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Sustainable livelihoods analysis of post-conflict rural development in southern Sudan

by

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A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty

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CHAPTER 1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Throughout the world, many people are forced to leave their homes, lands and

livelihoods as a result of civil or international conflicts, natural disasters, economic hardships,

developmental policies and environmental disasters. According to the United Nations High

Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR 2006: 9), at the beginning of 2006 the 8.4 million people

were refugees (those who fled their country of origin and crossed an international border to seek

safety in another country). This represents "the lowest total since 1980," due to voluntary

repatriation - refugees returning to their countries of origin, commonly on their own without

assistance from any organization. According to UNHCR, 1.1 million refugees repatriated

voluntarily during 2005. In contrast, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs), people

who are uprooted by conflicts but seek safety within their country of origin, has increased

dramatically to 6.6 million in 2005 compared to 5.4 million in 2004.This increase is attributed to

deteriorating situations in Iraq and Somalia. While other countries such as Liberia and Colombia

reported reduced numbers of IDPs, IDPs in Sudan increased from 662,000 to 842,000 during

2005 due to the crisis in Darfur.

According to IDMC (2007), Africa has the largest number of IDPs in the world (12.7

million in 19 countries). Sudan remains the country with the largest number of IDPs (5.8

million), followed by Colombia (4 million), Iraq (2.5 million), the Democratic Republic of

Congo (1.4 million), and Uganda (1.3 million).The major causes of conflict in most of these

countries is due to unequal access to resource, economic, political and social service (USAID

2006; Steward 2002). As Steward (2002:342) argues, "the wars in developing countries have

heavy human, economic and social costs and are a major cause of poverty and

underdevelopment." Therefore, addressing the root causes and facilitating transitions from war to peace is a fundamental step towards development and reduction of poverty.

Providing assistance that genuinely supports development in post-conflict situations is fraught with enormous challenges, because conflicts typically destroy almost all assets necessary for sustaining viable livelihoods. Sustainable peace for communities involved in conflicts as well as global security depends on people having access to viable livelihood options and avoiding or escaping from poverty. Realization that well-intentioned development assistance can be unsuccessful has prompted the shift from relief-based to long-term development assistance, which involves capacity building among the poor and helps them become central actors in their own development. Unlike the relief-based and traditional top-down approaches to assistance, the new approach promotes participation and empowerment so that communities do not rely heavily on external support which makes them dependent and vulnerable (Lewis 1999; Satge 2004). Because conflict situations are fragile, careful design and implementation of development programs that are based on sound contextual knowledge is critical to avoid inadvertently doing more harm (Anderson 1996).

Southern Sudan is emerging from Africa's longest civil war, and millions of people who were refugees in neighboring countries and those who were internally displaced during the war have been returning to their home areas. In post-conflict situations, resources crucial for human survival and creation of viable livelihoods are severely limited or have been destroyed, making the situation extremely difficult for returnees and those in their home communities. Agricultural land and livestock are the most important source of livelihoods in rural areas of Southern Sudan. The peace has brought optimism regarding political stability (FAO 2008 and USAID 2006), and

made it possible for many international organizations to shift their assistance to programs and activities that promote sustainable development through improving livelihoods of the rural poor.

The purpose of this research project is to analyze post-conflict rural development efforts in Southern Sudan, particularly concerning agriculture and food security, from a sustainable livelihoods (SL) perspective. The paper presents an assessment of cases studies of three leading development organizations in terms of how they explicitly or implicitly incorporate a sustainable livelihoods framework and principles in their planning and implementation. It will also compare results to SL goals, particularly regarding increased food production and income as a result of the projects.

The thesis is organized as follows: Chapter 2 provides the general overview and the contexts for challenges in post-conflict development; this is followed by definitions and discussion of the conceptual framework and core concepts. This is followed by discussion of the impacts of conflict on the livelihoods base of Southern Sudan, data and methods, role of three development agencies in rural Southern Sudan and discussion of findings and conclusions. Chapter 3 presents the general conclusions and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2. SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS ANALYSIS OF POST-CONFLICT RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN SUDAN

Abstract

Organizations that provide assistance in post-conflict situations shift from emergency humanitarian relief to long-term development assistance, but face enormous challenges because conflicts have destroyed assets crucial for sustainable development. Southern Sudan emerged from a 23 year devastating civil war that ended in 2005 as result of a peace treaty signed by the Southern People Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) and the Government of Sudan (GOS). The central goal in this study is to understand the extent and means by which development organizations are helping make people central actors in their own development by effectively empowering them through meaningful participation and appropriate capacity building from the perspective of sustainable livelihoods. Project activities and practices of three organizations (USAID, NPA and FARM-Africa) are examined in relation to the key concepts and principles in sustainable livelihoods. Strengths and weaknesses are assessed, and areas for improvement are highlighted.

From emergency to long-term development assistance

Southern Sudan is emerging from Africa's longest civil war. As the result of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed by the Government of Sudan (GOS) and the Southern Sudan People Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), millions of people who were refugees in neighboring countries and those who were internally displaced during the war have been returning to their home areas. The war has destroyed almost all resources crucial for human survival and creation of viable livelihoods. With severely limited resources, the situation is extremely difficult for these returnees and those in their home communities who were also severely affected by the war. Southern Sudan is richly endowed with natural resources, especially agricultural land and livestock. People in rural areas have well-established traditions of agricultural and livestock production and management skills. In fact, the region as a whole can be characterized as rural, and the limited infrastructure that did exist was completely destroyed during the war. The CPA has opened a window for optimism regarding peace and stability (FAO 2008 and USAID 2006), but sustaining it is not without considerable challenges.

The cessation of hostilities after the CPA made it possible for many international organizations that were initially involved in providing humanitarian relief during the war to shift their focus to programs and activities that promote sustainable development through improving livelihoods of the rural poor, especially in agricultural and livestock development projects. Agriculture and herding are the most important livelihood sources for many people of Southern Sudan, not only in the rural areas but also for many in urban areas. Fishing and gathering of forest products is another important livelihood strategy for those with less farming and livestock rearing capacities. These livelihoods assets and the resilience of the people of Southern Sudan

are well recognized by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other organizations that were involved with humanitarian relief during the conflict.

The purpose of this research project is to analyze the post-conflict rural development efforts in Southern Sudan, particularly concerning agriculture and food security, from a sustainable livelihoods (SL) perspective. The paper presents an assessment of leading development organizations in terms of how they explicitly or implicitly incorporate a sustainable livelihoods framework and principles in their planning and implementation. It will also compare results to SL goals (e.g., if there is an increase in food production and income as a result of the projects). This will be accomplished by constructing a composite profile of development assistance in post-conflict rural areas of Southern Sudan based on reports, case studies, and other relevant documents. The study will specifically involve an examination of the extent and means by which development organizations help make people central actors in their own development by empowering them and giving them opportunities to articulate agendas of their own development through meaningful participation and appropriate capacity building throughout the cycle of programs. As pointed out by Eade (2007), Maynard (1999) and others, this is one of the best approaches to help post-conflict societies overcome their tragic past and work together to repair their livelihood assets, especially their human, social and political capitals which were devastated during the civil war.

