

Network Paper

In brief

- The focus of humanitarian assistance in conflict has understandably been on life-saving interventions. Yet conflict-related emergencies also have serious impacts on people's livelihoods. Livelihood strategies become extremely restricted and may involve considerable risks to personal safety.
- In these circumstances, livelihood interventions are an important complement to humanitarian relief, particularly in protracted conflicts, where relief often declines over time and there may be opportunities to support new livelihood strategies or find other ways to help conflict-affected people meet their basic needs.
- This Network Paper reviews food security and livelihoods programming in conflict. The aim is to gather information on the types of food security and livelihoods interventions that are being implemented in conflict situations, their objectives, when particular livelihood interventions are appropriate, what the constraints have been in implementing them and how these constraints can be overcome.

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Food security and livelihoods programming in conflict: a review

Commissioned and published by the Humanitarian Practice Network at ODI

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Summary

Conflict affects all aspects of livelihoods. War strategies often deliberately undermine livelihoods and war economies may develop, where a powerful elite benefits from war by using violent or exploitative practices. War directly impacts on livelihoods through the destruction, looting and theft of key assets, and indirectly through the loss of basic services and access to employment, markets, farms or pastures. As a result, most people's livelihood strategies become extremely restricted and may involve considerable risks to personal safety. Contemporary conflict is frequently protracted, and risks to livelihoods thus persist for long periods of time. Protracted conflict is frequently punctuated by periods of acute food insecurity and displacement.

Livelihoods programming in conflict can have a number of objectives:

- Meeting basic needs and contributing to civilian protection (livelihood provision).
- Protecting and helping to recover assets (livelihood protection).
- Improving strategies and assets by strengthening institutions and influencing policy (livelihood promotion).

Whilst food aid remains the main way of meeting basic food needs in conflict, agencies have increasingly implemented a range of food security/livelihoods programmes to help meet basic needs and reduce protection risks, in both acute and protracted phases of conflict. These have included interventions that reduce expenditure, such as fuel-efficient stoves and grinding mills, and vouchers or grants to increase access to a range of goods or services, such as vouchers for milling or non-food items, cash for work for road rehabilitation or solid-waste disposal and grants for basic needs or livelihood recovery.

Minimising the risk of diversion, theft or attack is important when programming in conflict situations. Agencies seek to achieve this by avoiding the direct distribution of in-kind goods or cash, and by close monitoring of both the context (movement or presence of armed groups) and the process of distribution. Risks associated with cash distribution are minimised by delivery via local banks or money-transfer companies, or by distributing only small quantities on a regular basis.

Asset protection and recovery is also possible, although only to a limited extent. This needs careful consideration lest people are exposed to greater risks through the distribution of valuable assets, as well as consideration of such questions as access to land and markets and freedom of movement. In relation to food security, interventions have included:

- Protection of key production assets, for example fodder and safe places for livestock in displacement settlements, veterinary care and agricultural extension.
- The provision of assets that are less subject to theft, or that people can take with them if they are displaced (such as small stock like chickens).
- Seeds and tools, or seed vouchers and fairs in protracted conflict and for returnees.
- Small-scale income generation in protracted displacement or refugee situations. The provision of new livelihood skills could also provide people with safer livelihood strategies that are not based on owning valuable assets.

Understanding the conflict environment, in relation to policies, institutions and war-related processes, has been identified as a key gap in humanitarian response. This limits the impact of actions to support livelihood strategies and assets, and also means that efforts by humanitarian agencies to influence policies and strengthen institutions in food security/livelihoods programming have been limited. Food security/livelihoods interventions in conflict are similar to those in any emergency context; the key difference in situations of conflict is the importance of understanding how conflict influences the governance environment, in particular the power relations between and within groups, and how the political economy of conflict affects the functioning of local institutions and thus the livelihoods of different groups. It is necessary to analyse, mitigate and monitor the potential harms that may be associated with livelihoods programming in conflict, including the risk of reinforcing unequal power relations. This includes making sure that the type of assistance provided, and the way in which it is provided, does not put people at increased risk. These are also the key elements of a conflict analysis. Whilst a livelihoods strategy should provide appropriate livelihood support, in conflict the application of humanitarian principles is also important. Objective assessments of need within all groups are important, to ensure that livelihoods assistance reaches the most needy, and to avoid accusations of bias towards particular livelihood or ethnic groups.

Most contemporary conflicts are long-term, and therefore need at least 3–5-year strategies. These strategies should combine approaches to protecting and promoting livelihoods, whilst also maintaining the ability to meet basic needs. This also means having the flexibility to adapt responses when the nature of conflict changes. A major challenge for livelihoods programming in conflict is therefore to develop a strategy which is long-term, but which also remains humanitarian and continues to meet the basic needs of the most vulnerable groups.

Chapter 1

Introduction

This Network Paper reviews food security and livelihoods programming in conflict. In recent years, emergency food security and livelihoods programming has made important advances as an alternative to food aid to address food insecurity and support livelihoods. Much of the literature on this subject relates to natural disasters, such as drought, floods and earthquakes; livelihood support in conflict has been less well documented.

In conflict situations, the focus of humanitarian assistance has understandably been on lifesaving interventions, such as food distribution, feeding programmes, health care, water and sanitation. Such interventions are needed in most conflicts, as people might be displaced or otherwise cut off from their normal food and livelihood sources. Conflict-related emergencies also have serious impacts on people's livelihoods, particularly since war strategies are often intentionally aimed at undermining livelihoods. In addition, conflict-affected populations (like all emergency-affected populations) are concerned with maintaining as much of their livelihoods as possible, for example by retaining access to their land or livestock, or developing new livelihood strategies to meet essential needs not covered by humanitarian assistance. These strategies often entail considerable risks to their security, hence livelihood strategies in conflict also include a protection element. In particular in protracted conflict situations, livelihood interventions become important as a complement to humanitarian relief, as relief often declines over time and there may be opportunities to support some new livelihood strategies or find other ways to help conflict-affected people meet their basic needs.

Livelihoods support in conflict has become more common in recent years; the humanitarian operation in Darfur, for instance, saw increased emphasis on livelihood support. The aim of this paper is to gather information on the types of food security and livelihoods interventions that are being implemented in conflict situations, their objectives, when particular livelihood interventions are appropriate, what the constraints have been in implementing them and how these constraints can be overcome.

The paper is based on a review carried out for the food-security and livelihoods team in Oxfam GB's Humanitarian

Department between November 2007 and January 2008. It is based on the experience of Oxfam and a number of other NGOs (including Action Contre la Faim (ACF), Save the Children UK (SC-UK), CARE-US, German Agro-Action (GAA) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS)).

Information was gathered through a literature review and agency interviews, in particular on four country case studies: Darfur, Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sri Lanka and the Philippines. As the review was carried out for Oxfam, the case studies were selected to reflect different degrees of involvement by Oxfam, as well as different conflict contexts. For each country, two key NGOs were interviewed in addition to Oxfam. A literature review was also carried out for each country to trace the history and nature of the conflict, as well as its impact on livelihoods. The findings and issues emerging from the case studies form the basis of this paper.

The paper starts with an overview of contemporary conflict and the impact of conflict on livelihoods (Chapter 2), followed by a discussion of the objectives of livelihoods programming in conflict and possible livelihoods interventions to meet these objectives (Chapter 3). The livelihoods framework, as adapted for humanitarian contexts by Tufts University, is used as the basis for analysing the impact of conflict on livelihoods, and for reviewing different types of food-security and livelihoods interventions, using information gathered in the case studies as well as some information from other conflict areas, where relevant.

Whereas Chapter 3 discusses the types of interventions that have been implemented in different phases or types of conflict, Chapter 4 reviews ways of making livelihoods programmes conflict-sensitive, by designing and implementing interventions which ensure that risks are minimised and positive impacts maximised. This discussion refers in particular to benefits-harms tools and humanitarian principles. Finally, the report draws conclusions about the range of livelihoods interventions that have been, or could be, implemented in situations of conflict, and what more could be done to effectively analyse and support livelihoods in conflict.

