capital of North Darfur state, which hosts 3 IDP camps i.e. Abu Shouk, Al Salaam and Zam with population of 56000, 47000 and 42,000 respectively.

Abu Shouk IDPs Camp is located 2.5 kms Northwest of El Fasher town; the capital of North Darfur State. The camp was established in April 2004 to accommodate the massive influx of 30,000 IDPs from Jebel Si, Korma and Tawilla. After the attack on Tawilla and Korma in November 2004, there were additional influxes of 30,000 IDPs. 65% of the IDPs are from Jebel Si, 15% from Korma, 10% from Tawilla and 10% from Kutum and other areas. The camp was planned by Government of Sudan and Spanish Red Cross (SPRC) it was divided in to two parts, East part which includes 28 blocks, each block divided in to 15 squares. The other side (West part) divided in to 11 blocks, in each block

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there is 8 squares, in each square there are about 25 families (see Abushouk IDPs camp map). In the beginning of the crisis, there are 54000 individuals, but now the total number of Abushouk IDPs is approximately 42000 individuals, 70% of them are women and children.

The main tribes within the camp are Fur (70%), Zagawa (10%), Berti (5%), Tunjur (5%) and 5% Gimir

and Keneen. There are 26 *Omdas*(Native leader) and 327 *shakhs* (Native leaders under *omda*) in the camp, they collaborate with the camp admin to manage, flow, observe the services and solving the social problems through (*judia*: council of native leaders meet to solve problems)there is homogeneity in the camp [4].

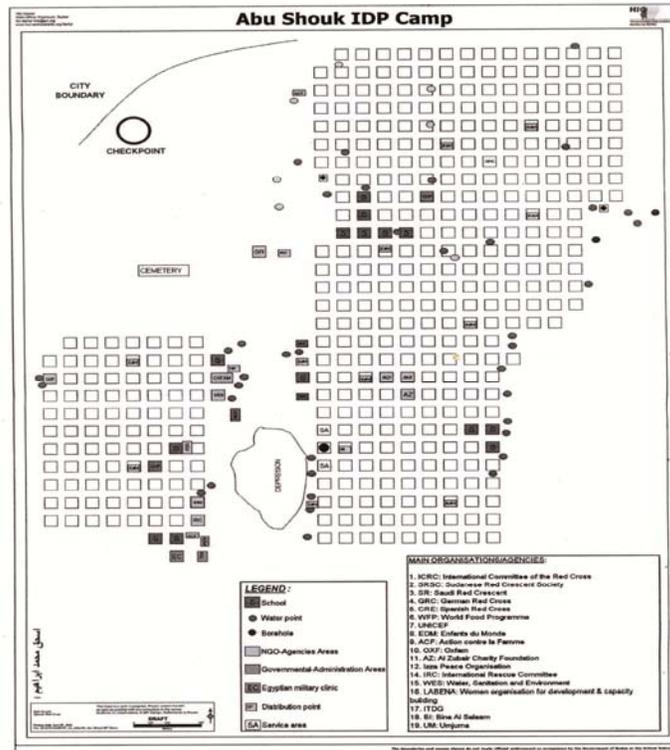


Fig 1

## 2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Understanding the impact of armed conflicts on women requires attention to many specific themes such as women tend to experience conflict differently than men. Women (just like men) are both actors and victims of the armed conflicts. The specific experience of women in conflicts areas is linked to their status in societies .i.e. women are particularly affected because of their status in the society and their gender. They do not enjoy equal status with men in any society

Conflicts and strives forced IDPs to change their source of income and livelihoods, particularly women. This study tries to investigate the impacts of the current conflict in Darfur on livelihood of Abushouk IDPs women through finding answers to the following questions:

- What are the new livelihood strategies Abushouk IDPs women adopt?

- What are the impacts of Darfur current civil strife on IDPs women livelihood and sources of income?
- What challenges Abushouk IDPs women face?

## 3. METHODOLOGY

This research combines both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection.

- Literature review and secondary data related to the theme.
- Own researcher field observation, interviews through questionnaires for the primary data.
- Discussions with individuals and groups

The study covered AbuShouk IDPs Camp, the camp was divided in to 39 blocks. A multi-stage stratified random sampling procedure was employed for selection

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of ( 12) blocks, 120 women (respondents) selected randomly( 10) women from each block.