Challenges and opportunities in post-conflict development

Reconstruction of post-conflict societies has become a major concern of the international community, not only for enhancing national, regional and global security but also recognizing that peace and development are inextricably interwoven and interdependent (Kibreab 2000).

While integration of uprooted populations, both refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) is fraught with challenges, it is a crucial element of sustainable peace and development. "The driving forces behind international initiatives to find durable and sustainable solutions for uprooted persons are not only the humanitarian imperative but also the risk of a cycle of displacement after return" (IRIN 2005:5). Post-conflict situations are characterized by a serious lack of basic needs because infrastructure and social services are severely damaged or neglected during war. People not displaced during war are not necessarily any better off; conflict may erode traditional safety net exposing vulnerable groups to extremely difficult conditions. Providing assistance in post-conflict situations requires careful attention to contextual factors so that a well intentioned but poorly planned development does not exacerbate the situation and further harm the target population (Anderson 1996).

Given the wide range of challenges, utilization of a conflict-sensitive approach can help direct appropriate interventions in conflict and post-conflict situations. A "conflict-sensitive approach provides conflict analysis of the actors, cause, profile and dynamics in a given context - with the aim of ensuring that assistance programs do not inadvertently increase the likelihood of violent conflict, but rather serves to reduce potential or existing violent conflict" (FEWER, International Alert and Saferworld 2004:2). Participation and broadening of stakeholders while paying attention to the weaker members (addressing social exclusion), is one of the key solutions to this issue (Engel and Korf 2005). With an overwhelming number of returnees and severe scarcity of resources at home, clashes among people concerning livelihoods are inevitable because "what the returnees need is exactly what the rest of the population is lacking" (IRIN 2005:5).

The interrelationships between livelihoods and conflict could have a retarding effect on development. According to Mullen (1999:131), grassroots approaches to development "take place in an uncertain and complex environment that requires responses which are locally responsive and flexible, not centralized and rigid." Therefore, successful integration of uprooted populations depends on recognition and understanding of this complexity which may not be readily visible to outsiders. Most conflicts are caused and perpetuated by competition over scarce resources, inequalities (social exclusion) and the absence of viable livelihoods (Engel and Korf 2005; Maynard 1999; Kibreab 2002). In order to avoid relapse into war, the primary task of post-conflict development is to establish priorities for economic revival, especially local livelihoods. "At the micro level, it means providing support for households to rebuild their livelihood systems" while making sure that no individuals or groups are excluded (Green & Ahmed 1999:198).

While repatriation is generally considered the preferred 'durable solution' to refugees' plight, a lengthy period of exile, acculturation in host societies, and returning to a changed environment without adequate access to livelihood resources mean that "returning may be as traumatizing as flight itself" (Kibreab 2002:54).Yet post-conflict reconstruction may represent an opportunity for societies to plan a brighter future, perhaps even better than the pre-conflict situation by recognizing and avoiding inequalities that caused the conflict in the first place (Mazur 2004; Zuckerman and Greenberg 2004). Post-conflict societies could utilize innovative knowledge and skills that refugees and IDPs have gained while displaced.

Providing development assistance in such situations requires a different approach than the traditional emergency and relief based approach that was not designed to revive or support livelihoods from the perspectives of refugees and IDPs. Indeed, the latter approach often

contributes to creation of attitudes of powerlessness and dependency, the main ingredients of vulnerability (Lewis 1999; Satge 2004). Another challenge is the revival of the most important livelihood assets, human and social capital. Unlike natural disasters, conflicts have serious and long lasting effects because of their tendency to erode peoples' capabilities. Among the first casualties of conflict are livelihood assets – particularly human, social, political, financial and physical capital.

Human capital (knowledge, education, good health, awareness and access to information) is an important livelihood asset that is severely affected by war when most educational facilities are destroyed. Although refugees and IDPs gain access to better education and other skills compared to those who remain at home during the war, people in camps are often constrained to becoming passive recipients of aid, leading them to lose skills and creativity. Capacity building is thus another priority to facilitate participation and empowerment essential for meaningful development. As Mazur (2004:45) argues, "A capacity building approach to development in crisis involves supporting active means of coping and problem solving, based on survivors' resilience, skills, and priorities." The role of social capital in development is extensively documented. The Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, one of the most widely cited successful programs for poverty reduction, is a clear manifestation of the significant role of social capital in rural development. Krishna et al. (1997) and many other development specialists have documented successful projects in developing countries in which success is attributed to mobilizing the potential of poor people through formulating and pursuing their own development agenda. Social networks and connectiveness, key elements in social capital, are among the most distorted elements in war. Unlike other community capitals, social capital may be very difficult to revive. In relationships that were either non-existent or strained due to protracted conflict, it is

very challenging to establish trust required for people to plan and implement a long-term program. Working together is "a necessary step to resolving practical problems and achieving wider objectives" (Cain 2004:98). Creating equal opportunities in war-torn communities will not only facilitate repairing social fabric and rebuilding trust; it can also serve as an important vehicle for promotion of democracy. Political capital (organization, voice and power) is an important asset that people need in order to access community resources available for them. The importance of political capital according to Flora and Flora (2008:144) "is to understand not only who runs things in rural communities but also how excluded groups whose issues are not on the agenda when resources are allocated can increase their voice and influence." Financial capital (savings, credit) is an important means for market and diversification of livelihood assets based on people's needs at a particular time and place. Physical capital (such as land, water, farm equipment, livestock, and roads) is the base of productive resources. Good governance (equal opportunities for citizen participation and investments in community capitals) is the key to successful rural development not only in post-conflict situation but in normal rural development (Radin et al. 1996).

Development organizations in post-conflict situations have to confront many powerful vested interests such as few elite and military/militia leaders who may perceive a grassroots approach as a threat to their power. According to Oyen (2002:6) "weaker programs, with limited impact on poverty reduction, are the ones more likely to survive because they are less challenging to their surroundings." Erosion of trust among people and a culture of suspicion are pervasive in conflict and post-conflict situations. Although traditional authority is crucial for social order and community cohesion, its legitimacy cannot be taken for granted in war-torn societies. According to Carlson (2003:17), "In Sierra Leone, contemporary antipathy toward

chiefs among rural communities and the implication of returning chiefdom authorities for the management of aid resources at the local level cannot be fully appreciated without understanding the role that the chiefs played in the past." In their studies of World Food Program operations in Southern Sudan, Maxwell and Burns (2008) pointed out that the role of traditional authorities such as chiefs is to ensure social cohesion rather than guarantee equalities and protect the marginalized and vulnerable people; those with more power benefited more during food distribution. Such behavior became entrenched during the war and became a very difficult challenge as it perpetuates inequalities that often cause conflict.