Chapter 2

The impact of conflict on livelihoods

The nature of conflict today

A number of key points about contemporary conflict are important in relation to livelihoods programming. First, most conflicts are long-term. Conflicts in the DRC, Sri Lanka and the Philippines have been going on for between 15 and 25 years, and the conflict in Darfur is now entering its fifth year. Conflicts in other contexts, for example in Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia, are similarly protracted. Typically, belligerents have clear political aims at the start of the conflict. Over time, these political conflicts mutate into conflicts over economic resources, and are perpetuated because of the economic benefits to be gained from the war economy. War economies often involve various forms of violence, for example asset-stripping of the politically weak, extorting protection money and exploiting labour.¹ This may involve military or paramilitary actors or profiteers who benefit from a weak regulatory environment. These economies often have links to global networks.²

Second, in these protracted conflicts there may be periods or areas of relative stability, but the risk of acute or violent conflict remains and conflict frequently resumes (as in all the case studies). It has been said that these present-day wars differ from situations of 'violent peace' (peacetime situations with high levels of violence) only in degree, rather than being opposed conditions, and that violent peace and protracted conflict differ little in terms of levels of violence, death and displacement.³ The term 'fragile states' is now often used to describe situations of chronic conflict, weak institutions, political will and policies, poverty and/or the ineffective use of development assistance.⁴

Third, in all case-study countries there had been a ceasefire or peace agreement. However, this changed the nature of conflict rather than stopping it. In Darfur, a partially signed peace agreement in 2006 encouraged the splintering of opposition movements, changed alliances, weakened command and control and increased levels of banditry. In Sri Lanka, the ceasefire signed in 2002 unravelled following failed peace talks, a split in the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and a change in government. In the DRC, renewed conflict in the east has resulted from a failure to address the underlying causes of conflict as part of the peace agreement. In the Philippines, conflict over land and resources has continued despite a ceasefire in 2003 between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Fourth, war strategies are increasingly targeted at civilians, and impact civilians in a number of ways. The direct effects of war on livelihoods include the destruction, looting and theft of key assets, such as houses, food stocks and

livestock, and displacement. Indirect impacts include the destruction or loss of basic services, the collapse of public-health systems and loss of access to employment, markets, farms or traditional pastures through restrictions on movement. In the DRC, an estimated 4 million people died between 1998 and 2004, mostly from war-related diseases and starvation resulting from the breakdown in public services and livelihood systems.⁵ More than a million have been displaced in the east of the country. Even when people are not exposed to open hostilities, they may still be affected by conflict, for instance through limited access to markets or the imposition of formal or informal taxes.

Conflict is thus intimately linked with livelihoods. The underlying causes of conflict are often related to access to land and other resources, and people may take up arms because of long-term economic and political marginalisation. Conflict between different ethnic or livelihood groups over resources can be manipulated for political ends. War leads to parallel economies, and the economic motivations of more powerful groups tend to become increasingly dominant in protracted conflicts. War strategies are often aimed at undermining the livelihoods of those perceived to support 'the enemy'.

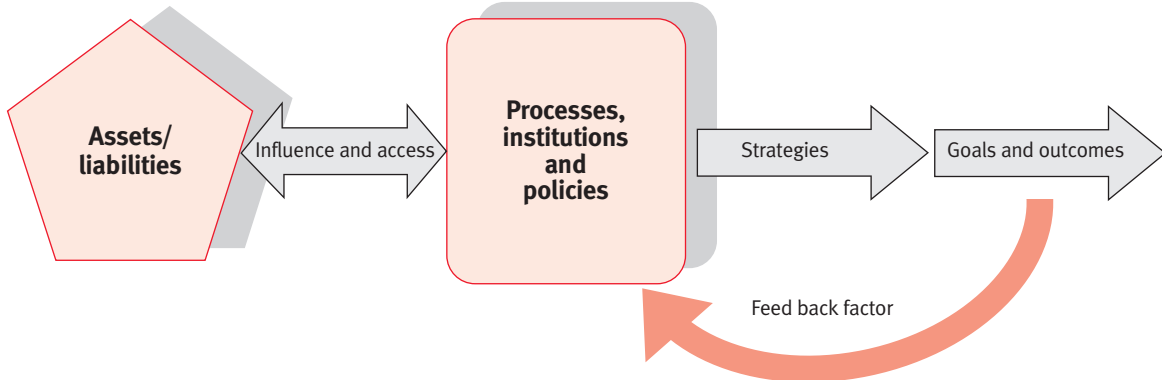
Implications for livelihoods programming. Livelihoods programming in conflict needs to be long-term, and flexible enough that it can switch between, or combine, meeting immediate needs and longer-term work to support livelihoods at local, national and international level. Livelihoods programming in conflict involves, not only working with displaced people (IDPs) or people cut off from livelihood sources, but also with people who are more indirectly affected by conflict. This includes populations who are experiencing low-intensity conflict when open hostilities have ceased, and people facing limited access to markets and informal taxation. Livelihoods programming in acute or protracted conflict needs to be underpinned by a commitment to core humanitarian principles. This means that meeting the basic needs of the most vulnerable should remain an important objective. Livelihoods programming in protracted conflict is also unlikely to be sustainable as livelihoods options will remain limited in the absence of a basic respect for human rights, ongoing violence, limited freedom of movement (and thus restricted access to markets, land and employment) and weak institutions, and where the risk of renewed humanitarian crisis remains.

The impact of conflict on livelihoods

The impact of conflict on livelihoods can be analysed in more depth by considering the livelihood strategies and assets of different livelihood groups, and the influence of

Figure 1

Adapted livelihoods framework for complex emergencies



Source: S. Lautze and A. Raven-Roberts, 'Violence and Complex Emergencies: Implications for Livelihoods Models', *Disasters*, vol. 30, no. 4, 2006, pp. 383–401.

the wider governance environment. These are the basic elements of the livelihoods framework, which can be a useful tool for assisting in livelihood analysis and planning programme activities.

A number of adapted livelihoods frameworks have been proposed for complex emergencies, including the model developed by Tufts University (see Figure 1). These frameworks differ from those used in more stable situations because vulnerability is considered central to all elements of the livelihoods framework, rather than being an external 'shock', such as a drought or flood; it encourages an analysis of assets as a liability as well as a source of resilience; and power relations and politics are incorporated more explicitly.⁶

In addition to forming the basis of a livelihoods analysis, the livelihoods framework has been a particularly useful tool in conflict situations, as a way of examining sensitive conflict-related political and economic issues. It has for example been used to study the political economy of conflict, examining the livelihood strategies of different groups, and by Tufts University in workshops in Darfur as a neutral forum for discussion between different stakeholders, including UN agencies, NGOs, Sudanese academics and government ministries.⁷ In these workshops, the livelihoods framework was used as a tool for analysing the impact of conflict on livelihoods, to undertake a programme review and make strategic recommendations. In these workshops, Tufts University developed a useful and innovative tool for analysing livelihoods by taking the following steps as part of an overall livelihoods analysis.⁸

1. Identify different livelihood groups, their main livelihood strategies and goals and the main assets and

policies, institutions and processes (known as 'PIPs') that these groups need in order to carry out their livelihood strategies.

2. Identify the impact of conflict on assets and PIPs and identify new PIPs that have developed during the conflict.
3. Identify humanitarian initiatives that influence different livelihood groups (strategies, assets, PIPs).
4. Consider how positive impacts can be built upon and negative impacts reduced (in the Darfur case, these were examined in relation to how livelihood strategies in themselves can fuel conflict, assets as liabilities, protection threats associated with livelihood strategies, longer-term processes of environmental degradation and poor governance and humanitarian principles).

The discussion below uses a similar method to summarise the impact of conflict on livelihood strategies, assets and policies, institutions and processes for the different case-study countries covered by this review.⁹

The impact of conflict on livelihood strategies

People's livelihood goals may change according to the context, and are what households aspire to. For example, goals may be increased income, food security, wellbeing and dignity and the sustainable use of natural resources, or in emergencies they may be limited to reducing risk and vulnerability, or ensuring personal safety and survival. Strategies include farming, pastoralism, wage labour, the collection and sale of natural resources and migration for work. Livelihood *outcomes* may not be the same as livelihood *goals*, because what actually happens (the outcome) may be malnutrition, food insecurity or exposure to violence.¹⁰

As noted above, conflict often restricts movement, which means that people are unable to carry out many of their former livelihood strategies. Activities such as farming, fishing, livestock herding, labour migration and the collection of wild foods, as well as the ability to access markets, may all be restricted or blocked. For many conflict-affected populations, livelihood strategies become limited to subsistence, petty trading, collecting firewood and water and making charcoal. In Darfur, brick-making has become a common strategy for internally displaced people (IDPs), as well as for resident populations. This pattern is consistent between conflict situations, although there are some differences, for example in Sri Lanka, where remittances are an important source of income and the state remains an important source of social welfare. In all case-study countries, conflict-affected people remained involved in a number of different livelihood strategies to meet basic needs such as milling costs, clothes, cooking fuel and education, even when relief was being provided.

With the reduction in livelihood opportunities, competition over resources can lead to conflicting livelihood strategies, which in turn can fuel conflict, for example between pastoralists and IDPs in Darfur over the collection of natural resources such as firewood.¹¹ People can become involved in illegal, criminal or degrading activities; in the DRC, for example, prostitution is an increasingly common livelihood strategy.¹² People may become involved in the war economy, through theft, looting or joining a militia. Others, usually the more powerful, find ways of benefiting from war by exploiting price differentials between markets, extorting protection money (in Darfur), mining (in the DRC) or drug smuggling and illegal logging (in the Philippines).¹³ Displacement is a key strategy for many, demonstrated by the large numbers of displaced populations in all four of the case studies.