Data obtained were processed and analyzed through the computer facilities using the Statistical packages for social sciences (SPSS) program to show the relations within and between the dependents and independent variables.

#### 4. CONCEPT AND LITERATURE REVIEW

##### 4.1 Livelihood

A means of securing the necessities of life. A livelihood in its simplest sense is a means of gaining a living. In addition, livelihood is defined as adequate stocks and flows of food and cash meet basic needs [2]

##### 4.2 Livelihood Strategies

Are the combination of activities that people choose to undertake in order to achieve their livelihood goals, they include productive activities, investment strategies and reproductive choices. Also can be defines as which are what people actually do, or the means by which they achieves their goals[10].In conflict areas women adopt alternative Livelihood strategies to cope with the new situations [11]. Livelihoods usually comprise multiple strategies.

##### 4.3 Livelihood Goals

Are in a sense the objectives of the household, which influence the combination of assets and strategies

that are subsequently mobilized.[11] reflect that livelihoods and survival of human individuals, household, groups and communities are vulnerable to stresses and shocks such as declining of labor work available, declining yields on soils, spend longer for less, for fuel, fodder, grazing or water, population pressures on resources, ware, civil violence, famines, animal or human illness,(Figure blow) address the components and flows in livelihood and the relation between civil strife and people livelihood system.

People livelihoods system and civil strife are interlinked .the mobility of people lead to concentrations of people and livestock in certain areas and pressure over resources and environmental degradation .at last lead to conflict over resource. Also population mobility and family dislocation and difficult access to subsistence means. were apparent socio-economic consequences, moreover the UNDP- 1996 and 2000 - reported that 96% of Sudanese population lie under poverty line, 30% have no access to health services, 60% have no access to healthy drinking water, this can cause socio-economic decay and at the end civil strife.

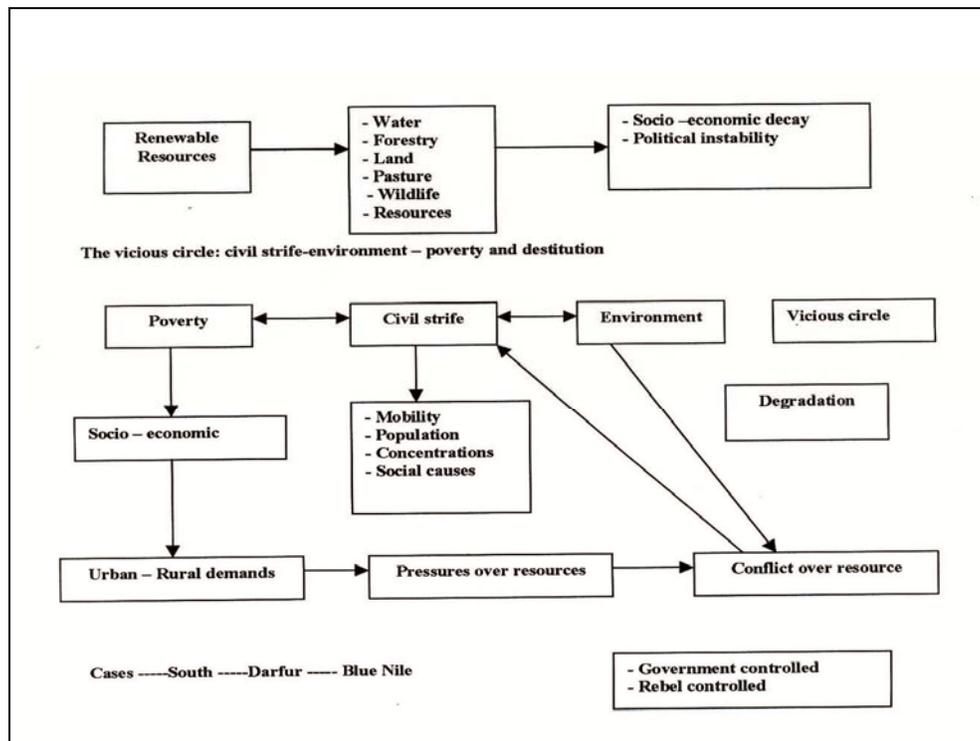


Fig 2: Conceptual Framework: people livelihood system and civil war

#### 4.4 Livelihoods in Darfur

Darfur region cover a vast area of 510,000 km<sup>2</sup>, stretching from the Sahara Desert in the North to equatorial forest in the South. The region's ecological diversity in part results from its wide-ranging zones of rainfall:

- A desert zone north of 16N, with less than 100mm of annual rainfall and variability in rainfall of 35-60 per cent;
- A Sahelian zone 12-16N, with 100-150mm of annual rainfall, 9.5-12 arid months and 25-35 per cent variability,
- A Sudanic zone 9-12N, with 6.5-9 arid months, 500mm annual rainfall and 25-30 percent variability. Critical elements of rural livelihoods and the food security of the region include the annual grain harvest, livestock production and market systems, rural production systems are a function of altitude, rainfall and soil type, which are obviously inter-related. The soils cultivated in Darfur include the sandy goz soils and the more fertile and therefore important alluvial soils (including wadis) [10].

Swift and Gray[8] identify five main rural production systems across the region, with local variants (Goz/wadi farming in North Darfur, Goz/wadi farming in South Darfur, Jebel Mara mixed farming, Camel, cheep and goat pastoralists and Cattle pastoralists). The food economy profiles compiled by SCUUK, go step further and take into account the full range of food and income sources that characterizes each food economy zone in North Darfur (The goz food economy zone, the pastoral food economy zone, the agro-migrant food economy zone, Mixed cash crops food economy zone, Tombac food economy zone and Wadi food economy zone) these include markets, trade, labor migration and artisanry. as well as the coping and crisis strategies that people use during times of drought and political instability as well as farmers, there is also a significant urban population of traders, government officials and other professionals in the region.

#### 4.5 The Situation of Darfur an Women

Women in Darfur play different roles as mothers, daughters and grandmothers, these roles are of socio-political and economic nature. It might be said in

general that women in Darfur, are hard workers, and are distinct from the rest of Sudanese women in terms of production skills. Those women take on both domestic, reproductive roles and productive roles, working inside and outside the home. They have shared most of the jobs designated elsewhere as men's work [Ismail and Make, 1990:9]. Women in Darfur work as farmers, as butchers, as traders and even as construction workers. They assert themselves vigorously in the social, economic and political areas [3].

#### 4.6 Socio-Political Role

Women in Darfur enjoy powerful position; throughout history of women in Darfur have played significant roles in political and social life. Muslim travelers were astonished by the freedom accorded to the royal women in particular and women in Sultanate [5,6]. Through songs, al *Yakama* (popular woman poet) has the right to criticize or compliment anyone, including the chief, women singers in Darfur express themselves freely concerning the current social and political situation. Although women in Darfur share most jobs designated for males, men have duties specified only for them, such as warfare. On the other hand, women are also responsible for specific duties, such as domestic ones [3].

#### 4.7 Economic Role

Women in North Darfur are engaged in productive roles, during rainy season (July to October) which called Goz economy, rain-fed farming, mainly millet mixed with melon or grow separately, household are holding small to medium sized herds of livestock (goat, sheep and few cows). Tombac economy, cultivation is labor intensive activity for women, thus it provides local labor opportunities for poor from within the areas. In addition, they grow different kinds of grains and vegetables, such as okra, tomatoes, sorghum, and millet. Women also processed dairy products. In the dry season, women usually worked on traditional crafts such as pottery, leatherwork, and basket, waving. They also collect and prepare wild food to make it edible. also women are involved in petty trade includes selling tea, food, cereals, vegetable e.g. also work as daily causal labor: this includes work in buildings, on brick mines, on houses as domestic helpers (cooking, cleaning, clothing) [3].

