

## “Hunting for Moisture”

### Background

Northern Darfur is one of the poorest states in Sudan and offers extremely difficult conditions for growing food, raising livestock - 90 per cent of the population live below the poverty line and 60% of the state's 1.4 million-strong population are constantly faced with very real doubts about whether the rains will come and if they will have enough food to survive on each year.



Arid Landscape - Northern Darfur

ITDG have been working in Northern Darfur since 1988. The principle aim is to break the 'relief-cycle', in which poor people's circumstances are so difficult that they go from one crisis to another, without having the means to become self-sufficient.

Through ITDG's participatory methods, work with local groups of farmers, villagers and artisans has helped to develop a range of simple technologies that have helped to improve people's lives.

Over the last sixteen years, through help from ITDG, households have significantly improved their crop yields and storage capabilities. In addition, firm links have been established with local communities that will help to spread the work and replicate it elsewhere in Sudan.

### The Problem

In Western Sudan, in particular Northern Darfur, drought is a regular, unwelcome visitor to the region. As a result, the crops of the poor rural people, predominantly farmers are either meagre reaping only a quarter of the expected yield or fail entirely.

The people that live in this area have lived there for many generations. Many of them have never been to another village, let alone the capital of the state – El Fashir. For these people the choices are minimal. Either they stay and persevere, or they leave and migrate to either El Fashir or to the capital of Sudan, Khartoum. In most instances, it is

the men that leave, with promises of returning to their villages wealthy but they never return.

## The Solution

ITDG has worked in Northern Darfur for sixteen years and made a substantial difference to the lives of many poor people in the area through our participatory methods.

They have introduced solutions such the provision and safe, secure storage of grain, seeds, hand tools and ploughs that have meant that poor people can become self-sufficient and get more from their land.

ITDG has provided access to business development services, including marketing support, bookkeeping, strategic planning and priority setting.

They look to directly address the drought problem through earth dams. An earth dam is used to retain water after there has been rainfall. Once *(if)* the rains fall, the water is dammed using the earth dam as a barrier. Along the outer edges of the dam, seeds are planted and crops grown in wadis. As the water naturally evaporates and disappears, more seeds are planted in the outer edges to maximise growing opportunities. The hope is that the seeds contained in the wadis will continue to grow after they have taken root. Each seed is carefully planted quite deeply to ensure that they are not blown away or disturbed. The staple crops in Darfur are sorghum and millet. ITDG have helped introduce around 25 different vegetable crops. These are used to supplement their diets with the residue sold as cash crops. Some of the vegetables grown include okra, pumpkins, aubergines, tomatoes and watermelons – all of these grown in the wadi. ITDG have also helped to introduce indigenous drought resistant millet.



Earth Dam - Darfur

The extra income that is generated by having a cash crop is spent on basic foodstuffs such as tea and sugar. The rest of the income is spent on education for the children. As in any other developing country, this is a major priority.

ITDG do not work in isolation however. Oxfam have supported them in the building of community centres, UNICEF have assisted with education and training, particularly with midwives. Save the Children Fund have helped ITDG with the construction of *haffirs* - a dug out piece of land used to store water for irrigation and animals – about the size of two football pitches.

## Together

ITDG and Trade plus Aid will support a village in North Darfur called Abu Digaise, located 20km West of the state capital El Fashir. This village has a population of 6,000

people and is inhabited by three tribes Tongur, Gawama and Bartee of whom 80 per cent are farmers, 15 per cent animal herders and 5 per cent casual labourers.

Although the village is not geographically far from the state capital, transport out of the village is only available three times per week, the nearest telephone is over 10km away and in the rainy season the village is completely cut off.

### **Trade plus Aid will help to:**

There are a number of activities required to enable the people of Abu Digaise to:

- ◆ Secure their food needs.
- ◆ Produce nourishing food for their family and to sell
- ◆ Improve agricultural practices.
- ◆ Increase the amount of land they are able to farm
- ◆ Capture the rainwater
- ◆ Strengthen community knowledge and organisation

Below is list of the urgent funding requirements that will assist over 1,000 farmers and provide water for 3,000 goats, 4,000 sheep, 2,200 donkeys, 50 cows and 20 camels. Each requirement on their own, once completed will make a difference to their lives. However combined, the difference to the people of Abu Digaise will be significant.

- ◆ **Earth Dam:** Building an earth dam to capture large amounts of floodwater from streams in the rainy season. The water will be used to irrigate over 1,470 hectares of crops. The construction of an earth will cost: **£15,000**
- ◆ **Grain Supply and Storage:** Two hundred sacs of grain and the construction of a ventilated, waterproof building. The building will keep grain for many months, to use, eat or sell when prices are high. The grain and building will cost: **£5,000**
- ◆ **Agricultural Store and Supplies:** Seeds, hand tools and ploughs are vital for farmers to do their job. Through a village seed and tool bank farmers can produce drought and disease-resistant crops. Supplies of seeds, hand tool and ploughs and the construction of a ventilated, waterproof building will cost: **£2,500**
- ◆ **Community Training:** Training workshops in food processing and business management to provide the community with essential technical knowledge and skills. Four training workshops will cost: **£2,000**
- ◆ **Organisation, Advocacy and Dissemination Support:** Overseeing the successful implementation of the activities from the UK and in Sudan. Ongoing work to influence policies, institutions and processes to bring about changes that bring benefit poor women and men in Sudan. Dissemination support as ITDG seeks to inform other non-governmental organisations of our work so that we can replicate and scale-up our activities. Cost: **£1,500**

The activities above commence in February 2004 and crucially be completed by July 2004 just in time to yield maximum benefit from the rainy season.

The costs shown above represent the complete figure for implementing the activities and take into account labour costs, materials, technical support, training, tools, and transportation costs.

## Match funding

As part of a three-year plan, ITDG are looking to scale up its activities in this area of Darfur. We have recently won a contract from the EC to 'role-out' our successful model of integrated sustainable development. The total budget for our programme in Darfur is @ £1.3m. The EC have granted a total of @ £940,000 to support the programme, however this is reliant upon ITDG successfully co-funding the remainder. To date we have been successful in securing about £225,000, leaving £135,000 to find over three years. Trade plus Aid's support will enable ITDG to release three times more support from the EC to do similar work in neighbouring villages in Darfur.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation will be conducted in participation with the people of Abu Digaise. The Programme and Project Managers will manage the monitoring and evaluations on a monthly basis with quarterly reviews. ITDG will provide Trade plus Aid with a three-month report outlining the status of their project and an end-of-project report. These will include written and photographic material.



Together we have an opportunity to help some of the poorest people on earth. By supporting ITDG, we can have a positive, long-lasting affect on the people of Abu Digaise. Together, we can give them a future that is long-term, sustainable and for perhaps the first time – with real hope.