

Executive summary

The following report presents the findings of an independent evaluation of Tearfund's **Wadi Salih Integrated Relief Project** that was implemented between 1st January and 31st December 2006. This project was funded by BUZA and represents a continuation of Tearfund's humanitarian response to the needs in the Garsila and Deleige areas of West Darfur.

The evaluation was conducted by a multi-disciplinary team of three independent consultants. The field evaluation of the Wadi Salih project took place between the 1st and 5th March 2007. However, this was preceded by document reviews and discussions with Tearfund representatives in London and Khartoum and a debriefing with Khartoum managers between the 12 and 13th of March, including a visit to the Dutch Embassy. Meetings were also held with programme personnel in Nyala on the 6th March.

Background

Tearfund has been operational in the Wadi Salih locality since 2004 providing an integrated approach with a focus on the sectors of nutrition, food security, health promotion, water and sanitation and community development. The activities in 2006 focused on communities along the Southwest-Northeast geographical axis between Kordofan, Garsila and Deleige, in the region of Wadi Salih in West Darfur, Sudan. Eighteen communities were initially selected for intervention based on the following criteria:

- Communities who have permanently returned to their villages of origin, those who have recently returned, and those predicted to return in the near future.
- Equitably serve Arab, African, IDP and host communities.
- Continuing work with existing target communities where there are still unmet needs, and in new communities meeting the above criteria.

However, during 2006 the security situation in Wadi Salih has continued to deteriorate. Humanitarian access has decreased in the second half of 2006. Various security incidences involving local NGOs, including the serious incident involving the death of a Tearfund staff member, has limited movement and operational freedom. IDPs continue to congregate in the larger towns near to their areas of origin, putting an increasing strain on basic services and local resources. The hoped for large scale return of IDPs back to their home villages in Wadi Salih in the coming months is now unlikely.

Purpose of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the appropriateness, relevance and impact of both planned and unplanned project interventions and produce recommendations for future operations. The evaluation concentrates on the project covering the period January – December 2006.

The main methods applied were key informant interviews, group discussions with beneficiaries and staff, observation and project documentation and secondary data review.

Findings

Overall, the programme has led to an improvement in the quality of life for members of at least 18 conflict affected communities within the Wadi Salih area of West Darfur. This has included improvements in both health and food security.

It is difficult to verify the actual impact on the health of these communities given the lack of reliable monitoring systems. However, the beneficiaries' own reports and the agency's KAP surveys indicate that there has been a significant change in both awareness of preventative health measures and a notable reduction in the incidence of diarrhoea over the past year. This

is mainly due to improved access to 'safer water', latrines and effective health and sanitation promotion. As such the programme is judged to have successfully addressed its goal.

The programme reports that 51,509 people directly benefited from at least one of the three sector programmes. Although, it was difficult to verify the accuracy of this overall total, the numbers of direct beneficiaries reached by each sector is more evident. The attributed scores regarding the evaluative categories such as effectiveness, impact and appropriateness are presented by sector in Table 1, on page v.

Health Promotion

The Health Promotion programme had the widest reach, covering the 18 communities and involving approximately 28,000 as regular attendees of the health clubs. These targeted women, children and latterly men. Health Promotion was also introduced into 11 of the local schools. However, the number of women attending regularly was below the numbers expected. Women's attendance was found to fluctuate during the year according to agricultural seasonal labour demands. However, the programme (positively) did include men, setting up health promotion activities within existing community level associations. This also included involving the religious leaders in discussions regarding issues such as HIV/AIDS. The main concern regarding the Health promotion was the failure to distribute mosquito sleeping nets. This was due to a failure on the part of the UN agency that had committed to provide these.

The Health Promotion content and dissemination methodology is considered appropriate and very effective. It appears to have achieved and surpassed the intended adoption of recommended health practices. Although the KAP survey indicated that more than the targeted 60% of the beneficiaries adopted at least two recommended preventative health practices, the sampling process used means that the survey results cannot be generalised reliably. However, they do give a strong indication of the impact.