Fortunately, realization of unsuccessful but well-intentioned interventions has prompted development organizations to tap the enormous capacity and potential of the poor (Krishna et al. 1997), a long ignored factor crucial for sustainable development, "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Jaffee 1998:108) Many development organizations, especially non-governmental organizations (NGOs), have helped eliminate barriers that constrain the capabilities of the poor and place them at the center of their own development process. Significant progress has been documented as the result of these efforts. Vincent (1997) emphasizes the importance of local people's participation from inception throughout the life cycle of programs that strive to help the poor. Success in development and poverty-reduction interventions is widely attributed to meaningful participation of the poor in articulating their own development agendas. According to Krishna et al. (1997:100) "true development is the development of people." As Flora et al. (1992:238) put it "What is actually more valuable in forming foundation of a community's human resource base is what people know and their ability to learn." Mobilizing the potential of the poor to genuinely participate should be a priority in post-conflict societies to achieve

sustainable peace and development; it is a fundamental way to address inequalities and social

exclusion that are the underlying causes of conflict. Sustainable peace depends on people being

able to achieve viable livelihoods so that they do not resort to looting or joining militias who

could destabilize a fragile situation. Sustainable livelihoods approach has the best tool to

critically analyze and utilize the potential of the poor.

Sustainable livelihoods framework and core concepts

The concept of sustainable livelihoods (SL) is a way to critically analyze and understand

people's ways of living in a holistic mode. According to Chambers and Conway (1991:6):

> a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and
>
> access) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable
>
> which can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, maintain or enhance
>
> its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the
>
> next generation; and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the
>
> local and global levels and in the short and long term.

Livelihood resources are divided into tangible and intangible. Stores and resources are

tangible assets. Stores include food, cash, credits and other valuables while resources include

land, livestock farm equipment and other tools. *Claims* and access are intangible assets. *Claims*

are demands and appeals that people can make on relatives, friends, communities, government or

other agencies during adverse situations. This includes moral support and access to community's

resources to which one is entitled, such as health care and education. However, success in this

area is based on capabilities that households or groups may have such as social status, gender,

social networks and education. *Access* is the opportunity to use resources to which one is

entitled. Carney and Drinkwater (1999) emphasize that better access to assets makes it more likely that people can influence government's policies.

According to Chambers and Conway (1991), people are subject to external and internal vulnerabilities, stresses and shocks. Stresses include seasonal shortages, rising population and declining resources, while shocks include floods, conflict and epidemics. Internal vulnerability refers to the lack of the capacity to cope with an adverse situation.

Unlike traditional approaches to development and poverty reduction that are supply-driven, the SL approach focuses on people and their knowledge and capabilities as key resources. Traditional approaches have tended to ignore or devalue these resources, viewing them as part of 'the problem,' and attempted to replace rather than strengthen them. The livelihoods approach assumes that enabling people to provide for their own needs and goals is a crucial step towards sustainable development. It is people centered - focusing on people rather physical resources. The approach starts with understanding of people's livelihoods and their dynamics, directing initial attention to strengths and capabilities rather than needs. It builds upon people's own definitions of their constraints and opportunities and supports them to articulate their priorities and realize their goals. In other words, it provides opportunities for meaningful participation (share ideas, articulate goals, and meaningful contribution) of the beneficiaries. It embraces people's contributions while paying attention to the impact of external factors such as institutional policies that affect people's livelihoods. A livelihoods approach stresses the importance of influencing policies so that they are promotive of rather than obstacles to the interests of the poor. A sustainable livelihoods approach recognizes that people's livelihoods and the factors affecting them are dynamic; therefore, it stresses the importance of flexibility on the part of those providing external support to most effectively respond to changes in people's

conditions and learn from them to support positive patterns of change while mitigating negative impacts.

The approach strives for social inclusion, taking into consideration heterogeneity in terms existing assets and capabilities. Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics such as gender, social status and education may limit or enhance people's livelihoods. Finally, sustainable livelihoods must be able to withstand shocks and stresses independently, maintain the resource base, and not undermine the livelihoods of others.

Livelihoods consist of human capital (knowledge, skills, creativity and good health), social capital (networks, social connections, trust and norms of reciprocity among individuals, groups or communities), physical capital (roads, farm equipment, and livestock), and natural capital (land, water, and forests) and financial capital (money, saving, credit, and jewelry) Enhancing livelihood asset productivity depends on in-depth knowledge about existing livelihoods activities. As "development thinkers have shifted their emphasis from an exclusive focus on [physical] resources and income to social dimension of poverty and development," human and social capital has become the most important resources in livelihoods approaches because they are resources that are rooted in people and can be converted into other resource such as income and social services such as education and health care (Drinkwater and Rusinow 1999: 9). If poverty reduction and peace are to be achieved, external intervention must take into account how different actors are interrelated and learn how people perceive their own situation for decision making and assuming increased responsibilities (empowerment). Because of the comprehensive and integrated approach that characterize SL, it embedded principles of conflict-sensitive approach previously discussed and thus has critical analytical tools to address complex issues surrounding post-conflict development and poverty reduction.

Impact of conflicts on livelihoods base of people of Southern Sudan

The people of Southern Sudan belong to clans and ethnic groups and, as determined by geographical locations, have established diverse livelihoods strategies ranging from farming, herding, fishing, and trading with cash or exchange in local markets, collection of forest products, charity from relatives or friends or any combination of these livelihoods sources (Muchomba and Sharp 2006). As in many other African countries, droughts and floods constitute the major natural elements that affect people in terms of crop and livestock production. Vulnerability varies according to livelihood assets and strategies and their capacity to cope with changes. In response to long-term exposure to these stresses and shocks, people have developed coping as well as adaptive strategies through which they have become relatively resilient. However, conflicts at the national level and among clans and ethnic groups have been the most disruptive shocks to people's livelihoods. Throughout the war, people were constantly stripped of their livelihoods assets through looting, appropriation and through deliberate destruction of property. For example, as a tactic to expose the rural southern Sudanese to hunger during the war, the military forces of the Government of Sudan deliberately bombarded and destroyed cattle, the main livelihood assets in the region. Although these is a long tradition of cattle raiding among herders in Southern Sudan, the proliferation of small arms and the breakdown of the rule of law and cultural norms that sanction deviant behavior has had a devastating effect, making cattle liabilities rather than assets. Markets have been destroyed and people's mobility has been restricted, one of the most important livelihoods strategies in maintaining resilience to shocks and stresses.