In conflict, livelihood strategies may involve considerable risks to personal safety. In Darfur, for instance, firewood collection has been associated with a heightened risk of rape, while travelling to farms and markets can increase risks to personal security in the DRC, Sri Lanka and Darfur.¹⁴ The case studies show that people adopt a number of different strategies to minimise risk and/or to enable them to continue some livelihood activities. These responses can include travelling in groups to farms and markets, paying 'taxes', forming alliances with armed actors or negotiating across conflict lines to keep livestock migration routes open.¹⁵

Implications for livelihoods programming. Meeting basic needs or ensuring personal safety may be a goal of people's livelihoods strategies and should therefore be an element of livelihoods analysis in conflict and an objective of livelihoods programmes. Livelihood strategies frequently entail risks to personal security, and therefore supporting livelihoods could enhance protection. Achieving sustainable livelihoods will be difficult in an environment where people's livelihood strategies are

Box 1

Protection strategies and livelihoods in the Philippines, the DRC and Darfur

In Mindanao in the Philippines, even at the height of conflict, communities stayed within the war zone to protect property, crops and farm animals. They used a number of different protection strategies, including aligning with powerful groups linked to the government, aligning with the armed forces or joining paramilitary units, an arrangement that also provides a small income, and aligning with local rebel commanders.¹⁶ Whilst such arrangements allow people to continue some of their livelihoods activities, they can come at a cost, both financially and in terms of the potential for fuelling the conflict. Similarly, in Darfur, farmers in government-held areas still have access to part of their land, sometimes by paying protection money to the *Janjaweed* militia or other Arab groups, by aligning themselves with the government or by remaining neutral. In Eastern DRC, accessing fields and markets involves a number of risks.¹⁷ Women in particular fear being harassed or raped in their fields or on the way to markets. They also have to pass a number of roadblocks. Looting of the harvest has continued, and in some locations communities agree to stay away from their farms for one day a week so that government troops or militias can take a share of the crop.¹⁸ Because of insecurity, farmers have adapted their practices, shifting to low-risk, seasonal but less efficient crops. Farmers have also decreased the investment that they make in their land.¹⁹

constrained because of insecurity or restrictions on movement.

The impact of conflict on livelihood assets

Assets encompass what people have, control or have access to. This can include natural (land, forest products, water), physical (livestock, shelter, tools, materials), social (extended family and other social networks), financial (income, credit, investments) and human assets (education, skills, health). Adaptations of livelihoods models for conflict often include political assets – proximity to power – as a sixth category. In conflict, vulnerability is often related to a lack of power, rather than a lack of material assets. An important difference between conflict and natural-disaster contexts is that, in conflict, assets can also be liabilities because they may put their owners at greater risk of attack.

The direct impact of conflict is that assets may be looted, destroyed or lost. Particular ethnic groups or areas may be targeted because valuable assets are present, such as fertile land in Darfur and diamonds and gold in the DRC. In Darfur, violence and the destruction of

livelihoods through the burning and looting of villages was most severe in West Darfur, which has some of the best arable land and rangelands as well as large seasonal water courses. Human assets were severely depleted as men died, fled to Khartoum or joined the militia. Lack of access to land among certain groups, and competition over natural resources, was a key contributory factor to the conflict in Darfur. Indirect losses result from the need to sell assets or spend savings because income-earning opportunities have been lost, or due to the lack of agricultural services or limited movement. Household labour decreases due to migration, death or recruitment into the military. Displacement disrupts social networks, while conflict can undermine previously harmonious social and economic relations between ethnic groups. In Sri Lanka, however, whilst social capital between groups was undermined, families relied more on traditional social capital, such as family, religious or caste networks.

Implications for livelihoods programming. Vulnerability is related to lack of power and/or marginalisation. These same dynamics may make the targeting of assistance more difficult. The risks associated with the provision of assets as part of livelihoods programming need to be minimised. Asset support has to consider the social and economic relations between as well as within groups, so as not to reinforce social disruption or unequal power relations.

The impact of conflict on policies, institutions and processes

Policies, institutions and processes – PIPs – can be broadly interpreted as both the formal and informal governance environment, which determines control over assets, the types of livelihood strategies that people can use, who is able to use them and thus ultimately who is vulnerable.

Policies might include the policies of governments, rebel movements and aid agencies. They might govern land rights and access, taxation and the movement of goods between government- and rebel-held areas. Institutions include civic, political and economic institutions, or any other customs, rules or common law that constitute an important feature of society. Examples include public services, such as agricultural and livestock services, education, law enforcement and justice, as well as banks, communications systems and markets or informal institutions including civil society, along with traditional forms of governance. The latter includes in particular customary law in relation to land tenure, water, grazing and fishing rights. Processes might include the dynamics of conflict, power relations and issues of political and economic marginalisation, as well as climate change and environmental degradation.

Policies on land rights are often a key underlying cause of conflict, in particular changes resulting from the move from customary law to new systems of land registration. Illegal land grabbing and land occupation increase during conflict

in the absence of functioning legal and administrative frameworks: see Box 2.²⁰ Warring parties may impose informal taxes (as is the case in all four of our country case studies), increasing the costs involved in moving goods; restrictive government policies may have the same effect. In Darfur, for instance, border closures affected the transfer of remittances.²¹ Finally, policies on the return of IDPs and on compensation for losses incurred during war have been a major factor in determining people's livelihoods in all four case-study countries.

In terms of institutions, government services are often weakened or cease to function, and formal markets can become fragmented because of changes in production, insecurity, the displacement of traders, government restrictions on transporting goods into rebel-held areas and informal taxes levied by militia groups. Informal governance – civil society and traditional governance, as well as new forms created by aid agencies, such as relief committees – becomes more important in the absence of functioning formal structures. By the same token, conflict may also affect informal governance, undermining local mechanisms of conflict resolution, for example over water, land and natural resources.

Conflict is often associated with the development of parallel or war economies, in which a minority elite benefit, while weaker groups are exploited (see Box 3). The nature of this war economy depends to a large extent on the resources available and the actors involved (local, national and international). In the DRC, the war economy is closely associated with the presence of valuable minerals for mining, while in Darfur it appears more closely related to the trade in wood, timber and food aid and the theft of agency vehicles.²² Even in conflicts which are not clearly linked with resources, such as Sri Lanka, there may be profits to be made from extortion, protection rackets and taxes, and from exploiting price differentials between markets. For many armed groups, personal gain through theft and robbery has become the overriding objective.

Implications for livelihood programming. Examining policies, institutions and processes is important in understanding the constraints people face in their livelihoods options and in determining which groups are most vulnerable. PIPs also influence what can be achieved with livelihoods programming, and highlight the importance of monitoring and promoting access to land, freedom of movement or IDP return, for example. Understanding and working with informal institutions becomes more important. Knowledge of power relations and changes in governance are important to determine the risk that humanitarian assistance will be manipulated, and the potential negative impacts of assistance, such as reinforcing unequal power relations or increasing tensions between different groups. As local institutions come under political pressure, humanitarian agencies working with them need to be careful not to compromise their neutrality and impartiality.

Box 2**Markets, land and livelihoods****Markets**

In the DRC, markets are fragmented due to the destruction of roads, changes in production areas and levels and difficulties in accessing markets. In the east, there are numerous checkpoints along roads, manned by militia groups or the army, where ‘informal taxes’ have to be paid.²³ In addition, many primary producers can only access markets through intermediaries, who may have links to the local authorities or the police.²⁴ Even in areas which are now relatively stable, the cost of transport is high, increasing the price of goods in the market, and varies widely between locations and by season. Farmers have developed a number of strategies to increase their income and access to markets. These can involve speculation and cheating, as well as collective marketing to minimise taxes, comparing information on prices paid to intermediaries and attempting to define profit margins.²⁵

In Darfur, the impact of the conflict on markets has been severe, affecting every principal commodity, as well as livestock, grain and cash crops. Producers and traders have been displaced, the transport of goods is restricted between government- and rebel-held areas, there is extensive insecurity, checkpoints are frequent, payment for passage is demanded and there is double taxation when moving between areas controlled by opposing groups. This has led to the fragmentation of markets, increased transport costs and widely varying prices. Former trade patterns have all but collapsed. The grain trade has been replaced by a trade in food aid, which has stabilised prices and kept markets functioning. Livestock trade routes are now much longer and more costly, and most produce is sold locally.²⁶

Land

Land rights have been problematic in the DRC since the

colonial period, when customary law was replaced by a modern system of land rights and links between ethnicity and land access were institutionalised. The Bakajika land law of 1966 meant that land held under customary law had no legal status, and those with political or economic power could appropriate land. In the Kivus, the majority of land became the property of a small number of owners. Smallholders had insecure land rights or were alienated from the land, leading to growing food insecurity. By the 1990s, local land disputes had become linked to a wider conflict over political power and resources, as access to land provides new leaders with an economic base and resources to be distributed to supporters.²⁷ In Ituri, large firms associated with one ethnic group still own the majority of land.²⁸

Issues of access to land are also central to the conflict in Darfur. Arab nomadic tribes do not have their own homeland, and have traditionally depended on other groups to grant them land on which to build their settlements. With the displacement of many farmers from their land, and occupation of their land by nomads who can no longer use their normal migration routes, there are fears that some of this land may be granted to Arab tribes. Others argue that traditional land rights systems will continue to function through traditional leaders and that therefore the displaced will be able to return to their own land.