However, the Health Promotion impact was frustrated to some extent by the lack of sleeping nets (*as mentioned above*), and to a lesser degree, latrines. It is difficult to adopt recommended behaviours if the basic elements that support that adoption are not available. The Health Promotion programme raised the demand for latrines to a level the planned watsan programme could not cover. This was particularly noted in the IDP camps. However, Tearfund is attempting to maintain the integration between the different sectors. They have also (start of 2007) bought their own supply of nets to be distributed before the next rains.

The maintenance of the Health Promotion process has been significantly enhanced by the inclusion of the health messages in the schools' curriculum within the area. This is seen to be one of the key methods of sustaining the educational process over time as it is doubtful if the current level of health club activity could be maintained beyond the end of Tearfund's involvement. A positive co-operation with the MoE has helped to facilitate this process.

Food Security

The Food Security programme provided seeds and tools to 5,000 households (an estimated 25,000 direct beneficiaries) across the 18 communities. This involved seed distributions (the principal one) for the main rains and a further one for those that had access to dry season vegetable gardens. This involved the introduction of some vegetable varieties that proved popular and profitable. Hand tools were provided to each participating household and a reported total of 70 donkey ploughs divided between the 18 communities.

The intention to establish 2 tree nurseries was not achieved. The reason for this was due to expected funding from the FAO not materialising and an attack on one of the agencies that was due to provide the saplings. The agricultural extension aspect of the food security project was considered weak. Although the personnel responsible for this sector were committed and hard working, Tearfund should have given much more attention and resources to the extension aspect if it was to form part of the food security enhancement strategy. As it is, it

appears to have had little influence. This tended to pull down the overall positive assessment of the intended food security initiative's effectiveness.

The Food Security programme was considered highly appropriate. However, the ability to benefit from the programme depended on access to land. Although the programme has successfully targeted the more vulnerable households, both stable and IDP, the most vulnerable do not have access to land. The donkey plough is considered a highly appropriate means of enabling the household to increase the land under cultivation. However, the extensive distribution of the limited number of donkey ploughs was inappropriate.

Farmers reported increased yields. Some claim that it was also down to the good rains that were experienced in 2006. However, it is clear that the vegetable seed varieties grown in the winter gardens led to an increase in household incomes via the sale of these products. Although, those that were able to use the donkey ploughs reported an increase in the areas normally cultivated, very few were able to take advantage. In fact at least one community leader refused to let the donkey plough be used for fear of the competition and strife the demand would create. Tearfund need to take into account the very short cultivation season and the limited area one donkey plough is capable of covering in this time. However, people have recognised the potential of the donkey plough and have started to buy them in the local market (previously these were not available.)

The programme has had a significant impact on the semi nomadic participants encouraging them to develop a greater reliance on agriculture, which in turn could threaten existing farmers.

The Food Security process has been efficiently implemented. The sustainability of the achievements gained will, to a large extent, dependent on farmers saving and building their own seed stocks over the projected 2 year life of the programme. Tearfund is also considering the promotion of community seed banks, though the evaluators expressed some caution in this respect.

Water and Sanitation

The Water and Sanitation (watsan) programme is considered to have been very effective. It covered 15 communities and improved access to safer water for an estimated 17, 000 people. This involved the construction and rehabilitation of 45 water points, mainly hand pumped and the rehabilitation of the central water yard in Garsila. It was estimated by the evaluators that the average use per beneficiary (number in household by amount collected per day) could be in excess of 15 litres supporting the 12 litres per person/day reported by the project. The programme has also continued to maintain and repair several of the water points, particularly those servicing the Garsila IDP camps.

Members of the different pertinent Water Committees (9 in Garsila) and VDCs have also been trained in wellhead maintenance and pump repair. However, little evidence of local water point management was observed.

No water quality testing has been carried out, mainly due to the sensitivity toward this issue in the communities. One of the reasons for the attack on Tearfund was due to a deliberately spread that the agency was attempting to poison the water.