## 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1:** Distribution of respondents by Source of income

Source of income	Frequency	Percent
Trade	54	45.0
Agriculture	6	5.0
Job(governmental& nongovernmental)	10	8.3
Labor	37	30.8
Remittances	2	1.7
remittances-labor/employed by other	2	1.7
free business	2	1.7
trade-labor/employed by other	2	1.7
labor/employed by other-agriculture	1	.8
trade-assistance fake(traditional healers)	1	.8
job, remittances	1	.8
Other	1	.8
No answer	1	.8
Total	120	100.0

Source of income in any area reflect the social welfare and living standard of the people, Women may provide the primary or only source of income for their families. Table.1 show that trade (especially petty trade) is the main source of income for Abushouk IDPs women followed by labor (daily casual labor: this includes work

in buildings, on brick mines, on houses as domestic helpers...cooking, cleaning, washing clothes )their level of education is low and can't help them to found job of high income(Plate 1&2).



**Plate 1:** IDP Brick Maker

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**Plate 2:** Brick making

**Table 2:** Distribution of respondents by Impacts of conflict on their income

Impact on income	Frequency	Percent%
income raise	3	2.5
income decrease	74	61.7
change the source of income	6	5.0
No change in income	2	1.7
income decries and change	35	29.2
Total	120	100.0

Women are often the first to become unemployed or under-employed in conflict situations. Women may provide primary or only source of income for their families. Table 2 shows that 61.7% of the

respondent their income was decries, and 29.2% their income change and decries as a result of conflict on their income (limit job opportunities & competition).

**Table 3:** Distribution of respondents by livelihood before conflict

livelihood before conflict	Frequency	Percent%
Trade	12	10.0
Agriculture	73	60.8
Labor	3	2.5
Agriculture-trade	13	10.8
trade-agriculture-relief food	2	1.7
Agriculture-Trade-Animal herders	4	3.3
Agriculture-Animal herder	6	5.0
Job- Agriculture	6	5.0
Animal herders	1	.8

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Total	120	100.0
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Even before the conflict Darfur livelihood has been affected due to a number of factors; mainly consecutive droughts, depleting environment and marginalization. The conflict in 2003 has only further aggravated the stressed livelihood situations in Darfur. Never before in the history of Darfur has there been such a combination of factors causing the failure of livelihood strategies and the loss of assets. These factors include systematic asset-stripping, production failures, market

failures, failures to access of natural resources and constraints on the remittances of the migrant workers... Livelihoods under siege, [10].

Darfur livelihoods and food security includes the annual grain harvest, livestock production and market system. Aboshouk IDPs women depends mainly on agriculture as a main source of livelihood before the conflict beside trade and animal raring as table (3) showed.

**Table 4:** Distribution of respondents by the new livelihood they adopt

The new livelihood IDPs women adopt	Frequency	Percent%
relief food	3	2.5
labor -employment by others	1	.8
Agriculture	1	.8
Job(governmental& nongovernmental)	4	3.3
Trade-(assistance fake(traditional healers	6	5.0
Daily labor-relief food	25	20.8
trade and relief food	44	36.7
trade-daily labor -relief food	7	5.8
making brick and relief food	8	6.7
Alcohol -relief food	1	.8
Agriculture-relief food	2	1.7
Remittances-relief food	2	1.7
Free business, relief food	3	2.5
free work-relief food -job	2	1.7
agriculture-free business -relief food	1	.8
Agriculture-daily labor- relief food	3	2.5
Job- relief food	6	5.0
Trade-free business -relief food	1	.8
Total	120	100.0

Conflict and peoples livelihood are inextricably linked. Livelihoods are integral to the causes of the conflict and the impact it has had, and therefore will be central to any lasting solutions to the conflict.

Livelihood in North Darfur experiencing a rapid change, such as change in environment (variability of rainfall in amount and distributions and desertification), economical factors (marketing...ect), social factors and technological factors. Some people supplement their farming and livestock- raising activities with some

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strategies. In response to the stresses produced by the collapse in livelihood system, due to conflict women adopt new coping strategies regarding sustainable livelihoods. Abushouk IDPs women may pursue new and nontraditional occupations, including work normally done by men. Table 4 reflects the new livelihood IDPs women adopt. Through discussions the study found that the youth women have the desire to change and high ability to forget sad memories to cope with the new situation more than older ones. For those who change their source of income and livelihood, the reasons behind this are: they loss fertile lands, livestock's, assets, find opportunity to complete their education and found new job specially with NGOs. Also

The study found that the negative effects of the civil strife on IDPs Women in Abushouk includes: losses

of housing and assets (animal. crops), losses of the head of the household (father, husband), losses of markets and source of income, displacement and family dislocation, drops from schools, streetism (children), beggary, inability to pay health and school fees and pressure on services. Women may turn to illegal activities, including prostitution, brewing of alcohol and trafficking of drugs, which provide lucrative opportunities, but can carry a high risk of violence. In situation of armed conflict, severe mental and social stress can be caused by death, separation and loss of family and friends, loss of home and social environment, killing of friends or relatives, destruction of basic infrastructure, losses of economic livelihood opportunities, and material deprivation.