Land is one of the factors driving conflict in Mindanao, in the southern Philippines. Over the past century, many of Mindanao’s Moro people have been dispossessed of their land, through the introduction of new laws on land registration, settlement from the northern Philippines and the development of commercial plantations growing rubber, bananas and pineapples. Logging companies have also obtained huge concessions.²⁹

Box 3**The political economy of war and links with livelihoods in the DRC and Sri Lanka**

In the DRC, mining has become a key part of the war economy, dominated by military and militia actors and backed by regional states and multinational firms. As the conflict has progressed, military objectives have increasingly been realigned towards the capture of mineral-rich areas. With reduced access to farms, some farmers abandoned agriculture to become involved in mining, to the extent that once-surplus areas now have to import food.³⁰ Mines are largely controlled by government and military officials and businessmen. They are often worked by slave or forced labour, including child labour, and working conditions are extremely exploitative. Exploitative conditions are also found in the cash-crop sector. In parts of North Kivu, the cultivation of vanilla and papaine – an extract from the papaya fruit used in manufacturing solvents – involves highly inequitable trade relationships, where traders exploit insecurity and the

fragmentation of markets to bind farmers into private arrangements ensuring that crops are produced for a certain fixed price.³¹

The conflict in Sri Lanka, while not a resource war, still has important economic elements. In areas it holds, the LTTE largely controls and sustains remittance flows, meaning that receipt of remittances depends on support for the LTTE. The main source of funding for the LTTE appears to be the Tamil diaspora. As early as 1998, violence served important functions in terms of acquiring profit, power and protection. Military personnel manning checkpoints benefit from extortion, while paramilitary groups tax traders and other civilians along transport routes. Others control the fish trade. Profits can also be made through tree felling, the illegal occupation of land and, as in the DRC, by exploiting large price differentials between markets.³²

Chapter 3

Livelihoods programming in conflict

The objectives of livelihoods interventions in conflict

Using the livelihoods framework, interventions can be divided into those that support the assets people need to carry out their livelihood strategies, and those that support policies, institutions and processes.³³ Taking a livelihoods approach also involves the adoption of livelihoods principles, which includes working in a people-centred or participatory way, working at different levels (micro and macro, or local, national and international) and building on positive changes in livelihoods.³⁴ Livelihoods programming could therefore potentially include a huge range of interventions: not just food security, but also water and sanitation, health, education and different ways of improving governance. Hence, the livelihoods framework has been used by some agencies as the basis for integrated programming. The focus here is on the food-security element of livelihoods.

The Sphere Handbook divides emergency food-security responses into production support (agriculture and livestock support, provision of business materials), income support (skills/business training, income-generation, micro-credit, direct cash transfers) and market support (vouchers, building/repairing market infrastructure, helping to create cooperatives, the sale of subsidised goods). The objectives of these different forms of food-security support will vary according to the context, in particular the severity of the risks different groups face to their food security and livelihoods. Objectives may include meeting immediate food needs, livelihoods provision, livelihoods protection and livelihoods promotion. This paper uses these objectives to describe the different types of food security and livelihoods programmes in conflict. As will be seen, however, food security and livelihoods interventions may meet several objectives at the same time, and the same intervention may have different objectives in different contexts. Examples include:

Livelihood provision (directly affecting outcomes)

- Meeting basic needs (through the provision of in-kind goods – including food aid – or cash, or minimising expenditure through the provision of goods and services free of charge or with cash or voucher support).
- Contributing to improving personal safety (reducing risks to personal safety through the provision of assistance).

Livelihood protection (protecting assets, preventing negative outcomes)

- Preventing migration to camps by providing livelihood support to rural populations.
- Reducing vulnerability by diversifying livelihood opportunities and increasing choice (cash, vouchers, production support, income generation).

- Protecting livestock and agricultural assets through the provision of services.
- Helping to recover assets (agricultural inputs, assets for small-scale business, financial assets – micro-credit, savings and loans, cash transfers).

Livelihood promotion (improving strategies, assets and supporting PIPs)

- Creating new livelihoods assets (for example human assets through skills/vocational training).
- Improving access to markets and services (vouchers, infrastructure, producers' cooperatives/organisations).
- Supporting informal institutions and civil society, to improve access to services, and/or traditional governance, for example natural-resource management.
- Promoting access to information (on services, entitlements and rights).
- Influencing policy (for example on land rights and occupation, compensation for lost assets, border controls and remittance flows and taxation – both formal and informal).

Whilst in the first stages of conflict, the focus of interventions might be livelihoods provisioning and some elements of protection, during protracted conflict it may be possible to incorporate elements of livelihood promotion. This will depend on the severity of the crisis, and must not compromise the principle of meeting immediate humanitarian needs first. It should be noted that livelihood promotion in this case is unlikely to lead to sustainable livelihoods, but rather attempts to address the constraints people face in carrying out their livelihood strategies, thereby helping to meet basic needs.

The range of livelihoods programmes in different conflict settings

A wide range of livelihoods programmes has been implemented in conflict situations. Those used in the case-study countries are summarised in Table 1, using the categories given above. Whilst food aid remains the most common response to the needs raised by conflict, agencies are using an increasingly diverse spectrum of approaches. In most cases, and particularly during acute phases of conflict, livelihood-support interventions complement more 'standard' humanitarian responses, such as food aid, the distribution of non-food items, water, sanitation, health care and shelter.

The range of programmes includes cash transfers, such as cash for work and vouchers for different goods and services. In addition, many agencies have started longer-term programmes to strengthen community groups, promoting access to markets and improving basic services such as agriculture and livestock care. Often, a number of

different interventions are combined to increase people's livelihoods options, for example food aid, milling support, fuel-efficient stoves, income-generation and fodder for livestock in IDP camps in Darfur.

Evaluations of livelihoods interventions in conflict are scarce, so it is difficult to give criteria for when different types of interventions are appropriate and feasible, based on information on impact. The same criteria will apply as in any emergency context, but in conflict there are additional considerations to do with analysing and minimising potential risks. For example, food aid is appropriate when food is lacking and/or when people are cut off from their normal sources of food. This is common in acute conflict. The potential for the diversion and manipulation of food aid in conflict has been extensively documented, and there are a number of ways to minimise this.³⁵ For cash transfers (including vouchers) to be effective, basic goods must be available in markets, and markets must be functioning. Ensuring mechanisms for the safe delivery and receipt of cash programmes is likely to be more challenging in conflict, due to the increased risk of theft, looting and attack. Seeds and tools programmes are only appropriate when these items are lacking, and this lack is the limiting factor in production. In conflict, issues of access are also likely to be important factors. Finally, livestock support is appropriate when people have lost livestock as a result of conflict, and when maintaining key livestock assets is a priority. In conflict, freedom of movement, access to veterinary care and the risks associated with owning valuable assets also have to be considered. These questions are explored in more detail in Chapter 4.

Table 1 outlines the types of conflict situations in which livelihoods interventions have been implemented. Interventions with the objective of livelihoods provisioning are appropriate both in acute and in protracted conflict situations, and can target both IDP and resident populations. Livelihood protection has involved both IDP and rural populations, and has included in particular veterinary care, as well as fodder distribution and the creation of safe places in IDP camps. Support for agricultural production is more common for rural populations. Where IDPs have access to land, or where this can be negotiated, agricultural production can be an important source of food and income. Programmes aimed at livelihoods promotion are generally implemented as conflict becomes protracted. Advocacy initiatives to influence policy can take place at any stage to address some of the constraints to livelihoods people face. In general, livelihood support has focused more on rural than urban populations, highlighting a key gap in knowledge and expertise within humanitarian agencies.

Livelihood provisioning: meeting basic needs and contributing to civilian protection

Food aid

Food aid remains the main way of meeting immediate food needs in situations where food is either not available, or

where people have been cut off from their main food sources or are actively denied access to food as part of a war strategy. Most agencies start their response to acute conflict with food distribution and feeding programmes, alongside other lifesaving emergency responses.

The main purpose of food aid in conflict is to meet immediate food needs, but even in acute conflicts food aid can have a livelihood-support role. For example in Darfur, the World Food Programme (WFP) increased food rations with the explicit aim that beneficiaries would sell some of the ration to gain income, and so lower food prices in the market. This was justified as markets were fragmented, and little local produce was being sold.³⁶ Even when food aid levels decreased in Darfur, people continued to sell food aid to meet other needs. Food for work or food for asset creation are also common responses when people return to their home areas or are resettled, as in for example the DRC.³⁷

Food aid and food for work are not always appropriate in protracted conflict, as was shown in a study of food-security responses in Central Africa.³⁸ Once the crisis becomes protracted, food may be available locally and prices in the market may be low, which means that other forms of assistance, such as cash, may be more appropriate. This was also found in the DRC case study for this project, where GAA started its road-rehabilitation programme as a food for work project, but found that people were able to grow their own food and were selling the food aid. GAA switched to cash for work instead.