The latrine programme did not quite achieve the targeted 1000 households. However, 780 household latrines were completed and are in use – out of the 909 slabs provided. 20 VIP latrines were built for two schools and a further 4 at the request of 2 mosques. Both observation by the evaluators and the programme's own surveys indicate that a very high percentage of the household latrines are being correctly used and hygienically maintained, especially in the rural villages. However, the same cannot be said for the public VIP latrines. In this case issues of maintenance and responsibility are still being discussed while the toilets continue to be fouled.

The water and sanitation programme addresses the most strongly expressed needs in the communities, the Health Promotion programme increasing the demand for latrines. It is therefore considered highly relevant and the methods adopted appropriate. Of particular note is the decision to build and or cap hand dug wells. These were mounted by two hand pumps while leaving trapdoor access in the case of pump breakdown. This approach is particularly appreciated by the rural communities. Although initial technical problems were experienced in the design of the capping and installation of hand pumps over the hand dug wells these have now been addressed by the programme's engineer.

The beneficiaries interviewed directly associated the reduction in diarrhoea to the watsan programme. However, the maintenance of these facilities in future remains an issue. Although there is no concern regarding the sustainability of the household latrines, the school VIP latrines pose a problem. The schools are being advised by the MoE that it is Tearfund's responsibility to maintain them. With regard to the water points there still appears to be a high dependency on Tearfund to maintain the pumps. While Tearfund is present this attitude is likely to persist. However, Tearfund has co-ordinated very effectively with the pertinent authorities and other actors in this sector such as WES and this may prove another avenue for sustaining the village water points.

Community Development

The community development approach has rested on the establishment and training of Village Development Committees (VDCs). A VDC has been established in each of the 18 communities where Tearfund has had an operational presence during 2006. This surpasses the initial objective. These committees represent over 200 members with a gender split of approximately 20% being women. A planned series of workshops have been conducted for the members with the aim of enabling them to understand their roles as agents for change within their respective communities.

The establishment of the VDCs represents a considerable achievement within a year. However, many of the VDCs or their members seem to still be some distance from assuming the responsibility for the different sector interventions within their communities. Tearfund is looking to these structures as the basis for their eventual exit strategy. However, there is little evidence of group initiatives as yet. Most appear to think that their role is to act as an intermediary for Tearfund.

Many are still suspicious of Tearfund and are still tending to expect rewards for their services. However, they are present and participating in the training events. One of the factors that may have held them back initially was Tearfund's evident attempt to dissuade the traditional leaders from presiding over the VDCs. However, for those that appear to be functioning effectively, the traditional leader is in fact presiding over the committee. The issue of involving women in these committees has also demanded a significant cultural adjustment that may not yet have been completed.

It appears that Tearfund have approached this developmental process with a preconceived construct and applied a 'relief' rather than a 'developmental' expectation regarding time. Although significant progress has been made it will still require time and a preparedness to respond to the communities' emerging agendas if the VDCs are to achieve a truly representative and sustainable, independent status. To date they have helped facilitate the implementation of the Tearfund programme. However, there are signs that in some communities there is a growing realisation of the potential of the VDC as a representative body beyond the servicing of Tearfund. Their future sustainability will depend on their ability to identify and facilitate their own communities' initiatives.

One of the unexpected results of the VDC workshops has been the resulting inter-community and ethnic dialogue these sessions have promoted. This forum could offer opportunities for creating broader understanding and appreciation for one another's position. This could therefore create a basis for conflict mediation in future.

Tearfund have taken a very developmental approach to their response to the needs within the Garsila / Deleige area. Given the context, this is a relatively expensive method of conducting community development. However, one of the key and most appreciated contributions made by Tearfund's repeated and wide spread presence in the area is the perceived protection this offers to the villages. This is an outcome that was not taken into account when planning and justifying their operation or budget. However, if the issue of protection is taken into account, it more than justifies the expense of the current operational approach.

The following table presents the summary of the scores attributed to the objective categories for each sector. The scores are based on a five point scale where 1 = very weak and 5 = very strong.