Social capital in the form of traditional kinship and other social safety nets has been severely impaired or transformed whereby some groups may use their bonding social capital which is the "connections among individuals and groups with similar backgrounds" (Flora and Flora 2008:125) while excluding others. Social capital may be the most important element in livelihoods in Southern Sudan, even during the war; but it has been overstretched to the point that it became almost impossible to maintain it in such desperate situations. The protracted conflict has led to massive population displacement which has radically altered livelihood goals and strategies. For example, the study of refugees and IDPs who returned to Northern Bahr Al Ghazal in Southern Sudan from Darfur and Khartoum revealed this fact. Returnees from Darfur settle in rural areas where farming formed the most important source of livelihoods. These returnees have adopted the ox-plough as a new agricultural technology. On the other hand, those who returned from Khartoum engage in petty trade and construction works (Pantuliano et al. 2007)

The poorest returnees tend to go back to their original areas, while returnees from urban areas with income-earning capacities associated with education or skills and capital assets tend to remain in the urban areas. The returnees from urban areas have lost their skills in farming and livestock production as a result of their long term displacement in Khartoum. A needs assessment indicated that they regard microcredit as the first priority for their assistance. The government and assisting organizations are avoiding labeling returning refugees and IDPs as such, to avoid any sense of entitlement to privileges; instead, they are immediately referring to them as citizens of the area (see Pantuliano et al. 2007). The same variation in livelihoods strategies and goals was observed among the refugee returnees from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to Maridi, Ibba and Ezo counties in Southern Sudan. According to (Phelan and

Wood 2006), those who settled in refugee camps in DRC lost their agricultural skills; upon their return, they have tended to concentrate in urban areas. Those refugees who settled among rural communities in DRC have maintained and strengthened their farming skills and tend to return to rural areas to continue farming.

These examples suggest that development organizations which aim to assist the rural population in Southern Sudan to strengthen and rebuild livelihoods assets must base their activities not on assumptions but on a sound understanding of local dynamics; they must be self-critical and flexible to learn and respond to the realities from the perspective of the poor people they seek to assist. Whether well-intentioned interventions would support or undermine existing livelihood strategies will depend on understanding these dynamics. Lack of proper understanding on operating environment may not only impede the efficacy of development goals but may indeed do harm by exacerbating problematic situations.

Development agencies in Southern Sudan have adapted the concept of sustainable development, which is based on a "bottom-up approach" to reach out to the poor giving them the opportunity to meaningfully participate in programs planning and implementation, while building their capacity through training that is tailored to their situations. By taking this step, development agencies are aware of the fragile post-conflict situation and try to mitigate its causes and consequences through a grassroots approach to addressing inequalities and socioeconomic differences which could exacerbate the situation. The leading organizations that assist the people of Southern Sudan in agricultural and livestock development include: the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), FARM-Africa, and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA). These organizations directly address development at the grassroots level. The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) also targets rural people but operates at

the macro level with the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS). Development assistance for all these organizations is based on the concept of long-term sustainable development.

Based on their documents, the common objective of all above mentioned organizations is to achieve economic recovery, mitigate the causes and consequence of conflict, and achieve sustainable livelihoods for poor people in rural areas through agricultural and livestock development, so that they become self-reliant and not dependent on aid. These organizations also recognize that the government's role is crucial in achieving these goals; therefore; one of their core framework to enable GOSS to provide appropriate services to its citizens. The vehicle for achieving these objectives is to mobilize people's potential through participation, capacity building and empowerment at individuals, groups, communities and institutional levels.

Data and Methods

Data for this study are derived from reports and case studies of three leading development agencies (USAID, NPA and FARM-Africa) providing development assistance, specifically in agricultural, livestock production and management and promotion of good governance in post-conflict rural Southern Sudan. These organizations were selected because they lead in terms of funding as well as their scope in terms of areas they cover in different states of Southern Sudan. They also have data available on agricultural and livestock production and management, as well as data on building local government capacity, which is one focal element in this research project. The method of analysis involves assessment of practices in relation to the 'ideal' sustainable livelihoods principles previously discussed; five criteria (C1-C5) are examined. This concerns evidence of beneficiaries' participation, whether they (C1) effectively participate in articulating project goals and design, (C2) receive appropriate training and education, (C3)

meaningfully share decision making responsibilities in project implementation, (C4) apply their knowledge (i.e., work as groups to enhance their human and social capital), and (C5) derive benefits that are significant and consistent with their livelihood goals. It also analyzed efforts to address social exclusion (i.e., members of the community equally participate and benefit from projects regardless of gender, tribe, ethnicity, political and other social categories), enhance institutional linkages and promote good governance, government policies regulate markets and bring different interest groups together and work for common interest, ensures equal participation and offer opportunities for communities to make decisions and influence policies were assessed. Document of practices (case studies, reports and other relevant documents) were assessed. A matrix of activities and services of each agency were constructed to examine the presence and absence of key sustainable livelihoods concepts and principles in their practices.

Role of development agencies in rural Southern Sudan

Many international organizations, especially NGOs that have been assisting war-affected populations during the war, continue their commitments to provide development assistance during the fragile peace. However, assistance offered during the war, whether in refugee or IDP camps, was on an emergency basis. The CPA brought stability conducive for shifting from humanitarian relief to development assistance. Many development programs have seized the opportunity and adopted the concept of sustainable development. It is the focus of this research project to examine how this long-term development program is being carried out in rural Southern Sudan, particularly in the areas of agriculture and livestock.

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

In USAID's interim agricultural development strategy approved in 2001, one of the strategies to reduce poverty is through mobilization of science and technology. To achieve it objective, USAID stresses the importance of the conceptual framework that "good governance is an essential element of the enabling environment for science-based, market-led, sustainable agriculture" (USAID 2000:3). According to the framework, training, infrastructural support and good governance are the key determinants of successful small scale agricultural producers in developing countries. In its plan to address rural poverty and sustainable natural resource management, the USAID plan posits linking agricultural producers to markets as essential. According to this framework, assistance to fragile states (countries in or emerging from conflict) must be based on their contribution to the objectives discussed above. In its interim Strategic Plan for Sudan 2004-2006, (USAID 2003) stressed continued commitment to assist Southern Sudan in its path to sustainable peace and recovery. USAID is mindful of millions of refugees and IDPs returning homes and the consequences of overstretching the limited resources and planned to facilitate the situation. FAO (2007) and FARM-African (2008) also stressed the importance of planning to mitigate the impact of the returnees in compounding the poverty that the host communities face. These agencies are already assisting returnees in rural areas of Southern Sudan. Consideration for female-head households which characterizes war-affected societies is also an important part of their plans. According to USAID's (2003) Sudan Interim Strategic Plan, 60% of households in Southern Sudan are estimated to be headed by women.

The Southern Sudan Agricultural Enterprise Finance Program (AEFP) contract to establish a self-sustaining micro-finance institution (MFI) and provide access to working capital for micro-entrepreneurs was awarded to Chemonics International (CI) by USAID in 2001. In

2002, CI implemented agribusiness training as well as agricultural specialty training to entrepreneurs and microfinance institutions in Rumbek and extended to Yei, Yambio and Maridi in Southern Sudan. Six agricultural training and data analysis centers were established by the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Consortium - which includes CRS, Winrock International, Veterinarians sans Frontiers-Belgium (VSF-Belgium), and SUPRAID work in partnership with Chemonics International. Sudan Production Aid (SUPRAID) is a local NGO that provides agricultural technical training to farmers in Southern Sudan.