Even when food aid is really needed, cash and voucher interventions can be a very effective complement to food distribution. Food aid operations are often under-funded (in particular in protracted conflict situations), food aid may be diverted or manipulated by warring parties and beneficiaries often sell food aid to meet other needs. Cash and vouchers can provide alternative ways of meeting additional food and non-food needs.

Reducing expenditure as a way of meeting immediate needs

In Darfur, agencies have carried out a number of different activities to reduce expenditure, either through vouchers or other means. Even when relief assistance is provided, people continue to adopt livelihood strategies to earn income to meet needs such as milling costs, cooking fuel, fodder and school fees.³⁹ Alternatively, people may sell food aid to meet needs, thus reducing the effectiveness of the food distribution. In Darfur, the provision of grinding mills and fuel-efficient stoves are examples of interventions which minimise expenditure.

ACF started a pilot project to provide vouchers for milling services in 2007 to IDPs in four camps in Darfur. Each voucher provided access to milling for the monthly cereal food-aid allocation. An evaluation of the project showed that the sale of food aid was reduced by 55–70%, and that the vouchers covered about 20% of household expenditure.

Table 1: Examples of livelihoods interventions in different conflict situations

Interventions	Context
Livelihood provisioning	
Food aid to all affected groups	All (rural, IDP, returnee). Acute conflict and post-conflict
Fuel-efficient stoves	IDPs. Acute/protracted conflict
Provision of grinding mills	IDPs. Acute/protracted conflict
Vouchers to meet non-food needs (e.g. milling, NFI, clothes)	IDPs. Acute/protracted conflict and post-conflict
Cash grants/cash for work	Rural. Protracted conflict/drought IDPs, populations suffering economic blockade Periods of relative stability: DRC
Livelihood protection	
Seeds and tools distribution	Rural (rebel-held areas), IDPs, returnees. During and post-conflict, in most conflict settings
Seed vouchers and fairs	Rural. Protracted conflict
Cash grants/cash for work	Returnees (livelihood recovery)
Fodder distribution/safe places for livestock	IDPs. Acute conflict
Restocking (e.g. donkeys as essential assets for firewood, water collection; small stock as source of food and income)	IDPs, returnees
Income generation (including market gardens)/savings and loans	Protracted IDP and refugee contexts People affected by conflict but not experiencing open hostilities (e.g. stable rebel-held areas). Returnees
Veterinary care/provision of veterinary drugs	Rural/IDP. Acute/protracted conflict
Agricultural extension: seed multiplication/crop protection	Protracted conflict. Rural
Livelihood promotion	
Skills and vocational training	IDPs, refugees, ex-combatants
Strengthening community organisation to increase access to services (e.g. community livelihood groups and disaster-preparedness planning, farmer field schools, savings and loans groups)	Protracted conflict. Government- and opposition-held areas
Supporting localised peace initiatives <i>and traditional governance, for example in opening up migration routes, efforts to stay neutral, conflict resolution*</i>	Protracted conflict
Market access programmes – road rehabilitation, farmers' cooperatives, linking producers with markets, voucher programmes	Protracted conflict. Periods of relative stability
Advocacy on compensation, voluntary return <i>and freedom of movement, access to land, opening borders, etc</i>	Acute/protracted conflict
Mapping land-tenure systems and land occupation	Acute/protracted conflict

* Interventions in italics have been mentioned in agency reports but few or no examples were found in practice.

Some food aid continues to be sold to buy fresh food and firewood and for health and education expenses.⁴⁹ Although not mentioned in the evaluation, presumably this intervention also reduced the need for 'risky' livelihood strategies, such as the collection of firewood. ACF also recommended that similar voucher interventions could be used to give IDPs access to other items, such as fresh food. Voucher interventions have a positive impact on access to

goods for the recipients, while also stimulating the wider economy.

The use of fuel-efficient stoves in Darfur has also had a positive impact by reducing the consumption of firewood for cooking, thus potentially reducing exposure to risk whilst collecting firewood, or reducing the amount that needs to be spent on buying firewood. However, a review

by USAID found that women continued to collect firewood as a social activity, and because firewood collection is often combined with the collection of other natural resources such as grass, shelter materials and wild foods. Other possibilities might include fee waivers for schools and health centres, or assistance with transport.⁴¹

Vouchers as a safer way of meeting immediate needs

Some agencies view vouchers as safer and more effective ways of providing assistance in situations of acute conflict and displacement, as well as in protracted conflict. In general, vouchers are provided because they are considered more secure than cash, and less prone to theft. In Sri Lanka, for example, Oxfam started a food-security/livelihood recovery programme to support 2,000 returnees in 15 villages in late 2007. Five hundred families received vouchers to buy livelihood assets. Vouchers rather than cash were chosen because of prevailing insecurity and following the earlier theft of some cash grants.

Vouchers also allow for closer monitoring than direct cash transfers, reducing the risk of diversion, and may be more appropriate than in-kind aid if roads are unsafe and it is difficult to transport large quantities of material goods. In Darfur, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) transported seed vouchers by helicopter, where it was impossible to transport seeds themselves by road. Vouchers have also been used in the Palestinian Territories for school materials (UNICEF) and for food and non-food items (ICRC).⁴²

These examples show that it has been possible to carry out voucher interventions in a number of conflict situations, and that local traders and service providers are able to supply the goods required. There are however very few evaluations describing the planning process or reviewing projects specifically in relation to conflict.⁴³ An example of the planning process for seed vouchers and fairs is given in Box 5.

Direct cash transfers in conflict

Cash for work and cash grants are more often used in situations where conflict is less acute and theft is considered less of a risk. Examples from the case studies are given in Box 4. The objectives of cash transfers in conflict are similar to those in natural-disaster contexts, and include improving food security and facilitating livelihood recovery.

Agencies in Sri Lanka have provided cash transfers as part of the first-phase response to renewed conflict and displacement in 2006, drawing on experience gained in the response to the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004, and in many cases continued to work with the same partners and communities. In the DRC, GAA monitored army and militia movements to ensure that cash distributions took place when troops were not present in the project area. During periods of open hostilities the project was suspended. In Afghanistan and Somalia, local money-transfer companies have been used to channel cash grants, removing some of the security risks associated with delivering cash.⁴⁴ Cash grants were used to ease the impact of drought, rather than addressing the humanitarian consequences of conflict directly.

Box 4

Cash transfers in Sri Lanka and the DRC

Sri Lanka: Oxfam's projects for newly displaced populations include cash for work and cash grants for income generation. The risks of theft are considered minimal with cash for work as only small amounts of cash are distributed. With the resumption of conflict, CARE, SC-UK and Oxfam all provided cash or in-kind assistance for agricultural support to resettled and returnee communities. SC-UK has also implemented a cash response in the Jaffna peninsula in northern Sri Lanka. The project works through the Samurधि government-welfare scheme, which continues to function in conflict-affected areas. The government scheme targets the poorest people, giving them a cash equivalent to spend in local shops (akin to a voucher scheme).

DRC: GAA uses cash for work in its road-rehabilitation programme. The programme employs between 350 and 950 daily workers, and can pay out up to \$40,000 a month. Work is largely carried out at times when the situation is relatively stable, and has been suspended during periods of increased hostilities and renewed displacement. According to the GAA representative in Bunia, the programme has been successful: people have been able to buy essential livelihood assets, such as agricultural items, and markets and trade have been revitalised.

Livelihood protection: safeguarding assets and preventing negative outcomes

Various types of intervention have been used to protect and support assets in conflict situations. One of the most important approaches, if security conditions permit, is to provide assistance to rural populations to help them keep hold of their assets and stay on their land. As the case studies show, people will go to great lengths to prevent being separated from their land, including paying militia groups in Darfur for protection and making alliances with armed groups and political leaders in the Philippines. The successful protection and provision of assets in conflict also depends on the wider context of policies, institutions and processes. Agricultural inputs for instance will have little impact if people do not have access to land to farm.

Protecting key livestock and agricultural assets

There are a number of examples of livestock-support programmes for conflict-affected populations. In some IDP and refugee contexts, people have taken livestock with them, for example donkeys in Darfur, which are essential for fetching water and firewood and travelling to markets. A number of agencies, including Oxfam, ITDG and ACF, have carried out support programmes, organising space in which animals can be kept and providing fodder and veterinary

care. Similarly in the Philippines, Oxfam organised spaces for livestock and fodder in evacuation centres. In addition, as part of community disaster-preparedness plans, means of transport for livestock and other assets are identified within the community to enable people to take these assets with them in case of fresh displacement.