**Table 5:** Result of chi-square test of significance of observed differences between pre& post conflict by extent of level of expenses

Variables	Groups	df	Chi-square	Sig
Food	Pre	4	101.250	.000
	Post	5	212.600	.000
Water	Pre	4	228.333	.000
	Post	5	167.500	.000
Cloths	Pre	5	110.000	.000
	Post	5	76.100	.000
Education(school fees)	Pre	5	77.300	.000
	Post	5	134.200	.000
Health	Pre	4	52.750	.000
	Post	5	136.100	.000
Rent	Pre	5	124.200	.000
	Post	4	72.083	.000
Travel(transportation)	Pre	5	147.500	.000
	Post	5	236.200	.000
Fuel	Pre	4	216.917	.000
	Post	4	243.417	.000
Social occasion	Pre	5	50.700	.000
	Post	5	97.900	.000

The level of expenditure in any community reflect the standard of living of the people in that area, Results of chi-square in table 5 reflect that there is highly significant difference by level of expenses of food (for example) pre and post conflict, this because before the strife the IDPs women depend on their farms and local resources for their food.

High level of insecurity persists around the IDP camps, make IDPs afraid of attacks and fear losing their lives causing the IDPs to remain confined to the IDP camps affecting their livelihood activities, the challenges that Abushouk IDPs women faced during conflict and after displacement related to:

- Providing staple food for their families.
- Finding suitable work (job opportunities).
- Care and looking after their children in the host community because there are new cultures, some different and unacceptable behavior.
- The size of the house is very narrow compared to the number of the household member.
- Difficulty in access to services due to the large number of IDPs (crowded) and limit of the services.
- Insecurity in and outside the camp (security is the basic dimension in livelihood sustainability).
- Ensuring security of livelihoods, access to economic activities, provide adequate training on survival skills, health issues, leadership, introduce and support vocational training opportunities.
- Improvement of credit system helps IDPs women to create new income generating activities to improve their livelihoods (there is entrepreneurial spirit and desire for self-reliance).

## 6. CONCLUSION

Civil strife and people livelihood are interlink, Abushok IDPs women were cope with the collapse in their livelihood strategies by adopt new ones such as petty trade, daily casual labor :this includes work in buildings, on brick mines, on houses as domestic helpers...cooking, cleaning, washing clothes . IDPs originally from Tawilla, Korma, Dar Al Salam have more quickly acquired “new” livelihood strategies than IDPs from Jebel Si. The main reason behind this is attributed to their historical isolation and minimal exposure to urban life. They were also the worst hit by the conflict as they lost most of their assets. On the other hand, IDPs from Tawilla, Korma and Dar Al Salam have benefited from previous exposure to El Fasher town and central Sudan where they obtained new resources (credit and gifts). The proximity to El Fasher played a crucial role in maintaining property and gaining new assets.

There is highly significant difference by level of expenses of food, water, cloths, rent, travel, education, health, fuel and social occasion pre and post conflict, although they spend more post the conflict 97.5% of the IDPs women interviewed reported that their income is not enough for the family expenses.

Civil strife is like a coin, that has had positive impacts on one face (exposure to other cultures, to new skills and experiences, awareness about sustainable development and the need for sustainable peace, access to education and health services ) and negative socio-economic impacts on the other side ( losses of houses, assets, markets and source of income, destruction of basic infrastructure and livelihoods, pressure on services, culture of violence, mental and social stress, losses of the head of the household (father, husband), displacement and family dislocation, drops from schools, illegal activities

In order to reduce the negative effect of conflict on Abushok IDPs women livelihoods and to encourage them the following recommendations are stated:

- Providing security in and outside the camp help IDPs to return to their home land voluntary.

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