USAID and its implementing agencies established the Southern Sudan Microfinance Institution (SUMI) in June 2003. This institution was designed to expand economic and financial opportunities. USAID also considered the institution as an incentive for IDPs and refugees to return to these areas. The program began by offering group-based loans in Yei in 2002, based on the principle of economies of scale. Group activities provide a good opportunity for people to work together and share ideas for success but the organization failed to recognize this opportunity. The microfinance initiative has also tested individual loans in Yei and Yambio for those have completed training in agribusiness but require collateral. This condition may reinforce exclusion for the poorest who do not have resources in the first place to guarantee the loans. The staff of SUMI received training on loan management, such as delinquency management, which is provided by the Uganda Institute of Bankers in Kampala. This is an important part of capacity building for self-sustaining financial institutions so they can be responsive to the needs of their borrowers. Refugee returnees constitute over 50 percent of the borrowers and returned IDPs constitute over 10 percent. The report does not explain the reasons for the high representation of refugees and does not mention host communities or how many of the refugees and IDP that received the loans are women. However, providing loans to uprooted populations is an important

for their settlement in the new environment, but caution should be exercised not to promote it as a privilege for a few.

After becoming aware of a busy market in Ombasi 18 miles away from Rumbek, the program expanded to Ombasi and recruited 73 clients there (62 of whom were men), the available documents do not provide information as of how many returnees, women or residents. The main activities of the market are agricultural produce, mainly maize and other products. The expansion is consistent with USAID's strategy to link producers to markets, one that many development agencies fail to build into their programs (Longley et al. 2007). There was no wholesaler in the area, so traders have had to purchase products in Yei and the DRC and transport them on bicycles, a major constraint to business development that requires an efficient transportation system. Many great successes were reported in terms of business expansion and the program's extension to other areas. Yei Branch finances most of its operating cost, an important indication of a self-sustaining microfinance institution in Southern Sudan.

From the discussion above, it is evident that USAID programs provide appropriate training to help strengthen the capability of government institutions to support small scale agricultural producers (refugees, IDPs, and residents). In terms of operating according to key principles of a SL approach in project implementation, there is little or no indication in any of the reports that beneficiaries have effectively participated in articulating project goals and design (criterion #1, or C1); the project seems to operate under a pre-established set of assumptions about people's livelihood preferences regarding farming and microenterprises. While mechanisms for indentifying and selecting the beneficiaries are not clearly described, beneficiaries' lack of involvement in project design is reflected in the inflexibility of the repayment period in a difficult business environment where traders have to travel long distance

with bad roads to get only few products on bicycles. The organization's advisory board consists of representatives from the government, USAID and NGOs; beneficiaries are not represented. In relation to C2 ('receiving appropriate training and education'), there is a clear demonstration of appropriate training and education. Borrowers received training before they are given the loan. USAID and its implementing NGOs established six training and data analysis centers at the project site; these centers serve as the knowledge bank. For 'meaningfully sharing decision making responsibilities' (C3), the staff of SUMI make decisions and share risks by initiating individuals loans; however, the assessment found no significant evidence of beneficiaries' (borrowers) involvement in deciding or in sharing any responsibility in implementation of the projects. In terms of 'utilizing and enhancing social capital' (C4), there is no evidence of any deliberate attempt to enhance social capital in terms of beneficiaries working in groups. The principal aim of group loans was to utilize economies of scale rather than to promote social capital. In terms of evidence of borrowers deriving benefits from the project (C5), the expansion of the project seems to indicate success. USAID has been mindful of gender issues and makes sure that women equally benefited from the project; however, the data do not indicate whether these women are widows or married. USAID provided training and education for government officials to establish a self-sustaining financial institution in Southern Sudan.

Overall, the absence of meaningful participation and genuine empowerment, crucial factors for sustainable livelihoods and development, indicates the organization' limited correspondence to the framework and principles of sustainable livelihoods in which people are the key to their own development and their knowledge, ideas and livelihood systems form the base for designing external support.

Norwegian People's Aid

Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) is an NGO that has been working in Southern Sudan since 1986. The NGO recognizes the complexity of the situation and works to address issues of food security, health care and development of local communities. The ultimate goal of its Food Security and Livelihoods Program is to "contribute to the right of the rural poor communities of Southern Sudan to have improved livelihoods" (NPA 2008:1). The program covers 13 counties which include: Eastern and Western Equatoria states, Lake State and Jonglei state. The objective of the agricultural component is to increase agricultural production for beneficiaries by encouraging them to adopt new agricultural techniques. The targeted populations are the most vulnerable groups within IDPs, refugee returnees, and the host communities. In its agricultural component, NPA provides seed and agricultural hand tools which mean eliminating barriers that may constrain people's abilities to rebuild their livelihoods assets and achieve their goals. NPA's key agricultural assistance is in the form of transfer of ox-plough technology which helps strengthen existing traditional cultivation techniques.

In its livestock project, NPA provides vaccines and drugs for animals and provides training for community animal health workers (CAHWs). Cattle are the most important assets for most Southern Sudanese as the main medium of exchange, for livelihood diversification, and for resilience during stresses or shocks. Cattle can be lent to relatives or friends for milk during food crises and are key collateral for loans either from relatives, neighbors or friends. Strengthening human capital through capacity building for livestock management is one of the key elements of sustainable livelihoods for people in the rural areas in Southern Sudan as well for urban residents. NPA provides fishery equipment for those who depend on fishing, again recognizing and building on existing and increasingly diverse livelihood strategies. These are in line with the

concept of secure and sustainable livelihoods to address vulnerability by focusing on livelihoods and building assets. NPA's demonstration of the program success in Juba in 2007 helped raise awareness in the GOSS, other organizations and the general public. Such knowledge diffusion is important for community mobilization and, thereby, human capital.

According to NPA's 2006 achievement report, hundreds of farmers were trained in ox plough technology by community oxen trainers, people from the communities trained to train others. Local blacksmith groups produced hundreds of ox ploughs and sold them to the farmers. These activities encourage local knowledge and create markets in the area. NPA provides small loans for ox ploughs that are managed by local community-based organizations (CBOs), an important part of empowerment in which communities take responsibilities and make decisions about appropriate use of the money. Significant achievements in terms of increased acreage of land cultivated and subsequent increase in agricultural production that is beyond subsistence were reported as the result of ox plough adaptation. According to the report, over 780 farmers sold surplus seeds directly to the project distribution. In Western Equatoria, local surplus food was sold to the World Food Program (WFP) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to distribute to other areas as relief. This is an indication that farmers have enhanced their food security, strengthening their resilience to stresses and shocks or the 'hunger gap' which exists for many from April to August (Longley et al. 2003; Shanmugaratnam 2003). The achievements also serve as evidence consistent with SL livelihood goals.