Agencies have provided veterinary care for livestock owned by IDPs and rural populations in a number of conflict situations, including Darfur and South Sudan. Livestock vaccination, the supply of veterinary drugs and the training and support of Community Animal Health Workers have been important components of this work, and are vital in the absence of functioning government services in circumstances where the risk of livestock disease is increased because of overcrowding and blocked migration routes. Agricultural services include seed multiplication and crop protection (ACF in Darfur and DRC), as well as agricultural extension to improve farming practices. These interventions are sometimes carried out together with the Ministry of Agriculture and local research institutes, and can include training agricultural extension officers. Providing services rather than material assets can be a conflict-sensitive way of delivering assistance in contexts where material goods are at risk of theft and manipulation.

Asset provision or recovery during conflict

A key consideration when thinking about the protection or provision of assets in situations of conflict is that assets can be a liability, potentially making people more vulnerable to attack. Affected people themselves may seek to reduce their investment in valuable assets, focusing instead on things that they can take with them if they have to move. Several agencies have adopted a similar approach. In Darfur, for instance, Oxfam carried out some restocking with donkeys, which were considered less vulnerable to theft than other livestock. CHF provided chickens to displaced people in South Darfur, and in the Philippines Oxfam and CRS provided ducks, goats and geese, seen as low-value, moveable assets.

Seeds and tools tend to be provided when the situation appears to have stabilised, in particular for returnees. However, this is rarely justified on the basis of actual seed shortages, nor is a shortage of seeds usually the key factor limiting production.⁴⁵ Seed interventions and seed fairs have been implemented both during acute conflict, as in Darfur, and in a more stable context, by CRS in the DRC. In Darfur, assessments to determine appropriateness were also based on issues of access to land, land occupation and the security risks associated with farming. Box 5 explains how CRS sought to minimise the potential risks associated with seed vouchers and fairs in Darfur.

Income generation as livelihood protection

Income-generating projects can be a form of livelihood protection and promotion. These projects have been carried out in a number of IDP and refugee settings, and include the production of food, clothes and traditional goods. Projects are combined with other livelihoods initiatives, as illustrated

Box 5

Minimising the risks associated with seed vouchers and fairs in Darfur

CRS provides seeds through a vouchers and fairs system in northern Geneina province. The agency took a number of steps to minimise the risks associated with this intervention:

- Assess land-access issues, as well as seed availability and need. Ensure that land ownership is not disputed, that farming does not involve security risks and that farmers have consistent access.
- Examine relations between ethnic groups and residency groups (displaced, resident, returnee), and between potential vendors and recipients, to ensure that the programme will not exacerbate tensions.
- Minimise security risks during fairs by conducting voucher distributions and fairs in a single day, avoiding market days and holidays. Ask village seed committees to advise on security issues.
- Ensure that people can reach the fair safely and do not make public announcements if this will increase the risk of attack.
- Change monitoring and payment systems regularly to reduce the risk of manipulation or theft.

Source: CRS Darfur, personal communication.

in Box 6. In many cases, conflict-affected people may be provided with assistance to generate income without an assessment of the viability of this work as a livelihood strategy. In Darfur, a review of vocational training activities showed that they mainly relied on the humanitarian community as purchasers of products.⁴⁶ Income-generating projects need to be based on an assessment of the market for the goods or services being produced.

Savings and credit groups can also be used to improve people's financial assets, even in situations where livelihoods are constrained. CARE has set up village savings and loans groups in Sri Lanka and Darfur, for instance, although the Sri Lanka project has been suspended due to renewed conflict (see Box 7).⁴⁷

Any provision of cash grants to groups, or where groups manage cash, needs to consider existing power imbalances within the assisted population, and the potential for such projects to exacerbate existing tensions. The risk of diversion by more powerful groups must also be assessed.

Livelihood promotion: improving strategies and assets and supporting policies, institutions and processes

Providing new skills and vocational training as alternative means of livelihoods

Some agencies have sought to provide alternative means of livelihoods which do not focus on promoting high-value

Box 6**CHF's livelihoods programming in Darfur**

CHF's livelihoods programmes for IDPs in Darfur have three main aims: to reduce the need for people to venture from camps to insecure areas; to provide alternative means of livelihoods that do not involve building up high-value assets; and to increase incomes through the use of appropriate technologies. Agricultural programmes have included the adoption of sharecropping strategies, training in livestock skills and the distribution of chickens. A shelter project sought to support the local economy by using traditional materials, and generated income by paying women to make mats. The project also brought women together, facilitating the creation of informal women's groups. Other projects included the production of pasta, clothes and traditional goods such as baskets. CHF also introduced community-managed mills to reduce expenditure on milling grain.

Source: Richard Hill et al., *IDP Livelihoods and Personal Security: Case Studies from Colombia and Sudan*, 2006.

Box 7**CARE's 'Local Initiatives for Tomorrow' project in Sri Lanka**

CARE started the 'Local Initiatives for Tomorrow' (LIFT) project in March 2002. The project aimed to help community-based organisations (CBOs) in LTTE-held areas to access and manage local resources, and enhance their influence in decisions related to meeting basic needs.⁴⁸ The project worked mainly with two types of CBO: farmer field schools and savings and loans groups, with a particular focus on isolated villages that were cut off from services. An evaluation of the project in 2006 found that it had succeeded in strengthening CBOs, and that the purchasing power of group members had improved. Additional income was used for food, education and savings. In some cases the groups succeeded in resolving family disagreements and land disputes, and they were able to link with and lobby government departments, for example for animal health services, health care and post and transport services. With renewed conflict and displacement from 2006, however, the project no longer functions. People have been displaced to different areas, and will find it difficult to repay their loans.

assets. Projects have included providing new income-generation skills and vocational training, in particular for IDPs and refugees, and as part of demobilisation programmes for ex-combatants. Many of the income-generation projects mentioned above involved the development of new

skills, which could potentially form important livelihoods strategies. The objective can be both to provide people with safer livelihoods and help them to meet basic needs (i.e. reducing their reliance on owning high-value assets), and furnishing people with skills that they might be able to use in the future as part of their livelihoods. Whether it is appropriate to develop skills for the future, rather than promoting those skills that can generate income in the present, needs to be judged on the basis of the severity of the humanitarian crisis and whether immediate needs are being met by existing programmes. If basic needs are not being met, then the focus must be on assisting people to meet these needs in the present.⁴⁹

Vocational training, apprenticeship schemes and small-business support have all been common interventions for ex-combatants, including child combatants. However, the impact of these projects has often been limited as children were often trained in skills which could not lead to viable livelihoods, or for which there was no market. Both UNICEF and Save the Children now take a more community-based approach, providing livelihoods assistance (including education) to the community as a whole.⁵⁰

Supporting informal institutions: community groups and traditional governance

A number of agencies work with community groups. One objective might be to increase access to services and markets, while also supporting local efforts for disaster preparedness. Good examples of this within a protracted, less acute conflict situation include Oxfam's work with dairy cooperatives, fishing unions and farmers' groups in Sri Lanka. In the DRC, ACF and GAA work with village groups to diversify income-earning opportunities, increase access to markets for farmers and develop collective-farming methods. Local NGOs in the DRC have played a role in resolving land disputes by the provision of legal support. In the Philippines, Oxfam linked community groups with government services, and supported local efforts to create 'spaces for peace' to enable people to return to or remain on their land. Community groups negotiated with warring parties, asking them to sign a written declaration that people could return to their homes and that they would respect their 'space for peace'. The initiative started with a limited number of communities, but proved successful and grew over time. Oxfam supported one of its local partners to access independent and timely information to guide negotiations about return. These initiatives are described in more detail in Box 8.

Much less work has been done on supporting traditional governance mechanisms.⁵¹ In Darfur, for instance, traditional governance systems exist for natural-resource management and conflict resolution, but these are not very well understood or supported. There are also examples of local efforts to remain neutral, to avoid attack and to promote reconciliation, for example between ethnic groups on opposing sides of the conflict, in order to open up livestock migration routes. Oxfam has put forward a proposal to increase access to basic services for conflict-

Box 8**Supporting community groups to improve livelihoods**

Oxfam's work in the Philippines included an important governance component, by linking village livelihood groups to government services. These groups identified their own priorities in terms of livelihoods initiatives and identifying the support they needed. The work also encompassed community disaster preparedness plans in anticipation of future displacement, including monitoring the movements of militia, identifying places where people could go and making arrangements so that people could take important assets with them. A rights awareness campaign enabled people to approach the government for support and resources, as well as making them more confident in negotiating with armed actors. At the same time, there were campaigns to make government institutions and warring parties aware of their responsibilities.

Also in the Philippines, Oxfam and CRS supported local community groups and churches in creating 'spaces for peace'. Community groups negotiated with the two warring parties, and asked them to sign a written declaration that people could return to their homes and respect their 'space for peace'. Starting with a limited number of communities, the initiative grew over time. Oxfam supported one of its local partners to access independent and timely information to guide negotiations about return. This obviously has immediate implications for livelihoods as people are able to reclaim their land and recover their livelihoods, while also preventing renewed displacement.