Table 1: Summary of objective categories scores attributed to by sector

Objective category	Community development	Health Promotion	Watsan	Food Security & environment
Effectiveness	3	4	4	2
Impact	3	4.5	4	3
Appropriateness	4	4	4	4
Efficiency	?	4	4	4
Coverage	5	4	3	2
Sustainability	2	3	3	3
Co-ordination	?	4	4	2

Recommendations

Health Promotion

1. *Tearfund should improve the KAP survey sampling process, particularly if they wish to generalise the findings to the targeted population. Recommend that a randomised cluster sampling process is applied with a minimum sample 210 divided between 30 clusters. (Reference to Epidemiological and Statistical Methodological Unit, WHO Geneva: 'Sample Size Determination, A Users Manual' (1986) and / or the EPI INFO Users Manual.)*

Water and sanitation

2. *When Tearfund takes the responsibility of constructing hand dug wells it should consider using cast concrete casing to be sunk as the dig progresses. This will help protect against accidents that could occur with the collapse of the unprotected sides while the dig is in progress. This happened in Dar es Salaam. Fortunately no one was trapped. However, Tearfund could get blamed in the case of an accident*
3. *Maintenance of wells and other structures in established communities should be transferred to those communities, while in the IDP camps, inhabitants will continue to look to agencies to take on that responsibility. Tearfund is therefore advised to have a segregated approach.*
4. *Should consider investing in portable or manual rigs if they are going to continue with water provision, e.g. a Vonder Rig or something similar with the ability to drill to 40 meters*

Community development

5. *Tearfund appears to be highly reliant on the VDC and the intermediaries for each of its programme components (the focal points or co-ordinators for Health Promotion,*

watsan and Food Security). This should be balanced by actively seeking more engagement of relevant Tearfund staff with direct project beneficiaries. Tearfund must be very sensitive to maintaining access to the poor and weak and ensure that benefits reach the most insecure.

6. *It is important that Tearfund enable the VDC to define their own initiatives and to help them in the achievement of these. It is important to foster their independent initiatives without the agency assuming responsibility.*

Food Security and environment

7. *To add a fuel efficient stove project which is relatively easy to manage and will bring substantial benefits to the target communities and improve the programme's efficiency.*
8. *Tearfund is advised to look into ways to maintain and increase soil fertility, e.g. by promoting intermixing with nitrogen fixing crops.*
9. *The idea of community seed banks is questionable with Tearfund being advised to build on traditional/indigenous ways to preserve seed stocks in times of distress.*
10. *Place more effort on acquiring a basket of sorghum varieties in line with recommendations of farmer groups and post harvest evaluation of the varieties distributed in 2006.*
11. *Legitimate land claims and user rights should govern the delivery of agricultural inputs and resources.*
12. *For Tearfund to distribute more donkey ploughs to selected communities in order for the more vulnerable to have easier access. However Tearfund is also advised to monitor to what extent the more vulnerable have access to land and to see to what extent ploughs will invite them to take on risks by cultivating farmland well away from the village periphery.*
13. *To develop an appropriate training and agricultural extension guide based on the interest and expressed needs of the local farmers and geared towards sustainable forms of intensified agricultural production in a relative small area in the vicinity of the main village centres.*
14. *For Tearfund together with the VDCs to seek ways to promote dry season vegetable gardening in the vicinity of the urban centres and to learn from the experience of the IDPs in Garsila town whereby men guard the gardens during the night and have reached an understanding with the nomadic people not to disturb the gardens.*
15. *With Tearfund planning to introduce the treadle pump, to discuss with FAO how to solve the technical shortcomings of the pump (as encountered by FAR in the South West Corridor).*
16. *The sharing of experience between Tearfund's Food Security project in Garsila and FAR's programme in the South West Corridor will be beneficial to both Tearfund and FAR.*

Management

17. *Tearfund need to take care that an appropriate balance between the sectors within the different communities targeted is maintained so as to avoid beneficiary frustration. E.g. the number of latrines offered needs to match the scope of the Health Promotion activities.*
18. *Where possible, Tearfund should seek to maximise the scale of the intervention at a particular site so as to help further improve the unit costs of the operation. This needs to be set against the need to spread the operation across several sites, especially if protection is one of the purposes. If budgets do not permit, increased efficiencies of*

scale may be achieved by reducing the number of sites addressed in a projected period