The data indicates NPA's goals to goal to support the rural poor communities of Southern Sudan to increase food production improved livelihoods by introducing new agricultural technology. In terms of evaluating the incorporation of the five key elements of the SL framework and principles examined here, there was no evidence of the poor beneficiaries

articulating project goals and design (C1). The organization does provide appropriate intensive

training in agricultural and livestock production and management (C2). However, there is no

indication that poor people have been sharing decision making responsibilities in project

implementation (C3). Although NPA helps farmers to conduct exhibitions of the products and

techniques, it does not deliberately try to encourage people to work together as a way to share

knowledge and build trust - i.e., enhance human and social capital (C4). Finally, there is

evidence of increase in food production as result of the new agricultural technology, farmer sold

surplus to NGOs and other humanitarian organizations (C5). NPA tries to addresses issues of

inequality; the majority of beneficiaries are women. As with USAID, the data do not indicate

whether the women are household heads and the criteria of selecting beneficiaries has not been

explicitly discussed. In terms of collaborating with other organizations, the data indicates that

NPA works with international and local NGOs to share their areas of expertise. NPA provide

training for government officials from the department of agriculture and animal resources so that

they can support farmers in achieving the goals of increasing food production and improving

livelihoods.

Like USAID, NPA seems to ignore the importance of beneficiaries' involvement in

articulating the goals and priorities of the program or in planning and implementation, such an

approach that ignores the beneficiaries' input risks missing the most vulnerable populations and

can potentially widen the socio-economic gap and exacerbate social exclusion, which is the root

cause of conflicts in Sudan (USAID 2003). Shanmugaratnam (2003:21) conducted an evaluation

of the project and argues that only few elite farmers who are the owners of large farms and large

number of cattle dominate and control the benefit of the projects and "the ox-plough technology

continues to remain beyond the reach of the poor and the very poor in Rumbek and Yirol." As a

result, the program is stagnant. Emergence of such conditions seems to signal that the project unintentionally addresses wrong priorities such as serving the relatively rich people. The organization's practices are largely inconsistent with the SL framework and principles.

FARM-Africa

FARM-Africa (Food and Agricultural Research Management) is an NGO that works with rural communities to help provide sustainable solutions to poverty in Eastern Africa. It works with farmers and herders to strengthen their capacities to increase food production and enhance food security. FARM-Africa began working in Southern Sudan in 2005 in Gogrial county of Northern Bahr Al Ghazal State. The organization's aim is to support the revival of farming and it is "based on short term support to returnees and their host communities and technology and skill transfer through action research, participatory training and, institutional strengthening at community and local authority levels" (FARM-Africa 2008:1). FARM-Africa considers itself as the pioneer of a mobile outreach camp that brings projects and delivers services to its beneficiaries. Like the NPA discussed above, FARM-Africa has agricultural and livestock production sectors. The main activities in the agricultural sector are the supply of seeds, agricultural hand tools and ox plough training. Training of trainers for ox plough management is carried out through FAO staff, while FARM-Africa distributes ox ploughs. A variety of seeds are distributed so that farmers can choose what they want to grow and diversify their production, an important way to address vulnerability. The provision of seeds, agricultural tools and ox ploughs, according to the SL approach, are consistent with the role of external supports to help remove constrains so that people can realized their goals.

The community has accepted the new technology and increased cultivated land. The acceptance and adoption of the new technology is an important innovation and signals social change. Cattle, particularly bulls, are not only livelihood assets; in most areas and particularly at this project site, they are the most important indicators of social status. Some people rent out their ox to others which indicate the expansion of ideas. FARM-Africa also restocks goats on a loan basis exclusively to female-headed households, which represents a way of rebuilding assets and reviving livelihoods for the most vulnerable populations to reduce poverty.

In its livestock project, FARM-Africa helps vaccinate animals, provide drugs and train community animal health workers (CAHWs). The CAHWs vaccinate livestock, raise awareness and train communities on how to utilize the new technology to protect their animals. The activities are important for strengthening and rebuilding human capital, as well as for asset protection. Knowledge about animals' health is empowering because communities need local solutions to protecting their livestock. When people know what they need to do to protect their animals, they will be motivated to claim services, such as animal drugs, from external sources. In partnership with SUPRAID and Save the Children Fund (SCFUK), FARM-Africa helps train local people in water access techniques, such as boreholes digging, for domestic and agricultural use. Working with a local NGO such as SUPRAID also is another important element in capacity building because local NGOs can continue to help the communities after withdrawal of international organizations. It is not clear whether the water project emerged as a response to challenges or request from the beneficiaries, but it is an important step because lack of clean water interferes with people's health, one of the most important components of human capital. Water technology can also help with stresses such as drought when used for irrigation. The organization has extension groups trained in farmer participatory research which provide training

for farmers in six locations in Gogrial West. There is no discussion of whether or not participatory research is carried out to examine the role of the farmers in planning and implementation of the projects. FARM-Africa also distributes tree seedlings and has introduced three types of fruit tree cultivars - mango, orange and guava. This indicates their holistic view of the situation.

FARM-Africa reported significant success in all its agricultural and livestock projects. The farmers sold their products to restaurant owners as well as individuals. The organization uses the same techniques that NPA uses to raise awareness and mobilize the community by helping farmers organize to demonstrate their produces and techniques to the publics. This is an important technique for knowledge diffusion (human capital). Demonstration of assets has been confined to bulls in most parts of Southern Sudan, so the technique implies a huge shift in terms of social change. Great successes were reported in term of vulnerable families having access to milk and manure for vegetable cultivation, and even reported improvement in food availability.

FARM-Africa has projects with goals similar to those of NPA - helping rural people to increase their food production through adoption of new agricultural and livestock management technology and practices among refugees and IDPs. In assessing evidence of incorporation of SL framework and principles, the is no evidence of beneficiaries articulating project goals and design (C1). Beneficiaries' limited participation was revealed when women who were not involved in planning and buying goats requested that the organization replace their black goats with goats of different colors because a goat's black color was deemed responsible for miscarriages. Involving beneficiaries in planning and buying goats would not only minimize error but would also empower through creating opportunities to negotiate and build connections with customers (goat retailers).The organization provides intensive training and education in the

areas of agricultural and livestock production and management (C2); FARM-Africa also

provides training in water technology so that people have access to clean water. The data do not

indicate any participation by beneficiaries in decision making and sharing of responsibilities in

project implementation (C3).   FARM-Africa tries to organize goat producer groups, women who

collectively own goats, but there is no evidence that the plan promotes networks and enhances

social capital (C4). Finally, the organization has reported significant success in terms of

increased food production and incomes (C5); farmers sell their produce to restaurants and

individuals. In addressing social inclusion, FARM-Africa does better in these area compared to

USAID and NPA. It restocks goats for female-headed households; goats were loaned out and

families should give a goat kid to other families as repayment for the loan. FARM-Africa

mentioned that it utilizes village leaders to identify vulnerable groups, especially female-headed

households. Reaching the poorest is not an easy task, as has been extensively documented in the

literature when operating in a desperate situation in which vested interests and group loyalty and

negative social capital are entrenched during decades of conflict. FARM-Africa utilizes other

organizations' expertise to accomplish its technology transfer program. Its water project is

implemented by SUPRAID and other NGOs. FARM-Africa provides management training to

local government officials, especially from the department of agriculture and animal resources.