In Sri Lanka, Oxfam has implemented a large dairy development project in Vavunya in the north. A needs assessment in early 2006 found that dairy production was a key secondary source of income, but that conflict had destroyed the infrastructure, veterinary and extension services were weak and access to markets was limited. Key components of the project included social mobilisation to improve cattle management practices, the strengthening of local dairy cooperatives to increase access to the formal dairy sector, strengthening supply mechanisms and promoting market demand. The project has created links with the informal financial services sector and government extension services. Projects in other areas have included the construction of an ice factory to improve market access for fishing communities.

In the DRC, a number of studies by the University of Ghent (supported by FAO) highlighted the need to support the work of local organisations, rather than just working with them to help implement the projects of international agencies. In eastern DRC, the only organisations playing a role in local land disputes were informal community-based *chambres de paix* (peace councils). Other local organisations introduced collective fields and micro-credit systems and provided judicial support. These organisations receive little international support.

affected populations by working through the clan system, the only functioning social institution in Somalia. Working with or supporting local institutions needs careful analysis of the role and function of these institutions, and how these have changed during conflict. This is discussed further in Chapter 4.

Understanding and supporting local institutions was identified as a major gap in humanitarian response in recent work by Tufts and FAO in Sudan, the DRC and Somalia. Humanitarian responses to conflict tend to focus on supporting livelihood strategies and the protection or provision of assets.

Improving access to markets in conflict

In all our case studies, conflict-affected populations faced problems in accessing markets, both to sell assets and to buy basic goods. At the same time, however, in all cases markets continued to function to some extent, and/or new markets had emerged. Whilst agencies recognised that limited access to markets was a problem, issues such as restrictions on the movement of goods, the imposition of informal taxes and increased transaction costs were rarely addressed, either through direct programming or through advocacy.

Oxfam's work in the DRC suggests a number of ways for improving access to markets, including the provision of processing equipment (such as milling facilities) to reduce the cost of travelling to market, creating cooperatives for storing food and trading and facilitating transport to markets through the creation of village groups, reducing the taxes that have to be paid. This last initiative builds on strategies already used by local farmers.⁵² Alternatively, community groups may be able to negotiate safe passage through checkpoints. Road rehabilitation in the DRC has been another important intervention, and has had a noticeable impact in revitalising markets. Evaluations in 2004 showed that improved roads facilitated movement, reduced transport costs and increased farm-gate prices, and thus profits for farmers.⁵³ Voucher interventions may also encourage trade.

Influencing policy in conflict

Issues of land rights, ownership and access to land were key in all the conflicts examined for this study, but there are few examples of agency responses that address, or even assess and monitor, land issues. There are some examples of agencies negotiating for access to land on behalf of IDPs and refugees, but addressing the structural issues around land ownership, as one of the underlying causes of conflict, is

much more complex and politically sensitive. In Darfur, some agencies have started monitoring secondary land occupation and documenting customary land traditions, as well as examining other land issues in relation to the return of IDPs and refugees.⁵⁴ This was considered a key component of humanitarian action in conflict at a conference on land, conflict and humanitarian action hosted by the ODI in February 2008.

Policy decisions can also affect the flow of remittances during conflict. Remittances constitute a key livelihood strategy in Sudan, Somalia and Sri Lanka, for instance. Any effort to facilitate them will make a huge difference to people's livelihoods, and more needs to be done to support this.⁵⁵ The Darfur livelihoods study conducted by Tufts University, referred to above, recommended improved communications and the reopening of the border with Libya as a way of facilitating remittances.⁵⁶ Other options include family tracing, assistance with obtaining identity documents (to access banks) and advocacy on remittance- and migration-friendly policies at national and international levels.

Influencing policy at this level is rarely part of an agency's emergency livelihood response. Few NGOs are involved in advocacy activities at all, and if they are, this is usually not done by staff working in livelihoods programmes. For example, Oxfam's humanitarian advocacy generally focuses on quality issues in the assistance and protection of civilians. Advocacy on protection can be closely linked to livelihoods, however. For example, advocacy on compensation for losses incurred during conflict, as considered in Sri Lanka and the Philippines, and on voluntary return of IDPs, for instance in Sri Lanka and Darfur, is important from both a livelihoods and protection perspective. Similarly, monitoring and mapping access to land and land occupation, as done by some agencies in Darfur, can provide powerful information to influence return policies and data on the need for assistance in rural areas. Advocacy can also be done at local level, for example negotiations with armed actors to allow civilian access to land or markets.⁵⁷

Chapter 4

Key considerations for conflict-sensitive programming

The types of livelihoods interventions implemented in conflict are the same or similar to those implemented in other emergencies or even in development contexts. However, livelihoods programming in conflict requires a good understanding of the causes and dynamics of the conflict, and how they influence livelihoods (and vice versa). This will in turn determine what can be achieved with livelihoods programming, and the likely risk of manipulation or negative impacts, such as reinforcing inequitable power relations or increasing tensions between different groups. Challenges in conducting a conflict analysis were frequently identified by agencies as a constraint on livelihoods programming in conflict.

Conflict analysis has been defined as the systematic study of the structures, actors and dynamics that interact to cause conflict. It is concerned with the underlying and long-term security, political, economic and social factors that play into conflict; the interests, relations, capacities and agendas of different actors in conflict; and an analysis of patterns and trends.⁵⁸ Objectives of a conflict analysis might include:

- To understand the operating context and develop strategies to address both the causes and consequences of conflict.
- To analyse the potential positive and negative impacts of various response options.
- To develop strategies which minimise negative impacts and maximise positive ones.

In many ways the first component is similar to an analysis of ‘policies, institutions and processes’ using the livelihoods framework, which could include an analysis of the wider political economy of war, power relations between groups and changes in governance.

A number of conflict-analysis tools can be used to plan livelihoods programmes.⁵⁹ The guidance notes for assessing conflict developed by DFID provide one of the most common frameworks, and were used by members of the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) in Sri Lanka for a country-level strategic assessment of their programmes in relation to the conflict there.⁶⁰ The framework is described in Box 9.

Oxfam in Sri Lanka developed its own conflict-analysis method, using scenarios based on monitoring changes in the nature of conflict, and making projections based on this. Another approach uses the ‘do no harm’ rubric developed by Mary Anderson, though practical examples of its use were hard to come by in this research.⁶¹ A careful analysis of potential harms is important for livelihoods programming as it often involves working closely with local institutions that may be under pressure to favour certain groups, or which provide valuable assets (whether in-kind or cash); livelihood

Box 9

Conflict analysis in Sri Lanka

Stage 1 – Map the security, political, economic and social factors underlying conflict at international, national, district and local level. Identify the main issues relating to conflict, and the interactions between them. What grievances underlie the conflict and what are the main drivers? What trigger events can be predicted? Develop three scenarios.

Stage 2 – Map out the positive elements of the general response, including aid inputs and local capacities (using the same framework). Consider whether the DEC agencies are working: around conflict (avoiding it), in conflict (relating to conflict factors but without intention or impact) or on conflict (with intention regarding conflict factors and having an impact). Is the overall position strategic?

Stage 3 – How could DEC activity be more closely aligned to conflict? Map out areas of potential (using the same framework). Include programme work, advocacy and support to local capacities.

Stage 4 – Make a list of conflict-sensitive principles based on statements of interaction in stage 1. Spell out what these principles mean for response.

groups may be closely linked to ethnicity, so targeting assistance to one livelihood group could be perceived as being biased towards one side of the conflict.

Analysing and minimising potential harm and maximising positive impact

Broadly speaking, a ‘do no harm’ approach involves analysing potential tensions within and between groups and control over resources, and how aid influences this. It also includes looking at the broader political and security impacts of aid, and finding ways of minimising potential negative impacts. It looks at potential ‘connectors’ and ‘dividers’ within and between groups.

CARE has developed a specific benefits–harms approach consisting of a set of profile, impact and decision tools.⁶² It takes programme managers through a number of steps to analyse the political, security, economic, social and cultural profile of target communities. These same categories are then used to examine potential or actual unintended impacts, and to inform decision-making to minimise these impacts. The security impact tool is most relevant for project design in conflict situations. It explores:

- The potential for the project to impact on conflict between communities, for example by increasing tensions or strengthening relations between the community and those with whom they are in conflict, and by reducing or increasing communities’ vulnerability to violence.
- The potential for the project to significantly change the potential for violence between people in the community.
- The potential for the project to affect the underlying causes of insecurity in the community, by strengthening or weakening the attitudes, systems or structures that cause conflict or insecurity.
- The potential for the project to impact upon local forms of conflict resolution.

Based on the issues identified, decisions then need to be made about how to address this. An example of how this was done for cash programming by Oxfam Somalia is shown in Table 2.

As we have seen, there are a number of ways in which livelihoods interventions can be made conflict-sensitive: minimising the distribution of high-value goods, finding ways of minimising expenditure, providing vouchers rather than in-kind goods or cash or providing cash in small, regular amounts, or through local banks or money-transfer companies. Providing services such as veterinary and livestock care, rather than goods, can also minimise risk. Monitoring the movements of armed groups and altering distribution or payment schedules accordingly, avoiding gathering large numbers of people together and monitoring interventions to assess whether the intended beneficiaries received the planned assistance may all be important.

The application of humanitarian principles

Humanitarian assistance is guided by humanitarian principles, including the principle of humanity (to prevent and

alleviate suffering wherever it is found), neutrality (not taking sides in a conflict) and impartiality (relieving suffering solely on the basis of need, with no discrimination according to race, religious belief, class or political opinion). These principles were specifically developed for working in conflict, to ensure (or at least seek to ensure) access to all conflict-affected populations.

Applying these tenets can be challenging in a livelihoods approach, in particular as one of the key principles of livelihoods work is capacity-building of local institutions. In situations of conflict, the actions of local institutions can be influenced by ethnicity and political affiliation; even if political influences are not explicit, local institutions may come under pressure to favour more powerful groups. This clearly creates a dilemma, as in many conflict situations working with local institutions can be the only way of accessing some conflict-affected populations, for example at times in Sri Lanka, Somalia and parts of Darfur. Examining the interests and motivations of local institutions, and the influences on them, is important in determining which institutions to work with, and how to do so.

At the local level, agencies have tried to ensure impartiality by having clear targeting criteria and doing regular independent monitoring, when feasible. However, targeting livelihood support in itself poses challenges, as it is not necessarily intended for those most in need: asset protection, for instance, seeks to help people who have assets to protect, rather than the destitute, who have no assets at all. It is therefore important to include livelihood provisioning, or meeting immediate needs, as part of livelihood support in conflict. Food-security standards are also clear that responses to meet immediate food needs are prioritised where people’s lives are at risk through lack of food. Such interventions need to be targeted at those areas,

Table 2: Examining potential tensions in cash programming in Gedo and Lower Juba, Somalia (Oxfam GB)

Potential tensions	Action
1. Cross-border conflict between Somalia and Kenya because assistance provided in Somalia is not given to the same clans in Kenya	Discussions with community and government representatives, which found that this risk was low as Kenyan Somalis recognise that their neighbours in Somalia are worse off
2. Conflict within Somalia, between those in regions covered by the programme and those in regions not covered by it	Work in close coordination with other agencies planning to undertake similar cash programmes
3. Conflict between clans targeted and those not targeted	Implement programme through clan structures. Representative sample of clan elders will be asked to identify beneficiaries. Use traditional ways of allocating resources
4. Tension between hosts and newly arrived IDPs	Monitor population movements and reasons for them (e.g. some may be Kenyans moving for pasture), work with clan structure
5. Tension between those who will only receive cash grants and those who will receive both cash grants and cash for work	Inform communities of objectives of programme, and beneficiary selection criteria

Source: Oxfam Somalia project proposals

Box 10**An integrated livelihoods and protection approach in Mindanao**

In Oxfam's programme in Mindanao, livelihoods and public-health programmes were both implemented within a protection framework. The project aimed to combine the creation of an enabling environment for the respect of human rights with the provision of goods and services in public health and livelihoods. A Free and Informed Decision-making (FID) component was added later, to give people information on conditions in their home areas and keep them up to date on new developments in the conflict. The programme also included an education component. Creating an enabling environment had three components:

1. Educating civilians on their rights and entitlements and helping them to attain and enjoy them.
2. Insisting on the government's responsibility to respond and protect and uphold IDP rights.
3. Highlighting the responsibility of warring groups to respect the rights of civilians.

Informing civilians of their entitlements, and duty bearers of their responsibilities, included raising awareness of the Sphere minimum standards for disaster response, as well as the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and

International Humanitarian Law (IHL). All four programme components (public health, livelihoods, FID and education) combined the provision of material and non-material support. Although the four projects were sometimes implemented in parallel, rather than integrated (i.e. working in different communities and with different partners), the livelihoods programme mirrors the overall programme approach by linking the provision of inputs and technical support with improved services and accountability among government institutions. At community level, the approach included the creation of community livelihood groups.

A rights and awareness campaign (run in part through a radio programme aired by one of Oxfam's partners) made people more confident in their negotiations with armed actors, and made it easier for them to approach the government for support and resources. The campaign provided information about rights, as well as the roles and responsibilities of different government institutions and other agencies. At the same time as making people aware of their rights, building the capacity of government agencies was also part of the programme strategy.

population groups and households facing the greatest needs.

The application of humanitarian principles is important at all levels. In Sri Lanka, agencies are widely suspected of being biased in favour of LTTE-held areas and/or of providing a disproportionate amount of assistance to tsunami-affected communities, creating tensions at both national and community level. Following a country-wide strategic assessment, programmes were reoriented to prioritise conflict-affected communities, and measures were taken to work on all sides of the conflict, ensuring the participation of different ethnic groups. In Darfur, agencies initially focused on IDP populations in camps, and failed to consider how Arab pastoralists aligned with the government were being affected by the conflict. Again, this led to perceptions of bias in the humanitarian response.

These examples show the importance of objective assessments of need within all conflict-affected populations, to ensure impartiality of response. In many conflict-affected countries, agencies have developed 'ground rules' or guiding principles for humanitarian action, based on International Humanitarian Law, the Red Cross Code of Conduct and the Sphere Charter and Minimum Standards for Disaster Response.⁶³

Linking livelihoods and protection⁶⁴

Livelihoods interventions can minimise protection risks, either through the type of intervention or the way in which it is done. Livelihoods interventions can reduce protection risks by removing the need for people to adopt livelihood strategies which expose them to risks, and by providing people with safer ways to meet their basic needs. Targeting areas and groups facing the greatest protection risks may therefore be an effective way of reducing risks or minimising the negative implications of exposure to threats.

Linking protection and livelihoods programming may also be an effective way of influencing policies, processes and institutions in positive ways. Protection experts are generally more experienced in developing advocacy strategies and holding 'duty-bearers' to account, so combining livelihoods and protection expertise may provide better links between programming and advocacy.⁶⁵ The Oxfam programme in Mindanao used a protection framework to formulate the overall approach. This involved combining the creation of a more favourable protective environment with direct service delivery. Using protection as the overall conceptual framework for developing a livelihoods programme strategy could be one way of keeping the focus of livelihoods programmes humanitarian.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

Whilst food aid justifiably remains the most common response to food insecurity in many conflict situations, the range of livelihoods programmes implemented in conflict has increased in recent years. While livelihoods programmes are often a complement to, rather than a replacement for, food aid and other forms of relief, they potentially have a substantial positive impact on the lives and livelihoods of people living in conflict areas.

Livelihoods interventions are implemented both in the early stages of acute conflict and in protracted conflict. Examples include interventions to meet basic needs, to protect assets or to promote livelihoods. In acute conflict, the focus is generally on meeting immediate needs and contributing to civilian protection, as well as protecting livelihood assets. In more protracted conflicts, all three types of livelihoods programming – provision, protection and promotion – might be implemented simultaneously, with the focus depending on the severity of the humanitarian crisis. Different types of programmes may be implemented for different livelihood groups. In all emergency contexts, however, meeting the immediate needs of the most vulnerable remains an important objective; with ongoing constraints to people's livelihoods, sustainable livelihoods are unlikely to be achieved.

In conflict, the focus is also very much on safe ways of providing assistance, and minimising and monitoring potential harms. So, for example, meeting basic needs is often done through voucher interventions rather than cash, and protecting and providing assets focuses on items less subject to theft or on the provision of services. Agencies have at hand a number of conflict-analysis tools and ways of linking conflict and livelihoods analysis to help them plan and design programmes. However, very few evaluations or reports of food security/livelihoods interventions in conflict look into how potential risks or negative impacts are taken into account in programme design, implementation and

monitoring. This is essential to facilitate learning, and to encourage good and safe practices.

Understanding and working with informal institutions and influencing policy has been a relatively neglected area in conflict situations, though it has important implications for the impact of livelihoods interventions. Simultaneously meeting basic needs while working to address some of the constraints to people's livelihoods at the level of policies, institutions and processes would be likely to increase the impact of any livelihood-support activity. Combining livelihoods and protection approaches might be one way of doing this more effectively, as protection programming generally has a greater focus on influencing policy and the functioning of institutions responsible for creating or addressing livelihoods and protection risks. Policy and institutional issues such as land rights and remittance flows are key issues in conflict, but are rarely part of a livelihoods strategy. Promoting access to markets is another area where there is little experience in situations of conflict, but this report shows that improving access, albeit in a limited way, is possible.

Most contemporary conflicts are long-term events, and therefore need long-term strategies. Whilst some of the conflicts studied in this review have lasted for one or two decades, it is perhaps more realistic to plan in terms of 3–5-year strategies. This would already be an improvement on the usual 6–12-month planning cycles for humanitarian response. Such a strategy would need to combine approaches to influence policy and support local institutions, whilst also ensuring that basic needs are met. It also means having the flexibility to adapt responses when the nature of conflict changes and the crisis becomes more or less acute. The key challenge for livelihoods programming in conflict is therefore to develop a strategy which is long term, but which also remains humanitarian enough that it addresses the basic needs of the most vulnerable groups.

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