Compare to USAID and NPA, FARM-Africa seems to demonstrate good knowledge about the

key elements of the SL framework and principles; it is the only organization among the three that

has a participatory training program for farmers, although it is not clear from the data whether

farmers are really articulating goals and making decisions about the project. As with USAID and

NPA, the organization does not explicitly incorporate the key elements of SL framework.

Conclusions

This research revealed the international community's concern and commitment to reduce poverty and enhance global security by assisting poor people who strive to achieve viable livelihood options. This is particularly important in conflict and post-conflict societies where there are enormous challenges in terms of basic services, livelihoods options, and capable government while many uprooted populations (refugees and IDPs) are returning to these conditions and compounding the poverty that equally affects host communities. The organizations have developed programs to assist returnees and their host/home communities through microcredit and farming. In post-conflict Southern Sudan, development assistance has significantly shifted from emergency based to focus on long-term development assistance; this becomes the dominant goal of every development agency in the region. There is a genuine attempt to revive and strengthen the livelihood options of the poor in rural areas in Southern Sudan through increasing agricultural and livestock productivity. The analysis here indicates explicit incorporation of the concept of capacity building for sustainable livelihoods, specifically in the area of agriculture and livestock production and management. All organizations strive for livelihoods support and revival-crucial step to address vulnerability. Building and strengthening people's capacities is the overriding goals of all the organizations and has been explicitly demonstrated in various activities such provision of agricultural training, introduction of ox plough technology, and training in animal health. Distribution of agricultural inputs, fishing equipment, restocking of goats to female-headed households is clear examples of the valuable role of external support in removing constrains beyond control of the poor. The agencies distribute fishing equipment and strengthen people's capacities and techniques of beekeeping - recognition of the diversity of livelihoods and building on people's interests and strengths.

Farmers' exhibition of their products and techniques is a way to mobilize communities and enhance human capital by diffusing knowledge. It is also a good way to make connections with potential customers and partners.

Reaching the most vulnerable within target population is on of the Challenges of aid assistance in post-conflict situations. The analysis indicates organization's effort to help rebuild assets for the most vulnerable groups, especially women; this is reinforced by the allocation of 57 percent of agribusiness enterprises to women in Rumbek by USAID and restocking of goats for female-headed households by FARM-Africa in Yirol. Also, According to NPA, a majority of their farmers are women. Post-conflict situation is characterized by weak or non-existing governance which impedes sustainable peace and development. The organizations, especially USAID and its implementing NGOs lead on enabling the government by training local government staff in loan management to provide appropriate services and maintain self-sustaining financial institutions for the expansion of agribusiness and economic recovery. This is based on USAID's conceptual framework that successful agricultural production is not possible without good governance that is capable and responsive to the needs of its citizens. NPA and FARM-Africa also provide some training for local government officials, especially in management capacity. These factors suggest good collaboration among externally based organizations, local organizations and local government in terms of utilizing and sharing their expertise, especially FARM-Africa and NPA. These activities parallel the concept of macro-micro linkages in the sustainable livelihoods framework

Many achievements were reported. For example, many NPA-assisted farmers sold their surplus to agencies which was distributed as seeds to others; farmers in Equatoria sold their surplus to the WFP for distribution to those in need. According to the documents reviewed, the

efforts indicate important success in term of increasing food production. This is an important indication of the achievement of livelihood goals. Overall, these activities explicitly and implicitly demonstrate the incorporation of some elements of the SL framework, particularly in term of strengthening human capital, rebuilding and protecting assets, and removing constraints that inhibit the poor by providing agricultural inputs in a timely fashion and the provision of fishing equipment.

Despite all these activities and achievements, there are some important areas where the organizations need to improve. Although all agencies stress the need for community participation, capacity building and community empowerment, the available data do not indicate any significant participation and empowerment of beneficiaries in planning and implementation. Participation includes giving people opportunities to share ideas, articulate goals and provide a meaningful contribution in prioritizing their development agendas and goals. Empowerment means that people have opportunities to meaningfully share responsibilities in decision making in design and implementation. Throughout the data, there was no indication that the beneficiaries have meaningfully participated in all phases of planning and implementation. Even in capacity building activities that the organizations have practically and extensively implemented, there is no evidence that any of the initiatives originate from the beneficiaries.

Although the activities seem to match the livelihoods of the people in the area, participation and empowerment are important to create genuine 'ownership' as well as stimulating ideas and self-discovery. As evidence of the absence of people's participation, women have complained and attribute miscarriage of goats to black colors and requested that FARM-Africa replace their goats with those having different colors. This cultural perspective would have been revealed if women had participated in buying the goats. A store owner in

Rumbek who was a client of SUMI complained about rigidity of the loan repayment period in the difficult business environment. IDPs and refugees who might lose their rural livelihood skills are offered the same options of agricultural and livestock activities which may not match their choices and could result in waste of limited resources because they may not utilize them.

Another important issue is how to reach out to the most vulnerable groups. This has been the most challenging part of assistance. FARM-African indicated that they have to utilize community leaders to reach out to the poorest but that approach has been widely criticized, particularly in post-conflict and conflict situations. Community leaders in this context may have vested interests, specifically group loyalty is one of the negative social connections in many developing countries - including Southern Sudan - that engenders corruption, creates social exclusion and perpetuates conflict. This is not to suggest that agencies should work with people without their leaders, but it is important to make sure that they contribute to the goal of development rather than diverting aid for mere individual or group gain. Such problems can be mitigated by operating an effective participatory monitoring and evaluation component in all projects, enabling 'beneficiaries' to share their views about the projects' process and impacts.

The lack of beneficiaries' participation seems to confirm the argument advanced by Longley et al. (2006:3) that "despite rhetoric about 'community-based or 'community-driven' intervention, 'participation and 'empowerment, there is a little evidence that agencies are transferring their power to their community partners," the beneficiaries. Shanmugaratnam (2003) evaluated the NPA's project and concluded that the benefit of the program goes to few elite farmers and that the ox plough technology is beyond the reach of the poor. But according to USAID (2003:7), the "root cause of conflict in Sudan is unequal access to resources and opportunities" Unless gaps are recognized and ways are identified to fully implement

participation, capacity building and empowerment, the shift in development thinking would

mean nothing more than rhetoric to please donors rather than fundamental restructuring of aid

CHAPTER 3. GENERAL CONCLUSION

This thesis assessed the role of international development aid in post-conflict rural Southern Sudan. The assessment focused on the shift from humanitarian relief to development assistance that rebuilds assets to address vulnerability and promotes self-reliance and sustainable development through the achievement of viable livelihoods. This is fundamental in post-conflict situations where unequal access to viable livelihoods and resources is one of the main causes of conflict. Because of the comprehensive and integrated nature of SL, principles of a conflict-sensitive approach help address complex issues surrounding post-conflict development and poverty reduction. The utilization of SL as analytical tool for the assessment of organizations' activities made it possible to clearly identify strengths as well as weaknesses in their implementation of the most critical elements of sustainable livelihoods and development - participation, capacity building and community empowerment. Using this framework as an analytical tool and genuinely promoting participation, capacity building and community empowerment will verify the shift from relief to development assistance.

Although the organizations have striven to rebuild assets and capabilities of the rural poor in Southern Sudan and have achieved some of their goals by explicitly and implicitly implementing key elements of SL, there is a need for improvement in terms of making the poor central actors in their own development. Development organizations in post-conflict situations must understand the causes of conflicts and ensure that aid does not exacerbate fragile situations by widening socio-economic differences or promoting dependence. A post-conflict situation may represent an opportunity to address factors that caused conflicts so that communities can work together for a brighter future. A concerted effort to revive and utilize social capital, one of the fundamental assets in rural Southern Sudan, is required. This assessment has not indicated any

deliberate attempt by the organizations involved to promote the use of social capital in their projects. Social capital can be considered to be the best way to address issues of social inclusion because it means that people plan and work together to overcome their tragic past and plan long-term programs.

Future research in rural development - and post-conflict situations in particular - must address issues of appropriate structures and incentives that should be provided to facilitate meaningful participation of the poorest that may internalize exclusion and fail to access community resources and share in the benefits of development assistance. Giving people opportunities to articulate their priorities in project design and implementation is crucial not only in addressing social exclusion but also for sustainable peace and development. Attention is needed to better understand how community capitals, especially social capital, can be utilized to help the most vulnerable groups by working together while avoiding manipulation by special interest groups. In the agencies' reports, no group tensions were reported – despite conflict being inherent in all societies.

Further, there is no obvious evidence of any effort to utilize or build social capital – the emphasis in these projects was on human, physical and financial capital. While the project sites are inhabited by relatively homogenous peoples in terms of clan and ethnicity, even within a homogenous group, some may use connections that exclude others, especially the powerless who lack the human, social and political capital. Social capital is also an important component of sustainable development, especially in post-conflict situations. It discourages people from acting against the common good; people develop trust, share ideas and plan long-term programs. Therefore, it is a critical resource that development agencies and governments cannot afford to ignore.

Table 1: Conceptual framework of sustainable livelihoods

Sustainable Poverty Reduction	Secure and sustainable livelihoods for all (poor and non-poor)
Secure and sustainable livelihoods	Focus on livelihoods (ways of earning a living), builds assets (a diversified portfolio), increases resilience and reduces vulnerability
Principles	Socially inclusive, builds on strengths, enhances institutional linkages and good governance (at the micro, meso & macro levels) and links to establish market, long-term sustainability approach, flexible implementation
Build on strengths	Recognizes local assets (resources) and capabilities (knowledge, experiences, social networks), provides appropriate assistance (training, education, access to information and productive resources) based on people's priorities
Social inclusion	Equal 'participation' of community's members in setting development goals, making decisions that influence programs, equal access to community resources and deriving benefits from projects regardless of gender, ethnicity, or social status
Institutional linkages	Good knowledge of and working relationships with relevant organizations and institutions in government, civil society, and the private business sector
Good governance	Effective delegation of political decision-making authority to communities; promotes equal participation of citizens; gives voice to minorities and women; invests in human, social, political, financial and physical capital; helps create shared vision among diverse groups; regulated markets in accordance with prevailing norms and values; ability to influence public policies
Long-term sustainability	Can withstand and recover from stresses and shocks; not excessively dependent on external support; maintains long-term productivity of resource base and does not undermine livelihood options of others, including subsequent generations

Table 2: USAID Southern Sudan Agricultural Enterprise Financial Program in (Yei, Yambio, Maridi and Rumbek Southern Sudan):

Implemented by Chemonics International & Catholic Relief Services Consortium

Assets building (human, social, physical, financial and political)	Building on strength (participation, empowerment)	Social inclusion	Good governance (empowering) and institutional linkage	Sustainability/SL goals
Focused on (human, physical, financial and political capitals). Established microcredit institution, trained local government staff on loan management (macro), established training and data analysis centers, agribusiness and agricultural specialty skill training for individuals (micro).		(Special consideration to most vulnerable groups). Rumbek branch has 57% female clients, Yei has 41% female client and Maridi has 21% female clients. Overall, 41% of loan made to women as opposed to the target 50%. Over 10 % of the loan made to IDPs and over 50% made to returned refugees.	(Made decisions and shared responsibilities, responsiveness, flexibility). Sudan Microfinance institution (SUMI) management initiated individual loan (in Yei and Yambio) as a response to clients' request but required collateral. 20 clients benefited for the pilot project. Created and linked producers to market	Yei branch finance most of its operating cost after a gradual phase out of the grant while others are facing small growth due to various problems.

Table 3: Norwegian People's Aid (NPA): Food Security & Rural Livelihoods in (13 countries across CEQ, WEQ, Lake, Jonglie and EUN)

Assets building (human, social, physical, financial and political)	Building on strength (participation, empowerment)	Social inclusion	Good governance (empowering) and institutional linkage	Sustainability/SL goals
Focused on (human, physical, financial and political capital). Transfer of and training in ox-plough technology, trained trainers, provide ploughs and small loans to 26 farmers for oxen and ploughs, 91 project staff and county agricultural department staff from all counties attended 3 month training, distributes seeds, agricultural hand tools, help formed ox-plough farmers cooperative, assist producers to store and market their surplus. Trained trainer CAHWs, establish community-base pharmacies and provide drugs and vaccinated livestock	Local NGOs implement veterinary program.	(Attention to most vulnerable groups). Majority of the project beneficiaries are women	Works with local NGOs, agricultural and animal resource departments and help train local government officials	Improve nutritional intake and farmers sold surplus to NGOs, WFG and UNHCR.

Table 4: FARM-Africa & partners (SUPRAID, Sudanese NGO): Southern Sudan Livelihoods Recovery and Development Project (Gogrial Northern Bahr Al Ghazal)

Assets building (human, social, physical, financial and political)	Building on strength (participation, empowerment)	Social inclusion	Good governance (empowering) and institutional linkage	Sustainability/SL goals
Focused on (human and physical capital) Transfer of and training in ox-plough technology, conducted training of trainers, provide ploughs and small loans to 26 farmers for oxen and ploughs, distributes seeds, agricultural hand tools, help formed ox-plough farmers cooperative, assist producers to store and market their surplus. Trained trainer CAHWs, establish community-base pharmacies and provide drugs and vaccinates livestock, vaccination of animals, provision of drugs for animals, conduct CAHWs training of trainers farmer demonstrations, training on water techniques to be for domestic use and agriculture.	Local NGOs (SUPRAID), trained local blacksmith	(Attention to most vulnerable groups). restocking goats, form goat groups or cooperatives, Majority of the project beneficiaries are women	Provides training in management to government officials, providing skills and knowledge. Work in partnership with department of agriculture and department of animal resource and forestry, FAO, Save the Children Fund (SCFUK) and SUPRAID	Protecting natural resource base, distributed tree seedlings which are growing healthy

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